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“Understanding different learning needs and preferences in international students is a good way to model international mindedness and acceptance of difference. One size, one approach to teaching international mindedness will not suit everyone.”

Caroline Essame, p20

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# comment

## Building on good practice

When Caroline Ellwood decided to hand over the reins of editorship, we were delighted to be invited by our colleagues at John Catt to join the team responsible for the creation and production of *is* magazine. We are conscious of the impressive reputation that the publication has established under Caroline's editorship, a post that she held with distinction and for which a deserved appreciation from the publishers was included in the previous issue.

We thus begin our own term as editors from a very strong base. It is one on which we shall certainly seek to build. From our own experience of the magazine, together with the feedback we have gleaned over a number of years from our network of contacts through the world of international education, we realise that there are many features of the publication that are appreciated by regular readers. We shall continue to retain and to develop such aspects.

At the same time the constituency of those involved in the promotion of international education in schools has, in recent years, been characterised not only by a burgeoning of numbers but also by a widening of the nature of institutional types. In order to serve the interests of the increasing diversity of stakeholders, we shall explore ways in which a full range of views and experience may be expressed by those who are engaged in the processes of converting into practice philosophies and values underpinning international education and intercultural understanding, in both national and international systems of education. We therefore welcome ideas for topics for possible inclusion in future issues of the magazine.

Please send your suggestions to us via [editor@is-mag.com](mailto:editor@is-mag.com)

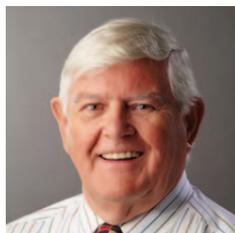
In that connection, we have been very pleased with the response to the invitation, made in the last issue, for readers to submit contributions to *is* on the topic of 'international mindedness'. We have included a selection of the contributions in this issue and we will publish a further set in the following one. It is clear that the topic has aroused a high level of interest! Thank you to all those who have responded.

We look forward to working with you – and to hearing from you!

Mary Hayden and Jeff Thompson



*Dr Mary Hayden is Head of the Department of Education and Director of the Centre for the study of Education in an International Context (CEIC) at the University of Bath. Her teaching, publishing and research supervision focus particularly on international schools and international education. She has held posts with the International Baccalaureate and is a trustee of the Alliance for International Education, a member of the Curriculum Advisory Board for the IPC and IMYC, and academic advisor for the ILMP.*



*Professor Jeff Thompson teaches, supervises, researches and publishes through the CEIC at the University of Bath in areas relating specifically to international schools and international education. He has worked closely for many years with the IB, and is currently Chair of the Curriculum Advisory Board for the International Primary Curriculum and International Middle Years Curriculum as well as Chair of the Alliance for International Education.*

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International School© is published by  
John Catt Educational Ltd,  
12 Deben Mill Business Centre, Old Maltings Approach,  
Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1BL, UK  
Company registration 5762466

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is a member of the  
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The following enquiries should be directed through  
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**Accounts:** [accounts@johncatt.com](mailto:accounts@johncatt.com)

International School© 2014  
ISSN 1461-395

Printed by Micropress, Reydon, Suffolk IP18 6DH.

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Valentina, Bocconi student from Germany



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# Tolerance is good – but the need to question remains

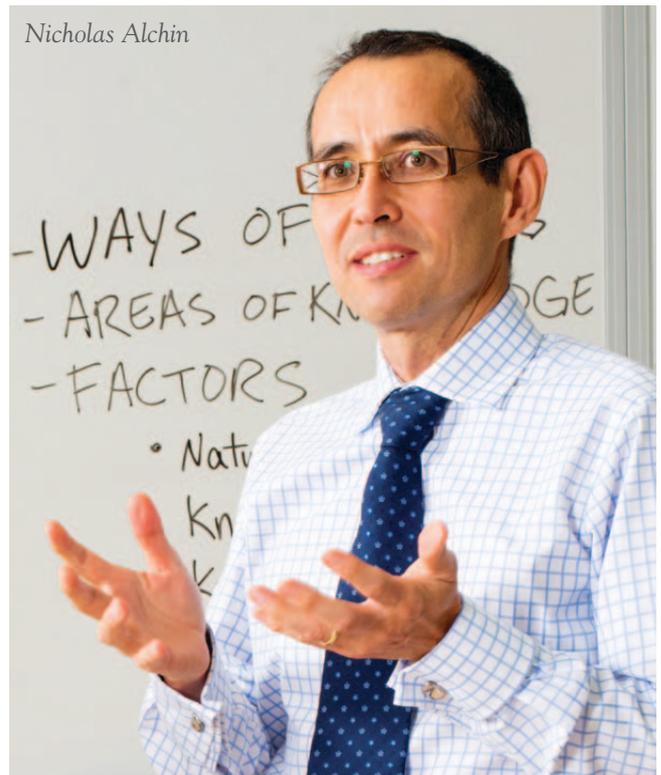
Nicholas Alchin explains how an IB student's essay raised issues about open-mindedness

I have just finished reading some work done by a student in one of my Theory of Knowledge classes. He had been asked to compare several possible solutions to a problem, evaluate them and explain which one was the best one, in his opinion. Toward the end of his essay he wrote that each of the (contradictory) solutions had its strengths, and each could be accepted because the person proposing each one came from a different culture, and had been “exposed to different cultures of learning”.

At one level one must applaud the open-mindedness here; the student was trying to see all possible solutions from the perspective of the person who offered them. Excellent. We are delighted to see tolerance here. I worry, though, about the slippery slope from tolerance to relativism. Toleration of other people is the disposition to fight opinion only with opinion; to use the pen and not the sword. So far so good. But toleration of people is based in respect for people simply because they are people (a good thing) – and it's easy to confuse this with respecting ideas simply because they are ideas (a bad thing). That means accepting that all opinions “are equally valid” – an appealing but dangerous step.

The trouble is that if all the ideas are equally valid, and all our beliefs are “just our opinions”, then we lose the right to search for a better world, or a more just world. If everything is just opinion, then there can be no right or wrong, no progress and no real engagement with other people. Perhaps it is the word just that is the problem; because when we call for an end to human rights violations around the world, for example, it is more than just our opinion; it is the voice of humanity's bitter experience with war, torture and atrocities over the centuries. The right reaction, therefore, on matters of importance, is not to nod gently, smile indulgently, and respect opinions, but to agree or to disagree as strenuously as you can and to say why. Philosopher Simon Blackburn puts it thus: “The virtues of courage and intelligence, patience and concern, are virtues the world over”. This cannot be in doubt.

In giving feedback to the student whose work is mentioned above, I told him that I would defend very much his right to make up his own mind. But I would at the same time defend the position that there are some things that it makes a lot more sense to believe than others. We talked about this, and we concluded that there are three ways to respond to differences of opinion:



- you can shrug and say ‘all beliefs are equally valid; we are both equally right’
- you can discuss why you believe what you do, and why others believe what they do, and try to understand the difference
- you can just say ‘I am right, you are wrong’

Why is the second of these responses so much better than the first and the third?

Because it is the start of a conversation – probably an intelligent, patient and concerned conversation – whereas the other responses are the end of one.

*Nicholas Alchin is High School Principal at the United World College of South East Asia (UWCSEA) East Campus [Email: nicholas.alchin@uwcsea.edu.sg]*

*This article appeared originally in a newsletter to UWCSEA parents*

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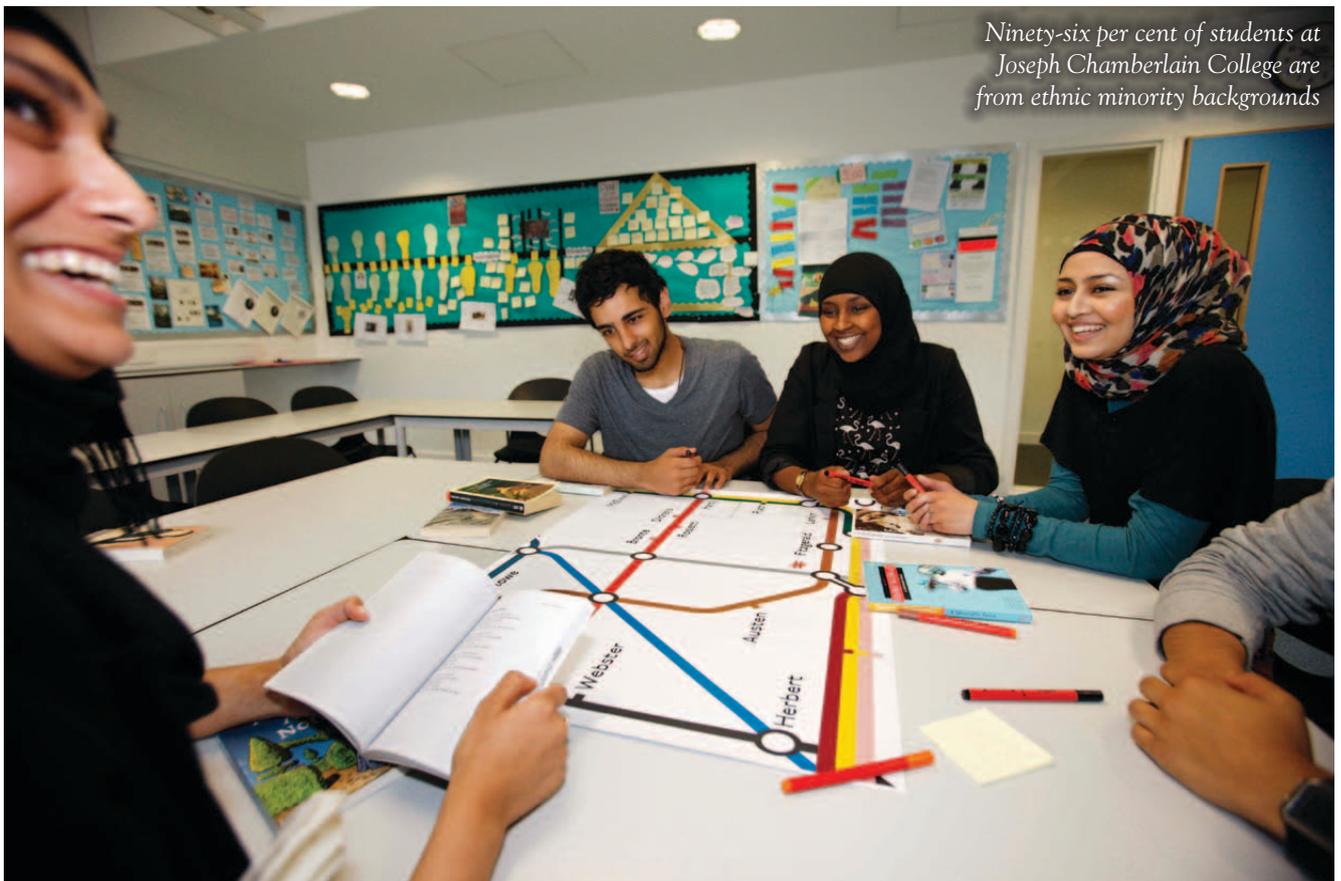
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# Bringing an international approach to the inner city

Elly Tobin, who leads one of the most ethnically diverse colleges in the UK, says an understanding of different cultures is essential for students



*Ninety-six per cent of students at Joseph Chamberlain College are from ethnic minority backgrounds*

Having spent many years in the world of international education in Europe and Asia – and most recently at Sacred Heart International School in Tokyo – I was determined, on my return to the UK, to embed the same ethos and values into education at a national level. The importance of encouraging all learners to be internationally-minded is acknowledged certainly in UK national primary schools where increasing numbers of academies opt for the International Primary Curriculum promoting “a frame of mind that needs time to develop” as central to the programme. However by the time students reach the age of 16 it is easy to neglect that notion, under pressure to focus on exam success rates.

Joseph Chamberlain College (JCC) is a British sixth form college based in Birmingham, UK. Sixth form colleges provide an education for 16-18 year olds in preparation for

university or employment. JCC is one of the most ethnically diverse colleges in the UK, with 96% of students coming from ethnic minority backgrounds. Situated in one of the top three deprivation areas in the country, it also hosts the College for International Citizenship (CIC) which in summer offers to international and national students ten week-long modules in international citizenship, all underpinned by a sense of social justice. Students may take any of the modules, all of which emphasize the fundamental values of democracy and human rights.

The curriculum itself can contribute to increasing knowledge, pushing out boundaries by adding value through considering multiple perspectives, but there are many extra-curricular ways of broadening the experiences of students too. Extra-curricular activities can be just as important as classroom curriculum in aiming to encourage international

## Promoting international mindedness



*The Class of 2011 bid farewell to Joseph Chamberlain College*

mindfulness. In both JCC and CIC we aim to challenge accepted values and open minds to new ideas, encouraging different points of view as part of the process of developing socially responsible citizens. Inviting asylum seekers to take part in discussions provides a rich forum in which to understand those escaping from oppression.

In a recent survey within JCC, over 50 languages or dialects were recorded as the dominant language of communication in the homes of students, creating linguistic diversity right here. Most of these students (over 87%) will go on to university and most will be the first in their families to do so. Many of their parents came to this country to create a better life, often with an educational background that ill equips them to provide a broad international perspective for their children, coming – as they often do – from rural backgrounds in areas without much exposure to the outside world or international outlooks. The responsibility of providing such opportunities therefore lies with us at the College. A strong enrichment programme is an important vehicle for putting the global into local. Studying additional languages without the need for tests and exams is popular, with students signing up for conversation classes in Mandarin, Arabic, French, German and Spanish. Led by Aston University students as part of the Links into Languages programme, this approach provides students not only with engaging conversation classes but also with the chance to talk in an informal way with university students from other cultures.

The importance of developing internationally-minded citizens in a national context to fit a future global economy is clear, but opportunities for international experiences and travel are likely to be restricted for many students at JCC. That being the case, we as educators – certainly in this college – need to bring the experiences to them, and nurture the debates and discussions that can open their eyes to a different way of looking at the world beyond the UK and

their heritage countries. We create opportunities for them to interact worldwide through weblinks, guest speakers and activities, and through our teaching. One teacher established the Fair Trade student group which lobbied for the college coffee shop to become a Fair Trade centre, and for the cafeteria to focus on Fair Trade produce. This activity has developed student understanding of international trade and the plight of poor farmers worldwide, often in the countries of the students' origins.

Our Model United Nations programme was the first of its kind for sixth form college students in the country. International schools are familiar with the MUN but for the city-bound students of Birmingham, becoming a country delegate and walking in someone else's shoes opens their eyes to other worlds. Understanding the perspective of others becomes a key factor in developing broader perspectives (Olsen and Kroeger, 2001). Involving as many of our students as possible in the running and organisation of the conference has been one way to expand their horizons. Reaching out to the community is important for us too, so our MUN students have been spending time in our feeder schools training younger delegates in preparation for a local mini MUN. Next year they will run a younger version of that programme for local primary schools.

Other worlds collide with us daily via the news. Bringing that into the classroom is essential, from the plasma screens in the college coffee shop where BBC World news is on constant display, through tutorials where major global events become the basis of discussion. The moving and heroic story of Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani girl shot by the Taliban for her outspoken determination to defend her right to education, inspired JCC drama students to write a play about her. Dance students got wind of it and asked if they could incorporate some expressive contemporary dance and, before long, music students were searching for appropriate cultural background music. Birmingham library

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We as educators – certainly in this college – need to bring the experiences to students, and nurture the debates and discussions that can open their eyes to a different way of looking at the world beyond the UK and their heritage countries.

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asked to have the play performed in the opening weeks of their spectacular new library complex and, at a conference of primary educators, teachers were moved to tears during the short excerpt they saw. Understanding the plight of young people denied an education went far beyond the play itself, as students were inspired to raise funds for schools less fortunate than ours. During the Japanese earthquake and tsunami our students rallied to raise funds through exhibitions of art, teaching each other to make origami cranes and connecting with a school in the devastated area of Miyagi prefecture. Respect and empathy for others is surely important in encouraging international mindedness (Nilsson, 2003) but it is essential in developing responsible citizenship.

The ECIS International Teacher Certificate, assessed by Cambridge, speaks of becoming more internationally minded “regardless of the national or cultural make-up of ... students, teaching staff or curriculum”. The number of people living in the UK who are non-UK born has quadrupled in the last four decades and, by 2013, 1 in 8 people usually resident in the UK had been born abroad (UK Office for National Statistics). Most will stay and their children will develop bi-cultural roots here. For most young teachers embarking on their career, teaching in an inner-city school in the UK will mean navigating a multicultural

and linguistically diverse classroom. Students in inner-city schools and colleges like mine will be balancing two cultures, often with very different norms and customs, and coping with the challenges that brings. It is surely essential for their and our future that we recognise the impact of cultural diversity at home and the value of giving the “non-mobile majority” – and not only those who attend international schools – a better understanding of different countries and cultures.

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*Elly Tobin spent over 20 years working in education in Germany, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Japan as a teacher, administrator and an educational consultant.*

*After 16 years in Japan she returned to the UK to establish the College for International Citizenship. Six years ago she was also appointed as Principal of Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College, serving 1700 students in inner city Birmingham. [email: ETobin@jcc.ac.uk]*



*JCC students with a fundraising project for the victims of the Japanese tsunami*

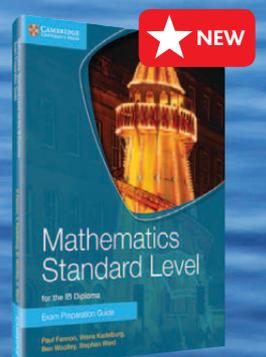
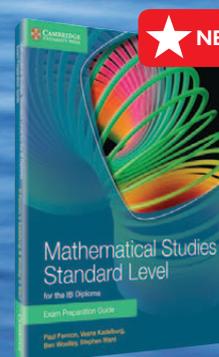
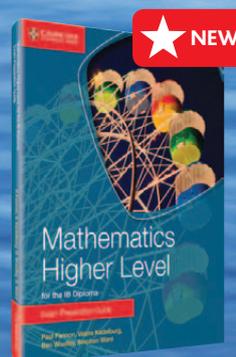
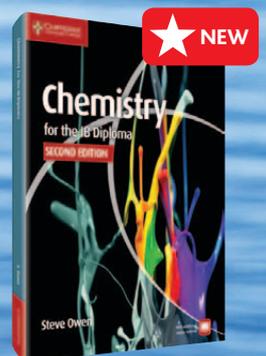
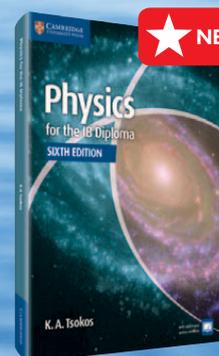
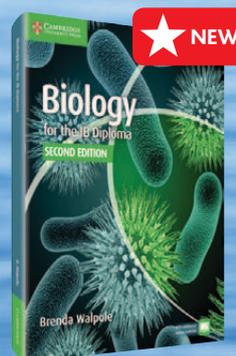
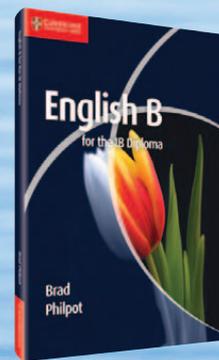
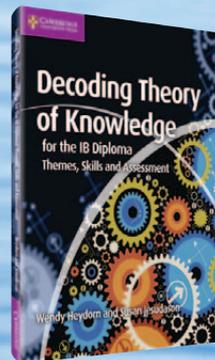
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Teachers taking part in a workshop at Tokyo International School on international mindedness

# How best to teach students with international minds?

Martha Ross and Mike Izzard offer some guidance to educators

The Alliance for International Education conference in Shanghai, 2006, proved to be the ‘meeting of international minds’ for two international educators. The professional pursuit of international mindedness practice within their fields brought them to the conference, themed ‘Educating for Global Citizenship’. The content provided an authentic backdrop for exploration and included a keynote speech by Fazal Rizvi, who highlighted the importance of ‘interconnectedness’ between students and educational communities.

With such a clear focus on students and their role in international education, the breakout sessions created stimulating discussion. It was here that Mike Izzard presented his paper, ‘The Coca Cola Curriculum’. Mike’s work raised the issues of generic curricular and assessment practices that had the potential to limit personal and cultural contributions to learning. This proved to be the connection to the many conflicting questions and concerns that Martha Ross had gathered during her international teaching career. The importance of students as citizens within cultures,



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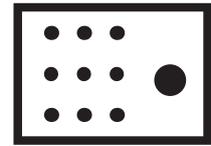
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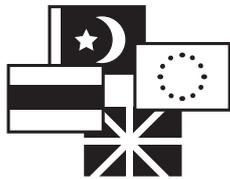
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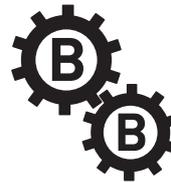
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interacting in learning communities, was finally raised.

Nearly eight years later these two international minds have become committed to reflecting on their experiences. Their shared understanding of learners at the heart of the international education process created a platform and, added to this, a conviction that the international and intercultural experiences that students have had create 'international minds'. International minds share their experiences and enhance international and cultural knowledge collaboratively. Learners in international school environments are successful mediators of a wealth of culturally specific knowledge. Students mediate their international and cultural knowledge between the expectations of home, school and the wider local and global communities. International mindedness, in this view, is not something schools and teachers can or should create. The students and their creative, international and culturally knowledgeable minds are already mindful and equipped. It is up to us, as educators, to catch up.

Some questions for teaching international minds include the following:

- How does diversity in international school population influence learning environments?
- What awareness of the 'international' lives (minds) of the students do educators have?
- Is there any 'interconnectedness' between the students and the diverse cultures and communities that they experience? (*ie* the bridge between home, host and school culture)

Planning and assessment:

- How could students authentically participate in the assessment of their work while constructively applying the context of their own international experiences (minds), personal/cultural interests and specific knowledge?
- What could be done to bring authentic international mindedness into learning environments as part of the planned, taught and hidden curriculum system?

Learning collaboratively in the school community:

- To what extent can students and staff relate to one another's identity and share their international and intercultural knowledge?
- How can students relate to the lives of others in geographically distant locations, without the experience of learning about one another within their learning environments?

21st Century Learning skills:

- How can students contribute knowledge and critical thinking from their own personal perspectives?
- How can global events be authentically understood by critically thinking students?

The exploration of these questions has led to many insights and awareness of others in the field who share concerns for the importance of student diversity. Richard Pearce in his recently edited book, 'International Education and Schools' (2013), writes a chapter entitled 'Student Diversity: The Core Challenge to International Schools'. In his chapter Pearce highlights this concern. He states 'Above all, it is

essential to accord respect to other cultural value systems' (2013: 77). He calls for a kind of differentiation that would change the nature of pedagogy in the future.

This point is a vital one in recognition of the developments likely in international education with respect to, for example, the role of the teacher in the classroom. An international educator has developed cultural frameworks containing specific professional skills and knowledge. When teaching an international audience of students, postulating this knowledge as the 'only' knowledge has many dangers. However, facilitating 'different ways of knowing', and celebrating them with the school community, is an entirely rewarding experience. Having an 'open mind' that inquires and accepts other critical interpretations is a pre-requisite for teachers in today's world.

Transparency plays an important role in developing inter-connectedness between teaching staff, students and parents. Here cultural, academic and social strengths are fully known and celebrated. Assessments, profiling and portfolio work are comfortably set in the context of the learner, their family and their culture. It is recognised that international educators who can truly appreciate the rich and diverse resources of culturally specific information that surround them, only benefit from exploration. The key to more authentic international mindedness can evolve when students are encouraged to learn with, about, and in connection with one another.

The essence of this layer of inter-connectivity is development of protocols to enhance understanding of the role of the student as a unique cultural individual, whose culture has provided knowledge and structure for personal development. Social relationships, and the way students relate to each other on various levels, differ from culture to culture. Failure to recognise this often results in serious roadblocks, and misunderstanding of expectations, interpersonal relationships and values. While formal academic achievement might be the surface goal of schools, failure to understand the cultural personae of students can result in very poor emotional intelligence and a lack of awareness of the significance of educating international minds. Providing structures and tools for accommodating 'cultural value systems' in classrooms and the wider school community is the path forward in education today.

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*Flags are considered one of the five aspects of cultural understanding*

# Frivolous or fundamental?

‘The 5 Fs’ are used to help develop cultural understanding, but is this teaching method still relevant? Darlene Fisher believes so...

In a recent discussion on the value (or lack thereof) of using the so-called 5 Fs – Food, Fashion, Flags, Festivals and Famous people – as an entry into developing intercultural understanding, I was surprised to hear the vehemence with which they were discounted by some as providing no depth, and only a superficial and frivolous understanding of intercultural differences.

Schools have undoubtedly used the ‘5 Fs’ as easy ways to display their many cultures and their diversity of population. Many schools, including those in national systems as well as international schools of various types, have also used them as instant signs of their diverse population, perhaps hoping they would not have to delve any deeper into the differences and understanding required to embrace true communication, using them as tokens of understanding of intercultural differences and international mindedness. However, such misuse is no reason for everyone to avoid the 5 Fs as a potential tool and fundamental point of entry into the enjoyment of cultural diversity that leads to intercultural understanding.

I ask you – as someone who has ever travelled anywhere, from one city to the next, or from one country to the next, or from one continent to the next – what hits you first when you arrive at a destination different from wherever you currently call ‘home’? The sights and sounds and smells are often very different from those you are used to. Is it not that people may look, eat, speak and understand the world differently from you? When you live in a different country and culture for a few months, the things that are most different are there on the surface – and these can provide you with very important first steps into understanding the culture of the ‘Other’.

For example: Why do people dress they way they do in India? Why are the clothes so beautifully colourful and

embroidered? Why is the food so heavily spiced? Why does the Indian flag carry the colours and designs it does? Why are the famous people who live there considered important and famous? Would they also be famous elsewhere for the same reasons? What are the major festivals and what do these tell us about the beliefs and important life cycles of the people who celebrate them? How are they different to our own and why? Similar questions can of course be asked of all other countries and cultures.

Even such a simple topic as food can suggest a list of questions that can promote depth of investigation. Elsie Begler (1998) suggests an extensive list such as: Geographic context – how does the food eaten here reflect the geographic context? Historical context – when and how did this particular food type arrive in this culture? Economic context – how is it prepared and distributed? Social context – who eats, when, and how? There are many further extensions of the questions from one of the 5 Fs, which can provide a very rich depth of understanding of a different culture, thus enhancing intercultural understanding to a significant degree.

Clothing allows for another set of in-depth questions which might extend understanding. Dressing in another’s national dress or fashion – for instance trying to wind oneself into a sari – is a lesson in many skills and brings with it a deeper understanding of the experiences of others (in this case of women in India) as we are not just walking in someone else’s shoes, but also wearing their style of clothing. Perhaps investigating the particular designs of clothing, and the materials and colours and patterns, also adds to an understanding that I would not get elsewhere. Maybe wearing the clothing and eating the food of a Bushman of the Kalahari would not go down so well in school, but if it was in situ, I would certainly understand a lot more about

the way of life of these people and what was important to them.

If we consider the impact of geography on thought and culture, as explored in some depth by Hofstede (2005) and Nisbett (2005), we will note that the physical environment is believed to impact the way societies, behaviour and relationships developed to support survival, and cultures therefore developed differently in different contexts. By taking further these simple topics of fashion, flags, festivals, famous people and food, it is possible to lead into, and engage in, a deeper appreciation of what makes others different and how we can better understand them. It can also lead us to consider much deeper questions about how these differences truly affect our potential communication, and understanding of what gives meaning to all of our lives.

In a recent article on global education, George Walker suggests that:

*We might bring the ethical mind to bear on human diversity with the key question: can you reasonably condemn the behaviour of a culture to which you do not belong? This would open up the whole issue of cultural relativism. (Walker 2012:17)*

How can students have any understanding of what 'culture' is, if they do not understand why others are so different in the things that give their lives everyday meaning, in the way they live, and eat and dress and think?

The 5 Fs for me are fundamental to the beginning stages of understanding another culture, can provide great enjoyment in the sharing, and are a powerful 'window' into another lifestyle and culture. Properly developed as areas of interaction and investigation, in schools and elsewhere, these aspects of culture can promote strong links between individuals which can then be deepened by exploration of the greater and deeper questions which educators and students will face not only now but also in their future worlds.

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## International education – forthcoming conferences

### May

10–12: COBIS Annual Conference, London, UK ([www.cobis.org](http://www.cobis.org))

25–30: NAFSA Annual Conference, San Diego, US ([www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org))

### July

6–12: IB World Student Conference, University of Queensland, Australia ([www.ibo.org/wsc](http://www.ibo.org/wsc))

10–13: IB Americas Regional Conference, Washington, US ([www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org))

20–26: IB World Student Conference, McGill University, Canada ([www.ibo.org/wsc](http://www.ibo.org/wsc))

27 July–2 Aug: IB World Student Conference, University of Bath, UK ([www.ibo.org/wsc](http://www.ibo.org/wsc))

### September:

12–13: FOBISIA CPD Leaders Conference, Singapore ([www.fobissea.org](http://www.fobissea.org))

28–Oct 4: Round Square International Conference, Bhopal, India ([www.roundsquare.org](http://www.roundsquare.org))

### October:

10–12: Alliance for International Education Conference, Mumbai, India (see page 31 or [www.intedalliance.org](http://www.intedalliance.org))

16–19: IB Africa, Europe and Middle East Regional Conference, Rome, Italy ([www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org))

31–Nov 2: EARCOS Leadership Conference, Sabah, Malaysia ([www.earcos.org](http://www.earcos.org))

### November:

7–10: FOBISIA Heads and Senior Leaders Conference, Thailand ([www.fobissea.org](http://www.fobissea.org))

19–23: ECIS Annual Conference, Nice, France ([www.ecis.org](http://www.ecis.org))

# Walking in another's shoes

## The Model United Nations can be used to incorporate international mindedness into IB programmes, says Emma McCluskey

Students in both international and national schools around the globe participate in Model United Nations (MUN) simulations. According to Obendorf and Randerson (2013: 2), 400,000 students worldwide participate in MUN in some form in either primary, secondary or tertiary education. It is used within the classroom and as an extra-curricular activity, as a way of teaching and learning about transnational issues, global governance and diplomacy. One of the most highly rated statements about international mindedness in a questionnaire conducted with students by Hayden *et al* (2000) was that to be internationally minded meant not to be narrow minded.

As educators in the 21st century perhaps we can use MUN simulations to broaden the minds of our students and to help them to appreciate other perspectives. In particular in the programs of the International Baccalaureate (IB), MUN can further the aim of creating students who are internationally-minded and can also assist in perpetuating the ideals of the IB Learner Profile.

A central aspect of an MUN simulation is that a student becomes a delegate for a nation that is not his/her own. In this way the delegate learns to walk in the shoes of another and to view the world through the eyes of another. In turn, students are enabled to explore and examine a perspective, not their own, which can lead to an appreciation and awareness of diversity. In participating in MUN simulations delegates must endeavour to represent a view that is not their own, one that is that of a nation or organization that is new to them. In so doing they experience playing the role of another, as they examine events and issues through the eyes of another. Ian Hill argues that such appreciation of diversity is fundamental to international mindedness (2012: 246). One attribute of the Learner Profile is that students strive to become critical thinkers who seek to understand issues and ideas from a variety of national and cultural perspectives (IB, 2013: 12). IB programs then seek to encourage international mindedness through the tenets of the Learner Profile. John Wells (2011: 175) claims, however, that instructions to teachers and students need to be clearer with respect to how to measure the extent to which students understand, appreciate and embrace the values of the Learner Profile. International mindedness in particular was identified by respondents to an IB survey on the Learner Profile as an area that could be improved upon in its implementation (IB, 2013: 8). MUN can and could be a tool used in spreading these ideals.

In debating the global issues on the agenda of a given MUN conference, delegates become more aware of the role that different perspectives play in shaping global policies.

They learn to negotiate with other nations, through a lobbying process where resolutions – essentially solutions to the issues – are combined and strengthened through merger and cooperation. International mindedness, Ian Hill suggests in the same article, includes knowledge about global issues and their interdependence and cultural differences. Once an MUN resolution is approved for debate, it is proposed and defended in front of committees made up of the delegates' peers. This is where students must think on their feet, react to criticisms with the evidence they have to hand, and attempt to persuade a majority to vote in favour of their resolution.

The various stages of an MUN simulation require delegates to research, negotiate, cooperate, and persuade – not to mention requiring the ability to speak in public and think on their feet. Hill adds to his definition of international mindedness that students need to be able to think critically and analytically and propose solutions. It seems clear to me that the practice of MUN enables students to become more internationally-minded problem solvers and more expert negotiators. Solutions to world problems are complex and, as Hill reminds us, require not only the interaction of nations with each other but also a willingness to collaborate and compromise. MUN can be a hugely beneficial tool in furthering the ethos of the IB Learner Profile, developing internationally-minded students and empowering and increasing the confidence of the participants themselves.

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*International School of Geneva students on a service learning project in Portugal*



# Service learning ‘commands respect and understanding’

Conrad Hughes looks at one of the most inspirational aspects of international education

Service learning, which can be described as ‘active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community’ (US Community and Service Act, 1990) is probably one of the most inspiring but complex areas of international education. On the one hand, models of intercultural competence such as those developed by Byram (1997), King and Baxter Magolda (2005), Haywood (2007) and Deardorff (2009) all point to attitudes such as empathy, knowledge of social groups, openness and willingness to work for others’ rights, therefore implying that service learning develops intercultural understanding quite felicitously. Service learning seems to exemplify the attitudes one associates with international

mindedness, articulated by Ian Hill as ‘mutual respect and global sustainable development for the future of the human race’ (2007: 246).

However, this will only be achieved effectively if service learning is planned carefully, for it can easily slip into students believing that they should ‘help’ others without knowing who they are trying to help or what is the profound sense of what they are trying to achieve. These situations can arise in international outreach programmes where children from relatively affluent international schools (we should not shrug off the fact that international schools, where international mindedness is promoted, are primarily socio-economically advantaged) target so-called developing

*The International School of Geneva educates 4,000 students aged 3 to 18*



world underprivileged communities and give them aid, either through fund-raising, building projects, education or work in orphanages, hospitals and/or schools.

Although the intentions behind these interactions are clearly honourable and in many cases there is a real need for some assistance at a specific level, ‘the road to hell is paved with good intentions’, since the psychological effect this can have on students is to give them the sometimes unjustified impression that they are more fortunate than others. This self-gratification reposes on the assumption that material wealth is the essential standard by which humanity’s fortunes can be judged, and that places visited – because unfamiliar to Western eyes – are therefore poor, unfortunate, inferior and dependent on charitable action. A student reflection that can come out of this type of one-sided relationship is ‘it made me realise how lucky I am’. Such reflections are affirmations of questionable belief more than evidence of profound learning; they represent anything but international mindedness.

To serve another person in an internationally-minded fashion is to attempt to know him or her, to seek for the wisdom, experience, context and cultural richness that can strengthen the learning experience. It is to open one’s eyes to the beauty of an unknown country. Often charitable endeavours become essentialising exercises in Othering. How sad for a student to travel to a sun-drenched land where people live frugally but with strength and joy, without anything near the levels of depression, divorce and suicide

that plague the so-called developed world, and to return with the sentiment that he or she should do something more to ‘help’ them.

At the International School of Geneva, we have written guiding principles for service learning that ensure that the approach we take involves careful planning, a sense of humility and the need to critically assess the usefulness of what it is we are trying to achieve (ISG, 2014). The principles, written by teachers and service learning coordinators, offer a conceptual framework within which service learning experiences can develop.

Some of the core features of international mindedness associated with service learning are evoked in these guiding principles, that aim to send out a clear message that service learning is about reciprocity, not charity:

Students need to show empathy and respect for the person or group served. It is crucial to avoid patronising or messianic approaches in service. The student should see him/herself as a learner first and foremost. In this perspective, students should be trained to understand that others with their cultural and socio-economic differences might also have something to teach them.

The principles point out that service learning entails human relationships and should therefore not be treated as a series of ‘one-offs’ with anonymous, ever-changing recipients on the other side of the transaction:

Whenever possible, projects developed by and/or with students need to be sustained and followed up. Even though

students can provide short-term support, for emergencies such as natural disasters or accidents, they should be encouraged to plan service projects with sustainability and long term impact in mind. Commitment to a project is more likely to develop if students are asked to go through careful planning, SWOT analyses and face to face discussions with the person or group served.

In line with this point, the principles ask students and teachers to think through the consequences of their actions before they are taken so that service learning projects do not come as a good or bad surprise, but as the fruit of careful forward planning:

Actions and interactions in the context of a service activity have consequences of which students need to be mindful. The repercussions and effects of service actions before, throughout and after they have been taken need to be planned critically and respectfully, in conjunction with the person or group served.

Service learning is sometimes hampered by sentimentality and unbridled emotions that get in the way of the critical thinking needed to develop a balanced appreciation of the situation. What service learning coaches can do to avoid this state of affairs is to show interest in how it feels to be a young change-maker and to enter into a reflective dialogue with students that goes beyond gut feelings and the superficial gratification produced by 'service adrenaline'. It will be reflective dialogue that will open students' minds and, possibly, help them understand that 'other people, with their differences, can also be right' (IB, 2014).



*Cultural understanding is impressed at a young age*

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Service learning has the potential to make a significant difference to the lives of the people involved. It can have a long-term transformative effect on learning and stimulate the fundamentals of international mindedness, most especially the demanding but rich areas of human reciprocity, experiential learning, wisdom and citizenship.

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Service learning has the potential to make a significant difference to the lives of the people involved. It can have a long-term transformative effect on learning and stimulate the fundamentals of international mindedness, most especially the demanding but rich areas of human reciprocity, experiential learning, wisdom and citizenship. For this to be achieved, it cannot be taken for granted or left to chance, but must be driven by a strong vision of what it is students are to learn and appreciate and, critically, what is to be avoided.

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# Exploring the psychology of international mindedness

## Creative arts therapist Caroline Essame examines the cognitive and affective elements

International mindedness has been described as an openness and curiosity about people from other cultures; the ability to understand global issues and cultural differences from beyond one's national, community or personal viewpoint in a critical and balanced manner (Hill, 2012). International mindedness suggests a complex understanding of cultural diversity, a desire to understand and work across human differences and to build acceptance, working for a better world. This ideal is embodied in Kurt Hahn's United World College movement with its emphasis on service, sustainability and compassion to all. It is a noble ideal, but how realistic is it, given basic human psychology?

International mindedness is a cognitive and affective process that is shown in students' ability firstly to think critically and open-mindedly about the viewpoints of others, and secondly show an emotional response and desire to do good to them. It is both knowledge of what we should do, and the emotional desire to do it, something that Simon Baron-Cohen (2012) calls a fully functioning empathy circuit. While it is easier to identify and evaluate the cognitive success of teaching international mindedness, the affective success is harder to quantify; this is where an understanding of psychology and the humanities has a lot to offer the field of education.

How do people develop a sense of self and an understanding of others? Much of this starts in early childhood through attachment with a key carer; through this children learn acceptance and understanding of self and then of others. By about five years of age children have developed a theory of mind; an awareness of what others may think, feel and need. They learn a moral code, how to interpret others' communications, needs and perceptions, and have developed the desire to connect and be part of a social group. These processes are learnt through play and creativity in the context of a positive relationship.

When theory of mind has not been developed, as with some children on the autistic spectrum, the ability

to understand and respond to others is impaired. These children need to develop a cognitive understanding of what other people are communicating, and link it to the affective responses they sense. Work in this area has been increasingly developed over the years with a focus on relationship-based learning using creative arts-based and structured teaching, highlighting that teaching anything social and emotional requires both a cognitive and affective component.

Much work dating back to Bowlby (1969) and Rutter (1987) demonstrates the importance of positive relationships for emotional development. Psychopaths have often not formed close attachments in early childhood and go on to become socially dysfunctional adults, in some cases powerful and manipulative –but certainly not internationally minded.

Relationships are fundamental in the teaching of international mindedness as they are the building blocks for self-understanding and acceptance of others. Teachers who intend to instruct in international mindedness need to be both versed in cognitive understanding and able to analyse and critique the issues, as well as high in emotional affect, able to build positive relationships that model compassion and acceptance of difference.

It is also important to understand individual personalities in order to educate children to be cognitively and affectively mindful to self and others. Personalities and experience differ in every student, and while an extrovert may flourish doing service in a group where (for instance) they can make relationships with elderly people with special needs, a more introverted student may find such engagement threatening and yet still develop a profound empathy for others through reading a life story of a refugee.

Understanding different learning needs and preferences in international students is a good way to model international mindedness and acceptance of difference. One size, one approach to teaching international mindedness will not suit everyone. Students need to experience the qualities of

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Understanding different learning needs and preferences in international students is a good way to model international mindedness and acceptance of difference. One size, one approach to teaching international mindedness will not suit everyone.

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*UWCSEA high school theatre students explore what it is like being elderly. The ability to understand and accept others is important in teaching international mindedness*

international mindedness in their school to become that way themselves. This is confirmed by the idea that people with strong self-esteem, who feel they have been understood and appreciated, are likelier to be hospitable, while people who feel bad about who they are more likely to be hostile. When threatened, people fight or withdraw; they do not reach out with compassion to others. So building self-esteem and self-understanding is imperative in education for international mindedness. Much of that will come through the nature of teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships rather than from a structured, cognitively-based curriculum, perhaps suggesting a more pastoral emphasis on international mindedness or supportive social and emotion skill-based work in schools.

It also seems to be important not to neglect the humanities as tools for teaching about others and learning about oneself. Children develop theory of mind and a sense of self in the world through play, story and creative drama. It is not an analytical cognitive process but an intuitive, emotional response. Traditionally literature and the arts have taught people about others, giving them metaphors for understanding different perspectives and showing different ways of being and thinking, and these stories can be a great

source of self- and cross-cultural understanding.

If schools are to promote and work on more affective-based international mindedness learning, they need to develop a culturally rich and diverse humanities curriculum as well as to provide broad access to relationship-building and cross-cultural creative arts opportunities outside of the curriculum.

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*The United Nations building in Geneva, Switzerland*

# International education and the nation state

Nicholas Tate argues the case for teaching and learning about national citizenship

'International education', a few fleeting precursors aside, first appeared as a concept after the end of the First World War. It was a consequence of a war whose effects, a hundred years later, we are now re-examining. Its pioneer was the International School of Geneva, set up alongside the League of Nations with its post-war aspirations for peace and international harmony.

'International education' grew out of a world of nation states in which national identity was often seen as some kind of an 'essence' which bound the members of a state or nation together, marking them off as different from others. It was this view of the world that the International School of Geneva set out to challenge. The aim was to help students look beyond their national borders, understand and respect other peoples, and come to an appreciation of a common humanity. It was about inter-national understanding, and the peaceful resolution of differences. It wished to tame

the excesses of nationalism, but not to undermine national identity or destroy patriotism.

This legacy of the early international schools was absorbed into the International Baccalaureate when it finally appeared in the late 1960s and 1970s. The audience for an international education had grown following the Second World War, with increased mobility, and there was now a market for a globally transferable school-leaving certificate. The IB Diploma met the needs of this market. It also reflected the continuing aspirations of some educators for a curriculum that better prepared students for a world that was increasingly inter-connected. Initially these educators were mostly in international schools with diverse expatriate student populations. The programme was geared to these schools' needs.

The IB Diploma, however, soon began to draw into international education other schools of a type for which

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## Are we doing enough to help young people develop, articulate and reconcile the multiple identities – local, regional, national, cultural, global – that many of them are going to have?

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it had not originally been intended – national schools, whether state or private, and ‘international schools’ which might be ‘international’ in name or in curricular terms but which had a predominantly ‘national’ population. The trend has accelerated in the last two decades with more than four-fifths of IB programmes now being taught in ‘national’ schools, and with some nation states even adopting IB programmes *en masse* for part of their educational provision. A similar pattern can be found among schools using the other ‘international’ curricula and qualifications that have emerged in the IB’s wake.

These developments raise the question to what extent educational programmes introduced largely to meet the needs of a mobile expatriate school population are appropriate for schools with a population largely of the same nationality (however diverse) within a nation state. Is the extent of international education’s focus on international mindedness and ‘global citizenship’ appropriate to the education of young people who will also, as a matter of priority, need to understand the past and present of the country in which they are going to spend the rest of their lives, and become its citizens? Are we doing enough to help young people develop, articulate and reconcile the multiple identities – local, regional, national, cultural, global – that many of them are going to have?

The identity most likely to be down played by the professional community that works in international education, at least in the West, is the national one. There are many causes of this: the failure to distinguish between nationalism and patriotism; a sense of guilt about colonialism and economic dominance; the legacy of Marxism’s influence on Western intellectuals and the Left; a pervasive distrust of frontiers, barriers, limits and traditions in all aspects of life; and, perhaps most importantly, the drawing of professional boundaries (the ‘we work in international education syndrome’). It is hardly surprising that one hears little or nothing about education for national citizenship within ‘international education’.

But this is highly unfortunate in a world in which nation states remain supremely important, in which most people are still likely to spend most of their lives near to where they were born, and in which many, perhaps most, of the decisions that impact on these people are still made locally. We continue to need to draw on that tradition of thinking about education for citizenship (in the precise sense of that term) that has its origins in Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Politics. Huge challenges face nation states, internally through the need to adapt to massive social, economic and demographic change, and externally through finding ways of cooperating with other states to tackle problems that require international solutions. Nation states need a wise and responsible civil society and citizens who will wisely and responsibly choose and hold to account their leaders. In many nation states the problem is now not nationalism but a lack of identification with the national community and a disengagement from national and local politics.

Preparation for national citizenship, in one form or another, is important for all schools following international education programmes, but is a priority for those ‘national’ schools which do so. Many international education programmes, especially IB ones, are flexible enough for this and some ‘national’ schools following these programmes find excellent ways of enabling ‘national mindedness’ to permeate the curriculum and school activities just as they do with international mindedness.

But no-one talks about it. When did you last go to a conference with a session on ‘education for national and global citizenship’ on its agenda? It is worth spending a moment reflecting on why the answer to that question is likely to be ‘never’.

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ACS students  
working with ORBIS  
on the 'Flying Eye  
Hospital' in Panama

# Growing, learning and living as a global citizen

Linda LaPine says international mindedness should be instilled within the curriculum from an early age

The Dalai Lama refers to international mindedness as the “the oneness of humanity”, and he goes on to explain: “nowadays, whatever happens in one region eventually affects many other areas. Within the context of our new interdependence, self-interest clearly lies in considering the interest of others”. It is this consideration for the ‘other’ that broadly defines international mindedness, emphasising a decline in egocentrism in favour of a more considerate and broader way of thinking.

Although much discussion surrounds the definition of ‘international mindedness’, this fluid, eclectic and alternative way of thinking is instilled within the DNA of ACS International Schools as a way of developing a diverse educational experience and nurturing students to be creative, independent and culturally aware. Across the world, within both national and international curriculums, this concept of international mindedness is becoming increasingly embedded within education. The drive to develop internationally-minded students is manifested through a variety of initiatives both within the classroom

and through co-curricular activities. This cultivates an awareness of global suffering and instability, and develops an appreciation for foreign cultures and global issues.

A key foundation for instilling these qualities and developing international mindedness is through internationally recognised programmes such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement. The AP programme is a demanding and rewarding curriculum, providing useful currency for students considering enrolment on further education programmes throughout the North American continent. Developed over 50 years, universities in more than 60 countries worldwide now recognise AP scores in their admission process, including many universities in the UK. Students who have studied the AP courses leave equipped with skills, such as working collaboratively and speaking publicly, that are highly sought after by international employers.

The IB programmes provide a flexible and culturally broad approach towards education that can be applied across the world to a multitude of different students. Due to the

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The drive to develop internationally-minded students is manifested through a variety of initiatives both within the classroom and through co-curricular activities. This cultivates an awareness of global suffering and instability, and develops an appreciation for foreign cultures and global issues.

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diversity of locations in which the IB is taught, the modules and subjects covered are tailored to the demographics of children in the class: for example, a common theme such as War will be broadly analysed within the context of many different nations, showing how it has impacted on a variety of cultures. As well as the strong academic aspects, an equally important part of the curriculum is personal development, which is nurtured through the creativity, action, service (CAS) initiative, a core element of the IB. The themes of CAS essentially look to create students who are intellectually, creatively and physically balanced and thus have a thorough understanding of the world and their ability to affect it. This well rounded education and international outlook provides an excellent foundation for both extra-curricular activities and future employment within the increasingly globalised market.

ACS Hillingdon promotes the personal development of students through its extensive extra-curricular activities. These have taken a particular focus on global citizenship, encouraging students to combine self-development with the experience of helping others. Amongst the variety of activities run by the school on both a local and international level, the ORBIS programme offers an interesting example of how students engage their academic studies with extra-curricular citizenship. ORBIS is a global charity that specialises in helping disadvantaged individuals with sight problems across the developing world. Working with the charity, a small team of ACS students were able to further their academic understanding of medicine whilst also instilling citizenship and international mindedness.

On this trip four students travelled to Panama where they worked with the ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital. This hospital was particularly notable as it was built into a specially

converted passenger plane, enabling it to travel to remote and inaccessible communities. The work conducted by the students encapsulated global citizenship as they were able to effectively aid disadvantaged communities, helping to treat a number of people with eye damage. This scheme not only tended to the immediate patients but also worked to educate the local healthcare specialists, leaving an enduring legacy.

Throughout ACS International Schools, this globally orientated way of thinking is cultivated from the Early Years programme right through to graduation. This thorough development of global citizenship and international mindedness has led to ACS Hillingdon being selected to pilot the Council of International Schools (CIS) 'International Certification' award. The award recognises schools that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to instilling global citizenship within their students, something Hillingdon has previously been recognised for as it won the CIS 'International Student Award' for supporting community projects at home and abroad.

Citizenship, both on a local and global scale, has always been incredibly important across all ACS schools, and is a particular focus at Hillingdon. Through teaching internationally recognised curriculums and putting an emphasis on extra-curricular activities, such as ORBIS, the students are able to translate what we learn in the classroom into real life experiences. As well as giving the students invaluable experience, these activities and trips broaden their horizons and allow them to really appreciate other communities and cultures.

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The Editors have received a large response to the invitation for readers to submit contributions on the topic of 'international mindedness'. A selection has been included in this issue.

We intend to include a further set of contributions on this topic in the next issue; the Editors would welcome additional submissions and, particularly, any follow-up comments arising from the articles published in this issue. Please send your contributions to [editor@is-mag.com](mailto:editor@is-mag.com)

# Finding ways to develop international mindedness in a Chinese public school

Richard Lee Wilkin, III reports on a unique challenge



*The Ningbo Foreign Language School represents a pioneering approach for China*

Running an international department ensconced within a Chinese public school is analogous to one of my favorite scenes from the movie *Apollo 13*. Ed Harris tasks some of the best engineers in the world with building a filter that requires a square piece fit into a round hole using nothing but material already aboard the spacecraft. Working in this environment, and having constructed the most comprehensive Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum anywhere in China, I am constantly amazed by our students. They excel in hard science such as physics and chemistry, eclipse most others in mathematics, and surpass expectations in difficult subjects (for EFL students) such as AP English, AP Art History, and AP World History. The students in our program are motivated, intelligent, and gifted. Yet at the same time, there is a fundamental gap that exists in terms of giving them opportunities to develop an international perspective. Since all of our students intend to matriculate to universities outside of China, it is imperative that our program embed international mindedness within the curriculum.

With a faculty of 12 full-time international staff from seven countries and a host of part-time and full-time Chinese teachers, administrators, and counselors all

working with the same students, a modicum of international mindedness is inevitable. Yet, while setting up the program several years ago, all faculty members discussed how to best prepare students to be internationally minded in their approach to both education and extra-curricular activities. Administrators carefully examined norms in similar Chinese programs and quickly concluded that due to the linguistic ability of many students and an overriding focus on science and math, most programs lack a comprehensive curriculum. By quickly expanding from an initial offering of three AP courses to 17 within three years, the program has sought to give students a breadth of education not typically found in China. An example of this is found in our AP Studio Art program where only 82 students took this course nationwide in 2012. Of these 82, 26 were NFLS students. The scope of this curriculum gives students more opportunities to broaden their views and engage critically with global topics from a perspective rarely afforded their peers in the main school.

Teachers have engaged with this process and sought ways to regularly engage learners on topics of global interest and expose students to issues that resonate both inside China and beyond its borders. The form that this engagement has



*Richard Lee Wilkin, III at the Ningbo Foreign Language School*

taken varies from course to course and teacher to teacher. Examples include developing thematic units in English courses based upon topics such as addictions, air pollution, gender equality, and poverty. English teachers have also engaged students by having weekly debates about issues such as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Economics teachers have emphasized corporate social responsibility and also sought to have students participate in global essay writing competitions about issues (such as Scottish independence) from a macroeconomic perspective. By engaging students through thematic units, teachers encourage them to research and gain knowledge about the international community.

In addition to curriculum design and development, the school's counseling department has strongly encouraged students to give back to their community and volunteer. This

has taken numerous forms. However, the largest project has been the international department's participation in Habitat for Humanity. Approximately one-third of the students in our department participate in a Habitat trip abroad during the course of their three-year senior school career. The department also has a vibrant MUN (Model United Nations) team that regularly participates in MUN conferences. Lastly, a majority of our students go abroad for several weeks during the summer and enroll in some type of program that encourages them to engage with a diverse group of people from different corners of the globe. This too is something that teachers and counselors have strongly advocated.

As the concept of the global village becomes an increasing reality, it is important for students, particularly Chinese students representing the world's largest country, to understand how the world is inter-connected. It is quite easy in a country this size to become insulated from what is happening globally. China has changed markedly over the past few decades and is now sending hundreds of thousands of students abroad each year to western universities. It is not always easy and there are numerous cross-cultural obstacles that must be overcome. Much like the line in Apollo 13, developing international mindedness in students sometimes feels like trying to fit a square piece in a round hole. Yet, by preparing students here in China and making them conscious of the idea of international mindedness, NFLS feels like it is preparing students to engage with the world.



*Projects are designed to encourage international thinking*

*Richard Lee Wilkin, III is Principal of the International Department at Ningbo Foreign Language School (NFLS) in Ningbo, Zhejiang, China [Email: ningbofls.cp@gmail.com]*

# Are we on the right terms?

## Boyd Roberts questions whether ‘international mindedness’ is poorly defined and restrictive

‘International mindedness’, as used by the International Baccalaureate, the International Primary Curriculum and many international schools, describes the attributes of students equipped for our challenging global world. It is the subject of an excellent manual by Caroline Ellwood (until recently, editor of *is* magazine) and Malcolm Davis, and of a new book edited by Lesley Stagg. But a quick Google search demonstrates that ‘international mindedness’ is not widely used outside this rather narrow context of international schools, the IB and the IPC and, within it, is poorly defined. This is not helpful. We are using a term that means different things to different people and confines our deliberations to our own context – although many others are considering similar issues. Its use discourages us from engaging with or learning from them, and may mean they show less interest in what we are saying. In considering education for a complex global context, the term ‘international mindedness’ may actually get in the way.

Words matter. They shape and express our thinking. We need to model the critical thinking we look for in our students. So what’s the problem? Well, it’s associated with each of the two words in the term international mindedness. ‘International’ was coined by the social philosopher Jeremy Bentham in 1789 to describe legal relations between nation states. It has done us good service since, in describing wider relations between countries, or organisations or activities embracing several countries. In giving attention to the ‘international’, international schools and curricula have, understandably, focused on the different languages, different cultures and countries, different religions – sometimes at the level of food, fashions and festivities – but hopefully going deeper. Sometimes described as encountering ‘the other’, it often deals with things that are ‘elsewhere’ too. International travel is an intrinsic characteristic of many international schools. Students and teachers fly around the world to a different country to be at the school. Sports matches become international tournaments, and service is increasingly undertaken in countries abroad. This is all admirable and very enriching – although we really should take account of the environmental impact of our air travel, and remember that we are not addressing the international simply by moving our bodies around.

But since Bentham’s time, ‘global’ factors have emerged that relate to the whole world, straddling borders and boundaries – another new word reflecting a new reality. Issues such as climate change, natural resource depletion, poverty, biodiversity loss and global infectious disease can only be studied and addressed above the level of the nation state (see Rischard, 2002 for example). Concentrating on differences and the ‘other’ needs to be complemented by an awareness of and response to those things that affect us all, wherever we are. It is not helpful to confuse or conflate

international and global. We need to distinguish the two levels of concern.

‘Mindedness’ is an inclination or disposition. Usually used in conjunction with other words, such as open-, narrow-, bloody-, or woolly-mindedness, it concerns attitudes, values and thought processes. But, unless it is strained to the point of meaninglessness, it does not embrace action – although it may help to shape how we behave. ‘Mindedness’ simply seems inadequate to describe how we should relate to the global world. (For a fuller consideration of the term international mindedness, see Roberts, 2013). In some more recent writing, IB has distinguished two important aspects of international mindedness: intercultural understanding and multilingualism; and global engagement (see *eg* Amiss *et al*). This distinction is helpful. It embraces the wider global dimension, and action. However, subsuming these components under international mindedness potentially confuses rather than clarifies thinking. No term is entirely satisfactory, and global citizenship – another widely used term – has its own shortcomings. To some extent, it is the quality of the underlying thought that is important. So leaving aside concerns about terminology, here are a few thoughts using language which I hope is self-evidently clear.

### Doing well and doing good

In working with students it helps to remember the distinction between doing well and doing good. We want our students to thrive in an increasingly competitive global world – to do well. But we also need to raise awareness of and concern about issues of global importance, and help them to live their lives accordingly – to do good. Attitudes and values are important here, of course, but they must be expressed in action, which should be broader than ‘service’. We need different approaches to curriculum and pedagogy to address these two concerns.

### Doing no harm

Positively doing good may actually be a second level of action. The first principle taught to health care students is ‘Do no harm’. It is time for us to enshrine this in school education and give adequate attention to our lifestyles and actions and how they impact on others, the environment and the natural world.

### Going global without going anywhere

International perspectives may be helped by international travel. But we live our lives in a web of global connections. We do not need to go anywhere to ‘go global’. With an informed ‘global gaze’ (Marshall, 2005) we see the global in the local and the local in the global. We can think globally and act locally.



IGC Award students at Collège Champittet, Switzerland with posters explaining global citizenship

### The International Global Citizen's Award

It is thinking along these lines that underpins the International Global Citizen's Award. It concerns global citizenship – taken to embrace community engagement and action at all levels from the immediate and local to the global. It is also international – offered in 19 countries – hence its title. Students commit to

- increase their understanding of other cultures and outlooks
- examine their personal global footprint (how they spend money; and environmental responsibility)
- work with others in various ways, and
- record and reflect on their change and development during the programme.

It concerns the lives of students now, wherever they are. Teachers accompany students on their exploratory journey, as mentors rather than as experts, share perspectives with teachers in other countries also engaged with the programme, and help to shape it. Foreign travel is not required or encouraged. Participants who undertake the journey seriously are recognised by their peers and mentors with a non-competitive award, available to many rather than only the few. Over 1800 students have received the Award since its inception in 2007. Why not go beyond international mindedness and join us? To find out more visit [www.globalcitizensaward.org](http://www.globalcitizensaward.org)

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# Alliance continues to map ‘success story of our time’

## International education is thriving, says Terry Haywood, but we always need to be ready for new challenges

The Alliance for International Education (AIE) traces its origins to the beginning of the twenty-first century, when a meeting convened at the University of Bath prepared the way for the founding conference held in Geneva in September 2002. The intervening years have produced a series of biennial ‘world conferences’ which have been held in Düsseldorf (2004), Shanghai (2006), Istanbul (2008), Melbourne (2010) and Doha (2012), with the seventh scheduled for Mumbai in October this year. This time period, not much more than a decade, is a brief one even in the short lifespan of international education as we know it, but our professional and ideological landscapes have changed so much over these years that we can now say with certainty that we have entered a new era of international learning. Like every organization committed to education for global and inter-cultural awareness, the AIE is asking some key questions about where the emerging scenario is leading us – what lies ahead? And can we control and influence it?

It has been argued that the turn of the latest century coincided with a phase shift for international education (Bunnell, 2013), and indeed there were some who already identified this at the time. The new century was widely and optimistically welcomed as an opportunity to go beyond ‘consolidation’ (Wallace, 1999) with the prospect of international education entering an ‘era of influence’ (Mackenzie, 2004). Much of what has happened since then seems to bear out this encouraging forecast. International education is a success story of our time, but the consistent and well documented changes that have taken place, some overt but others not always obvious at first sight, present a set of questions for the future that could hardly have been imagined just a few years ago.

The most obvious changes are those that can be quantified, and if success is measured by the scale of our market sector then we have every reason for satisfaction. International schooling has expanded consistently and globally, apparently unaffected by economic and financial crises, and there is no sign that the rate of growth will slow down in the years to come. This is one indicator of our sector’s ‘influence’ and it can be argued that everyone has benefited. Bigger schools and more extensive networks mean more stability and security for institutions and jobs, more funding for investment in facilities and resources to support learning, and better professional opportunities for teachers. At the same time, international schools have moved away from providing a niche educational experience for ex-pats to becoming beacons of excellence with models of pedagogical practice and assessment qualifications that are sought after in national systems. The International Baccalaureate, with its Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme, is probably the best example of this phenomenon, but other curriculum and assessment providers such as the International Primary Curriculum and International Middle Years Curriculum, Cambridge International Examinations and the Advanced Placement International Diploma have evolved to play their part in ensuring that international schools are often ranked among the most prestigious educational institutions in many cities around the world.

The qualitative evolution of our schools has also been mapped but the picture that emerges shows trends that are more complex and open to multiple interpretations. In the first place, the most significant ‘drivers’ of growth in the past decade are indicative of the extent to which the

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Our professional and ideological landscapes have changed so much over these years that we can now say with certainty that we have entered a new era of international learning. Like every organization committed to education for global and inter-cultural awareness, the AIE is asking some key questions about where the emerging scenario is leading us – what lies ahead? And can we control and influence it?

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## Promoting international mindedness

context of international learning has changed. In fact, growth has been driven largely by groups who had been, until the present century, only marginal participants on the scene – local families prepared to invest in international perspectives and/or English language to give their children a competitive edge in the global economy. As early as 2010, the ISC Research Letter could assert ‘We estimate that, overall, 70-80% of international school students are now from local families, a complete reversal over the last 20 years’. (ISC, 2010). To what extent is this desire for a competitive edge compatible with the values of collaboration and integration that are often identified as characteristics of international mindedness?

At the same time, sustained levels of growth and a seemingly endless projection of demand into the future have impacted on the governance and ownership of international schools. The same ISC Newsletter reported that ‘Until perhaps 10 years ago, international schools were still perceived by many as an expatriate and non-profit phenomenon. Now, many international schools, especially new ones, are for-profit and cater largely to wealthy local families’. Not surprisingly, the 28 billion dollar market has attracted corporate investors and the expansion of privately owned schools has fuelled the emergence of conglomerates or profit-driven networks who share a common owner, brand or major shareholder. Entrepreneurial interest is an important contributor to the expansion of our sector, but how does it impact on the values that are so important to the philosophy of many internationally minded schools? The distinction between pragmatically and ideologically driven schools has become much more complex and questionable. Is there any reason, for instance, why for-profit schools cannot also have high ethical standards and a genuine commitment to encouraging international mindedness or global awareness in their students?

Those who envisaged a period of ‘consolidation’ seem to have been excessively conservative, but in some ways at least they may have been correct. The era of curriculum and pedagogical innovation of 20 years ago, when international schools saw the flowering of myriad projects focused on devising innovative ways to establish a truly international approach to learning and the promotion of global awareness, has given way to the emergence of branding as a characteristic of the major curriculum and assessment models. This has been an inevitable consequence of the global market as schools and families seek standardized certifications for learning with qualifications that have a respected international currency, but does the current climate stifle innovation? Is there still a place for small scale, localized projects focused on providing for the specific school contexts? And what place is there in the international schools network for national and state-sponsored schools that would like to internationalize learning but that operate without the level of funding that allows them to access the major providers in curriculum and who may in any case be constrained to work within national programme outlines? How can we allow access for students in these schools to

the know-how we have developed and encourage global mindedness outside our ‘elite’ establishments?

Another frequently cited issue generated by growth is the need to recruit an expanding number of teachers to international schools, but while this is often seen as a problem of finding available human resources in national education systems, a separate dilemma regards the extent to which training and orientation is going to be available for these new cohorts. Is there a risk that more teachers will draw on experiences from their national backgrounds without training in international pedagogies, undermining the philosophical foundations for our professional roles? Or is there a new responsibility for educational leaders to learn how to forge effective inter-cultural teams made up of colleagues from different national systems working together in the same school?

These are just some of the questions emerging from trends that have characterized the past 14 years and that make the current climate so interesting. One thing is clear – we are still in flux and transition, and nobody expects evolution to come to a standstill. But apart from the continued forecasts of optimistic quantitative growth there is no clarity in how the ideological climate and the professional expectations of international education will evolve. The AIE has always believed that provoking reflection and critique is the essential step towards a better comprehension of the nature of our mission. In this sense the questions posed 14 years ago in Geneva to help promote international and intercultural understanding through education remain as valid today as ever. The context in which they are posed and answered, however, is radically different. The six AIE world conferences to date have helped to chart our changing world, and in Mumbai this October – where the conference theme will be Intercultural Understanding: Reflection, Responsibility and Action –there will be many hoping that the seventh conference will help us to navigate through unexplored waters as we enter the next phase. After all, the millennium, and even the century, is still young.

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*Year 12 and 13 students at NIST International School on a visit to the village of Maermit, where they conducted a needs analysis to help the village prioritise its development needs and establish future service projects*



# How entrepreneurialism could be the future of international education

James MacDonald suggests a fresh approach

The story of international education extends back many years and since the beginning international educators have been blending ideals with practical realities. Today we are witnessing an era of growth in international schools that few could have predicted 30 years ago. Yet even in the midst of this success, I think it is time to begin rethinking some of the ideals that are the foundation of international education. Though a full examination of international education would require a much longer study, the case can be made that its modern form largely results from the Cold War: superpowers faced off against each other, dividing most of the world into armed camps with massive arsenals ready to be unleashed at any moment. International education became a force for peace, enabling people from different countries and cultures

to better understand one another and therefore resolve their differences peacefully.

Of course, the prospect of a devastating nuclear war between nations still exists, but almost all would agree that the odds of such an event have decreased substantially over the past two decades. The world is a safer place from this perspective, and perhaps prior generations of international educators have played a small but important role in this outcome. But the world has since changed, and though fostering international mindedness and intercultural understanding is still an important aim, it can be argued that we need to recalibrate our focus to reflect that the main threat to peace is no longer from superpowers competing with each other.

## Promoting international mindedness



*James MacDonald says that service projects can teach skills that are 'entrepreneurial in nature'*

Nowadays we are witnessing a new era of increased tensions and divides within cultures and countries and a small, but powerful, global elite that wields enormous influence over the world's politics and economy. An undeniable divide exists between the rich and poor, and much statistical evidence suggests that the divide continues to widen globally. We cannot escape the fact that one rarely sees violent conflict between nations anymore, but bloody conflicts between groups within a country are becoming increasingly commonplace. Take a look at the daily news or think of some of riots we have seen in the last few years – even in places like London and Paris.

If education leads to understanding, and understanding between people is a fundamental condition to reducing conflict, then it becomes more pressing than ever for educators to promote understanding between people within a culture as much as between cultures. Intercultural understanding is simply not enough anymore.

To illustrate this point, I am fully confident that, this August/September, international school graduates at university campuses around the world will immediately connect with other international school graduates on the first day of orientation. There will be an immediate bond between these students, even if they grew up on opposite sides of the world, in different cultures, and have never met. But let's take these same students and imagine them enrolling at a local university with peers who grew up in the same country but did not experience an 'international education' and had far fewer advantages growing up relative to those of most international school students. I strongly suspect in many cases there would be fewer immediate connections between these students than

between the international school students, even though they share the same language, culture and history.

What does this mean for us as educators? I believe we need to be more deliberate in our attempts to foster an understanding both of the host country culture, and of the differences between our students' world and that of their peers who do not attend international schools. Our students will also need to be able to find creative solutions to the problems they face and be committed to making the world around them a better place.

A promising approach to supporting our students in developing such attributes could be through increasing our focus on entrepreneurial skills and dispositions. Yong Zhao, in his recent book *World Class Learners*, makes a very strong case that if we adopt a broader definition of entrepreneurialism, and do not limit ourselves to the traditional definition (eg starting a business to produce a profit), then we can begin to think of entrepreneurialism as a general process that results in innovation and creativity. Personally, I do not think we can teach entrepreneurialism *per se*, but we can teach the skills and attitudes that enable our students to think creatively and turn ideas into innovative action in a way that makes a positive difference in the world around them.

Of course this is not new. These words and ideas have been around for a long time in our schools. But very few schools place this sort thinking at the core of what they are doing. Entrepreneurial projects are often not systematically promoted to all students, frequently existing as disparate projects sitting on the outskirts of the core academic curriculum and sponsored by a handful of

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Personally, I do not think we can teach entrepreneurialism *per se*, but we can teach the skills and attitudes that enable our students to think creatively and turn ideas into innovative action in a way that makes a positive difference in the world around them.

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passionate teachers. I think we could be more systematic in our approach, and challenge our students to engage in project-based learning within their local communities that will not only make a difference for others, but will also help our students to develop entrepreneurial skills and a deeper understanding of those around them.

We already see countless examples of this in schools. For instance, at NIST International School Bangkok, Year 12 and 13 students recently visited the village of Maermit near Chiang Mai and conducted a needs analysis to help the village prioritise its development needs, with a view to establishing future service projects. Students utilised a variety of needs analysis techniques, including village location and asset mapping, determining a seasonal calendar and facilitating meetings with various groups within the villages. This approach is quite entrepreneurial in nature: scanning the environment and looking for ways of taking action that will make a difference.

More importantly, this process is also grounded in

learning about the local culture, and our students can gain a greater understanding of the lives of those who do not have the same advantages that have been bestowed upon them. Hopefully our students are also developing dispositions that will make them more likely to help others and to make a positive contribution to the world around them throughout their lives. This is only one project of course, and a goal for us is to make this type of learning much more systematic. It is an important educational aim, based around practical 21st century skills and lofty ideals, and having very little to do with the environment created by the Cold War. I believe this is the new challenge for this generation of international educators. As the world comes to terms with a new era of conflict within cultures and nations, it is important that we too move into a new phase of international education.

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*NIST students' service learning trip was 'grounded in learning about local culture', says James MacDonald*

*Schools are becoming increasingly aware of the need to support transitioning students*



# Ensuring a smooth transition for children and parents

International schools can have a high turnover rate. Sally Thorogood undertook research into how the ‘transition process’ can be improved

The transition process is an integral part of international school life; by their very nature, most international schools provide an educational base for the ever-increasing number of globally mobile families. While many schools accommodate some children from the host country population, the majority of such families are usually transient, staying for on average two to three years, and, as a result, a high student turnover rate is a feature of most international schools. The impact on a child of moving to a new country, home and school should not be underestimated, and ensuring as smooth a transition as possible into the new school is an important responsibility of international school teachers and administrators.

Only relatively recently have some schools and some researchers considered how best to support transitioning students. As a parent of two young children who joined Munich International School (MIS) in 1997 as a result of my husband’s work secondment, recollection of my own experience is a relative blur associated with the feeling of being overwhelmed. However, within a few weeks of arrival I had begun working as a substitute teacher and

become not only involved but totally engaged in the world of international education. Fast forward 10 years and I had become the Junior School Assistant Principal with responsibility for overseeing the pastoral care of students, including those new to the school. As I took on this role I became increasingly aware that the transition process at MIS could be considered ‘work in progress’ even though, or possibly because, the average annual turnover rate of students was 30%. Suggested improvements to the system had not always been implemented consistently and some students appeared to have a better experience of the transition process than others.

In keeping with the principle of lifelong learning, in 2008 I began studying for my Masters in Education, which provided the opportunity to combine conducting my own research with improving the transition process for students at MIS. As part of one module I conducted interviews with students from our Early Childhood classes through to Grade 4 to determine their perspective on the effectiveness of the transition process. Three common themes emerged:

- the potential benefit of a buddy
- the need for a means of new arrivals finding their way around school
- the desire to know more about their class and their teacher in advance

Although a buddy system was in place, it was clear that some buddies were less committed to their role than others, so I determined to make the expectations of the buddy system more consistent and to ensure the buddies recognized the value of their role. Many students had benefited from an initial tour when visiting the school in advance of arrival, but referred to it taking a long time for them to feel confident about finding their way around, so it was proposed that we create a child-friendly map of the school. In order to provide more information in advance, teachers were asked to prepare a letter introducing themselves to their new class and providing some information about their classroom setting and expectations. As the classes are mixed on an annual basis, the letter would be sent to all of the students entering that class, whether new or returning.

During my research into the perspective of students it became clear that parents' experience during the transition process could have a significant impact on the ability of the student to integrate into a new school. In my limited experience, those children who had found it most difficult to settle were those for whom at least one parent was experiencing a negative reaction. It became clear that research into any form of parent involvement in international schools is very limited and that further exploring the parent perspective, especially in relation to the transition process, may provide valuable data. Hence I decided to base my dissertation research on exploring the experience of new parents joining MIS and how much their direct involvement with the school community could influence the quality of the transition process.

It is impossible to do justice here to all aspects of the research, but from data collected from individual questionnaires and follow-up focus group meetings, a number of key needs emerged:

- more information in advance about the teacher and class/grade level, consistent with the students' perspective in my earlier study
- more practical information, including where to buy items on the list of supplies needed for class and how to find a babysitter for school-related events such as Back to School Night
- general curriculum information provided in an initial overview document followed by an introductory parent workshop in October when the parents would be more settled and in a better position to assimilate the necessary information
- a 'mentor family' to be assigned.

The latter suggestion came from one of the 'experienced transitioners', as I described those parents who had previously moved between different countries and schools. All the parents were keen to acknowledge the work and support of the Parent Teacher Organisation in providing information and making connections to area, nationality and grade level groups. However, the idea of having a specific contact available even before arrival was widely supported during the

focus group discussion, especially if the experienced family could be of the same nationality.

One aspect of my research was to consider whether the level of involvement of parents in school life had a significant effect on the ease of the transition process. Most of the parents who participated in the search had become engaged in a number of groups and school activities within a few months of arrival, and had a positive perception of the transition process and the opportunities for being involved. The few who were less positive about their experience were also reluctant to become more involved in school life. Nevertheless, everyone appreciated the opportunity to have their voice heard regarding their experiences and to know that their suggestions would inform future improvements.

Reflecting on the results of my research I certainly agree with those who have conducted similar studies, that

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international schools need to actively and intentionally support students and families in managing transitions. There is a need for procedures to be clearly developed and consistently implemented to ensure new students and their families feel welcomed, well-informed and supported. As with any valuable inquiry, further questions emerged during my studies, such as how best to support students and families when they transition to another school or when they join our school mid-year, but these questions would have to wait, as a further transition of my own was on the horizon. Having completed my research in Munich, I then moved not only countries but continents this time, which highlighted the need for school procedures to be well-documented because so many teachers and administrators are internationally mobile.

My research has now also informed improvements to the transition process at my new school. More importantly, through my own experience as an internationally mobile parent, teacher and now administrator, I can reaffirm that whatever the challenges of the transition process, it provides an incredibly valuable opportunity for growth and adventure!

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Spanish Club at ACS Athens hold a 'Day of the Dead' celebration

# Embracing the concept

Peggy Pelonis says that international mindedness must 'permeate every aspect of the school'

Because cross-cultural awareness and appreciation of diversity are keys to global citizenship in the 21st century, 'international education' has become an even more important approach to preparing students for full and purposeful lives as global citizens. Students attending international schools are expected to 'develop and transform their attitudes and beliefs to those which are in tune with ideals of world citizenship, which 'would include the breaking down of barriers and prejudices .... transforming the focus of young people's thinking from the parochial to the global and from the narrow-minded to the broad-minded' (Waterson & Hayden, 1999: 18).

Thus, key to international education and a challenge for international schools is embracing the concept of 'international mindedness'. In fact there lies the success of international education as students of such schools develop a global perspective that is built on understanding and respect for one's own culture and that embraces knowledge of global issues and their interdependence, cultural differences, and critical thinking skills to analyze and propose solutions. 'International mindedness is also a value proposition: it is about putting knowledge and skills to work in order to make the world a better place through empathy, compassion and

openness – to the variety of ways of thinking which enrich and complicate our planet'.

Such a stance is in accordance with the 1974 UNESCO pronouncement that 'international education should teach about peace, democracy, and human rights in order to enable every person to ... promote international solidarity and co-operation, which are necessary in solving world problems'. (Hill, 2012).

Questions then arise as to the meaning of 'international mindedness' and values: is there such a concept as universal values? Can a variety of values exist within one school? And if there are many different values, which are best, or right? (Ellwood and Davis, 2009: 160). There is no one definition of what an international school is, in fact international schools are a varied and diverse lot: (Leggate & Thompson, 1997) – 'a conglomeration of individual institutions which may or may not share an underlying philosophy' (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). Thus, each international school must develop a clearly activated set of agreed upon values that promote the concept of 'international mindedness'. And, each international school must develop clear strategies and plans for making these values real in the daily lives of their students.

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At ACS Athens, ‘international mindedness’ goes hand in hand with the idea of service. It is a step by step process that begins with developing awareness of social conditions and leads to fostering collaborative social commitment for the betterment of humanity (Gialamas *et al.*, 2013). Since international mindedness ‘is a frame of mind and an approach to issues, an attitude towards oneself, others and the world at large (Ellwood & Davis, 2009), it must permeate every aspect of the school; academics, co-curricular activities, sports, celebrations and community projects. Above all, student voices must be an integral part of decision making processes. Embedded in the ACS Athens mission is the concept of a student centered international school challenging its students to become responsible global citizens. Comprising students representing 62 nationalities and open to diversity, ACS Athens is committed to civic minded programs inclusive of many cultures. Academic programs include the International Baccalaureate (IB) whose aim is to develop internationally minded people committed to promoting world peace. ACS Athens has adopted the IB learner profile as its ‘Portrait of a Graduate’. In the ACS Athens interdisciplinary honors program, students explore literature, music and thought of the Byzantium and the contemporaneous Islamic world to understand sources of connecting and conflict. A World Literature and Ethics course is designed to help students discover and hone their leadership skills as they explore concepts of leadership embodied in a range of literature from around the world, as

well as in the political and philosophical writings of figures such as Gandhi, Lao Tzu, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. Social studies courses Junior Kindergarten to grade 12 emphasize comparative studies in world cultures and a substantial component of the school’s language and literature program is devoted to the study of literary works in translation. The North East South Asia (NESA) Virtual Science Fair allows students to participate in regional and global projects with international mentors and partners.

A rich array of co-curricular and support programs also serve to promote ‘international mindedness’. Participation in Model United Nations immerses students in seeing global problems through a multitude of perspectives as they seek solutions, while United Nations Day programs honor different cultural traditions through song and dance in the Elementary School and through a series of student-centered activities devoted to a solution-based exploration of UN millennial goals in the Middle School. The Yolo Club – Youth Optimizing Leadership Opportunities – encourages young people to shape their world through positive social action by entering into a journey of personal inquiry and questioning ‘I wonder what the world would look like if.....?’, investigating the local or global issues they are passionate about changing. ACS Athens Wellness month includes presentations, discussions and activities focused on issues of diversity, culture and conflict resolution and culminates in a school-wide celebration bringing all students, faculty and staff together to celebrate their accomplishments through



ACS Athens celebrate United Nations Day



*United Nations Day programs honor different cultural traditions through song and dance in the Elementary School*

service. Above all, student voice is strongly encouraged. ACS Athens students have taken the initiative to create documentary films such as 'The Palestine – Israeli Conflict' and 'The Rise of Homelessness in Athens'. A large group of high school girls on their own initiative developed the 'Girl Up' program, devoted to helping women in developing countries to gain access to education.

The beginning of the year 'salutation' led by counselors is designed to assist students in understanding the school system as well as to cope with the emotional ups and downs of changing schools and/or country. The 'Owl Buddy' Program pairs veteran students with new students throughout the year to help them adjust to their new environment. Participation in athletics promotes cooperation and cultural awareness as students compete against athletes from other countries while hosting them in their own homes. ACS Athens' well rounded and very comprehensive college application advising process includes many hours devoted to an investigation of personal values as well as to helping students understand the processes and philosophies of other school systems. The senior study hall syllabus includes cultural awareness activities as part of the process of helping students to envision and plan their futures.

Finally, ACS Athens has adopted a student-initiated honor code based on shared principles of self-respect and respect for others, integrity and personal and common responsibility. Student leadership teams have committed to educating students about the value of honoring this code in exams, on the playground, during activities and on fieldtrips, and about adopting these core values as a way of being. In the most fundamental sense, these are the building blocks of international mindedness. Recently one hundred grades 3-12 students participated in a leadership workshop and were charged with the task of educating the entire

student body and their families about the school's upcoming re-accreditation process. During the workshop students engaged in a critical explanation of the school's mission statement by citing examples of the mission statement in practice. A young man from fourth grade, new to ACS Athens, eagerly raised his hand to respond to the question 'How many of you know what our mission statement says?' He proudly shouted, unknowingly paraphrasing C.S. Lewis, 'Doing the right thing when no one is watching you'. Perhaps he missed reciting the mission statement word for word but many would agree that this young man certainly 'got the point', and I would say his response deserves an A+ in any international school!

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# The trouble with zombies

E T Ranger ponders some quirks of our language

A while back I was reading a book on consciousness by a very clever man, the philosopher John Searle. Now he is certainly clever, and people say he is also very nice, but I kept finding myself puzzled by his references, because he related the whole book to the concept of zombies. Now you can call me provincial (a wounding remark in international education, but possibly true) but we don't have lot of dealings with zombies around here. Nor even back home; I was raised in a zombie-free neighbourhood. So in the end Professor Searle left me with an incomplete understanding of consciousness, together with a disconcerting sense of my own ignorance.

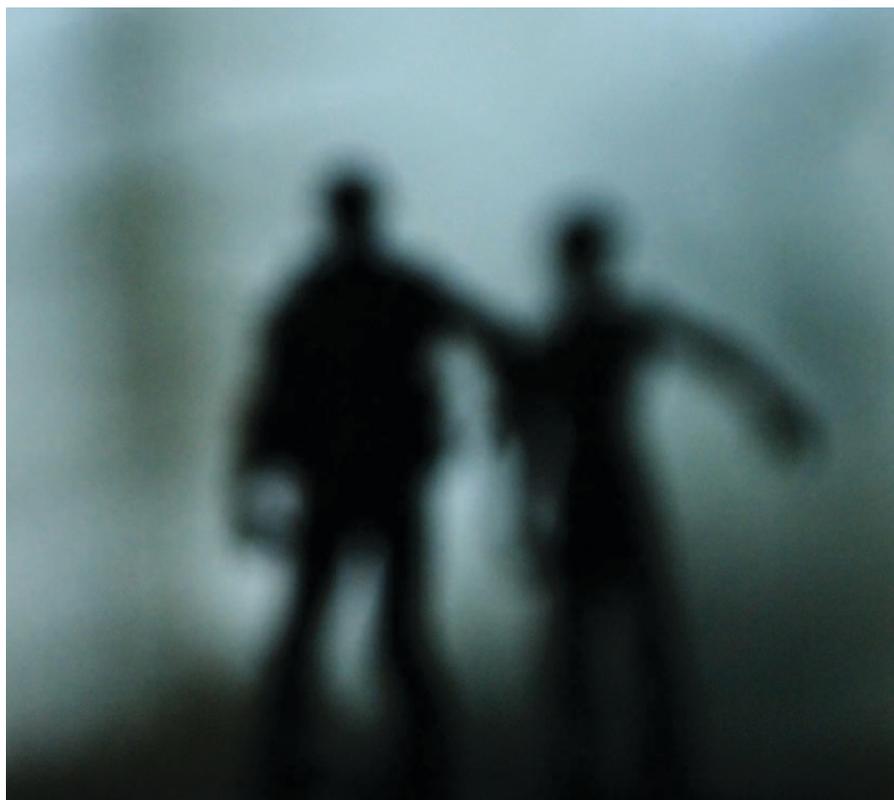
This may not be a bad thing. It is the kind of thing we can quite possibly do ourselves, thoughtlessly. Metaphors drawn from local sports – hit for six, left-field, a curveball, being stumped – all make references that only some English speakers understand. For our L2 students it may not be so troublesome: everything is new, and we teachers are (one hopes) aware that we ought not to use metaphors without explaining them. However, I think the problem of using metaphors goes deeper. Professor Searle was building an image that carries more meaning than mere words. This calls for a quick digression: I am supposing that he is a professor. Someone so clever deserves a title in our everyday thinking, and once we have accorded him this status we mentally underline what we read in his books: 'this man is worth listening to'. So where does this lead us in our use of metaphors? It shows that it isn't just a matter of knowing what a word means, it is also what is implied along with that meaning, and what weight we are giving it.

How about another, minimal example. We all know that 'quite' is used in different ways on either side of the Atlantic: in the US 'quite good' is 'thoroughly good', while in the UK it is 'a bit good'. How easy it is to draw the wrong conclusion, and how serious when the modifier is applied in attempts to be sensitively nuanced on some delicate issue. These local references are not just useful to us; they also make us feel good whenever we find that we can share them. Like jokes, they are a way of marking 'us' from 'them', with a little warm feeling each time they are used and understood between us. This is seriously dangerous, a way of talking that delights in the exclusion of the alien. But there may be another form of exclusiveness that is tempting

us, pretending to be good but actually dividing: if you want instant eminence, invent your own topic. As long as it catches on, and you have some followers, you will be guaranteed prophet status in your new field.

Neologisms are the scorched earth policy of the young. If you know nothing about something, declare it valueless and hail its miraculous successor. Just as those people featured in the last issue's article find it easier to attain wisdom from one book about alien lizard people from Mars than from 100 on astrophysics, if you are the inventor of a new term or even an early follower of a fashionable usage, you can burn the bridge behind you so that none can follow except in your terms. Listen to them. 'I hear what you say'; of course you do, you have two ears. 'I want people who are passionate about education'; passionate about first love, passionate about the well-being of one's child, passionate about a Beethoven sonata, but surely not while making responsible decisions? 'Multimedia framework pipeline and infrastructure platform . . .'; this means 'you can't come in and play unless you learn the secret passwords that we know!'

Now if we feel sore about being excluded, why don't we develop a gatekeeper that faces the other way, Janus-like, excluding the new? Perhaps some such classical allusion, guaranteed to be beyond the horizons of the young whippersnappers, will keep them at bay. We could launch a Grey Revolution. Old codgers could strike back! If only we could be sure that someone would follow us . . .



# Our heritage offers answers

## Traditional subjects can be an unexpected source of international mindedness, says Richard Harwood

Creating a background of shared attitudes to the world around us depends, in part, on the detail of our understanding of our inter-dependence with other cultures and nations for the wealth of human progress and achievement that we enjoy. We share a heritage that has grown out of the perceptions derived from the historic striving of man to understand, and we should draw on that in our teaching of the curriculum.

Science and mathematics, for instance, illustrate both how historically different cultural traditions have thrived at different times and the mutual enrichment that comes from acknowledging and understanding their contributions. The exchange of information and ideas across national boundaries has been essential to the progress of science. The gathering of scholars in Cordoba in medieval times produced a flowering of scientific and mathematical development that was built within an Islamic tradition but involved scientists from a mix of religious and cultural backgrounds. Much of the foundation of modern-day science was laid many centuries before by Arabic, Indian and Chinese civilizations, among others. Current major exhibitions such as that of '1001 Inventions: the Enduring Legacy of Muslim Civilization' (1001inventions.com) and the curriculum material that has stemmed from it and similar initiatives (muslimheritage.com) have brought this indebtedness to the fore (see also Prof. Jim Al-Khalili's recent book 'The Forgotten Legacy of Arabic Science'). The exploration of other sources of heritage from other cultures would seem to be of benefit, and teachers should be encouraged to emphasize such contributions in their teaching of various topics, perhaps through the use of timeline websites and in response to developments in new syllabuses currently coming on stream.

On an organizational level, many international bodies now exist to promote science. United Nations bodies such as UNESCO, UNEP and WMO, where science plays a prominent part, are well known. The facilities for large-scale research in, for example, space programmes, particle physics and the Human Genome Project are expensive, and often only joint ventures involving funding from many countries allow such research to take place, with the data being shared by scientists worldwide. The merit of these ventures into 'big science' offers scope for discussion to enhance student awareness of the issues. The recent newspaper announcements of discussions to build a successor to the Large Hadron Collider that found the 'God Particle' fuel this discussion. To further explore the mysteries of the universe a collider four times the size of the current machine – up to 62 miles in circumference – is being considered.

There is increased recognition that many scientific problems are international in nature and a global approach to research and intervention is an absolute necessity. The work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is a prime example of this. Another global problem that should command

attention is portrayed in a new book, 'The Sixth Extinction' by Elizabeth Kolbert. We are well aware of the disappearance of dinosaurs in the Cretaceous period, and possibly the loss of 96% of all life forms in the Permian extinction. But it is dramatic to learn that we are currently hurtling towards the sixth great mass extinction in 500 million years, known as the Anthropocene. This should be a big story of our age. We are living through the historically rare elimination of vast numbers of species. And, for the first time, it is our fault – hence the name. This extinction is set to sweep away a quarter of all mammals, a fifth of all reptiles and a third of sharks, rays and freshwater molluscs. The book is a series of field reports from places as disparate as the Andes, Iceland, the Amazon and the Great Barrier Reef. In each place Kolbert outlines the plight of a different species and, in some cases, the seemingly ineffectual efforts to preserve them. The plight of a range of amphibians, including the blue poison-dart frog, is one example described.

A certain amount of natural extinction is occurring all the time; as Kolbert puts it, "background extinction is like background noise". But mass extinction is on an entirely different scale, and the usual rules of survival are suspended. The plight of amphibians is particularly alarming, as they have always been regarded as highly resilient creatures which have survived previous catastrophic events. This no longer seems to be true. We are losing some species before we even know that they exist. The problems here are multi-faceted and any solution or easing of the situation must be international – but to what extent should we be concerned?

There are many areas where an international dimension should be a key aspect of science education. Making our students internationally aware of the opportunities and issues involved is a challenge, but resources are available through websites such as Global Engage (globalengage.ibo.org) and Think Global (think-global.org.uk).

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*Threatened by extinction:  
the blue poison-dart frog*



*Presentations to a class in the UK are also relayed to a class in India via Skype*



# Exploring the role of maths in technology

Richard CC Davies explains an innovative new project

Globalisation is 'the shift or transformation in the scale of human organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across the world's regions [which] can be mapped by examining the expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up and deepening impact of transcontinental flows and patterns of social interaction' Held (2004: 1).

Irrespective of the precise nature and institutional architecture of globalisation, there are a series of 'deep drivers' that will continue to operate for the foreseeable future including the global ICT revolution; global markets in the knowledge economy; and economic migration (Held, 2010: 243). These particular 'drivers', representing technology and information dissemination, can be thought of as prerequisites for a knowledge economy which the World Bank (2003: 2) explains is predicated upon four pillars, including an 'educated and skilled population to create, share, and use knowledge'. With science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects critical, therefore, to this emerging global knowledge economy, Project Jugaad was established with the aim of providing

pupils with a real world, open-ended project which would not only develop their mathematical understanding but, in addition, foster key skills such as inquiry, collaboration, communication, leadership, global awareness, and cultural understanding which will be crucial to success in further education and employment wherever they ultimately end up working.

In 2013 UK Prime Minister David Cameron led the largest business delegation ever assembled on his state visit to India with ambitions of doubling UK-India trade by 2015 (Nelson, 2013). There are tremendous opportunities for firms to benefit from economic growth in countries such as India and, given the changing economic landscape, providing our pupils with experience of working on collaborative projects alongside their peers in developing economies should help prepare them for myriad opportunities in the global knowledge economy. Jugaad is a Punjabi term that can be translated as using innovative approaches to solve problems effectively given limited resources. As such, it was chosen as the name for this collaborative educational research project into the role of Maths in Technology initially set up

## Curriculum

between Bluebells International School in New Delhi and Southfields Academy in London (Radjou *et al*, 2012).

For the inaugural project, two top set year 9 classes (13/14-year-olds) were selected and the project was deliberately open-ended to promote a growth mindset by exposing pupils to areas of mathematics that extend beyond the confines of the syllabus and challenging them to develop new approaches to thinking about the role of maths in the technology that surrounds them (c.f. Dweck, 2008). Groups consisted of two pupils from each school and, although they were free to communicate however they saw fit (Facebook, BBM, Skype etc), their activities were scaffolded by the fact that each member had to adopt a specific role (Project Manager, Chief Researcher, Digital Engineer, Communications Director). Whilst some groups did struggle to establish contact at first, as the deadlines approached there was a flurry of activity and nearly all groups established effective communication in order to submit their projects on time. In so doing they formed new friendships with their peers in an international collaborative environment which seeks to simulate what pupils can expect to find when they embark on a career in the global knowledge economy.

The array of topics covered by the pupils was huge and the deliberations involved in shortlisting the final four were agonising. These 13 and 14-year-old pupils completed extensive research into topics as diverse as maths in medicine and maths in space, and discovered, for themselves, topics that go way beyond the curriculum such as the Bernoulli Principle and calculus. Eventually, the four shortlisted groups were agreed upon and the pupils set about preparing to present their findings. This was a more intimidating task than normal, however; not only did the pupils have to present to a class full of pupils and a panel of judges sitting in front of them but, via Skype, they were also addressing pupils and judges in a class 5,000 miles away where the other members of their group were. Coordinating such a presentation within the strict 5 minute time limit required thorough planning, and it was brilliant to see how all the groups managed to achieve this with aplomb! In order to facilitate cultural understanding, pupils were also encouraged to produce short videos on 'Life in London/Delhi' with the best one being selected to be screened in the partner school immediately before the final.

Now in its second year, Project Jugaad has expanded to include schools as far afield as the United World College of South East Asia in Singapore and, appropriately enough given the myriad extreme environmental phenomena experienced on both sides of the Atlantic, this year the focus is specifically on the role of mathematics in Green Technology. In so doing, it resonates on more than just an economic development level with Hill (2012) who extols the virtues of international mindedness into education as:

*'The study of issues which have application beyond national borders and to which competences such as critical thinking and collaboration are applied in order to shape attitudes, leading to action which will be conducive to intercultural understanding, peaceful co-existence and sustainable development for the future of the human race.'*

Where once skills were recognised as a key lever for prosperity and fairness, and material forces dominated growth, globalisation has led to the situation where countries can outsource their material production and concentrate on research and development: increasingly skills are the key lever (Brown *et al*, 2008: 132). As the rate of technology transfer increases, the link between education and economic growth becomes ever stronger as scientific knowledge accelerates the pace of technological innovation (Sab & Smith, 2001). Equipping pupils with the skills to succeed in this new economic landscape through classroom activities such as Project Jugaad is surely, therefore, not just in our interests as education professionals. It is, moreover, a powerful vehicle through which to make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future in a manner that resonates with Hill's vision (United World College, 2014; Hill, 2012).

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- To find out more about Project Jugaad and see last year's winning entries along with videos and other material visit [www.projectjugaad.yolasite.com](http://www.projectjugaad.yolasite.com) or join in the discussion on twitter #projectjugaad

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*International mindedness is also about 'helping to establish a connection between one's knowledge and one's values and virtues'*

# Internationalizing the PYP

## Namrata Goel on teaching early years students

Unquestionably being an international school goes beyond being one that displays all the flags of the world; has an international head; celebrates all global festivals; or serves international cuisine in the canteen; it is more about developing an international outlook. We live in a dynamic world where we connect with people across continents on Face time and Skype; we fly distances on Google earth and reach out to new destinations, we use video conferencing to bring collaborative classrooms across the world to life. In our world we also witness challenges such as global warming, terrorist attacks and abuse of the environment. Hence, developing internationally-minded students is more crucial than ever to maintaining peace and ensuring a better world to live in. Globalisation is demanding international mindedness in the curriculum; not only to appreciate differences, similarities or development of tolerance and empathy, but also to appreciate diversity in other people. We all have a right to be different but that doesn't stop us from living together. We need to build knowledge and understanding of cross-cultural ways of thinking, leading to trust between us. There is an increasing disparity in lifestyles and the need of the day is for those who are able to stand up for others and act to alleviate suffering and misfortune. One such platform in education is the International Baccalaureate.

The aim of the IB Primary Years Programme; where the

student, the teacher and the parent come together, is to develop, enhance and support students' knowledge beyond their prior knowledge; where students feel responsible for their own learning by drawing relevant connections to the real world and transdisciplinarity, whereby themes of global significance are not confined within the boundaries of traditional subject areas but are supported and enriched by inquiry into globally significant issues and taking relevant actions towards the same. So, international mindedness is not merely about making young children knowledgeable but also about helping to establish a connection between one's knowledge and one's values and virtues. This isn't something that is taught in any particular class; instead it is so embedded in the way an IB student thinks and learns that it becomes part of their consciousness that encourages them to make responsible choices towards their own community, environment and eventually towards the globe. It is a kind of open-mindedness where one is ready to absorb new ideas – maybe shocking, maybe inconsistent with one's belief system – and is ready to process it mentally. For example, in some Eastern cultures people believe in talking to their elders with their heads bowed in order to show them respect, whereas in certain western cultures one might consider a person suspiciously if they do not make eye contact. It is important to understand what is culturally sensitive in a particular community.

## Curriculum

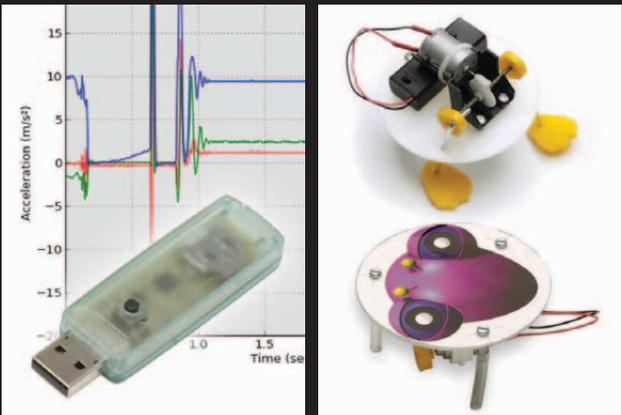
Students come together to do good for society through their confident and fearless actions, exploring new areas and horizons. Teachers encourage students with questions that lead into a path of exploring into the unit of inquiry, and often curious minds sweep us off our feet. In one such instance, six to seven-year-old students demonstrated being reflective by making responsible choices through their actions. Since ‘where we are in place and time’ was our unit, and we were learning how exploring the local environment deepens our understanding of the place, children took a tour of the school corridors and lobbies and noticed the daily usage of paper cups by the water coolers. They then followed by being inquirers and augmented their knowledge of the energy and trees required to support this demand for cups. This resulted in students displaying posters all around the school, including the staff room, providing factual information and encouraging the school community to come together and eradicate the use of paper cups. Teachers and students of the entire school were encouraged to bring their own bottles and mugs instead of using paper cups – a practice which continues even today. Another such instance was when Grade 5 students decided they wanted to create an impact by doing something to make a difference using the strongest weapon of our times – technology. During the unit ‘challenges and risks children face worldwide’, they made an animated film called Children of the World, and posted it on YouTube and social networking sites in order to create awareness of risks faced by certain underprivileged children

worldwide, especially in developing and under-developed countries. They received great recognition and appreciation for their work. Students have been setting personal goals around their individual aspirations, or in groups, towards their approach to learning, and very confidently portray this in their actions. This demonstrates that curriculum content is not the only dimension that promotes international mindedness; the diversity in student cultures and student attitudes are also influenced by extra-curricular activities.

Developing internationally-minded students is imperative for the future of the global community. The teaching of international mindedness empowers the students to be responsible and reflective life-long learners for the future. An internationally-minded school would model universal values to promote world peace; would surpass cultural diversity through their pedagogy, curriculum and assessment strategies; and the entire school community would plan and model the attributes of the IB learner profile. The unit of inquiry provides a platform of exchange for thoughts and ideas which fosters all the aspects of international mindedness. The framework of the PYP and its learner profile offer a platform for students to experience international mindedness within the multicultural classroom, and encourages students to take responsibility for their own actions.

*Namrata Goel is an International Education Enthusiast, Researcher and Analyst, based in Mumbai, India [Email: namratagoel.edu@gmail.com]*

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*Science can help students learn together  
and develop interpersonal skills*

# How science can help international thinking

Kajal Manglani on a global outlook for the classroom

Rapidly changing societies, fluctuating economies across countries, political, environmental and personal issues – these are the truths that we are living with today. On the one hand, students are graduating every year and getting ready to join the work force across the world, while on the other hand, people in some parts of the world are facing illiteracy, poverty, food and health issues ... and this situation continues from year to year. Do we as educators have a responsibility for creating future citizens who can think (and do something) about these issues? International Baccalaureate schools have as their mission to contribute to a better and more peaceful world by developing knowledgeable, internationally-minded, caring citizens, and IB educators are motivated to transform their students to be the best in the global village.

Student populations vary in schools around the world, but the language and nature of science is common to all. Just offering an international curriculum and discussing examples such as water pollution in different parts of the world, however, does not serve the purpose of developing international mindedness. Based on the findings of a survey of over 3000 students, parents and teachers, Hayden and Thompson (1996) stated that one of the five main clusters

of factors contributing to the experience of international education is teachers as exemplars of international mindedness. So like all other teachers, an IB 'science teacher' has an impact on the life of a student. How do we accomplish our task?

There is no fixed recipe, but teachers' planning, curriculum and implementation play a crucial role in developing international mindedness. Let's take a very common example. Many schools organize 'Science Fairs', where collaborative, communication, problem-solving, research and personal skills of students and teachers are evident. Students act like scientists, presenting solutions to problems – connecting science to society. The entire process is inquiry-driven, and needs careful planning; student teams work according to the guidelines provided, and put their hearts and souls into successful implementation. In addition to these skills, students develop better understanding of scientific concepts, and teachers, parents and students alike feel pride in their achievements. This is an example of how cognitive, affective and psychomotor objectives of learning can all be addressed; students demonstrate all the IB Learner Profile attributes, and support the development of international mindedness.

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Teaching is a profession where intellect and emotions are involved together, so when teachers' feelings are considered, when they have freedom of expression and are respected and happy, they will reflect these feelings and attitudes which will be communicated to students, who in turn will learn to care and respect.

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Science Fairs are, of course, only one of many such activities related to IB science classes. Teachers need to create many smaller-scale opportunities for collaborative activities where students learn together and develop their interpersonal skills. Skelton (2007) stated that 'Those people who are interpersonally intelligent are able to take on the perspective of the other, creating empathic understandings and working with them, integrating them with their own thoughts and feelings'. Last year, my IB Diploma students carried out their Group 4 project, a part of internal assessment where students of different science disciplines work together on a theme. They collaborated online with students in the UK and Bolivia, and it was certainly an interesting activity which provided a platform for them to work with people they don't know. It was difficult initially for students to accept the ideas of each other, but they worked at it, as they were assessed for interpersonal skills. Some international schools invite such collaboration via the IB's Online Curriculum Centre forum.

Studying an international curriculum does not stop students from being aware of their own culture and national issues. There are plenty of concepts, ideas and issues in IB Middle Years and Diploma Programme sciences, and in fact in any national science curriculum, that have local and global significance. Teachers just need to set appropriate tasks and provide students with an opportunity to inquire into scientific concepts such as energy, medicines and drugs, cloning, and genetic engineering, and to relate them to social, moral, ethical, economic and environmental implications, so they can make informed choices and participate in solving real world issues.

During the teaching/learning process, teachers need to be the facilitators and guides, providing co-operative learning activities. Various websites offering support for teachers should expose students to the use of technology in supporting learning. Among such websites are the following:

[www.project2061.org/publications/bsl/online/](http://www.project2061.org/publications/bsl/online/)  
[www.pbslearningmedia.org/](http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/)  
[www.acs.org](http://www.acs.org)  
[www.rsc.org](http://www.rsc.org)

While dealing with scientific theories, teachers can share life-stories of scientists and initiate discussions by asking open-ended questions. One website:

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/secretlife/teachers/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/secretlife/teachers/)

contains a series of blogposts/videoclips/teaching tips entitled 'The secret life of scientists and engineers' that presents today's leading scientists, showing viewers a human side of science that many students can relate to.

Many times students have arguments about the groups they're in, sharing of resources and sorting mutual differences – all these issues contribute to developing the affective domain. When teaching the concept of coordination and response, a field trip can be organized for students to the local blind school/special school. Students have the opportunity to identify the needs of those communities and can carry out a service project such as conducting an eye-camp for local villagers.

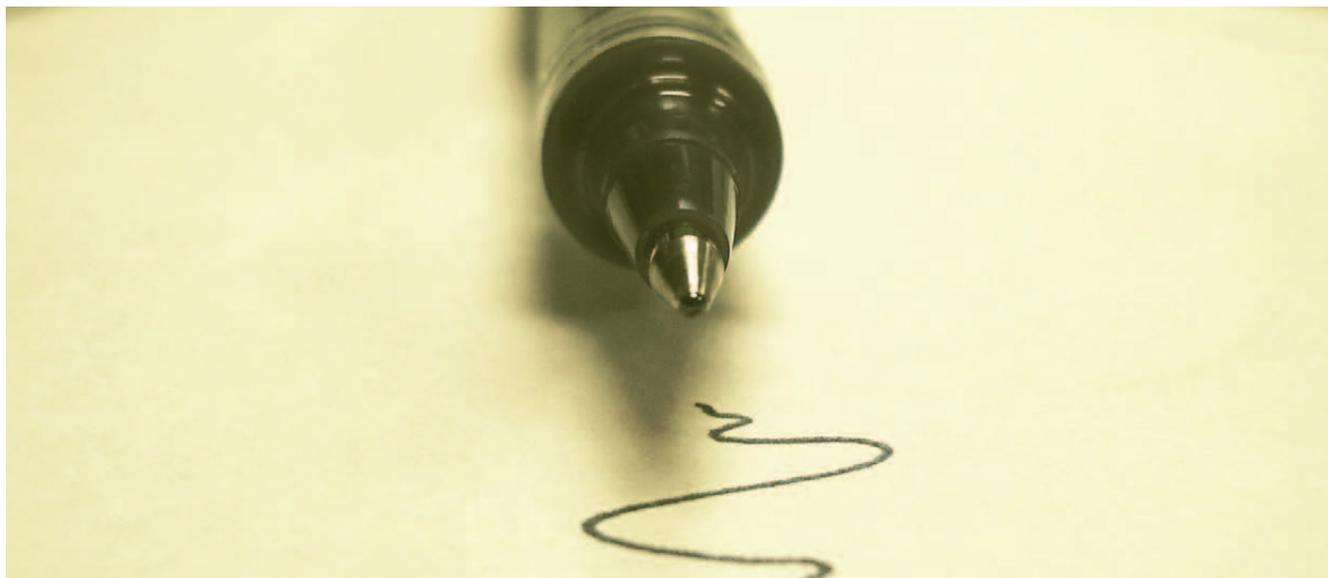
In short, teachers carry a lot of responsibility on our shoulders but there are practical difficulties. As a teacher are you thinking 'When should I allow collaboration in classes? How will I finish the syllabus? Is having a disciplined and organized classroom one of the appraisal criteria?' Do traditional teaching methods encourage more productive learning and lead to better assessment scores?' My response to such questions is to ask 'How can students become inquirers and principled if teachers act only as transmitters of information? Is producing better scores the only job of an IB educator?'. Teaching is a profession where intellect and emotions are involved together, so when teachers' feelings are considered, when they have freedom of expression and are respected and happy, they will reflect these feelings and attitudes which will be communicated to students, who in turn will learn to care and respect.

In Skelton's words (2007): 'the development of international mindedness is more complex and messy, more personal and emotional, than many seem to believe or want to admit. It is dependent upon a continually successful series of developments of the self that transcend and include each other.'

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# The pen is mightier than the keyboard

In the second of two articles on cursive writing and self-identity, Lawrence Burke argues that handwriting needs to be reinstated as a core standard

*In using computers writers are flirting with a radical separation of mind and body, the elimination of the work from the work of the mind. The text on the computer screen, and the computer print out too, has a sterile, untouched, factory made look ... the body does not work like that. The body characterizes everything it touches. What it makes it traces over with the marks of its pulses and breathings, its excitements, hesitations, flaws and mistakes ... and to those of us who love and honor the life of the body of this world, these marks are precious things, the necessities of life.*

(Berry, 1990: 194)

It needs to be remembered that as verbal communication is learned through exposure to its unique sounds and intuitive resonances it becomes quite instinctual for a child to recall, learn and reproduce these into a coherent audible language. The same cannot be said of learning to write words. Written language is an invented construct and is an intrinsic art form unique to humankind. It has yet to be mimicked by animals and other creatures and it has not yet been perfected through any kind of technology. Critics of this argument may disagree, as there are a number of software programs and downloadable apps which can either support those who are already literate writers or re-present manuscript and cursive script for those who are semi-literate writers – these

are the great digital impersonators of this learned human skill. When we consider technology's ability to decipher the cursive script it becomes apparent how difficult this is to achieve along with an ability to replicate it. Microsoft's cursive handwriting recognizer is an example of one such attempt to understand why, how and what humans write. It collected millions of writing samples across multiple languages and from a cross section of human beings from kindergarten to the retired and elderly who have long since left formal education of any kind. Yet its program still only gives a limited selection of letters or words from a list of possibilities. It is very much a guessing game lacking accuracy, fluency and credibility (Pittman, 2006).

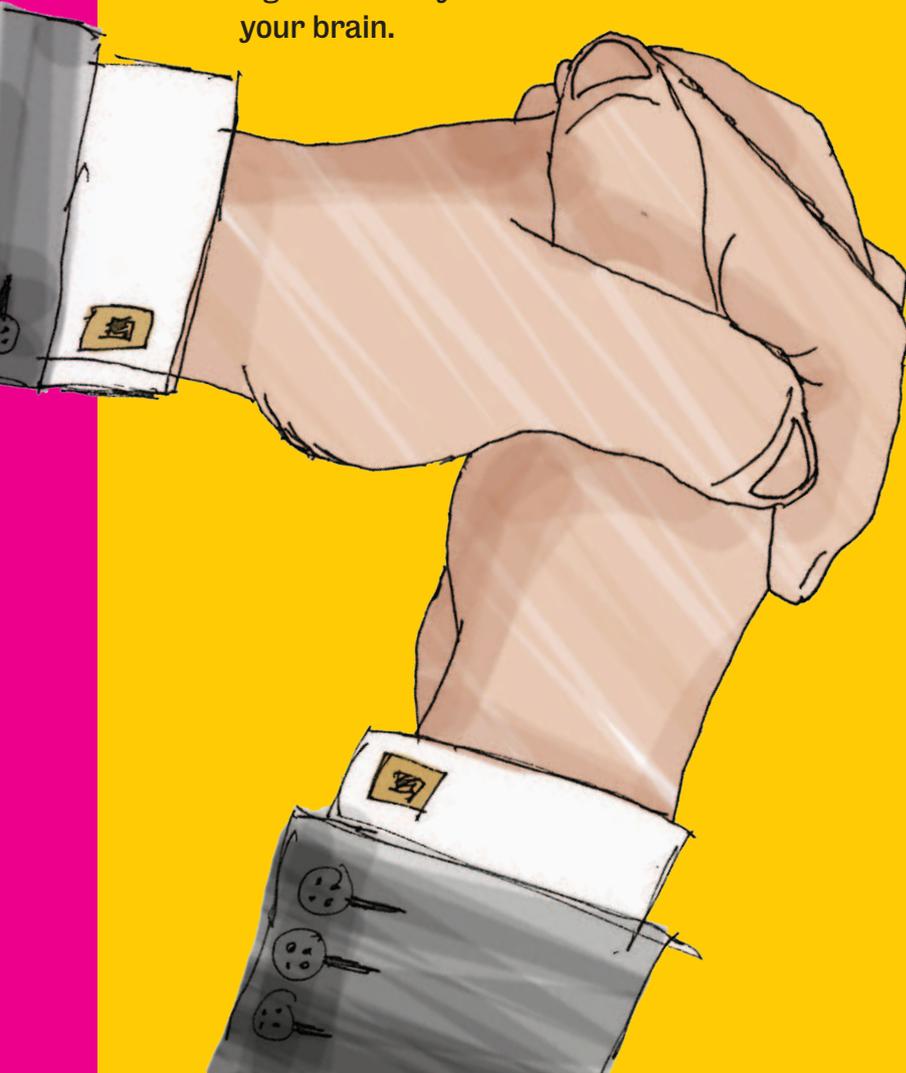
## **The Pen is Mightier than the Keyboard**

Graham, in an insightful and well-argued essay, asserts that handwriting as a literacy skill not only improves students' writing ability but supports the development of the 'quantity and quality' of the writing (Graham, 2009-2010). He further claims that if children cannot form letters with any reasonable accuracy, speed and legibility they cannot translate the language from their minds into a written form (Graham, 2009-2010). Others may argue that by playing with an iPad app in kindergarten or using a word processor in Grade 1 and so on, a child will develop the requisite skill to write. But this is a false supposition, not borne out by the

# Connecting the skills that matter

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evidence of how we learn. When a small child learns to write they experience their writing instrument as an extension of themselves. Their ability to fully differentiate the tool, task and mind, body dichotomy isn't fully cognizant to them, but as they are tutored and guided in developing the finesse required of the written word, like Barret, they'll soon come to know what it means to be an extension of the writing implement in their grasp:

*My language is a region of Being I inhabit. And here the comparison of language to a tool falls short. I do not use my language in a way I use a keyboard. With this simple sentence the whole elaborate model of language as an instrument and nothing but an instrument crashes to the ground. Familiar as my keyboard might be, intimately as I may know the touch and feel its keys, it still stands external to my life in a way that my language does not. I shall soon replace this keyboard – its keys have begun to stick – and it will be forgotten. My last expiring thoughts, assuming I am still conscious, will be in my language*  
(Barret, 1979: 173)

Learning to write requires a child to connect sounds, symbols and thoughts into an internal dialogue of coherent patterns which are able to generate an organized set of ideas which can be reproduced on paper. Even an iPad app or a CALL software program will only be able to mimic this complex affective, psychomotor and cognitive function up to a point – it cannot enter a child's mind to over-write the child's own neuro-linguistic circuitry and programming.

Handwriting, in particular cursive writing, is a complex performance indicator of the proper functioning of psychomotor and bio-mechanical process which tell us the level and ability of a child's developmental process (Bouwien, Smits & Van Galen, 1997). It requires an extended time for learning and practice for a child to become proficient, competent and literate in the skill. Given that the teaching and learning of the dexterity of handwriting takes place over several years of a child's development, it must compete with exposure to other external and internal forces and phenomena vying for the child's attention. Today these distractions center around passive edutainment and online activity which is favored over pro-active longer periods of active learning which promote healthy neurological development. Cris Rowan, the world renowned Canadian occupational therapist, warns of the lifetime debilitating effects this is having on children. Among her staggering statistics it is claimed that elementary aged children spend up to 7.5 hours per day in combined technology use and that "Baby TV" occupies 2.2 hours per day for the 0-2 year old populations (Rowan, 2013). Her compelling argument that a child's developing sensory systems have not evolved biologically to integrate the sedentary and tumultuous nature of 21st century technological changes has a profound impact on understanding the struggle for children today to master the basics of the foundations of literacy (Rowan, 2013). According to Rowan there's a causal link between the new disorders such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity, coordination and sensory processing disorders and sound, stable neurological development which facilitates

the development of key literacy skills including handwriting whether it be manuscript or cursive writing.

In the 1996 dramatic film *The Crucible*, moments before John Proctor (played by the inimitable Daniel Day-Lewis) is executed he is asked why he won't repent and sign a legal statement admitting to witchcraft and sorcery. His reply is that all he has is his good name and as such it will remain so even after his death because he will not admit to something which is a lie. For John Proctor in the 17th century, a cursive written signature is a powerful determiner of his identity. Several hundred years later it remained so for millions of generations up until the early years of the 21st century.

Cursive signatures written by hand are our identifier. We develop them as children, play with them, experiment with them and even try to match one another's as closely as possible – playfully yet unintentionally acting out our little forgeries as if waiting to be caught. In real life we sign our school documents and college applications, job contracts and driver's licenses and ID cards. Our cursive signatures open and close our bank accounts, allow withdrawing and depositing funds; we sign our deeds, bills, loans and our passports to prove who we are. Our cursive signature is one of our last vestiges of privacy unique to who we are in an age where privacy is viewed as no longer a civil virtue and right, but more of a trait of those with something to hide. Our cursive signatures may soon be lost to an age of digital mediocrity unless cursive handwriting is rescued and reinstated as a core standard in our school curricula.

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# Mother tongue or lip service?

## Laurie Kraaijeveld on the challenges of running effective self-taught literature in the IB Diploma Programme

School-supported self-taught literature programmes play an important role in breathing life into the IB mission statement of ‘creat[ing] a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect’. Through the academic study of their mother tongue, IB Diploma Programme students expand their knowledge of the language and culture of their home country, which makes it possible for them to return to their parents’ country and grow as balanced bilinguals. The programme also contributes to preserving language diversity at a time when UNESCO estimates that half of the languages currently spoken around the world will have disappeared by the end of the 21st century. However, despite these laudable objectives and growing diversity in the student body, few international schools have opted for implementing large-scale self-taught programmes. Some merely praise mother tongue education without offering any practical solutions for setting it up. Why? Because mother tongue programmes are challenging to lead and manage. Whilst the IB provides a generic syllabus for all Language A: Literature courses, Coordinators need to deal with a variety of issues ranging from course authorisation, students’ work ethic in multiple subjects, relationships with parents, resources and tutor training.

One of the first obstacles to offering the course may be its authorisation. The IB currently offers 57 self-taught languages, at Standard Level only, and will consider authorising other languages as ‘special requests, provided eight works of literary merit can be submitted that were originally written in the language concerned. A course of study will then need to be compiled by a specialist. In the past, I have successfully applied for authorisation of the following languages: Romanian, Khmer, Armenian, Tibetan, Vietnamese, Zulu and Shona. Recently a newly appointed Coordinator has asked me about Divehi, the national language of the Maldives. I advised him to contact the University of Male to enquire whether a specialist could assist him in preparing a proposal for a course of study.

Once an academic programme has been approved in principle by the IB, the next challenge will be to identify an examiner. Last year, the IB accepted our proposal for Zulu, but it turned out that they did not have an examiner for this subject. So I contacted the Head of African Languages at the University of Cape Town and she recommended a specialist to the IB. Our Zulu student is currently the only one taking this subject in the whole world – something on which we pride ourselves. Following authorisation, the Coordinator



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*Self-taught students sharing their experience of learning their mother tongue at a parents' forum*

will seek parents' support in identifying a suitable tutor who can guide their child through the course, unless the Coordinator is able to recommend someone. Typical issues include parents not liking the tutor recommended by the school, or a tutor lacking the required skills and qualifications. Sometimes parents will not contact the tutor because they assume that the school will take charge of everything, including hiring and paying tutors.

The next issue concerns the way students engage with the programme. Some students will struggle academically and tell me that the amount of work they put into their self-taught subject is more than for a Higher Level subject. That is usually because they have never been schooled in that language, and understandably struggle with its formal aspects. Some of these students will develop resilience early on, while others will complain and feel overwhelmed by the workload, especially if they have to see their tutor after school or at weekends. Sometimes students forget online appointments and ignore emails from their tutors. It is all the easier to hide away from the subject when it is not timetabled during the school day, and it can become a challenge that students avoid. In the past, however, I have had model self-taught students who are exemplary in their study habits, level of self-awareness, drive, discipline and maturity, such as a student from Swaziland who got up every Saturday at 8 am for a Skype session with her Siswati tutor based in the United States. Coordinators need to accept, though, that very few students will display these qualities at the beginning of the programme, and will need to design tools and a structure to help students develop them.

Another common issue pertains to course materials. Some languages will have a plethora of resources available online, whilst others will require families to purchase books in their home countries and ship them. This is what ends up happening for most languages. In addition, students often

find it daunting to embark on a course for which there are no language-specific exemplars and textbooks. The final difficulty involves tutors. In the past I have had issues with finding tutors of Hebrew and Tibetan and, surprisingly, German and French! Although it may seem contradictory, it is often more challenging to find tutors of more widely spoken languages than it is for those less widely spoken. This is because minority language tutors tend to have a stronger commitment to helping to keep their heritage alive than do majority language tutors. The most common issues arising regarding tutors once they have been identified are lack of IB experience and training, reporting and following the course planner prescribed by the school.

Given all these challenges, it is worth asking why schools should offer such a programme. Despite all the setbacks mentioned, we need to beware of 'impossibilising'; ie focusing on obstacles and missing invaluable educational opportunities. None of these issues are insurmountable. And for them not to appear insurmountable, we need school and programme leaders to show a genuine commitment to the benefits of mother tongue education and to communicate them clearly to students and parents. We need programme leaders who never tire of investigating resources and finding solutions to problems. Because, above all, these challenges pale in comparison with the benefits that self-taught students experience as learners who take charge of their learning and develop a secure sense of identity and belonging through studying their mother tongue.

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# Supporting ESL students

## Caroline Scott on the development of a new project to help new-to-English learners

As an educator, passionate about fulfilling the needs of ESL learners, I have been working on multiple ESL projects including teaching, advising and training teachers as well as writing supportive material and developing resources. This has finally led me to consider a customisable online learning portal for new-to-English learners stepping into schools where English is the language of instruction. This seemed a natural step forward for supporting ESL young learners, as advancements in technology can offer guided learning experience alongside their lessons that supports busy teachers with learners of many levels of English in their classes.

I have been working with professionals from various backgrounds to develop an effective English language learning portal that fully adheres to good practice in teaching and learning. Six months ahead and we are working on overcoming the obstacles.

Some elements just cannot be accomplished without a teacher – notably the teacher's personal touch and the emotional support a teacher can provide exactly where needed. The speaking element has also been difficult to replicate as our portal doesn't replace a conversation. Having said that, we have also found great benefits and ways to adapt the environment to ensure learners are getting the most benefit from working online. Important points that have become clearer during our work include the following:

- Online learning can allow learners to work independently, helping them to take responsibility for their learning. This is especially important when teachers have significant curriculum content to plough through alongside responding to language learning demands.
- It can provide an exciting platform for learners to engage with new language. A learner is often having so much fun, the learning is not perceived as difficult. It's perceived more like an exciting mission they need to accomplish!
- Student reflection can be incorporated to ensure that learners and teachers are aware of their challenges. This way, young learners can revisit these challenges independently which encourages them to take more ownership of their progress. This can help teachers easily identify additional language learning requirements and then to revisit topics in class to overcome language learning obstacles quickly.
- The ease of accessing various tracking statistics, including results over time and progress of learners, to identify the impact of their studies both on- and off-line as well as identifying difficulties that can be targeted in lessons in the same way as student reflections.
- Achievement can be related to the ability the

learner develops in using more of the language to ensure the learning experience is meaningful. For example, learners are recognised for their ability to communicate rather than winning stars or rosettes, often present in language learning games.

- Pictures can represent the vocabulary and language structures that need to be learnt and therefore translation is not required. Although I always foster the use of mother tongue in language learning, it's very difficult to translate effectively into every language. Many teachers have multiple language requirements for the learners in their class and need to know that each child can access the language learning experience. Mother tongue can still be fostered by making connections as pictures are introduced.
- Cummins (1991) outlined the difference between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) – the basics of the language needed to communicate, or what I call 'survival language', and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) – the more technical language needed for academic proficiency. With a carefully thought out learning portal, we can offer the survival language alongside the more complex technical language required to access the curriculum.

Collectively, this learning tool will provide significant support for learners and, inevitably, busy teachers in need of some solutions to support their English language learners within the demands of the curriculum. We are about to begin our BETA testing phase of the Learning Village (the online learning environment discussed here) so I am eager to see how effective this language learning platform is at supporting our learners! If you would like to be involved with this project please email us at [info@communicationacrosscultures.com](mailto:info@communicationacrosscultures.com). We need your feedback!

### Reference

Cummins, J. (1991) Language Development and Academic Learning, in J Malave and G Duquette (eds) Language, Culture and Cognition Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

*Caroline Scott has taught young learners and trained teachers in the UK, Thailand, China and the Middle East. She was the founding Head of Primary at CES, a British International School in Cairo, and Primary Principal at the International School of Milan. She is currently based in UK schools as an EAL (English as an Additional Language) teacher and EAL advisor, and continues to work with international schools as an EAL trainer. [Email: [caroline@communicationacrosscultures.com](mailto:caroline@communicationacrosscultures.com)]*

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# Halcyon days for new school

Mary Langford and Terry Hedger report on an exciting new venture in London

What happens when a group of parents cannot find the kind of international school they want for their children? They start one. While this story is not uncommon in parts of the world where international schools are yet to be introduced, it is unusual in a city like London where several long-established international schools already exist. And yet, over the past few years, four long-term resident expatriates, all informed and aspirational parents who are big believers in the International Baccalaureate, have been dreaming of a new kind of school that might deliver the IB in London: a 21st Century, 'life-readying', internationally-minded school where the values of the IB Mission are reflected in its own core aims; where every constituent – from board members to catering staff and teachers – models the IB Learner Profile; where the leadership and management philosophy embodies a commitment to community and outreach even in its corporate structure; a school that is forward-looking in its use of technology.

Motivated by this goal, these parents embarked on the journey from 'idea' to 'reality' in only fifteen exhilarating months. They engaged two international education consultants to help them carry out research into the best current educational practices worldwide, to meet with the IB, ECIS, NEASC, CIS and other professional colleagues, to develop a mission and business plan for the school, and to register as a charity to become the first not-for-profit co-educational, exclusively-IB school in London. (They intend to introduce a bursary programme for local students from the school's second year.) These visionaries used considerable ingenuity to find a property near Marble Arch in the heart of London's vibrant West End. They generated an amazing level of enthusiastic support not only to fund the project with a sustainable financial model, but also to attract a top-drawer team of energetic and inspiring teachers, and to galvanize thirty families who signed up to a building site and a dream – and who trusted their children's educational

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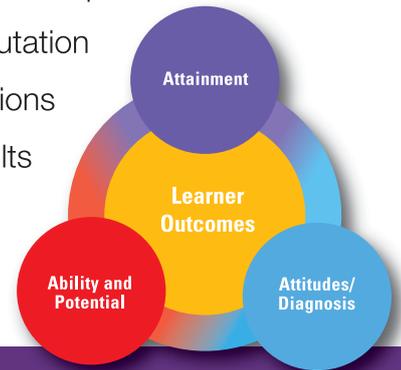
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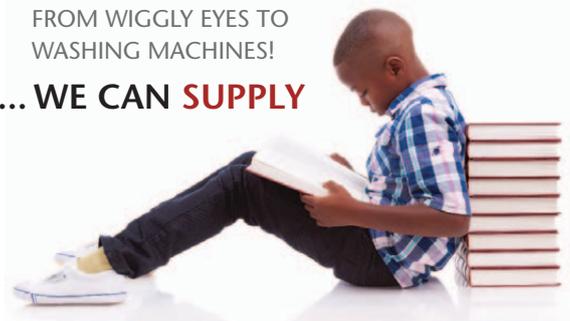
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future to the founders' vision and a belief that the school would become a huge success. IB Learner Profile 'risk takers' every one of them!

Halcyon London International School opened in September 2013 as an IB Middle Years Programme and IB Diploma Programme candidate school, with 34 students in Grades 6 through 9 and its mission statement proclaiming 'Building on the foundations of the IB, Halcyon is a thinking community, committed to holistic teaching and learning; nurturing engaged, reflective and responsible, life-ready, global citizens.' Enrolment rose to 30% after one term, and growth projections are positive. Grade 10 opens in 2014, Grade 11 and the Diploma Programme in September 2015, and the first batch of students will graduate in June 2017. Halcyon has already successfully undergone its first full Ofsted (UK) inspection.

The beauty of a new school is that it presents a blank canvas, a particular advantage when considering the use of technology. Halcyon opted for 1:1 iPads and classrooms equipped with HD televisions and Apple TV. iTunesU is the basis of the digital curriculum and, along with Face Time, enables students to access lessons from anywhere at any time. Students use e-textbooks and they all have immediate access to up-to-date internet resources worldwide, often in their mother tongue as well as in English. A digital

library is under development using KOHA – an open source management system, while Managebac supports management of the curriculum and reporting. A proposal to require all students to take one of their IBDP subjects online is under consideration, as studying in this way is thought to be an essential preparation for university.

Parents are important partners in this school's infancy, offering welcome support in many ways. A mother tongue language programme honours the cultural diversity reflected in the community. Strategic partnerships are being forged to the benefit of the school and its students. Teachers continue to find hundreds of exciting ways to tap into London's many educational resources and experiences to support the students' learning. New developments are likely to emerge as the school continues its IBMYP and DP candidate progress, and as it embarks on its NEASC accreditation. Halcyon days, indeed.

*Mary Langford and Terry Hedger are the international education consultants working with Halcyon's founders. Terry Hedger is the Founding Director.*

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[terry@halcyonschool.co.uk](mailto:terry@halcyonschool.co.uk)]*



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*The programmes at Mundus College are designed for students with gaps in their learning*

# Turning international

## Boris Prickarts reports on how a Dutch group is internationalizing all its schools

Amsterdam, for better or worse, calls to mind a blend of relaxed tolerance, culture, tightly-packed gabled houses, hump-backed bridges over curving canals and – when they happen – the setting for social disorders in the Netherlands. In Amsterdam schools, migrant and often less advantaged students from non-Western countries such as Morocco, Turkey, Surinam, the Antilles, Iraq and Afghanistan disproportionately end up at the age of twelve in pre-vocational (VMBO) tracks of the highly standardised and stratified Dutch secondary schooling system. Set against this backdrop, the Esprit School Group has set out to learn from international education how to provide more equal access opportunities to, and improve the quality of, programmes within and between its schools for all students.

### Esprit International

In 2011, the Esprit School Group adopted a policy called Esprit International, a policy that aims to internationalise all its ten schools, drawing upon the experience of just one of them: the Amsterdam International Community School (AICS). This is a so-called Dutch International School, or state-sponsored school in the Netherlands for internationally mobile students. It offers the IPC (International Primary Curriculum) to students aged 4-11 and the IB MYP and DP (International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme) to students aged 12-18. The aims of Esprit International are a mix between market and ideological considerations. This means that the

policy should improve international schooling and career opportunities for more Amsterdam students, offer professional development opportunities for Esprit employees, preserve Amsterdam as a socially cohesive society, and make the city an even more attractive place for transnational companies to locate and to send their workers' families to settle. As an integral part of the policy, in 2013 the Esprit School Group set up a new international school for migrant students, called De Internationale School (DIS). Prior to the founding of DIS, its secondary students had been following Dutch language immersion programmes before, mainly, joining national programmes at three Esprit VMBO schools. What follows are brief descriptions of the internationalisation of education efforts at the new international school and the three VMBO schools called the Marcanti College, Berlage Lyceum, and Mundus.

### The new international school

At the DIS, students from abroad – including refugees and increasingly, it is hoped, students from Amsterdam – learn Dutch and English, and acquire a disposition geared towards multicultural and multilingual ability and preparedness to handle and value differences and diversity. The IMYC (International Middle Years Curriculum) provides the core units of work and, together with Dutch language and Mathematics programmes, it aims to provide a comprehensive education full of inspiration and challenge.

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An exchange student from Marcanti College (right) at school in Turkey



The new migrant international school is a challenge for the Esprit School group too, as it aims to be attractive to all (migrant) students between four and sixteen years of age, regardless of their background or expected level of education. This new enterprise is instilling a sense of optimism and energy amongst DIS staff, which is also inspiring planning and decision-making amongst staff at the other Esprit schools. At a so-called Centre of Expertise, time is being set aside for all Esprit staff members for drawing up and consolidating internationalisation plans and, especially, for training, reflection and feedback.

#### **The three VMBO schools: Marcanti**

At the Marcanti College, a predominantly vocational school with a large population of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean students, internationalisation is aimed at students developing confidence and an attitude of mutual understanding and respect. An exchange programme with a nearby Christian school, called 'Talking Stick', and an exchange programme with a school in Istanbul, called 'Business Plus', have been created to this effect. Other outside school project plans include partnerships with 'on-site coaches' at the flower auction in Aalsmeer, Schiphol airport, Hemhavens harbour, the international Food Centre and the creative industry. Some extra English lessons have been organised. There is no standard extra English or home language (e.g. Arabic) education. These lessons are considered to be too much of a burden for students who often already have Dutch language learning gaps. The 'opportunity cost' is considered too high. Internationalisation is seen as part of a drive to create a more seamless transition from vocational to higher level (MAVO/ HAVO) programmes. Teachers need training to be more outward-looking and spend more energy on the creation of 'out-of-school' (and 'out of the box') programmes.

#### **Berlage and Mundus**

At the Berlage Lyceum, a relatively large ethnically and socio-economically mixed school for vocational and higher

(HAVO and VWO) education, internationalisation is aimed at students making connections with the world outside school in order to discover what they need if they are to make 'the right choices' (i.e. suiting their talents and interests). The bilingual, exchange and special project programmes, including CLIL (content and language integrated learning), are also designed to provide students with the option to 'go global' (eg a study abroad, travel). At Mundus, a relatively large vocational school with many Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean students, internationalisation is aimed at students creating opportunities and crossing cultural as well as socio-economic borders, leading to upward social mobility. So-called third generation – migrant – kids (TGKs) often experience a mismatch between street, home and school culture. Programmes such as a room in school for parents to share their talents, and an extended school day with after-school activities for the students, are aimed at bridging the gaps between these different cultures, as well as the development of talent, passion, desired attitudes and an increase in pride taken by the students in their identity and culture. A special programme is aimed at the joint participation in the updating of the school's shared values and rules. The programmes at Mundus are designed for students with gaps in their learning, and the issue of early stratification and the need for pedagogical differentiation is a pressing one. Teachers need to be trained to have consistently high expectations. There is an ambition to work with English native speaking technology teachers who can challenge and inspire the students. Along with the other Esprit schools, these two schools raise interesting issues about international education in a context that is different from the more 'traditional' international schools in which it is often found. All Esprit schools provide useful and informative indications of how international education might develop as the 21st century progresses.

*Boris Prickarts is founding headmaster of the Amsterdam International Community School (AICS), one of the Esprit schools [Email: b.prickarts@aics.espritscholen.nl]*

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*The International Teacher Education for Primary Schools (ITEPS) course welcomed its first students in September 2012*



# Training teachers for an international career

Tim Unsworth and Peter Elting reflect on the first year of the new International Teacher Education for Primary Schools (ITEPS) degree course

Ask yourself how much training you had to prepare you for working in an international school, and the answer is probably a generous 'very little'. For the past seven years a course aimed at preparing students for teaching in international schools has been in development, as a means of addressing the lack of preparation many teachers have for working in the international school sector. In September 2012 the International Teacher Education for Primary Schools (ITEPS) course opened its doors to its first group of students. In this article, we describe the course and look back on its first year.

The need for ITEPS grew from a realisation that there is enormous growth in the number of international schools and globally-mobile families, and that teachers with specific international school training would be in great demand. ITEPS is a joint venture of teacher training colleges in the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway and has been described

as 'one course across three campuses'. The language of the course is English and, because of its international focus, in addition to the subjects you would expect to find in an initial teacher education course, ITEPS students go much deeper into language-learning, inclusion and diversity in education, democratic citizenship and a study of the main curricula used around the world, as well as those used in international schools. Intercultural competency is integrated in every subject of ITEPS to further reinforce the global nature of the course. For most aspects of their work, our students make extensive use of technology. We encourage them to reflect upon their experiences, and they use a blog system to review the development of their key competencies.

English is clearly a very important aspect of a course such as this. Students are expected to have at least B2 (CEF) in English before they start the course, and must raise this to C1 by the end of the first year and C2 by the end of



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the course (Cambridge Proficiency Certificate in English). Learning English is based on a combination of weekly classes and self-study, as well as osmosis, since the whole course is delivered in English. Many of our students are not native English speakers, but what makes them qualified to teach English is that they know, first hand, what it's like to learn the language from scratch, the challenges and frustrations, and the benefits of re-learning grammar. As well as English language study, our students enjoy looking at the popular literature used in international schools for 4 to 12 year-olds, and they have a lot of healthy debate discussing the merits (and sometimes otherwise!) of commonly-used reading schemes.

In the second and third years of the course, students choose from a range of optional subjects, including Intercultural Understanding and Religion, and Special Needs. These last for five months and at least one of them must be taken at one of the other two partner colleges (in the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway), where they will also continue with teaching practice to add to their international experience. In the fourth and final year of the course the students have to prove they have mastered all the ITEPS competencies by means of a final teaching practice and a bachelors thesis. The final teaching practice and bachelors thesis (which can be based on research in the international school/classroom) will be preferably done at an international school in another country.

So, what kind of student do we manage to attract, and how well-equipped will they be at the end of the course? Our students have to have a high standard of English at the start. They have also had to demonstrate a broad general knowledge of the world. In addition to this we look for adaptability, confidence and some experience with working with children. Many of our students have worked with children abroad, either in domestic child-care or on third-world outreach projects. Above all, our students are under no illusion about the personal accountability and professional standards demanded by international schools. They also have a sense of fun, adventure and a desire to travel. During the course, they hone their teaching skills, including taking a critical look at the quality of learning taking place in the classroom. They also widen their general knowledge of culture and the most commonly-found systems in international schools, as well as comparing national school systems. Our students become well-versed and

experienced in using the National Curriculum for England, the IB Primary Years Programme and the International Primary Curriculum.

Opportunities for teaching practice are literally global. Our students spend their first-year teaching practice mainly at international schools, but also in local primary schools, and are now looking forward to spreading their wings in future with extended teaching practice in recognised international schools around the world. Coordinating this is interesting and challenging, and ITEPS makes full use of conferences such as ECIS to canvas for cooperation from member schools. Indeed, if you were at the November 2013 ECIS conference in Amsterdam, you may well have encountered our second year students as they played a high profile role in the running of the conference.

During the construction of the course, the ITEPS consortium has sought and been given much advice from key players in international education; teachers and head teachers, information services and curriculum developers, as well as experts in the field of teacher training. ITEPS has also established an Advisory Board with an enviable list of names. Now that the course is in full-swing, ITEPS is looking to the future; to Masters possibilities as well as a version of the course focussed on secondary education. We don't stand still, the whole world is out there and, as we say in ITEPS, 'teaching means the world to me'!

*ITEPS is a joint-venture between Stenden University in the Netherlands, University College Zealand in Denmark and Buskerud and Vestfold University College in Norway. If you would like to talk about the possibility of hosting one of our students for teaching practice, or contributing to the course in some way, please contact [info@iteps.eu](mailto:info@iteps.eu) or alternatively email the programme manager [Peter Elting; [peter.elting@stenden.com](mailto:peter.elting@stenden.com)]. Further information can be found at [www.iteps.eu](http://www.iteps.eu).*



# Thriving on diversity

## Peter Ashbourne explains the aims and vision of a new internationally-minded UK free school

The Europa School offers a European Education to pupils in and around Oxfordshire. The driving vision for the school is that every pupil should develop a deep understanding and enjoyment of all learning, particularly the Sciences. Pupils who graduate should be fluent and literate in at least two languages. This will fully prepare them for a future in which language skills and a global perspective will enhance job prospects and enable a richer cultural life.

Underpinning this vision is our passionate belief in the educational and economic benefits of multi-lingual, multi-cultural education. We also desire to respond to the growing demand for a school of this kind from many families living and working in the area.”

On 4 September 2012 the Europa School UK opened its doors to an initial intake of pupils aged 4 to 7 years old, the beginning of an adventure which will take these pupils, and many to follow, through a proven strong programme

culminating in the European Baccalaureate. In combining its status as one of England’s new Free Schools with the programme of the European Schools, it has a unique approach.

In 1978 a European School was set up in Culham to meet the needs of families involved with the nearby Joint European Torus (JET) project. JET stopped being a European Institution in 1999, and in 2007 it was decided to close the school in 2017, as funding from the European Schools’ budget could no longer be justified. The school had always enjoyed great popularity locally as well as providing for JET families, and its closure would have left a gap in educational provision in the area. This was the catalyst to bring together the group responsible for founding the Europa School UK.

Free Schools are a recent initiative in England: centrally funded state schools, set up by interested parties acting on local parental demand. Among the “freedoms” associated

Principal Peter Ashbourne is pictured with Europa School pupils



with Free School status, freedom to choose the curriculum enabled us to adopt the European Schools' programme. Alongside the fourteen European Schools of the original model (created in 1953), there are now nine Accredited European Schools, funded independently of the main system but licensed to offer the curriculum leading to the European Baccalaureate. The Europa School is on the point of becoming the tenth such school.

The new school, located on the same site in Culham, is based on more complex needs than those of the first European Schools. The assumption then was of providing for families displaced to serve the European institutions and needing education for their children, with a strong home connection and a common identity for the school. Native language was therefore supplemented by a "vehicular" language, which in secondary school enabled pupils to study History and Geography through the language and culture of others. In Culham, the European School was already providing for a more diverse population, and it was clear that Europa would extend that diversity. We have families who are already bilingual with English as a third language, others who are English speakers much at home in Oxfordshire, and between them a broad spectrum of language experience and need. Our pupils have entered with at least sixteen different languages between them.

We decided to concentrate on English, French and German. We have two classes in each year group, one learning through English and German, the other through English and French. The teaching staff change at midday on Wednesday, so that pupils learn to identify each language with particular adults. Our approach is gentle immersion, where the teacher will always speak in the language of the day and encourage pupils to do the same, but a child asking to go to the toilet in the "wrong" language will be heard!

In the words of a smiling father at the end of the first half term: "it's working". Using age-adapted can-do statements of the European Common Framework, we have measured steady growth in language competence, while at the same time maintaining good progress through the curriculum. On half a week of English, our pupils are matching, on national measures, the success of peers in schools with a normal five days of learning through English. We can see how the learning in one language is supporting progress in the other, but we hope for much more, and we are beginning now to see the cognitive advantages of the approach we have adopted.

Much research has shown the benefits of bilingualism in improving capacity for learning and understanding throughout the curriculum. Our decision to make the Europa School bilingual from the point of entry is therefore well supported, but in one way we are breaking new ground. Studies into the benefits of bilingual education have concentrated on relatively simple bilingual environments: French and English in Canada, Spanish and English in the USA, and so on. Many of our pupils have no home or other environmental connection with one of their two school languages. Around a fifth have a home language other than English, French and German. A few manage two languages at home and another two in school!

Why would a Dutch child add German or French to learning in English? Wouldn't attending a local English school be challenge enough? The answer is that we offer

something much more important. Our school is founded on a principle of the huge advantage in valuing and learning from other cultures. Our staffroom sums it up beautifully: ten nationalities each with a right to bring something to our curriculum model and a duty to respect and learn from the others. It is not a matter of cherry-picking the best, but rather of building a deeper and more effective pedagogy by reflecting on best practices from around Europe and indeed the world. The enthusiasm is contagious – although at times exhausting.

Because each pupil is different, no-one is. New pupils arriving, perhaps not speaking any of our languages, are made to feel welcome, as the others realise what is involved and are immensely supportive. I'm sure it is true to say that those who are engaging with the toughest challenge are those who stand to gain the most.

"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world." I'll risk taking Wittgenstein slightly out of context, because the quote fits us so well. There is no doubt that our pupils' horizons are enlarging, and we know that their capacity for learning will follow suit.

*Peter Ashbourne is Principal of the Europa School UK, having previously taught Mathematics in a number of international schools throughout Europe and held administrative positions in Bosnia, Slovakia, and Switzerland. [Email: p.ashbourne@europaschooluk.org]*

## A TOAST TO MATHEMATICS

by M<sup>2</sup>

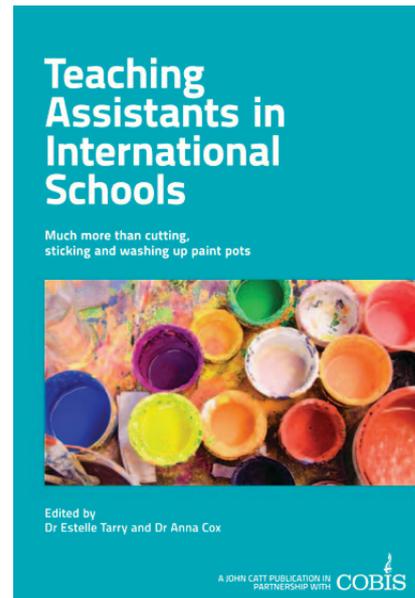
In Maths, it's totally cool to be a square  
 x and y really do make a good pair  
 Using Trigonometry is so much fun  
 A tan is not just from the sun  
 Geometry is not so obtuse, it's acute  
 A log-a-rithm has a beat no one can refute  
 Arithmetic, geometric it need not be  
 One, one, two, three, five is Fibonacci we see  
 I worry is it their, there or they're?  
 No need to speculate, four and four always make eight  
 From alpha to omega, zero to plus or minus infinity  
 There is no other, maths is pure divinity  
 See it, Maths is everywhere  
 Get into it, there's no time to spare!

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# Teaching Assistants in International Schools

Edited by Dr Estelle Tarry  
and Dr Anna Cox  
John Catt Educational in  
partnership with COBIS



Teaching Assistants in International Schools focuses on the work of the army of Teaching Assistants (TAs) who support international schools worldwide in a myriad of ways. Published in partnership with COBIS (Council of British International Schools), editors Drs Estelle Tarry and Anna Cox have assembled contributions from university lecturers, and international school heads and teachers who have worked with TAs, to describe their impact on schools and practice. The TAs themselves are represented in a chapter of assembled case studies. The foreword is by Colin Bell, Executive Director of COBIS, who commissioned the University of Northampton to conduct research with COBIS schools on this subject; as a result they have jointly developed a Certificate for Teaching Assistants in an International Context.

While some of the authors have been immersed at the international school 'chalk face', others are academics whose expertise and research is based on current UK educational practice. The editors open by citing the important contribution made by TAs that are particularly beneficial in the international context: improvement of inclusion by supporting children whose cultural difference or lack of language fluency makes it challenging for them to integrate into the life of the classroom, and the continuity provided by locally-hired TAs who often become long-serving school staff in the midst of a transient international school teaching community. Ken Bland presents an update of the role of the TA in England today, along with a brief analysis of the findings of the COBIS survey, suggesting that TAs have different training needs to those of teachers; intercultural training is required for their work with culturally-diverse learners, and TAs need to strengthen their practice with internationally-mobile children. Wendy Turner's chapter provides a useful overview of children's rights and UK-based child safeguarding legislation to which all COBIS schools must adhere, and which constitute good practice overall. The inclusion of this chapter demonstrates prudence on the part of the editors, who are correct in assuming that TAs from different national and cultural backgrounds may not previously have encountered these

UK regulatory requirements. Andrew Smith's chapters on special educational needs and supporting children with behavioural issues are comprehensive, offering definitions and strategies for dealing with these scenarios; while he makes reference to differences that arise because of culturally different or transient children who make up much of the international school population, issues not discussed include differentiating between ESL and SEN issues, misbehaviour arising from frustration at lack of language comprehension, grief/anger resulting from the experience of mobility, and differences in cultural perspectives to medicating students with behaviour issues.

There follow chapters from the international school perspective about the various roles of TAs working with early childhood, supporting students learning English, working in a large British school in the Middle East, and case studies of 10 TAs located around the world. The final chapters describe the varied backgrounds of TAs who work in international schools and the merit of specific professional development to consolidate previous skills – in some cases even leading to international PGCEs. The editors conclude that the TA has moved on from being the 'extra pair of hands' to becoming a vital and collaborative partner in the classroom – a role that should be recognised by the international school community, and that requires specific professional development to make maximum use of this valuable resource in the school.

Though some chapters in this book could benefit from more elaboration on the relevance of UK research and practice to the international school context, it is a welcome resource not only for senior leaders and teachers who have the important responsibility of managing TAs in their classrooms, but also for TAs themselves who wish to gain a better overall understanding of the professional considerations that affect their daily work.

*Mary Langford is an experienced international school educator now working as an independent consultant with international schools and families.*  
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