

## INTERPRETING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Geneva, 11 – 13 September 2002

### **CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT THEME**

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*[What follows is a summary of the conference theme discussions, as provided by the theme convenor at the end of the conference, followed by abstracts of presentations made within the theme]*

### **THEME SUMMARY**

- A curriculum is an artefact, not a first principle. It is built on principles and values.
  - Defining the first principles of ‘international’ or ‘internationally-minded’ has proven tricky.
  - Perhaps ‘international-mindedness’ is a tapestry woven together from many different elements.
  - In engaging in ‘international’ or ‘international-mindedness’ all of us are in the process of becoming – we change ourselves through our interaction with others of different cultural and national backgrounds and experiences and change our interactions with others through our selves.
  - Becoming internationally-minded is an activity, therefore of ‘self-construction’ as much as ‘self-expression’. It isn’t finite but helps us to ‘go on’. The starting point of this ‘self-destruction’ in international schools is the student’s cultural scaffolding.
  - Becoming internationally-minded is an act of self-construction which enables us to experience, react to and work with the similarities and differences between ourselves and others. It enables us to behave independently and inter-dependently in order to become citizens of and responsible for the world as well as our nation, tribe, family and self.
  - An internationally-minded curriculum is one that helps in that process of self-construction by setting out appropriate developmental states and encouraging teachers, children and students (through teacher facilitation) to engage in similarly appropriate activities relevant to their age, experience, abilities and needs derived from best practice around the world.
  - Assessments of that process of self-construction should reflect the different cultural backgrounds and perspectives of students, teachers and others and should enable the values of international-mindedness to be expressed authentically.
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## **ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS**

### **Introduction and Overview**

#### **Martin Skelton**

Despite much enthusiasm, interest, spirited conversation and hard work, an 'internationally-minded curriculum' still remains much more of an idea than it does a practical application. There are likely to be many reasons why this is the case, some of which will no doubt be explored during this and other strands of the conference. Using the 'four quadrant' approach I will suggest that those of us who are keen on developing such curriculums may have failed to approach the task coherently enough to sustain and consolidate this important work.

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### **What Should International Education Be? From Emergent Theory to Practice**

#### **Boyd Roberts**

1. What is international education? How has the term been used?
2. Relationship to global education / multicultural education
3. Suggested criteria for what constitutes 'international education'
4. How do we move from theory to practice?

With particular reference to the IB Diploma programme, considering how the existing programme can be complemented by introduction of elements of 'global citizenship'

#### **4.1 Global citizenship**

Aims

Elements of global citizenship

Skills

Knowledge

Values

Experience

Action

Expanding on the elements of global citizenship

4.2 Proposal to address global citizenship not by provision of a stand alone add-on programme, but by reviewing all components of existing IB Diploma programme to ensure that, where possible, elements of global citizenship are included within the existing programme. This would require reviewing, for instance, the skills exercised and developed in particular subjects; the books studied in world literature and elsewhere; the service elements of CAS to include a global dimension. Some elements of global citizenship would not readily be addressed within the IB Diploma programme, and would need to be dealt with separately. Schools could opt to address global citizenship in this way, or continue to deliver the IB Diploma programme as at present. Schools opting to address global citizenship in this way would need a commitment from all teachers to a collective effort to develop skills / knowledge / values relevant to global citizenship. The schools would also need to consider how students were provided with opportunities to acquire relevant experience (eg of a very different culture), and to undertake action (which I would take to be things which students do which actually make a difference).

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## **The Role/s of International Education Within the Context of a Globalized World**

**Greg Carroll**

In this presentation I examine some of the major assumptions regarding international education and situate it within the wider concern of globalization utilising the pragmatist method of Charles Sanders Peirce (1960) and William James (1919). The contention of this presentation is that subscription to different philosophical orientations will determine whether international education serves emancipatory or hegemonic interests. Both international education and globalization are subject to definitional pressures based on different philosophical stances, and these need to be examined so that we can come to an understanding of both the possible benefits to be gained and the perils to be avoided. As stated by Michael Apple 'How we think about something makes a difference, not only at the level of theory, but in terms of practice as well' (Apple, 1992, p 779).

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## **Interpreting International Education in the Social Studies Classroom**

**Tobin Bechtel**

What happens to internationalism in the classroom? Is it at the centre of inquiry and planning or seen as a requirement to 'get through' or 'bolt on'? Do teachers have the necessary skills, training, desire and confidence to teach 'international' courses? Many social studies programs in schools claim to be international with descriptive titles such as Global Awareness and World Studies. Are students truly developing international understanding in these courses? Even within the umbrella of social studies there are differing visions of what constitutes an international approach and a distinct dichotomy emerges in middle school (12-16 year olds) between integrated, thematic studies and discipline-based studies. Taking these perennial questions into consideration, this presentation examines some of the ways social studies teachers have taught international courses 'in the field' and engages in a discussion of what could define a practical international social studies curriculum.

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## **Special Needs and Access to Education**

**Graeme Donnan**

Does the practice of international education mean anything different to those students who have special needs than it does for others? Are students with special needs prevented from access to an international education as a consequence of their individual learning needs, segregation or practical issues? I argue that access can only be achieved through a policy of inclusive education that is ideologically consistent with the practice of international education. There are practical problems that must be overcome owing to differences across countries in the perception, diagnosis, monitoring and management of special needs. Managing a school policy that requires screening, the writing of individual education plans and appropriate staff development may help to overcome the barriers that prevent access to a programme of international education.

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## **How Can an International Assessment System Take Account of Cultural Differences?**

**Roger Brown**

International education providers who espouse the values of internationalism will need to incorporate a culturally fair assessment system into their programmes. A culturally fair assessment system is one that recognises and takes account of the cultural backgrounds of all persons involved in the assessment process. This presentation will use Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures as a basis for developing an assessment system that takes account of cultural differences.

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## **Cultural Differences and Learning**

**Michael Allan**

How can education in international schools be inclusive in terms of the multiple differing types of cultural contexts from which the students draw their experience? In view of the myriad and differing natures of international schools and their population a quality assurance programme in international schools must look beyond traditional processes in order to evaluate effectiveness, and take into account the cultural dissonance experienced by children from different cultural backgrounds who have been socialised in conflict with the expectations of the school. As well as the formal curriculum, this presentation examines process factors such as teaching and learning styles, teacher/student interaction and the informal curriculum from a cross-cultural perspective. It presents ideas for norms of quality assurance in the process of multicultural academic learning that could be used for developing a cross-cultural pedagogy, something of which international schools have both the opportunity and responsibility to be in the vanguard.

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## **Interpreting International Art Education in the Context of 'Late Modernity'**

**Derek Pigrum**

International Art Education as represented in the IB and MYP Guides is constituted from certain positions in the philosophy of art and what the author, following Wolff, terms 'enabling' structures that shadow expert practice. The most important of these are the Developmental Workbook and the Research Workbook (hereafter DW and RW). The first part of the presentation examines the philosophical positions of postmodernism, self-expression and the aesthetics of reception as having a problematic relationship to 'enabling' structures that provide the student with the crucial knowledge of how to generate ideas and the knowledge of 'how to go on' (Wittgenstein, 1953), but also in terms of engaging with cultural differences as a form of 'creative understanding' of other cultures in which the subject does not merge with another culture, but each retains its own unity and open totality, and are mutually enriched.

It is argued that postmodernism is a transitional phase and that a far better way of conceiving our present-day world is what Giddens terms 'late modernity'. In this world of 'late modernity' Giddens claims that the self has to be reflexively made. The 'enabling' structures of the IB art programme promote an engagement with cultural differences in the process of idea generation and development in the social context of the classroom, and encourage the student in the continuous reflexive construction of the self and the self's relationship to the other. One important dimension of postmodernism is globalisation. This

has cultural dimensions which are producing a world-wide culture which is irreversibly displacing, or at least transforming local cultures everywhere and the emphasis in the guides on traditional art forms would seem to be designed to create some kind of counter-weight to the 'dominant culture' input into the art programme. It is argued that to encourage the reproduction of traditional art is redundant in the post-traditional order of 'late modernity'. However, this does not eliminate the validity of an interest in the traditional or canonical works of the past when this carries symbolic meaning for the student and the development of ideas.

The paper presents a view of self expression as having roots in the 18<sup>th</sup> century 'aesthetics of genius' that produces a one-sided emphasis on the subjectivisation of expression at odds with the down-to-earth self-knowledge of practitioners concerning the possibilities of doing, undoing and making and re-making that is also reflected in the 'enabling' structures of the guides producing a greater emphasis on aesthetic praxis. Following Giddens and Wolff the specific issue of innovation is understood as the practical outcome of '*a uniquely specific combination of structural determinants*' (Wolff, 1981, p 24). In terms of Int Art Ed, these structural determinants are embedded in the generation, exploration and development of ideas. Thus the central thesis of this presentation is that certain 'enabling' structures within Int Art Ed have the potential, in the form of transactional practices, to allow the student to construct the self in a continuous reflexive doing and undoing. Transactional practices and the encounter with the 'voice' of the other and her cultural difference constitutes a knowledge of 'how to go on' in our involvement with ideas and the object world, and the continuous construction of the self and relations with the other.

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