

INTERPRETING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES 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

International education is, in practice, interpreted through schools.

For many years, observers found this simple statement to be a source of difficulty as they struggled to pin down the meaning and purpose of this distinctive form of education in the diverse galaxy of institutions which constitute the international schools movement. More recently, however, there has come to be a widespread consensus that we cannot identify *international education* by confusing it with *international schooling*. Rather, as participants in this strand had no difficulty in agreeing from the outset, we must recognise that international schools can have a wide range of rationales for their existence but that *international education* has to be sought in schools that are *internationally minded* and which place a high profile on international goals in their explicit philosophies. The aim of this strand was therefore to help these internationally minded schools to create a conceptual basis for their organisational models and to then provide some practical support for putting their philosophies into effect.

Terry Haywood introduced the strand by exploring some of the ways in which school leaders and managers carry out an internationalising role in their work. The essential feature of an internationally minded school, he pointed out, is that the school leader and the school mission both have a clear vision for what it means to be 'international' and that they attempt to transmit this vision through the pragmatic management of their schools. In setting out to provide an international learning experience, the institution will inevitably have to reflect the local needs that will vary from school to school but that in the pragmatic evolution of how these needs will be satisfied there has to be an over-riding and inclusive vision of what the experience of curriculum, relationships and life implies in an international context. This model of organization is not limited to schools in international settings as the mission and vision are more important than the geographical location and national curriculum schools can be just as internationally minded as those outside of national systems.

Conceptual bases for the development of an international vision were further discussed by a number of presenters. **Steve Bannell** looked at the implications of cultural awareness for educational leaders, using Hofstede's work to help throw light on how intercultural understanding among the faculty and the community as a prerequisite for a common shared perception of the school's mission and the way that decisions are made and communicated.

Michael Allan also explored some cultural implications derived from Hofstede but this time by looking at the experience of children in the opportunities for learning and social interaction provided by schools. He went on to assess the value of dissonance as a key element for intercultural learning, with the aim being to provide an optimal level of supported dissonance so that the student can experience the differences of living another culture as a profound learning opportunity. Too much or too little dissonance can weaken the positive effects of the experience and lead to superficial internationalism or even to a rejection of the *other* culture. **Richard Pearce** provided an insight into the way that values are promoted in schools and tackled the essential problem of which values should be promoted as internationally valid. His presentation included references to philosophical, psychological and social reflections on value formation and a discussion of whether it is worth pursuing so-called universal values, before going on to present a new model of values for international education derived from a biological perspective. As well as looking at how schools might consciously teach value formation, he concluded by looking at values as processes as well as content and pointed out the special application of this in the educational context.

Jim Cambridge challenged international education to become more aware of its products as well as its processes by looking at the way that it has taken on characteristics that are more often associated with globalization and business culture. As can be seen from the context of this conference, most exponents of international education seek to promote idealistic aspects of international and cross-cultural understanding. But another perspective can also be put forward: that international education is fast becoming a globally branded product with schools as the local distributors of this franchised brand, essentially dedicated to serving the values of a transnational capitalist class and set up to provide for globally mobile expatriates and local socio-economic elites who are looking for a lever in positional competition with the national education system. In a concluding session, **Brian Garton** went on to make another challenge for international educators. He argued that many of the main motivating ideals for international education have largely been unchanged over the past half-century, while the world today is very different from the era in which these ideals were initially generated. As well as the global aspects that affect the nature of transnational and intercultural exchange, he went on to review some of the local pressures on schools. Besides the implicit challenge in his critique, he also pointed the way forward towards a series of possible benchmarks for assessing schools which takes account of both international and local features.

Other presentations focused on the way that these conceptual bases can be applied in the management of pragmatic aspects of school and the overall educational experience for students. **Mike Fertig** actually posed a number of critical open questions about the meaning of school improvement and asked us to consider some of the ways that have been developed to formalise improvement in the context of international education. **Pat Sullivan** stressed the importance of the school's mission statement and made some valuable suggestions about how the mission can first of all be developed and then reinforced in the actual processes of school life and interaction. **Elaine Parker** asked which characteristics of international schools enable them to develop a special ethos that leads to a distinctively rewarding educational experience and she provided some possible answers from her research in Switzerland. **Ian Piper** presented a new model for producing organisational charts that has been developed from the IBO's curriculum models. It places less emphasis on hierarchical power relations and more on the child and sees the faculty and staff first and foremost as providers and supporters of the learning experience. **Clive Carthew** presented the ISA instrument that has been produced to help schools assess their level of internationalism and guide them towards more conscious application of international values and processes. **Stephen Codrington**

reinterpreted the concept of 'best practice' from the business world to evolve an educational tool that can be applied to international schools. His new tool includes an overall view of school management from values and mission to curriculum and learning. **Andrew Wigford** examined the way that international schools recruit teachers and presented some findings from his continuing research in this field.

Some presentations looked at the provision of specific services to students. **Edna Murphy** asked schools to make sure that they have a clear perception about the implications of their early childhood programmes, especially as they relate to language development in the mother tongue and the cultural needs of the young child. **John Bastable** presented some results from his research into the ways that schools provide orientation to help the mobile student. **Andrew Hand** described a model for setting up international service projects which is aimed at optimising the cultural learning that occurs from student involvement and maximises the benefits over time to all parties involved in the exchange.

A distinctive message was delivered by **Margaret Radier** about what she sees as a notable failure of international education to make an impact in Kenya and her assessment of the reasons for this failure provide some valuable lessons for both the visionary and pragmatic elements in the way that international schools have been managed.

The strand presentations reflected a widespread consensus of opinion that in spite of the product branding that certainly exists and that can be interpreted as a result of the globalization of *international schooling*, the interpretation of *international education* will continue to be interpreted in different ways by schools that are seeking pragmatic solutions for local circumstances. It is hoped that the work of this strand will enable schools to identify a common conceptual format for their work while continuing to seek those local solutions that are best suited to the specific circumstances in which each school operates.

ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS

Pragmatic and Visionary Components in the Management of International Education

Terry Haywood

This opening presentation investigates the nature of specific skills, tools and strategies that are valuable in promoting the successful development of international schools and, most of all, international education. Starting from a brief analysis of the challenges that are faced by school leaders in any context, it goes on to ask what makes international schools different from those working in national systems - and then tries to identify some essential management and leadership strategies for schools wishing to promote international education whatever their location, including internationally-minded schools in national systems as well as mainstream international schools operating around the world. It points to the need for an essential balance of pragmatic and visionary components as the essential ingredients of the manager's toolkit.

The Culture of International Schools and the Role of the Leader

Steve Bannell

This session serves as an introduction to exploring the central idea that leadership in international schools is affected by intercultural awareness. Literature in international education is beginning to draw attention to the effect cultural issues may have on management and leadership. Awareness of the culture of others seems a prerequisite for school leaders. If so, what more do they need to learn about culture and its relationship to leadership? The 'iceberg' model of culture is outlined as well as Hofstede's dimensions of cultural variability. These are set against models of leadership focusing on one developed by Daniel Goleman in the Harvard Business Review.

Border Crossings: Cultural Effects on Academic and Intercultural Learning

Michael Allan

This presentation examines the cultural environment of international schools, and how this determines the nature and outcomes of cross-cultural interaction among students, between students and teachers and with the school culture itself. It shows how the resulting cultural dissonance affects both academic and inter-cultural learning, and how the largely mono-cultural nature of many international schools can cause problems for students coming from different cultural backgrounds and also inhibit the inter-cultural learning of those from the dominant culture.

The Creation and Promotion of Values in International Education

Richard Pearce

Human values lie at the core of International schools, with a central role in both the medium and the matter of the education which schools provide - yet our personal perception of values is inevitably value-laden and culturally specific. To understand better what international education can hope to achieve and what we are currently doing, this presentation offers a biological model of the nature and operation of values derived from recent theories in cultural psychology, cognitive anthropology, and neuroscience. If this model is applied to teachers and schools, a picture emerges of the issues encountered in the process of building teams and institutions. Applying it to the students and their families, it is possible to perceive how diverse are the experiences and the outcomes which they are achieving.

Questions are posed for personal and institutional consideration as we confront the intrinsic cultural plurality of our field. Are all values universal? Are any values universal? How far does schooling influence students' values? Can one international school serve all cultures and can it do so equally? How does a school compile a value-system? Do international schools practise the values of the globalist society? If so, is this appropriate? Can there be a culturally-plural school? How quickly and how far can schools integrate teachers and students into their culture? Are there specific values appropriate to international schools? Are they appropriate to all international schools? How can schools simultaneously promote adherence to moral standards yet respect other cultures? Can cultural policies take account of plurality for all ages of children? Some responses are offered, but for some questions a debate is more appropriate than an answer.

Writing a Mission Statement for an International School

Pat Sullivan

A clear mission statement is now considered essential for all organisations, including international schools, where it should be the means of defining and expressing the internationalism of the school as well as the foundation of all policies so as to bring the international dimension into all areas of school life. The school's mission is a unifying statement in that students and families from diverse backgrounds tend to have varied expectations of schools, while the teaching staff also have different cultures, training and professional experience. The danger of not having a clearly worded and communicated mission statement include the lack of a common understanding about the aims of the school, resulting in the failure to address internationalism as an essential element in learning and in the school culture.

This presentation proposes some strategies and guidelines for developing the mission statement, looking at how the community can be involved and arguing that there must be meticulous and thorough benchmarking against targets of internationalism. It goes on to assess effective communication vehicles and formats to encourage widespread adherence and application of the school philosophy.

A Very Rewarding Experience? Ethos and the International School

Elaine Parker

Visitors entering a school for the first time tend to experience certain perceptions, either consciously or unconsciously, about the overall credibility of the establishment. This initial sensation is not one that necessarily lasts, but is a strong indicator of a school's ethos. This presentation explores the subtle and complex meaning of the term 'ethos' and investigates the factors which help to create a positive ethos, particularly in the context of international schools, through the perceptions of students and teachers. It attempts to isolate the parameters that most influence attitudes in international schools with the goal of providing useful information and a set of guidelines that will help to develop a positive ethos in schools worldwide. In ultimate analysis, since reality is a social construct that has to do with the relationships between people, the goal of achieving a positive ethos appears to be the key as to whether or not an international education is a very rewarding experience.

The Impact of International Education in Kenya

Margaret Radier

International education has existed in Kenya since the early 1980's, with several schools having adopted the programmes of the International Baccalaureate Organization. The main objective of introducing IB to developing countries was to inculcate the ideals of internationalism to young people. This included their participation in the general welfare of the communities around them so as to promote the understanding of ideals such as tolerance, sharing and service. Unfortunately this objective has, to a large extent, not been realised and this presentation investigates several reasons for this failure. In the current administrative setting, many administrators themselves do not understand the communities around them due to language and cultural barriers. Furthermore, the IB itself is not clearly

understood at the tertiary level of Kenyan education, locking out most IB students from joining local universities. This has led to a severe brain drain for a country such as Kenya. It is contended that if IB is to have the impact it was intended for, then some deeper evaluation of the needs of the local circumstances needs to be addressed. This presentation looks critically at the current management of IB in Kenyan schools and suggests ways by which the curriculum can be improved to achieve its intended objectives.

Applying the Concept of 'Best Practice' to International Schools

Stephen Codrington

International schools are increasingly becoming exposed to approaches and philosophies which originate in the business or corporate sector, and among the new catch-cries for schools is 'Best Practice'. Given that the purposes of international schools are usually quite different from (even if complementary to) the corporate sector, it is appropriate to question what 'best practice' actually means for schools. At their worst, corporate notions of the term may actually work against the development of learning outcomes that students will need if they are to rise to the challenges of life in a global environment. This is because corporate views have traditionally encouraged uniformity, emphasising control, pre-determined goals, accountability and short-term views. For international schools to fulfil their purposes of forming young lives, shaping the future direction of society, and nurturing talents and skills, emphasis should be placed on flexible learning outcomes, creativity and open-ended learning. International schools must accept the challenge of discerning the way to provide the most appropriate education to meet the authentic needs of the young people in their care.

'Best practice' in international schools should nurture a sense of authentic intercultural awareness, and use this as a springboard to develop skills in critical thinking and logic. Today, it is generally acknowledged that the most effective learning environments are non-linear and open-ended. A classroom which reflects authentic best practice will thus be student-centred, collaborative, problem-solving focused and emphasising process rather than product. This presentation argues that there are specific strategies for promoting effective learning and authentic 'best practice' in international schools and these will be identified and explored.

Improving International Schools

Michael Fertig

Recent years have seen an increasing interest in the issues surrounding 'effective' and 'improving' schools. The prime focus of these studies has been related to schools within the maintained sector of state education systems. Little attention has been paid to how schools operating within an international context might approach the process of 'improvement'. The whole notion of this concept in the context of international schools poses crucial questions which the presentation seeks to identify and address. These include: What do we mean by 'improvement' for schools operating within the private sector and within an international context? What might the process of 'improvement' look like within international schools? What might be the implications for the management of international schools if the 'improvement' process is put in place? What role, if any, might there be for different stakeholder groups within this process?

A New Approach to Organisational Models for International Education

Ian Piper

We often use organisational models to represent how schools function. The normal models that are utilised frequently fail to represent the philosophy of the school and simply indicate the levels of hierarchy, spans of control, lines of communication etc. This session argues that if we believe that in international education the student is at the centre of our philosophy, then the student should be the focal point of our organisational models. To this end a new format is proposed which enables this to happen. This is a novel and radical approach which does not suggest how every individual international school should be organised but instead highlights the limitations of current systems and illustrates the values of one possible alternative format. It is also shown how the proposed model can complement the curriculum design and philosophy of the IBO.

Internationalism: A Self Assessment Instrument

Clive Carthew

This presentation outlines one approach for assessing a school's effective international focus by using a tool that has been developed from work carried out over the last decade by the International Schools Association. The instrument can be used by any school to describe and define 'internationalism' within its own context. Working systematically through typical aspects of the school's life and activity – values, aims, programmes, personnel and communities – and using a variety of quantitative and qualitative descriptors, the instrument seeks to analyse and interpret the occurrence of internationalism within each aspect. A synthesis of the results may help a school to identify those aspects which are shown to be less international than they imagined or hoped and to create a developmental action plan.

Factors in the Education of Young Children in International Schools

Edna Murphy

One of the great unknowns of international education is the effect it might have on young children, an important question now that many international schools enrol children as young as two or two and a half years of age. Most international schools have followed the experience of state schools in western countries by offering a form of education to young children known as 'pre-school', 'nursery', 'pre-kindergarten' or the all-inclusive 'early childhood education'. This presentation is based on several assumptions: that the younger the child is, the more fundamental is the learning experience and the more lasting its effect on future life; that young children are especially impressionable because they have limited ability to correct or balance school experiences with a store of prior knowledge; and that young children have a stronger need for a settled routine. It explores some areas of daily life in international schools in which confusion arises that promotes widespread, often unnoticeable (and often even unmonitorable) but probably fundamental, changes that are not necessarily for the good. It also asks whether, and in what ways, the possible benefits are worth the risks.

Some of the areas of risk are: cultural attitudes and values; the school's programme for acquisition of a second or third language; relationships between pupils and teachers, other pupils and parents, and school-parent relationships. The presentation also goes on to look at implications for admissions, testing, staffing and curriculum. A search for authoritative voices in these areas will be undertaken along with anecdotal evidence. Though some tentative conclusions might be drawn the author hopes, given the scope and complexity of the topic, to indicate several avenues where further research is needed if international schools are to achieve their goals with minimal ill effects on their young pupils.

Work, Rest & Play in the Global Village - the Value of International Service

Andrew Hand

The Creativity Action Service section of the IBO website states: *'The IBO's goal is to educate the whole person and foster responsible, compassionate citizens.'* This statement seems to imply that imbedding international strands in the subjects taught in the classroom is only part of what international education is about. It is proposed that what is actually desired in a student is a demonstrable mind shift or an 'expansion' of vision and understanding if we are to adhere to the hyperglobalist view which sees international education as a force for creating a better world by overcoming national differences. While the first step towards promoting tolerance and understanding can be attempted in the regular school experience, it tends to remain at the theoretical level in this context. *'Living'* another's culture, even for a short period, is much more challenging and provokes a deeper impact and appreciation.

Although multi-cultural in its demography, Australia is geographically isolated and opportunities to interact with other cultures on their own home ground are limited. There are opportunities for interaction with the indigenous population but the international perspective that is part of the IB philosophy invites us to go further afield. This presentation reports on a project offering students the opportunity to experience another culture at first hand in Western Samoa and Indonesia. As well as providing opportunities for cultural appreciation through involvement in aesthetic pursuits and day-to-day living, the service component is also addressed through working in orphanages, schools for the disabled or under-resourced primary schools. The sense of international understanding which emerges from these programmes is evident in the comments of students who have taken part and who, once home again, continue to support and interact with the communities of which they were a part during the project. It is argued that such experiences have an invaluable role in the broader curriculum, especially in terms of the student 'product', and that the benefits of this approach are not limited to schools taking part in the IB programmes.

Examining Recruitment for International Education

Andrew Wigford and Michael Fertig

The process of recruiting staff for international schools often involves bringing teachers into the world of international education for the first time. How, then, should recruiters include an orientation for international education in the recruitment process? To what extent are candidates given an accurate picture of the job and the school before, during and after interviews and briefings? How important is it to establish the school's commitment to international education at the point of first contact with a new member of staff? And are all candidates treated equally, even for local hire vacancies? This presentation examines how

international school recruiters can prepare candidates, during the recruitment process, for the roles they will be expected to fulfil if they are successfully employed in their school.

How Prevalent are Student Induction Programmes in International Schools and What Implications Does This Have for the Needs of Third Culture Kids?

John Bastable

This study reports upon how international schools meet the needs of the transient student population known as 'third culture kids'. These students are known to have specific needs arising from their nomadic lifestyle and cultural displacement. International schools might be expected to make special provision for these transient students and many do claim in their publicity material to have induction programmes in place. But how prevalent have induction programmes become in international schools and is there any evidence of shared similarities of purpose in respect of transient students' needs? The study also seeks to discover whether factors such as school size or designated staffing (with responsibility for the induction process) have any implications for good practice. It also asks whether schools which subscribe to the common curriculum and philosophy of the IBO are more or less likely to have an induction programme.

Globalising and Internationalising Tensions in International Education

James Cambridge

International education has been described as a contested field of educational practice involving the reconciliation of economic, political and cultural-ideological dilemmas, which may be identified as the competing '*internationalist*' and '*globalising*' perspectives. The *internationalist* current may be identified with a positive orientation towards international relations, with aspirations for the promotion of peace and understanding between nations. This is a view of international education as 'a transformative discourse which locates all fields of enquiry in a supra-national frame of reference and upholds the cause of peace'. It embraces an existential, experiential philosophy of education which values the moral development of the individual and recognises the importance of service to the community and the development of a sense of responsible citizenship. It may be argued that *internationalist* international education celebrates cultural diversity and promotes international co-operation and an internationally-minded outlook. The *globalising* current is influenced by and contributes to the global diffusion of the values of free market capitalism. These values are expressed in international education in terms of increasing competition with national systems of education. This is accompanied by quality assurance through international accreditation and the spread of global quality standards, which facilitate educational continuity for the children of the globally mobile clientele. *Globalising* international education serves a market which requires the global certification of educational qualifications. This facilitates educational continuity for children of the host country clientele with aspirations towards upward social mobility in a global context. It may be argued that an outcome of *globalising* international education is cultural convergence with the values of the transnational capitalist class, 'domiciled in and identified with no particular country but, on the contrary, identified with the global capitalist system' and having 'more interests in common with each other than with their non-capitalist fellow citizens'.

Is @edu.utoxia the Only Reliable Home for International Education ?

Brian Garton

The first part of the presentation seeks to explore the validity today of Alec Peterson's description of international schools as 'schools without frontiers'. The context, however, is the first decade of the twenty-first century rather than the 1960s (the era of Peterson's vision) or the 1980s (the time of his writing). In particular it takes into account the changed and changing concept of an international frontier. Examples of this change in concept are discussed, ranging from the reality of the European Union, the implications of the international war against terrorism (or should it be called the 'western' war against international terrorism?), the disappearance of the USSR and its satellite infrastructure, and the revival of the possibility of a 'nuclear conflict' over what might appear to be a 'frontier' dispute in Kashmir. The relationship of international schools to the concepts of globalisation and to isolationism are then investigated, including a discussion of the role and relevance, today, of 'community schools' and the validity of the claims that schools categorising themselves as 'American' or 'British' use to incorporate the term 'international' in their name and philosophy. The context for this analysis is the debate as to whether the term 'international' is now only a politically correct label for an assortment of attitudes that could more properly be described as 'western', 'liberal', 'democratic' and 'capitalist'. Finally, there is an assessment of the impact and constraints on claims to 'international' status that may be imposed by the policies and practicalities of a host or sponsor country government.
