INTERPRETING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Geneva, 11 – 13 September 2002

HISTORY & NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION 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

DIFFICULT TERMS/CONCEPTS

The following terms/concepts needed further clarification:

International vs. global
It was felt that 'global' had taken on a somewhat negative connotation in relation to world trade (demonstrations against a global market).

International vs. refugee community
One presenter pointed out that, in a national context, people of other nationalities are referred to as either 'the international community' (that is, those with high income positions in international companies, embassies, UN agencies, and so on) or 'refugees' (those who have sought political asylum or are seeking jobs and have come from poor countries). The use of 'international' in this context has become *elitist.*

International = Inter-national in European Union (EU) schools and United World Colleges (UWCs)
In these schools, most students come directly from a national system without having lived elsewhere; 'international' therefore means students discovering what is similar and different between the nations they represent. An international school normally has a more transient, internationally-mobile population which gives a different dimension to 'international'.

Cultural relevance vs. universal values
Much discussion took place on this difficult question. There seemed to be consensus that international education represents certain values such as those to be found in the various UN charters. There remains the problem of different cultural interpretations of such values and whether they are peculiarly Western. The majority felt that international education should 'stand up and be counted' in terms of the values it represents.

A history of international education should recognise:
*   the contribution of antecedents prior to the 20th century

- the contribution of ancient, diverse cultural and religious contributions from non-Western cultures
- the importance of inter-religious dialogue
- that there were factors (for example, economic, social, utilitarian) other than idealism leading to the development of international education.

International education is education <u>about</u> the world <u>for</u> the world and should have:

-   CURRICULUM ('education **about** the world')
    o   <u>Knowledge</u>: languages (bilingual where possible but at least a second language), global issues (including forces of good and evil), political literacy, citizenship, roots and identity
    o   <u>Skills (to reconstruct the world):</u> critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, adaptability, awareness of other points of view
    o   <u>Attitudes (leading to action):</u> ethical literacy, respect for cultural diversity, commitment to peace and justice, responsible citizenship, commitment to sustainable development (including the solution of global issues).
-   INTENTIONS: pragmatic, pedagogical and idealistic
-   DERIVATION: from an equitable representation of the world's best practices
-   ASSESSMENT: culturally sensitive
-   CURRENCY: recognised around the world
-   TEACHING METHODOLOGY: appropriate to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be developed and to students' learning styles
-   VALUES: grounded in shared human values (such as empathy, respect for other points of view – see 'attitudes' above) and addressing cultural diversity
-   CONTEXT:
    o   A context in which international education is delivered
    o   A context in which the knowledge, skills, and attitudes are applied ('**for** the world').

ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS

International Education from 1924 to the Present

Ian Hill

A number of key, historical descriptions of international education from schools and other institutions are presented and analysed from the point of view of an education model which emphasises content (knowledge and concepts), competencies (equated to 'skills') and the formation of attitudes (values). It is argued that one of the distinctive features of international education is the context in which it is delivered and the context in which it is applied. The paper ends with a suggested description of international education based on an analysis of the sources used in this paper.

What Should International Education Be? From Emergent Theory to Practice

Boyd Roberts

This session was run jointly with the Curriculum and Assessment theme: see abstract in that section.

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

Greg Carroll

This session was run jointly with the Curriculum and Assessment theme: see abstract in that section.

The European Schools and the European Baccalaureate: an Alternative Model of International Education

Robert Gray

This presentation briefly describes the place of the European Schools in the history of the international education movement and then considers their curriculum and structure insofar as these offer an alternative – and perhaps unjustly neglected – model of international education. An analysis of the European School model raises fundamental questions about the nature of international education. What roles do languages and language learning have to play? Are 'national' and 'international' complementary or antagonistic approaches? Should not the word 'international' imply greater involvement of non-English-speaking cultures and educational traditions? The presentation finally offers points of comparison between the International and European Baccalaureates as representatives of two different approaches to international education, suggesting complementary but differing areas of strength.

International Education and the Problem of Evil

Jonathan Levy

It is the mission of educational organizations like The International Baccalaureate to teach not only material and techniques but values. Those values include altruism, open-mindedness, tolerance and honourable and ethical behaviour. What is the obligation of organizations like the International Baccalaureate to educate their students to defend themselves against those whose values and actions are the direct opposite of theirs?

Imagined Communities: Citizenship and International Education

Simon Murray

This paper takes as a starting point the recent experience of trying to establish the Citizenship programme of the British National Curriculum in an international school. It addresses the benefits and anomalies of this experience in itself, but goes on to situate it in the light of recent work by Habermas, Castells, Capella and Popkewitz. As such, it examines the rise in citizenship education as a response to the impact of certain features of globalization. The core concepts examined include the nation state as a disciplining force in education, the privatisation of the public sphere, the possibilities for global governance and citizenship at a transnational level. It argues that social identity formation, particularly conceived of as education for democracy, needs to be a prime focus for international education. It concludes that national and international education may currently be unified in a process of imagining or re-imagining their communities and attendant rights and duties. Approaches to Learning and Theory of Knowledge are seen to be the best current means to develop a critical awareness of active citizenship.

If National Schooling = National Identity, does International Schooling = International Identity?

Michal Pasternak

This presentation initially examines the ways in which a state education system contributes to the development of a national identity. Functioning through a common mother tongue, state systems shape a student's perspectives on history, religion, knowledge, mores and values, thus nurturing a national identity component in a young person. Based on the perspective of many international school graduates that they often feel outsiders in the nation of their passports but a commonality with other internationals, the second section of the presentation examines the structure and content of international school programmes then raises question as to how different international school curricula is a factor in the development of a corresponding identity component in an international school student. Questions pertaining to the importance of national roots recognition, mother tongue affirmation and religious education in the context of an international curriculum are used to explore the complex identity situation of a young person experiencing international education.

IB Language A1 and Values Education: The Multicultural Dilemma

John Clemo

It is a remarkable phenomenon that whilst educators embrace the concept of multiculturalism, its definition and what exactly it means to live in a multicultural society remain elusive. At this time, the international 'world spirit' perspective underpinning the aims and objectives of the IB Language A1 programme is vital. As IB schools nurture democracy and educate ethically through the promotion and inclusion of the principles of liberty, equality and justice – the fundamental building blocks of modern Western society – so they promote international awareness, human rights and freedom of expression. However, often through the study of literature it becomes clear that questions concerning identity and difference demand more of an understanding and exploration than a simple acquiescence into tolerance for the sake of diversity and multiculturalism. The twenty-first century international student needs to be fully equipped for life and for learning, and for life-long learning, so the orientation of future education policies must reflect this.

My presentation analyses this teaching and learning dilemma, and explores the concept of multiculturalism and values education: its limitations and misinterpretations; situating it at the heart of a school's curriculum so that the IB syllabus can be delivered within a meaningful pedagogical structure.

International Education: A Perspective from the Middle East

Samia Al Farra

Internationalism and international education are not new concepts in the Middle East. For millennia interaction with others has been the norm. Arabs have always been world travellers, moving across Europe, Asia and Africa where they mixed with peoples of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Will West and East ever meet? The problem today is not in religion but in the way some practise it. Their fears are fuelled by the media,

and reinforced by the injustices of self-interested politicians. I address these issues through focusing on the education offered at the Amman Baccalaureate School, and give you my definition of 'international education' from a Muslim perspective for, as M S Savory writing in 1980 reminds us, 'What the West borrowed from the East is the whole fabric of civilisation'.