

INTERPRETING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Geneva, 11 – 13 September 2002

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THEME

Convenor: Mary Hayden
(e-mail: m.c.hayden@bath.ac.uk)

[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

The concept of professional development adopted as the basis for this theme was a broad one, incorporating a variety of activities undertaken by an individual, group of teachers/administrators or school as a whole, with a view to the improvement either directly or indirectly of education in the classroom. The presentations which formed the basis for the theme arose from a number of different backgrounds, and covered issues including the training of teachers to work in the context of international education as well as issues relating to in-service opportunities. Presentations reflected the interpretation of international education as being promoted in both national and international schools, and through national as well as international curricula. Many issues raised relate to good practice, whether nationally or internationally, and the following points summarise our discussions:

- It is important that professional development opportunities be matched to needs identified both through school development plans and by individuals.
- Professional development includes initial training for the promotion of international education as well as in-service support for experienced professionals. It may be based on activities organised and led 'in house' by members of staff of the school in question, but there are also benefits to be gained from external input to in-school activities. We should bear in mind the professional development needs not only of classroom teachers but also of senior managers/administrators, leaders and support staff, and the importance of encouraging all involved in the promotion of international education (leaders or otherwise) to develop appropriate skills and play their part in having a 'vision' for the promotion of international education within their own school.
- There is an issue with respect to whether a need exists for more widely available training/preparation for those intending to teach within the context of international education and, if so, what form it should take – bearing in mind the different motivations for individuals to work in this context.
- One major purpose of professional development is the encouragement of reflective practice, facilitated by the sharing of good practice, whether nationally or internationally (although we did touch on whether reflective practice is itself a western concept). In the context of international education, there are clear benefits to be gained through peer

support, collaboration and exchange across different cultural contexts. Increasingly, such support may be facilitated not only through physical contact but also through electronic means.

- It is important that international education is informed by what might be described as a learning perspective. In the context of the learning of the educator, we should bear in mind not only the individual learning which results from effective professional development opportunities, but also the means by which such learning can feed into the school more widely: there need to be mechanisms in place to encourage the translation of individual learning (from, eg, workshops) into learning of the organisation overall. From an organisational perspective, recent developments in business contexts on human resource management could perhaps feed usefully into schools.
- There is, however, a need for individual professional development opportunities as well as for those aimed at collaborative professional development. Such opportunities include, for instance, individual study towards higher qualifications.
- In the context of post-experience programmes of study offered by universities and other higher education institutions, an important issue with respect to such institutions operating within the context of international education is whether they are actually internationalising their education programmes or rather arranging international delivery of their existing programmes.
- In discussing issues relating to international education it is clear (as we were reminded by Sir John Daniel in his opening plenary address to this conference) that international education encompasses both what might be described as pragmatic dimensions (relating to issues arising from increasing global mobility) and ideological dimensions (relating to preparing people 'who want to save the world'). While existing professional development opportunities tend to focus rather more on the former, we need to bear in mind the importance of providing support for teachers in promoting the latter and in encouraging the viewing of everything we do 'through the lens of internationalism'.
- In all of this, we need to bear in mind the resource implications of providing professional development opportunities within the context of international education. There is clearly a need to maximise the professional development opportunities available while finding the most cost-effective means of doing so (which, increasingly, may involve the use of electronic means of interaction and exchange).
- Underpinning our discussions was the notion – first discussed widely in the seminar held at the University of Bath in June 2001 from which this conference grew – of the need for some sort of 'Alliance of International Education' which would bring together the different organisations working in this field. In discussing this idea, participants in the professional development theme were of the view that the extent of their support for such a notion would depend upon the form it is proposed it should take. A resource-intensive organisation involving more layers of administration and diverting resources from existing activities, or one which became a lobbying organisation, would not find favour. What would be valued, however, is a 'lighter touch' of networking links and opportunities to share experiences of good practice, widen experiences and disseminate information about (in the context of this theme) professional development – across a wider range of those with interests in international education than might currently be

the case.

ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS

International Teachers – What Are They, and What Support/Training Do They Need?

Lesley Snowball

Much research has focussed on questions such as ‘What is international education?’ and ‘What is an international school?’ To complement and extend such considerations, this presentation focuses on one essential element of a school – the teachers. What is an international teacher? How do teachers become ‘international’? What training do teachers need to prepare for the differences between a national and an international school? What training is available? Most teachers in international schools are ‘thrown in at the deep end’, with little or no preparation for dealing with the issues of culture, language and transition that are so commonplace in international schools. As well as taking these into account in their teaching context they also have to deal with them on a personal level – coping with their own culture shock, language deficiencies and transition issues. This session presents initial findings on factors that lead teachers to teach internationally, characteristics that parents look for in international teachers, characteristics that administrators look for in international teachers and the types of training that are needed.

Professional Development for the International Educator

Paul Beedle

This presentation addresses issues in designing a generic professional development programme for the international educator which is meaningful and practicable. By focusing on a particular concept – reflective practice – and its associated skills and knowledge, and by looking at particular examples of international professional development activities, we can discuss to what extent it is possible to define objectives and activities with which international educators can engage equally. Is ‘reflective practice’ a shared goal – who says so, how and why? Is it possible to impart agreed content so that an international standard is achieved while local context is respected?

The Learning Pathway through the IB Diploma Extended Essay: a Strategy for Improved Supervision

John Munro

This presentation describes a procedure for assisting teachers supervising the Extended Essay to improve the quality of their supervision by using a learning pathway that leads students to successful completion. Cognitive task analysis was used to identify a pathway that comprises a number of intermediate outcomes or phases. Year 12 students who had completed the Extended Essay and supervisors (1) evaluated the pathway in terms of its validity, (2) identified difficulties that arose at each phase and (3) described steps that they took to deal with these.

The pathway was used to plan and implement a professional development activity for supervisors. They used the pathway as (1) a planning tool to devise collaboratively with the student an outline or action plan for the research, (2) a decision making framework for implementing the action plan, monitoring progress to the desired outcomes and taking remedial thinking actions if necessary, (3) a diagnostic tool to analyse student difficulties, problems at any time, (4) a means for assisting students to identify what aspects they had in place at any time and the nature of the next step, (5) a means for helping students to identify explicitly the types of thinking and learning strategies most likely to resolve the difficulty, and (6) a means for assisting students to remain focused on the outcome.

The presentation describes the use of the pathway as a procedure for professional development in the supervision of Extended Essays and as a means of assisting students to improve their use of self-managing and self-directed learning strategies. It relates the concept of the learning pathway to the broader concepts of knowledge enhancement and innovative thinking.

The Tyranny of Subject-based Learning: Implications for Teacher Education

John Lawrenson

Subject-based teaching, and therefore learning, for pre-university education has been the dominant model for more than a hundred years. Despite brave but limited attempts by organisations such as the International Baccalaureate Organization, there has been little real progress towards ending the 'tyranny' of the subject specialists. This presentation attempts to provoke colleagues into questioning this state of affairs, and will consider how alternative models suggested by Gardner and others may lead to new approaches for professional development.

Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers in National Schools : The Promotion of International Education

Penny Krucker

In 2000 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in London agreed to give 2,600 English teachers each year a chance to experience world class teaching in different countries across the world. Teachers' International Professional Development draws together networks of schools, teachers and Local Authorities working in partnership to examine models of good practice, to engage and share in professional dialogue with colleagues internationally, and to demonstrate that what happens in the classroom can be influenced by positive examples from elsewhere. It provides the opportunity for teachers to act as reflective practitioners, engaged in critical dialogue over the skills sets and methodology for enhancing classroom performance and school improvement.

This presentation looks at the various professional development opportunities available to teachers in England, examining how teachers have incorporated these experiences into their classrooms and what impact they have had on pupils' learning. It looks at how schools use their links and contacts across the world to enhance teaching and learning, and to ensure that the whole school has a global vision and ethos.

A Case Study in Collaborative Professional Development

Ray Taylor and Mona Nashman-Smith

Staff from two diverse schools (Munich International School Germany and the American-British Academy Oman) have spent two years shaping the grade 9/10 curriculum to allow the IB Middle Years Programme to overarch the International GCSE programme. In the course of this work the processes adopted and the combinations of groups used to achieve tangible results have yielded considerable insight and information about the value of collaborative professional development. In this session the two school Heads describe the processes, the groupings and the expectations held for staff which resulted in individuals exceeding their own estimations of what is made possible through collaborative and well-focused professional work. Participants in this session are asked to share their successes in professional development experiences which have enabled a coalition of voices, representing diverse international experience in education, to truly benefit from the sharing of best practice.

Sharing the Vision: Implications for Professional Development**Mark Waterson**

Much has been written about the role of leadership and, in particular, its responsibility for providing vision and direction to schools. School effectiveness literature identifies a shared vision as one of the main correlates with schools that contribute most in terms of the learning outcomes of students. Whilst some school head teachers see it as part of their role to provide the vision, others see it as their responsibility to facilitate the development of a shared vision. The simple transmission of a vision to the staff, adopted in some schools, would seem to be insufficient in terms of institutionalising the vision within the school. If the vision is not accepted or respected it will most likely be ignored. If it is to be embraced, then the teachers need some degree of real ownership of it. In short the vision must be shared both in terms of its generation and its application.

This presentation explores the process of sharing the vision and the role of professional development in this envisioning process. In international education where values and ideology are integral to the experience it will be argued that vision sharing is essential if teachers and school communities in general are to develop and improve. The presentation firstly considers why vision is so important to schools generally and particularly to those that purport to offer an international education. It is argued that one of the primary focuses of professional development should be concerned with the envisioning of schools and the role of collective reflection in this process is considered. The presentation then attempts to develop an understanding of the challenges faced by schools in developing a shared vision and considers some strategies to meet these.

Peer Mentoring in International Education and Training**Sean Vincent Toner**

This presentation begins with a rationale for undertaking action research in peer mentoring within English teaching settings worldwide, against a background of increasing globalisation of the English language and its teaching by those from many different backgrounds, cultures, educational qualifications and native languages. The concept of peer mentoring as opposed to traditional mentoring is discussed, drawing upon a range of research literature and examples of different types of peer mentoring as a highly effective

way of sharing skills. The role of the trained facilitator is considered, together with the learning which can arise from peer mentoring. Consideration is also given to the reasons why this flexible approach can be particularly effective in international settings.

Internationalising Professional Development in International Schools: What? Why? How?

Jackie Holderness

This presentation examines the need to internationalise the various forms of staff development, from initial teacher education to whole-school in-service days. Issues, such as language variety, cultural dissonance, pupil transience and educational globalisation, need to be both addressed and researched by international school teachers at all levels. In this session, we consider ways to internationalise teachers' understandings and attitudes, their experiences and knowledge, and their pedagogy.

The Next Generation of International School Teachers from the US: A Profile

Jack Levy

This presentation discusses a study of seventy future international school teachers enrolled in George Mason University's FAST TRAIN program. The study investigated their backgrounds, international experience, professional development preferences and outlook on teaching abroad.

Globalization and International Education: Tensions in Going Global at the Doctoral Level

Tom Maxwell, Peter Ninnes and Cathryn McConaghy (presented by Tom Maxwell)

This presentation begins by setting out a confluence of events which initiated a proposal to attract students from Taiwan to an EdD programme in Australia. Tensions arose between competing desires to provide a programme that was respectful of Taiwanese student requirements and the desire to maintain the integrity of the original programme, designed specifically for Australian contexts. We explore issues around the nature of 'international education' which ensue from this scenario. Issues of quality and standards and the need to internationalise the curriculum are set against desires for minimum costs and lower English entry levels (on the part of the Taiwanese) and maximising student numbers (on the part of the Australians). Such issues are brought into greater relief in a globalising university sector in which time and space are reconfigured and local/global tensions are raised. The presentation concludes with implications for the school sector.
