



# **Learners without borders: A curriculum for global citizenship**

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## Introduction to IB position papers

This paper is part of a series of papers, written by IB practitioners and endorsed by the IB. Each paper addresses a topic or issue related to the IB's philosophy or its educational practices.

### **Other papers in the series**

Allan, M. May 2011. *Thought, word and deed: The roles of cognition, language and culture in teaching and learning in IB World Schools.*

Hare, J. July 2010. *Holistic education: An interpretation for teachers in the IB programmes.*

Marshman, R. July 2010. *Concurrency of learning in the IB Diploma Programme and Middle Years Programme.*

Walker, G. October 2010. *East is East and West is West.*

# Introduction

In the past two decades the success of the International Baccalaureate (IB) in international education has led to a significant dissemination of its ideals and philosophy. As a result other programmes are competing with the IB in education for global citizenship. In this highly competitive climate the IB must continue to develop and clearly articulate the global elements of its distinctive programmes.

The IB and IB World Schools are leaders in international education. Collaborative work with educators in IB schools and the IB Educator Network provides the foundation and a resource for the development of IB programmes.

This paper shall argue for a curriculum that strengthens the elements of global citizenship so that it becomes an approach to learning, not an addition to the curriculum. Learning for global citizenship must include specific attention to philosophy, pedagogy, content and assessment. Global citizenship requires a knowledge base and understanding of global issues together with critical thinking skills and pluralistic attitudes. In this era of rapid change, technology skills contribute significantly to a 21st century global curriculum and students' ability to make change in the world.

## Globalization and education

The world is changing, and there is evidence that we are entering a “post-international environment”: borders are weakening, multiple citizenships are more commonplace, migration has reached record levels, and we have encountered the “death of distance”. “We are increasingly living next to, working alongside, sharing our leisure with, choosing our partners from people with different cultural backgrounds” (Walker 2010: 69). The challenges in education, arising from pervasive globalization, are more complex. Today's schools need to educate for the future more than ever before, as the world's challenges and opportunities become more compelling.

Education for global citizenship must become the curriculum of the future. We experience increasing interdependence and interconnectedness. An earthquake in Japan brings suffering to our own back yards; the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico reverberates for economies and resource use worldwide; revolution on the streets of Tripoli resounds around the globe.

“Not only has globalization become the central issue of our time, but it will define the world our children inherit” (Suarez-Orozco and Qin Hilliard 2004: IX). As it defines their world, educators are responding to these new realities.

The scope of Education for Global Citizenship is wider than a single scheme of work or subject. It is more than simply the international scale in Citizenship, or teaching about a distant locality in Geography. It is relevant to all areas of the curriculum, all abilities and all age ranges. Ideally it encompasses the whole school — for it is a perspective on the world shared within an institution, and is explicit not only in what is taught and learned in the classroom, but in the school's ethos.

Oxfam (2006: 2)

The IB has pioneered a philosophy that offers a solid foundation for education for global citizenship and a curriculum to address these challenges.

## IB philosophy

In its mission statement, the IB embraces a vision of educating young people to make the world a better place. The IB learner profile outlines the attributes that enable IB students to engage with this vision, and the IB programmes define the path. In the IB this philosophy is most commonly referred to as **international-mindedness**.

The practical application of the IB philosophy can be challenging even for schools that wholeheartedly embrace international-mindedness. Explicit instruction in ethics, perspective thinking, open-mindedness, interdependence, intercultural understanding, complexity and diversity is a formidable task in any classroom. The IB programmes will benefit from strengthening these philosophical attributes of global citizenship in the curriculum.

“The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect” (IB mission statement). An IB education imparts the attitudes and the knowledge that facilitate caring and the skills that enable students to take action towards creating a better and more peaceful world. Educating for global engagement requires a combination of philosophy, pedagogy, content and aspiration: a transformative curriculum that leads students of all ages from learning to caring to action.

## Terminology

Education for global citizenship assumes a common understanding of the concepts underlying the terminology. In the IB, the word **international** has been used since 1968 to describe the aims of the education programmes the IB produces, and it connotes more than “between nations”. Other words (**cosmopolitan, pluralistic, global, world, universal**) add nuance and may serve equally well or better in the context of curriculum. More recently, the IB has introduced the term **global engagement**, which implies a more active stance.

For consistency, the terms international education, global citizenship and intercultural understanding, as well as global engagement, will be used in this paper. Continued discussion of terminology will benefit IB educators as they seek clarity in communicating IB educational perspectives to teachers and students.

## Citizenship: Local, national and global

A curriculum for global citizenship must explore the many dimensions of citizenship a child experiences growing up. It will guide students in establishing a balance between allegiance to nation and allegiance to humankind. Citizenship education is traditionally a core element of many national education systems around the world. It is argued that young people require a solid grounding in the workings of their governments, their rights under the law and civic participation; these are prerequisite understandings for civic engagement. In our globalized era, governments and educators are challenged to find new approaches to the teaching of citizenship (Tarc 2009). The dimensions of citizenship are shifting as the world changes.

National citizenship is clearly defined as bearing distinct rights and responsibilities. It carries with it language(s) and culture(s), a sense of place and an understanding of governance. Our national belonging and identity contribute to our sense of self. Belonging and sense of self in this context can be elusive as many people are growing up in two or more cultural and citizenship contexts. In Canada, for example, 2.2 million immigrants arrived in the 1990s. The children of these immigrants often carry dual citizenship, speak multiple languages and grow up in at least two cultures. Understandings of national belonging, identity and citizenship have shifted significantly in our globalized era. Nevertheless, national citizenship is distinctly different from global citizenship.

Global citizenship is aspirational; membership in global civil society differs in concrete and significant ways from national citizenship. It carries with it no inherent rights, yet is often motivated by the desire for greater commitment to universal human rights. It can be perceived as inclusive, caring and responsive.

Global engagement in the IB includes an element of active membership in the world community, a willingness to challenge injustice and strengthen local and global civil society.

This is singly the most important premise of global citizenship ... and that of most self-styled global citizens: *that individuals can make a difference, especially if they cooperate*. This is the sober optimism of

global citizenship. Without it, global citizenship is either incoherent or marginalized into ineffective idealism.

Dower (2003: 45)

Ultimately global citizenship is the personal decision to assume responsibility and develop a sense of moral agency for issues facing our fellow humans. It is a choice.

The question facing IB educators is: How can we strengthen the IB curriculum so that our students are empowered to make the choice to become global citizens?

## The global citizenship curriculum in practice

The IB aims for teachers to be role models, developing international-mindedness and global citizenship in their students.

### Pedagogy

A pedagogy based on **constructivist approaches** is the bedrock of a global curriculum (Hayes Jacobs 2009). Open-minded understandings of perspective, culture and diversity arise through open inquiry. Critical thinking thrives in a climate that allows learners to explore their own questions and seek new knowledge and levels of understanding through active participation and independent research.

A **transdisciplinary approach** and **collaborative learning** are further elements of best practice.

These include motivating students through engaging relevant content; combining a focus on deep content knowledge with reasoning skills and analysis of multiple perspectives; using purposeful interdisciplinary inquiry and simulations to answer large questions; using primary sources from around the world; and emphasizing interaction with people in other parts of the world as part and parcel of the learning process.

Stewart (2009: 106)

Active learning and inquiry by teachers create a culture of open-mindedness and engagement for the students. "A pedagogy for international education", by Ian Hill, offers a thorough exploration of pedagogy and its role in the IB.

The dramatic impact and pervasiveness of technology in our students' lives should also be reflected in our pedagogy. Creative, meaningful integration of technology permits a more participatory interaction between all members of the learning community.

### Assessment

Schools assess what they value and value what they assess (Wiggins and McTighe 2005). If we value international-mindedness, then it follows that we must assess the concepts, skills, knowledge and attitudes that define it. We need practical examples of authentic assessment of open-mindedness, perspective thinking and intercultural understanding in all IB programmes.

Possible starting points include:

- In a geography course about river systems, students learn about the construction of dams. Assessment for global skills might focus on students' ability to identify different perspectives on the value and impact of constructing a dam in a particular place, and make suggestions to address concerns of different stakeholders.

- Learning about the connection between human rights and medical interventions in biology could end with an assessment of the understanding of the role of human rights in medical care.
- A novel study might include an assessment of students' ability to analyse the influence of culture on the characters' expectations and actions.
- Understanding of the connection between migration and human rights can be assessed specifically in a Primary Years Programme unit on migration.

While many IB educators are using assessment in this way, making it explicit that we are assessing for international-mindedness and global citizenship will strengthen the curriculum in this area. Assessment of international-mindedness will improve as we develop our tools "with the type of products and performances that match our times" (Hayes Jacobs 2009: 25).

## Technology

Our world is being changed dramatically by the surge in technology and communications. When internet communications can lead to revolution in the streets and information is instantly accessible, schools must be nimble and creative to ensure that their students are active, knowledgeable and skilled participants in this brave new world.

Technology enables students to apply and communicate their ideas in innovative and creative ways, reaching wider audiences. In a globalized world, information technology (IT) and research skills enable our students to amplify both their learning and their impact.

An education for global citizenship must realize the potential of the new media and incorporate it into teaching, research and learning at all levels.

## Global curriculum

Every curriculum describes learning outcomes: concepts, skills, knowledge and attitudes. A pre-K–12 curriculum for global engagement necessitates fresh approaches in identifying learning outcomes. "Changing curriculum is about changing your mind first and then forming some new habits and routines as you abandon old ones" (Costa and Kallick 2009: 211). Curriculum elements for global awareness will include:

- cultural and perspective awareness
- additional language learning—multilingualism
- explicit teaching of the concepts, skills, knowledge and attitudes of international-mindedness
- critical thinking skills
- research and IT skills.

## Culture and perspective

Culture is the fabric of life for students both in and out of school. Engaging in explicit discussions of their own cultures is the starting point for exploring diversity and complexity. Perspective and cultural understanding are underlying drivers of a curriculum that must reach beyond the delights of culture to probe the ambiguities, challenges and provocations of cultural difference. Complexity and difference will be revisited throughout the school years in the service of developing empathy and the will to act. Exploration of culture through lenses such as pluralism, gender, equality, ambiguity, relationships and power and authority illuminates difference and complexity.

An example from the primary classroom may be a food unit that includes an exploration of family roles in food preparation, or differences in pricing and availability of basic food items. A civics unit

in upper grades might explore power and authority in government or the presence of women in higher levels of the bureaucracy.

A global understanding also requires the ability to consider multiple perspectives. This is nurtured through exploration of culture, as well as explicit practice applied to a wide range of contexts. Dimensions of perspective awareness include: perspective consciousness, “state of the planet” awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices (Hanvey 1976). Classrooms rich in discussion about varying perspectives regarding environmental, political, economic or social issues will actively develop students’ ability to consider varying points of view.

## **Multilingualism**

Language is the primary vehicle of learning and every teacher is a language teacher. Thoughtful use of language enhances teaching and learning in academic, social and personal development. The language of instruction provides a common basis for developing understandings about language.

Language is also a gateway to culture. In both the sphere of the family and the greater world, the languages we use impart culture and identity.

More recently the deep relationships between language, identity, culture, and power have impacted pedagogical views. There is a realisation that the diverse multilingual, multicultural, multimodal attributes of learners are resources for further learning and the development of critical literacy. In IB programmes language learning, multilingualism and the development of critical literacy are considered important factors in promoting intercultural awareness and international mindedness which are integral to the organization’s mission.

IB (2011)

The learning and use of additional languages help us to understand other cultures, which promotes global citizenship. The IB additional language requirement from the early primary years through to graduation in all three programmes originates in a commitment to the acquisition of additional languages for developing intercultural understanding and communication.

## **Concepts, skills, knowledge, attitudes**

In a curriculum for global citizenship, these will go beyond discipline-specific skills and knowledge. The scope of this paper and the nature of the content make a comprehensive discussion of these elements impossible. Many useful approaches have been written outlining the conceptual basis of a curriculum for global citizenship. The following list from the English National global citizenship curriculum is intended to spark discussion, reflection and further innovation in this area.

### **Concepts**

Relevant global concepts might begin with these (DfID 2005).

- Global citizenship
- Conflict resolution
- Social justice
- Values and perceptions
- Sustainable development
- Interdependence

- Human rights
- Diversity

Interweaving these concepts and others (ie pluralism, complexity, stewardship, inequality, universality, power) throughout the disciplines and units of learning promotes global awareness. The teaching strategy of cycling through these concepts repeatedly throughout the years of school will help create an environment of international-mindedness.

For example, in an elementary classroom, the concept of interdependence can be explored in the unit about roles in our school; difference is a theme when discussing how families celebrate birthdays or other family and cultural events. In a chemistry classroom, there is an opportunity to discuss sustainability in the context of chemical applications. While some disciplines lend themselves more readily, it is possible and beneficial to apply these concepts in any discipline.

### **Skills**

Global citizenship requires a specific skill set. The transdisciplinary skills of the Primary Years Programme can provide a solid framework for the entire IB curriculum (IB 2009). Global skills enable students to approach issues with the ability to research and learn about them, consider the perspectives of others, find solutions, and strive for consensus.

These skills will include:

- critical thinking
- communication skills
- issue analysis
- problem-solving
- ability to challenge injustice
- reasoned persuasion
- cooperation and conflict resolution
- the ability to choose a means of responding
- technology skills.

### **Knowledge**

We cannot care about something we don't know about; therefore, global content belongs in the curriculum at all levels. Teaching a curriculum for global citizenship requires courage and commitment. In a pluralistic curriculum, the teaching and learning of difficult knowledge, which may take both teachers and students outside of their comfort zone, cannot be avoided. Teachers must be aware of their students' developmental level and scaffold the teaching of difficult issues in age-appropriate ways (PhysOrg 2009).

Knowledge content in the curriculum for global citizenship could include:

- sustainability and environmental issues
- issues of human rights and social justice
- positive and negative effects of global interdependence
- systems thinking and understanding of organization



- importance and meaning of culture/diversity issues
- lessons from the past and present, and their potential impact on the future
- issues related to conflict and conflict resolution.

As with the areas of skills and concepts, weaving the knowledge component into the curriculum will be more challenging in some disciplines, but making these connections in the less obvious domains helps students gain a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of knowledge. Transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary learning enhances global understanding and awareness of the interdependencies of our world.

### **Attitudes: The IB learner profile**

The IB identifies the attributes of international-mindedness in the IB learner profile. The learner profile can be viewed through the lens of responsibility: the active participation of the learner, the personal responsibility of the learner and the moral development of the learner (Walker 2010). IB educators demonstrate tremendous creativity in approaching the learner profile and making it come alive in their communities.

The success of a curriculum for global citizenship depends on the fusion of these elements (pedagogy, concepts, knowledge, skills and attitudes) into a coherent, integrated curriculum.

Success can be measured in student action, individual and group motivation to make the world a better place. This action might be local, such as a food drive, or in response to a distant calamity such as an earthquake or flood. It might be seen in a wish to work abroad in development work. When the desire to reach out and help comes from the students themselves, when they propose a plan of action and carry it out, we know we are on the way to developing young people who can make a difference.

## Future directions for IB educators

Education for global citizenship is education for the future. There is a growing need for a curriculum that develops open-mindedness, intercultural understanding and comfort with plurality and complexity in our globalized world.

Classrooms are busy and school communities experience relentless pressure to achieve results; students also have active lives with many distractions. In this climate, including the curriculum elements for global citizenship can be challenging. The task will be easier with a strengthened curriculum for global citizenship.

The IB has a key leadership role to play in the field of international education. Educating for global citizenship is now a significant element in curriculum development in many jurisdictions. There is a notable increase in national and international programmes offering education for global understanding. Our success has motivated others to create programmes with similar goals.

The IB can provide leadership in international education by:

- strengthening the elements of global citizenship throughout the IB curriculum
- developing authentic assessment tools for international-mindedness and global citizenship
- opening perspectives for students and empowering them through technology
- strengthening the terminology used in describing and explaining the IB philosophy.

Strengthening the global elements of the curriculum is an ongoing process. With 3,200 schools in 140 countries and a vast network of IB educators, the IB has a unique opportunity to draw on expertise from various cultures and experiences to achieve this. The more clearly the global

elements of the IB curriculum are articulated, integrated and assessed, the easier the task will be for schools.

Education has always been a future-oriented endeavour. The combination of rigor and philosophy offered by the IB carries tremendous potential and promise. Maintaining the vision expressed in its mission statement requires that the IB nurture a culture that is creative, alert and flexible. Educating for the 21st century is an exciting and urgent responsibility. Our collective future depends on it.

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