WHAT NOTIONS OF EDUCATION ARE EMBEDDED IN THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AND WHAT ARE THE CONSIDERATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS?

by

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Abstract

In this paper, notions of education are examined against the ideals and mission of the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) and its curriculum programmes. This paper considers the consequences for IB leaders in upholding these particular values. Leadership matters because principals influence a measurable, though indirect effect, on school success and student achievement through changing school-wide conditions like classroom practices and teacher motivation. Adopting the perspective that educational and schooling leadership is necessary for IB World Schools to flourish, I will examine the importance of sustainable leadership; emotional intelligence; collaborative leadership and values-driven leadership. My main contention is that the IB mission and Learner Profile provides an IB notion of education, and for IB schools to be truly “educational” school leaders must model these values and engage all stakeholders in a dialogue around them. Currently this is not happening in enough IB World Schools.
Introduction

From the outset, this paper does not set to explore the distinct and necessary elements of “management” involved in running an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. In fact the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) must “authorise” a school before it is allowed to undertake any three of its curriculum programmes. Instead this paper seeks to examine the distinctive educational and schooling leadership necessary to actualise the IB mission and philosophy. There is no doubt that leadership matters and “…is the single most important contributing factor in creating a school’s ethos, identity, and ultimately its success or failure as an institution” (Haywood, 1994 as cited in Hopkins et al., 2002, p.175). Hallinger and Heck (1996) go on to state that from a review of 40 studies over fifteen years “…principals exercise a measurable, though indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement” and this is done by affecting the school’s “academic capacity” (as cited in Jarrett, Wasonga & Murphy, 2010, p. 640). “Academic capacity” can be described as “whole school” improvements in learning; promotion of new classroom practices such as inquiry-based learning; teacher professional development; shared decision-making and open communication (Hallinger & Heck, 2002). These conditions can change classroom practices and improve student learning.

The IBO authorises, manages, provides professional development, and ensures the quality of three programmes- the Primary Years Program (PYP), the Middle Years Program (MYP) and the most common, the Diploma programme (DP), for students in their two final years of secondary schooling. According to its official website, The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a non-profit educational foundation, motivated by its mission, focused on the student (IBO, 2011). Its three programmes, for students aged 3 to
19, help develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world (IBO, 2011). IB programmes are currently found in 3,480 schools in 144 countries (IBO, 2011).

**Educational Leadership versus Schooling Leadership**

Educational leadership is different from schooling leadership. Wanting to offer an IB programme requires the leader to organise a feasibility study; promote and fund IB teacher workshops; provide time release for the creation of comprehensive curriculum maps including suitable assessment activities; complete a detailed questionnaire, and facilitate an on-site inspection by an IBO team (Hill, 2006). These activities help to provide the necessary preconditions for a dialogue around “education” (i.e., what it means to lead a good and worthwhile life) (Coulter and Wiens, 2008). But becoming an IB World School doesn’t just demand curriculum innovations, but will require financial (forward) planning, normally a timetabling re-structure, suitable resources for the library to support and complement programmes, and staffing considerations (such as a collaborative staffing model and a strong middle management team). These considerations are necessary for the efficient running of IB schools, but aren’t strictly “educational”.

School leaders can create wonderful interpretations of education, but fail to provide the required conditions for these ideals to flourish. Later in this paper, I will discuss a number of leadership approaches that can contribute to schooling leadership. Hence educational and schooling leadership, although both essential, are not the same thing.

Roher and Wormwell citing Fullan (1992) state that effective school leadership “... involves designing and carrying out plans, getting things done and working effectively
with people” (2000, p. 2). In contrast educational leadership is not so clear, partly because it is influenced by values and dispositions that can vary depending on how one interprets leading a “good and worthwhile life”. According to Professor George Walker, a former Director-General of the IBO, his interpretation of an IB education includes vision, values based on the organisation’s mission and what it means to be a 21st century citizen:

The first basic ingredient of leadership is a guiding vision...a vision...that is able to face the future with confidence: a vision that is founded upon the values-intellectual rigour, compassion, open-mindedness and cultural understanding- that are essential ingredients for a fulfilled life in the globalized society of the 21st century. (my emphasis) (Walker, 2007, pp. 101, 104)

There is no doubt that IB leaders require effective school leadership skills as they attempt to negotiate competing demands for resources (the IB is often offered in addition to national curriculums), and will need to use their problem solving skills to structure processes that support teaching and learning. But more than schooling leadership is needed if an IB school is to truly live the mission of the organisation. Educational leaders should encourage discussions around what is “good and worthwhile”, and the IBO has its own interpretation of this through its mission statement, and commitment to intercultural understanding and respect.

IB programmes are more than curriculum. As Hill (2006) points out:

...each year a number of schools are not accepted because they do not match up...in terms of school philosophy, pedagogy, teacher training...acceptance by the staff, school board and parent body...an appropriate consultative management style...the promotion and understanding of international-mindedness. (p. 23)
Dr Hill, as Deputy Director, seems to be suggesting that decisions about what is "good and worthwhile" involve democratic acceptance of the IBO's values and philosophy. In the above quote Dr Hill is talking about both educational and schooling leadership, because promoting a "vision" of international mindedness requires a dialogue that will differ depending on the values held by stakeholders. Equally, teacher training, pedagogy and school-wide consultation, are schooling leadership concerns. What is more explicit is the fact that the IBO's mission and "...values are at the heart of everything we do", as stated in the organisation's 2011 document *Impact through Leadership in International Education*:

"At our heart we are motivated by a mission to create a better world through education. We value our hard-earned reputation for quality, for high standards and for pedagogical leadership" (2011, pp. 1-3).

To achieve such a "noble" ambition, IB schools need to be led by administrators and teachers that model, and are guided by, the values of the IB mission statement. Having worked in several IB schools over ten years (I worked in IB schools in Germany; Turkey; Sweden; The Netherlands and Australia), I saw little evidence of leadership motivated by this mission. Just because the IBO sees its mission "at our heart", does not mean this is reflected in educational leadership practices. This is problematic as I often witnessed IB leaders motivated by "market orientations" values, and the need only to prepare students for future academic success. For example "teaching to examinations" was a prioritised over Community, Action and Service (CAS). Many of the IB schools where I worked chose particular values, such as academic success and marketability, to guide their ideas of education and schooling, while ignoring others. This "selective" and academically
focused approach to an IB education does not reflect the original intentions of its founders.

The International Baccalaureate Program

Origins of the IB

In 1962 a team of international social studies teachers met in Geneva to discuss whether it was possible to create a joint social studies course and examination that would be acceptable to all schools (Hill, 2002). The task was initially given to the International School of Geneva that was running four different examination courses dependent on the nationality of the students (Hill, 2002, p. 20). According to Hill this led to "...unviable class sizes and cultural isolation" (2002, p. 20). Moreover parents of the students at the International School of Geneva (civil servants working for mainly UN agencies) "...wanted for their children an education whose objectives reflected those of the organisations they served: the promotion of world peace and international understanding" (Hill, 2002 p. 19). For this to be realised international schools needed a different approach to the schooling practised at the time- encyclopaedic memorisation.

To promote international understanding the IB’s founders believed that what was necessary was "...an approach that would cut through stereotypes and prejudices: critical inquiry coupled with an open mind willing to question established beliefs...[willingness] to accept that being different does not mean being wrong" (Hill, 2002, p. 19). Critical inquiry was particularly important to the IB’s founders as it would allow students to challenge the Cold War prejudices of the time, and hopefully provide "...a complete and rounded view of the world, not only knowledge and understanding but the desire for peace, the feeling of the brotherhood of man" (Maurette, 1948 as cited in Hill, 2002, p.
21). This approach to education is still evident in today’s IBO mission statement which emphasises caring and inquiring students who aim to create a better world and believe that people, with their differences, can also be right (IBO, 2002).

Historically the IB Diploma programme came about “…for ideological, utilitarian and pedagogical reasons to:

- Promote international understanding and prepare students for world citizenship and peace;
- Provide a school leaving diploma that would allow students to gain entrance to world universities through a common curriculum and examinations and
- Promote critical thinking skills via a programme that requires students to study a broad range of subjects, at least one foreign language and participate in community service. (Hill, 2002, p. 20)

The first Diploma trial exam did not take place until June 1967 (Bunnell, 2011, p.168). However, from the very outset there was a divergence between “…having at its heart a radical mission statement to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect” whilst at the same time wanting to provide “…a global quality- assured and branded certification process to an elite group of candidates” (Brunnell, 2011, pp.167-169). This has led to much critique of the IB. Its programmes have been attacked as being “elitist”, “too academic”, “too focused on examinations”, “too idealistic” and “too Eurocentric” (Tarc, 2009). According to Bunnell (2011), concerns were expressed as far back as 1972 about the elitism of the project and “…its lack of activity in Africa…has always been an issue of concern” (2011, p. 166).
To counter these criticisms the IBO created in 2006 a document explicitly espousing important values "...that should infuse all elements of the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma programme and therefore, the culture and ethos of all IB World Schools (my emphasis) (Bunnell, 2011, p. 167 & IBO, 2008, p. 1). I will focus on this "Learner Profile" later, but nonetheless these values are meant to provide "...the common ground on which all IB World Schools stand" (IBO, 2008, p.1). In essence these are the values the IBO has decided are "good and worthwhile" for students living in a rapidly changing world. So important are these values (for quality assurance) that they are found in the IBO’s Programme Standards and Practices which must be met in order for schools to be authorised and continually accredited. These values and standards should have a direct impact on how IB World Schools are led.

**IBO Mission**

The broad aims of an IB education are found in its mission statement:

The International Baccalaureate Organisation aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the IBO works with schools, governments and international organisations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right. (IBO, 2002)
When reading this statement an IB education is meant to be inquiring, knowledgeable and caring, with an emphasis on creating a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect (IBO, 2002). The IBO mission “...is first and foremost a symbolic expression of the organization’s values” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985 as cited in Hallinger & Heck, 2002, p. 13). Hence I would contend that IB schools must have leaders that nurture these values, not just through the curriculum, but in relationships between management and staff, staff and students, staff and parents, schools and local communities. Of course an organisation can have many values, but I would argue that a school’s mission statement can only be “educational” if it seeks to promote a democratic conversation around what constitutes a good and worthwhile life. Yet from personal experiences, there was never a democratic conversation about the purpose of education and what constitutes a “good and worthwhile” life. Furthermore I never saw the IBO mission publicly displayed, let alone explicitly debated. No references were made to it during staff meetings or professional developments.

Only certain IB values were respected with one school in Sweden introducing “performance pay” and in another school located in Germany, the Director was so rarely seen out of his office, whilst writing his PhD, that most students were unaware he was the school principal. At an IB school in Turkey, several staff literally left in the middle of the night, so bad were employment conditions and the relationship between staff and management. In that same school, IB Turkish teachers were paid less than their international colleagues causing friction and a loss of morale. This experience was not unique, and according to Tarc (2009) “...some Anglo-Western teachers genuinely view their heightened status in the international school system as a product of their individual
pedagogical competence granted by their more advanced culture” (p. 128). While these toxic environments can exist in any school (or workplace for that matter), in the IB schools where I worked there was a dissonance between how these schools were led, and the IBO's mission and values. Hence problems with educational leadership led to problems with the institutionalisation of schooling.

Dr Nicholas Tate, the former Director-General of the International School of Geneva, reputed to be the world’s oldest international school (and the school were the IB was conceived in the 1960's), gave the 2004 Alec Peterson lecture stating:

Many individual schools have mission statements. I sometimes wonder...whether enough thought goes into such statements: both whether we think enough about the meaning of what we are saying when we describe the aims of education we provide and whether we think enough about the practical implications of these aims for how we devise our curriculums and run our schools...What happens in our education systems and schools are inseparable from those about our values, about the kind of society (and world) we want...and about our fundamental ends and purposes as human beings. (Tate, 2004, p. 2)

Hence the “hidden curriculum” of a school is vitally important because it establishes the ethos of the school and its fundamental purpose about what counts as education. (Brighouse, 2008). This includes “...the diversity of the teachers; the composition of the student body; the school mission statement; the curriculum and extra-curriculum; the physical appearance of the school; the choices that managers make about what kinds of activities to single out for praise and illumination...” (Brighouse, 2008, p. 68). In many IB international schools Anglo-American teachers are favoured over local hires meaning
faculty is predominantly white, middle class and schooled in Eurocentric ways of learning (Tarc, 2009). In some IB schools, the focus is on only one IB value- academic achievement and outcomes- and educational leaders “praise” those students publicly with awards. Currently some IB schools fail to recognise those students who have fostered intercultural understanding and awareness, even though this is essential to the IBO mission (Brunold-Conesa, 2010).

The mission statement is meant to be at the centre of all the IB does, and these sentiments have been echoed from the highest officials in the organisation. Dr Monique Seefried (then) Chairman of the IB Board of Governors, stated during a major speech in San Francisco that:

The IB is without a doubt a mission driven organization...We have to be beacons of humanity, creativity and learning. I know that many schools joined our organization because of our challenging programmes and curriculum...our rigorous assessment...but this is not enough to be an IB World School. We challenge schools to demonstrate what they have done to fulfill the mission of the organization, to inculcate in their students the desire to work towards a better and more peaceful world. (my emphasis)(Seefried, 2007, p. 4)

My major contention is that there is a disconnect between how these educational intentions are actually translated into schooling practice. To some extent this is the fault of the IBO itself. While it has procedures to ensure the moderation (and quality) of student assessments and external examinations,

...it [assumes] that schools that offer one or more of the IB programmes have internal mechanisms to ensure that the programmes are being delivered in keeping
with the IB philosophy, and that teachers incorporate the attributes [of the IB] into their teaching and interaction with students. There would seem to be a lack of evidence as to the extent to which this occurs. (Wells, 2011, p. 184)

Recent research on educational leadership suggests that school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly through “building vision and setting directions” and that vision can motivate staff, create a sense of shared purpose and “...staff consensus on...the aims of the school [can create a] general sense of educational purpose...and broadly understood instructional focus” (Hallinger & Heck, 1996 as cited in Hallinger & Heck, 2002, p. 16; see Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008). The IB provides a framework of values through its mission statement and the IB Learner Profile. If a school chooses to adopt the IB, then it must also adopt its values and mission. It is my contention that no school is “forced” to adopt the IB and internationally there are now other secondary programmes, such as the Cambridge University International Examinations, that provide a purely academic qualification without the broad mission statement.
‘Unique’ features of the International Baccalaureate

![IB Diploma Hexagon](image)

**Figure 1** The IB Diploma Hexagon (IBO, 2011).

In 2010 IB programmes were educating 800,000 children (Bunnell, 2011, p. 165). The IB is still in a period of growth and development, and it is likely that by 2020, IB programmes will be educating 2.5 million children in 10,000 schools worldwide (Bunnell, 2011, p. 166). While the IB was once seen as a programme offered to international students so they could get a “transferable” diploma to enter higher education, public national schools now represent 52% of all IB schools, and this figure is likely to increase, particularly in the US and Canada (Hill, 2006, p.15). IB leadership is important given it is a “unique” programme involving international mindedness, global engagement, creativity, action and service learning (CAS), and a visible “Learner Profile”.

As a global organisation the IB’s mission is overtly and unapologetically idealistic and
hence “...intercultural understanding, a knowledge of global issues, learning at least one other language, a knowledge of the human condition on a world scale...are important ingredients of the IB...programme” (Hill 2006, p.16). There is also a (historical) emphasis placed on critical thinking skills and this evident from (compulsory) programmes like Theory of Knowledge in the IB Diploma, to the Primary Years Programme where the final assessment involves an “exhibition” of a real (normally global) issue. An essential part of this exhibition involves students coming up with ideas to address their global concern. Reflection on student work, outcomes, and even course content is encouraged in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) which in fact has no prescriptive syllabus; instead students look at content through the questioning lens of health and social education, community and service, environments, human ingenuity and approaches to learning (skills). In the Diploma Programme emphasis is placed on Creativity, Action and Service (CAS), Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and the extended essay.

These compulsory courses are placed at the “heart” of the IB Diploma hexagon (see figure 1), although their interpretation will always depend on the local context. For example, an IB school in southern Netherlands decided to focus on the “service” component of the IB mission (through the CAS program) by becoming a Centre for Service Learning. Likewise, in keeping with the IB’s history and emphasis on critical thinking, some IB schools focus on Theory of Knowledge (Bilkent Preparatory School, Turkey) which is designed to get students to question the ways and problems of knowing. “There is no equivalent of this course in any national system, and the IBO prefers to see as many teachers as possible involved in the teaching of this inter-disciplinary course”
(van Loo, 2004, p.6). At Bilkent, TOK students engage in meaningful debates and hold seminars on how knowledge is acquired-through reason, perception, language and emotion-and investigate their strengths and weaknesses. Essentially it is a course on epistemology, and students are expected to relate problems of knowledge to their learning using meaningful examples from the curriculum, or from current public discourse. John Goodban (2004) states “…the teacher has a significantly diminished didactic role to play and class discussion…exchanges of opinion, the Socratic critical approach to learning…and experiential discovery…are equally important and active” (p.15).

Having taught this course, it definitely challenges students and “…being launched on to the open sea of intellectual uncertainty can be a daunting experience, especially for those who have succeeded very well so far by staying within the tramlines and passively accepting the words of their teacher” (Austin, 2006, p. 148). The intellectual rigour of the course can be seen from the prescribed list of essay titles students need to write (and which are externally assessed):

- Does knowledge come from inside or outside? Do we construct reality or do we recognise it?
- The word “know” does not translate easily into all languages. In what ways do various languages classify the concepts associated with “to know”?
- Does knowledge always require some kind of rational basis?
- How does mathematical proof and scientific law differ from a historical judgement, an aesthetic opinion or a moral value?
This depth of questioning deliberately fits well with the IBO’s mission to create individuals “...who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right” (IBO, 2002).

Another unique feature of the IB Diploma programme is the Extended Essay. It is an academic research essay of 4,000 words and I am unaware of any national system that has this (compulsory) requirement. Students are able to write their essay in any DP subject and “...the IBO expects that the content will present a genuine intellectual challenge” (Jones, 2004, p.196). Students choose a topic of their choice and the essay must be the student’s original work. Jones goes on to state that there is “...a strong emphasis on the process of academic research, the level of analysis, the quality of argument...and the standards of formal presentation” (2004, p. 196). There is no doubt that this requirement was implemented for pragmatic reasons as the IBO wanted students well prepared for the type of research and writing expected by universities. The extended essay “…represents a step up the ladder towards tertiary education [and] as one university admissions tutor commented: “I would fall over backwards for more IB students” (Austin, 2006, p. 160). Nevertheless this core part of the Diploma does place additional demands on teachers as all students require a teacher-supervisor. According to Katy Ricks, Headmaster of Sevenoaks School in the UK, “What is clear is the demands made on the energy of school staff and resources...our staff had to mark 200 extended essays and make time for a lot of one-to-one work” (Richards, 2007, p.2). This has direct schooling implications for educational leaders as they juggle the demands of the program against the needs of staff who, in most public schools, would be receiving no additional increase in salary (Craig & Lawson, 2004, p. 134). Taken together with the TOK grade,
the extended essay can result in three bonus points added to the aggregate Diploma score (IBO, 2008). Yet from my own perspective, what is most fulfilling for students is the completion of a major piece of academic work on a topic that genuinely interests them.

Another feature of the Diploma (community and service is also a mandatory part of the MYP), and very much in keeping with the IBO’s mission, is Creativity, Action and Service (CAS). The notion of “service” in schooling is not new, and in order to graduate with a Dogwood Diploma, BC high school students need to complete four Graduation Transitions credits involving physical exercise and community service (BCED, 2012). Yet for IB school leaders CAS should be seen as one of the most important IB notions of education (McCallum, 2004):

CAS is at the heart of the Diploma Programme (DP) and sets it apart from other educational programmes. When properly implemented, the CAS programme should provide the spirit and drive for the entire DP... The CAS programme focuses on the whole student, and gives students a chance to take risks in a safe environment, to explore the new, to stretch and to grow. (McCallum, 2004, pp. 145-146)

CAS very much reflects the part of the IBO mission that seeks to encourage “...caring young people who help to create a better world, a more peaceful world” (IBO, 2002). In fact the Diploma can only be awarded to a student who meets this obligation (Austin, 2006). I have worked in IB schools where students have not been awarded the Diploma because they failed to fulfil their CAS requirements, even though they received high grades in their academic subjects. All IB Diploma students need to undertake activities from each area of creativity, action and service over the two (final school) years. Such
activities could range from being involved in a school theatre production (creativity), to taking up a new sporting challenge or coaching position (action), to participating in a beach or river clean-up project (service).

Technically students are required to complete 150 hours over the two year programme, keep a CAS journal were they reflect on what they have learnt, accurately record all activities, times, dates and get signatures from those individuals supervising the activity. CAS activities must be meaningful in some way and must have consequences for both the student and others (McCallum, 2004). These consequences will not necessarily always be positive, but the point of CAS is to offer "...a well-rounded education in the wider sense, to foster the development of fit and healthy young people able to think imaginatively...[and able to] demonstrate their responsibilities to others, either in their local community or further afield" (Austin, 2006, p. 163).

From personal experience CAS poses particular issues for school leaders. There are the obvious management issues such as needing to appoint a CAS coordinator preferably with a reduced teaching load; monitoring student progress; finding teachers to act as supervisors; and safety and liability issues as many activities will (and should) occur off school grounds. Furthermore, setting up community service projects is time demanding. Having been involved in setting up two such projects- in Sweden and The Netherlands- the administrative work and logistical issues are demanding when considering that "...each new placement will involve many hours of preparation, and will most likely benefit only a handful of students" (Austin, 2006, p. 165).

Besides these schooling issues, there is the leadership role of what status CAS should be given within the culture of the school. The IBO "...expects the school administration
to share its belief in the educational value of CAS, acknowledge the central role of CAS within the Diploma programme and encourage staff to participate as far as possible” (IBO, 2001 as cited in Austin, 2006, p. 167). Nevertheless from my own experiences CAS was often seen as an intrusion into “…the business of granting diplomas…one common goal to all parties is that DP candidates will be admitted into the postsecondary institutions of their choice” (Taylor and Porath, 2006 as cited in Brunold-Conesa, 2010, p. 267). Hence the educational value of CAS was largely ignored as many IB schools focused only on the values of academic success and university entrance scores.

If an IB World School is to faithfully fulfil the IB mission, then educational leaders need to place CAS, and “service” in general, at the centre of all the school does. School leaders should model creativity, action and service, monitor teacher and student engagement in the programme, and encourage dialogue so that teachers can discuss ways of supporting and facilitating a core aspect of the IBO mission (IBO, 2011). Personally I saw little evidence of school leaders being involved in CAS, which only nurtured a view in the staff room that these activities were “hour counting” exercises. In fact CAS and “service” are opportunities that can promote “good and worthwhile lives” as it encourages the education of the “whole” person, gets students “outside” of the classroom, and represents the true “value-added” element of doing the IB (Austin, 2006).

Coulter and Wiens (2008), state “…much contemporary educational discourse emphasizes the acquisition of abstract knowledge to cultivate theoretical wisdom, usually to the neglect of the type of wisdom that involves acting in the world (my emphasis) (2008, p.13-14). CAS, and community service in the MYP, allows students to “act” in the world, to learn outside the four walls of the classroom and hopefully appreciate that
living a “good and worthwhile life” involves helping others. Only an IB school, fully supporting “service”, will actualise the IBO’s mission and philosophy “...to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people...” (IBO, 2002).

The IBO does not market its programmes and is more interested in quality as “...to be authorized [as an IB] school is increasingly accepted around the world as being an internationally recognized statement of excellence” (van Loo & and Morley, 2004, p.13). As Goodban (2004) observes, what makes the IB “unique” is not its emphasis on the intellectual, emotional and social development of students, but rather having programmes that have “...no allegiance to any religious doctrine” with methods and philosophy influenced by best international practices and data, rather than “...by any government’s policy” (Goodban, 2004, p. 22). Hence the IB is non-national in the sense that it “...is not subject to the requirements, standards, demands and orientations of a particular national system”; it is pan-national in that it aims to create intercultural understanding that “seeks to build bridges between countries”; ex-national in that it also caters to the internationally mobile student who can study the same (or very similar) course whether they be at an IB school in Tanzania or Australia; and is transnational in that the IB Diploma is recognised by many universities, meaning graduates “...may cross educational boarders with the same ease that a valid passport permits movement from one country to another” (McKenzie, 1998 as cited in Hayden, 2006, p. 29). This is not to say that in an increasingly globalised world, where post-secondary education is another commodity to be brought and sold, that only IB graduates can attend foreign universities. Nevertheless IB graduates are well sort after by many prestigious institutions including The University of British Columbia (see Piper, 2006).
IB notions of education

An IB school is more than just its academic programmes, resources and appropriate facilities. As stated earlier in this paper, the IBO mission is unashamedly idealistic, and recent documentation coming out of the organisation only reinforces this view that “...at our heart we are motivated by a mission to create a better world through education [through the promotion of] intercultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of culture and national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century” (IBO, 2011). However, what it means to create a better world and what this actually looks like in practice, is both an educational and schooling concern. Furthermore, do mission statements really have an affect on the leadership of schools, and do they influence student values and motivations? Paul Tarc (2009) contends that “…understandings of the world and meaning of “better” or “change” are both contested and historically contingent” (p. 35). Despite my research I have been unable to locate any IBO documentation that clarifies what its means in actuality to create a better world despite the IB originating in “Cold War” Europe, with predominantly Anglo-American teachers and parents being “…worried about the inappropriateness of national curricula for providing a truly international experience” (Hill, 2002, p. 21).

The IB’s mission is very much linked to its aims for education. Hallinger and Heck (2002) argue that mission statements provide a vision for schools which in turn can promote “good and worthwhile” lives. They further contend that “transformational” leaders can “…only profoundly influence their constituencies [by having]...a clearly formed...vision [that] shapes our actions, invests our work with meaning, and reminds us why we are educators” (Hallinger & Heck, 2002, pp. 9-10). Yet despite the highly
contested nature of education—from Soerates, Plato and Aristotle to more modern philosophers such as Rousseau and Dewey—there is a view that education should be about encouraging young people to live good and worthwhile lives (Coulter & Wiens, 2008). Differences in opinions arise in “…how such a life could be fostered, that is… what count[s] as education” (Coulter & Wiens, 2008, p. 13).

Aristotle, Plato and Socrates viewed education as the contemplation of the good and true (Coulter & Wiens, 2008). Yet these ancient philosophers also debated how one could foster this good life. Socrates and Plato “…emphasize the role of knowledge and understanding in guiding human action [while Aristotle] is less confident about the power of abstract knowledge to guide human action” (Coulter & Wiens, 2008, p. 12). Aristotle was more interested in practical knowledge—that is “…wisdom that involves acting in the world” (Coulter & Wiens, 2008, p. 14). Coulter and Wiens argue that “…in the West, Plato seems to have trumped Aristotle publicly [while]…much contemporary educational discourse emphasizes the acquisition of abstract knowledge to cultivate theoretical wisdom” (2008, pp. 13-14). This is certainly not the intention of the IB programmes.

Alec Peterson, the first Director General of the IBO, was an educationalist from Oxford University who was “…a progressive educator in the tradition of Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), valuing depth of learning, both in terms of rigour and meaningfulness (my emphasis) (Tare, 2009, p. 16). Peterson believed that education should:

…develop the whole person for the needs of common humanity [and]… by expecting every student to study literature, human sciences and the philosophy of knowledge and to engage in the practice of a creative and aesthetic activity,
moral...dimensions of the student’s development are not neglected. (Peterson, 1972 as cited in Tarc, 2009, pp.30-31)

Peterson’s views seem to resonate with my understanding of other Western educationalists such as Nel Noddings (1995) who argues that “...we should want more from our educational efforts than adequate academic achievement and, second...we will not achieve even that meagre success unless our children believe that they themselves are cared for and learn to care for others” (pp. 675-676). This view fits well with the IB’s notion of education which explicitly states “...the IBO aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people” (IBO, 2002 as cited in Hill, 2006, p. 16).

For the first IBO Director General at least, the IB was a “moral” programme, and living a “good and worthwhile life” required students to question themselves and the world in which they lived:

No such education of the whole person worth the name could be purely informative...information must lead to understanding and understanding of other nations and cultures is impossible without some degree of sympathy...an international education...goes well beyond information and includes an appreciation of the art of other cultures and a discussion of the basis of morality in other cultures, is inevitably involved in the development of attitudes...the affective as well as the cognitive domain. (Peterson, 1972 as cited in Tarc, 2009, p. 17)

Within all IB programmes is an appreciation to think critically. If IB programmes are being taught well (a schooling leadership concern), then students shouldn’t be acting “...automatically or conventionally... [doing] only what is expected of them (...because
they feel they have no right to speak for themselves), if they do only what they are told to do, they are not living moral lives” (Greene, 1978, p. 49). Greene goes on to contend that to live a moral life one needs “wide-awakeness” and individuals who lead these lives “...think about their condition in the world...inquire into the forces that appear to dominate them...[and] interpret the experiences they are having day by day” (1978, p. 44). To a large extent this can only be achieved if teachers themselves are living moral lives (Greene, 1978). Hence an open and honest dialogue around what constitutes a “good and worthwhile” life is necessary if we are to truly educate our students.

Despite this, in job interviews I was never questioned about my philosophy on education, nor was any explicit mention made to the IBO mission. School leaders quizzed me about my teaching experiences, my teaching methodologies, and more often about what I could do for the school in terms of extra-curricular commitments or special interests. It is often this “extra” commitment that gives teachers “added-value” in schools attracting tuition paying students. In IB schools “...many parents...favour the objective of university access over international understanding, which exerts pressure to enact more conservative pedagogical approaches against the preferred approaches of the moral idealist IB actors” (Tarc, 2009, p. 33). From my own experiences, the teaching of ethics, care, and learning for the sake of inquiry, are often neglected as teachers teach to examinations (particularly at the IB Diploma level) to ensure student access to the best universities around the world. Hence many IB schools ignore their responsibilities to attend to all aspects of the IB educational framework.

This “institutionalisation” of schooling is about efficiently equipping students with work skills so as to promote a healthy economy. The fact that some IB schools promote
academic success by instigating selective entry procedures, means that certain aspects of
the IB fit tightly into a traditional schooling framework (see Whitehead, 2005 & Resnik,
2009). In Real School, Mary Metz (1989) critiques how schools

...were a mechanism for the quick Americanization of diverse immigrants and
efficient training of a labor force, most of whom were headed for menial jobs where
bosses and managers intended to be the brains...such a system was not designed to be
responsive to individual or cultural diversity. (p. 81)

This traditional view of schools as a “factory system” churning out individuals who could
do the three R’s (reading, (w) riting and (a) rithmetic), for jobs in the industrial economy,
was one reason for the inception of the IB. As Hill (2006) points out “…the IB project
attracted reformers of national education systems who could see beyond memorisation
and encyclopaedic knowledge…and despaired at the lack of dialogue, questioning and
real understanding on the part of students” (p. 16). As part of the “common school script”
students do not need any real understanding to pass a standardized test, nor do they need
to question when everyone is supposedly getting the same public education (Metz, 1989).

Some literature would seem to suggest that broad IB notions of education are a
credible alternative to Real School. In a study done of 659 IB Diploma students from
eight schools in seven different countries, Wilkinson and Hayden (2010) found that

...as the two years progressed, they grew to see that issues they had previously
perceived as simple were often complex, and that solutions to many of the world’s
problems were not clear-cut. What might seem ‘right’ for one person could be
‘wrong’ for another; this they came to recognize as they gained an increasing
knowledge of each other’s value systems. Many of the case study students
demonstrated a major shift in attitudes during their IBDP studies. (as cited in Wells, 2011, p. 90)

Another (small scale) study undertaken by Gary Snapper (2006) showed that many IB students believed that the programme provided them with self-confidence, independence and a willingness to take risks (p. 173). They were more open to challenges and would critically think about local and global events (Snapper, 2006, p. 173). He quotes Student D stating:

I have never regretted taking the IBDP- on the contrary, I have always felt privileged to have the opportunity to take it...When I first went to university I found it disappointing...Classes were not as stimulating and certainly not as focused, other students were not as comfortable in taking part in discussions, and showed little interest in any subject other than their own as it was narrowly defined by the syllabus. (Snapper, 2006, p. 171)

Nevertheless whether IB schools offer a true alternative to the “common script” found in Real School is contestable. As Metz (1989) points out, this script does suit some schools, notably those located in high socioeconomic communities and “...works with reasonable technical effectiveness in schools were certain unstated preconditions are met...where students come...with strong literacy, numeracy, and writing skills and a rudimentary knowledge of history and science” (p. 87). The same could be said for success within IB programmes. From my own experiences, the IB does not suit students with special needs, those who are not interested in further academic studies (although the IBO is rolling out an IB Career- related Certificate (IBCC), from September 2012) and those who struggle with perseverance and organizational skills. Dr Hill has admitted as
much by stating "...there is an intellectual level below which it would be difficult to obtain the full diploma" (2006, p. 15). From personal experiences I noticed the struggles and difficulties experienced by students whose first language was not one of the three official Diploma languages—English, French or Spanish. Furthermore, the Western approach to knowledge and learning would probably not suit indigenous students, and the cost of doing the IB in private or international schools is too expensive for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Even if IB schooling was to be promoted as an alternative to Real School, the real motivation is often the pursuit of academic and economic advantage, rather than preparing students to lead "good and worthwhile" lives. In a study of 155 schools conducted by Spahn (2001) on why schools adopt the IB, he found that "...a rise in academic standards was the major reason for adopting the IB" while "its international aspects were of secondary importance", and the growth of the IB in the US is more due to "...its content rather than its philosophical underpinnings" (as cited in Hayden, 2006, p. 36). These sentiments are not uncommon. South St. Paul of New York became the first public school district in the US to offer the IB program to all students. The rationale—"...the need to prepare students to compete for 21st-century jobs [and]...in order to prepare them for that, we need to offer them rigours, challenging academic experiences, and that’s basically what [IB] is all about" (my emphasis) (Cech, 2008, p. 20). This quote is from the school district’s director of curriculum and instruction, an official who should actually understand the IB’s mission and values!

The pursuit of academic and economic advantages through IB schooling is not unique to the United States. Whitehead (2005) studied the marketing of IB schools in South
Australia. She focused on school advertisements in South Australia’s daily newspaper, the *Advertiser*, in 2003. Out of 145 schools that advertised in the newspaper, forty were IB World Schools (Whitehead, 2005, p. 2). By focusing on the marketisation of schooling, Whitehead was trying to understand why school leaders advertise in the ways they do. Advertisements are insightful in that “…schools present what they consider to be their most desirable features to persuade buyers and in doing so they shape expectations about…education” (Whitehead, 2005, pp. 5-6). After examining those advertisements Whitehead argued that these schools “…were selling social advantage rather than social justice”, and this was compromising the “educational” ideals of the IB (2005, p. 2). She did this by looking at the size of the advertisements (and compared base rates for advertising); annual tuition fees; the geographical location of the school, and advertising language suggesting “…that there were limited places available and thus they could afford to be very selective about the kinds of students they were prepared to enrol” (Whitehead, 2005, p. 6).

By analysing these advertisements Whitehead was able to identify that “Open Days” were the most frequent subject of the advertisements, “…followed by music and academic scholarships” (2005, p. 6). As part of this process “interested families” are invited to “…meet the Headmaster [or Principal] and senior staff” meaning the school leadership is well aware of the content of its marketing (Whitehead, 2005, p. 6). Whitehead goes on to comment “…there was no explicit references to the IB’s commitment to a liberal education for intercultural understanding…” (2005, p. 7). She also disrupts the notion that the marketing of education is gender-neutral by highlighting that no female teachers were present in any of the advertisements, nor did the schools...
acknowledge single parents or "untraditional" families (Whitehead, 2005). In other words "...pragmatic realism overrides the IB's humanitarian and socially just ideals" with the result that "...student identities are being reconstructed along individualistic lines as these schools teach the skills required of the entrepreneurial individual...rather than a socially responsible citizen" (Whitehead, 2005, p. 10). In essence the "common script" of the Real School has been replaced by the "IB script", which fundamentally is no different in the sense that it offers success to those who already have economic and social advantages.

Charges of "elitism" are nothing new for the IB. While the IBO tries to emphasise its mission to create a better and more peaceful world, schools, principals and school boards continue to use the programme to attract gifted or talented students or "...create racial balance within a school by stemming "white flight" of students away from the area" (Spahn, 2001 as cited in Hayden, 2006, p. 36). The financial implications of offering the IB are also important considerations for poorer schools and districts. There is an application fee of $US10,000, and separate yearly fees need to be paid by students for each program (around $US717 per year for each IB Diploma candidate with $US141 being the registration fee plus $US96 for each subject over the two year programme (96 x 6 x 2 year program = $US1, 152)) (Resnik, 2012, p. 260). These figures don't include the cost of sending teachers and coordinators away to IB conferences and workshops which is estimated at around $US1, 000 per person (Cech, 2008). In Australia, some state governments have changed legislation making parental payments for "specialised" programmes like the IB mandatory in public schools (Doherty, 2009, p. 77).
The IB is aware of these charges and contends that “52%... of IB world schools are state schools with no tuition fees” and this figure is expected to increase in the future (Hill, 2006, p. 15). According to Jeff Beard the current IBO Director General:

...while we get the label of being elitist...about 30% of IB schools in the United States receive federal Title 1 anti-poverty money. The organization would like to increase dramatically the overall proportion of IB students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches...we’re focusing on schools with Title 1. (Cech, 2008, p. 24)

What Jeff Beard doesn’t devolve is how to make this a reality given the high financial cost of running IB programmes and continuing professional development. It is a noble ideal to increase the availability of the IB to those most disadvantaged. Furthermore, I would contend that this very much aligns with the IB’s mission and values, but I remain concerned that the single-minded pursuit of “academic rigour” (and university access) will fail these students who could benefit so much from an education that challenges the status quo.

Recent attempts to IB Learner Profile

The IB Learner Profile is at the core of all IB curriculum documents, and is emphasised by the highest officials in the organisation (see Appendix). Dr Monique Seefried (2007), states that the IB is “…an organization whose message encompasses such richness that it would be a shame to reserve this sense of international-mindedness and those shared values for a few. The world needs people educated with the values of the learner profile” (as cited in Tarc, 2009, p. 95). The IB Learner Profile is part of all three IB programmes, and is meant to provide “…a long-term vision of” [an IB]
education...a set of ideals that can inspire, motivate and focus the work of schools and teachers, uniting them in a common purpose” (IBO, 2008, p.1). The profile is a set of ten attributes that all IB learners should strive for: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective (IBO, 2008, p. 5). The IBO’s Programme Standards and Practices, which schools use for authorization, emphasises the Learner Profile stating that IB schools will be committed to developing this profile in all students (Standard A1.2), but their interpretation will obviously depend on the school’s local context. Furthermore, the formal, informal and hidden curriculums will promote all the attributes of this profile (Standard C1.6).

Despite teaching IB programmes for nearly ten years, last year was the first time a school administrator asked me to actively promote the IB Learner Profile. In this (Canadian) school the Profile was part of learning outcomes, assessments and reflection. In reporting to parents we were asked to comment on whether students had demonstrated these attributes in their learning and through their interactions with others. The Learner Profile is not meant to be “...a profile of the perfect student; rather, it can be considered as a map of a lifelong journey in pursuit of international-mindedness” (IBO, 2008, p. 2). In this respect the IBO has at last provided some guidance as to what it means to be internationally minded. As discussed by Paul Tare (2009), where the profile is “...not ignored or tokenized, [it] does press IB...teachers to employ more progressive approaches within the...disciplinary-rigid IB Diploma” (p. 103).

Nevertheless there is little evidence to suggest that this Profile really contributes to international-mindedness. Past studies of ex-IB students and IB teachers have been unable to pinpoint “...whether the development of intercultural perspectives in individual
students is a direct result of participation in an IB programme or an effect of the school environment, especially where diverse cultures are represented in the student and teacher population (Hayden & Wong, 1997, as cited in Brunold-Conesa, 2010, p. 263).

Furthermore, there is an assumption “...that teachers, managers and other adults at the school are aware of and agree with the attributes of the Learner Profile and are able to perform actions that are a reflection of this” (Wells, 2011, p. 184).

I have always believed that teaching is a “moral” profession, and it is inauthentic to promote discussions around what constitutes a “good and worthwhile life” if we don’t develop and reflect upon our own values. As Gary Fenstermacher (1990) points out:

...nearly everything that a teacher does while in contact with students carries moral weight...every response...every assignment...every discussion on issues...every resolution...every grade given...carries with it the moral character of the teacher. This moral character can be thought of as the manner of the teacher. (p. 134)

This statement may be obvious, but is easily overlooked by teachers trying to get through an increasingly crowded curriculum, and by policy makers more concerned with accountability, standardised testing and the ranking of students and schools. Educational leaders, whether they be principals or teacher-leaders, have an essential role in establishing school-wide reforms, and these reforms cannot be fully realised (or justified) if they are not guided by core values. Harris & Johnston (2010) talk about effective schooling leadership as “...creating transitions, overseeing changes, introducing innovation, and achieving strategic goals toward a better future through persuasion,
empathy, and collaborative work *ground in and guided by values and integrity*” (my emphasis) (p. 146).

The emergence of the IB Learner Profile has meant that all school leaders have a set of attributes to strive for, and have a responsibility to promote democratic discussions around them (Bunnell, 2011). This isn’t to say that there are not varying degrees of interpretation, and like education generally, what constitutes a “principled” or “reflective” student, for example, can be contested. Furthermore it is problematic that the IBO has provided a framework of values, but does little to support educational leaders in their interpretation of them:

...the delivery and monitoring of the success of teaching the attributes of the Learner Profile is left to schools...[but] if there are checks on the academic rigour of the IB programmes in schools, why does the IB not have a mechanism to fulfil this role where the attributes of the... Learner Profile are concerned, bearing in mind the importance it attaches to these attributes? (Wells, 2011, p. 177)

Likewise there is a need to acknowledge that the IB is intending to provide a set of idealistic outcomes for schools around the world. The IBO has never really grappled with the fact that it is intending to instil these values on students from different countries and cultures that may not share Western liberal- humanist traditions (see van Oord, 2007). From my own experiences, I found it challenging to encourage “critical thinking” in my Asian and Middle Eastern students who were more interested in having the “one” right answer, than disrupting notions of knowledge and understanding. This is particularly problematic when teaching subjects like English and history were different perspectives and biases affect interpretation. After all history is nearly always written by the “victors”,

and the historical content studied by most secondary students is largely devoid of female, working class, queer and indigenous perspectives. The teaching of Western knowledge and content is arguably one reason why 60 per cent of all IB schools are located in just four countries- the USA, Canada, England and Australia (Bunnell, 2011, p. 165).

The Learner Profile applies equally to adults in IB schools with the IBO explicitly mentioning that these attributes should guide the management and leadership. (2008, p. 2). Even if these values are not shared by everyone, it is imperative that school leaders encourage discussions around them as “...these values affect the expectations that community members have about what schooling is supposed to include, what students are supposed to achieve, and how teachers and administrators are supposed to act” (my emphasis) (Hausman, Crow & Sperry, 2000, p. 7). Nevertheless it must be stated that:

...even if teachers and schools are supportive of the attributes inherent in the...Learner Profile, there is no guarantee that these will be acquired by students; and, even if they are acquired, there is no guarantee that the students will develop strong, accessible links to the attributes so they can be transformed into palpable demonstrations of behaviour. (Wells, 2011, p. 181)

**International education to international mindedness**

Historically the IB started as a pragmatic exercise to ensure that internationally mobile students had access to universities through a “quality-assured product” (Bunnell, 2011, p. 178). However, many of the early actors in the creation of the IB were idealists and critics of their own national curriculums. Alec Peterson, the first IBO Director- General, was especially critical of the excessive specialisation in the English A- levels, while others wanted schools that more fully reflected the original clientele-students whose
parents worked for the UN or international agencies-who believed that education could be force to reduce the Cold War tensions of the time (Hayden, 2006; Bunnell, 2011). With this in mind, it is not surprising that the IBO has always seen itself as an organisation promoting international understanding (Hill, 2006).

Given that the IB started within international schools, it was relevant to develop within students understanding across national differences (Taric, 2009). Yet with the growth of the IB in public national schools, there became a need to revise what was meant by international understanding (van Oord, 2007). Some commentators have suggested that “…the Diploma programme has developed from a programme for international schools, to an international programme for schools” (Hagoort, 1994 as cited in van Oord, 2007, p. 376). There is no way to fully prove or disprove this assertion, although Hayden (2006) in a small scale study, suggests that international mindedness is achieved more through daily interactions with a diverse student and teacher population, than the IB curriculum per se.

In international schools my greatest joy came from teaching a diverse range of young people from around the world. This diversity enlivened discussions and debates, and students could draw upon their own personal experiences when discussing global issues. Nevertheless most international events in these schools involved the five f’s- flag waving, food, famous people, festivals and fashion (Ellis, 2006). This tokenistic approach to internationalism was fun (and easy to plan), but there is little evidence to say that it contributed anything to advancing international-mindedness.

Nevertheless with the end of the Cold War and continued globalization and migration, international understanding has turned “…from knowledge and understanding towards
dispositions and mindsets” (Tarc, 2009, p. 79). For the first IB Director General, international education involved “crossing frontiers”, but now “…the frontiers are less and less a transformative space for international contact and learning. Frontiers have flattened under globalization, and international understanding has become a diluted and taken-for-granted outcome” (Tarc, 2009, p. 129). Furthermore, some have argued that international understanding, now linked to “emerging global league tables of universities” has resulted in students being attracted to IB schools “…potentially impoverishing national (public) education systems as a middle class voice will no be heard in the demand for raising standards and resources” (Lauder, 2007 as cited in Tarc, 2009).

It is hard to sustain this contention given that the IB educates a tiny fraction of students when compared with public education systems (Bunnell, 2011). Furthermore, many public schools in the West are very multicultural and “…there is a growing recognition of differences within nation-states, rather than just between nation-states…[and] few western governments have a clear notion of what nationhood and citizenship mean in complex and pluralistic modern democracies” (Green, 1997 as cited in Tarc, 2009, p. 80). Intercultural understanding is no longer just a concern for IB schools.

Nevertheless the ‘I’ in International Baccalaureate is important to the organization not only for educational, historical and idealistic reasons. I would contend that it provides the IBO with a marketing tool with which to sell its “brand” of schooling. Resnik (2009) discusses the notion of the IB curriculum as meeting “…the needs of global capitalism” (Resnik, 2009, p. 217). She makes this assertion after conducting an extensive review of the available literature on multiculturalism, and the needs of transnational corporations in
the global economy. Resnik makes the argument that the IB curriculum fosters emotional, cognitive and socio-communicative multiculturalism hence these “... schools respond to the needs of the global economy by instilling into their students the predispositions (and mind-sets) that match the competencies required by global managers” (Resnik, 2008 as cited in Resnik, 2009, p. 218).

In contrast she traces the rise and fall of multiculturalism in public education in the United States, arguing that neo-conservative political forces have reduced the importance of civic multiculturalism as the term has gone out of favour, and national schools are focusing on a curriculum that goes “back to basics” (Resnik, 2009). Resnik makes these claims by comparing IB documents to management literature and making parallels with the skills and competencies needed in the globalised economy. Read in isolation she presents a compelling case and laments at the creation of “…two differentiated systems—a national system and an international system” where the latter “…may have access to prestigious global jobs that require multicultural skills; [while for] the rest... even the most brilliant, becoming a global manager might remain only a dream, an impossible mission” (Resnik, 2009, p. 218).

When read with a wide range of literature on the IB, there are serious flaws in Resnik’s discourse. Firstly, not all students want to be global managers in transnational corporations, and it neglects the role of individual teachers in promoting multiculturalism despite its “formal” absence in the curriculum. From my own teaching experiences, English classes play a pivot role in “imagining the other.” Literature allows “…a capacity for sympathetic imagination that will enable us to comprehend the motives and choices of people different...seeing them not as forbiddingly alien...but as sharing many problems
and possibilities with us” (Nussbaum, 2008, p. 144). Furthermore, Resnik neglects the social justice and humanitarian ideals of the IB. In doing so she has promoted a “corporate” notion of education which I contend was never part of the history and philosophy of the IB. Resnik (2009) confirms that education remains a highly contested concept, and there continues to be rigorous debate about whether the role of education is to produce skilled and mobile workers for the capitalist economy, or democratic citizens that lead good and worthwhile lives.

“International-mindedness” is embedded in the IB Learner Profile as discussed earlier in this paper (IBO, 2008; Tarc, 2009). The IB curriculum is always meant to espouse an understanding that in the end “people with their differences can also be right” (van Oord, 2007). Yet it is debateable whether this really occurs in IB schools. As a teacher trained in Eurocentric ways of knowing, I had little trouble teaching the IB programmes no matter where I was in the world. Tarc (2009) makes an often cited comment that the IB has a Eurocentric vision of international understanding. Van Oord (2007) supports this contention through his review of IB documents, course descriptors and literature stating “...the programme is overtly international at the content level but thoroughly western at the epistemological level. This leads to a partial incompatibility of goals that the International Baccalaureate Organization will have to face and address” (p. 375).

Van Oord makes this finding partly by using learning configurations theory. Accordingly “this theory explains what constitutes ‘a’ culture and approximates what makes human differences into cultural differences” (2007, p. 382). The theory talks about “reservoirs” of knowledge and how this is passed onto next generations (van Oord, 2007). Geographical and social differences affect how knowledge is transmitted in
different cultures and hence “...put constraints on what is taught and how this is done” (van Oord, 2007, p. 382). He contends that at least at the IB Diploma level, emphasis is placed “…on the importance of learning for understanding…learning of concepts and ideas over…vast…content… [and a] reaction against encyclopaedic memory work” (van Oord, 2007, pp. 385-6). This is a “liberal” epistemological tradition (van Oord, 2007).

Other commentators have gone further to suggest that there is nothing particularly “international” about the IB curriculum. Clayton Lewis (then) Director of the International School of Luxembourg states that research done into students choosing

Group 3 History shows:

In 2005, 18,712 students selected IB Higher Level history. Ninety-eight percent of these students pursued either the history of the Americas or the history of Europe as their optional topic...less than 3% of all Higher Level history students concentrated upon Asia, Oceania, the Middle East or Africa...this imbalance [is] a reflection of the dominant Anglo-European elements within our schools and a belief that non-Western regions are less important. (2006, p. 57)

This also reflects my own teaching experiences. As a history teacher I always taught the history of Europe as the optional Higher Level course, partly due to my geographic location, and partly due to my own academic background. Likewise most teachers I worked with were white, middle class and predominantly heterosexual. Hence many IB schools reflect Anglo-American ways of knowing. I concur with the small-scale study conducted by Hayden and Wong (1997) that:

...IB students tend to be international in their outlook [although they] reinforced the view that the IB school environment is more important than the IB subjects in
encouraging them to be “international”, the variety of nationalities at the school being particularly emphasised. (as cited in Hayden, 2006, pp. 37-38)

If international-mindedness is an IB notion of education, would the adoption of Eastern or indigenous ways of knowing, be acceptable to the many Western universities that favour IB graduates? (van Oord, 2007). Here IB leaders are in a dilemma- should they promote the equivalency of different ways of knowing and encourage assessments that allow students to demonstrate knowledge through a diversity of means and practices- or engage in pragmatism and maintain the status quo where the IB is a challenging academic means of gaining access to the world’s best universities?

To be fair, in some ways the IB can’t win. While van Oord (2007) argues that the IB way of teaching and assessing is too “Western”; others have contended that the IB is not western enough! In the United States the IB has undergone attacks due an emerging “culture war” “...to gain ideological control over areas such as the family, education, law and politics” (Hunter, 1991 as cited in Bunnell, 2009, p. 62). Bunnell (2009) contends that America is in a “war” between conservative and religious forces on the political Right and intellectual “moderate” Middle America. He goes on to state that “...not surprisingly...ultra conservative attention has turned towards the IB, a curriculum that emerged in the early 1960s both as a pragmatic vehicle for the globally mobile, and as a Cold War tool for promoting global peace” (Bunnell, 2009, p. 62). Using research from the internet, blogs, newspaper commentaries and academic journals, Bunnell highlights that this “culture war” has resulted in the IB being called “anti Christian”; “un American”; “Marxist” and “promoting one world government ideology”. An editorial in The Washington Times called the IB a “United Nations programme” (Bunnell, 2009).
This debate has intensified as “ninety percent of IB World Schools [in the US]...are state-funded” (Walker, 2005 as cited in Bunnell, 2009, p. 63).

Ironically the IB became popular in the US because of the view, at the Federal government level, that the public education system was not globally competitive enough, and there was a need to raise academic standards (Bunnell, 2009). Nevertheless, “…the attack on the IB seems partly as much an attack on federal government interference as it is the curriculum itself” (Bunnell, 2009, p. 65). The traditional notion of schooling being a state prerogative was always going to be at odds with an international curriculum that promotes understandings beyond national borders (IBO, 2002).

I contend these attacks are partly due to ignorance about the IB’s philosophy and history, and this is a failing that educational leaders must heed. From my own experiences, many parents enrol their children in IB schools for the academic challenges. Hence it is imperative that educational leaders articulate, debate and model the values of the IB if they choose to offer such programmes. It is my contention that no school is compelled to adopt the IB and should only do so if staff, students and the parental community accept and understand its values and philosophy. In fact the IB “...relies heavily on word-of-mouth marketing and has never advertised its programmes” (Bunnell, 2011, p. 173). There is no compulsion for schools to choose the IB, but if they do, there needs to be a close connection between the school’s mission and that of the IBO (Standard A1.4) and these beliefs need to be shared by all members of the school community (Standard A1.5) (IBO, 2005, p. 2) through sustained democratic discussions.
Educational Leadership for IB World Schools

Dr Monique Seefried, the former Chairman of the IB Board of Governors, commented at the Heads of Schools Conference (2011), that IB school leaders have a *responsibility* (to use the main theme of her speech) to promote and live the IBO mission and that an IB education goes *beyond* intellectual rigor and high academic standards. The ultimate goal is to help schools equip young people with *values* that they will use outside of the classroom...ideals of international understanding and responsible citizenship. *(my emphasis)*(2011, p. 17)

Here Seefried interprets international understandings, and responsible citizenship, as “good and worthwhile” educational goals. Furthermore, she elaborates on what is means to be an IB student:

- recognize all other persons as of equal value
- develop the skills to empathize
- acquire the knowledge to understand the emotions and motivations of oneself and others
- gain awareness of the seriousness of moral situations
- form a commitment to generate an autonomously accepted set of moral principles and *act* upon them *(original emphasis)* (2011, p. 18).

I would suggest that these same attributes need to be adopted by IB educational leaders. In an increasing globalised world, still divided by racial and religious intolerance, intercultural understanding and respect is necessary to lead a “good and worthwhile” life. Nevertheless determining what is “good and worthwhile” can be difficult enough in any school, “…but with turnovers as high as 20 per cent per annum [in private IB
international schools] this can be a monumental task [for educational leaders]” (Allen, 2002, p. 135). Principals in international schools last 3.7 years on average (Hayden, 2006). This is one reason why it’s also imperative to develop schooling leadership practices that are collaborative and sustainable. Even if the IB school is not international, the demanding and inter-disciplinary nature of the programs means the “decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus for leaders” (Leithwood, 1999, p. 12). Walter Plotkin, Director of Copenhagen International School in Denmark states:

...International schools tend to be more self-sufficient. They use their own expertise and develop ideas from within...people need to depend on one another. So it's important to create a culture of learning and a collaborative environment. (IBO, 2011, p.1)

**Collaborative Leadership**

The next part of this paper addresses the considerations and consequences for IB school leaders in actualising the intentions of the IBO. To actualise these intentions there needs to be schooling leadership which provides the necessary institutional conditions that can support dialogue around what constitutes a “good and worthwhile” life. Regardless of whether the IB school is international, or a public national school, research suggests that “…collaborative and participative styles of leadership help to develop and promote shared vision and goals and an environment of collegiality and collaboration” (Hausman et al., 2000, p. 34). I would contend that only in a school environment, encouraging collegiality and collaboration, can genuine discussions occur around what constitutes a “good and worthwhile” life. Likewise effective school leadership requires a strong middle management team. In the PYP subject leaders are necessary; in the MYP
there needs to be a program co-ordinator and co-ordinators for the ‘Areas of Interactions’; in the DP there must be a Diploma co-ordinator and the IBO recommends CAS, Theory of Knowledge and Extended Essay co-ordinators.

This set-up provides an ideal opportunity to practice collaborative schooling leadership that fosters sharing decision making and dialogue. In past teaching posts I have argued for PYP, MYP and DP committees made up of these individuals. Any organisational issue affecting the teaching and learning of students would be dealt with by these committees with recommendations then going to the Senior Management Team (SMT). There is also a certain logic in having these committees participate in student pastoral issues (along with relevant support staff like the school counsellor) as the IBO clearly states that its programmes are meant to be holistic and promote “...the education of the whole person, emphasising intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth through all domains of knowledge” (IBO, 2008, p.1). There shouldn’t be a distinction between academic and pastoral programmes, they are intertwined and (should) mutually support each other.

I have experienced variations of the above leadership model, yet in all cases important decisions were still made by the small SMT (Principal and Vice- Principals) and some clearly relevant decisions were not even referred to these committees. There is nothing more demoralising than to be given a decision-making role, but have no means to influence outcomes. Despite literature and research supporting collaborative and distributed leadership models, “...most schools are still organized in a manner that encourages isolation and discourages collaborative work” (Little, 1990; Schmoker, 2006 as cited in Jarrett, Wasonga and Murphy, 2010, p. 637). At the same time
“...governments are adopting leadership accountability measures that bear little connection with distributed practice” (Gronn, 2003 as cited in Harris, 2003, p. 318).

Hence expectations of the principal’s role can vary widely and can be contradictory such as autonomy versus control and shared leadership versus the institutional requirement to hold leaders ultimately responsible. In the IB school where I worked in The Netherlands, an organisational structure was put in place to share and disperse leadership with heads of department and heads of year. This made sense as according to a study of 15 schools in the USA and Canada, researchers found that “high leadership capacity schools” were those which enhanced relationships, participation and dialogue (Lambert, 2006).

Everyone is on a team, whether it is a leadership team, a vertical or horizontal grade team, a vision team, an action research team, etc. Everyone participates by engaging in conversations about student performance and questions of practice. Vision, belief, and values guide the development and implementation of initiatives that are congruent with the overall mission of the school. (Lambert, 2006, p. 242)

In such schools principals let go of much authority and control whilst still providing support and mentoring (Lambert, 2006). Lambert’s view, while supported by some research, doesn’t reflect the current reality that holds principals ultimately accountable for efficiency and student learning outcomes. Nevertheless, such schools could provide teachers with the confidence and responsibility to initiate educational discussions.

In the above IB school, the principal’s inability to delegate (and the challenge to his authority and ego) meant that he had created a structure that didn’t allow participants any ability to influence decision-making at a whole school level. As a head of department the strategic goals and vision of my department (and agreed to by my staff) were not
supported by the SMT. Despite a record of minutes, most suggestions and solutions to school issues were never acted upon. Hence the common refrain in departmental meetings became "it doesn’t matter what we say or propose they [the SMT] will do what they want anyway". The fact remains that a principal in a large secondary school cannot be an "expert" in all matters and "...acknowledging and developing...broader leadership capacity...may hold the key to unlocking the store of [instructional] leadership potential ...that principals are often unable to provide" (Barth, 1990, 2001; Fullan, 2001 as cited in Hallinger & Heck, 2010, p. 657).

**Sustainable Leadership**

Collaborative leadership also promotes sustainability. Sustainable school leaders promote dialogue around what constitutes education, as a means of "... planning and preparing for succession- not as an afterthought, but from the first day of the leader’s appointment" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004, p. 10). Sustainable leaders create meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders in the school community and share decision-making where "...staff [come] to believe that we are all administrators" (Hargreaves & Fink 2004, p.10). According to Hargreaves and Fink (2004), sustainable leadership has seven principles:

- Sustainable leadership matters because it goes beyond temporary fixes like raising test scores to creating lasting and meaningful improvements in learning;

- Sustainable leadership lasts because it builds capacity for participation and decision-making in others that continues long after the principal has left,
• Sustainable leadership spreads because the principal ensures that others share and help develop the school’s vision;

• Sustainable leadership is socially just meaning that it benefits all schools and students and is not only about maintaining improvements in one’s own school, but establishing networks of improvement in the wider community;

• Sustainable leadership is resourceful in that it attracts and retains the “best and brightest” to leadership positions and encourages them to take care of themselves;

• Sustainable leadership promotes diversity and allows leaders to take risks and create conditions that suit their individual schools and,

• Sustainable leadership is activist in that principals establish personal and professional networks that forge alliances in the community “…in a tireless campaign to preserve the school’s mission”. (p. 12)

Sustainable leaders put a structure in place that allows decision-making and opportunities for all staff to get involved in short to medium term planning and goal setting thus allowing for a shared or collective vision for the school. This is especially imperative in IB international schools where administrator and staff turnover is high. Sustainable leadership also suits the mission and philosophy of the IB which encourages collaborative teaching and learning, and where most programmes (PYP and MYP) have no prescriptive content (Hill, 2006). As stated by Hargreaves and Fink (2004) “…sustainable leadership recognises and cultivates many kinds of excellence in learning, teaching and leading, and…provides…networks for sharing these different kinds of excellence in cross-fertilizing processes of improvement” (p.
12). Just as the IB Learner Profile sets out ideals to inspire debate around what constitutes a “good and worthwhile” life, sustainable leadership provides the institutionalised support that allows schools to develop and nurture leadership in all staff, and its success is no longer dependent upon one (temporary) “heroic” leader.

Nevertheless Hargreaves & Fink (2004) fail in their discourse to address issues such as how widely should decision-making and the sharing of the vision be? And who determines this distribution? What kinds of tasks or roles are to be shared? Financial barriers may hinder the establishment of more formal leadership positions as higher wages would need to be paid to the participants. Equally sustainable leadership is problematic in the sense that again goes against the accountability orientation policy context that may schools must work in. At the end of the day nurturing leadership in others is fine as long as they can do the job, and once again who decides this? Not everyone is a leader or should be. In most local contexts principals will still ultimately be held accountable for efficiency, good management and student learning outcomes. Furthermore, the degree to which a principal can even take risks to create conditions that suit their school will depend to a large extent on the amount of autonomy given to them in their local context. In the Australian state of Victoria, for example, most “power” has been devolved to individual principals (and schools) who effectively allocate a pre-determined budget (based on student numbers), decide staffing and can engage in community partnerships. In Western Australia and British Columbia where public education is more centralised, there is less autonomy for principals, thus less scope to develop long lasting sustainable practices.
Emotionally Intelligent Leadership

Emotional intelligence is a relatively new area of leadership research (Crawford, 2011). As education is about people, emotional intelligence develops constructive inter-personal relations, which in turn can promote a more satisfying and emotionally secure school environment. Equally there can be no open and honest dialogue around what constitutes a “good and worthwhile” life, if there is no “culture of trust” between leadership and staff. As any practising classroom practitioner knows, teaching and learning occurs best when there is a relationship and connection between teacher and student. Humour, empathy and compassion help build such relationships. In schooling leadership these relationships are also essential. In an interview with the *IB World* magazine Aureila Curtis, principal of Curtis High School in New York states:

The more connected I feel to students and staff, the more successful I am. My teachers rarely say that I have no understanding of what they’re going through because I attempt to walk the walk with them every day. I describe myself very often as the principal teacher. (IBO, 2011)

The unique features of the IB programmes (and the students who take these programmes tend be academically demanding) requires leaders to motivate, and take into account, staff and student emotions and wellbeing. Hence a school leader needs to demonstrate self-awareness of their own emotions, after which “…knowledge of the interpersonal is crucial” (Crawford, 2011, p. 204). According Daniel Goleman (2004) emotional intelligence depends on five factors:
• Self-awareness (an ability to recognise and understand your moods, emotions and drives and their effect on others);
• Self-regulation (the propensity to suspend judgement and to think before you act);
• Motivation (the strong desire to achieve goals with energy and perseverance);
• Empathy (the ability to understand the emotions of others) and
• Social skills (the ability to find common ground with others and build rapport) (p. 3)

A leader who is self-aware of their own intra-personal emotions (for example they’re not having a “good day” and hence should refrain from dealing with a complaint about a staff member until they’re in a more objective frame of mind), is then able to “use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought” and implement school wide improvements through fostering better relationships between administrators and staff, staff and students (Crawford, 2011, p. 205).

During my time at an IB school in Sweden, staff were demotivated and stressed by the amount of documentation required to gain MYP authorisation after a period of ongoing change. Rather than using a motivating and empathetic approach, the principal became angry, called us malcontents, and said we could find other jobs. In the above case the principal showed “too much” emotion, was unable to empathise, and wasn’t able to manage the atmosphere of tension. He only succeeded in demoralising staff more and this created further negative emotions- anger towards him (and de-motivation towards the school). Unlike Goleman’s emotional intelligences, he failed to create a climate where staff felt “safe” to discuss emotions and was unable to find any “common ground” and
rebuild rapport. If we were emotional we were malcontents. This principal was not effective, as according to Fineman (2000), "...leadership is a meaning-making process...what people want for meaning...is a connection to others" (as cited in Crawford 2011, p. 206).

Furthermore, this principal was "...unable to think beyond themselves and to the social context of the organisation as a whole" (Crawford, 2011, p. 208). I have often felt throughout my career that some principals have (personal) agendas that have little relationship or connection to the school as a whole. In general schools are "emotionally draining" as teachers are in constant contact with a wide range of stakeholders, while wanting to "...make students feel that he or she is on their side and is going to take them to a better place" (IBO, 2011). The "...ability of the leader to read others’ emotions, is essential for establishing a psychologically safe and productive teaching and learning environment" and this could help leaders better connect with the school as a whole (Crawford, 2011, p. 209). Of course there is always the danger that emotional intelligence could result in leaders that are too empathetic and fail to hold individuals accountable for their actions (or inaction). Taken to the extreme this would obviously have an effect on the school’s efficiency and on staff morale. Hence there is a need to balance empathy and emotional understanding with the wider purpose and vision of the organisation.

**Values-based Leadership**

When examining values-based leadership it is necessary to first decide *whose* values are to be promoted and why? The principal’s? The community’s? Likewise *what* values should be promoted and why? As stated earlier, values such as compassion, respect, intercultural understanding, lifelong learning (through personal autonomy and
the ability to reflect and make informed decisions), empathy and international
mindedness, are evident in the International Baccalaureate mission (2002). Equally the
interpretation of these values can only be decided in context and will differ from one IB
school to the next. Nevertheless a school is educational if the provides all stakeholders
with the opportunity to debate a “good” and “worthwhile” life within the confines of its
local context. Is a school “educational” where students are able to critique what they are
told and can respect that people, with their differences, can also be right (IBO, 2002)?
Certainly this was an important value for the IB school where I worked in The
Netherlands and a range of community service projects saw students engaged with
different groups from asylum seekers to DSM, a locally based multinational food
processing company. Equally another IB school in Turkey emphasised academic success
and the values of autonomous learning. Whatever the local context it seems obvious to
me that to lead an IB school a leader should not only bring forth values centred around
the IBO mission and philosophy, but must also create the schooling environment that
allows a democratic discussion around such values.

An IB leader must model international mindedness. I would contend that a
monolingual leader is not exemplifying such values. If we expect IB students to learn a
foreign language, then the same expectation should be placed on the leadership. An
acknowledgement of international mindedness is implicit in a schooling leader who
recognises (and celebrates) various festivals and holidays such as Hanukkah, Christmas
and Kwantas. Providing a quiet space for religious students to pray, while acknowledging
a “safe” space for homosexual, lesbian and transgender students, demonstrates an
understanding of the “other”. According to Zachrisson and Johansson (2010) “…there
has been an unwillingness to discuss and analyze the non-rational, moral, and ethical aspects of leadership...obvious values are no longer so obvious” (p.44). Again, “worthwhile” educational goals cannot be analysed if educators have not examined and analysed their own values:

...educators need to better understand the connection between their deep-seated educational beliefs and their educational practices. When the link between theory and practice is examined...then conscious reflective intentional action occurs as opposed to mere mechanical responses...this type of understanding...brings us closer to the realm of praxis or enlightened practice...Educational leaders can play a significant role in creating a school culture of praxis, a culture that is conducive to continual examination and negotiation of educational values.


Schools are about people, and people not only hold values, but often make decisions involving a choice among different values. Hence schooling leadership involves daily decision-making around the academic, personal, emotional and social development of young people; whilst educational leaders instigate dialogues around values that promote a good and worthwhile life.

Work done by Leithwood (1998) demonstrates that “...values are basic concepts that govern the desire to carry out specific actions and reach specific goals...they also affect actions, which in turn, influence the thought and actions of others” (as cited in Zachrisson & Johansson, 2010, p. 44). If educational leadership is about promoting discussions around what constitutes a “good and worthwhile” life then “...values-based leadership is necessary to create and implement sustainable improvements” (Harris and
Johnston, 2010, p. 146). Personally I have seen little evidence of dialogue centred around the IBO mission and philosophy. Likewise the implementation of the IBO mission was no-where to be seen; the IB Learner Profile never referred to or used for teacher development, and interactions between leadership and staff were at times devoid of compassion and empathy.

Furthermore, if a dialogue about a “good and worthwhile” life involves social justice (as the IBO suggests), then the issue of “access” needs to be urgently addressed. The organisation needs to embark on partnerships and sponsorships to bring their programmes to economically less developed countries. Equity could also be addressed by providing individual scholarships to needy students. Equally parents and students entering an IB World School should be informed of its vision and the need to contribute, both in and outside of the classroom, to social justice. The IB mission and values should be on every bulletin board display, in every newsletter sent home to parents, and should be discussed openly at every assembly. IB school leaders should be an example of social justice, whether they personally engage in a local cause, or by placing “service” at the centre of all the school does. In this way educational leaders model and encourage dialogue around the IB mission and Learner Profile while providing the institutional support for these ideas to flourish.

The IB programmes were never meant for “mass consumption” and there was a very idealistic element to its creation in the 1960’s (Brunnell, 2011). These ideals are still important and current global events, from terrorism to environmental degradation, vindicate the need for even greater international mindedness and collaboration amongst people and nations. The IBO mission needs to be at the core of teaching and learning in
IB schools. Furthermore, educational leaders need to lead the debate as to whether academic success is a more important IB value, than its broader mission and philosophy. In order to achieve this they need to “...inspire a shared vision, change traditional notions of education, enable others to act and lead when necessary, and ‘encourage the heart’ - encourage individual excellence and community mindedness” in equal measures (Harris & Johnston, 2010, p. 149).

**Conclusion & Recommendations**

International mindedness, common humanity and respect for differences are values that can promote “good and worthwhile” lives. IB programs are challenging and academically rigorous. These are IB notions of education, but my main argument is they are not the most important values. The commitment required from IB school leaders and teachers often goes beyond many national schools and curriculums. As the current IBO Director-General states:

...we ask a lot of schools. They must train their staff to educate in our way and ensure that library and computer facilities meet our standards. When schools say that they like some aspects, but not others, we tell them that you must take the whole package or not at all. (Richards, 2007, p. 2)

In most public schools IB teachers get paid the same as their non-IB counterparts, so they must do more work for no extra financial benefit. If teaching in IB World Schools is to be seen as a reward in itself, then you need educational leaders who use the IB mission and Learner Profile to guide their decision-making, and are increasingly sensitive to emotions such as compassion, respect and empathy. At the same time you need schooling leadership that is collaborative, sustainable and emotionally intelligent, providing the
means for school change and reform in a way that inspires, motivates and encourages all stakeholders to "act out" these values within their local context. The IB mission and Leaner Profile may be perceived as "popular" or "acceptable" values orientations, but it is only through educational leaders modelling, mentoring and engaging in dialogue around them, will they become part of the practice in all IB schools (or be adapted to suit local circumstances). Furthermore, this outcome requires institutionalising changes and reforms in the ways decisions are made and implemented within schools. Hence achieving schools that more fully live out the ideals of the IB will require a combination of educational and schooling leadership. Unfortunately from my own experiences this combination has rarely been achieved. Perhaps more disappointing is the fact that rarely did these schools even attempt to explore the relationship.
References


Appendix

IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

**Inquirers**  They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

**Knowledgeable**  They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

**Thinkers**  They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

**Communicators**  They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

**Principled**  They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

**Open-minded**  They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

**Caring**  They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

**Risk-takers**  They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

**Balanced**  They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

**Reflective**  They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Taken from: [http://www.ibo.org/programmes/profile/documents/Learnerprofileguide.pdf](http://www.ibo.org/programmes/profile/documents/Learnerprofileguide.pdf)