

“Sharing the Vision: Current Developments within the IB”

IBAEM REGIONAL CONFERENCE

12 - 14 OCTOBER 2006

Thank you for the opportunity to join you here in Athens for your biennial regional conference. It's my intent, as a new director general, to attend as many of these events as possible in order to meet new people, establish networks, understand your issues, and in general just to be more aware of some of the challenges you face. Please feel free to come up and introduce yourself later today or tomorrow.

The conference theme, “The IB school as a community, and in the community” comes at a most appropriate time. With all of the turmoil and violence that is occurring across the world, and within our own backyard, people are looking to strengthen relationships locally, within their family...within their culture...and within their local communities. There is something very comforting when you are part of a community...you draw strength from it...encouragement from it...and it helps give you the courage to better deal with the many stressful issues that are increasingly part of our everyday lives.

As you know, there are four learning objectives associated with the conference theme. The first is that you will walk away with a better understanding of the importance of building learning communities within your school or community. The second is to share some information showing you many of the commonalities that exist across all three of our programmes...and to share with you the current developments within IB programmes. Finally, we hope that you come away with useful ideas for implementing and improving your IB programme in your school. Well, my discussion this morning with you will fit into the third learning objectives. I've titled it “Sharing the Vision: Current Developments within the IB”. However, before launching into all of the many things we're working on, I thought it would be important to step back and ask the question “why are IB programmes in such demand today?”

I believe demand for IB programmes continues to be quite strong for a couple of basic reasons. First, most of the countries around the world have simply not been very good in the area of primary and secondary education, and second country policies have not fully addressed the increasing need for providing students with an international versus only a national education. Let's talk about both of these for a moment as it puts some context behind the growth of IB programmes worldwide.

Education has always been a national prerogative that has been designed to not only teach the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also to reinforce certain cultural biases by shaping the type of learning that goes on in the school through the design of the curriculum requirements by the state. Leo Fernig, the former director of the International Bureau of Education at UNESCO headquarters, a group specialized in curriculum development once said *“In the 1920's.... eminent men protested to the League of Nations that education was so intimately connected to the unique peculiarities of each nation-state that the idea of international action in this field was untenable...Although we have come a long way since then, it remains true*

that the political definition of a nation-state largely determines the limits of an education system.”

Another example illustrating how education is a serious national priority comes from my predecessor at the IBO, George Walker: *“Education has always been the peaceful weapon in the nation-state’s struggle to create and maintain its own identity. It has been used differently by different nations during different periods of their history, depending on the need for national heroes and myths, an articulate electorate, a patriotic army of conscripts, an administrative elite, a contented group of taxpayers or (most recently) a competitive economic workforce...governments still view education as the essential vehicle of economic and social development, one of the few remaining instruments of national policy.”*

The point is that nation states have used education policy to shape both what they want their children to learn, but also what *values* they want them to learn. Even when countries do a decent job with the formal curriculum that is taught in the schools, they many times fail to incorporate the changes happening outside the country, helping students cope with an increasing need toward international topics and perspectives...particularly the perspectives and values held by others! Bringing an international perspective to education systems will be essential to adapting our education institutions, raising the skill level and ensuring high standards and equitable outcomes for all students. It will also be essential for preparing students for careers in the knowledge economy. According to Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, in their book, *Globalization, Culture and Education in the New Millennium* *“Education’s challenge will be to shape the cognitive skills, interpersonal sensibilities and cultural sophistication of children and youth whose lives will be both engaged in local contexts and responsive to transnational processes.”*

Well, here we sit in Athens...a group from many different countries across the region...and yet most everyone in this room recognizes that we are now operating in a new knowledge economy that will rely heavily on *knowledge workers*. At present, this term is widely used to describe people with considerable theoretical knowledge and learning: doctors, lawyers, teachers, accountants, and chemical engineers. But the most striking growth will be in *knowledge technologists*: computer technicians, software designers, and analysts in clinical labs, manufacturing technologists, and paralegals. These people are as much manual workers as they are knowledge workers; in fact, they usually spend far more time working with their hands than with their brains. But their manual work is based on a substantial amount of theoretical knowledge that can be acquired only through formal education, not through an apprenticeship. They are not, as a rule, much better paid than traditional skilled workers, but they see themselves as “professionals”. Just as unskilled manual workers in manufacturing were the dominant social and political force in the 20th century, knowledge technologists are likely to become the dominant social—and perhaps also political—force over the next decades.

I believe the IB is well positioned to respond to these educational challenges and I also believe it has been one of the factors underlying our tremendous growth rate to-date. As people increasingly wake up to what it’s going to take to compete in this new *flat* world, the IB is increasingly viewed as one of the best educational systems to prepare young people for that future. IB programmes are international, develop

critical thinking skills, require a 2nd language, and emphasize cultural understanding in our principle that other people can be right as well. Our programmes are shaped around creating “a better and more peaceful world” with a core determination to develop students who can create this better world through intercultural understanding and respect.

So this is the context of how things are changing, let’s now turn our attention to the IBO and how we’re responding to these challenges. Let’s start by looking at the growth of IB programmes, which has averaged approximately 14% over the past 25 years. You can see from this graph a few key events...when the cold war ended...where we’ve added the middle years ...and then the primary years programme...to a point at the end of 2005 whereby total programs now total around 2100 programmes globally. Our programme growth from 2004 to 2005 exceeds the total number of programmes we had in place in 1987, so demand for IB programmes continues to be strong. This year alone, as of Sept 1st, we’ve increased that number to 2268 programmes, with 645 of those in this region (representing 510 schools).

The growth drivers for IB programmes do vary from country to country, but fundamentally growth is driven by our programme quality, which sits at the core of our reputation; the growing need for more rigorous curriculums that feature international-mindedness, and, since we do no advertising, by word-of-mouth, which is the strongest promotion.

This annual rate of compound double-digit growth creates challenges for us though. Specifically, how do we sustain quality as we add more and more schools; and how do we ensure that this growth is consistent with our mission? The answer is planned growth, which is the focal point of our strategic plan.

Planned growth is about maximizing the impact of our limited resources to enhance the quality of our programmes, to broaden access to our programmes for students worldwide, not just the wealthy; and to build a scalable infrastructure to ensure a high quality school support worldwide.

Let’s first look at how we intend to enhance the quality of our programmes. Turning first to the area of curriculum development, at their April meeting, the Council of Foundation approved management’s proposal to create a pilot programme to offer our diploma programme online. Many of you are aware of schools or universities that offer courses and degrees online today, so this is nothing new. What is new is the notion of whether it will be possible to offer the complete diploma programme online without compromising the ethos of the diploma program (i.e. the direct exchange of ideas, the challenge of debate, and the interaction of colleagues among themselves as well as with teachers). This new programme will be aimed at student communities, such as a sports federation of athletes that must train and perform around the world. These new students that are currently beyond an existing IB World School gate will need to be linked to an IB Open School, which may be either an existing IB World school that requests to participate in the online programme, or a new school, authorized specifically to offer online courses. Of course, one of the additional benefits for existing schools is the ability to broaden curriculum offerings for existing and new students.

Beyond the online diploma programme, we're continuing to make new innovations to our OCC, and we are busy developing new subject offerings for the diploma programme, such as World Religions, Ecosystems and Societies, and World Cultures, (all still in pilot phase), the last two of which are interdisciplinary in nature.

In the area of professional development, we are developing a teacher award program to recognize the IB training teachers receive through authorized programs now being set up at leading universities around the world. Presently we have agreements with George Mason University in the USA and the University of Melbourne. We are developing a consultant licensing program for partners that want to offer services or training for the IBO. We're also developing online workshop capabilities, in addition to our present physical workshop programs, which reduce the cost of travel and may permit more teachers to participate in workshops where school budgets are limited.

In the area of research, we've consolidated the Bath research unit under Jonathan Marsh's leadership and setting a new focus for the group's activities. The department will have staff in each regional office plus folks at the center working together on agreed-to goals for the organization. Principal among these is more quantitatively validating the value of an IB diploma for students attending university. We continue to also work on university recognition as over 1500 universities now have written policies worldwide; and countless other countries have established acceptance criteria for the IB diploma, which affects every university in the country. It's important for us to work with IB school associations within each country, such as the one set up in the UK (IBSCA), as well as the many other country organizations across IBAEM to promote our activities and ensure universities are applying their recognition policies broadly and consistently.

The area of access has been a tough one for us, because it's so hard to define. I mean, access for whom? Access can be defined in a number of different ways. Our Council of Foundation met in July and focused their summer retreat on this specific issue in an attempt to better define what access means to the IBO. They have concluded that, for the Council of Foundation, access for the IBO should be defined as:

"Enabling more students to experience and benefit from an IB education regardless of personal circumstances."

Their vision is to have well over a million students participating in an IB education by 2014 of which a significant percentage are admitted on an entirely merit basis, coming from schools that are increasingly representative of the broader communities in which they operate. To achieve the access vision, the Council has established four objectives for management: (1) To increase access in existing IB World Schools. (2) To achieve a critical mass of IB World Schools in relevant countries/areas. (3) To increase access by offering new or modified versions of our programmes. (4) To achieve a 'step-change' in access by moving beyond our current operational paradigms, for example by utilizing technology. You'll be hearing a lot more about this subject in the coming months, but the question for those of you sitting here might be to think about the first objective...how can you increase the percentage of students taking the MYP or full diploma in your schools?

We're already making good progress in several of these areas already. For example, we continue to work on programme developments to broaden access for more students. Examples include some work we're just now undertaking to strengthen the transition from the middle years to diploma programme; developing an online diploma programme, as I already mentioned; and piloting a career-related education initiative, whereby those choosing to go into a more technical or "knowledge" field may still benefit from an IB experience.

We're identifying and leveraging relationships with like-minded organizations that can help us develop new IB world schools more effectively than we could do by ourselves by our traditional 1-1 approach. These organizations may use their own trained staff to work under our guidelines in order to facilitate bringing a school up to IB standards for authorization, as an example. Or they may have enough scale to conduct their own local workshops. The key is that we'd work *through* these organizations, like a government or a school district, who will have many IB schools under their jurisdictions, versus only with each individual school. For example, we've started to develop a relationship with the Aga Khan organization here in IBAEM. They intend to set up around 19 academies in Central & East Asia, and Africa, as well as being responsible for running ~300 local schools in these same regions.

Finally, for community development, we have a number of projects, like the Schools to Schools project and the Morocco teacher training programme that many of you here may already be familiar with, that will develop access to an international education experience beyond an IB world school and which have enjoyed tremendous support and success.

Moving to the infrastructure strand of our strategic plan, capacity planning is critical during this time of rapid growth, so it is essential that we invest in our service capacity to handle greater number of schools, and to be able to monitor and manage program and service quality. There are three key capacity-related processes that we're currently re-engineering: school authorization and ongoing evaluation; teacher training workshops; and student examinations for diploma level candidates and MYP certification. This is where the bottlenecks tend to occur, and this is where it is important to maintain quality and consistency globally. These will therefore be the basis of the IT masterplan that my team is currently in the process of developing.

We also need to move beyond our dependency of school fees to pay for major new initiatives and new programmes. We've hired a new Development Director who will help us launch the IB Association, permitting the networking of volunteers and IB graduates. She will also be helpful in coordinating our fundraising efforts so that we can continue to develop and launch new programmes. As an example, to develop and run a six year pilot project to test the viability of an online diploma programme will require an investment of \$12 Million, something we could not afford to do unless we had outside help.

As many of you know from the questionnaire the principals or school heads filled out last year, we're working on a new programme fee structure which will phase out the subsidization the MYP and PYP programmes have received over the years from the diploma programme, allowing each programme to be cost-neutral. There was a letter sent by me to school heads late last month that said we would be freezing fees for the

DP programme while raising MYP and PYP programme fees by \$1500 for the 2008 year. More importantly, the new structure, which was announced late last month, will provide for more simplicity and transparency, allowing more clarity over what each fee buys. There will be continual investment in quality, and greater financial incentives for more students to participate in the full diploma programme. There will be some level of discount for schools carrying more than one IB programme. Finally, there will be a bursary fund established to help needy schools that encounter short-term financial difficulties (such as an unexpected de-valuation of a currency).

You have already seen, we're working on updating our image and communications capability. Thus far this year, you've seen the launch of a new website that is more user-friendly, and the launching of a new format for IB World magazine. We're also working on a new IBO brand-identity system to better reflect our image today as a three-programme educational provider, and to better protect our intellectual property against those who are using our name or image without our consent or authorization.

Finally, I have changed the internal management structure within the IBO. I now have regional directors reporting directly to me, and I've set up a matrix-management system to facilitate the implementation of global processes and inter-linked IT systems to improve transparency and reduce some of the "silo mentality" I observed during my transition period last fall.

So, that's a whirlwind tour showing where the IBO is headed, and why we are heading down this particular path. The bottom line is that IB programmes are appropriate for today's world, which is changing ever faster. Geography, distance, and language no longer form barriers for global integration and collaboration. Technology is making the world more seamless, and the distinctions between nation-states is blurring. English is increasingly seen as the global language for communication. More and more students are aware of not only what is going on locally, but also what is happening around the world. As a result, they have a greater awareness of events, such as the dramatic changes in climate that are occurring, attacks by terrorists, outbreaks of disease, and the increase in environmental disasters occurring globally.

The IB students that I met during my orientation phase last fall talked frankly about their desire to be more than just aware of these events; they also want to be involved in helping to resolve these problems. I continue to see more examples of students using some of the same "flattening" technologies to network with other concerned students around the globe, form virtual global issues groups and create virtual governance organizations that are increasingly putting pressure on governments to act. I discovered a group of international schools in Europe have formed such a network at last year's ECIS conference. Their focus addresses real issues and invokes action rather than plays out a simulation. Their experience is collaborative, not competitive. The Global Issues Network (GIN) has set as its mission, *'to help students realize they can make a difference by empowering them to work with their peers internationally to develop solutions for global issues.'* It is exactly this type of "out-of-the-box" thinking that will be required to embrace something that looks more and more like global citizenship. As a result, today's students are helping to create a sense of global social responsibility for righting the wrongs, preventing the recurrences, or

at least helping to alleviate some of the pain and suffering associated when tragedy strikes.

I believe that IB students undergo a unique experience which better positions them to tackle these global issues in a more creative way than has been done in the past. In part this is due to the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills they have developed during their IB programme years. IB students also tend to get more involved throughout their educational career because of their experience with creativity, action, and service in all three IB programmes, which creates a sense of fulfilment and a continued need to remain involved well past their IB programme years.

So, to conclude, let me just leave you with the following thoughts:

- The world is indeed changing, and it requires new skills, language, and abilities to leverage technology
- IBO is on the move: we recognize the need to respond to these changes and we are positioning ourselves for planned growth.
- We will be looking more closely at the area of access and working to implement the objectives to provide more students with an IB experience... setting priorities and developing partnerships with others.... and also working to put more countries over the “tipping point” to offer IB programmes in mainstream and disadvantaged schools.
- We will be ensuring consistent quality through re-engineered processes and strengthened management.
- Our programmes will continue to expand, in the ways mentioned here this morning, and we’ll use technology to help us leverage programmes globally.
- Finally, there is the need to maintain and further develop IB Associations and other networks within each key country to support the IB, work issues for students, and help ensure universities have the best and most up-to-date information in which to make decisions.

In summary, it is ensuring IB programmes remain “fit for purpose” for the 21st century!

Thank you very much...and I hope you have a wonderful conference while enjoying the many splendours that this city of Athens can provide.