

Is the International Baccalaureate  
Diploma Programme Effective at  
Delivering the International Baccalaureate  
Mission Statement?

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Executive Summary

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## Introduction and Aim

International education is becoming increasingly more visible and popular (Hayden et al., 2002; Dolby and Rahman, 2008) both in academia and with the development of independent international education curricula including those of the International Baccalaureate, (2011a), Fieldwork Education (2012) and Cambridge International Education (2012). Within all of these international curricula is the aim to develop in students an ‘intercultural understanding and respect’ (International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO), 2011a) or ‘international understanding’ (International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC), 2012). Yet, according to the literature, there is a lack of research into the effectiveness of educational programmes’ ability to develop the global citizenship and cultural understanding of students (Wilkinson and Hayden, 2010). When this lack of research is compared with the growth of international educational curriculums (IBO, 2012a, Crippin, 2008) then further analysis of the effectiveness of these curricula becomes increasingly necessary. The growth of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes is shown in Figure 1 below.

Programme	Jan 2007	Jan 2012	Increase	CAGR*
PYP	316	874	176.58%	22.56%
MYP	502	929	85.06%	13.10%
Diploma	1,482	2,307	55.67%	9.25%
<b>Total Schools</b>	2,300	4,110	78.70%	12.31%

\*Compound Annual Growth Rate

**Figure 1: International Baccalaureate Five Year Growth by Programme (IBO, 2012a)**

The aim of this research is to examine the effectiveness of the curriculum and structures put into place by the IB to achieve its mission statement. The IB’s mission statement is;

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

*To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations 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, 2011a, Mission Statement)

Particular attention will be placed on the first sentence of the mission statement and the ability of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) to meet these goals.

This piece of research can be split into two distinct phases. The first phase is a literary comparison of the IB's aims to those found in the literature on international education and an analysis of an examined curriculum to promote the aims of the mission statement. The second phase of the research examines the effectiveness of the IBDP curriculum to promote in students the aims of the IB. This ability of the curriculum to influence student attitudes is assessed by interviewing and surveying pupils at an IB world school about the impact the IBDP has had on the development of their views along the lines of the IB mission statement.

## **Literary Analysis**

### **Defining international education**

The term 'international education' does not have a universally agreed definition (Sylvester, 2007; Gunesch, 2004; and Marshal 2007) and due to its global nature, international education has developed differently around the world. The aim this first section is to examine the term 'international education' and its different interpretations.

The different definitions of international education can roughly be divided into 3 different areas:

- The formation of an education system designed to foster and develop international understanding and with this the promotion of peace and respect for different cultures as seen in the United World Colleges (2011) and the Round Square Schools (2011).
- The development of an education system for expatriate children in a host nation whose curriculum aims are the same as those of the home nation, as seen in The British School of Paris (2011).
- The introduction of international students into a nation's public school system as seen at Wellington College, New Zealand (2011).

Of these three areas highlighted above, this literary review will focus mainly on the first area; the formation of an education system that aims to promote international understanding, peace and respect. It is from this ideal that the IBDP was developed from 1962 onwards (Hill

2002). This interpretation of international education can be seen in the founding principles of a number of international school organisations including the United World Colleges (United World College, 2011) and the Round Square Schools (Round Square, 2011). These principles are also mirrored in academic writings on international education including Hill (2002) and McDonald (2002).

There are a number of themes that run through educational systems designed to promote the development of international understanding. These include human rights education, cosmopolitanism, globalism and peace education (Hayden et al., 2007). I will now make a closer examination of two of these areas; cosmopolitanism and human rights education.

### **Cosmopolitanism and international education**

The idea of cosmopolitanism and the development of an inclusive morality is a theme that resonates with the ideals of international education in terms of the development of a person with an intercultural outlook. Hansen (2010) identifies that:

*...cosmopolitanism implies more than tolerance of difference. Rather, it suggests a willingness to learn from or with other traditions and human inheritances (p.6)*

The ideal expressed above, combined with the need of a person to actively pursue the ideals of cosmopolitanism (Hansen, 2010 and Gunesch, 2004) reflects the dynamic nature of modern society. The dynamic nature of cosmopolitanism allows for assimilation and development of cultural awareness and hence the promotion of understanding between people who hold different views. The active and continued development found in cosmopolitanism is also a characteristic of educational programmes that promote lifelong learning, like the IBDP (IBO, 2011a, Mission Statement). These findings show the ability of cosmopolitanism to act as a basis for an education system that promotes international ideals and understanding.

### **Human rights education and international education**

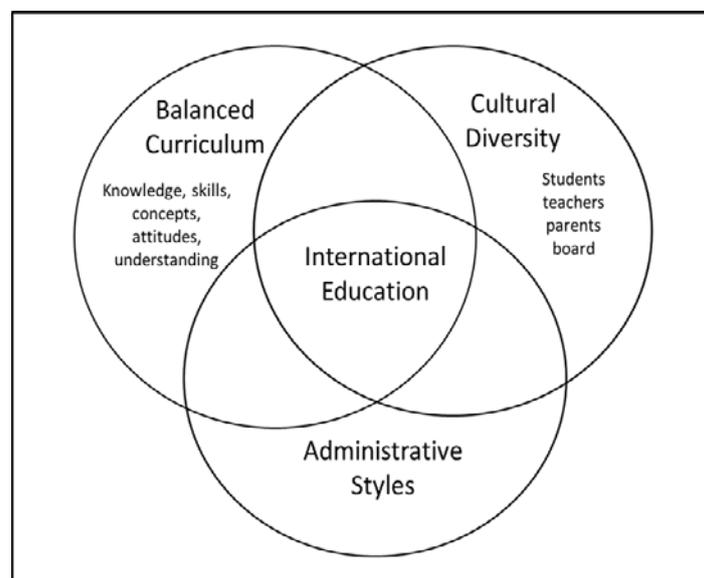
The idea of a global community can also be developed within the model for human rights education as developed by Tarrow (1992) (cited in Marshall, 2007) where the ideal of human rights runs as a core theme through ethical education. Cardenas (2005) noted that the promotion of human rights with education systems can ‘...foster social tolerance, a democratic citizenry, and a climate wherein human rights abuses are less likely to occur’ (p364). This is supported by Ramirez et al. (2007) who identify the links between human rights education and the promotion of a global citizen. These outcomes closely link with the

aims of international education as presented by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) who state that ‘Education should encompass values such as peace, non-discrimination, equality, justice, non-violence, tolerance and respect for human dignity.’ (UNESCO, 2012)

### **Curriculum structure and international education**

As identified by Sylvester (2007) and Marshall (2007), and mentioned previously, there is no truly universal definition of the term International Education. Having said this, the general underlying theme in curricula worldwide is ‘the need (for students) to be prepared for an increasingly multicultural and globalized world’ (Räsänen, 2007, p 57). To meet these aims different curriculum designers work from different starting points and structure their curriculum’s differently.

Thompson (1998) identifies a trifecta of factors that can be combined as a structure for international education these being: a balanced curriculum, cultural diversity and administrative styles (figure 2). Thompson (1998, p287) notes that international ideals are ‘caught not taught’ in schools, where the experiential learning of students that are exposed to an international educational environment is more important than the instructional learning that they receive. It is the combination of these three factors outlined above that can help create an atmosphere in a school where experiential learning can occur.



**Figure 2: Factors contributing to international education, adapted from Thompson (1998)**

The implementation of this model means that international education does not have to be restricted to a school with an international intake but in a national school it can be a ‘state of mind’ (Cole-Baker, 1989) (cited in Hill, 2007, p26). Indeed, simply placing international

students in a school does not result in the kind of intercultural exchange and understanding that a program of international education would set out to achieve (Matthews and Sidhub, 2005; and Belle-Isle, 1986, cited in Hill, 2007).

### **The effects of assessment on teaching and learning**

The aim of international education, in terms of developing students' international outlook and intercultural skills, has been covered above. This section seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the assessed curriculum to positively influence students, in terms of developing an international outlook.

The summative assessment of a curriculum is a very powerful tool in terms of influencing the teaching and learning in a school. This influence can be magnified when the assessment in question can be classed as high stakes. High stakes summative assessments exert noticeable pressure on the institution, teacher and pupil alike. This pressure and the assessment of schools and teachers through examination results can affect the teaching and learning styles employed.

The driving force behind an examination structure should be dictated by the learning theory that underpins the course. The learning should dictate the style of the examination and not the other way round. This alignment between the examination and the learning underpins the validity of the examination system (Bring, 1996; Tang, 1997) (cited in James, 2006). It is not possible with externally developed exam curricula to design the assessment around the teaching that has taken place. Instead, the assessment will dictate the teaching that takes place; this factor is acknowledged by a number of examining bodies, including Cambridge International Examinations (Maughan, 2008) and the IB (IBO, 2011b), who look for examinations to promote 'best practice' in the classroom.

The ability of the examination system to positively influence the teaching in a classroom is noted by Maughan (2008) who states that assessment '...can now be designed to impact on the actual learning that takes place in schools rather than purely to measure the outcomes of that learning' (p.1). It is important for the examination or curriculum bodies to carefully construct the assessment in order to ensure that the desired teaching and learning strategies take place. This influence of the examination on what is taught is supported by Jacob (2004). Spratt (2005) and Pan (2009) note that the attitude of teachers is significant in creating a positive washback from exams onto the everyday teaching and learning. Spratt (2005) notes that for the examination to have a positive effect on the teaching and learning

in the classroom teachers need to believe that the tests are beneficial to the education of the students.

The monitoring of schools by exam results can affect the teaching styles of the institution and cause them to revert from a constructivist or social-constructivist approach to a more behaviourist one. This can have a negative effect on student learning and the ability of a curriculum to promote the aims of international education. The development an international outlook on a problem or situation requires students to develop the ability to look at something from multiple angles. This ability to look at problems from a different angle can be classed as a thinking skill. The development of thinking skills requires the use of both constructivist and social-constructivist theories of learning by teaching staff. Constructivism is based upon the work of Piaget (1950, cited in McGregor, 2007) and is identifiable by its development of increasingly complex layers of knowledge. Looking at Hipkin's (2006) definition of thinking, a constructivist approach can help develop the critical and reflective personal practise needed to develop an international outlook, as desired by the IB.

Social-constructivism is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978) and promotes the idea of language as a tool for improving thinking. By getting students to discuss ideas we are helping them to learn, think and develop ideas. This sharing of ideas can help them develop, thereby improving the creativity of the thought process. Social-constructivism is useful in problem solving in new situations and in subjects where there is not a single correct answer. Part of developing an international outlook is appreciating that there is more than one answer to a problem. It is therefore important that the summative assessment used promotes use of constructivist and social-constructivist teaching styles.

### **The International Baccalaureate and international education**

When comparing the branches of international education to the aims of the IB it is worth considering some of the historical influences on the development of the IB. These influences included:

- Practical necessity for a school curriculum that could be delivered to students who were going to tertiary education worldwide (Sylvester, 2002).
- Demands of parents (the customers) who were politically influential and who disliked the cultural bias and lack of international perspective of national systems (Sylvester, 2002).

- Following the ideals of international education as education to encourage peace and cultural understanding as promoted by UNESCO (Sylvester, 2007; Marshall, 2007) and reflecting the peaceful ideals of post Second World War society (Hill, 2007).

These influences can be seen in the IB mission statement where IB expresses its aim to develop ‘...inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.’ (IBO, 2011a, Mission statement).

One of the main aims stated of IB programmes is to ‘develop internationally minded people’ (IBO, 2009, p7). This term does not have a singular internationally defined definition within education. The IB also does not have a singular succinct line within its curriculum documents to define this statement. Having said this, throughout the IB programme standards and practices document (IBO, 2005), reference is made to the ideals connected with the ideas of internationally minded people, e.g. ‘The school encourages student learning that strengthens the student’s own cultural identity, and celebrates and fosters understanding of different cultures.’ (IBO, 2005, p2). This comment resonates with the ideas of cosmopolitanism presented by Hansen (2010) and recognises that students have their own cultural identity.

Ellis (2006, p25) succinctly summarises the aims of the IB in terms of international education as ‘viewing our world not as “us and them” but as “us and us”’. Not only is this a concept that can be found at the heart of both cosmopolitanism and human right education as discussed above, but it fits comfortably with the UNESCO ideals that were at the heart of the formation of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

### **Curriculum structure for international education and the International Baccalaureate diploma programme**

Wilkinson and Hayden (2010) found that there had been a change in attitudes of students following the IBDP, towards those expressed in the IB mission statement and highlighted the importance of the whole school environment in these changes. The IB has a number of principles and practices that it requires the school to implement as part of its application to become an IB World School. Standard A2 includes 12 practices that help shape an international outlook within the school. As discussed by Thompson (1998) the structure and overall ethos of a school is important in the development of an international outlook in students. This ethos is important, in terms of nurturing an atmosphere where the ideals of international education can be *caught*. By putting in place these structures and by making these aims explicit within the school community, the school increases the chance of students being *caught* and developing an international perspective.

The whole school structure that the IB seeks to develop is also reflected in the ideas of McDonald (2002), who highlights the importance of the administration of the school to develop a bold vision that filters down into the school ethos and structure. This bold vision when including the ideals of international education can help foster these ideals in the school.

Within the IBDP both the academic subjects and the core curriculum are being used as a vehicle to help develop the ideals or values outlined in the IB mission statement. The connection between the visibility of values education, teacher buy-in and their effectiveness is made by Lovat et al. (2010). They have noted that it is most successful when a whole school approach is taken, encompassing the curriculum, teaching staff and the school leadership. These findings are supported by Halstead and Taylor (2000, p190) who note that 'a whole school policy is much more effective in influencing the development of young people's values'. These findings can be linked to Thompson's (1998) models for the development of international education and the need to build a whole school approach. This will result in effectively promoting within students the ideals expressed in the IB Mission statement (2011a).

### **The International Baccalaureate diploma programme curriculum and summative assessment**

As discussed above, summative high stakes assessment can have a noticeable effect on teaching and learning. The nature of the IBDP assessment is unmistakably 'high stakes', being the culmination of the 2 year programme, the results of which will determine university placements and employment opportunities. Were a student to have followed the Middle Years Programme (MYP) then the IBDP will be the only formal certification that they will receive after completing seven years of secondary education.

The IB has a clear assessment philosophy where the DP assessment looks to assess academic skills in line with the stated goals of the DP. The IBDP assessment also aims to encourage 'an international outlook and intercultural skills where appropriate' (IBO, 2011b, DP assessment philosophy). The IB is aware of the influence of the summative assessment on teaching and learning and has aimed to construct an assessment system that influences the everyday teaching and learning (IBO, 2011b). It is this system that we will now examine.

Central to the ideals of the IB and international education, as discussed earlier, is the development of an appreciation of other cultures and the ability to learn from them. Within the IBDP this idea is developed within the theory of knowledge (TOK) component of the curriculum and through topics chosen within the academic areas studied. Language A is the

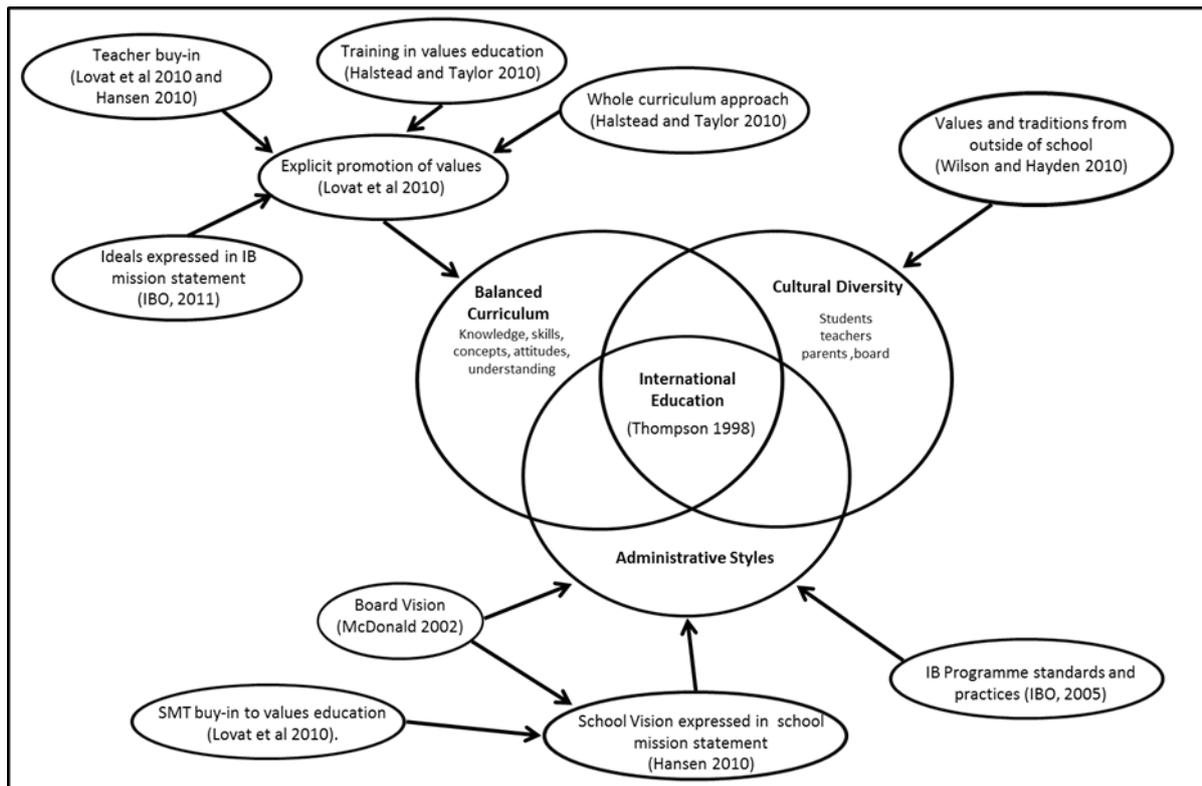
study of literature and language in a language that a student is 'academically competent' in (IBO, 2011c, Curriculum Group 1). When studying world literature students can use translated texts allowing them access to literature from different cultures. The use of translated texts is not allowed in some nationally based systems e.g. in the UK with A level English. By introducing these factors into the examined curriculum, the IB can ensure a positive influence on the teaching and learning in the IB world schools. As well as helping develop an appreciation of other cultures, the studying of literature from different languages can also help create the international state of mind, as promoted by Cole-Baker (1989) (cited in Hill, 2007).

The study of TOK involves a critical reflection of knowledge and experiences that students gain both as part of the curriculum and their lives as a whole. This knowledge is explored using the curriculum model above and Socratic Analysis. By using a Socratic method, different viewpoints can be distilled down to their cores, and along with this, commonly held truths can be examined. From this point an appreciation of other cultures' viewpoints can be made and appreciated. This approach can also help students develop critical thinking skills (Maxwell, 2009), which are one of the aims of the IBDP. Students are internally assessed (and externally moderated) in TOK through an assessed presentation and an essay, and credits are awarded towards their final points score. By making these areas of the curriculum assessed, the IB is ensuring its status in the curriculum and that dialog between students occurs. This again helps develop opportunities for social-constructivist teaching to be implemented through the influence of the curriculum.

As part of the continued development of the IBDP new subjects are being introduced and developed. These developments involve the interdisciplinary subjects that can be studied on a local and global scale. An example of this is the world studies extended essay. The extended essay forms part of the IBDP core components and has three key requirements: students must focus on a topic of global significance (e.g. the global food crisis or climate change), students must take an interdisciplinary approach when approaching the topic, and whilst doing this students must link their thinking from local to global (IBO, 2012b). The move towards an extended essay on a topic of global significance is a move away from the more academically based topics that students typically choose for their extended essays (personal experience). This move by the IB to encourage students to investigate global issues can be seen as a positive move to develop students' global perspectives and their international understanding through assessment.

## Conclusion and further questions

The ability of a school to promote the ideals of international education is a complex situation. Thomson (1998) identified three factors that help create a culture of international education within a school. As discussed above, these three elements do not stand in isolation and have a number of external influences. Below (figure 3) is an expanded version of the Thompson model for international education, highlighting the influences on the three areas, including that of the IB.



**Figure 3: Influences on creating a school environment suitable for promoting international education with the International Baccalaureate**

A comparison of the findings of the literary research to the curriculum and systems put into place by the IB, shows a number of parallels. These parallels include: the development of a syllabus that emphasises cultural awareness and has multiple opportunities for students to explore this curriculum area; the development of the administrative side of the school through the standards required of IB world schools; and the requirement of all staff teaching the IBDP to undertake professional development which includes an outline of the IB philosophy. This training is recognition of the significant part the teaching staff play in the formation of the school culture and the emphasis of the lessons, as identified by Spratt (2005) and Pan (2009). When all of these factors are considered as a whole, it can be said

that the IB has sought to build a culture within the school in line with Thompson's (1998) model for international education, creating an atmosphere most likely to promote the aims of the IB mission statement.

This literary analysis raises the question of the effectiveness of the IBDP to meet its stated goals in terms of an international education and it is this question that will be examined through the following case study.

## **Research methodology**

The effectiveness of the structures put into place and the washback from the assessment in achieving these goals can be determined by the attitudes of the students. These attitudes can be split into three areas; how aware the students are of the IB mission statement, how explicit students feel the international educational aims of the IB are in the everyday teaching and learning, and how students feel their perceptions have been changed over the course of following the IBDP. This method is similar to that used by Wilson and Hayden (2010). The use of a mixed methods study with an exploratory sequential design allows for the researcher to gain a qualitative insight to the situation and then triangulate this information through quantitative analysis of the responses of a larger group (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011 and Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As discussed above, there are a large number of educational theories underpinning the curriculum of the IBDP. These theories include the ability of the curriculum to influence the teaching and learning and the formation of students' attitudes and values. The initial qualitative assessment of this mixed methods approach allows for the interaction of these theories to be examined in the school setting as a whole (Cohen, 2011). Also by taking a qualitative approach to the study allows for the findings to be linked to the theories examined above in a way that a numerical study would not allow (Bassegy, 2007; and Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The adoption of a case study approach and by focussing on one school allowed the enquiry to be tailored to the situation under investigation and the effectiveness of the programme evaluated in that environment. This appraisal of the effectiveness of the education programme (the infusion of international education ideals into the IBDP) is the aim of this research and one of the goals of case study research (Bassegy, 2007). This focus on one specific school also fitted the time scale and resources available for the study.

## **The Research School**

The research took place in an independent fee paying school in Switzerland that has been offering the IBDP since 2006. The school has an international student and staff body with 480 students aged between 5 and 18 enrolled. There were 52 nationalities within the student body in academic year of 2011/2012 when the research was undertaken. The major national groups within the school are: British 21%, Russian 9%, Swiss 7%, American 5% and French 5%. The school has 240 students in the secondary section (11 – 18 years old) with 25-30 students in each IBDP intake. The major language of instruction in the school is English with 84% of students opting to take the language A literature course in English.

## **Data Collection**

Following the exploratory sequential approach of mixed methods research outlined above an initial series of semi structured interviews were carried out with small groups of IBDP students. These interviews were carried out in March (the case study school year starts in August) and involved 18 students. The interviewees were a mixture of first and second year IBDP students, with 13 first year students and 5 second year students. The timing of the interviews within the school year meant that all students had a good working knowledge of the IBDP curriculum. Once the semi structured interviews had been completed and trends identified, a second wave of research took place. This second wave of research involved circulating questionnaires to all IBDP students in the school to see if these trends identified in the semi structured interviews were reflected in the whole student body. The questionnaires were distributed to all 45 IBDP students in the school and had a return rate of 76% (34 out of 45).

The semi structured interviews and the triangulation questionnaires followed a similar pattern with the students being questioned about their reasons for studying the IBDP, what they knew about the IB mission statement, and their understanding of this. Finally students were asked about where they saw the IB mission statement in their lessons. The semi structured interviews were recorded and then transcribed allowing for trends in the students answers to be identified. In the triangulation questionnaire students were presented with answers to the questions that reflected those given in the semi-structured interviews and asked to indicate on a 5 point scale their agreement or disagreement with these statements. Connections between the student interviews and the student questionnaires are made below.

## Results

### Part 1: What reasons do students have for studying the IBDP?

When students were asked to explain the reasoning behind why they studied the IBDP, the responses could be split into two distinct groups; students who chose the school before the qualification and those that chose the qualification before the school. When looking at students' reasons for choosing the IBDP above of the school, the following two factors were highlighted: the breadth of the IBDP and the appeal that it had to employers and universities. These two ideas were reflected in student comments made during the semi structured interviews:

*The only really other alternative was A Levels and I would prefer to do the IB because it gives you a more broad choice of subjects rather than just the three on A Level. (Interview 2)*

*I think that the IB opens more doors for the universities, so I had more options than at A levels... (Interview 7)*

Of the students who chose the school over the qualification offered, the main reason given involved social ties within the school. Highlighted by students were the difficulties experienced when moving to a new school:

*Student: "I came here beginning of Year 10 and I don't really want to change school again so I thought it would better".*

*Interviewer: "But why did you not want to change school?"*

*Student: "It's not the best of experiences, it can be a bit tough at the beginning..." (Interview 3)*

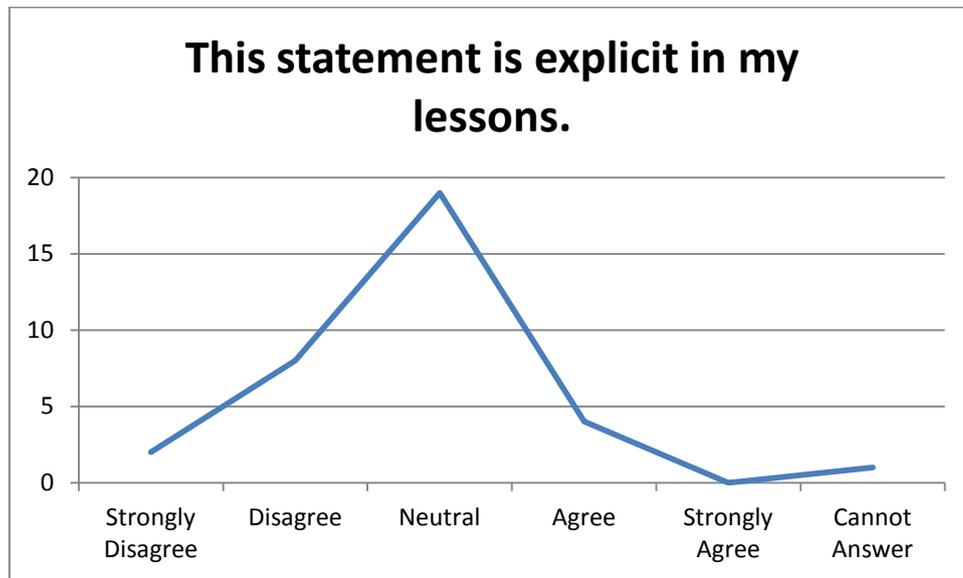
The desire to stay in a stable place can be linked to the feeling of loss experienced by third culture kids or 'global nomads' when moving (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001).

### Part 2: IB philosophy

The interviews then moved onto the IB Mission Statement, in particular, whether students knew the mission statement and what the terminology used in the statement meant. Particular attention was paid to the phrases that referred to the development of international understanding and respect. Students were asked how aware they were of the IB philosophy and to explain what they understood by the terms used in the mission statement. The

interpretation of these statements is central to the understanding of the mission statement and how it is seen within the programme.

Students were generally aware of the IB mission statement and linked this with the learner profile, although students were neutral in their response to the mission statement's explicitness in lessons.



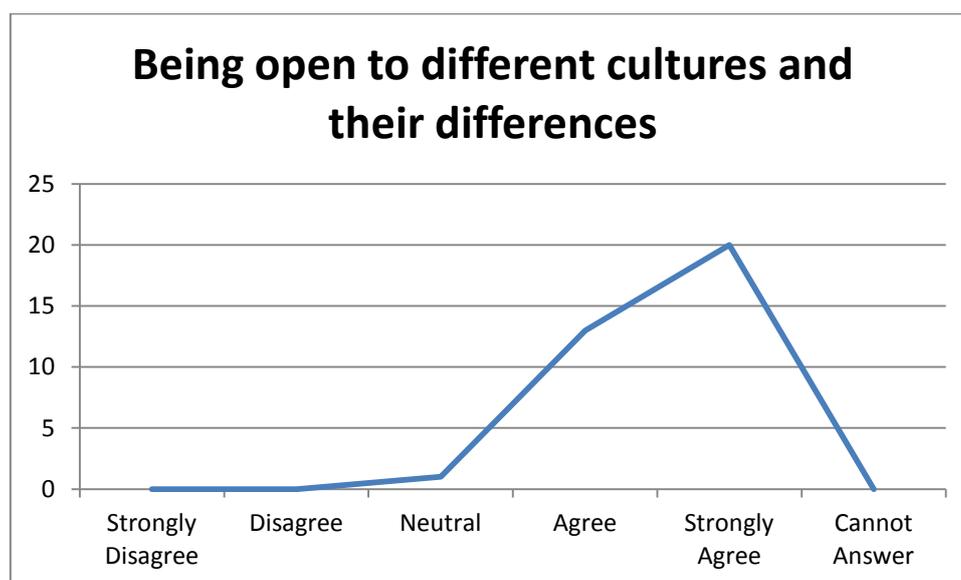
**Figure 4: Graphed result of question 10, 'Is the IB Mission statement explicit in lessons?'**

When questioned about the understanding of the terms used, there was a wide range of interpretations, reflecting the wide range of terms found in educational literature. When asked to explain the term 'intercultural understanding and respect' students focused on being open minded about people's cultures and beliefs. Students talked about taking time to understand where people's ideas and opinions have come from and not judging someone on one set of criteria:

*...to me it means getting an understanding of other cultures through the education. And with this understanding of other cultures, you can respect them in a different way than you would if you had no knowledge. (Interview 6)*

*Being able to see someone from probably not where you're from and not being shocked and being able to relate to them. (Interview 3)*

These ideas were strongly confirmed in the triangulation questionnaire.



**Figure 5: Graphed result of question 13**  
**'To me the term intercultural understanding and respect means...'**

The use of the term international education in the IB mission statement was also discussed. Students' responses reflected the different uses of the term found in educational literature. Students highlighted the use of the term 'international education' to include a curriculum that was studied worldwide and a qualification that was internationally recognised by employers and universities:

*...up until now I've not really decided where I want to go to university, and I think IB is more accepted universally. So if I go to America, or if I go to England, or if I go to Sweden, nobody will be asking, "What's IB?"* (Interview 6)

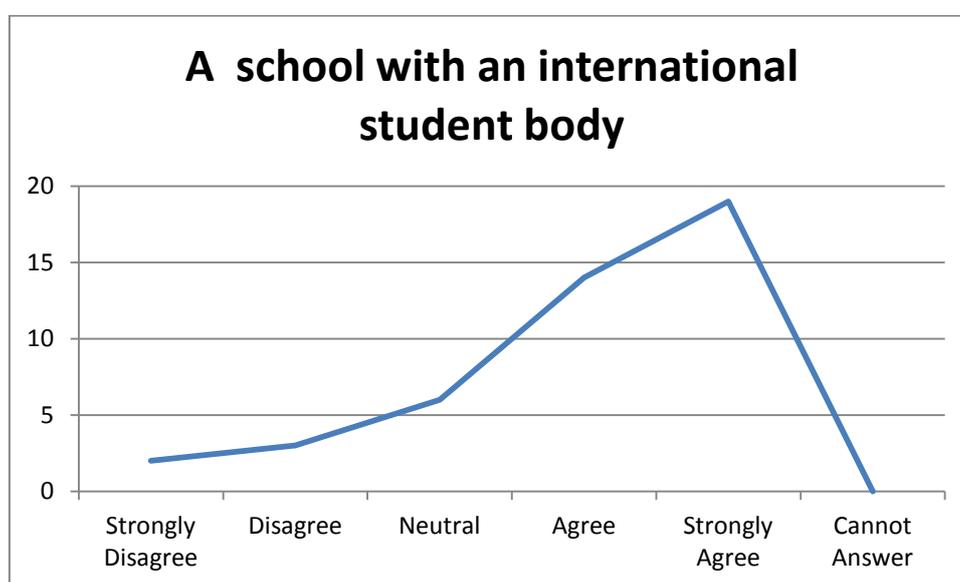
This interpretation of the term 'international education' reflects the multinational nature of the student population in the case study school and the international mobility of the students' lives. It is typical of students in the case study school not to be studying in the same country as their passport and to have lived in a number of different countries. Only seven per cent of the case study students are Swiss.

Also highlighted in discussions around the IBDP was the international nature of the curriculum. This was seen as positive when compared to the perceived bias found in other examined syllabuses. The case study school examines students at aged 16 with the Cambridge International Examinations; International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE). As a result, many of the students interviewed will have completed this curriculum:

*Because I recall from the IGCSE course I did, it was English, how the English looked at the world, it was not international. (Interview 1)*

As part of this discussion, students linked international education not only to the curriculum followed but also to the student make-up of the school. A number of interviewees commented that this mixing of many nationalities was a more significant influence on their opinions than the curriculum followed:

*I'm not sure that it's the IB's teaching that's directly made me more an international student, rather than being surrounded by the different cultures within the school. (Interview 5)*



**Figure 6: Graphed result of question 17, 'To me the term *international education* means ...'**

The final question on the IB mission statement was about the meaning of the phrase '...to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right'. During the interviews, students focussed on the second half of the statement, linking this statement to ideas explored in their TOK course:

*... respecting other people's views on different subjects and accepting change in your ideas based on other people's opinions. (Interview 1)*

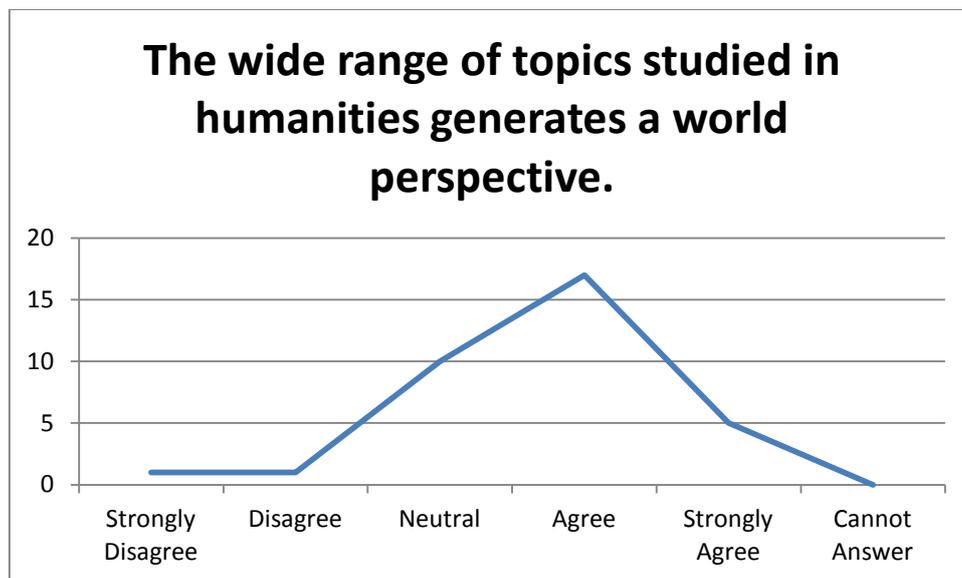
*I think what it also means is that as well as being open, you are curious about other cultures, it's not that you accept them but you search to accept them. (Interview 5)*

### Part 3: Teaching and learning

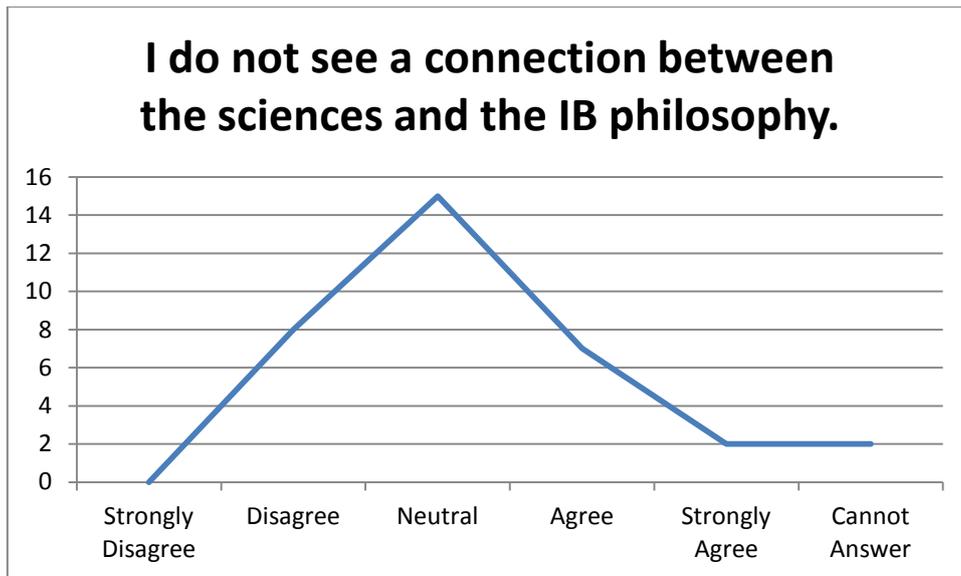
The third part of the student interviews investigated how they perceived the aims outlined in the IB mission statement were represented in the course.

Having spent time talking through the IB mission statement and exploring its meaning, students were then asked as to where they saw the parts of the mission statement discussed (international education, intercultural understanding and respect, and compassionate and lifelong learners) were found, in the day to day delivery of the curriculum. Having explored these ideas, students had a greater understanding of the concepts and were able to give examples of where the mission statement was visible in the curriculum. This can be considered a reflection of the lack of transparency of the mission statement in the everyday teaching of the IBDP in the case study school.

Students were first asked to give examples of where they felt the mission statement was reflected in their academic studies within groups one to six. As highlighted in the figures below, students found the most examples of the mission statement within languages and humanities and the least amongst maths and sciences.



**Figure 7: Graphed result of question 28, 'How do you feel the IB philosophy is taught in your diploma programme?'**



**Figure 8: Graphed result of question 26,  
'How you feel the IB philosophy is taught in your diploma programme?'**

Of particular note from the group interviews were the differences found in the IBDP and the IGCSE course that many of the students had previously studied. These differences included the lack of prescription found within the IBDP case studies used in humanities and the freedom that they were given to explore these ideas from multiple perspectives:

*Yes, even in history you look at the history of other nations but also how they interacted with each other. (Interview 5)*

*Geography, because we don't specifically study Switzerland; we study other case studies all over the world. (Interview 7)*

Students highlighted the influence that the multinational student body has on the nature of discussions in humanities lessons. Within each class there is a number of different cultural perspectives and knowledge that helps build an appreciation for different viewpoints. A number of students highlighted this factor as a bigger influence on their development of an international outlook than the syllabus:

*... being in somewhere that has so much difference, and so many different people from different countries, it's perhaps taught me more than what I've learnt directly through the IB. (Interview 5)*

Students were then asked to consider the IBDP core of Creativity Action and Service (CAS), Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and the extended essay and how they saw the IB mission statement reflected in this part of the curriculum. The majority of the students expressed that

this was where they saw the most connection between the mission statement and the everyday teaching and learning. The inclusion of the IBDP core subjects was noted as a major difference between the IBDP and other examination syllabuses, for example A level, as it forced students into areas of study and activity that they would not have chosen to do otherwise.

When talking about the TOK course, students recognised that this was a good environment to examine both their opinions and those of other students:

*I think TOK makes you appreciate the different aspects of the cultures and the different opinions of the cultures more than we would have done otherwise. (Interview 7)*

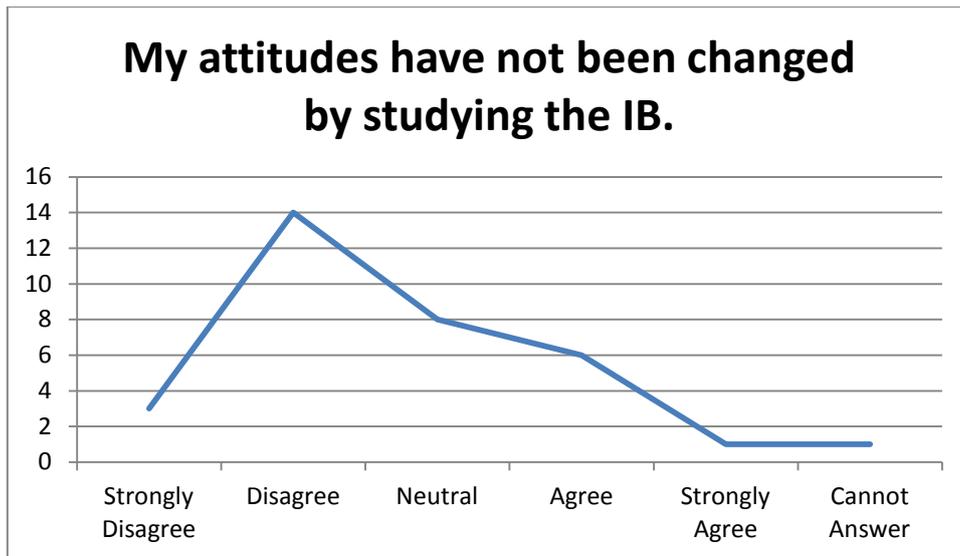
Students found the inclusion of CAS useful as a prompt to push them into new situations that they would not usually be in. This included moving out of the 'bubble' that they lived in and meeting people that they would not normally interact with.

#### **Part 4: Development of Individuals**

The final part of the interviews was about how students felt that following the IB had changed their perspectives. This can be considered the litmus test of the effectiveness of the curriculum. If students do not feel their perspectives have been changed or developed, can the IBDP be said to have achieved its stated aim? When considering the student answers, it is worth noting that potentially only half of the student responses were from students who had completed the majority of the course. The stage of the students in the course was not recorded in the triangulation questionnaire.

Students noted that there was a change and a development of attitudes over time and some students attributed these to the education system they were in. Comparisons were made to peers in students' home countries who did not share the same experiences and had developed different attitudes:

*I went to Vietnam last year and I had a total different perspective, just because of the international education. (Interview 5)*

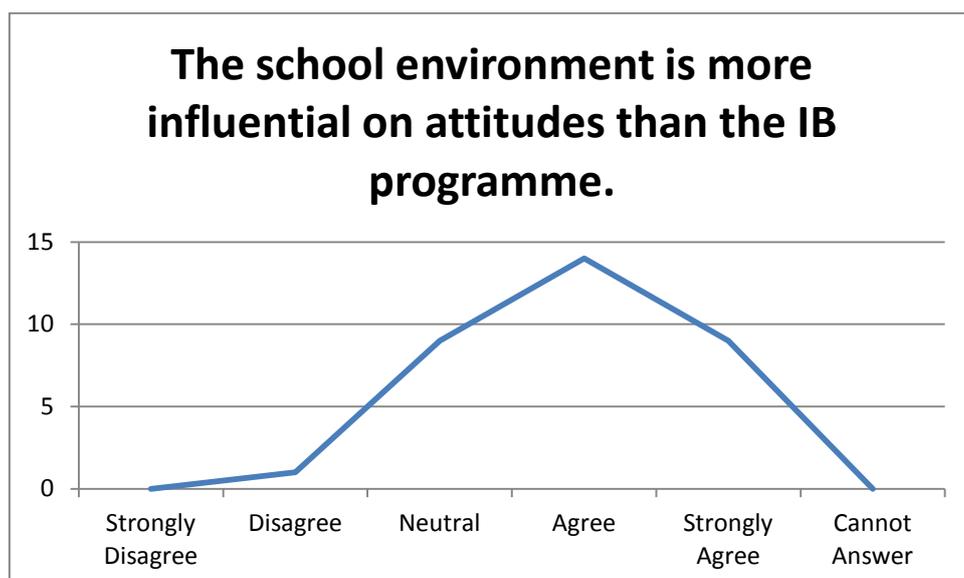


**Figure 9: Graphed result of question 32, 'My attitudes have not been changed by studying the IB'**

Students identified that it was difficult to separate the influence of the curriculum and the school environment:

*See I've thought about this myself, and I'm not sure whether this is coming from being in an international school since Year 8 (12 years old), or whether it's actually come from the IB. It's a bit difficult to distinguish. (Interview 6)*

*I think that you notice more after school than during school, because the whole time you are in the building and you don't leave to other places. And I think you'd notice the difference more when you leave school. (Interview 5)*



**Figure 10: Graphed result of question 23, 'Has the IB has changed your attitudes towards the goals of the mission statement?'**

## **Summary of findings**

The results of the semi structured interviews show that within the case study school the IB mission statement does not have a highly visible profile, with students only having a rough idea of the statement. Students were found to have a greater familiarity with the learner profile. When students were asked to give reasons as to why they chose to study the IBDP, the main reasons were the global currency of the diploma and the breadth of the course offered.

Once students explored the terms used in the mission statement, they began to make connections between the curriculum structure, the mission statement, and teaching and learning. Students' definitions of the terms 'international education', 'cultural awareness' and 'compassionate learner' affected how they saw the mission statement as part of the curriculum.

Students found that they could see the mission statement infusing the learning most in the IB core modules of CAS and TOK. Within the academic modules, the mission statement was most visible in languages and the humanities, and least visible in maths and the sciences.

In terms of personal development, students identified that over time their opinions were moved towards the ideals expressed in the mission statement, during their time in school. Students found it difficult to identify changes brought about from following the IBDP curriculum and those from being in the case study school environment. As The school environment is influenced by the standards and practices put into place as part of the school being an IB World School this may be an example of the programme influence extending beyond the curriculum.

The results of the triangulation questionnaire correlated with the findings of the semi structured interviews. This showed that the views of the interviewees can be seen to be representative of the case study school.

## **Discussion**

Within educational literature there is no universally agreed definition of international education (Sylvester, 2007). However when the IB mission statement was examined it was found to closely correlate with the ideals found in cosmopolitanism as defined by Hansen (2010), the educational aims of UNESCO (1996) (cited in Hill, 2006) and human rights education. Gellar (2002) highlights the importance of education to promote international understanding due to peoples increasing dependence on one another. Thompson (1998)

identified three factors that combined to form an international education. These factors are a balanced curriculum, a culturally diverse student and staff body and the administrative style of the school. Thompson's model can also be used as a working definition to identify a school that offers an international education.

During the semi structured interviews students identified instances where Thompson's three factors were visible in the school. This included identifying the cultural diversity of the school as a significant influence on their attitudes. Students particularly noted the role that this cultural diversity played when discussing topics in class, in terms of the presentation of multiple perspectives on a situation. The third of Thompson's factors for the development of an international education is the administrative style. The standards and practices that the IB (2005) requires IB World Schools to implement can help create the correct administrative culture to foster international education. This development of a whole school culture is seen as significant in the development of values education (Lovat et al 2010).

When questioned about a change in their attitudes over the IBDP, the students found it difficult to identify which of Thompson's factors had the most influence on them. This can be seen as is a reflection on how the three elements interact to form a culture within a school that is perceived as a whole. A review of the students' answers identified that the students' attitudes are in general alignment with those promoted by the IB. These findings are in support of those made by Wilson and Hayden (2010).

Thompson (1998) states that the formation of the correct culture within the school environment is important, because the ideals that international education seeks to promote are 'caught not taught' (Thompson 1998, p287). Students appeared to support this idea by questioning if the ideals of international education and that of IB can be taught or if being exposed to these ideals is of greater influence.

The main draw of the IBDP for students was the international currency of the qualification. Students were attracted to the worldwide mobility that the IBDP gave them, not the ideals expressed within the IB mission statement. These findings are the same as Paris (2003). The interpretation of the term international education as a global qualification can be seen in the structure and marketing of the IB programmes (IBO, 2012c). The global nature of the qualification is not mentioned in the mission statement which focuses more on an ideological interpretation of the term international education. The factual subject knowledge delivered as part of the curriculum and the assessment of this is mentioned in the IB mission statement and the IB assessment philosophy. The thoroughness of the assessment helps create the market currency of the IBDP.

Students were not found to be overly aware of the IB mission statement, and needed this reviewing before they could identify its place in the everyday teaching and learning. The need for a review could indicate one of two conclusions: that the mission statement ideals are not being overtly promoted in the teaching of the IBDP in the case study school, or that the language of the mission statement is not in everyday use. After students discussed the terms used in the mission statement, then they started making connections between the mission statement and their studies. This would indicate that it is the language of the mission statement that is not in everyday use in the case study school. Students identified the core IBDP modules of TOK and CAS as those with the most visible aspects of the IB mission statement. The ability of the IBDP to promote in students the ideals express in the IB mission statement is in agreement with the findings of Wilkinson and Hayden (2010). Of the academic subjects studied then languages and humanities were found to have the most evidence of the IB mission statement within lessons.

The development of specific values through a curriculum is seen as a challenging goal and one that requires curriculum and teachers to work in tandem (Wells, 2011). Within the IBDP academic topics studied are used as a vehicle to foster the development of intercultural understanding and respect within IBDP students. The ability to use an academic subject as a vehicle to develop a second skill or trait is best done explicitly as emphasised by Lovat et al. (2010), with their analysis of values education, and by the work on thinking skills by McGuinness et al. (2007). It can be said that although the students were being exposed to the attributes of the syllabus that was helping them develop an intercultural understanding and respect, this was not being made obvious to them. Spratt (2005) and Pan (2009) both identify the significance of teacher attitudes on the development of positive washback from the curriculum.

The emphasis that each subject teacher gives the mission statement is open to the individual preference of the teacher. This personal preference can be influenced by a number of factors including training, background and perceived importance of the mission statement in that subject (Wells 2011). The reasons for emphasising or not the IB mission statement by individual teachers is an area that requires further questioning.

The IB has aimed to develop an assessment structure that creates a positive influence on the teaching and learning. This includes promoting the ideals expressed in the mission statement and encouraging a social constructivist approach to learning (Bullock, 2011). The ability of high pressure examinations to negatively affect teaching styles was highlighted in the literary review, with the pressure of examinations causing teaching staff to move away from a constructive or social constructive approach to a behaviourist one (Jacob 2004).

There is evidence from the student interviews of a social constructivist approach being used in lessons and class discussions taking place. The impact the international intake of the school has on these discussions was highlighted by students. The global variation of experiences contained within the classes helps develop intercultural understanding. It then follows that the ability of the IBDP curriculum to instigate these interactions is helping develop students' attitudes, a factor highlighted as important by Wilkinson and Hayden (2010). This indicates that the end of diploma examinations is not having a negative effect on the teaching styles implemented. The exact effect of the examination to promote a social constructivist approach to learning is beyond the scope of this study.

## Conclusion

It is not simple to answer the question posed earlier; *is the curriculum of the IBDP effective at delivering the IB mission statement?* The evidence gathered shows that students were not familiar with the IB mission statement and its aims. These aims were also not the reasons for students to choose to study the IBDP. Once familiarised with the IB mission statement then students could identify areas where it permeated the teaching and learning. These included: the IB core subjects of TOK; the CAS programme; languages and humanities. This may mean that students were not familiar with the language of the IB mission statement.

The presentation of the mission statement in the everyday teaching and learning is not explicit to the students in the case study school. This finding leads to the question; Are the curriculum and assessment practices of the IBDP responsible for the infusion of the aims of the IB into the case study school? It can be said that the curriculum is contributing to student interaction and that this helps promote an atmosphere in the school that encompasses the ethos of international education. Students identified the core IB elements of TOK and CAS as ones that had the most opportunities for the development of the IB mission statement ethos. The IBDP is unique in requiring students to cover these subjects as a graduation requirement, so it can be said that this is a definite incidence where the curriculum is helping achieve the aims of the IBDP. Having said this, it is not possible from the evidence gathered to separate the curriculum from the school ethos. Increasing the profile of the IB mission statement within lessons would make students more aware of its presence in the curriculum. This may lead to an increased development of students learning along the lines of the IB mission statement.

Returning to the question posed; *is the curriculum of the IBDP effective at delivering the IB mission statement?* The evidence gathered within the case study school suggests that yes it

is. The study was not able however to proportion the amount of influence the IBDP curriculum had on student values compared to other external factors including the existing school ethos. This reflects the complexity of developing values in young people and the need for further studies in the effectiveness of the IBDP to achieve this.

### **A Summary of areas for further research**

The completion of this study and the analysis of the findings reflect the complexities of promoting the ideals of international education in a school. The combination of factors that influence the culture of a school where the ideals of international education are likely to be caught are summarised in figure 3 above.

The expansion of the Thompson (1998) model and the findings of this investigation have highlighted areas that need further research. These include establishing the relative impact of the three main factors above in creating the international education environment. This major question when placed in context of the study into the IBDP will involve answering the ability of a curriculum to develop student values. A starting point for this will be to compare the development of students' attitudes studying the IBDP and those studying the high school diploma programme in the case study school. This will help ascertain the significance of the IBDP curriculum on the development of student values compared to the school environment.

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