

International education and IB programmes

Worldwide expansion and potential cultural dissonance

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It has been suggested that the International Baccalaureate Organization could be expected to 'influence' as many as 100 million people in the foreseeable future. This article focuses on some of the cultural dissonances that may be produced from attempts to 'clone' on to non-Eurocentric models, educational systems and methodologies designed to accommodate cultural norms in another part of the world. Cultures are dynamic entities and a certain repositioning of defining characteristics may be regarded as an acceptable, even desirable, consequence of adopting IB programmes and methodologies. This article argues that such outcomes need to be the product of intentional design and not accidental by-products.

KEYWORDS affective education, cultural dissonance, International Baccalaureate, pedagogic practice

Introduction

At the 2003 International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) World Heads' Conference in Cancun, Director General George Walker indicated that a recent study undertaken by the McKinsey group had suggested the IBO could be expected to 'influence' as many as 100 million people in the foreseeable future. Such projections mark a significant development in the history of the IBO movement and have been the cause of much lively

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Selon certains, l'Organisation du Baccalauréat International pourrait 'exercer une influence' sur près de 100 millions de personnes dans un futur proche. Cet article porte principalement sur certaines dissonances culturelles qui peuvent naître de la tentative de 'cloner' dans des modèles non eurocentristes des systèmes et des méthodologies conçus pour accepter des normes culturelles provenant d'autres parties du monde. Les cultures sont des entités dynamiques. Un certain repositionnement de leurs caractéristiques déterminantes peut être considéré comme la conséquence acceptable, voire souhaitable, de l'adoption des programmes et des méthodologies de l'IBO. Cet article insiste sur le fait que cette démarche doit résulter d'une conception intentionnelle et non pas être une conséquence fortuite.

Algunos opinan que el ámbito de influencia de la Organización del Bachillerato Internacional podría alcanzar los 100 millones de personas en el futuro inmediato. Este artículo analiza algunas de las disonancias culturales que podrían producirse al tratar de 'clonar' en otros lugares del mundo modelos, metodologías y sistemas educativos no eurocéntricos que hayan sido diseñados conforme a unas determinadas normas culturales. Las culturas son entidades dinámicas y una cierta redefinición de sus características esenciales puede verse como una consecuencia aceptable, e incluso deseable, de la adopción los programas y las metodologías de IBO. Este artículo insiste en que dichas redefiniciones deben realizarse intencionalmente y no ser un resultado fortuito.

discussion. While many applaud the direction the IBO is charting, and are supportive of the almost evangelical mission articulated by Professor Walker, others remain concerned over the possible marginalization of international schools, and their interests, in face of the organization's new tranche of imperatives.

Within this discourse one issue that appears to have received little public attention is the potential dissonance created by the importation of international education programmes, such as those of the IBO, which have been developed in particular areas of the world and are consequently infused with culturally specific pedagogical expectations, to other regions of the world where 'different economic, political and cultural conditions exist' (Walker and Dimmock, 2000). In seeking to raise consciousness on such issues this paper asks whether individual national or international schools requesting IB authorization in non-Anglocentric parts of the world or, indeed, national educational administrators wishing to selectively graft aspects of IB programmes onto their existing systems, have considered the full range of cultural challenges presented by the implementation of such programmes within a non-'western' construct.

The IBO and its place in international education

Beginning with the Diploma in the late 1960s the IBO has established itself as the pre-eminent agent of international education. To the Diploma programme was added the Middle Years curriculum framework (MYP) in 1994 and the Primary Years Programme (PYP) in 1997. The first IB Diplomas were awarded in 1970 and since then there has been a remarkable expansion in the organization, including a meteoric growth of interest in national systems of education. In early 2004 there were 1351 schools worldwide authorized to offer one or other of the IBO's programmes; while 55 per cent of all Diploma students sitting the May 2003 examinations were from government schools (www.ibo.org). George Walker is not alone in thinking the IB represents 'the nearest thing we have to a K-12 international system of education' (Walker, 2002: 91).

Over recent years there has been considerable debate over the nature of international education which has been usefully summarized by Mark Heyward (2002). The University of Bath's Centre for the study of Education in an International Context has played an important role in facilitating research in this particular field. One significant contribution to the discourse has been the investigations into the core features of what makes an education international. In one survey of international school students,

alumni and teachers a conclusion was drawn that 'open mindedness, flexibility of thinking and action' were the most important characteristics of people who felt 'international' as a result of their education (Hayden et al., 2000: 91).

The IBO itself sees its three programmes as offering a 'continuous international educational experience from childhood to school graduation' promoting 'the education of the whole person, emphasising intellectual, personal, emotional, and social growth, through all domains of knowledge, involving the major traditions of learning in languages, humanities, sciences, mathematics and the arts' (Conn, 2002: 1). At its core the IBO seeks to foster:

... an understanding among young people around the world, enabling them to live more peacefully and productively than before. By emphasising the dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, independent critical thought and international awareness or intercultural understanding, the IBO espouses the principles of educating the whole person for a life of active, responsible citizenship. (Conn, 2002: 4)

So successful has the IBO become in the realm of international education today that few would disagree with the claim that its programmes afford the most appropriate pre-university platform for the pursuit of intercultural awareness. Perhaps inevitably, some practitioner-researchers continue to question the degree to which 'the curriculum either is genuinely international or remains eurocentric and western biased' (Heyward, 2002: 24). The IBO acknowledges that the Diploma programme grew from a western humanist tradition with its promotion of 'individual talents', 'responsible citizenship', 'critical thinking' and 'informed participation'. However, despite George Walker's persuasive encouragement for IB teachers to ensure their students 'appreciate the diversity of models of learning, of which western humanism is (but) one' (Walker, 2002: 51), critics remain who would concur with Elizabeth Fox's earlier claim that, despite best intentions, the IB curriculum was prone to perpetuating cultural imperialism (Fox, 1985).

The IBO has recognized the importance of culture in education and Monique Conn openly states that:

Developing an understanding of culture is critical to promoting an understanding of others and an ability to relate co-operatively to them. This is what each individual programme and the sequence of programmes is designed to achieve. (Conn, 2002: 6)

However, it remains essential for educators to continue to engage in this discourse so as to better reach an understanding of the extent to which the IB's pedagogical expectations are at present culturally determined. For if they are, there may be a critical disconnect between an espoused imperative to acknowledge the 'diverse values inherent in different cultures of the world' (IBO, 2002: 5) and a recognition that 'the values and attitudes of the school community will shape the kind of future in which young people will live' (IBO, 2002: 7).

The difficulty of talking about culture

In any discussion on cultural issues it is important to acknowledge from the outset that some broad-brush statements will inevitably be made. Generalizing about 'cultural norms', particularly in the context of Africa, Asia or South America, is notoriously dangerous. There is certainly, for instance, no single African or Asian culture, nor indeed a single Chinese culture. It is equally contentious to talk about a homogeneous South American or even western culture. However, although the use of such terms as 'Asian' or 'western' culture may be thought of as nothing more than convenient short hand, these generalizations are necessary in order to establish a meaningful discourse. Dimmock and Walker conclude that culture is 'an enduring sets of values, beliefs and practices that distinguishes one group of people from another' (2000: 43) and it is this definition that underpins discussion in this paper.

School-based discourse on cultural issues offers reflective practitioners a range of intriguing questions to resolve, particularly in international schools enriched by dual or pluralistic cultures. It is vital, however, that educators engage in such discussion for, as Heyward (2002: 23) argues, culture is the more 'significant identity construct in the 21st century . . . not nationality . . . and culture is a far more elusive and complex construct'. Fortunately, a number of potential structures to help schools frame their discourse have been provided by the work of Hofstede (1991) and others. Hofstede offered researchers a taxonomy of cultural dimensions which were intended to facilitate comparative studies. These included power–distance relationships, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term versus short-term orientation. As Dimmock points out, the dimensions 'may be defined as core axes around which significant sets of values, beliefs and practices cluster. They provide common benchmarks against which cultural

characteristics at the societal level can be described, gauged and compared' (2000: 50). Some critics have argued that Hofstede's taxonomy of cultural dimensions needs to be handled with caution (Trice and Beyer, 1993), and even Clive Dimmock enjoins reflective practitioners to accept that Hofstede's taxonomy should not be used to 'polarise cultural influence on school design, restricting leadership or teaching and learning, but rather provide a basis for comparison' (2000: 51).

Walker and Dimmock (1999) have restructured Hofstede's cultural dimensions into a model more appropriate for school-based educational research. The first of their dimensions is 'power-distributed/power-concentrated'. This is similar to Hofstede's *power-distance relationships* construct but is relabelled to represent what Walker and Dimmock see as the essence of power relationships in various cultures (Dimmock, 2000: 51). The next dimension is 'group-orientated/self-orientated' which embraces Hofstede's *individualism versus collectivism*. Then there is 'consideration/aggression' replacing Hofstede's *masculinity versus femininity*, which has been relabelled by Walker and Dimmock to avoid possible confusion and accusations of sexism. Next in the taxonomy is 'proactive/fatalistic' which replaces Hofstede's *uncertainty avoidance*. The labelling of this dimension reflects proactive cultures which offer a sense of 'we can change things around here' compared to a willingness to accept things as they are in more fatalistic cultures (Dimmock, 2000: 52–3). Dimmock and Walker's 'generative/replicative' dimension has no Hofstede equivalent. It reflects the assumption that 'some cultures appear more predisposed towards innovation, or the generation of new ideas and methods, whilst other cultures appear more inclined to replicate or adopt ideas and approaches from elsewhere' (Dimmock, 2000: 53). Finally in this taxonomy is the 'limited relationship/holistic relationship' dimension which relates to the importance attributed to connections and relationships in different cultures.

Like Hofstede's taxonomy, that offered by Walker and Dimmock is presented as pairs of alternatives. The extent to which culture affects educational programmes and the practices of learning and teaching is difficult to measure. Hofstede, Walker and Dimmock provide the reflective practitioner with important tools for comparative analysis. However, caution needs to be applied in the practical application of such dimensions for, as Dimmock notes, to view the 'pairings' 'as polarities along a uni-dimensional scale is too simplistic and could lead to severe misconceptions' (Dimmock, 2000: 51).

IB programmes and congruence with particular cultural dimensions

George Walker sees the IBO as the 'torchbearer' for international education (Walker, 2002: 96). At the heart of the IBO's transformationalist decision to 'influence' a broader range of constituents appears to be a desire to provide a more equitable access to IB-style education to students from a wider world provenance and range of abilities than currently exists. Reference was made at the recent Cancun Conference to the 'no-child-left-behind' Act in the USA which seeks to raise standards for all children and, in support of that endeavour, it was argued that the IBO has a real role to play in facilitating quality improvement programmes. But it is in the less developed parts of the world that the IB itself sees a more urgent need to render assistance to national systems. The McKinsey report identified a number of geographical areas of the world which presently have little connection, outside a few international schools, with the IBO. It is in these areas that the IBO's Strategic Plan is setting discrete targets to assist national systems with their educational reforms while continuing to maintain its services to international schools.

Culturally, these regions (Asia, Africa and South America) are very different from the Eurocentric milieu in which IB programmes were originally developed and it is vital that individual schools in these areas seeking to adopt the IB, as well as educational leaders responsible for national systems, are fully aware of the challenges posed to their current paradigms from any attempt to simply clone IB programmes and methodologies and apply them to different cultural contexts.

All IB programmes actively promote, indeed one might say prescribe, the skills of critical enquiry, and independent and creative learning. The PYP Student Profile, for instance, states the expectation that students will be 'risk-takers' and that they 'approach unfamiliar situations without anxiety and have the confidence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are courageous and articulate in defending those things in which they believe' (IBO, 2000). In terms of teaching methodology the PYP is committed, unapologetically, to:

... structured, purposeful inquiry, which engages students actively in their own learning, because it is believed that this is the way in which students learn best. The PYP believes that students should be invited to investigate important subject matter by formulating their own questions, looking at the various means available to answer the questions and proceeding with research, experimentation, observation and other means that will lead them to their own responses to the issues. (IBO, 2000)

Bartlett (cited in Heyward, 2002: 4), furthermore, suggests that the PYP 'develops competencies such as multiple perspective-taking and open-mindedness'. There is clear resonance here with the philosophies of the MYP, IB Diploma and the mission statements of many internationally minded schools, in their pursuit of intercultural awareness, independent learning, creative thinking and reflection. Indeed, Monique Conn, in her valuable and erudite monograph on IB curriculum articulation highlights the importance of a style of teaching which 'stimulates curiosity, inquiry, reflection and critical thinking' (IBO, 2002: 1) and 'encourages an eclectic, creative and independent approach to inquiry and learning' (IBO, 2002: 10).

However, as Walker and Dimmock (2000) indicate, it is conceivable that prescription of such skills/methodologies may create tensions with certain traditional cultural attributes which lend themselves to high power–distance relationships; fatalism as opposed to proactivism; collectivism as opposed to individualism and uncertainty avoidance. In some cultures, for instance, uncertainty 'is often viewed as psychologically uncomfortable and disruptive, and people seek to reduce it and to limit risk by hanging on to the way things have always been done' (Dimmock, 2000: 52–3). All IB programmes actively cultivate critical thinking skills. At age appropriate levels students are encouraged to challenge received wisdom, including that imparted by the teacher. However, in societies where there are high power–distance relationships, such as many African nations, China and Japan, open criticism of elders – Cultural Revolution notwithstanding – remains culturally unacceptable. Moreover, a Chinese or Japanese child successfully adapted to the skill of independent inquiry would find it difficult to distinguish appropriate critical analysis at school from an inappropriate lack of respect at home, producing an inevitable cultural dissonance.

Conn (IBO, 2002), on behalf of the IBO, recognizes that group learning is an acceptable, even desirable, alternative to individualized learning. This is important as Dimmock and Walker (2000: 310) suggest that in 'many education systems, a trend towards individualising curricula, teaching and learning is discernible. Whilst such an approach may be harmonious with cultures emphasising self-orientation, its suitability for group orientated cultures may be legitimately questioned.' Moreover, while many schools follow the received wisdom of the day and, in particular, of the IB in promoting personal student responsibility for learning and individual goal setting, these characteristics may be at odds with cultures 'displaying strong elements of fatalism' (Dimmock and Walker, 2000: 310). Many Asian societies are felt to be more prone to 'fatalism' than 'proactivism'

and, as a consequence, students may tend to rely more heavily on the teacher as an ‘impartor’ of knowledge and be more accepting of things as they are. Even though teamwork is a recommended option within IB programmes, formal assessment in both the MYP and DP remains predicated on the performance of an individual and this may again produce dissonance for non Eurocentric educational paradigms. Dimmock and Walker advise caution when systems are designed for self-orientated cultures where people are judged on what has been accomplished individually in contrast to ‘group-orientated cultures (who) value harmony, face saving, filial piety and equity of reward distribution among peers – values associated with Asian societies’ and where ‘status is traditionally defined by factors such as age, sex, kinship, educational standing, or formal organisational position’ (Dimmock and Walker, 2000: 309).

Other concerns may derive from differing cultural emphases on, for instance, the role of effort as opposed to ability as the determinant of achievement. In many Asian societies, including China, ‘trying hard or appearing to do so . . . [does not challenge] the existing order or show a lack of loyalty’ (Bond, 1991), whereas in ‘individualist cultures, greater explanatory emphasis is given to the ability factor. Variations in ability are consistent with the uniqueness theme in individualist cultures and justify individual resistance to group pressure for conformity’ (Smith and Bond, 1993). MYP and DP reporting and assessment processes are essentially culturally predicated on the identification of ability and may, as a consequence, diminish the part played by effort in a student’s final performance to the detriment of those whose educational experience has been shaped by different cultural norms.

Tensions created by such potential dissonance described above should be openly addressed in both putative and existing IB schools so as to ensure that the challenges involved in ‘cross-cultural cloning’ of educational programmes (Dimmock and Walker, 1998) are fully internalized and that schools, or indeed national systems adopting particular features of the IB, are able to ensure that learning and teaching practice continues to provide the optimum experience for all students.

Pedagogical practice

Conn (IBO, 2002: 8) enjoins IB educational teams to acknowledge and accept that ‘pedagogical practices, whilst having many common features, are largely influenced by individual cultures’ and that it is vital that IB schools provide ‘a flexible approach to teaching and learning’. However, despite this advice, the collective pursuit of IB-driven student outcomes

may have encouraged some educational leaders to assume that only one methodological approach can be truly effective and that is the one drawn from the 'western liberal' paradigm. A full appreciation of the IB's commitment to flexibility in teaching and learning methodology is important to national system administrators, schools new to the IB, as well as to existing reflective practitioners. Not everyone is easily persuaded away from one-size-fits-all theorizing. For instance, Watkins and Biggs (2001) suggest that researchers tend to look at the large size of the classes in Chinese schools, the paucity of resources, the teacher-directed didactic style of delivery and conclude that poor-quality education is being offered. Watkins and Biggs (2001) note that the paradox of Chinese education is that, in certain subjects, Chinese students outperform their western counterparts.

The place of rote learning in education offers a further example of a pedagogical cultural disconnect. In the West, rote learning is disparaged for providing no more than surface learning. In contrast 'evidence collected from Hong Kong students shows that rote learning is a necessary part of memorization, which in turn is linked to deeper understanding' (Watkins and Biggs, 1996). Whether the institution thinking of adopting IB programmes is a national or international school, it is vital that the faculty accept that others 'can be right in being different' (Peel, cited in Conn, 2002: 6). For instance, a major challenge exists for educational leaders in international schools in ensuring mutual respect is offered to colleagues emanating from differing educational paradigms. It is essential to avoid a climate developing where subsections of staff think there is 'only one way to teach this . . . our way!!!'. Indeed a key step on the school's journey towards international mindedness is to help staff appreciate the value of alternative approaches to learning and teaching. This is particularly important in Asia in relation to the 'Chinese Learner'. As Watkins and Biggs (2001) indicate:

The key is that there are universal principles of good teaching, which involve getting the students to engage the learning tasks at an appropriate cognitive level. How this is done depends on the approach to teaching that is appropriate to the culture . . . In this, it must be said that the approaches current in several Confucian heritage cultures seem to be working better than those in many Western countries.

The clear indication here is that quality education, whatever the cultural context, derives from an understanding of how students learn and of the validity of adopting culturally pluralistic approaches to learning and teaching. In pragmatic terms, implementing the latter may require an extensive dialogue on the nature of the school's learning and teaching policy and

whether or not to incorporate discrete, but differential, cultural indicators of performance.

Having decided to adopt the IB and address the cultural challenges identified above, national system administrators and leadership teams of prospective or existing IB schools who view change as 'intentional and holistic' (Dimmock and Walker, in press), would also need to consider the effects of their curriculum on a range of connected school-wide imperatives. To achieve this, strategic planning to manage the interconnectiveness of change, as illustrated in the diagram of a model adopted at the author's current school (Figure 1), may be necessary for cultural conflict to have a positive rather than negative influence on the school (Allan, 2003; Heyward, 2002). Cultural dissonance, like other forms of conflict, can actually be helpful to a school, but as Michael Allan suggests, in order for the school to help shape internationally minded students they must:

. . . work with cultural dissonance in promoting intercultural learning and recognise the plurality of learning styles in allowing students to reach their academic potential and develop self esteem. This means working with conflict and, perhaps, accepting that conflict cannot always be resolved. (Allan, 2003: 107)

A proactive discourse should be conducted, for instance, over the school's teacher appraisal or performance management programmes. Will staff, despite Monique Conn's advocacy of flexible approaches, be required to demonstrate an ability to teach in a prescribed format designed to facilitate the fulfilment of output expectations outlined in IB student profiles? If so, will professional development courses be provided to help staff adjust to the new demands? If the school is an international school will the leadership team assess how effectively their appraisal and professional development policies are informed by differing cultural needs? Is a single system of appraisal based on one cultural paradigm capable of ensuring performance improvement for faculty from diverse cultural backgrounds (Drake, 1992)? Are all staff likely to respond in the desired fashion to a system predicated on individualistic rather than collectivist determinants (Walker and Dimmock, 2000)? A key element in western-style appraisal is, for instance, the provision of 'honest' feedback to the individual being appraised. Although this approach works effectively in individualistic cultures, Hofstede argues it destroys the harmony that is expected in collectivist cultures and can 'cause irreparable damage to the employee's "face" and ruin his or her loyalty to the organisation' (Hofstede, cited in

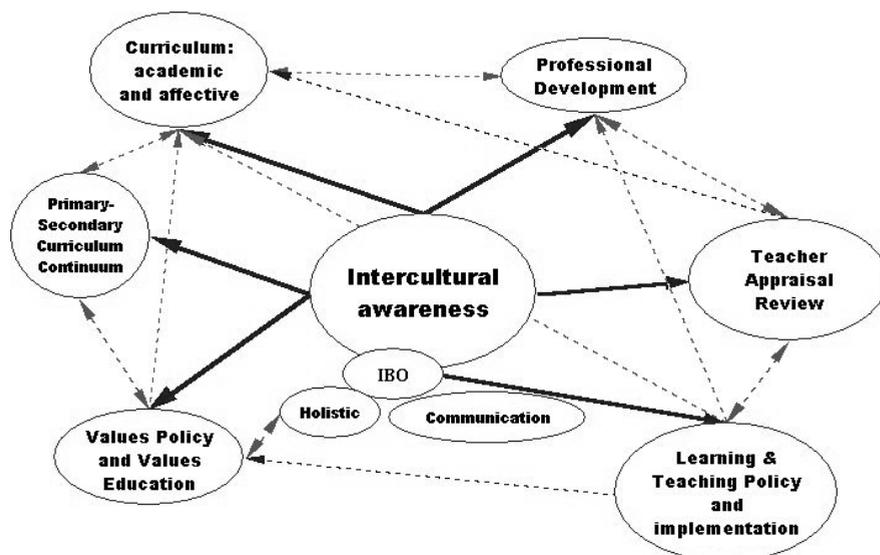


Figure 1 A holistic approach to the pursuit of intercultural awareness

Dimmock and Walker, 2000: 170). Consequently, the suitability of such a model of appraisal to, for instance, Chinese teachers working in a western-paradigm international school must be questioned. If the aim of appraisal is to secure personal growth and improvement, the system will have limited success where the Chinese manager is reluctant to risk situations involving a colleague's loss of 'face', or where Chinese teachers are culturally unlikely to admit their own weaknesses or problems.

The IBO and affective education

The IBO is quite rightly committed to the cultivation of a broad education. Indeed, a number of researchers have posited a view that international understanding might well derive as much from the non-formal, pastoral and 'hidden curriculum' as from the formal academic modes (Allan, 2003; Drake, 1997a, 1997b, 1998b; Hayden and Thompson, 1995). This author has gone so far as to suggest that pastoral care could reasonably be construed as an essential third component of the holistic education promoted by the IBO (Drake, 1997b). However, even here there are major cultural issues to resolve. In a multicultural school offering a structured personal and social education programme, will all staff be equally

capable of delivering personal and social education, impacted, as it is bound to be, by cultural sensitivities (Drake, 1998a)? Sweetingham and Woods (1994) for instance suggest, on the basis of their work in the UK, that the most successful staff involved in pastoral care work are those who are 'egalitarian and non-control orientated'; people-persons who are not dominated by power systems. Hofstede, and Walker and Dimmock, as noted above, would argue that some cultures are more prone to these dispositions than others.

The author's own doctoral research at an international school in Hong Kong had as a central focus the testing of the hypothesis that 'cross cultural counselling' would prove acceptable to the major school constituents (Drake, 1998a). This particular school-based research concluded that educators understate the importance of cultural issues at their risk. A carefully considered decision was taken that all teachers, irrespective of culture, would be assigned tutorial responsibilities. Like Raynor (cited in Drake, 1998a: 239), the leadership team was of the opinion that:

. . . pastoral care is not solely the responsibility of designated staff teams within a school, but is the responsibility and obligation of all staff at all times . . . all staff are responsible for the pupils in their charge, for putting the ethos of the school into practice, and being aware of the needs of their pupils.

As with Marland (1989) the leadership team supported the view that the:

. . . tutor is the heart of the school, the specialist whose specialism is bringing everything together, whose subject is the pupil herself, who struggles for the tutee's entitlement, and who enables the pupil to make the best use of the school.

Pastoral care systems need to be based on values 'that are appropriate to the school's cultural make-up' (Duncan, cited in Drake, 1998a: 240). But what sort of value system does an international school subscribe to? That of the society in which the school is located? That of the majority of the staff, students, parents? Is there a nucleus of common values to which all people can subscribe in a given school? Mattern (1990) for one argues in support of this view. Even if the proposition were accepted, this does not preclude potential conflict arising from other non-convergent cultural perspectives. Duncan's (1988) limited study of the way tutors worked in a multi-cultural school in the UK indicated that cross-cultural counselling was ineffective since many teachers had no knowledge of the backgrounds and needs of students from cultures other than their own and that, therefore, they were not able to cope with 'some of the very interesting but rather delicate

issues with which they may have to come face to face'. Interestingly, the tentative results of a recent piece of research by Eric Jabal on the alumni of five Hong Kong international schools suggested that many alumni feel that the teachers in these schools had failed to really take into account the cultural differences (Jabal, 2004: 15–24).

One has only to consider the recent debate on 'Asian-values' and whether, by definition, such values are distinctive from 'other cultural values'. If so, what sort of impact does this have on an Asian teacher's counselling of non-Asian students, or vice versa: a non-Asian tutor counselling an Asian student. Is it possible to ensure that the staff in an internationally minded school are, in Hamblin's (1986) words, 'sufficiently alert (in a multi-cultural community) to unintentional violation of values? Lack of respect clothed in the language of caring is no better than that expressed more blatantly.' For cross-cultural counselling to work effectively tutors must try to become more aware of the needs of particular ethnic groups. It may well be hugely idealistic to expect all tutors to become au fait with the particularistic needs of every culture represented at the internationally minded school, but if the desire is to provide more effective cross-cultural counselling the school will need to offer regular INSET on the cultural and religious values of the major groups with which tutors/homeroom teachers have to deal. The current counselling emphasis emanating from a western cultural perspective is infused with universal human rights, interpersonal tolerance and personal accountability, and this tradition might find itself at odds with non-Eurocentric cultural mores predicated on collective allegiance and responsibility, duty, diligence and religious convergence (Everts, 1993).

The evidence offered by this author's research is that some tutors (homeroom teachers) did find it difficult to conduct 'life-skills' sessions in a second language with students of the opposite sex, particularly those taking radically different cultural standpoints. Moreover, some students naturally tended to seek out a tutor who spoke the same language for discussions on sensitive personal issues. This particular problem was well illustrated by information gleaned from a 1994 Input survey given to the third cohort of students at the school (Drake, 1998a). Students were asked whether they would find it easier to talk to a tutor if they were of the same culture: 111 students completed the survey and 43 students indicated they would find it easier to talk to a tutor of the same culture whereas 36 students said 'No' and a further 32 said it depended on the issue. Of the 43 who categorically said 'Yes', 27 or 63 percent were Chinese (13 male and 14 female). This was somewhat disproportionate to the total ethnic split in the college as ethnic Chinese made up only 47 percent of the

third cohort. There was clearly some tentative support here for the view that an important proportion of students (38%) would be more comfortable discussing sensitive issues with tutors of the same culture. Furthermore, it was apparent that a significant proportion of such students were of Chinese ethnicity. To these figures should, of course, be added other students who had expressed the view that for 'some issues' they would prefer to talk to a tutor of the same sex or culture. These statistics were confirmed by more informal interviews with Chinese teachers employed in the school who indicated the difficulty they faced discussing very sensitive issues in English and, conversely, the difficulty faced by Cantonese students articulating their inner emotions in English to a non-Chinese tutor.

The tentative conclusions drawn from the results of this research suggest care is needed with cross-cultural counselling. By no means all students or staff were comfortable with the concept. Internationally minded schools seeking to enhance the opportunities for increased intercultural awareness through affective education will need to proactively address a range of conundrums. They should certainly accept that what can at one level be seen as a problem can, from another perspective, be viewed as a chance to provide opportunities for more informed communication between students from different cultures which can, in turn, enhance the quality of international education offered at the school. As Marland (1986) indicates, pastoral care programmes sometimes have to accept a more moderate achievement of certain aims in order to fulfil a greater aim.

Conclusion

The IBO offers an impressive range of international education programmes and the organization is to be congratulated on its growth from the early 'heroic period' of the late 1960s and 1970s to the current period of 'influence'. Many significant targets have been charted for the next few years as part of the IBO's Strategic Plan, including the very important work required to standardize the lexicon of international education extant in IB documentation! However, the continued expansion of the IBO into the national systems of the non-Eurocentric world raises a raft of interesting questions, most of which the IBO itself has admirably identified in Monique Conn's 2002 monograph. Prospective IB schools and national system administrators seeking to incorporate features of international education into their programmes, while learning from the IB, must proactively address these very same issues. Certainly, educational leaders in the non-Eurocentric world endeavouring to provide an internationally minded education

would be unwise to simply attempt to 'clone' on to their models educational systems and methodologies designed to accommodate cultural norms in another part of the world. Even with careful adjustment, the introduction of IB programmes to regions such as China, Africa and South America will inevitably produce dissonance and cultural tension. Cultures are, of course, dynamic entities and are constantly changing; a repositioning of characteristics such as power–distance relationships may be regarded as an acceptable, even desirable, consequence of adopting IB programmes and methodologies. Whatever the case, such outcomes need to be the product of considered intentionalist design and not an accidental by-product. Cultural change within schools will ineluctably impact upon societal culture. Will both existing and potential IB schools and, more especially, national educational leaders, accept such consequences as necessary evils: the educational axis of new forms of cultural imperialism, homogenization and globalization? Or will they adapt the IB programmes to meet their specific quality enhancement requirements while defending and maintaining existing cultural imperatives? If they choose the latter, what will be the shape of the new constructs, and in a world of significant cross-fertilization, how will the IB itself ultimately be changed? . . . For changed it will be.

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