

## “Educating the global citizen”

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Last year I wrote a book (Walker, 2006) with exactly the same title as this afternoon’s lecture: *Educating the Global Citizen*. In the final chapter I summed up what I had learned about international education during my 15 years as director general, first of the International School of Geneva and then of the International Baccalaureate Organization. I suggested it could be described in three stages, each one overlapping the next. I am going to summarize those three stages and then move on.

### **Stage 1: international awareness**

The first stage is what I call ‘international awareness’. This has always been a feature of everyone’s education: learning about other countries, their history and geography, their language and their customs. Governments now recognize that the success of trade and diplomacy will be enhanced if you know something about the traditions and culture of those with whom you are doing business. A typical statement is that of former US Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, who said in 2000:

*I strongly believe that the growth of democracy, economic prosperity and economic stability throughout the world is linked to the advance of education. This is one of the strongest reasons why the United States should have an active and strong international education agenda.*

For the person in the street, ‘international awareness’ might mean planning a holiday abroad, working in an multi-national team, having a child living overseas and perhaps a grandchild who does not speak the same language.

### **Stage 2: global awareness**

I call the second stage ‘global awareness’, meaning an understanding that engagement with another country is no longer a matter of choice: from now on we are all inextricably bound together in the process known as globalization. This is a relatively recent situation but it was described 25 years ago by a distinguished British politician, Shirley (now Lady) Williams (Ref?) who said:

*The world is becoming like scorpions in a bottle, who have learned in a very short time that they either live together or that they mortally wound one another. For we deal, of course, with a situation which is very new: where the luxury of being able to vent national feelings, xenophobia, national hatred, racial prejudice and so forth, is one that has only recently come into question; and where much of the education system in all countries, including our own, has simply not taken on board sufficiently the international dimension and the degree of international interdependence to which we are now heir.*

For the person in the street, 'global awareness' might mean low inflation rates because of cheap manufacturing in China, a relative killed in a distant war in Afghanistan, worries about bird 'flu and the long-term implications of global warming.

It was into the early period of global awareness that the International Baccalaureate was born. The terrifying nuclear confrontation of the two super-powers, America and the Soviet Union, in the 1960s made everyone realize that the days of independent political action were over. We either learned to live together or we would die together and it was not by chance that the book describing the IB's early history was entitled *Schools across Frontiers* (Peterson, 2003). The IB's programmes would bring together young people across the globe in programmes that would encourage them to believe – and here I quote the IB's mission statement – *that other people, with their differences, may also be right.*

### **Stage 3: global citizenship**

Finally, I went on to describe the third stage of international education which I call 'global citizenship'. Like any other citizenship, this brings rights and responsibilities. The *rights* are enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and if this seems remote to the person in *your* street, let me suggest that people in *other* streets have reason to be grateful (for example) for UNESCO's Education for All initiative, for the HIV/AIDS campaign by the World Health Organization, for the Balkan genocide trials at The Hague or for the UN High Commission for Refugees' protection, shelter and sustenance during conflict, famine and disaster. Each of these examples – and there are dozens more – ultimately derives its legitimacy from the Universal Declaration and the global citizen should do everything possible to protect those fundamental rights of security, education and health even if, for most of the time, we are in the happy position of taking them for granted.

But I also mentioned *responsibilities* and in the book I introduced them by quoting from a pamphlet prepared by Washington International School (2004):

*Educating global citizens means much more than exposure to many nationalities, learning about multiple cultures, or even immersion in other languages. It requires giving students the outlook and skills that equip them with mental flexibility and a basic respect for perspectives other than their own.*

*A global citizen is one who seeks out a range of views and perspectives when solving problems. He or she does not 'tolerate' or 'accept' cultural difference or viewpoints, since these words implicitly place the speaker at the centre of what is acceptable and right. Global citizens proactively seek out those who have backgrounds that are different from their own, examine ideas that challenge their own and then enjoy the complexity.*

*A global citizen examines and respects differences, and evaluates them critically. He or she does not passively accept all ideas or philosophies. Engagement – in thought, in discussion, in active learning – is the basis for global citizenship.*

What impresses me about this statement is its commitment to action. Engagement – in thought, in discussion, in active learning – is the basis for global citizenship. How, then, can schools best prepare their students to engage with the issues of a global society? It is at this point that I continue my thinking this afternoon by suggesting that the key to engagement must be an understanding of the very concept of globalization itself.

Very little has been written about the implications of globalization for education. Much has been written about globalization and economics, politics, communication, health and conflict. Virtually nothing exists on the interaction of globalization and education. But there is one important exception: a collection of essays (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004) that had its origin in a seminar in Pocantico, New York, to which I contributed in 2002. One of the authors in that collection is Professor Howard Gardner, who writes:

*The trends of globalization – the unprecedented and unpredictable movement of human beings, capital, information and cultural life forms – need to be understood by the young persons who are and will always inhabit a global community. Some of the system will become manifest through the media; but many other facets – for example, the operation of worldwide markets – will need to be taught in a more formal manner.*

### **Understanding globalization**

During the time remaining to me, therefore, I am going to propose five ways in which we can encourage our students to understand better the ‘trends of globalization’ as Gardner describes it. But before I do so, I want to emphasize his important observation: the young people whom you are teaching at the moment will spend their entire lives in a globalized society. It is not something that will gradually creep up on them (as it has crept up on me); nor will it slowly creep away as they get older. It will be a determining factor in every aspect of their lives and their children’s lives and their grand-children’s lives....

Let me start with a working definition of globalization that is even broader than Howard Gardner’s:

*The widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life.* (Held, 1999)

which deliberately moves globalization beyond its economic context. Having an EU passport is globalization; so is watching England’s dismal cricket performance in Australia as it happened. No longer having to carry a smallpox vaccination certificate is globalization; so are the long queues at security in international airports. Being able to check every single fact in this lecture on the Internet is globalization; so is the threat of tourism to the delicate ecology of the Galapagos Islands.

### **The first feature: its historical context**

Globalization is not a new phenomenon. Arguably, we are witnessing at least its fourth period. The first was launched in 1492 from Portugal, produced the first trans-Atlantic trading system and a century or so later had caused the deaths of more than 90% of the original inhabitants of the Americas. The second period, two hundred years later, saw nine million African slaves shipped to the Americas where they made good the labour shortages caused by the first period. The third period began with the huge growth of imperial trade in the nineteenth century and mass migration from Europe to North America. The current period of globalization started with the liberalization of international trade after the Second World War and has been

greatly accelerated in recent years by new techniques of information and communication technology (ICT).

Each period of globalization has seen significant increases in human productivity. In most cases these have trickled down to improve overall standards of living relative to countries untouched by the process. But short-term benefits have often gone to tiny minorities and were usually achieved at the expense of acute suffering over many generations.

There are parallels to be drawn here and contrasts to be made. There is evidence to be sifted and alternative explanations to be weighed. There are issues to be argued about and some lessons to be learned. All this speaks to me of a history lesson and I would like to see globalization included in history syllabuses as a thematic topic. I note for example the following themes in the IB Diploma history course

- *the causes, practices and effects of war*
- *the rise and rule of independent states*
- *religion and minorities.*

and wonder why ‘the trends of globalization’ is not amongst them. Surely we should acknowledge that globalization has become one of the defining social movements, shaping the development of humankind.

### **The second feature: complexity**

Important issues appear to have become much more complex. I stress “appear” because there is no reason to suppose that the issues themselves are necessarily more complicated or perplexing; they just appear that way. This is partly because a range of different information is now immediately available to us. Compare, for example, the not wholly dissimilar situations of Suez in 1956 and Iraq fifty years later. The true situation in Suez was largely hidden from the general public which had no means of finding out. The true situation in Iraq, with all its confusions, claims and counter-claims, information and disinformation is there for anyone who has the time and inclination to make sense of it.

Generally-speaking it is becoming more difficult to make up one’s mind as, for example, one watches (as I did in Geneva) the truth of a particular incident according to CNN, the BBC, France 1, Télévision Suisse Romande and Al-Jazeera. Reaching a conclusion from all this diversity of viewpoint – most of it true – is an intellectually challenging process. Globalization requires us to resist premature conclusions, to learn to live with ambiguity and to reject the black-and-white for less reassuring shades of grey. Do you remember the Washington International School statement:

*Global citizens...examine ideas that challenge their own and then enjoy the complexity.*

There is another cause of complexity, and to illustrate it let me choose a different example, that of carbon credits, a concept upon which our very survival may depend. The importance of climate change has been around for as long as anyone has needed to keep warm, or cool, as the case may be. Globalization (which has *widened, deepened and speeded up inter-connectedness* – remember?) has of course accelerated the problem of global warming but at the same time it has forced us to adopt solutions that require international cooperation: we are having to think and act globally. The entire system of operating carbon credits depends

upon international cooperation and only few months ago I came across a group of Japanese in South Australia who were planting eucalyptus trees on Kangaroo Island as part of a carbon credit scheme. Today's problems can no longer be contained within international frontiers.

How can education best respond to this growing complexity? First, I believe, by insisting that students study a range of different disciplines that, for example, help them to grasp the scientific, statistical and economic aspects of a carbon credit scheme; the historical, cultural and political aspects of the Iraq conflict. In other words, a broad curriculum. Second, by becoming aware of the status of different forms of knowledge, thereby developing a sense of intellectual honesty. This is why I believe the IB's theory of knowledge course is so important – last year, for example, students were asked to respond to these questions:

- *What are the differences between 'I am certain' and 'it is certain' and is passionate conviction ever sufficient for justifying knowledge?*
- *To what extent may the subjective nature of perception be regarded as an advantage for artists but an obstacle to be overcome for scientists?*

Third, by exploring some aspect of globalization in depth, bringing to bear learning from different disciplines. The IB's extended essay is an obvious example, but every school should require something similar from its students.

My three chosen areas: a wide disciplinary base, an awareness of the scope and limitations of different forms of knowledge and an inter-disciplinary study in depth, all encourage the development of what are popularly called 'critical thinking skills': the ability to use sound intellectual tools to analyze an argument and then bring new information together in order to construct a better argument. Let me emphasize that last point. So much debate today consists in knocking down someone else's proposals; very little seems involve the building of better, alternative proposals.

### **The third feature: ethical values**

Globalization demands from education a greater emphasis on ethical values. This may appear contradictory since, for many people, the very word 'globalization' conjures up images of violent street protests fuelled by a deep-rooted sense of inequity (Klein, 2001 and Stiglitz, 2002). In the popular mind, globalization is unethical. However, the *widened, deepened and speeded up interconnectedness* (I remind you once again of my chosen definition) has the essential merit of making it impossible to ignore other opposing points of view or to refuse to examine the other side of the coin.

Let us therefore consider the case of the *Emma Maersk*. This is the name of the world's largest container vessel which docked for the first time at Felixstowe, on the East Coast of Britain, last November. The quarter-mile long ship unloaded 45,000 tons of Christmas goods in 3,000 containers, all from China. She sailed away from the port virtually empty. In 2005, the UK exported £2.8b of goods to China and imported £16b, a 30-fold increase over the figure in 1980.

In a newspaper interview (Vidal, 2006), the regional MEP, Caroline Lucas, commented:

*"Whole sectors of global trade are now being dominated by companies operating out of China and it's clear the whole free trade project is in question. The real cost of the goods that the*

*Emma Maersk is bringing in should include the environment, the markets destroyed in developing countries and the millions of jobs lost.”*

*Peter Mandelson, the European trade commissioner was not available for comment but is known to regard China as a globalization success story since its growth as a manufacturing centre means cheaper goods in European shops, more competitive companies and lower inflation.*

With this example in mind, I was rather pleased to read the aims of the IB geography course, expressed as follows:

- Develop a global perspective and a sense of world interdependence.
- Encourage an understanding between people, places and environment
- Create concern for the quality of the environment and for sustainable development
- Recognize the need for social justice and equity, combat bias and prejudice, and appreciate diversity

and I applaud this emphasis on issues that require ethical judgments about what is good and bad, what is right and what is wrong.

Howard Gardner (2006) recently addressed the Royal Society for the Arts in London on the theme of 'Five Minds for the Future', the title of his new book to be published later this year. Gardner identifies five kinds of mind – disciplined, synthesizing, creating, respectful and ethical – which he believes need cultivating if we are to respond to the challenges of globalization. In considering the ethical mind he draws attention to the responsibility of adults in setting good examples, particularly in the workplace when confronted by market forces, ambition and different interest groups.

I want to go further. I have detected a renewed interest in ethical issues (one example is the light-hearted but seriously-intended, and clearly very popular, daily column entitled Modern Morals in [The Times](#)) and this interest should be developed amongst students by overt reference to ethical issues within each discipline of the curriculum. This is not a matter to leave to the vagaries of the hidden curriculum.

#### **The fourth feature: connecting to other people**

I mentioned a moment ago that the account of the early days of the IB was called *Schools across Frontiers*. The title was clearly chosen to illustrate how international schools could span national borders and it reminds us that 40 years ago, if you wanted to make contact with someone of a different culture, it usually meant crossing a frontier, going into a different country. It was exciting, exotic stuff, particularly, as I remember it, travelling behind the Iron Curtain. How times have changed, bringing people of every conceivable culture onto our daily doorstep.

There is now a very high probability, almost a certainty, that you will have a regular *connection*, not just contact – in your neighbourhood, at work, in your leisure pursuits – with people of very different cultural origins who have retained and make daily use of large chunks of their own cultural identity, including their language and religion. For example, 400,000 people in the UK speak Bengali; half a million speak Punjabi and 200,000 speak Italian.



French, Spanish and German do not register on the UK language users' scale. What might this tell us about future school language policies?

What opportunities does the school curriculum offer to students to work alongside people of different cultures? The IB's Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) programme is frequently misinterpreted as providing service to needy communities, even charitable aid, but its primary purpose is neither service nor aid, but learning. CAS offers a rare opportunity for students to work with people whom they would not normally encounter at school and to learn from that experience. Service may indeed be rendered but often the net flow is powerfully to the benefit of the student.

How many school curricula offer the opportunity, in particular through literature, film and the performing arts, to understand what is meant by a culture and thereby to realize how much of one's thinking is predetermined, programmed by the 'software of the mind' – one's culture? How many take the risk of examining the same issue from different cultural viewpoints: the concept of marriage perhaps, or an iconic battle or social struggle? How many can truly sign up to that final sentence in the IBO mission statement that concludes *other people, with their differences, can also be right*?

We must recognize that the globalized young person of today will have many different cultural allegiances: to the Islamic faith but perhaps to a non-faith school; to an inner-city community but perhaps to a regional soccer team; to family in Bangladesh but perhaps to a rock group of non-Islamic friends in Bradford; to a language at school but perhaps to a different language at home; and, depending on the circumstances, to the United Kingdom, the European Union, perhaps to the Commonwealth and even on occasions to the United Nations. We must therefore define and encourage "multiculturalism" as representing each of the distinctive *threads of affiliation* (Maalouf, 2000) between that young person and those different groups and resist the temptation to label people with a unique affiliation and isolate them within a single cultural box.

### **The fifth feature: winners and losers**

My fifth and final feature of a global curriculum is to draw attention to a new acronym that has arrived on the scene, one which we shall see with increasing frequency. The acronym is BRIC, as in 'bric economies' and it stands for Brazil, Russia, India and China, four countries whose stock markets rose in 2006 by 41, 66, 37 and 102 percent respectively. The UK and US markets, which by the way came in at 56<sup>th</sup> and 84<sup>th</sup> of the 93 studied, had growth figures of 26 and 14%. (All figures are US dollar converted and include dividends.)

None of that will surprise Thomas Friedman (2005), author of the best-selling book *The World is Flat*. Friedman draws our attention to 3 billion new economic players coming from these countries at a time when a combination of factors including deregulation, global communication via the internet, outsourcing and off-shoring have all leveled the playing field for countries that have the appetite, the education (particularly in science and engineering) and the entrepreneurial skills to exploit new opportunities. Friedman's conclusion is that the United States no longer has; for Britain the jury is still out.

However, the equally experienced British social writer, Will Hutton, does not agree (2007) arguing that China does not have one single brand in the world's top hundred. Goods are made 'in China' and not 'by China' and, says Hutton, the United States retains a clear lead in

technology, brands, universities and patents. Where both Friedman and Hutton are in agreement is over the importance of education and of knowledge-based services. In the UK it is estimated that unskilled jobs have fallen from 8 million in the 1960s to 3.5 million today and will fall further to about 600,000 in 2020. Friedman writes:

*Jobs are going to go where the best educated work force is with the most competitive infrastructure and environment for creativity and supportive government.*

Nonetheless, the very fact of participating in the global economy is slowly pulling the Chinese people out of poverty. The World Bank reported roughly 375 m Chinese living in acute poverty (less than \$1 per day) in 1990; the figure decreased to 212m in 2001 and, if current trends are maintained, will decrease further to about 16m by 2015. In stark contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa the comparable figures *increase* from 227m to 313m to 340m. Such are the inequities that result from catching or missing the globalization train and they are likely to be as marked within countries as between them.

Trying to grapple with this dilemma, Friedman writes about the importance of the 'social entrepreneur' and suggests that in future a business school brain must be combined with a social worker's heart. If he is right (and he must have been encouraged by the award of the 2006 Nobel Prize for Peace to Mohammad Yunus and Grameen Bank) then schools must offer an education that strives unashamedly for the highest intellectual standards but connects them to a concept that became thoroughly unfashionable during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that of *obligation*. It has been assumed in the West that a good education will be the passport to a materially comfortable life. In future a good education, one that connects the intellect to human compassion, must be perceived as the means of *providing*, as much as *receiving*, material wealth.

## Summary

I have tried this afternoon to move on from where I was at the end of 2006. I have suggested that 'international' is not the same as 'global' and that all programmes of education should reflect the increasing influence of globalization.

In order to judge the relevance of a curriculum in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I have suggested five themes that should form the basis of an education for global citizenship:

- the historical development of globalization
- the intellectual tools to handle growing complexity
- the increasing importance of ethics
- the significance of culture
- the interaction of compassion and intellectual rigour.

Exactly one hundred years ago, John Dewey (1907) wrote:

*All that society has accomplished for itself is put, through the agency of the school, at the disposal of its future members.*

The role of the school remains unchanged today, but the definition of society has changed beyond recognition, now embracing the local, the national and the global. Putting that at the



disposal of its future members describes the formidable challenge of educating the global citizen.

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