

**Presentation to the IB ARMS level 3 workshop
Denver.
November 4th 2006**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I am delighted to be here in Denver at this workshop: my first visit to this city and this state, but it is also very exciting for me to be here in a state that has so many successful IB schools, a state that released so many wonderful practitioners to help us in Cardiff with programme development and a state that is working so hard to build the continuum of international education. I plan to make use of every moment by listening to you and talking with you about your experiences and ideas for the development of the continuum.

My role at the curriculum and assessment office in Cardiff (IBCA) is head of programme development, which means I oversee the development of the three IB programmes but with the focus of my work being the development of the continuum of international education. I will be speaking to you twice this week-end and I hope to be able to contribute to your understanding and help you with your work on the continuum

For the first time we now have two programme components that cross all three programmes: the programme standards and practices, introduced in October 2005 and the IB learner profile, introduced in March 2006. The nine standards and most of the practices under each standard are common to all three programmes and thus make a very clear statement about the common philosophy and practices that underlie the programmes. The IB learner profile provides, for the first time, a clear, unambiguous statement of the beliefs and values that

underpin the programmes. Sharing the same basic standards and the same beliefs and values means that we should be able to create a programme continuum that will provide a truly meaningful and coherent educational experience for IB students. It is very exciting work!

What I would like to do this morning is to consider what the IB learner profile should look like in practice, by suggesting to you some of the opportunities and challenges the implementation of the profile presents to schools and teachers, and then I will focus on one key factor in the implementation of the learner profile: educational leadership.

Values in education

But I would like to start by briefly considering the current place of values in education.

The implementation of the learner profile provides a school with the opportunity to implement a set of very explicit values that can unite a school, or a district, and should unite schools across the world in very meaningful and powerful ways. But it also challenges a school and its teachers to find ways of implementing the learner profile so that students will have opportunities to fully explore and understand those values, make meaning of them in their own lives, and take them through into their adult lives. In other words the implementation of the learner profile challenges a school to develop true lifelong learners.

In some schools in the IB North America region, the issue of values is controversial. There are parents or school boards who are questioning whether the values of IB programmes are what they want for their schools. There are also people who advocate that education should be

value free. To the second group I would say that value-free education is neither possible nor desirable. To the first group we can now say: here is the learner profile, these are the values and beliefs that underpin IB programmes and the pedagogy required to teach them. If these values are not for you then you would do best not to choose IB programmes for your school or your child.

The teaching of values is, of course, not something exclusive to the IB. There is a growing consensus amongst academics and educators and parents, despite pockets of dissent, in support of the centrality of values in education and the role of the school in developing values. This consensus is growing out of a variety of interests; I would suggest to you there are three critical ones: economic and political pressures to produce people that can feed production in our new knowledge society – our societies and economies now urgently need people who can think critically and creatively - and also, of course become good consumers of the fruits of such productivity; the progressive educationalists' concern for the development of the whole child – the academic, physical, social and emotional development; and concern from teachers, parents and people in general that we educate for a better world, and that we re-focus our collective attention on values that seem to be increasingly diminished in the face of mass consumerism and, arguably, globalization. Different motivators, but all, apparently and fortuitously, heading in a very similar direction.

As I have said, the IB learner profile provides IB schools for the first time with an explicit, unambiguous statement of IB beliefs and values, beliefs about the nature of international education, beliefs about the way students learn best, beliefs about how we can best teach students and beliefs about the values students need to develop to

be productive and effective, and to live a good life, in the moral sense of good, in the 21st century.

The learner profile has been with us, in the form of the PYP student profile, for nine years, but PYP schools, as yet, account for only 12.5% of our total IB World Schools. In our 508 MYP schools and 1,469 Diploma schools, the IB learner profile provides for the first time this clear statement of the values that underpin the structure and content of each of the subject areas, the areas of interaction, the hexagon core, and the pedagogical approach needed to teach the MYP and the Diploma successfully. It is interesting to note that nowhere in past or current Diploma programme documentation are there explicit statements about the values that underpin the Diploma programme. The values are certainly implicit in the subject guides and the principles of assessment but it has been possible for schools to, shall we say, skirt around them! No longer!!

So the time seems to be right for focusing on values – when have we ever needed them more!

So what opportunities does the IB learner profile present?

The learner profile is referenced three times in the new programme standards and practices:

- Standard A1 Philosophy; practice 2

“The school is committed to developing in students the qualities, attitudes and characteristics described in the IB learner profile”

- Standard C1 Curriculum; practice 6

“The curriculum promotes all the attributes of the IB learner profile”

- Standard C4 Curriculum; PYP practice 14
“Data, including evidence of development in terms of the IB learner profile, is reported to all participants in the learning process: students, parents, teachers and school administrators, and other schools at time of transfer.”

What will the programme evaluators be expecting to see as evidence of a commitment to the values of the learner profile and promotion of the values throughout the school. What will that commitment and promotion look like?

I am going to suggest to you some of the opportunities the implementation of the learner profile presents to a school, and also several challenges. The lists are certainly not exhaustive, they are my thoughts based on discussions with teachers and colleagues. But the ideas I am suggesting will, I hope, give you a strong sense of the how the IB views the learner profile and its place in the programmes and in schools. We do not have a checklist for this. We are looking to schools to implement the learner profile in ways that demonstrate commitment but which also reflect the culture and ethos of the school.

Firstly my hope is that the learner profile will **refocus attention in a school from content and skills to the ideals of learning**. Focusing attention on the learner profile, is essentially to focus attention on ideals again, on the things we know are most important in education and in life, on the things that motivate us and inspire us as teachers, and which are, therefore, most likely to inspire and motivate students. We need to shift the focus from content and skills back to ideals and learning. That is not to say that content and skills are unimportant but without ideals behind them they can be meaningless.

Secondly, Ron Richhart, from Harvard Project Zero, talks about the **development of 'intellectual character'** as a prime focus for teaching. He defines intellectual character as a set of dispositions that, together, shape and motivate intellectual behaviour. Put very simply, "We must educate students to act smart not just to be smart". (page 34). I believe the attributes of the learner profile equate well with Richhart's dispositions in shaping and motivating intellectual behaviour, and that if we focus pedagogy on the learner profile we will help students develop intellectual character. 'Intellectual preparedness', is a term I have heard used here in the IBNA region and which I have found very helpful in explaining why IB programmes are effective. I think the concept of intellectual character goes a stage further than intellectual preparedness, suggesting very strongly a more permanent, lifelong development rather than getting ready for the next stage of your academic or working life. This is the great opportunity the learner profile presents us with.

The learner profile should help to bring about **coherence within a school**- the opportunity to focus on common themes, putting them into action, challenging all members of the school community to live up to them, including school boards! It will provide a common language for all members of the school community. In school districts when a student moves from her elementary school to middle or middle to high school I would hope that shared ideals and a shared language would help ease that transition and make the educational experience of the students more coherent and meaningful.

Teacher recruitment and appraisal – the learner profile as a checklist for teacher recruitment and as a set of standards for teacher appraisal and classroom observation. What a powerful instrument it would be for teacher self-appraisal, peer appraisal and as the

foundation of a teacher appraisal/evaluation system. What impact could this have on classroom teaching and on student learning.

As a tool for teacher recruitment, some administrators are using the profile as a guide or checklist, or a focus for questions and finding it to be extremely helpful. After all, it is a profile for IB teachers.

A basis for professional development: staff meetings or workshops could take as their focus the attributes, one at a time, and help teachers come to a fuller understanding of what each of the attributes looks like at classroom level. How do we recognize critical thinkers? How do we help students become reflective, critical-thinkers. Are there strategies we can employ at all levels? Could, for example, guiding questions be employed for every unit of work at every grade level and could we then discuss how students could answer those guiding questions and so develop models of what good critical thinking would look like.

All these opportunities suggest that the learner profile should be built into the fabric of the school. That it should become the foundation for systems and structures: the common language, the shared set of values that underpin all activities.

But what are the challenges?

We need everyone to buy into the values if the profile is going to be fully implemented. If we want our students to be 'open-minded' then teachers and administrators must explicitly value and model open-mindedness consistently and enthusiastically. That is a challenge! A challenge both

for teachers, and for the administrators who manage teachers. But what an interesting professional development opportunity this presents! A staff workshop to analyse and define 'open-mindedness', and then a discussion about how it can be modelled consistently. 'Open-mindedness' can mean looking at a situation from more than one perspective. That can mean intellectually, in history or literature or science, or emotionally in dealing with a problem between students, or with a student who is being difficult.

In my office in Cardiff I have a large copy of the Upside Down World Map framed on my wall. It is a source of great inspiration to me and great fascination to people who visit me in my office. Suddenly the UK and the USA look quite different, and countries look different relative to each other. It helps to keep my mind open and to keep me thinking critically when I tempted not to and it is a good reference point sometimes for difficult meetings.

Values can't be taught in the traditional sense of teaching, they are learnt and they are learnt primarily through strong role models and practice. Every opportunity must be taken to provide students with those models and an opportunity to put what they have learnt into practice. But how does a school handle the skeptics? Institutionalising the learner profile so it can't be avoided would be a start ie teacher appraisal; using the reports to parents; professional development.

How is the learner profile to be built into the Diploma with all the existing pressures on teachers and students? The learner profile is implicit in the Diploma. It should not be an add-on but should enhance and re-focus what is already happening. As I have said, we can't ignore the content and skills, nor should we, but I would argue that a

refocusing of attention on structured inquiry and encouraging intellectual risk-taking in all subject areas will improve the quality of learning and performance in examinations. Structured inquiry and critical thinking can obviously enhance Diploma studies and certainly are doing so in many schools already, but so can careful, thoughtful reflection and adopting an open-minded approach to the great canons of knowledge. A focus on these attributes and on ideals should also increase motivation in students, giving their studies a higher purpose than just passing the test.

If integral to the school, **should the attributes of the learner profile be assessed**, and if so how? I will return to this later, but suffice it to say now that assessment here must be considered in its broadest sense. A school must ask itself: “how do we know if our students are developing the attributes of the learner profile?” “What type of evidence can we collect to demonstrate progress?” This is what regional offices will require for programme evaluation, and surely what a school will want to discover for itself. In terms of individual students, how will the student or teacher know if she is making progress in terms of ‘balance’ or being ‘caring’, for example? Through observation, conferencing, self-assessment, I would suggest. Not through grading!

The challenges are not insurmountable by any means but they need to be acknowledged and be carefully considered and planned for.

School leadership and values

I will now turn to the importance of educational leadership in an IB school in the implementation of the learner profile.

By the educational leadership of the school I mean the head of school, divisional principals and programme coordinators. Increasingly in the IBO we are recognizing and promoting this team of people as the key factor in successful programme implementation, of all three programmes. Gone are the days when the programme coordinator was expected to just push paper around the school or fill in registration forms. If a programme is to be implemented successfully the head of school must lead the way philosophically as well as practically; the principals and programme coordinators should have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the programmes so as to be able to take the lead and advise on pedagogical as well as programme issues.

In the implementation of the learner profile, the full involvement of the educational leaders in operationalising it will be the key performance indicator. This team must model the behaviour and attitudes they expect from teachers and students and encourage schools, boards and parents to do the same. There is a school in Europe that has a parent profile, before the learner profile was introduced. The school has found it to be extraordinarily effective as parents have to answer to other parents when their behaviour violates any of the attributes. The school has noted that parent attitude and behaviour has noticeably improved! Can we get parents to commit to the learner profile?

Pedagogical leadership of the learner profile is about focusing and refocusing attention, about making the learner profile the foundation of school systems and structures and using it as criteria for evaluating as many aspects of the school and community as possible.

I do not want people here who are not in senior leadership positions to feel as if there is nothing they can do until the

leadership team gets moving! Leadership can take many forms. Very rarely are schools today wholly autocratic communities. Most teachers have frequent opportunities to lead, whether it be leading a school trip or arts activity, or a taking the lead in developing a unit of work with grade or subject colleagues, or leading by example in the type of learning environment a teacher creates in his class and the relationship he has with his students. The opportunity to model the attributes of the learner profile puts all teachers in positions of leadership and is the key to the successful implementation of the learner profile.

The temptation with the learner profile is to instrumentalize it. Here I return to the issues of assessment and the learner profile. I am sure you are aware that it is now possible to measure your level of emotional intelligence. Please do not try and measure the learner profile! I suggest that your time might be better spent at first, as I have said, evaluating your learning environment, asking yourselves to what extent your curriculum and pedagogical methods in all subject areas and classrooms truly encourage inquiry-based learning, for example; gathering together evidence of critical thinking in your curriculum, or opportunities for genuine, valued student reflection and seeing if, as a collective staff, you can create more and better opportunities. Discuss and debate with your students what it means to be principled in the 21st century. Build the learner profile into your systems and structures.

I would like to pass on to you some wise words via Michael Fullan, from a man called Peter Block who wrote a book called: “The Answer to How is Yes”:

Block argues that we live in a ‘how-to’ culture, in which we too readily look for easily available, simple answers, so suppressing deeper reflection and thought:

“ My premise is”, Block says, “that this culture (the how-to culture) and we as members of it have yielded too easily to what is doable and practical.....In the process we have sacrificed the pursuit of what is in our hearts. We find ourselves giving in to our doubts, and settling for what we know how to do, or can learn to do, instead of pursuing what matters most to us and living with the adventure and anxiety this requires.”(5)

Back to ideals again. Beware of too readily focusing attention on instrumentalizing the IB learner profile, thereby avoiding the soul or heart-searching that needs to go on in a school if the attributes of the learner profile are to be truly embedded in the learning environment. Instead, put the learner profile into practice in every way you can.

Refocusing a school's attention on ideals and modelling the values of the learner profile also pre-supposes the development within a school, by the educational school leaders, of a dynamic learning community.

Andy Hargreaves in his book ‘Teaching in the Knowledge Society’ argues that “teachers are not deliverers but developers of learning. Those who focus on teaching techniques and curriculum standards and do not also engage teachers in the greater social and moral questions of their time promote a diminished view of teaching and teacher’s professionalism that has no place in a sophisticated knowledge society.” (p202).

He argues that this means: “making teaching into a moral, visionary profession once more, in which teachers care about their world as well as, and as part of, their work.” (Hargreaves p202). (6) I interpret this as not just refocusing a school on the ideals of learning, but also encouraging teachers and students to engage in the great

issues of our age that give relevance to the learning that takes place in school.

As educational leaders we must promote this enlarged view of teaching and teachers' professionalism: you as leaders and teachers in schools and we as curriculum developers in the IBO. The learner profile provides us with the opportunity to engage school communities: governors, teachers, parents and students in the perhaps the most important debate we can have in today's world: the place of ideals and values in our schools, in our lives, and, indeed, debate the whole purpose of education. We need to encourage teachers to engage their students in the debate about the most important social and moral questions of our time if we wish them to develop 'intellectual character'. This is what will, of course, lead to the development of internationally-minded students. This is what international education is about.

I would strongly encourage you to go back to your schools and provide opportunities for teachers and students to argue and debate, to deconstruct and reconstruct the learner profile, and then challenge them and yourselves, as IB teachers, to put it into practice in your daily lives. I would encourage you to embed it in as many structures and systems as possible so that the ideals encapsulated in the learner profile become the foundation of the school.

I repeat that IB programme evaluators will not have a checklist of what the learner profile should look like in a school. It is a classic IB cliché but nevertheless true, that the implementation of the IB learner profile, like the implementation of IB programmes is a journey. I believe the IB is leading the way in trying to implement values-based education in most countries, and, as always, we look to our excellent schools and inspired school leaders and practitioners to show us the way. We, as an

organization, will continue to support you and engage with you in the debate about our core values and how to put them into practice.

PYP practitioners talk about the written, taught and assessed curriculum. I would argue for the IB learner profile to become the 'lived curriculum'.

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(30 minutes)

References:

1. Richhart, R (2002) *Intellectual Character*, (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass)
2. Block, P, quoted in Fullan, M (2003) *The Moral Imperative of School Leadership* (Thousand Oaks, California, Corwin Press)
3. Hargreaves, A (2003) *Teaching in the Knowledge Society* (New York, Teachers College Press)