The International Baccalaureate in Australia and New Zealand in the 21st century

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An inevitable consequence of the globalisation effect on education systems is the need to create qualifications that are accepted worldwide. The International Baccalaureate (IB) fits neatly within these criteria. It is transportable, able to be taken in more than 1,380 schools in 110 countries and accepted by most universities in the world. This paper is concerned with the educational theory behind the IB and the way that it has been adapted in Australia and New Zealand, especially in the last ten years. Through the original international schools movement that created the IB, a curriculum was developed that catered for the mobile group of students whose parents’ work led abroad. Children could either travel and study abroad with their parents or remain at home estranged from their immediate family. Just how applicable was this international curriculum to students in Australian or New Zealand schools who were offered an alternative program to the local qualification? It is understandable that international schools should offer the IB, but why should schools that already have a local curriculum? The paper concludes by asking just how international is the curriculum of the IB and what does this mean for national school systems in countries such as Australia or New Zealand.

THE EDUCATIONAL THEORY BEHIND THE IB.

Peterson once described the educational aims of the IB program as:

... to develop to their fullest potential the powers of each individual to understand, modify and to enjoy his or her environment, both inner and outer, in its physical, social, moral, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects. (1987, 33).
Acknowledging the inadequacies of such a simplistic statement, he is quick to link the curriculum to the programs’ aims. It is only this practical application that makes the IB anything more than an impossible dream. What he finds important in this statement of aims is: "... the concept of general education as process rather than content which is implied..." (Peterson, 1987, 34). The problems associated with developing a curriculum that was truly international and met the various needs of the sixteen to eighteen year olds in international schools throughout the world were complex. By asserting the priority that was to be given to the moral, aesthetic and practical education of the whole person, the IB was placing itself outside the purely intellectual and academic spheres normally covered by university entrance examinations of national systems. National systems of education are able to incorporate the education of the whole person into a total curriculum, without controlling its implementation by the use of examinations. While national systems are able to prescribe a curriculum by law and then promote it through their system of teacher training and inspection, international schools have no such mechanisms of control. The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) has no inspectors, no common system of teacher-training and only examinations as a means of regulation.

The second area of concern to those attempting to formulate a curriculum based on the aims of the IBO was the potential split that would occur at year eleven. If IB courses were designed specifically for the highly motivated and intellectually able college bound students, what would happen to the less gifted candidates who were more unlikely to attend university? Matthews (1988) (cited in Hayden & Thompson 1998, 558) estimates "... that 95% of students graduating from international schools enter higher education". The answer to the dilemma was partly provided for by the provision of certificates for performance in individual subjects.

The third problem was one of pedagogy. How could the IB hope to provide continuity in those subject areas that students hoped to pursue at university? While some subjects such as anthropology and sociology may require no prior knowledge of that discipline before commencing university courses, others such as languages and chemistry, may seek students who have studied extensively in those disciplines at upper secondary levels. For these subjects, the course planners had to ensure that there was a reasonable fit between upper secondary and university courses.

The fourth problem of exam orientated courses, where the ‘tail wags the dog’, is not confined to the IBO. National systems are as guilty as the IBO of falling into the ‘Tyranny of Testing’ with course contents fading in significance behind grade scores. The IBO has made an attempt in this area to provide a number of assessment techniques. By increasing the amount of internal assessment in some courses, students’ find a more balanced program. The ability of teachers to predict scores of their candidates in advance has also helped in this area. In all subjects, teachers are asked to list their class in order of ability and make a grade assessment prior to students sitting final examinations. This information is usually not made available to markers of examinations but is monitored.
by the chief examiner prior to the return of grades to students. While teachers may find some discrepancy in the scores anticipated and those attained, the existence of such a channel provides for a measure of teacher input.

It was this attempt to foster an ability of the student to think critically that dominated the original founders of the IB. Rather than following an ‘encyclopedic’ approach to learning, students were to be encouraged to develop their mind to think in a particular manner. It was an essential factor in some subjects, such as history, where the alternative was to provide a rigid curriculum that was to be dictated by content. The need to keep the curriculum as fluid as possible and to thereby reduce the dominance of one particular ‘school of thought’ or body of knowledge was an integral aspect at the formative stages of the IB curriculum.

The addition of the extended essay to the core of six subjects for IB diploma candidates was intended to enable students to experience specialisation.

In order to take one step even further the experience of what individual study in depth is like and to provide an intellectual outlet for what Kurt Hahn called the grand passion, every candidate for the IB diploma is now required to conduct a substantial piece of individual work on a topic of his or her own choice, related to one of the six subjects chosen and recorded in an ‘extended’ essay of approximately 4,000 words (Peterson, 1987, 45).

The requirement for students to successfully complete a Creative and Aesthetic Study (CAS) program and the internally assessed Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course completed the diploma. Acknowledging the need to incorporate experiential learning into the IB Diploma, schools were required to provide the equivalent of one half-day a week to student involvement in creative and aesthetic service (CASS, now known as CAS). This requirement is for full diploma students only. The IBO does not rigorously enforce it. Schools are required to sign a declaration that all candidates participated in some form of CAS activity. The TOK course is designed to be taught over a period of 100 hours and may be taken in one year or two. Students are expected to participate fully in the course and ask their own questions about knowledge, but the teacher must structure and guide the process of inquiry.

The remainder of this paper will provide a brief history of the development of the IB in Australian and New Zealand schools from the mid-1980s and it will consider just how international the curriculum of the IB is, and what such a course can offer to schools in a country that has a pre-existing system of education. The original schools that developed the IB had no acceptable option to offer their high school graduates. Students in Sydney have the Higher School Certificate and those in Melbourne the Victoria Certificate of Education. Why should they be interested in an alternative course of study?

The conclusion of the paper will attempt to draw together those aspects of the Australian schools experience with the IB and place them in the context of a rapidly globalising world. “Australia is now the third most popular destination for international
students globally”(Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (AVCC) paper, 2001, 45) Courses such as the IB enables the free flow of people that make study abroad a possibility. Do they favor some students at the expense of others? Who are the winners and who are the losers?

THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE IN AUSTRALIA FROM THE MID 1980S

Background in Australia

In 1972 two Australian students attending the International School of Geneva were awarded IB Diplomas. Returning to Australia they attended Australian universities. (Monash in Melbourne, Victoria and Sydney University in New South Wales). By May of 1990 there were approximately 450 Australian IB Diploma holders who received their awards both within Australia and abroad. By far the greatest number of Diplomas were awarded to Australian students who had attended one of the United World Colleges (UWC) overseas as there were only two schools offering the IB in Australia up until 1988 when an additional two schools joined. The first Australian school to offer the IB was Canberra’s Narrabundah College in 1979. St Leonard’s College in Melbourne followed in 1982.

The growth of the education export industry from the mid 1980s has accelerated the acceptance of the IB by universities in Australia in general and Victoria in particular. The education export industry evolved from two major Commonwealth Government reviews of Australia’s international student policy conducted during 1984. These reviews resulted in a shift in policy focus from international education viewed primarily as a tool of international aid, to a significant mechanism for generating export revenue and implementing international policy initiatives. The first review commissioned by the Commonwealth Minister for Education and Employment was undertaken by the Goldring Committee, established specifically to examine international student policy. The Committee concluded that the prevailing policy emphasis on subsidisation of international students should continue as part of the national interest.

The second review was undertaken by the Jackson Committee that reviewed Australian overseas aid and proposed a more market-oriented and less-regulated policy towards international students. The Committee felt that the aid aspect of education should be more targeted and that private students should have unrestricted access to Australian education, provided they paid the full cost of services and met academic standards applicable to local students. The recommendations of the Jackson Committee were ultimately to prevail over those of the Goldring Committee. The Minister for Education in March 1985 released a new international student policy that stated: “.... the introduction of full-fee courses for overseas students would reinforce the flexibility and efficiency of the education system and encourage an entrepreneurial spirit amongst institutions...”(International Student Programs in Universities, 1993, 17). Two Victorian Universities, Monash University and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), generated fee income onshore from international students in excess of $100
million in the period 1990-1992, with Monash clearly the state's largest earner from overseas students with an annual revenue of over $30 million by 1992.

By 2000, international education across all education sectors generated $3.7 billion in export earnings for Australia, making it Australia's eighth-largest export earned (AVCC, 2001, 3). The AVCC report further recommended that the Prime Minister make some sort of statement on international education as the last such statement was in 1992 by the then Minister for Employment Education and Training, Kim Beazley. As the report points out, much has changed since 1993. "The nature of international education is such that it affects, and is affected by, public policy across many areas, including education and training, science and technology, foreign affairs, trade, tourism, overseas aid and immigration" (AVCC, 2001, 7).

The first school in Australia to offer the IB, Narrabundah College, was strongly influenced by the need to cater for the large numbers of international students located in the country's capital. Although it had seen only small numbers take the IB option up until 1990 (65 diploma and 67 certificate students over this ten year period), the last four years have seen a steady increase in numbers. Glenunga High School (now called Glenunga International High School) entered the program in response to two government initiatives. The first was the gaining of a contract to build submarines in Adelaide in conjunction with a Swedish firm. It was felt that the Swedish workers on the project would need a school to which they could send their children. The adoption of the IB would allow them to re-enter the Swedish University system. The second was the siting of the Multi-Function Polis (a government supported high technology centre) in Adelaide. Apart from these two state schools, the remainder of IB participating schools in Australia has been private. There are a number of reasons for this.

The first and most obvious is that it is very expensive to set up and maintain. There is a fair amount of 'churning' amongst IB schools globally and Australia is no exception to this. Private school principals or members of school boards often hear of the IB and push for its adoption, but once taken on board, they realise just how difficult and expensive it is to stay involved in the program. The larger Australian schools such as Wesley College can justify the expense of sending staff to meetings all over the world to stay abreast of curriculum developments, while smaller schools such as Kilmore International School find such costs difficult to sustain. The annual costs of remaining registered with the International Baccalaureate Office (IBO) are substantial when converted from Swiss Francs to Australian Dollars.

However the IB is not aimed at the 'large-scale market.' The 'academic capital' enjoyed by IB Diploma holders is the more potent for this scarcity value. The students competing for entrance to this global culture improve their chances of success by pursuing the IB. The IB Diploma may be seen more as a key that unlocks a potential advantage in an area than the arrival at a destination of advantage.

The IB is not the only component of this global culture. The global cultural field is not static. It is changing constantly. The IB rests as the only significant international
university entrance qualification available to the individual wishing to gain advantage in the global field. While university degrees such as the Master of Business Administration (MBA) exist at the post degree stage, courses of study at the secondary level are limited. The process of selection into the IB is not one that starts at the year level immediately before the two-year Diploma starts, but it begins at birth. As Bourdieu notes:

... most of those excluded from studying at the various levels of education eliminate themselves before being examined, and that the proportion of those whose elimination is thus masked by the selection overtly carried out differs according to social class. In every country, the inequalities between the classes are incomparably greater when measured by the probabilities of candidature (calculated on the basis of the proportion of children in each social class who reach a given educational level, after equivalent previous achievement) than measured by the probabilities of passing (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1992, 153).

While the chances of success for students leaving school with an IB diploma cannot be guaranteed by any single factor, they certainly have a powerful trump at their disposal. As Bourdieu so aptly remarks: "In short, the game is over early, if indeed we can still speak of a game when the chances of winning are so unequally apportioned among children from different social backgrounds" (Bourdieu et al, 1994, 55).

The students choosing the IB have played the game well. They compete in a world where the rules change in an unpredictable and often irrational manner. Their choices in the future will be largely a reflection of their past circumstances. The IB has become a significant part of the global field. The future direction of this global culture is not limited. It may continue to value the IB or disregard it as circumstance change. The fact remains that the IB is more than a curriculum. The recognition of this by students in Australia who choose the IB ahead of the local equivalent qualification highlights the importance of the IB as a useful 'card' in the game of global power.

Individual schools in many countries have the choice of taking the IB, or any other curriculum that they may consider beneficial to their overall program. The growth of schools in the Southern Hemisphere taking the IB has created a number of administrative problems for the IBO. Is it feasible to continue to run the IBO from Europe along the lines established in the past? Is it time for a more regional approach with the schools in various locations being managed entirely by their regional representatives? The majority of schools in the Southern Hemisphere taking the IB are operating within national guidelines that have an interest in international education and find that the IB helps fulfil this focus within their schools. They are not schools like The International School of Geneva, (ECOLINT) and The United Nations International School (UNIS), nor the United World College in Singapore, but rather St Leonards College, Melbourne or St Pauls College, New South Wales. Does the IBO see any optimum number of schools from Australia, and indeed any other country that wants to continue its support of an international approach to education with a syllabus such as that offered by the IB? If there is to be growth in the number of schools offering the IB, this growth will have to come
from schools within education systems such as Australia, as the number of International Schools is small.

Does international education only exist from the age of sixteen years and upwards? Surely the answer is no. The recent arrival of the Middle Years Program (MYP) and the Junior Years Program (JYP) bears witness to this.

So the need for a new curriculum comes not just from the downward push to prepare students more appropriately for the IB, but also from an upward force in an area where curriculum reform is already encouraging discontent with existing programs. Thus international schools have an ideal opportunity to harness the present desire and need for change to their special circumstances. Furthermore, if the curriculum as a whole presented a response to social and technical change; had a philosophy which was applicable to global education; and, had sufficient flexibility to be adaptable to different places, then it could appeal not just to international schools but also to the growing number of national systems with international philosophies (International Schools Journal, (ISJ) 1991, 21-30).

The IBO developed initially as a response to a need within the international schools community. It has developed and grown as national schools have adopted the program that it offers to students wishing to take part in the global community. Whether the IBO continues to offer the program that these students of the rapidly expanding global community require will be dependent on a number of factors. These are:

- the ability of the program to continue offering students maximum benefit for entry into tertiary institutions;
- the ability to continue offering a course of study that is significantly different to local courses to make it worthwhile for students to complete both programs of study;
- the ability of the organisation itself to respond to the clients needs; and, finally,
- the ability of the IBO to maintain its independent status.

It is crucial for the continuing success of the IB for it to offer students access to the universities of the world that are the inevitable destination of most candidates who take the full diploma. Inevitably the more widely recognised the IB becomes, and the subsequent increase in numbers of students who apply to universities worldwide, the easier entrance for these students will be.

Peterson and the founders of the IB were aware of the need to allow the curriculum to evolve and change if it were to continue to offer a worthwhile course of study. While problems of distance between curriculum planners have been partially solved by the increase in the use of electronic forms of communication, a system of education that has no means of controlling its program except by a series of examinations and teachers recommendations will continue to have major difficulties. There is no prescribing body to act as a model for the IB. The individuals who shape the program create the culture of
the IB in a more immediate sense than local curriculums. The structure of any organisation that claims to be international must look carefully at its recruitment policy in order to maintain a balance of nationalities amongst its personnel.

The domination of the IBO by English speaking (and often English nationality) individuals will have to be avoided for the IB to maintain its credibility as a global institution. The increase in acceptance of English as the major language of trade and in many academic circles as the medium of communication has created a monopoly in favour of English speaking nations. The cultural issues associated with the dominance of English as the lingua franca are significant.

Few strategies have been developed for tackling the fundamental issues – how to give equal voice to local cultures, institutions and educational approaches. Local cultural values are further annihilated when the English language becomes the dominant language in the globalised learning and teaching and that English language providers dominate the field, and English-speaking countries have dominated the development of the technologies which support global communications (Mason 1998, 139-140 in Yang 2003, 283).

If the IB is to continue to offer a program that is unique in its conception and its operation, it will need to be constantly ‘out-thinking’ itself. It will need to anticipate problems and avoid a conflict of its ideals with the demands that consumerism places on any commodity market. The temptation to increase sales and decrease the quality of the product will have to be carefully avoided. So far the IB has been self funded by the schools and to a lesser extent those countries whose schools participate in its programs. As Yang (2003, 282) points out:

Educationally, the globalisation of education is increasingly centering on consumerism, wherein learning ceases to be about analysis, discussion and examination, and largely becomes a product to be bought and sold, to be packed, advertised and marketed.

The final section of this paper will look at the extent to which schools offering the IB in Australia are in fact helping prepare students to operate in an increasingly global world. Does the IB embody a curriculum that is, by itself, able to offer a unique educational experience to students? Is the IB more than a series of course outlines that define a course of study leading to an internationally recognised diploma? The ‘fallacy of neutrality’ is common: there is a tendency in some educational discussion to talk about education as if it were some kind of naturally-occurring, single, unitary phenomenon; as if it were possible to remove it from the social context in which it emerges and is lived out daily in schools; as if it were somehow ‘neutral’ (Broadfoot et al, 2000, 47). Is the IB the exception to the rule? Can the IB curriculum bypass the traditional ‘national context’ outlined by Fourez (1990, 52)?

Values, ideologies and social education are present in every aspect of teaching. They can be analysed through the curriculum, the systems of reward and punishment, relationships and institutional structures.
The IB is currently offered in 53 schools throughout Australia. Of these schools, seven are state schools. The remaining 46 schools are private schools. What does this tell us about the appeal of the IB? Is it more valued in the private sector or is it just too expensive for state schools to fund? Of the 53 schools offering IB programs, 35 are diploma schools and the remaining 18 offer either the MYP or the JYP. One of the original aims of the IBO was to offer an examination at high school leaving age that was accepted by universities throughout the world. Having achieved this goal, the IBO is now devoting more energy into the JYP and MYP. Conceding that many students in Australia may be interested in studying abroad, the IB diploma is understandable as a course of study that schools, many of them private, might justifiably adopt. How justifiable is it for an Australian primary or secondary school to adopt a Junior or a Middle year’s program from an international organisation such as the IBO? It makes sense for the IBO to develop the two programs. Diversification is a key concept in any marketing strategy, global or national. But surely the Australian schools recognise the importance of teaching the local curriculum. A curriculum is an amalgam of the culture, beliefs and goals of a country. By adopting the JYP and MYP of the IBO, a small selection of Australian schools is choosing to embrace the goals and philosophy of an external organisation.

THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE IN NEW ZEALAND, 1980-2002

The International Baccalaureate has been in New Zealand since the mid 1980s. Claudia Wysocki, the principal at Kristin School located in Albany, just out side New Zealand’s largest city Auckland was the first to introduce the program. She was concerned that students should experience education in a more global format than the local qualification offered at the time. Numbers were relatively small but for the first time, an alternative examination for university entrance was on offer in a New Zealand school. While other schools have offered the program since Kristin School, growth has been moderate.

There are now a total of five schools offering the full diploma and one of these also offers the PYP program\(^3\). Four of the schools offering programs are private and one is a state school. The schools are John McGlashan College, Kristin School, Mt Anglem College, St Margaret’s College and Wellington Diocesan School for Girls – Nga Tawa.

There have been a number of schools that adopted the IB initially believing that it would help to combat falling enrolment but which later found that it was not effective. Glendowie College in Auckland’s Eastern Suburbs was a state school that took on the IB only to find that it did not deliver what was expected. The school is located in an area with an aging population and hence a falling roll. In order to compete with the other two state schools in the area, Tamaki College and Selwyn College, it became an IB school. It was decided after an initial ‘honeymoon’ period that the program was costing a great deal to run and delivering a little in return.
JUST HOW INTERNATIONAL IS THE IB?

The IB has been criticised since its inception as a compromise curriculum. It has been widely acknowledged that with the best intentions in the world, any curriculum that attempts to be international, will struggle to overcome cultural bias. The IB has been criticised from its beginning in the late 1960s as a predominantly British curriculum with an American component. Matthews had this to say about it:

Certainly, the IB represents a unique blend of factors such as the required balance of six subjects at two levels of work, the major independent study project (the ‘Extended Essay’), the combination in all subjects of internal assessment with external examination and the compulsory Theory of Knowledge course. However with the exception of the last mentioned, none of these aspects is individually unique in the education world. Similarly, the methodology in the schools, though representing an amalgam of different traditions (most notably British and American) would generally be described as conservative rather than innovative (Matthews, 1989, 25).

Uy’s (1988) doctoral study focuses on the extent to which the aims and curriculum of the IB converge or diverge with national aims and curriculum of the Third World. Her findings indicate the following important points:

1. The selection process of the IB diploma program creates elitism, which is contrary to the Third World’s goal of democratizing education.

2. The European bias of the IB, together with the provision of the diplom a program in only Spanish, French, or English, militates against true relevance to the building of cultural and national identity, which stresses the supremacy of the mother tongue.

3. The structure of discrete subject areas of the IB program lends itself to a monolithic and compartmentalized view of the world, which, especially for the Third World, necessitates an integrative or interdisciplinary approach.

4. The IB diploma serves as a university matriculation credential for the IB student, while a Third World national needs a school-leaving certification to qualify him for employment.

5. The IB and the Third World have the same concern for the growth and well being of the child, and therefore this is an area worth looking into where cooperative efforts may be possible.

The conclusion reached by Uy is that the IB is not ready to enter the Third World countries without seriously addressing some of these issues.

Remillard’s (1978) study was amongst the first to offer any real critical appraisal of the IB program. His attempt to examine the themes of knowledge recognition, social selection and educational control in a program of international education is particularly interested in weighing the claims of the IBO as a creator of educational change. He
pursues this by examining the IB's sociological basis and underlying assumptions. The model he adopts is that of Basil Bernstein. Bernstein's model states that the principles of social control correspond to practices of educational control. This approach relies heavily on a comparative methodology that places the IB program in relation to other national and international educational programs.

Remillard concludes that the IB:

does not represent educational change, but, rather, is supportive of a traditional, well-defined knowledge paradigm. The IB is seen as more specific in its designation of valued knowledge than the British General Certificate of Education, and as equally inflexible in its pedagogical techniques as the continental European model (Remillard, 1978, ii).

Bagnall (1994, II) in his doctoral dissertation on the IB in the education systems of Canada and Australia found that while the IB had been described as a world movement it was as important for the 'symbolic imposition' it bestows on holders as it is for the stated intentions of educating the whole person. He also concluded that the IB functions as an agent of 'reproduction', rather than as an international laboratory for experiment, both in curriculum and examining methods, as originally intended by the founders of the IB, and that students participating in the IB increase their potential for advantage in the 'global field'.

McKillop-Ostrom (2000) felt that for a curriculum to be considered international it must meet the specific academic and emotional needs of its international student body. In order to achieve this goal, an international curriculum should have two main facets.

First, it must be considered to be the total program of an educational institution. This is a curriculum that incorporates all aspects of the planned academic curriculum (what is written down on paper) all aspects of the hidden curriculum (extracurricular activities which occur on a voluntary basis) and the actual or received curriculum (the 'reality of the pupils' experiences'). Second, an international curriculum must challenge and allow the child 'to see the world from a much wider perspective than is generally required in national systems (McKillop-Ostrom, in Hayden & Thompson, 2000, 74)

Other variables that affect the international aspect of the curriculum, according to McKillop-Ostrom, are the mix of nationalities within the school, the location of the school, the mix of teaching practices and the degree to which the program is recognized by other schools and institutions such as universities and TAFE's.

One study that asks just what is it that makes an international education experience for students, is that of Hayden and Thompson (1998). They found that far from being solely the curriculum, IB, Advanced Placement or any other qualification, it was a combination of factors. An earlier study (Hayden and Thompson 1997) was concerned with over 3000 student responses to a questionnaire. The study was not necessarily concerned with schools that offered a qualification such as the IB or AP, but with international schools generally, which were: 'Established principally in response to a
perceived need on the part of misplaced employees of multinational organisations, diplomats and aid workers for schools which could provide forms of education not available locally.’ (Hayden & Thompson, 1998, 551). Secondary teachers returned a total of 226 questionnaires in a variety of international schools throughout the world. The point that they make in their study is that there are many factors that contribute to enable students to experience an international education. While offering an internationally recognised qualification is significant, it is not sufficient on its own. Hayden and Thompson concluded that: ‘the appeal of an internationally accepted examination such as the International Baccalaureate may lie essentially in its international recognition for higher education purposes, rather than in its provision of a ‘common international experience’ (Hayden & Thompson, 1998, 557). The earlier (1997) study, mentioned above, by Hayden and Thompson, found an even greater emphasis on factors other than curriculum in offering an international education to students.

A study by the author, Bagnall (1994), looked at two countries, Australia and Canada, that offered the IB. The schools in the study were national schools that had chosen to offer the IB as an alternative to the local curriculum. They were, with the exception of a few schools, not what Matthews (1989, 25) would classify as typical international schools.

A 1988 survey of schools in Europe offering a combination of IB and American curriculum (23 responses out of a possible 28) revealed a diversity unknown in any national school, and provides a profile of the ‘typical’ student population of a middle-sized international school, which will easily be recognisable to the readers of this journal:

- 600 students;
- 40 nationalities represented;
- 47 per cent Americans amongst the students;
- 89 per cent destined for higher education.

My 1994 study asked why schools had initially chosen to take the IB. The twelve Australian schools listed a number of responses ranging from its international dimension (4 schools), the curriculum offered (3 schools), catering for an increase in overseas students (2 schools). Amongst the responses made by one school only were: acts as a magnet, no scaling of marks between subjects, Principal felt concern re-limitations of and lowering of standards in local system, to allow students to be competitive at the international level, threat of closure because of ‘aging’ local population drawing too few numbers to keep college open, special attraction of IB to locals/ethnics, because it is far superior to the HSC (Higher School Certificate- state examination), more demanding and rigorous, because the HSC is not fully understood or recognised in the USA or Europe, diploma compliments traditional school values, community service, academic excellence, consistency of marking and, internationally mobile community aspect.
CONCLUSION

The IB continues to provide a small number of globally mobile Australian students an entry qualification to the universities of the world. The introduction of the JYP and MYP into a number of Australian schools demonstrates the willingness of school boards, especially in the private sector, to offer their clients curriculum choice. The number of students in Australia, and indeed globally, taking the IBO courses remains statistically small. The curriculum is not the sole, nor indeed according to Hayden and Thompson, the most significant indicator of a school offering an international education. Australian schools will continue to experiment with a variety of international curriculum. It is unlikely that the IB will ever provide more than an enticing alternative to the local curriculum for a select few Australian schools that can afford to offer their students a choice. What research indicates is that the adoption of the IB, by itself, does not provide an international education.

NOTES

1 There are 1,395 authorized IB world schools in 114 countries
2 For a more detailed history of the early days of Australian schools' involvement
   in the IB see either the Bagnall (1997) article in *Melbourne Studies in Education* or
3 Figures taken from IBO homepage http://www.ibo.org/ 21/xi/02
4 Matthews, M. The Uniqueness of International Education, Part II.
5 Note that many schools listed more than one reason for offering the IB.

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