

# The Creation of New Thought

George Walker



# Vision

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« What I object to is the artificial arrangement by which this foreign education tends to occupy all the space of our national mind and thus kills, or hampers, the great opportunity for the creation of new thought by a new combination of truths. »

Rabindranath Tagore



# Dissatisfaction 1

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« Consequently there have been numerous criticisms of the IB recently on the grounds that it is too dominated by the demands of university entrance, not genuinely international enough, too Western oriented and too academic. »

Alec Peterson 1987



# Dissatisfaction 2

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«We remain vulnerable to the criticism of being too Euro-centred in our programmes of study and our body of chief examiners. It will take a deliberate effort over the next several years to correct this, but I have no doubt that such weaknesses can indeed be corrected. »

Roger Peel 1983



# Dissatisfaction 3

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« For the moment I do not know how this issue can be addressed beyond saying that (one) objective of international education is to encourage its students to appreciate the diverse modes of learning of which western humanism is one. »

George Walker 1999



# Dissatisfaction 4

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« The IB has schools in 125 different countries yet during my six years as director general I cannot remember asking any one of them for advice and practical proposals in this area. Nor can I remember any one of them volunteering. »

George Walker 2007




# Gleicher's formula

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For change to take place


$$V \times D \times F > C$$

Where V = vision, D = dissatisfaction, F = first steps and C = cost of change




# First steps

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- Examine the IB Learner Profile: can it accommodate different forms of learning?
  - Make proposals in a ‘White Paper’ for the IB
  - Maintain an interest in the subject
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# What do we understand by 'western humanist values'

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- emphasis on life in this world rather than other worlds (the only life we shall have)
  - the inspiring possibilities of human life
  - the dignity of human beings
  - the importance of human reason
  - moral values founded on human empathy and scientific understanding
  - strong sense of justice
  - capacity to 'say no to God'
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# Extracts from the IB Learner Profile

- Natural curiosity
  - Independence in learning
  - Initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively
  - Take responsibility for their own actions
  - Approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage
  - Independence of spirit
  - Brave and articulate in defending their beliefs
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# Rudyard Kipling's *Ballad of East and West*

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OH, East is East and West is West and never the  
twain shall meet,

Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great  
Judgment Seat;

But what comes next.....?

But there is neither East nor West, Border nor  
Breed, nor Birth

When two strong men stand face to face, tho'  
they come from the ends of the earth!

# Almayer's Folly: Joseph Conrad (1895)

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« Almayer vainly expected to hear of the cause of his daughter's return from his daughter's lips. Not that day, nor on any other day did she ever allude to her Singapore life. He did not care to ask, awed by the calm impassiveness of her face, by those solemn eyes looking past him on the great, still forests sleeping in majestic repose to the murmur of the broad river. »

# Richard Nisbett *The Geography of Thought* (The Free Press, 2003)

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- East Asian thought tends to be more holistic, attending to the whole rather than focusing on an object within the whole
- There is less use of categories, rules and formal logic
- It emphasizes change rather than stability
- It recognizes contradictions and the need for multiple perspectives
- Americans respond to contradiction by polarizing their beliefs; Chinese moderate their beliefs
- Koreans are more likely to cite the situation rather than the personality to explain behaviour

# Gert Hofstede: *Cultures and Organizations* (McGraw-Hill, 2005)

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Hofstede argued that different societies respond in distinctly different ways to five common social problems:

- Acceptance of social inequality
- The individual versus the group
- Perceptions of gender roles
- Acceptance of risk
- Short- or long-term orientation

# Hofstede's ratings

	<b>Inequality</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Masculinity</b>	<b>Avoid Risk</b>	<b>Long-term</b>
<b>China</b>	12	56	11	68	1
<b>Japan</b>	49	33	2	11	4
<b>India</b>	17	31	28	64	8
<b>USA</b>	57	1	19	62	31
<b>France</b>	27	13	47	17	19
<b>UK</b>	63	3	11	66	32

(sample of 74 countries, except for long-term orientation – 39 countries)


# Zhou Nanzhao Annexe to 'Learning: the Treasure Within (UNESCO 1996)

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- Deep-rooted appreciation of the value of education
- Emphasis on the group rather than the individual
- Focus on interpersonal relationships rather than on man over nature
- Stress on the spiritual rather than the material
- Meritocracy based on examination performance rather than inherited wealth or power
- Gender bias

# Summary of Eastern learning modes

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- Holistic view of a situation, including context
  - Accommodation to change
  - Acceptance of apparent contradictions
  - Application of multiple perspectives
  - Hierarchy of wisdom
  - Emphasis on interpersonal relationships
  - Long-term virtues rather than instant rewards
  - Education much valued
  - Strong gender stereotypes
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# Extracts from the IB Learner Profile

- This love of learning
  - Across a broad and balanced range of disciplines
  - They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others
  - Respect for the dignity of the individual groups and communities
  - Show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others
  - Make positive difference to the lives of others
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# *Wa* – Harmony (Deep Connection)

- **Omoiyari**  
(Consideration of Others)
- **Kyoryoku**  
(Cooperation with Others)
- ***Tomodachi***  
(Friendship and a Sense of Belonging)
- ***Shisei***  
(Sincerity)
- ***Gambaru***  
(Perseverance)



三人行必有吾師焉  
擇其善者而從之  
其不善者而改之

**Where three are gathered, isn't one my teacher?  
From their virtues, I will learn  
For their vices, I will teach**



# The IB Learner Profile



The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better, more peaceful world. IB learners strive to be:

> **Inquirers**

They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

> **Knowledgeable**

They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

> **Thinkers**

They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

> **Communicators**

They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

> **Principled**

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

> **Open-minded**

They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

> **Caring**

They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

> **Risk-takers**

They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and fortitude, and have the independence of spirit to explore new ideas, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

> **Balanced**

They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

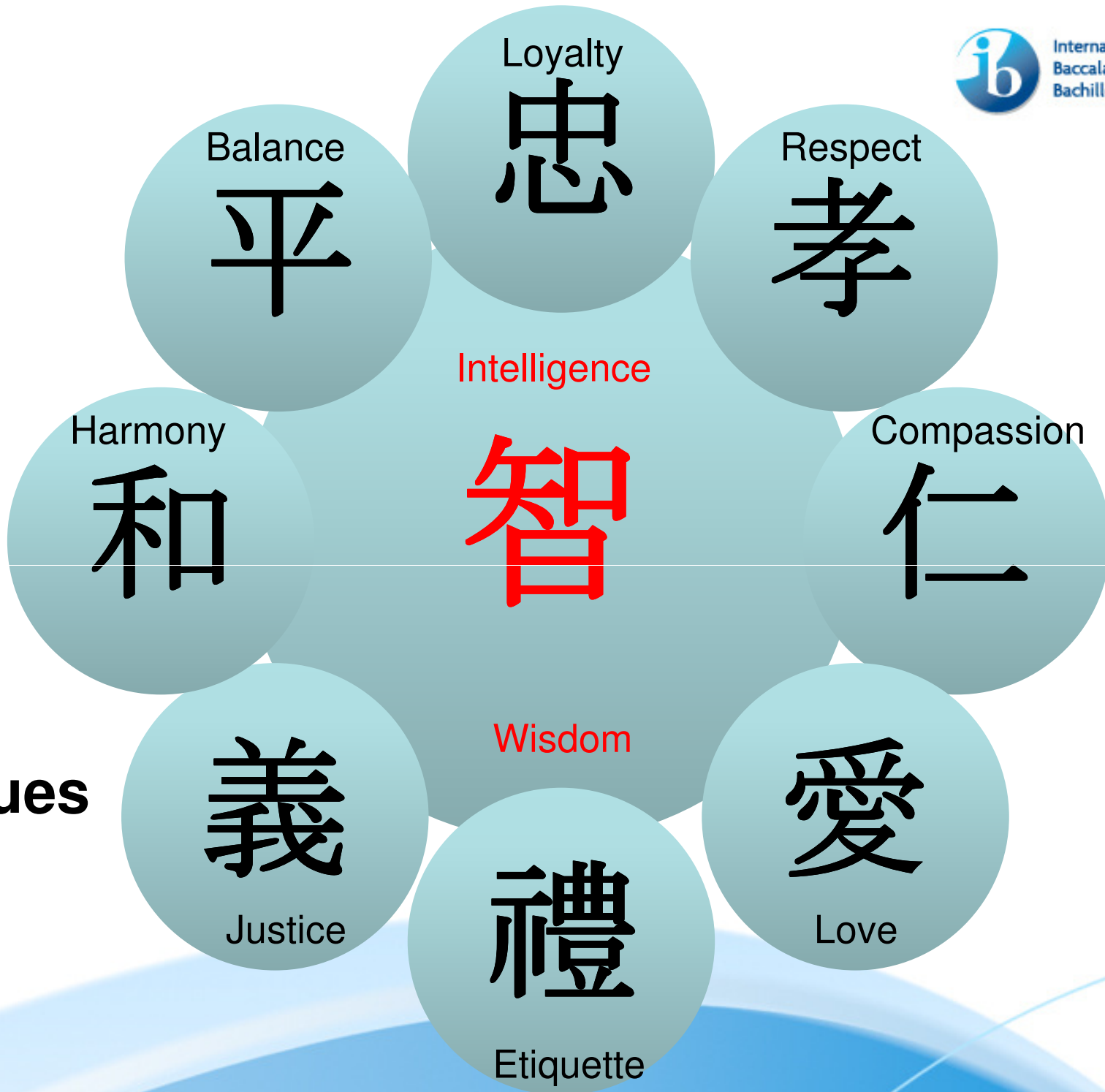
> **Reflective**

They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.



八德一智

8 Virtues  
+ 1



# Eight Virtues + One - orientation

## **Outward - interpersonal**

- **Loyalty**
- **Respect**
- **Compassion**
- **Love**
- **Courtesy**
- **Justice**
- **Harmony**

## **Inward - intrapersonal**

- **Balance**

# The IB Learner Profile – orientation

## **Outward - interpersonal**

- **Caring**
- **Communicators**

## **Inward - intrapersonal**

- **Balanced**
- **Inquirers**
- **Knowledgeable**
- **Open-minded**
- **Principled**
- **Reflective**
- **Risk-takers**
- **Thinkers**

# Recommendations

- The possibility of adding to the IB Learner Profile to reflect the local environment, culture and tradition
- We would like to see the ten PYP Learner Attitudes flow through to the MYP and DP
- Include some mention of spirituality in the Learner Profile (balanced)
- ‘Risk takers’ has negative connotations in many cultures, perhaps this word could be changed to ‘Courageous’?
- Regular review of the IB Learner Profile by a representative group