

IB Learner Profile

A Comparative Study of Implementation, Adaptation
and Outcomes in India, Australia and Hong Kong

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Executive Summary

Over the past decade, the Learner Profile (LP) has become an integral part of the IB curriculum. The LP consists of a list of ten attributes of learning designed to promote a value system leading to the development of learners who are both academically well-prepared and also 'international-minded' - effective citizens of their local and national, as well as global communities. The LP represents the IB's distinctive approach to pedagogy across each of its three programmes –Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP). This approach is designed to respond to the challenges of learning and citizenship in the 21st Century: to produce learners who are able to engage effectively with the processes of rapid social change, growing experiences of cultural diversity and exchange and the realities of global interconnectedness and interdependence.

The LP attributes are defined at a very high level of generality. Schools are thus encouraged to interpret and translate their meaning and significance in their own national and cultural contexts. This expectation challenges teachers to be aware of their local context, and interpret the requirements of the LP against a respectful understanding of the cultures of their students and community. The complexities of cultural translation lie at the heart of this challenge. This report explores some of the ways in which the LP attributes are interpreted, adapted and implemented in the IB Diploma Programme (DP) across three countries with significantly different cultural traditions – India, Hong Kong and Australia. It seeks to identify some of the outcomes of the LP, discuss the challenges IB schools confront in implementing the LP, and recommend strategies for addressing them.

The data upon which this assessment is based was collected over nine months, from July 2013 to March 2014, in nine IB schools, three each in India, Australia and Hong Kong. The processes of data collection included an exploratory survey of student and teacher familiarity and attitudes towards the LP. The results of the survey were mostly indicative and tentative: they informed the content of, and protocols for, the subsequent qualitative data collection. Qualitative interviews and focus groups, which were conducted at each of the nine schools to obtain further insights into the challenges of interpretation, adaptation and implementation, formed the main basis of the findings. The views of administrators, teachers and students were treated as equally important. In what follows, six key findings are presented along with associated recommendations.

1) The data collected for this study points to a wide variety of perspectives on the LP in the nine schools. While most teachers and students are supportive of the concept of the LP, there is a wide range of opinions about its purposes. Some teachers view the LP as a framework of ten academic and moral attributes that marks the IB's distinctive approach to pedagogy. Other teachers link the main purpose of the LP to the idea of international-mindedness. There are marked differences in the understanding of the LP between international and local teachers, and teachers with experiences of PYP and MYP and those without. The ways in which students interpret the purposes of the LP also varies greatly. Many, especially those new to the IB at the DP level, are unfamiliar with the role it is expected to play in their education, while others with experience of PYP and MYP speak about the LP with a great deal of confidence and conviction.

Recommendation 1

Schools should consider providing both teachers and DP students who are new to the IB with a more effective orientation to the LP. Schools should also encourage regular discussions about the role of the LP in developing independent and effective learners who are able to negotiate the future demands of tertiary studies and the changing world of work.

2) The data collected for this study suggests widely differing views about what these attributes mean, and the degree to which schools and teachers are free to define them in their own terms. There is uncertainty about the construction of the list of ten attributes – why this set of attributes rather than some others? There is also a great deal of debate about whether these attributes are still relevant at the DP level; and the extent to which they are assessable and should constitute the basis of student performance and achievement in both their academic subjects and more generally. There are also divergent views about the extent to which the list of LP attributes reflects a cultural bias towards western humanist values, focused on individuals rather than on the collective, as is the case in many eastern traditions.

Recommendation 2

IB schools should be dissuaded from regarding the current list of LP attributes as complete. Instead, school should be encouraged to view the list as a pedagogic tool to help position students to explore the meaning and significance of learning attributes, in relation to both local traditions and contexts, and to the requirements of an increasingly globalising society.

3) The issue of how the LP attributes should be integrated into the DP curriculum is also widely debated in the schools. The relationship of the LP to CAS and TOK is widely acknowledged. However, the fact that the LP attributes apply equally to the core subjects is less well understood. Indeed, some teachers and students mistakenly view the LP as an additional burden, especially in view of their perceptions of the curricular tasks in the DP as already overloaded. The impression thus remains that there is a tension between the competitive academic character of the DP and the LP's focus on a generalised value system.

Recommendation 3

The IBO should commission a discussion paper which addresses directly the challenges presented by the competitive academic character of the DP to the integrity of the LP, focusing on the contrasting pedagogical demands made on teachers and students.

4) Beyond the conceptual issue relating to the integration of the LP into the DP curriculum, a number of teachers also pointed to the challenges of implementation. In view of the fact that that the DP students are often anxious about examination results and their academic and career futures, many teachers remain unclear about know best to implement the LP attributes. This underlines the importance of teacher preparation and professional development. The practices and programs designed to orient teachers new to the IB curriculum in IB schools are uneven, particular as they relate to the philosophical underpinnings of the LP. Even for experienced IB teachers, opportunities to discuss the relevance of the LP to all learning areas within the DP are rare, as indeed are the opportunities to explore the ways in which the LP attributes can also speak to the requirements of tertiary education.

Recommendation 4

IB schools should provide additional support in the form of teacher workshops and professional development activities around the LP's significance, and its implementation within the DP, together with increased opportunities for international teacher exchange.

5) From the perspective of the IBO and school leaders, there is a tension between *diversity* and *uniformity* in their promotion of the LP across IB's network of schools. On the one hand, a system-wide focus on the LP implies a degree of *uniformity* of understanding and practice, while on the other hand *diversity* is encouraged in different schools and classrooms, located as they are in different cultural and national settings. Some schools view this tension as a hurdle to be overcome, while others celebrate the diversity of interpretations, framing this as a *productive tension* that is part of the richness of the IB's global approach. At the same time, tension between diversity and uniformity can be *unproductive* if not managed carefully, compromising the integrity of the LP as a pedagogic innovation.

Recommendation 5

Recognising that there is a perennial tension between diversity and uniformity in most attempts at curriculum reform, the IBO should view the various conceptual and practical tensions surrounding the LP as productive, encouraging IB schools to promote robust conversations about the ways in which meaning and significance of the LP can be locally interpreted and implemented, without compromising on its core aims.

6) The IBO encourages the LP to be interpreted and enacted differently across different cultural and national contexts. However, this study suggests that these differences are more marked across different schools than they are across the three countries. A major conclusion of this study is that national differences are less significant than institutional differences. The differences across schools, often within the same country, are due to a number of factors, including the demographic composition of the schools, their pre-existing ethos, their modes of governance, and the transnational lifestyles and aspirations of students and their families. In many ways, the IB schools in India, Hong Kong and to a certain extent Australia are transnational learning spaces, characterised by growing levels of cultural diversity and exchange, where new cultural practices are constantly negotiated. They are sites of a great deal of cultural creativity and innovation. If this is so, then it is difficult to draw any simple inferences about the relationship between the ways the schools approach the LP, on the one hand, and references they make to national cultural traditions, on the other.

Recommendation 6

In view of the dynamic cultural shifts taking place around the world, the IBO should explore how the LP attributes might be used to encourage students at the DP level to think about and critically reflect on the ways in which their academic and career prospects will increasingly reside in transnational spaces.

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Abbreviations

ACARA	Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority
CAS	Creativity, Action, Service
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
DP	Diploma Programme
EU	European Union
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBO	International Baccalaureate Organization
LP	Learner Profile
MYP	Middle Years Programme
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
PYP	Primary Years Programme
SAR	Special Administrative Region (of the People's Republic of China)
TOK	Theory of Knowledge

List of Participating Schools (Pseudonyms)

Australia

AUA - Maria Demonti School, Melbourne

AUB - Memorial College, Adelaide

AUC - St. Agnes Ladies College, Melbourne

Hong Kong

HKA - International Collegiate Institute, Hong Kong

HKB - Future Leaders Academy, Hong Kong

HKC - St. Kevin's Boys School, Hong Kong

India

INA - Regent International School, Mumbai

INB - Global Academy of India, Pune

INC - Gothford International School, Pune

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Background

This report provides an assessment of the Learner Profile (LP) component of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum within its Diploma Programme (DP) from a comparative and cross-cultural context. The LP consists of a list of ten attributes of learning designed to promote, across all the IB programmes, academic rigour and a commitment to a value system leading to the development of learners who are both academically well-prepared and also 'international-minded' - effective citizens of their local and national, as well as global communities. All IB schools are expected to incorporate the LP into their pedagogic approaches across the curriculum.

Introduced more than a decade ago, the idea of the LP has now become enormously influential and has arguably informed an international movement concerned with articulating and promoting a particular orientation to learning, aimed at the development of learners who are able to negotiate the challenges of the 21st century. This movement recognises that academic knowledge alone is no longer sufficient, and that learning must also incorporate an emphasis on creativity, innovation, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, digital literacy, and various other life and career skills. In other words, the key challenge of education in this new century is to produce a particular kind of learner who is able to engage effectively with the processes of rapid change and the realities of global interconnectedness and interdependence.

The study upon which this report is based was conducted between June 2013 and April 2014. It examined how the LP attributes are understood and implemented in nine schools in three different countries that have significantly different cultural traditions (Hong Kong--China, India, and Australia). The LP attributes are defined at a very high level of generality, and the IB's three programmes (PYP, MYP and DP) encourage teachers to interpret and translate this general formulation in their own national and cultural contexts. This expectation challenges schools and teachers to be aware of their local context, and interpret the requirements of the LP against a respectful understanding of the cultures of their students and community. The complexities of cultural translation lie at the heart of this challenge.

This study sought to identify the ways schools and teachers are taking up this challenge, adapting the meaning and relevance of the various LP attributes to local conditions and cultures, but also to

the broader understanding of global mobility of people and their ideas that has led to growing levels of cultural contact and exchange. Furthermore, the study attempted to identify some of the specific challenges that are associated with the implementation of the LP in the IB Diploma Programme, where greater attention to academic knowledge and external examinations is demanded. It aimed therefore to discern how the expectations of LP are addressed at local levels, how the local conditions inform the processes of implementation and what additional guidance may be required by schools and teachers. It is in this sense that the study is both comparative and cross-cultural, focusing both on differences across national and cultural borders but also on the ways in which schools might have shared understanding and should relate to each other.

Methodologically, this study paid an equal amount of attention to the perspectives of teachers and students. Using online surveys and face-to-face interviews, the study's research methodology was designed to explore the ways in which teachers interpreted and defined the LP attributes, adapted them to local cultures, and implemented them through school policies and procedures, curricular and co-curricular activities, and also through their daily encounters with students and parents. Using similar methods of data collection, the study also sought to discern the views of students, concerning the ways in which they understood the ten LP attributes, the extent to which they exhibited the LP attributes in their learning and daily conduct, and the significance they attached to them, especially in relation to the requirements of local cultural traditions, as well as to the global aspirations that they might have for their future studies and careers.

1.2 Overview of the Research

This study thus aimed to identify the ways schools and teachers take up the challenge of interpreting and adapting the LP to local conditions and cultural traditions, on the one hand, and embrace the IB's emphasis on 'international-mindedness', on the other. It examined how schools attempted to reconcile the tensions that potentially exist across these requirements.

More specifically, the aims of the study were to:

- (1) determine how the Learner Profile (LP) attributes are interpreted, adapted, enacted, evaluated and reported by schools and teachers in three countries that have significantly different cultural traditions.
- (2) provide an account of how students in these countries are encouraged and supported in developing the LP attributes through both academic and co-academic activities, relating

these attributes to their local traditions and global aspirations, and how they demonstrate these attributes.

- (3) consider some of the broader practical, conceptual and policy issues suggested by this discussion, in an attempt to recommend ways in which the broader objectives of the LP can be more effectively promoted.

To work towards these objectives, the study upon which this report is based involved a number of sequentially inter-locking steps, combining (1) Document analysis; (2) Surveys tools; (3) Interviews (sourced from 'site visit' interviews and focus groups); and (4) Collective reflection on the data collected. The results of the short surveys of student and teacher familiarity and attitudes towards the LP were treated mostly as indicative and tentative: they informed the content of and protocols for, the subsequent qualitative data collection. Qualitative interviews and focus groups thus formed the main basis of the findings. The views of administrators, teachers and students were treated as equally important. This approach aimed to develop rich case studies of an idiographic nature across the three schools in each of the three countries. Purposive sampling, conducted with the assistance of the IB Research Department, was used to identify the three schools in each of the three study sites for a total of nine schools -- three each in India, Australia and Hong Kong.

The research conducted for this report thus involved a number of steps. After preliminary deliberations based on the emerging literature on the LP, and the selection of the schools, two survey tools were developed. The first examined student awareness and understanding of the LP attributes in order to compare these across sites. The second explored teacher understanding and opinions with respect to the implementation of the LP attributes across the different sites. The surveys enabled the research team to develop protocols for qualitative interviews and focus group discussions on visits to each of the nine schools. Analysis of the survey results also enabled the team to develop tentative views that could be tested during the field visits.

Invariably, two members of the research team conducted the qualitative interviews and focus groups for each country from November 2013 to January 2014. This team approach to research enabled wide-ranging and rich discussions, serving also the purpose of triangulation. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with both teachers and students were designed to discern how the LP attributes are implemented and supported across the study sites as well as how they are adapted in the process. Throughout, our focus was on the ways in which local conditions and related cultural factors were taken in account, and whether any pattern of national difference could be identified.

During the site visits, the project teams requested (at the discretion of the school) access to relevant school documents, including school policies, curriculum documents, student work samples and results. This textual information provided additional data to support an understanding of each school's interpretation and implementation of the LP as well as teachers' and students' understandings of the attributes, and the contextual adaptations developed around the LP in each site.

Analysis of the data was aligned with the project's key research questions and developed a series of themes around differences and similarities across the nine sites. Particular attention was paid to the differences in teacher and student perspectives on the significance they attached to the LP, and the ways in which their understanding of the LP attributes articulated with local cultural traditions, on the one hand, and the processes of globalisation, on the other. This enabled a rich understanding of the ways in which the LP attributes were interpreted and applied at each of the schools, as well as the reason(s) provided for these. The data analysis thus constituted an interpretive account that is provided in this report of the ways in which the LP has been *implemented* in the schools, *adapted* to diverse cultural contexts, and with what *outcomes*.

1.3 Structure of the Report

Chapter 2 of this report provides a broad discussion of the relevant literature on the major objectives of the LP, and some of the assumptions that underlie its formulation and some of the key issues that have arisen and been widely canvassed over the past decade.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology for data collection and analysis, and also provides brief accounts of the nine research sites -- the three schools in each of India, Australia and Hong Kong SAR. It also discusses some of the issues associated with the comparative method that arose during the processes of data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4 presents a general account of the findings from the surveys, interviews and focus groups, about the extent to which teachers and students are aware of and understand the major principles of the LP, and the diverse ways in which they are implemented and adapted in various contexts.

Chapter 5 expands on the general findings reported in Chapter 4 by focusing on the meaning and significance that students attach to LP, and the ways in which they seek to apply their understanding

of LP to other aspects of the Diploma Programme as well as to their thinking about identities and cultural traditions, and their career and academic aspirations.

Chapter 6 focuses on the work of the teachers, and their understanding of the major philosophical, pedagogic and cultural principles underlying the LP, as well as the challenges they face in implementing its key objectives.

Chapter 7 brings together the findings of the study, linking them to a range of theoretical issues canvassed in Chapter 2. It also discusses the implications of these findings for IB policy and practice, and presents a number of recommendations based on this discussion.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Over the past few years, a body of research literature has emerged concerning the Learner Profile (LP), particularly in the fields of curriculum studies and international education. Together with a reference to IB's policy statements relating to the LP, this literature is useful in providing an account of its conceptualisation and implementation in schools. The review of literature for this study thus considers the IB's rationale for the LP, as well as its relationship to broader themes and debates concerning curriculum and pedagogy in primary and secondary schools, and the cultural dimensions of schooling in an era of expanding globalisation. This chapter provides an overview of the core themes and issues to emerge from this literature review as they relate to the key research questions for this study.

This chapter begins by providing a brief overview of the Learner Profile within the IB Diploma Programme (Section 2.1). The subsequent sections are thematically organized. To begin, consideration is given to learning in the rapidly globalising 21st century and how the LP speaks to its challenges and opportunities (Section 2.2). The next section highlights the role of culture as a mediating factor in the enactment of IB programmes and addresses claims by some scholars that the LP is too Western-oriented (Section 2.3). Consideration is then given to the design of the LP and the extent to which it allows for *diversity* of interpretation and practice, against the contention that it engenders *uniformity*, and is thus an instrument of global homogenisation of culture (Section 2.4). Finally, definitional debates and the contestability of the attributes are considered (Section 2.5). These themes are closely linked to each other, and are emergent in nature, designed not only to provide a foundation for the data analysis to follow, but also as a basis for continuing conversations about the meaning and the pedagogic practices associated with the LP.

2.1 The Learner Profile in the IB Diploma Programme

The IB Learner Profile (LP) comprises ten attributes, which together express values inherent to the IB continuum of international education (IBO 2008). These are currently listed as: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective. Through the LP attributes, the IBO seeks to promote academic rigour, along with a commitment to situate academic work within a framework of personal values designed to promote

'international-mindedness'. The LP is aspirational in nature, providing a set of ideals to inspire and guide the work of schools, teachers and students towards learning goals for a globalised 21st century. Rather than representing 'a profile of the perfect student', the LP can be considered 'a map of a lifelong journey in pursuit of international-mindedness' (IBO 2008, p. 2).

The LP originated in the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) – originally termed the 'PYP Student Profile' – to facilitate the assessment and reporting of individual student development. The LP has now been incorporated into the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP) to focus and enhance student learning. The extension of the LP into the MYP and DP has provided the IB with a consistent vision of the IB learner throughout its three programmes. This vision constitutes an aspiration to develop internationally minded lifelong learners, committed to the academic and personal attributes required for citizenship and success in a globalising world. As many of the DP students have already encountered the LP in PYP and MYP, the extent to which these students are in a better position to learn from it at the senior levels of their studies remains an open question, as does the issue of how the LP is best introduced for the first time at the DP level.

The past few years have seen a considerable amount of work done in IB schools to usefully incorporate the LP into the DP. However, given that the LP is a relatively new innovation in the DP, it will take some time for a comprehensive portrait of the LP's significance to emerge across the large and diverse number of IB providers. Moreover, given the complexity of the DP, in which a greater focus on academic knowledge is understandably warranted and where curriculum is less flexible due to the requirements of disciplinary knowledge and examination, the implementation of the IB Learner Profile presents an additional set of challenges. It should be noted however that it also provides many opportunities to schools and teachers that are not relevant to younger students.

The IBO has recognised that the introduction of the LP represents a challenge to schools, but has nevertheless invited all IB schools to 'evaluate critically their learning environment and make the changes necessary to enable all its students and teachers to work towards developing the values of the profile' (IBO 2008, p. 2). Specifically, the IBO has encouraged school administrators and IB coordinators to consider how the LP can be incorporated into the three main areas of: classroom practices; assessment and reporting practices; and the daily life, management and leadership of schools (IBO 2008, p. 3). The IBO has stated that schools are required to monitor student development in relation to the LP within the DP by engaging students and teachers in forms of reflection, self-assessment and conferencing. This is a less prescriptive directive compared to that of

the PYP, where teachers are explicitly required to assess and report on student progress and development in relation to each of the ten LP attributes. The flexibility afforded to schools in monitoring the LP within the DP might explain the wide variety of practices relating to the LP, as described in chapters that follow.

2.2 Learning in a Globalised 21st Century

The LP seeks to capture attributes that are central to becoming a successful learner in a rapidly globalising world. In this sense, the profile is situated in relation to a broader global movement concerned with articulating 21st century knowledge and skills. This movement recognises that academic knowledge alone is no longer sufficient and that learning must also incorporate an emphasis on attributes such as creativity, innovation, critical thinking, communication, information and media literacy, as well as life and career skills. Indeed, it could be argued that IB has provided important leadership in the development of these concepts and education policy approaches focused on the development of learner capabilities.

This movement has been driven by a powerful set of ideas about the emerging *global knowledge economy* and is exemplified in the work of Zhao (2009), who argues that rapid globalisation and technological innovation means we are in the midst of a ‘revolution that at least rivals the Industrial Revolution’ (p. 145). This revolution, he argues, is significantly changing societies, making new knowledge, skills and talents requisite, whilst rendering others obsolete. This line of thinking is also aligned to concepts of life-long and life-wide learning developed by international organizations such as the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU). These organizations have suggested that nothing short of a new kind of learner is needed to meet the requirements of globally integrated economy and societies.

It should be noted that a number of school systems around the world have developed frameworks similar to the Learner Profile. The Australian Curriculum, for example, seeks to combine traditional subject-based disciplines with a new concept called ‘General Capabilities’. The Australian Curriculum includes seven general capabilities: literacy; numeracy; information and communication technology capability; critical and creative thinking; personal and social capability; ethical understanding, and intercultural understanding. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) describe the general capabilities as ‘a key dimension’ of the curriculum, encompassing the

‘knowledge, skills, behaviors and dispositions’ that ‘will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century’¹.

In a similar sense to the LP attributes, the general capabilities are designed to be *woven into* the broader curriculum and are seen to be equally relevant to all learning areas (academic subjects). Indeed, ACARA describes the design of the general capabilities as an attempt to recognise ‘the interconnectedness’ of young people’s learning across subjects (ACARA 2013, p. 1). Alongside the general capabilities, the Australian Curriculum also features a set of ‘Cross-Curriculum Priorities’, which are also to be embedded in all learning areas. One of these priorities is ‘Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia’, which highlights the importance of students developing ‘Asia Literacy’ and ‘communication skills that reflect cultural awareness and intercultural understanding’². In addition to Australia, several other countries have recently highlighted the importance of complementing the academic curriculum with globally-aware forms of knowledge and skills. In Singapore, for example, a ‘Framework for 21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes’ has been promoted as a central part of its national curriculum³.

Linked to the notion of creating effective learners for the 21st century is the importance of developing students into *lifelong learners*, which is a central element of the LP rationale. Within an era of expanding globalisation, students are expected to develop a personal understanding of what it means to live a life of active and responsible citizenship, and contribute to the creation of a better and more peaceful world. IB programmes view knowledge, skills, independent critical and creative thought and international-mindedness in an integrated fashion, thus reflecting a commitment to the principle of educating *the whole person*. The IBO (2008) states, for example, that underlying all three of its programmes is ‘the concept of education of the whole person as a lifelong process’ (p. 1), adding: ‘The learner profile is a profile of the whole person as a lifelong learner’ (p. 1).

Gert Biesta (2010) argues that concepts associated with ‘the learner’ have gained rapid prominence in education policy and curriculum documents over the past few decades, suggesting that this trend is part of a ‘new language of learning’ (p. 541). This trend, he suggests, is partly emancipatory insofar that ‘it can be interpreted as an attempt to shift the emphasis away from teachers, curricula, schools and other ‘input factors’ to the activities and identities of those who are supposed to benefit from this’ (p. 541). A focus on learners, can be seen ‘as an attempt to liberate the learner’ (p. 541) to

¹ <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/GeneralCapabilities/Overview/general-capabilities-in-the-australian-curriculum>

² <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/english/cross-curriculum-priorities>

³ <http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/21cc/>

some extent, by placing responsibility upon ‘the individual’ to consistently engage in a cycle of learning and information acquisition across their lifespan (see also, Field 2006). Considered in this way, the LP might be seen as an attempt to develop young people as learners who are committed – not only during their time at school but also beyond – to learning in ways that promote the core values of the IB curriculum, with a specific focus on the development of ‘international-mindedness’.

International-mindedness is another central aspect of the IBO’s vision for the LP and the creation of 21st century learners. In explaining the intentions of the LP, for example, the IBO writes:

... It is intended that teachers, students and parents will be able to draw confidently on a recognizable common educational framework, a consistent structure of aims and values and an overarching concept of how to develop international-mindedness. The IB learner profile will be at the heart of this common framework, as a clear and concise statement of the aims and values of the IB, and an embodiment of what the IB means by ‘international-mindedness’ (IBO 2008, p. 1).

It is the IBO’s intention, therefore, that the ten LP attributes will work together ‘to develop internationally-minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world’ (IBO 2008, p. 5). These aims are reflected through attributes such as: ‘Open-mindedness’, which stresses the importance of understanding and appreciating different cultures; ‘Knowledge’, which stresses the need to explore concepts, ideas and issues of global significance; and ‘Caring’, which stresses the importance of empathy and respect towards the needs and feelings of others (IBO 2008, p. 5).

Despite the fact that the IBO has been at the forefront of developing the concept of international-mindedness since the introduction of the DP in the late 1960’s, some contemporary educational scholars argue that the IBO’s definition of international-mindedness remains unclear and that a more succinct definition is required (Marshall 2007; Cause 2009). It is important to note, for example, that the IBO does not explicitly define international-mindedness in relation to the LP. Nevertheless, an analysis of the ten attributes, paired with a broader consideration of IB policies, suggests that in using the term international-mindedness, the IBO has in mind something similar to other terms in the contemporary curriculum landscape, including ‘intercultural understanding’, ‘global-mindedness’, ‘intercultural sensitivity’ and ‘global citizenship’. This diversity of nomenclature highlights what Marshall (2007) terms ‘the big terminology debate’ within global education, which often causes confusion about what these terms mean and look like in practice (Cause 2009).

Intercultural understanding is one term that has received significant attention of late - in the development of the Australian Curriculum, for example, where intercultural understanding is highlighted as one of the seven general capabilities. The Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) describes intercultural understanding as a crucial capability for young people to develop, emphasizing the need for students to value their cultures, languages and beliefs, as well as those of others. ACARA suggests that in a globalising world, young people should learn about and engage with diverse cultures 'in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect'⁴. The inclusion of intercultural understanding in the Australian Curriculum has been influenced by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008), signed by all Australian governments, which recognizes the fundamental role that education plays in building a society that is 'cohesive and culturally diverse' (p. 4). In this sense, it can be argued that terms like intercultural understanding and international-mindedness are stronger than other alternatives, insofar as neither implies the abandonment of national-mindedness in the way that terms like 'global citizenship' do. Instead, these terms concurrently embrace notions of nationalism, internationalism and emerging forms of citizenship stemming from globalisation (Cause 2009, p. 6).

The concept of the LP is thus linked to recent political and theoretical discussions about the need to develop a 'global consciousness' in a world that is increasingly characterized by growing interconnectivities and interdependence between nations and societies resulting from unprecedented levels of global mobility of people, capital and ideas, which has contributed to forms of cultural exchange unimaginable barely a few decades ago (Kennedy 2010). Yet, it has been argued that for some people in the world, mostly middle class professionals, this has become a source of individual empowerment, while for others increasing globality has had the opposite effects. For all humanity however an understanding of emerging forms of global interconnectivity and sources of global inequalities have become a major imperative (Beck 2006).

The idea of global citizenship is highly contested, as is the idea of global citizenship education. Some believe that it promotes the formation in privileged individuals a kind of 'cosmopolitan capital', while for others it represents an openness to other cultures and trans-sociality and is a vehicle for the development of critical understanding of global inequalities, leading perhaps to political action. Arguably, the idea of international-mindedness cuts across these debates by promoting 'cosmopolitan learning' (Rizvi 2009) focused on a set of epistemic virtues such as relationality,

⁴ <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/GeneralCapabilities/intercultural-understanding/introduction/introduction>

criticality, historicity and imagination. This study is thus informed by a deep awareness of the issue of the extent to which the LP attributes are helpful in creating internationally-minded learners.

2.3 Culture as a Mediating Factor

One of the central aims of this study then is to investigate the influence of diverse cultural and educational contexts on individuals' understandings and enactments of the LP. Implicit to the aims of the study, is an acknowledgement of *culture as a mediating factor* in education and curriculum processes. The culturally mediated nature of education is well established in a legacy of sociological and educational research. In education and curriculum studies, it is most commonly associated with social constructivist theories, which contend that teaching and learning, as well as the meaning-making processes associated with curriculum, are informed not only by the individuals involved, but also by the social and cultural systems of meaning in which teaching and learning operates (Vygotsky 1986; Lave & Wenger 1991; Schunk 2007). Vygotsky (1962), for example, famously argued that individual learning and development cannot be disassociated from myriad contextual factors, and that the unique socio-cultural experiences that teachers and students bring to school interact with the curriculum and other school-based factors to produce learning experiences unique to each setting. This implies that no matter how explicit or tightly regulated a curriculum is, it will be understood and enacted differently in different education systems, school locations and classrooms, and with different teachers and students.

The IB curriculum faces unique challenges due to its international orientation and the diverse cultural groups for whom it provides an educational framework. Reflected in IBO policy documents is a sense that the IB does not aim to be a curriculum relevant to a particular state or nation, but instead seeks to provide a globally relevant curriculum for the 21st century, which aims to transcend, to some degree, the cultural specificities of individual regions, nations and schools. The IB is also the preferred curriculum of many international schools, which typically cater for a diverse cultural mix of students. As such, there is a heightened sense of *globality* to the IB curriculum and to many educational institutions in which it is taught. At the same time, the IB cannot be abstracted from the cultural contexts in which it is enacted. Schools remain located in national and sub-national spaces, with distinct cultural histories and traditions.

Herein lies a core tension, because whilst the IB and LP aim to be globally relevant, the culturally mediated nature of learning means both will invariably be understood and enacted differently in

different settings. The LP faces particular challenges in this regard, because it is values-based, and thus *inevitably* reflects certain moral and ethical norms at the expense of others. For example, the LP is clearly designed to orient young people towards a particular 'learner identity', which is ostensibly global in nature. Yet is it truly possible to capture the attributes of a global learner without reflecting some measure of cultural bias? Which relevant attributes, for example, might the LP leave out or obscure? Which attributes might conflict with the dominant values inherent to specific cultural contexts?

Starr (2012) explores some of these tensions in providing a critical analysis of the LP attributes. She argues:

While few would argue with the ideal of creating a more responsible and caring youth, natural questions emerge relating to the context, delivery and validity of such an initiative, particularly when one set of characteristics or virtues is applied to a multiplicity of cultural school contexts as is the case with the IB Learner Profile (p. 116).

One of the main criticisms of the LP to date has been that it too heavily reflects the values of the Western cultural traditions and, as such, does not adequately acknowledge the diverse cultural contexts in which the attributes are required to be enacted. Walker (2010), for example, argues that both the IB curriculum and the LP strongly reflect European and Western humanist origins. Walker draws attention to the LP's emphasis on 'individual inquiry, personal responsibility and independent critical thinking', arguing 'there is little doubt' that these attributes are embedded in a Western tradition of learning (p. 8). Pointing to theorists such as Martha Nussbaum and Richard Nisbett, Walker argues that 'Eastern attitudes differ markedly from those of the West' (p. 7), and questions the future of the LP as the IB expands into Asia.

The continued expansion of the IB from its Western roots into the heartlands of 'the East' certainly brings questions of cultural orientation into sharper focus. In this context, the IBO has had to consider whether the current design of the IB programmes and the LP should be preserved, or whether more consideration needs to be given to alternative cultural perspectives, and if so how. Indeed, the IBO (2009) has recognised the need for the LP attributes to be flexible enough to be adapted to different contexts and different members of school communities to ensure a sense of relevance of the LP to diverse learning contexts (p. 31). To achieve such flexibility, it would appear that the LP must maintain a productive balance between operating as a universal set of values-based attributes and as a flexible set of normative aspirational goals for the 21st century learner. Contemplating this tension and the future of the LP, Walker (2010) writes:

Perhaps the best way forward lies with a less assertively humanistic learner profile that gives greater emphasis to social cohesion and the 'respectful mind'; with a learner profile that is perceived as a stimulus for debate rather than a tablet of stone, and is reviewed regularly by a multicultural team; a learner profile that leaves some space for regional tradition (p. 9).

Walker's analysis usefully highlights the importance of cultural flexibility and adaptability in the conceptualisation and enactment of the IB and LP. However, the IBO should be wary of discussions that over-play or juxtapose distinctions between 'the East' and 'the West'. Indeed, Walker's assertion that 'East is East and West is West' is theoretically blunt and not particularly useful for the IBO if it intends to evolve the LP in more culturally attuned ways.

It is quite clear, for example, that there is no coherent cultural identity to 'the East' or to 'the West'. Attempts to characterise the world in terms of such binary cultural traditions is fraught with danger, as has been shown around the intense debates that followed the publication of Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis. Moreover, setting up an impression of cultural conflict in this sense obscures the fact that significant cultural differences exist both within and between both Western and Eastern nations; a concept Walker briefly recognises in relation to India, but does not expand upon. Finally, it is useful to note that Walker's description of 'Western Humanism' (p. 4), which he sets up in contrast to philosophies from the East, shares many core elements with Eastern Buddhist philosophies. How accurate, therefore, are his claims of an East/West divide?

It is likely that little will be gained from engaging in sustained debates about cultural binaries between the East and West. Instead, finer-grained analysis is needed into the ways the IB and LP are actually understood and enacted in different local settings – a challenge this study has sought to address. By gathering and carefully considering *on the ground* insights from educators and young people engaged with the IB and LP, the chapters that follow provide insights into aspects of the LP that are commonly understood across cultures, and aspects that cause friction or are open to different interpretations. Such data is useful for the IBO in considering how, in the future, the LP might be rendered more relevant to diverse cultures in a globalising era.

2.4 Tensions between Diversity and Uniformity

A persistent tension for any curriculum or learning framework is the extent to which its design allows for *diversity* of interpretation and practice, versus the extent to which it engenders *uniformity*.

Building on considerations in Section 2.2, tensions between diversity and uniformity are particularly acute for the IB and LP because of the global reach of these initiatives and the diverse contexts in which they operate. For example, the IB and LP must cater for diversity in order to be educationally relevant to a broad range of schools, teachers and learners. Concomitantly, the LP represents a clear attempt by the IBO to imagine an *ideal learner* for a globalised world and thus implicitly serves a specific normative purpose, laying out a set of common attributes to be engendered in students studying IB programmes. At its core, the LP perhaps pulls in different and opposing directions: one reflecting the need for the IB to be transferable and adaptive, the other setting out a universal normative aspiration for the global learner.

A legacy of curriculum theory suggests both curriculum diversity and uniformity have benefits and limits, but that the tensions between each need to be carefully managed. For example, if the pendulum swings too heavily towards *diversity*, the LP risks becoming too open and therefore void of any specific content (i.e. it will be 'everything and nothing' at the same time). However, if the pendulum swings too heavily towards *uniformity*, the LP might be seen as a hegemonic colonizing force that does not adequately allow for cultural flexibility and interpretation. A key challenge for the IBO, therefore, is how to balance these two forces in order to render the LP globally relevant, but also culturally adaptable. This is a tension shared by any broad based curriculum organisation or agency, particularly when it comes to areas of the curriculum that are directed by a particular set of values or which seek to educate for particular forms of citizenship (see, for example, Maylor & Read 2007).

Debates about diversity and uniformity not only highlight concerns about how the LP is interpreted in different contexts (i.e. its *meanings*) but also bring to the fore questions about how much control the IBO should ideally exert over how schools put the LP *into practice* within the DP. For example, whilst the IBO has encouraged school administrators and IB coordinators to consider how the LP can be incorporated into classroom practices, assessment and reporting practices, school management and leadership, and the daily life of schools (IBO 2008, p. 3), it has not prescribed methods for doing so. Nor has it prescribed methods for monitoring or assessing student development in relation to the LP. Again, there is a delicate balance in this regard between an approach that is too controlling and compliance based, versus an approach that is too flexible and open. For example, whilst it is unlikely that the IBO would adopt a strict compliance-based approach to the use of the LP in schools, exerting *too little* control could lead to inequities of provision and a highly divergent set of understandings and practices around the LP. In other words, an absence of clear direction by the IBO

about how the LP should *ideally* be understood and used could lead to the LP losing its meaning and worth, and thus failing to engender any form of commonality. Such a situation would undermine the apparent purpose of the LP: that is, to promote a set of *normative* attributes based around an overarching goal of achieving international-mindedness.

2.5 Definitional Debates around the LP Attributes

Another issue for any curriculum framework is its contestability and this matter has been considered as a central part of the core research aims of this study. Intrinsically linked to this are questions about how tightly defined its core elements are. These concerns are acute for the LP because it seeks to provide a list of ten attributes that define the ideal IB learner. Yet to what extent are these attributes contestable? Are the attributes clear enough and well defined? These questions, in turn, open a range of others, including: Why include these ten attributes and not others? Why not more or fewer attributes? Are the titles of each attribute the most effective for representing the accompanying descriptors⁵? Is there a hierarchy to these attributes or is each attribute of equal value? Are some attributes easier to put into practice than others?

Since the release of the LP, criticisms have been levelled at the selection of the attributes and the definitional clarity surrounding them. Van Oord (2013), for example, suggests 'little has been communicated' by the IBO about why the ten attributes were chosen, adding that any list of positive attributes 'is never exhaustive' and that 'it is not difficult to discover a few more that could potentially have been added' (p. 210). Van Oord suggests that like all values or virtues, the LP attributes are 'essentially contestable' (p. 210), mainly because these things are not neutral, but instead reflect particular moral and philosophical positions. According to Van Oord, by choosing not to clearly explain and justify its choice of the 10 attributes, the IBO 'implicitly denies to have made a value judgment' (p. 210), adding that the attributes are assumed to be 'beyond discussion and only questions concerning their implementation deserve deliberation' (p. 210). Van Oord suggests that the IBO should embrace a more open-minded and modest approach to the future of the LP, 'by allowing schools, teachers and students ownership over the question of what it is that makes for the good life' (p. 216).

Wells (2011) also suggests there is 'a lack of clarity concerning the nomenclature when referring to concepts included in the Learner Profile' (p. 177). According to Wells, the IBO has failed to provide

⁵ For a full list of the descriptors, see IBO 2008, p. 5

any 'rigorous theoretical justification to substantiate the premises on which the values for the IB Learner Profile were chosen' (p. 177), adding:

... the IB uses the terms 'attributes', 'set of qualities' and 'set of ideals' which seem to express 'values', while the 'descriptors' used to explicate these terms seem to equate with 'learning outcomes' ... In addition, while 'the attributes of the profile express the values inherent to the IB continuum of international education' it is not clear how these values, attributes, ideals, aims or learning outcomes are to be applied or reflected in actions, and it is even less clear how the IB or schools evaluate the efficacy of their application by students (p. 177).

Wells' critique not only raises important questions about the nature of the LP attributes, but also about what exactly the practical role of the LP is meant to be in schools by problematizing its relation to both the IB curriculum and teacher pedagogies. This is an important critique, because the notion of *how to teach* the LP remains particularly unclear in IBO curriculum and policy documents relating to the DP. For example, it appears to be unclear as to whether the LP attributes should be *explicitly taught* to learners, or instead whether these attributes are intended to *develop organically* in the learner throughout their schooling experiences. The first implies a more structured and intentional relation between the LP, the IB curriculum and pedagogy, whereas the second implies a more organic relation, whereby the LP attributes *filter into* the lives of individuals as a result of the broader learning environments and experiences in which they are immersed (i.e. akin to a process of cultural osmosis).

IBO is not unique in facing these tensions. Similar concerns currently surround the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum, as whilst ACARA has made it clear to schools and teachers that the seven capabilities should be equally relevant to all learning areas and should thus be *woven into* the broader curriculum, there remains confusion about how exactly this weaving should take place and what it should look like in practice. This is particularly the case regarding assessment. ACARA has stated, for example, that: 'Teachers are expected to teach and assess general capabilities to the extent that they are incorporated within each learning area', but little more is offered in the way of direction⁶. Such a vague directive makes it difficult to imagine what effective assessment or reporting on the capabilities might actually look like. Similar dilemmas appears to face the LP, particularly in the context of an academically rigorous and demanding DP curriculum where it could potentially be sidelined due to other and more pressing demands.

⁶ <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/general%20capabilities.pdf>

In summary, a review of relevant literature suggests there are a range of related issues, ideas and debates that need to be taken into consideration when researching the LP. These concerns such issues as what it means to learn in our rapidly globalising 21st century and to the influence of culture as both an informing and mediating factor in the enactment and continued development of the IB curriculum. The other more pragmatic considerations relate to the design of the LP, the definition of its core attributes, and the extent to which it allows for positive and meaningful interpretations and practices. With respect to the list of the LP attributes the questions arise as to what extent they provide an exhaustive list and what other potentially important attributes have been omitted. Related to these questions are also issues regarding the relationship between the LP and IB's understanding of 'international-mindedness'.

These various considerations have usefully informed the design of this study and the nature of questions asked in the field. This, in turn, has helped generate data, featured throughout the chapters to follow, which speaks to and hopefully advances contemporary literature on the LP. We recognize that these issues in their various forms have been widely debated not only in the academic literature but also in popular media and business. In education, however, they are particularly pertinent, since schools are a site where cultural practices are not only reproduced but also produced.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methods

In this chapter we describe the methodological design of this study, which was developed in close alignment with the aims outlined in the Request for Tender. An associated aim of this study was to add to the growing field of literature that is engaged with the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Learner Profile (LP) by providing an analysis of empirical research specifically focused on the interpretation and implementation of the LP across cultural contexts. In this sense, this study is both comparative and cross-cultural, focused on the cultural politics of pedagogic reform.

3.1 Methodological Approach

The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne. Each researcher has particular expertise relating to global education and international schooling, especially in Asia. The researchers were responsible for the principal data generation in the different countries and in most instances more than one member of the research team visited each school. Since the team consisted of researchers from a diversity of disciplinary and cultural backgrounds, its deliberations involved cross-cultural communication, and contributed to the triangulation of the collection and analysis of the data.

Wide-ranging discussions were held within the project team and with relevant members from the IB research office to establish the methodology and methods for the study. The project team also reviewed and consulted relevant policy and research literature, including both published and unpublished discussion papers and reports that helped to better determine the research methods to be employed. The review also allowed the team to develop a better understanding of recent developments in the IB's educational mission and curriculum structures in relation to the LP.

Quantitative and qualitative methods of data generation and analysis were employed in this study, supporting the development of a series of case studies of an idiographic nature across the three schools in each of the three countries: India, Hong Kong SAR and Australia. Data generation methods included: surveys; semi-structured interviews and focus group sessions; document analysis of material produced by the IBO and the schools participating in this study; in-school observations; and collective reflection.

The study consisted of **five linked stages**:

- Stage 1** A critical review of literature to inform the development and implementation of the study and to identify themes related to the LP (June – August 2013)
- Stage 2** The creation and implementation of two brief survey tools, one for students and one for teachers. The surveys were directly informed by the review of literature in Stage 1. The surveys were sent to each of the participating schools for both students and teachers to complete (September – October 2013)
- Stage 3** Analysis of the survey data, in order to evolve follow-up questions and points of discussion and to inform the development of questions for semi-structured interviews and focus groups (November 2013)
- Stage 4** Fieldwork in each of the schools, comprising semi-structured interviews, focus groups and in-school observations (November 2013 - January 2014)
- Stage 5** Review of Stage 4 data and analysis of data from each of the other stages (December 2013 – March 2014). Identification of key findings and the production of the report (April – May 2014)

Throughout the study regular meetings were held whereby the team members engaged in collective reflection on the literature relevant to the study, and later sharing their emergent findings based on the data generated at the various schools.

3.2 Selection of Schools in Hong Kong, India and Australia

The project team selected the sites for the study through close consultation with the Manager of Research at IB Regional Office in Singapore. *Purposive sampling* was conducted with the assistance of the IB Research Office to identify three schools in each of the three study countries, for a total of nine schools: three each in India, Australia and Hong Kong. Project descriptions and Plain Language Statements (which detailed the personnel involved, the aims and objectives of the study, what was required of the participants and acknowledging that the study had ethics clearance⁷) were sent to participating schools and confirmation of participation was received after extensive negotiations. In each school, a key staff member was sought to assist the research team to administer the surveys and to set up the interview and focus group schedule.

⁷ The University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Clearance Number is: HREC 1340252.1

Nine schools took part in the study (as follows):

COUNTRY	SCHOOL TYPE	YEAR LEVELS	IB PROGRAMME OFFERED
Hong Kong (A)	International school	Year 11 and 12	DP
Hong Kong (B)	Private Independent school	Prep to Year 12	MYP, DP
Hong Kong (C)	Private boys' school	Prep to Year 12	DP
India (A)	International school	Preparatory level to Year 12	PYP and DP
India (B)	International school	Preparatory level to Year 12	PYP, MYP, DP
India (C)	Independent boarding school	Year 11 and 12	DP
Australia (A)	Steiner school	Preparatory level to Year 12	DP in Years 11 and 12
Australia (B)	Catholic Secondary school	Preparatory level to Year 12	PYP, MYP, DP
Australia (C)	Private girls' school	Preparatory level to Year 12	DP in Years 11 and 12

In this report the schools are identified by a code (pseudonym) linking back to the chart above (e.g. Hong Kong (A) corresponds to the 'HKA' used elsewhere in the report; India (C) corresponds to INC, and so on). For the sake of confidentiality (and in line with Ethics requirements) the name of each school with respect to particular information has not been identified within the main body of this report. However, brief descriptions of the participating schools, which offer details such as the school type, the IB programme(s) offered, the number of students studying the IB at the school and relevant historical details, are provided in Appendix 1.

3.3 Student and Teacher Surveys

Development of the two surveys, one for teachers and one for students, involved an interactive process of consultation amongst the research team. This process was guided by review of the relevant literature pertaining to the IB Learner Profile. Draft versions of the surveys were trialled amongst the research team to test for adequacy of the items and each survey as a whole. A process

of refinement occurred which eventually determined the optimal sequence of the questions and the language used within each item as well as response to issues identified in the literature. Attention was paid to crafting each item such that each could be readily understood by non-native English speakers. For instance the survey questions were kept to 25 words or fewer and where at all possible plain English was used to ensure a lack of ambiguity.

After preliminary deliberations based on the review of literature, and the selection of the schools, two survey tools were developed. These brief surveys were designed to:

1. Explore student awareness and understanding of the IB Learner Profile attributes at each of the case study sites to inform subsequent stages of the project; and
2. Gauge teacher understanding and implementation of the IB Learner Profile attributes across the different sites.

Each of the surveys aimed to investigate how teachers and students viewed the Learner Profile attributes. It also aimed to seek an initial response to how each school has sought to reflect the local culture and identity in its implementation of the LP and if and why any local adaptations/interpretations have been made. Surveys were completed by participating teachers and students in each of the nine schools selected in consultation with the IBO's Regional Office in Singapore. In each school a participating staff member, usually the IB Coordinator, assisted in administration of the surveys by soliciting participation from teachers and students associated with the DP programme in their school.

The surveys were completed electronically online using *Survey Monkey*. The teacher survey contained 39 items and the student survey contained 30 items. Most items were answered by all respondents. The surveys were designed to take no more than fifteen minutes to complete and the identity of those completing the survey remained anonymous. The student survey items sought preliminary information about the awareness and significance of the LP, as well as views about the role the LP plays in meeting the students' educational needs and career aspirations. IB DP staff members at each of the participating schools were also invited to complete the survey (which was adapted from, and contained very similar questions to, the student survey). The completion rates were uneven, with higher levels of completion in Hong Kong and India than in Australia. Of the 140 teachers who participated in the teacher survey, 53 were from Hong Kong/China, 56 from India and 7 from Australia. 24 teachers did not identify the country in which they were working. Of the 506

students who responded to the student survey, 235 were from Hong Kong/China, 131 from India and 76 from Australia. 64 students did not identify their country location.

The survey included Likert style questions, while also providing an opportunity (an option) for respondents to include qualitative information on the survey through ‘open-ended responses’, such as explaining, in their own words, their reasoning for choosing a particular option within a question. As noted above, the survey data was treated as tentative and provisional, but nonetheless proved most helpful in developing protocols and areas of focus for the qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

The results of the survey analysis, which took place prior to the face-to-face interviews, generated rich discussion amongst the research team, as some clear patterns began to be evident within the data. Results from the electronic survey formed the basis of the interim report, which detailed the preliminary findings and progress of the study. Some of these findings have been reproduced in the final report but have now been synthesised with the other data that was generated in the study, such as that derived from student and teacher interviews. Through the face-to-face interviews, a richer understanding was gained of how schools implement and adapt the LP and how the LP attributes are utilized and displayed in the teacher approaches to their pedagogy; as well as how they are reflected in the ways in which students think about their education and their futures.

3.4 Interviews and Focus Groups

Following completion of the surveys of staff and students at the participating schools, the research team approached each of the schools to set up a series of face-to-face qualitative interviews and focus groups with teachers and students. These were conducted over up to three days at each of the participating schools.

Interviews and focus groups took place in:

SCHOOL	INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS	FOCUS GROUPS WITH STAFF	FOCUS GROUPS WITH STUDENTS
Australia (data collected in November 2013)			
AUA	2 senior and teaching staff		3 – with a total of 12 students

AUB	3 senior and teaching staff		2 – with a total of 10 students
AUC	2 senior and teaching staff		3 – with a total of 23 students
Hong Kong (data collected in November 2013)			
HKA	5 senior and teaching staff	2 – with 4 teachers in each	2 – 4 and 4 students (8)
HKB	4 senior and teaching staff	1 – with 3 teachers	2 – 10 and 6 students (16)
HKC	5 senior and teaching staff		5 – 4, 4, 4, 4 and 4 students (20)
India (data collected in January 2014)			
INA	3 senior and teaching staff	2 – with 2 teachers in each	4 – 5, 5, 4 and 4 students (18)
INB	4 senior and teaching staff	2 – with 3 teachers in each	3 – 6, 6, and 5 students (17)
INC	4 senior and teaching staff	1 – with 5 teachers	3 – 6, 5 and 4 students (15)
TOTALS	32 senior and teaching staff in individual interviews	26 teachers in 8 focus groups	139 students in 27 focus groups

With student participants, all interviews were conducted via focus groups. Two members of the research team were typically present. For consistency, a common set of questions and/or discussion points were used at each site. This enabled extensive notes to be taken of the interviews, which were also, with permission, audio-recorded. The focus groups with students examined how they interpreted the meaning and significance of the LP, and how it features in their education at the school and planning for the future. Given the qualitative nature of the questioning techniques, the questions were intended to encourage the students to engage in a discussion with the interviewers and with each other. The schools themselves selected the student groups, often with the expectation that they would represent both diversity and a record of engagement with the LP.

In the case of school leaders, they were interviewed individually on a one to one basis. These interviews were also audio-recorded. Mostly these leaders included IB coordinators and directors of the Diploma Programme, though in some cases it was also possible to interview principals and vice-principals. Some teachers in charge of Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and Creativity, Service, Action (CAS) were also interviewed individually. The individual interviews were of approximately forty minutes duration. Some other interviews with the teachers took the form of focus groups. The

selection of teachers for focus groups was made in consultation with either the school principal or another participating staff member such as the IB coordinator. The focus groups were planned to last in the vicinity of 40 minutes to an hour, though in most cases went over time, indicating the level of interest that exists in schools to talk about the issues raised by the LP. Interviews and focus groups with school leaders and teachers explored the ways in which the schools interpret and implement the LP, together with the challenges they face.

During site visits, the research team members requested (at the discretion of the school principal or senior staff member at each site) access to relevant school documents, including school policies, curriculum documents, student work samples and results and promotional documentation produced by the school in regard to the International Baccalaureate in general, and more specifically the Learner Profile. Data also included publically available documents produced by the IBO on the websites and school magazines. In some cases, the team was able to visit the classrooms and talk to teachers and students informally at, for example, lunch and in the school corridors.

The interviews, focus groups and collection of textual information generated data that provided an understanding of each school's interpretation and implementation of the LP, teachers' and students' understandings of LP attributes, as well as contextual adaptations of the LP in each site. More broadly, the team sought to understand each school's approach to the LP by referring to its mission in terms of its history, ownership, demographic composition and religious or corporate affiliations. The team also attempted to find out as much as it could about the national policies that affected each school's operations, as well as something about the local community within which it is located.

3.5 Analysis of Data

Between December 2013 and April 2014, the data generated from all sources was synthesised and analysed. An essential element of the analytical process involved referring back to the key research questions. In the analysis phase, particular attention was paid to the differences across teacher and student perspectives on the significance they attached to the LP, and more specifically, the ways in which their understandings of the LP attributes articulated with local cultural traditions, on the one hand, and processes of globalisation, on the other. Linked to this was analysis of how the LP attributes related to the school's existing sets of values and/or mission statements, relevant national policies or the expectations of parents and the local community.

The survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics, with a key aim being to determine the frequency of certain responses. Of particular interest was the ratings given by respondents of their understanding, familiarisation and use of the LP attributes. The qualitative data in the research such as that derived from the face-to-face interviews were analysed by applying a hermeneutic perspective. Patterns and relationships between the qualitative data were identified. Findings from the data collection and analysis stages were combined to provide an interpretive account of the ways in which the LP has been implemented and adapted in the schools located in diverse cultural contexts. Somewhat limited, however, was the data's capacity to reveal the outcomes of the LP. To be confident about outcomes, the longitudinal studies are necessary, since the main aim of the LP is to produce life-long outcomes in producing internationally-minded learners, who are able to engage productively with the changing realities of global interconnectivities.

3.6 Challenges and Limitations

This observation highlights some of the challenges the research team faced during the study and some of the limitations associated with conducting a comparative research project in a transnational environment. However, these challenges were for the most part anticipated and planned for prior to the implementation of the study. Significantly, some of the challenges had a bearing on the findings of the study overall. The study, which necessitated a comparison of schools operating in a transnational space, revealed many variables at play. These included: the growth and growing popularity of international schooling; the growing focus on international perspectives in schooling; global mobility of the education sector; the number of expatriates teaching and studying in international schools; and the desire of parents to provide their child access to a globalised education.

The research team was, from the start, attuned to issues surrounding cultural and educational homogenisation given that a key aim of the study was to determine how the LP was being interpreted and perhaps re-interpreted in the participating schools. As the study progressed, it was interesting to see in what ways or not the global trend towards the homogenisation of education was manifested in the schools and how, if at all, this affected the teachers' and students' understanding and implementation of the LP and its attributes. As the findings show, issues surrounding an emerging global culture of a globally mobile population in particular were also examined by the research team given that the academic programmes, co-curricular activities and

mission statements of the schools are responsive to both the communities in which they are located as well as the wider global education marketplace.

Given that the research team was Australian-based, issues of representation were an important consideration of the study. When conducting the fieldwork and data analysis based on the schools outside of Australia, the researchers needed to be particularly attuned to subtle but significant nuances in the factors operating in these schools. Whilst many commonalities were encountered, the researchers were also sensitive to notable cultural differences that were evident.

Preparing for the study required some new learning on behalf of the researchers. This necessitated an understanding of cultural factors and cultural norms such as gender roles, aesthetics, religious beliefs, the world of work (including how business is conducted), the local legal system, leisure time activities and so on operating within the culture. The researchers found that the ongoing dialogue that they developed with their local contact(s) in the school helped provide them with necessary cultural understandings and insights that proved to be most valuable before the commencement of the data generation stage. This was an adjunct to the extensive reading of associated literature conducted by the researchers prior to implementing the study.

Understandings of language and syntax differences were also a factor for the researchers. Even though English was the common language used in this study, it became evident that the proficiency of its use differed from one participant to another. Additionally, it was apparent that there were subtle but ultimately important variations in the English used by native speakers. This had a noticeable bearing on the ways in which participants understood and described the LP and its attributes. For example the concept of 'risk' was viewed differently by many of the respondents depending on their understanding of the term and the connotations they place on it due to local cultural factors.

When interviewing the teachers and students it was necessary for the researchers to not appear to be judgemental of their understandings or applications of the LP. The participants were informed that the researchers were interested in reporting on the various ways in which the LP was being taught, learnt and implemented in the participating schools and that there was no sense 'right' or 'wrong' to their attitudes, understandings or approaches to the LP and its attributes. This open approach enabled the researchers to represent the schools fairly and accurately; it was through the

representation of the viewpoints and practices of each individual school that a wider understanding of how schools have adapted the LP to reflect local cultural contexts could be formed.

The teachers at the participating schools outside of Australia were, in many instances, not locals. This affected their responses to culturally specific questions. For many of the teachers outside of Australia whilst they commented on national approaches they acknowledged that they were not from that national space (and/or had not undertaken their teacher training there) and so they brought an outsider's perspective to the conversation. However, as the findings revealed, this outsider perspective enabled many of the teacher respondents to speak frankly about localised cultural factors and wider systemic issues associated with the implementation of the LP in their school. Some were able to comment on the ways in which the understandings and implementation of the LP in their school was similar to, or different from, what they experienced at other IB schools, and/or in other countries in which they had previously taught.

An accurate representation of the participating schools was aided by the study of data such as school documentation and the use of observations at the site to gain further evidence as to the role the LP played in the school. For example, it was observed that in some schools a noticeboard, displayed in a prominent position, listed each of the LP attributes with an accompanying student-friendly description/illustration of them. Some schools made direct reference to the LP and its attributes in newsletters and other communiqués with parents. In other schools, such physical manifestations of the LP were mostly absent, even if these schools regarded the LP as an essential part of their work.

Analysis of the data revealed that some of the variations in regard to approaches and understandings to the LP were school-based and that these occurred irrespective of the country in which the school was located. When conducting the fieldwork in the schools the researchers found apparent contradictions operating in each country and in each school between the ways in which it interpreted the LP whilst at the same time upholding and fostering local values and customs. It soon became evident that the cultural and pedagogical values of one individual, group or school were different to another. These particularities contributed to the key findings of the study overall, which suggest that the implementation of the LP cannot adequately be understood outside of the recognition that most IB schools, in Asia in particular, operate in a transnational and transcultural space; and that their relationships with local and national factors are contextually specific to each school in a range of diverse and contingent ways.

Finally, it is important to note that this study cannot make any claim to the generalisability of its findings. This is so because the nine schools that participated in this study represent a small part of the global network of more than 3400 IB schools. For example, the American IB schools, which are often publically funded and enrol students from various marginalized backgrounds – as part of a broader strategy to promote equality of educational opportunity –, were not included in this study. They are more likely to exhibit a national character than is the case with the nine schools in this study, the students at which hail mostly from globally mobile and socio-economically privileged backgrounds. These students often already have a global outlook and aspirations, and are more readily able to access the benefits of globalisation. That is not to say that the nine schools in this study do not have disadvantaged students, but they are few in number, and often supported by scholarships and thus do not change their socially privileged status. Arguably, the students in Indian and Hong Kong schools represent a new confident Asia with wide-ranging transnational and transcultural links. In Australian schools too, most of the students are from well-off families and range from a wide variety of cultural and national backgrounds.

Against these limitations, this study nonetheless presents insights that are helpful for understanding the nature and significance of the LP in IB schools in Asia and Australia. These insights are also useful in elaborating the conceptual issues that surround the pedagogic role that a focus on LP can potentially play in promoting discussion of the broader demands of education in the 21st century. Another potential contribution of the study is an analysis of the ways in which teachers might interpret and respond to the requirements of cultural diversity and exchange, resulting from the multiple and often contradictory processes of globalisation.

CHAPTER 4

Contrasting and Multiple Perspectives

The perceptions of LP in the schools participating in this study were varied, along the lines of contrasting and multiple perspectives. This chapter presents an overview account of these perspectives, incorporating relevant data collected from both surveys and interviews across the nine schools to reveal multiple and contrasting perspectives when it comes to understanding and implementing the Learner Profile (LP). Firstly, the chapter explores the level of awareness and understanding of the LP, from the perspectives of both teachers and students. Secondly, a framework for interpreting the various understandings of the purposes of the LP is suggested. This framework illuminates how the LP is understood as (1) knowledge to be learned; (2) as practices of learning, and (3) as ways of being a learner. This leads into discussion of, thirdly, the complex interplay between not just two value systems that impact on the DP, but three. These three value systems cannot be understood merely in terms of a national space but instead operate transnationally, interpreted at the school level, and even more specifically at the classroom level. This complex interplay of values suggests that, fourthly, differing interpretations of each of the attributes, and the list of attributes itself, is an organic occurrence. Finally, the way the LP is worked with in classes was questioned. Students and teachers conveyed different preferences for this, with those not having the experience of the MYP and PYP perhaps opting for a more explicit rendering of the LP than those students for whom the LP had become 'a second language' through their MYP and PYP experiences.

4.1 Awareness and Understanding of the Learner Profile

Survey data collected in the first phase of this study established the general familiarity of teachers with the Learner Profile (LP), and asked teachers to rate their attitude to the LP. When asked about their ability to identify the ten attributes of the LP in Question Three of the survey, more than half of the teachers surveyed (57%) believed that they could name between 7 and all 10 of the attributes. A further 32% said they could name 4-6 attributes, with 10% of respondents indicating they were familiar with between 0-3 attributes (see Figure 1). Question Five, which asked teachers to rate their colleagues' familiarity with the LP, showed that most respondents rated their colleagues' familiarity as either medium (36%) or high (43%).

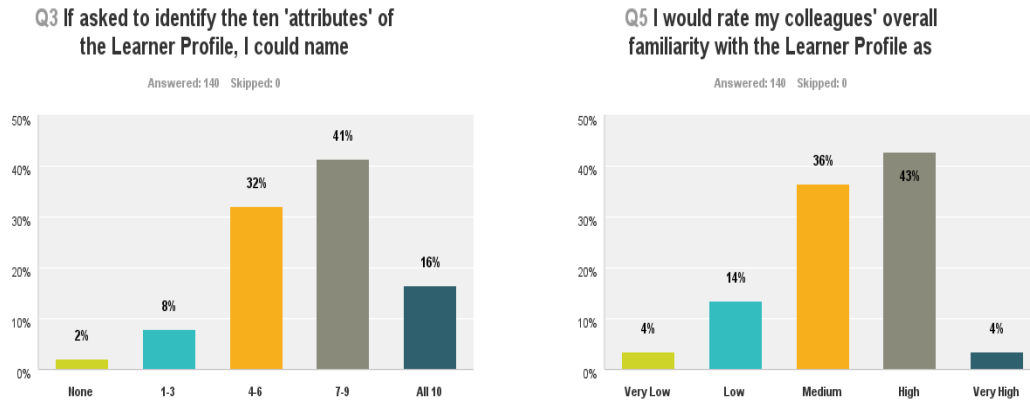


Figure 1. Frequency graphs based on responses to questions 3 and 5 (n=140) on the teacher survey. These questions relate to teachers' professed familiarity with the attributes of the LP and perceptions regarding colleagues' familiarity with the LP.

When teachers were subsequently asked to rate their own understanding of the LP, more than 55% reported that their understanding was 'high' or 'very high', with a further 36% reporting their understanding of the LP as 'satisfactory' (see Figure 2). Meanwhile, teacher personal attitudes towards the LP were generally positive (53%) to very positive (28%) for the majority of respondents, with only 1% indicating they held a negative attitude to the Learner Profile. Taken together, these results suggest that teachers at the case study schools were cognisant of and largely positively disposed towards the LP.

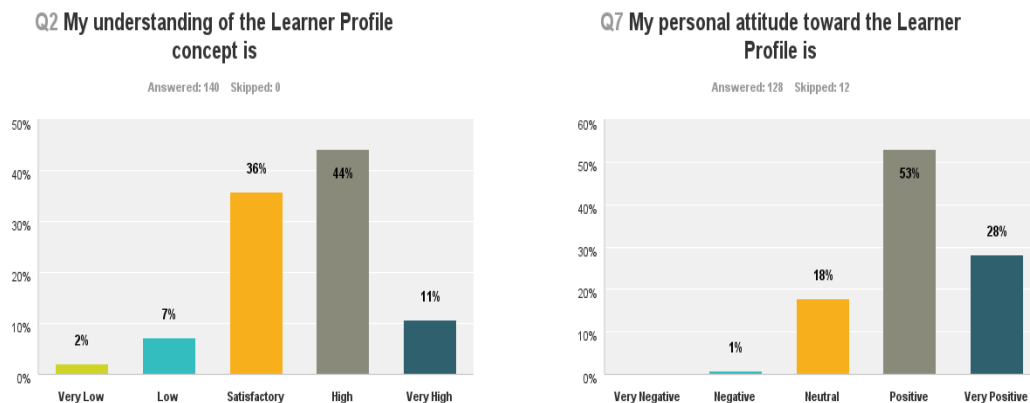


Figure 2. Frequency graphs based on responses to questions 2 (n=140) and 7 (n=128) on the teacher survey. These questions relate to teachers' understanding and attitude toward the LP.

Students at the case study schools were similarly asked to self-report their familiarity with the LP. When students were asked if they could name the 10 attributes of LP, 41% said they could identify 4-6, 18% indicated they knew 7 to 9 attributes and only 5% felt they could name all 10 attributes (see Figure 3).

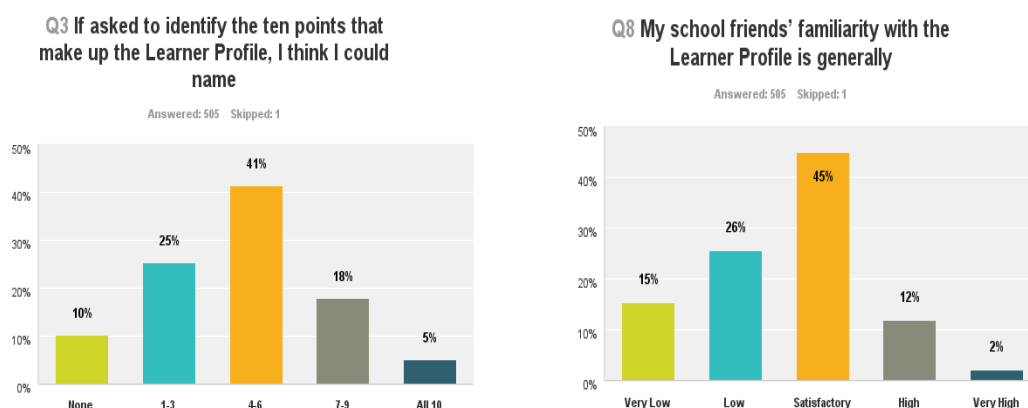
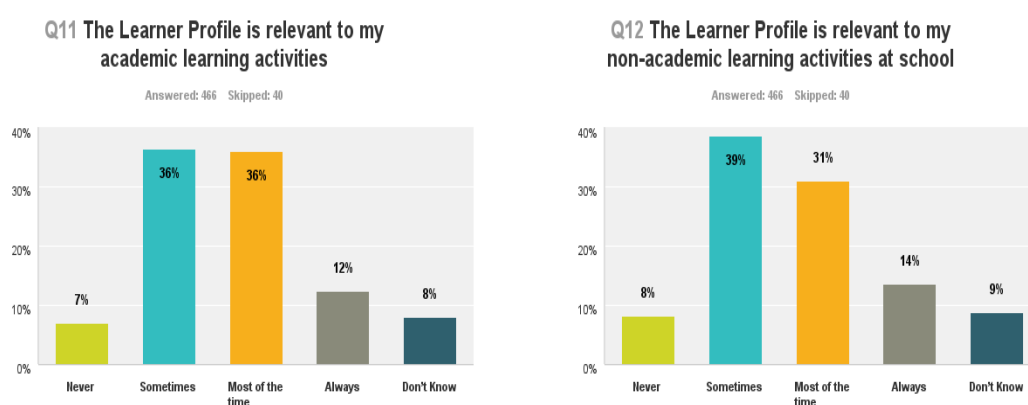


Figure 3. Frequency graphs based on responses to questions 3 and 8 (n=442) of the student survey. These questions relate to students' professed familiarity with the LP attributes.

When the student responses to these questions are compared with those of teachers (to similar questions), as represented in the graphs of Figures 1, 2 and 3, it can be seen that the teachers generally reported higher levels of familiarity with the LP than students. For instance, whereas 57% of teachers claimed that they could identify 7-10 of the LP attributes, this percentage dropped to 23% amongst students. These results suggest that teachers at the case study schools were more aware and familiar with the LP than their students.

As shown in Figure 4, an additional series of questions asked students to indicate the relevance they perceived the LP to have to their academic learning activities, non-academic learning activities, and the daily life of the school.



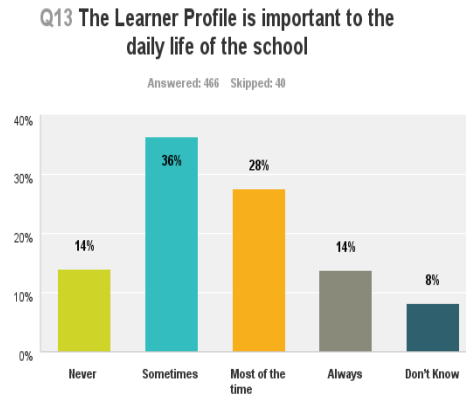


Figure 4. Frequency graphs based on responses to questions 11, 12 and 13 (n=442) of the student survey. These questions relate to the relevance students attribute to the LP across different aspects of their school experience.

In total, 48% of students viewed the LP as relevant to their academic learning activities ‘Always’ or ‘Most of the Time’, and 43% judged the Learner Profile as relevant either ‘Sometimes’ or ‘Never’. Moreover, with regards to non-academic learning activities, 45% of students viewed the LP as relevant ‘Always’ or ‘Most of the Time’, whereas a greater proportion, 47%, perceived the LP to be relevant ‘Sometimes’ or ‘Never’. Lastly, 42% students rated the Learner Profile as important to the daily of their school ‘Always’ or ‘Most of the time’. However, 36% viewed the Learner Profile as being important to the daily of their school ‘Sometimes’ and 14% ‘Never’. A question that emerges is whether there is a connection between the relevance students perceive the LP to have to all aspects of their schooling and their levels of awareness and understanding of the LP. The next sections further explore this issue, mainly using interview and focus group data collected in each of the nine schools.

4.2 Learned, Learning, Learner

As noted in Chapter 3, interviews and focus groups were conducted with teachers and students at each of the case study schools. Our analysis of these data sources pointed to the existence of three broadly intersecting but distinct ways in which the LP was engaged with and hence understood at their schools. The first and most basic of these revealed an understanding of the LP as knowledge to be acquired by students – something to be *learned*. The second highlighted the LP as influencing the practices of *learning*. The third emphasized the LP as a particular learner identity. Each of these different ways of engaging with the LP – learned, learning, and learner – illuminates a different understanding of the purpose of the LP. All three were present at all schools, and it was this co-existence of all three that underpinned the difficulties in understanding the LP.

When the purpose of the LP is understood to be its contribution to the knowledge content of the DP, then its implementation may be approached through testing. This view of the LP as knowledge to be learned before one begins the DP was evident at one school in Hong Kong, which required a test for knowledge of the LP as a prerequisite for student admission to the DP. The rote learning nature of this practice was reported by one of the students who had completed such testing: 'we are aware of the Learner Profile because the school requires us to learn it as part of the entry testing we undergo to get into the Diploma course. We basically learn it rote because that's what they're looking for' (HKC Student). This approach to the LP perhaps conveys a limited understanding of its place and purpose in relation to the DP: as a list to be recited when asked by teachers. This, of course, devalues the importance of understanding the LP in the context of its actual use in learning situations. Such a position was expressed by an Australian teacher: 'it's a problem when it's detached from the everyday ... If it's brought up in a real context, where they can actually connect the Learner Profile to what they're experiencing, that's how it should be. I think a lot of the time the Learner Profile gets 'tacked on' to something else, like it's 'out there' and we can't see its relevance in the classroom' (AUA Teacher).

Employing the LP as a means to influence learning practices reveals a deeper understanding of the profile's purpose. Teachers spoke of referring to the various attributes of the LP in classes and discussed ways these were connected with achieving the learning goals of the class. Such reference, they said, offered a language to discuss different ways of approaching learning. The following representative comment from a senior DP teacher in a Hong Kong school makes this point:

If I say today we're going to focus on being good communicators or today we're going to focus on being risk-takers, they like it. They like it because they understand it. They understand this is the IB Learner Profile. This is what we're aspiring to. And it gives them a sense of how to measure their performance in that lesson. And so I can say, 'Who was the best communicator today?' and 'Oh, Jeremy was really good at communicating today!' And so - 'A biscuit for Jeremy!' So it gives you some kind of framework against which to measure progress towards certain standards of behaviour that I think is helpful but not perfect. Definitely not perfect (HKA Teacher).

Both teachers and students at many of the schools participating in this study shared this understanding of the purpose of the LP as influencing learning. However this understanding seemed to highlight, for students mainly, deficiencies in the way the LP is integrated into their classroom experience. This lack of integration extended from a seeming absence of any reference to the LP in

their textbooks, to the IB curriculum itself. As one student from Hong Kong noted: ‘the supporting materials such as textbooks and other referencing are not really linking back to the Learner Profile’ (HKA Student). Moreover, a student at an Indian school suggested that: ‘we would appreciate it more if they [LP attributes] were integrated more, and highlighted more as part of our curriculum’ (INA Student).

Understanding the purpose of the LP as contributing to a broader conception of the learner formed a significant part of the interview data collected. Both teachers and students highlighted how the LP asked for more than just shifts in learning practices, to an acknowledgment that such shifts required a change in who the student was: ‘the purpose of the Learner Profile is to make students more well-rounded and a better person’ (HKC Teacher). This teacher perspective was supported by students, who were also well aware of this purpose of the LP: ‘the Learner Profile is published to say what you should become, what one should become, at the end of the IB journey. You should become caring, you should be principled, should be ...’ (HKA Student). Australian students concurred: ‘it’s about qualities or aspects of your character ... things they want you to have when you leave school’; ‘it’s for building well-rounded people, not just people who focus on one area, someone who takes interest in a lot of things’; and ‘it’s a list of things to be, to become a more holistic person ... it’s what you strive to be while doing the IB to maximize your learning’ (AUA Students). Thus ‘it’s about building an ideal IB learner. It’s not just about learning theoretically, but goes beyond the academic to the ethical and global qualities of a person’ (AUC Student).

4.3 National and Transnational Spaces of Learning

A further question which colours understanding of the LP is whether it is a product of a particular time and place, and therefore overlooks other views on learning which are perhaps equally valid. This issue was highlighted by a school principal in Hong Kong, who argued that the LP is ‘a reflection of a very Western, liberal, individualistic culture and intellectual tradition’ (HKA Administrator). This positioning of the LP appears in the research literature as a contrast between Western and Eastern perspectives on learning (see for example Walker, 2010). Such a position aligns particular nations with Western or Eastern designations and seems to suggest that national spaces of learning are the most significant when it comes to interpretation of the LP and learning per se. When teachers were asked directly on the teacher questionnaires to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that the LP was culturally biased towards Anglo-American attitudes, 34% agreed or

strongly agreed this was true, 27% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and a relatively large percentage (39%) indicated they were neutral on this topic (see Figure 4).

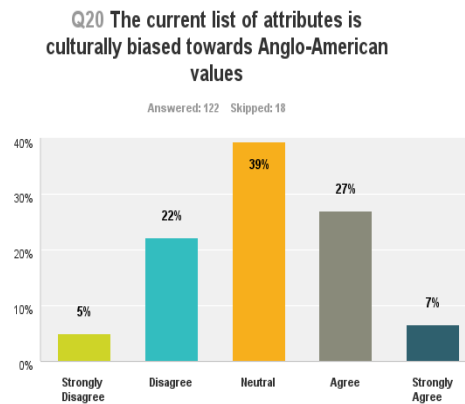


Figure 4. Frequency graph based on responses to question 20 (n=122) of the teacher survey. This question relates to the cultural bias towards Anglo-American values that teachers may or may not perceive within the LP.

The broad spread of teacher responses to the issue of cultural bias gathered in the survey data informed design of interview and focus group questioning. Interviews and focus groups queried the possibility of cultural bias of the LP. However the discussions at each school highlighted a picture that was more complex than could be conveyed by notions of cultural bias alone. Instead, the complex interplay described by teachers and students involved three competing value systems within the DP, each of which has an impact on how learned, learning and learner are perceived: (1) the traditional academic group subjects in the DP; (2) those aspects of the DP such as the LP, CAS and TOK that are beyond the usual academic curriculum, and (3) the school itself as a social/cultural institution with particular affiliations in this regard. This complex interplay can be analysed by focusing on two of the value systems at one time, revealing the ways in which their interplay is influenced by the third value system, and yet this complexity often goes unnoticed (see Figure 5).

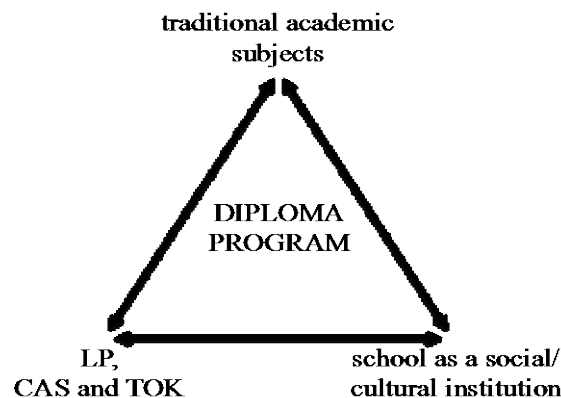


Figure 5. A diagrammatic representation of the three value systems impacting on the DP.

Firstly, it is worth highlighting the tension that exists between broad, school based value systems and the values inherent in achieving highest results in traditional academic subjects, especially in the senior secondary grades closest to certification requirements (such as with the DP). These tensions are not new and have been with mainstream schools for a very long time. From certain perspectives these two value systems align quite neatly, whereas from others they repel each other. This interplay can be seen to have national characteristics because the school based value systems are sometimes aligned in this way, even though the traditional academic value system operates transnationally.

However the complexity of this tension is further compounded when one adds the LP to the mix, as an Indian student noted: 'they [IB] are trying to break away from the solely academic, and trying to incorporate different elements' (INA Student). These different elements – the LP, CAS and TOK – cannot be viewed in the traditional academic way, as one Hong Kong teacher argued:

The Learner Profile shouldn't be viewed by students as being another work requirement. I would be horrified that one day we might grade students on how well they have attained the various attributes. The IB is overly regulated as it is. If we push the Learner Profile too much then students will turn off it because they will see the Learner Profile as another thing to be learnt and tested on (HKA Teacher).

So secondly, there is a tension introduced between the academic values inherent to the group subjects in the DP and those elements of the DP – like the LP – which operate under a different value system. In the milieu of the DP, the most obvious requirements from a student perspective are the academic demands of the DP, as a Hong Kong student attested: 'once you step into the DP you don't really care about much other than just getting your stuff done. It's very hard to think about being balanced or being principled' (HKA Student). Hence it seems that the traditional academic values of the DP group subjects work against the LP in particular ways, concerning particular attributes. This creates tensions for students who are being told to adhere to both value systems:

It is very difficult to attain the right balance between school work and the Learning Profile because our studies are so demanding and our teachers don't seem to encourage the balance all that much when it comes to their subjects. Everything hangs off the exams. Yeah, our teachers seem even more worried about the exams than we are (HKC Student).

Other students felt similarly, especially in relation to their interpretation of risk-taking, as one Australian student argued: 'I find that being a risk-taker or inquirer is actually discouraged in

schools... basically, you have the curriculum and you have to work with that and there's not a lot of room to move' (AUA Student). This raised questions about risk-taking in an academic context: 'you can get really good marks by rigidly following the criteria for the IB, so why do you need to take risks?' (AUA Student). The general outcome of such a tension was a siding with the academic values of the group subjects in the DP and the belief that risk-taking in an academic sense was to be avoided: 'with the IB, I wouldn't take risks because there's just so much content you have to learn, so much you need to do, all the criteria are very set, so taking risks could be very risky!' (AUA Student).

Yet the group subjects continue to play a large part in the DP, meaning that student experience is commonly characterized by traditional academic values, positioning the LP as a contrasting perspective. A teacher in a Hong Kong school firmly articulated this point, stressing that the traditional academic values of the group subjects overpower the other aspects of the DP, such as the LP and CAS:

I think there is a real contradiction between the Learner Profile and the content of the course. The IB is too heavy on the academics; they have six subjects plus three additional activities. Even with CAS you have to write down stuff. I think [the students] don't have the time... It is so driven by academics and grades. Each year the internal assessments get harder to push the standard. If they [IB] were serious about the Learner Profile they would relieve some of this pressure so the students had time for it and to enjoy CAS (HKC Teacher).

This tension between an academic value system and many of the attributes of the LP seems to lead to some confusion in the classroom around particular learning practices. But it also intrudes on student understanding of what it means to be a learner, as one Indian student noted: 'apart from just learning facts, it [the LP] is about learning to live with different cultures and caring about your community' (INA Student). Here this student highlights very clearly the broader sense of being a learner striven for by the IB, which is different from the academic way of being a learner emphasized by the necessity to achieve a score in the group subjects.

Interestingly, this Indian student's understanding of the LP does not reflect an individualistic perspective, usually aligned with a Western viewpoint. And yet the LP is commonly interpreted as individualistic. It is often overlooked, however, that the language of the LP is not specifically individualistic, and that interpretation of the LP is always situated in a particular school and classroom context. Hence, when the LP informs learning practices or versions of being a learner, this implementation requires a whole class or even whole school approach in order to be achieved. In

other words, and as an example, it would be very difficult for a lone student to be an inquirer in a context where inquiry was not a practice valued by the whole class, and especially the teacher.

The third tension thus involves the values of the LP seemingly coming into conflict with the values of the school as a social/cultural institution, specifically around the notions of individuality and community. However, like the other tensions, this one is complicated by the imposition of the academic value system so prevalent in the DP.

When schools espouse community orientated values, teachers and students tend to see learning as an individually orientated process, with being a learner interpreted concomitantly. This is perhaps because the traditional academic values are also involved here, wherein learning is considered a more individualistic undertaking. This leads to a perceived alignment between the traditional academic goals of many of the DP subjects and the LP, which confuses understanding of the LP. Such confusion is exacerbated when comparisons are made directly between a school's community orientated values and the LP because they overlook the presence of the academic values. The alignment between the LP and traditional academic values can be seen in this direct comparison a student made in Hong Kong between the LP and the school's community orientated values:

The IB Learner Profile is centred on the individual [and] individual improvement. While the [school] values definitely bring society into the ethos more. Because the IB Learner Profile is more about you as an IB student, while the [school] ideals are about how you can contribute to the community as well (HKB Student).

This perception of the LP seems clouded, however, by the complex interplay between the three value systems: traditional academic, LP, and school based. When compared with school based value systems the LP is, often unknowingly, aligned with traditional academic views of learning and thus considered to be a fairly narrow undertaking because learning is itself seen more narrowly. This narrow view of learning then positions the community orientated school values as beyond learning per se. Learning is no longer an encompassing term.

4.4 Local Relevance and Coherence of the List

In the complex mix created by the co-existence of three value systems in the DP, the attributes of the LP must inevitably be interpreted in various ways because they are seen from varying perspectives. As one Indian teacher suggested: 'the ideas [attributes of the LP] are sound, but they

can definitely be expressed differently across different cultures' (INA Teacher). And taking this notion a little further, a teacher in Hong Kong argued that it is an expectation of the IB that this interpretative task be taken on, deliberately: 'I don't think the IB values all the attributes equally. I think they expect us, as an IB school, to make our own judgments about what is more valued for our students' (HKC Teacher). This sentiment characterised the way that teachers and students engaged with the attributes of the LP, revealing various interpretations as to the relevance and even appropriateness of each attribute. Hence there were occasions when some students and teachers suggested that a particular attribute did not seem to add to the coherence of the LP. At times, they also put forward attributes that are not part of the current LP list, suggesting that they should be included.

Being a risk-taker was one of the attributes that many students struggled with. An Australian student asserted that being a risk-taker should not necessarily be part of the LP: 'I'm just not a hundred percent convinced that being a risk-taker is inherent to being a learner, because sure you have to take risks ... but not every single person needs to ... and being a risk-taker is often not a good thing' (AUC Student). Similarly, students in a Hong Kong school expressed concern that being a risk-taker was disrespectful to their teachers and family, and in the end did not serve their educational aims: 'our parents don't want us to be risk-takers, they want us to be respectful'; 'they say that we should not cause waves: do what your teachers ask you to do!' (HKC Students).

When the LP is mixed with a school based value system which is predominantly Chinese, then any discrepancy between the two systems can tend to challenge traditional Chinese values such as respect and harmony, and therefore highlight risk-taking. Communicator is comparably positioned amongst those attributes that sometimes challenge traditional Chinese values, as one Hong Kong student attested: 'in our school, communicator is usually tied with the profile [attribute] of being a risk-taker. After all, this is a predominantly Chinese focused culture where we don't really want to offend people with our own personal opinions' (HKA Student).

Being principled raised similar concerns, but this time in potential conflict with traditional academic values aimed at gaining high grades. Principles are at the heart of a value system, so when three value systems come together, their principles may not always align. An example scenario was shared by a student in Hong Kong:

One of our classmates raised an interesting question about [being] principled. We know very well that we should be honest. But then when it comes to a group four [IB academic subject] project, you know that if you have an anomaly in your experiment you can talk about that and you might get a better grade because you have more analysis to do. However if your experiment doesn't give you any anomalies what do you do? Do you add to the data or do you?... So that classmate asked, 'Does being principled hinder my learning? Or does it have a negative impact on me trying to get a higher grade?'" (HKA Student).

In a different way, Australian students seemed to have some difficulty in grasping what being principled really meant, and preferred words like ethical or responsible: 'principled is so vague I think something like 'responsible' or something to do with 'ethical' would be better ... because ethics come up so much in the IB, I think ethical is a better word to use ... honesty and integrity can fit under ethical ... and ethical is a broader idea, whereas principled tends to sound like something based on the individual'; 'I think for principled it's much less clear about what that particular attribute is trying to express' (AUB Students). 'I find principled a bit weird, because everyone has different principles and you can't really say we should all have the same principles' (AUC Student). One Australian teacher even suggested removing principled altogether: 'I'd get rid of principled ... it has something righteous about it' (AUA Teacher).

Inquirer was another attribute that drew mixed reviews. Again, a student in a Hong Kong school found it challenging as this attribute conflicted with their more traditional Chinese school based value system: 'in traditional Chinese culture you don't challenge your teachers. That would be considered as impolite. But then if we have to be an inquirer we ask questions and then we might sometimes challenge our teachers' (HKA Student). Not only did inquirer challenge traditional Chinese values, it also challenged traditional academic values. One Hong Kong student related what seemed to be a common occurrence, where students would avoid engaging in inquiry when they felt that this might be taking the class focus away from specific academic goals: 'sometimes if you ask too many questions and it diverges [the focus] away [from the specific topic] it becomes sort of like intruding into the class time of other people' (HKA Student).

When school based values systems and the LP were more closely in alignment, notwithstanding the difficulties created by academic values, students could acknowledge the importance of inquiry to learning: 'when you are an inquirer it means that you look into things more deeply, like a scientist might do and that is very much linked to being a good learner' (HKC Student). Further still, Australian students considered being an inquirer as central to learning: 'if you don't inquire, you'll never learn'; 'inquiry is part of that constant cycle of learning' (AUA Students).

Knowledgeable was also seen to be a problematic attribute, especially by students. Several expressed the notion that to be knowledgeable was an outcome of learning, not learning itself, and therefore it had no place in the LP: 'you don't need to be knowledgeable to learn ... you get knowledge through learning'; 'I'm not sure knowledgeable is relevant, because you can be a learner with not much knowledge ... for example, I don't know a lot about history or politics but that doesn't affect my ability to learn about history or politics' (AUA Students). A Hong Kong student responded similarly to this attribute: 'I don't get... being knowledgeable. Surely if you are learning then you're becoming more knowledgeable anyway. I don't see why it has to be singled out like this' (HKC Student). With an understanding of the pressure emanating from traditional academic values in the DP, one teacher even suggested removing knowledgeable from the list of Learner Profile attributes:

I would take out knowledgeable because I think in the IB there is already too much emphasis on having to know things. In this day and age you actually don't need to know that much anyway because it's all at your finger-tips (HKC Teacher).

Akin to knowledgeable, another attribute that some students found superfluous was thinker, because thinking was something you did all the time anyway, as one Indian student suggested: 'we should take out thinkers, you think all the time [so] it doesn't have to be on the list. This was the attribute that was explained the least. I think inquirer is a good one and makes thinker redundant' (INC Student). Yet thinker became more highly valued when a specific sense of thinking was introduced. One such sense was that of metacognition, which was identified by a Hong Kong teacher: 'I see it like metacognitive thinking; that is, thinking about your thinking. That's the way I see it anyway' (HKC Teacher). A further way in which thinking can be specified is as critical thinking, which one Indian student identified particularly with the DP:

Being a critical thinker is what separates an IB student from other students. What I really like about [the] IB is that we are taught to think holistically, we are taught to think outside of the box and we are taught to think by asking questions. We don't just take what we are being told. We hear what we are told, we think about it, and then we come up with our own conclusions and that's what I think the perfect IB student is. So instead of thinker it should be critical thinker (INC Student).

Teachers also valued this way of comprehending thinking as critical thinking: 'I would rank thinkers highly because it means that [the students] think about what we're teaching them and they make their own decisions about what is useful to them and what is not' (HKC Teacher). So, as a student at

a Hong Kong school suggested: 'it's really important to be a thinker I see it as being about thinking for yourself and not letting other people tell you what you should think' (HKC Student).

Being open-minded was considered by many students and teachers as one of the most important attributes. It seemed to suggest a sense of international-mindedness which is a cornerstone of the IB and a very important aspect of promoting the level of acceptance required of students and staff at an international school, as this Indian student recounted: 'when you come here, you may be in a class with no one else from your country so you can't be racist. We all have to learn to be open-minded. More nationalities help us to be more open-minded' (INC Student). A similar comment was made by a student in a school in Hong Kong, 'an international school with lots of different cultures and ethnicities,' which to this student meant being 'open-minded in relation to other religions and cultures. We don't get into fights about it. It's just an understanding of different opinions and respecting them' (HKA Student). Being open-minded was also highly relevant when students undertook school trips, often as part of CAS, as a student from Hong Kong shared:

[Open mindedness] is a really important Learner Profile [attribute] when we're going on school trips. Because when we go to a different culture we have to bear in mind that how they think might not be the same as how we think. And we shouldn't assume that what we think is what they think. For example we went to Vietnam recently [and experienced situations which forced us to be more open-minded]. [For example,] when we are being friendly to small children in Hong Kong we might sometimes pat them on the head. But in Vietnam, because they believe their soul is in their head, we're not supposed to touch [the small children's heads] (HKA Student).

This situation highlights the importance of the opportunities provided by CAS to bring the LP to life in different ways: 'with the example of CAS, when we go out and do service, we are being caring human beings, we are reflecting, and we are being communicators. It may be incorporated into the academic learning but it can also be outside of the classroom' (INA Student).

Another interpretation of this attribute plays on the link between openness and freedom, which again raises the issue of conflict between value systems. Some students recognised that being open-minded is only possible when teachers and schools value it, which is not always the case, depending on the ideas being expressed: 'I think open-mindedness is really discouraged in a lot of cultures and schools ... for example, what if you're in a Catholic school, and you believe in Buddhism or Atheism?' and 'some countries are very set in tradition and rituals, and in those countries it could make being open-minded more difficult' (AUA Students). One teacher in Hong Kong also connected this closed-

mindedness with traditional academic values, highlighting a contradiction for students: 'I see a contradiction here because how, on the one hand, can we drill the students to approach the exams the way we tell them to, but at the same time we say to them they should be risk-takers and be open-minded?' (HKC Teacher).

The three remaining attributes – balanced, caring, reflective – were not prominently raised by students or teachers through the interviews conducted in this study. One Hong Kong student did acknowledge that 'we have to be a balanced person by sleeping [properly] and you have to be caring towards your peers' (HKA Student). However, such a comment, while addressing daily life in the school, also suggests a connection with CAS, as one teacher pointed out: 'I think the Learner Profile is mostly linked to CAS at our school. That is where we tend to discuss the Learner Profile the most, such as communication skills and caring for others' (HKC Teacher). Being balanced, caring and reflective (along with other attributes) are very important in the context of CAS. Being reflective is another attribute that relates to one's experience, which CAS provides opportunity for, within the framework of the DP.

It is noteworthy that the complexity of the interplay between the three value systems, resulting in various positioning of the LP, leads to a range of beliefs about the coherence of the list of LP attributes and prompts suggestions for change. As one teacher proffered: 'I think the terminology used for the IB [LP] needs to be broader ... because it needs to include every person and every personality, or to at least help people to start thinking about these terms' (INA Teacher). Calling for an increased breadth of the LP can refer to the attributes themselves, and widening the scope of their interpretation, but it can also refer to broadening, or changing in some way, the list of attributes, thereby changing the LP more explicitly. A teacher from Hong Kong raised concerns with implementing change of this magnitude, querying what this would mean for all the work that has already been undertaken in schools in relation to the LP: 'I do think that if you were to update it – because it does somehow feel quite dated – what are you saying about the ones you remove? That they weren't essential in the first place? To then try to update it, or add to it or take something away makes you question whether this was ever really it' (HKA Teacher). Within this tension – suggesting change but also not sure what change might mean – some teachers and students advocated for a number of new attributes that addressed areas not specifically catered for within the LP. These new attributes were creativity and some version of self-motivation or dedication.

Creativity has become increasingly prevalent in educational discourse, and this has had an influence on how the LP is perceived. As one Hong Kong teacher argued: 'I think creativity is actually more important and more valued in today's world than some of the existing attributes' (HKC Teacher). Students in Australia also saw educational value in being creative: 'creativity should be there,' because 'creativity as a thought process can be applied to science or English, to all areas, but I don't think it's emphasized enough' (AUA Students). An Australian teacher thought the same: 'I think you need something along the lines of imaginative or creative ... because you've got to have your imagination ... you've got to grow the imagination, the inspiration and the drive to do things' (AUA Teacher). In a Hong Kong school several students wondered why being creative was not one of the attributes, one suggesting that the list may just be dated: 'I am not sure why 'creative' is not on the list. Maybe it's because it's an old list and being creative is more popular these days' (HKC Student).

The two areas of self-motivation and dedication overlap to a considerable degree. And they also align well with traditional academic values, which the LP is, in some ways, trying to move away from. But the general feeling amongst teachers and students was that something of this sort was missing from the LP, especially as this applied to the DP. 'I think a real omission is self-motivation,' one Hong Kong teacher proffered, explaining that: 'at our school this is a particular value that we instill in our students. We want them to take responsibility for their own learning' (HKC Teacher). A student at this school agreed, giving some examples: 'I think something that should be there is motivation. We are being told all the time to keep up the motivation and that means not making excuses about why you haven't done your homework or studied for a test' (HKC Student). Dedication was referred to similarly, and used mainly by Australian students: 'I think 'dedication' is needed ... because if you're not dedicated, you're not going to learn anything' (AUA Student). Again, the workload of the DP was mentioned in relation to this possible LP attribute: 'I really think something is needed there about being persistent or disciplined, because you've got to really put yourself out there in the IB and work really hard over the two years' (AUC Student).

4.5 Learner Profile as Explicit or Embedded

The various interpretations possible for each of the LP attributes meant that some students believed more explicit teaching should occur which would enable them to better incorporate the LP into their learning practice. This was not, however, a request for direct teaching of the LP. This request was for more explicit *reference* to the LP, premised on the need to understand it better, to see where it is useful, rather than just using it, somewhat intuitively. This was pointed out by a student in Hong

Kong: 'I think we are developing those skills for learning, but we don't know we are using them' (HKA Student). Another student at this school continued the point, arguing for more information on how to put each attribute into practice:

What they [the IB] don't specify, I don't think, is explicit ways in which these Learner Profiles [attributes] affect the quality of learning and the quality of knowledge thereby acquired. There is a lack of guidance from the IB How does the Learner Profile help me learn? How [for example] do I use that profile [attribute] of being a communicator to revise in chemistry? (HKA Student).

These students were happy to work with the LP, but they also wanted concrete examples of how to implement the LP in practice. While written examples and textbook links could be further developed, the provision of concrete examples takes another twist when the role of the teacher in conveying the LP is taken into consideration. Some students called on teachers to set the example by implementing the LP in their teaching practice: 'In some ways I think it [the LP] is even more relevant to teachers ... because it makes them think about how they teach and the different ways they teach' (AUC Student). Therefore, another student reasoned, 'teachers also need to be these things, because like, if your teacher is not a critical thinker or an inquirer, they're not going to be good at teaching you these things' (AUA Student). Other students made similar points, but also highlighted how their teachers did not practice what they preached in relation to the Learner Profile:

The teachers are the ones who need to act [according to] and have the attributes so that they can set an example for us. I see most of my teachers don't have any of the attributes of the Learner Profile and they expect us to act that way. If you are going to set an example for us, set a good one because you are not setting a very good one right now (INC Student).

While these students were calling for more explicit reference to the LP, they were not asking for it to be taught to them as a list of attributes. Rather they were asking for the LP to be more clearly integrated through all aspects of their experience of the DP – through teaching practice, textbooks and other resources. This would then enable them to develop a better sense of how the LP actually worked to support their learning.

This position is a middle ground between that of explicit teaching of the LP and a purely embedded LP; and it is a position that teachers did not seem to be aware of. Some teachers thought that the LP should be approached in a minimalist way through its unspoken incorporation in practice, as a teacher in Hong Kong suggested: 'I don't think we need to drum the Learner Profile into the students because they are reaching these goals through our day-to-day IB program anyway It is not

something we need to especially teach them as such' (HKC Teacher). An Australian teacher provided a classroom example that illuminates this point:

Say in history, open-mindedness, for example, you have to be open to what different people and perspectives say on a particular subject, being open-minded is embedded in the very methodology of what I have to teach my students. So to some extent, we don't have to talk about the Learner Profile explicitly because I am teaching it by virtue of the fact that I teach my subject (AUA Teacher).

However this way of embedding the LP may not provide the clarity that some students require in relation to the ways in which the LP actually connects with their learning. On the other hand, though, some students were very happy with this way of implicitly embedding the LP. A comment from a student at the same Hong Kong school supports this point: 'in the DP program we *have* to be risk-taking and we *have* to be knowledgeable and we *have* to be a thinker We do it just as things go on' (HKA Student). It seems that the embedded nature of the LP may be appreciated most by those students who have come through the more explicit teaching of the LP in the MYP and PYP: 'what I like about the DP this year is that they [the LP attributes] are not explicitly mentioned, but they're just there within our learning' (AUB Student). So 'the IB LP isn't very enforced in the DP program, as it is in the PYP and MYP. When you come to DP, you are just expected to know it' (INC Student).

Perhaps the explicit connections between the LP and experience of the DP that some students were seeking are best supported in CAS activities. One teacher pointed out that it is in CAS that the explicit references to the LP are made: 'I think the Learner Profile is mostly linked to CAS at our school. That is where we tend to discuss the Learner Profile the most, such as communication skills and caring for others' (HKC Teacher). An Australian teacher similarly acknowledged that 'we don't explicitly teach it [the LP] outside of CAS' (AUA Teacher). This reserving of the LP to CAS activities suggests that the LP is more applicable to those other aspects of the DP – CAS and TOK – and may be more difficult to integrate clearly with the group subjects which largely follow a more traditional academic value system.

CHAPTER 5

Student Knowledge and Attitudes

The following two chapters expand on some of the general findings presented in Chapter 4, focusing on student and teacher perspectives respectively. In this chapter student knowledge and attitudes towards the Learner Profile (LP) are explored. Discussion first centres on the diversity in their understanding of the LP across all nine schools, suggesting that there is no clear pattern of difference along national lines. Differences within the same country are often more significant than across the three countries. Findings emerging from the data suggest that each of the nine schools has diverse and distinct views emanating from its unique history and religious or corporate affiliation, the organisational structure of the school and the cultural composition of its student and staff. For example, the data suggests differing attitudes of globally mobile as opposed to local students. It also points to discernible differences in student knowledge of the LP based on entry level into the IB: the students who did not encounter the LP until the Diploma Programme (DP) often have a more limited understanding of the LP's relevance and significance in their learning. This chapter also examines the relationship of the LP to other aspects of the DP curriculum, and explores the impact of the demands of the DP curriculum on the LP. Finally, some preliminary observations are presented on the ways in which parents understand and view the significance of the LP, especially with respect to its relevance for student academic and career prospects, both national and internationally.

5.1 Patterns of National Difference?

In exploring student familiarity with the LP within the DP, the focus groups indicated major differences in the ways in which students interpreted the LP and attached significance to it. Indeed, the meaning attached to the various attributes was highly contested. The level of familiarity with, and attitudes towards, the LP among students varied a great deal, and hinted at institutional rather than national disparity across schools in India, Hong Kong and Australia.

To what extent is there a common language about the LP across all Diploma schools and a shared knowledge of each of the ten attributes? The qualitative data gathered from students across the nine schools in this study suggests there is considerable variation, attributable to a range of factors including exposure to the LP, the extent to which it is aligned to the existing mission and values of the school, and the ways in which it is introduced and implemented at each school. At one Indian

school, students developed their appreciation for the LP prior to entering the IB programme. The school's initiative in presenting the LP at school orientation sessions was paramount in crafting a shared discourse amongst prospective students. This early introduction was able to foster an emerging understanding of each of the ten attributes and their connection to the curriculum. This introduction led students to understand the LP as 'a framework for their learning', enabling them to articulate the LP's purpose and relevance, in ways that the school had defined in its own distinctive fashion. The other two schools in India however viewed the LP somewhat differently, as a set of values and as a particular perspective on life-long learning.

In Hong Kong, students at one school viewed the LP attributes as a body of knowledge to be learnt. Students at this school went so far as to suggest that they were told even before they started the IB Diploma that the LP comprises of personal attributes that must be applied to everything in the IB: 'I remember one of our teachers saying that without taking on the LP attributes we wouldn't be able to complete our DP successfully' (HKC Student). In contrast, at other schools in Hong Kong, students described the LP as a list of character traits developed throughout an IB education - capabilities that are essential for becoming a successful learner in this new century.

The data pointed to considerable diversity among perceptions of the manner in which the LP related to academic knowledge. Some students viewed the two to be inextricably linked, while others viewed the LP to be an additional set of requirements of the DP. According to one student, academic knowledge, while in itself is essential, is no longer sufficient in an era of globalisation and technological advances. He regarded the LP attributes as being instrumental; a means of cultivating a more holistic person. Other students in Hong Kong thought that the LP encouraged the development of a global citizen who had the knowledge and skills required of 21st century learners. Students in Australia also considered the LP to be mainly about becoming well-rounded people – 'moving beyond academic knowledge towards nurturing the ethical and global qualities of a person' (AUA Student). For another student, the LP 'is a list of things to be, [in order] to become a more holistic person ... it is what you strive to be while doing the IB to maximise your learning' (AUA Student).

Interestingly, while students acknowledged the importance of the LP, they were sceptical about its effectiveness within the DP, questioning whether the LP actually did make a difference. For some students, this uncertainty emanated from the absence of explicit references to the LP at the DP level. One student maintained that while at his school posters were placed in every classroom and

corridor, he doubted that this was sufficient in effecting any real change. Another student suggested that 'the attributes are definitely important but I don't know if they are making a difference. They are too subjective; some people make more sense of them than others' (INC Student).

The relevance and impact of the LP was perhaps more contested within student focus groups in India and Hong Kong than in Australia. For some students at an Indian school, the pre-existing mission statement and values it actively represented were more significant in attracting them than the fact that it was an IB school. These students felt that the list of the LP attributes was too narrow and limited. An international student at this school described his involvement in politics, and the alignment between his personal values and these aforementioned school values:

I was very involved in politics back home. When I heard about [this school] and especially its values, that's what made me interested. I wasn't too interested in the IB, I was quite happy with the Finnish education system and would have stayed there happily. It was the fact that this whole system was based on intercultural understanding and promoting values that I really respect that made me apply. (INB Student)

For students at this school, its own ethos remains more important than the LP attributes. At a school in Hong Kong that shares a similar philosophy, students felt a greater connection to the school's vision and mission statement than to the LP. Equally, some students at an Indian school were critical of the IB's claim that the LP attributes were only attainable through an IB education. They saw these qualities developing from a variety of external sources, with one student stating: 'you can learn all of these things [the LP attributes] anywhere in the world; you don't have to be in the IB. It depends more on the person than the system. It really depends on who the person is and how they were raised' (INC Student).

Furthermore, for one student in India the list of the LP attributes was simply that - a list. For him, there remains a disconnect among the concepts and the ways the teachers explain their significance. One student stated: 'I actually don't care for the LP. When I first came here, my teacher told me about the LP but I couldn't understand it and I still don't understand it... 'be a balanced person, be an inquirer' but they don't teach us how to become like that' (INC Student). Some students in Hong Kong shared this view, and questioned the extent to which the teachers themselves understood and practiced the list of attributes. One student described the LP as having no effect on his learning. He insisted that the lack of opportunities to reflect on the attributes precluded any deep engagement with the list (HKC Student).

The diversity of views expressed above clearly suggests considerable variance among student understanding and familiarity with the LP. Their perceptions of the LP clearly do not align exclusively along national differences. The differences in perceptions across schools within the same country are often greater than differences across schools in different countries. Indeed, one school in India and another in Hong Kong belonging to the same global network of schools demonstrate remarkable similarities in the ways in which their students speak about the LP and the broader ethos that the two schools share.

5.2 Globally Mobile and Local Students

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of many of the IB schools in this study is the cultural diversity of their students. At the girls' school in Australia, almost half of its DP students are international students - globally mobile, with cosmopolitan lifestyles that they seem to take for granted. Many local students too have had transnational experiences, and if they have not, their aspirations are nonetheless global. However, some students are locally grounded and have not travelled extensively. How do these different groups of students relate to each other, and does their transnationalism make any difference to the ways they approach the LP attributes? Attitudes of globally mobile and local students differed in a number of significant ways. Many teachers regarded the globally mobile students who had moved from one international school to another as more open-minded than their local peers. Local students in the DP who had previously attended nationally governed schools were less confident with the LP. Students who had experienced various contexts felt better able to integrate into IB schools, demonstrating a heightened sense of globality. According to some students, the LP attributes had greater applicability to a globalised context.

This was particularly evident amongst local students in India who expressed a sense of trepidation in coming to an IB school for the first time. Initial concerns centered on racism, but these became extraneous once they became a part of the school community. One student described her parent's heightened sense of concern upon entering an IB school in India. She described her parents warning her to be careful of foreigners, suggesting that she needed to modify the way she spoke and behaved when at the school, as well as alerting her teachers the moment she noticed anything untoward (INA Student). Similarly, other local students spoke of their concerns around racism:

I was a bit scared of racism, to be honest, but there was nothing like that because I realised that there are so many nationalities at this school - in fact, in this room itself there are four nationalities – [that] you cannot be racist, you won't find another of your nationality, that's how people learn to be more open-minded and they work together. (INC Student)

Her fears were dispelled somewhat as she came to realise that her school encouraged tolerance, but she continued to feel marginalized from the dominant globally-oriented students. Some teachers too felt that globally mobile students were better able to integrate into the culture of the school, and embrace the LP. One teacher argued the point by stating that 'trying to convince local students what it's all about is quite difficult' (INC Teacher).

While it appeared that local Indian students faced greater difficulties in integrating into the school community, discussions with students in Hong Kong suggested the opposite, where 'foreigners' were seen to be less tolerant and struggling to adapt to Hong Kong's cosmopolitan context. Indeed, the local students in Hong Kong regarded themselves as more open-minded and accepting. One student noted: 'it is interesting when a new student comes to the school who might be from a more racist or authoritarian country. I think they struggle with some of the Learner Profile at first. But this school is strong on its values and they would soon learn that we are more open-minded here' (HKC Student). An Australian teacher also described parochial views amongst local students in an international school from her previous teaching experience in another country. She was convinced of the value of the LP in breaking down the stereotypes often emerging from students with varied and opposing religious or national backgrounds.

This discussion shows how participating IB schools in this study are culturally diverse, though this diversity is expressed in a range of different ways, not only nationally framed but also in terms of transnational experiences. To varying degrees, most IB schools in both Asia and Australia cater for a large number of globally mobile students, along with students who have had limited experiences of mobility across national borders. This leads to complex cultural politics within each school, often rendering national differences less significant than other modalities of difference. Differences across IB schools within the same country are in many cases more marked than differences along national lines. National differences still matter, but not in any generalised fashion; rather, in ways that are institutionally specific.

5.3 Students with PYP and MYP Backgrounds

In relation to the LP, there is another difference among students that is potentially significant - across students with PYP and MYP backgrounds and those without. Interview data suggested that students who had completed PYP and MYP had developed a reasonable understanding of the LP attributes by the time they entered the DP. They were able to speak a particular discourse of learning. This was so because the LP is deeply embedded in the PYP and MYP programmes. Teachers make explicit references to the LP attributes with clearer links to the curriculum in both of these programmes. Students who had completed both PYP and MYP were thus able to draw on various representations of the LP in class, and able to discuss how the LP attributes were relevant to their learning experiences in the DP. According to an Indian student: 'I find myself just using them [the LP attributes] every day because that's something that's just programmed into me' (INC Student). Another Indian student suggested that he could recite the LP in his sleep as a result of its early introduction in the PYP programme (INA Student). Finally, students across most of the schools in each country suggested that community service reflections and homeroom discussions further cemented their understanding of the LP.

Students in Hong Kong also supported this view, insisting that their understanding of the LP was dependent mostly upon their entry point into the IB. Students suggested that completing PYP and MYP provided a solid foundation in understanding the LP as it was referred to frequently and discussed at length by teachers, particularly in their formative years. Students explained that entering the IB at the DP level was widely seen as disadvantageous, as at that level there was no formal explicit teaching of the LP attributes. In a Hong Kong school, the students were often asked to indicate how they demonstrated progress in the development of an attribute in completing a task. The DP students new to the IB often resented this task and questioned its purpose and relevance to their studies, even as they admitted that knowledge of the LP helped in completing CAS reflections required in the DP.

Even among some students who have been introduced to the LP in earlier programmes, there was a degree of scepticism regarding the relevance of the LP attributes at the DP level. One student explained that despite his familiarity with the LP, he remained doubtful that students would benefit greatly if the LP were introduced for the first time at the DP level:

I kind of relate more to the LP because that's the way I was taught during the MYP. I was encouraged heavily to follow the LP. Teachers liked to emphasise that you have to become a well-rounded person using the LP. You should be this and this and this. And they even gave out awards to people. They place a lot of emphasis on adhering to the LP and how students

should be all of these things, but in reality it is still hard to achieve. Very few students can ever achieve even half of those attributes. That's what I saw anyway. (HKA Student)

This student believed that many of his friends viewed the LP as a distraction in the DP. Not surprisingly, therefore, he maintained that formal instruction around the LP all but disappeared at the DP level.

What this discussion suggests is that there appears to be wide discrepancies between schools in terms of the extent to which LP is put into practice with students within the DP. At an Australian school, there seemed to be almost no use of the LP with students, with one student suggesting that he knew nothing of the LP until he completed the survey for this study: 'When I was asked do to your survey, that was the first time I'd ever heard of the Learner Profile' (AUA Student). He further stated: 'I've never heard of the LP in any of my classes, it's never been mentioned... Sometimes the teacher asks us to reflect on the Learner Profile, but we don't know what it is, so we don't know how to do that' (AUA Student). Similar views emerged from students in India where they simply didn't understand what the attributes meant: 'No-one told me what the attributes really mean' (INC Student). 'They don't teach us how to be balanced or to be caring. They give us examples but they don't teach us how to become like this' (INC Student).

5.4 Relationship of LP to other Aspects of the Curriculum

In contrast to some of the preceding sections' discussion of these sceptical views, some students appreciated the fact that the IB sought to provide them with a holistic education that focused on intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth, through the use of the LP attributes. These students noted that the LP was especially relevant to the three CORE elements of the DP curriculum that sat alongside the areas of knowledge: Theory of Knowledge (TOK), Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) and the Extended Essay. They acknowledged that these core elements were central in supporting the academic disciplines, developing a sense of identity and international-mindedness, and that the LP framework had the potential to enhance their engagement with the three core activities.

The students saw a more visible connection between the LP and two of the core subjects in particular: CAS and TOK. In fact, several Australian students saw the LP as being relevant only to CAS and TOK. Since CAS was conceptualised in order to help students engage with the world in 'real and

practical ways', the student readily saw how the LP attributes such as caring and reflective were linked to a service activity, for example. Experiential learning forms the basis of CAS, enabling students to engage in projects and to reflect on their experiences. Students reflect on what they have learnt, how they felt and what they most value from the projects undertaken. According to an Australian student: 'With CAS, it isn't just about going out into the community and doing things. I think it's more about the reflections that you do afterwards, and to do the reflections, these attributes are very important' (AUB Student).

Similarly, many students spoke of the relationship between TOK and the LP: 'I would definitely say it's a big thing in TOK ... things like open-minded, thinker and communicator would fall into TOK, and I think TOK is almost a summary of the LP in a way that it is tied in with our learning and how we learn' (AUB Student). Students also suggested that teachers often made explicit connections to the LP attributes within the TOK subject. One student explained, 'It [the LP] is definitely more relevant to TOK than the rest, especially open-minded and thinker... TOK is almost a summary of the LP, tied in with how we learn' (AUB Student).

Some students believed that the LP gave them a useful vocabulary to write their TOK and Extended Essays, and lamented the fact that teachers do not refer to the attributes as much as they should. From the teachers' perspective, however, while they could see how the LP attributes were linked to all subjects, it was not always possible to find time to address them in a 'crowded and intense' programme. According to a teacher in Hong Kong:

I think as teachers we are meant to be talking about the LP in our classes but in reality there is not much time for it. Also, I have to admit it is not in the forefront of my mind when I am teaching – so much other stuff gets in the way. Also I think the students would be surprised if I came out with something overtly LP in one of the classes. They would think that belongs somewhere else like CAS. (HKC Teacher)

This observation further illustrates the widely held view across each of the schools in Hong Kong, India and Australia that the LP attributes are best developed in CAS and TOK. Indeed, some students mocked the idea that the LP attributes were relevant to all academic subjects. A student in India, for example, asked: 'A few times a year, we have to write about what it means to be a risk taker in Math. How am I a risk taker in Math?!' (INC Student). Students in Hong Kong were highly critical of the ways in which their school tested knowledge of the LP attributes, both before they entered the DP, and also during the programme. The same sentiment was evident amongst students at an Indian

school: 'All they do is test us. At the end of the test, in a reflection, we are supposed to write which of the LP [attributes] we have shown in this test. What has that got to do with the test?' (INC Student).

5.5 Pressures of the DP Work Requirements

The students in all nine schools repeatedly raised the issues of time pressures and the intense focus on examinations in the DP, leading them to wonder whether the architects of the IB curriculum were really serious about the value placed on the Learner Profile (LP). They pointed to a contradiction between the IB's conceptualisation of the LP and requirements of the formal syllabus and examinations. Many students felt that more time within the curriculum should be allocated for them to think and reflect on the attributes. The students also commented on how the IB curriculum was driven by a relentless emphasis on tasks in an overcrowded curriculum. Many felt these tasks were necessary, but should not create conditions in which opportunities for reflection become rare.

A number of students in India and Australia discussed the attributes of balanced and caring, and suggested that these attributes conflicted with the realities of the IB workload required of students: 'Caring doesn't seem to correlate with hard study and all the work required for the IB at the DP level' (AUA Student). Another student commented: 'in theory, it is easy to ask students to become balanced, but it is not possible in reality given the demands of the IB workload' (INB Student). Finally, an Indian student expressed this dramatic sentiment: 'How can I be balanced when I sometimes don't even want to be alive?' (INA Student). This student suggested that he had various hobbies that could help him develop a number of the LP attributes and an overall better sense of well-being, which he had to abandon due to the number of tasks associated with his academic subjects.

Several students believed that their teachers were aware of the workload but were nonetheless anxious about covering all the necessary material on the syllabus, and so avoided anything outside the requirements of examinations. One student maintained that:

If I want to know interesting facts that will not necessarily be in the exam, the teachers know it but they don't have enough time because the syllabus is such that this is what we have to learn in that month and they don't have time to tell us interesting things that are equally important in our life (INC Student).

A number of teachers agreed but nonetheless felt that the formal academic curriculum made it difficult for them to explore equally interesting (but un-tested) topics that might be of considerable relevance to the students, and could help the students understand the communities in which their school is located. According to a teacher in Australia, the IB needs to acknowledge the tension between its academic expectation and its equally important focus on the LP attributes:

It feels a bit hypocritical sometimes ... I think we need to look broadly at the philosophy of schooling ... if you're going to stuff students with all this information and make them regurgitate it, then you're not 'caring', you're not a 'thinker'... (AUA Teacher).

A teacher in Hong Kong insisted that an excessive focus on academic knowledge risks implying that the LP is 'less valued'. He maintained that many of his colleagues 'feel that they cannot focus on the LP as it is not recognised or valued in the examination process' (HKC Teacher). The same teacher argued: 'I can just imagine what would happen if my exam grades fell. I'd love to know what would happen if I said to the school, 'I know my students did not do so well with their grades this year but never mind, [at least] they achieved all of the LP attributes!' (HKC Teacher).

5.6 Taking the LP Home

It could be argued, of course, that this line of thinking about the tension between requirements of academic knowledge and examinations and the LP - widely held though it is - rests on a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature and purposes of the LP; and that it does not represent a separate area of the IB curriculum but a framework of attributes for the learner through which academic knowledge should be approached. Like students and teachers, some parents appear to understand this, while others do not. They recognise that the LP is not an additional subject but a set of attributes essential for becoming responsible members of local, national and global communities. They appreciate that the LP represents a perspective on knowledge and its relationship to various values and capabilities, and should therefore be integrated in all curricular activities.

The student interviews conducted as part of this study suggested that the extent to which the LP was understood and valued by parents varied enormously. For many parents, the LP had little significance in their selection of the school while for other parents, the focus on the LP attributes formed an essential element of their understanding of the IB, and set it apart for other systems of education. It also constituted a marker of distinction. This applies particularly to the parents who enrol their children at the PYP and MYP level. According to a number of students, parents were informed of the

LP at information evenings and were also sent hard copies of related brochures. For these students, the brochures encouraged a dialogue about the impact and relevance of the LP to their studies. Some students claimed that their parents referred to the LP as a means of discussing tasks and refocusing the student's effort. Parents knew about the attributes and understood the connection to the curriculum, referring to it at every available opportunity: 'they mention the learner profile when they see me getting really stressed... they refer to it' (AUC Student). Another student reasoned: 'my parents... would agree that they [the attributes] are important and that they are something that the school should be teaching' (HKC Student).

There also appeared to be a shift in parental views over the course of an IB education, with parents initially advocating a desire for their child to have an alternate education with emphasis on ethics and values. However, what has been noted is a shift in thinking: 'as soon as they hit grade nine, everything changes... it goes from PYP - 'that's how we love our child to learn' - when suddenly it gets to grade nine, and suddenly 'we're all about exams!' (INA Teacher).

Conversely, interviews also suggested that the LP did not rate highly on the list of parent priorities. According to some students their parents gave little consideration to the LP when selecting schools. Students in Hong Kong suggest that their parents placed greater prominence on the school-specific value system over the LP: 'I think my parents would know the overall school values first and maybe the LP second' (HKB Student). Data in India also suggests that the LP was not widely regarded by some parents: 'the IB Learner Profile doesn't exist to my parents' (INA Student). One of his peers at the same school built on the same idea: 'I can forecast my dad's response - 'these [LP attributes] are meaningless, and these should not be explicitly mentioned, because these values are innate'. That would be his response' (INA Student).

5.7 Academic and Career Futures

The discussion in this chapter indicates that the DP students interviewed for this study had diverse and often conflicting perceptions about the significance of the LP to their studies. While almost all students recognised the important contribution the LP can make to enhance the PYP and MYP curriculum, many doubted its relevance in the DP. While most students acknowledged the value of the LP attributes in TOK and CAS, many doubted their applicability in relation to academic learning. In view of the strenuous demands of the academic tasks and examinations, some students felt that a focus on the LP was a distraction; and that at the DP level, many of the attributes had either already

been developed in the earlier years of their schooling or were not taken seriously by their teachers. In each of the Australian, Indian and Hong Kong schools, some students pointed to the contradictions they saw in their teachers not always practising the LP attributes, especially when it came to being open-minded, reflective and balanced. Others observed a degree of cynicism displayed by their teachers towards the LP.

In contrast, many other students recognised the importance of the LP, and could see its long-term benefits, in both their future studies and work. They realised that the list of the LP attributes combined a range of intellectual and moral virtues that has the potential to guide them through life beyond formal education. A student in India noted that university studies demanded a greater degree of independence and self-direction and that 'I can see how the LP is trying to develop skills of inquiry and research, and love for learning for its own sake' (INB Student). Another student in Hong Kong, who was hoping to study in the United States, claimed that 'I have to learn to be open-minded if I am to survive at an American college, where I know students come from many cultures and countries' (HKA student). A student in Australia summed up the long-term value of the LP: 'I don't think we will realise the full value of the LP and IB until many years from now. The LP attributes are not always for now, but for the rest of your life' (AUB student).

Many students also connected the LP attributes to their understanding of the emerging forces and conditions of globalisation. They acknowledged that each of the ten attributes was necessary to become an internationally-minded person, and to function effectively in a world which is becoming globally integrated. A large proportion of the students in Hong Kong and India were planning to study and work abroad. To some of these students, the LP attributes served the function of inspiring, motivating and imagining their future beyond school. According to a student in India, 'in my view, these attributes are all designed to prepare us for studies at a university in America or England, where we will need to be risk-takers and creative thinkers, and also to be self-sufficient' (INB Student). Another student agreed: 'since I came here, after a month, I realised... [the IB] is more connected to university study. We look at many researchers and open our minds about things' (INC Student). These students were told that the IB needed to be academically rigorous in order to prepare them for studies at highly competitive universities abroad; however, many also recognised their success there would depend not only on academic achievement but also on a perspective on work and life that the IB had sought to define for them through its focus on the ten LP attributes.

Some students readily acknowledged that the LP was giving them more than an academic foundation, with a number of students referring to its long term benefits beyond their formal education at the universities. Some students suggested that the LP had shaped the way they reason; exposing them to a set of ideals that impacted their thinking and approach to tasks. One student insisted that the LP had provided her some clarity regarding work-life balance:

These days you hear a lot about work-life balance and this is so true when doing the IB. I am not saying though that this is easy to achieve but like other aspects of the LP it is something we need to strive for. That is why I agree that the LP runs along with our studies. It reminds us that there is more to life than work and study. Maybe in years to come we will realise that the LP was the part of the IB with the most long term benefits for our adult lives. (HKC Student)

The IBO could find no better endorsement for its emphasis on the LP than this student's sentiment. It puts education in a broader context, concerned not only with academic knowledge and skills but with the development of a world-view in which we recognise our global inter-dependence, as well as our common humanity.

CHAPTER 6

Teacher Values and Approaches

6.1 Local and International Teachers

The data collected for this study points to a wide-ranging realisation in each of the nine schools we visited that a focus on the LP requires a particular orientation to teaching, with which not all teachers are comfortable. According to a principal in India, some of his teachers find it difficult to understand and relate to the pedagogic outlook suggested by the LP. He has noted that this is particularly the case with teachers trained in the traditional didactic 'chalk and talk' methods. Every effort is made at his and other IB schools to recruit teachers either already aware of, or sympathetic to, the requirements of the LP; or with an open-mind and a willingness to develop new pedagogic skills. However, he notes, this does not always guarantee the appointment of appropriate teachers, some of whom may be experts in their content area but are unwilling to change their teaching methods. These teachers might produce good examination results but are unable or unwilling to challenge their students to develop the LP attributes.

IB schools employ teachers from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some already have a sound understanding of the philosophical and pedagogic assumptions underlying the LP. This is especially the case with teachers who had previously taught in PYP and MYP, where the attention paid to the development of the LP attributes is often more extensive and explicit. In the Diploma Programme, according to a number of teachers in each of the Indian, Hong Kong and Australian schools, there are fewer opportunities to address the LP attributes, so dominated as it is with the concerns of content knowledge, academic tasks and examinations. One teacher in Hong Kong went as far as to suggest that in the DP: 'we work under great time constraints, and do not have the time to work on LP' (HKA Teacher). Another teacher noted that: 'some of our students regard LP as irrelevant to examinations, and feel cheated if too much time is spent talking about LP' (HKB Teacher). A teacher in India believed that: 'while the focus on LP was entirely apt in PYP and MYP, at DP level its importance is questionable' (INA Teacher).

Some other teachers were not so negative, however, and were able to incorporate LP attributes into the formal curriculum in more imperceptible and organic ways in their treatment of content areas. According to most of the DP coordinators in this study, such teachers are rare and perhaps not as

valued as they should be; such is the emphasis on examination results at most IB schools. The principal of an Indian school admitted that it was possible for some teachers to ignore the LP altogether. To overcome this, he encourages discussion of LP attributes in staff meetings and in professional development, and finds some teachers totally engaged, while others display 'looks that suggest a bored and dismissive attitude' (INC Administrator). To him the question of how it might be possible to encourage a great level of teacher interest in the LP remains a challenging one. He has also been unable to identify any distinctive pattern in identifying teachers at the time of their appointment who are likely to take an interest in the LP and those who will not.

Other educational leaders suggested however that, as a general rule, teachers who have taught in the PYP and MYP exhibit a greater awareness and understanding of the LP, as indeed do the teachers who have responsibility for TOK and CAS. The assumption that teachers of humanities and social sciences are likely to show a greater interest in the LP, and find it more relevant, was rejected by a number of teachers in schools across Australia, India and Hong Kong. However, the suggestion that teachers who are internationally mobile or have lived and worked outside their country of origin can more readily relate to the LP appears to have some plausibility. In their own experiences of transnationality and cultural diversity, it is suggested, they inevitably have to engage with the attributes of open-mindedness and reflection, while their decision to teach abroad expresses a degree of risk-taking. For those teachers who are locally grounded, attributes such as open-mindedness and risk-taking are not always applicable, according to a DP coordinator in Hong Kong. Indeed, it could be said that since IB schools are constituted by transnational learning spaces, the list of LP attributes is constructed with the transnational teacher and student in mind, and certainly favours their lifestyle and career choices.

6.2 Attributes of Cognition and of Morality

Teachers find the list of LP attributes, as it is currently constituted, both helpful and problematic. According to a number of teachers, it is possible to divide the list into two categories: intellectual attributes, which can easily be linked to the requirements of knowledge and cognition, essential for success in the formal areas of study; and attributes of morality, which are much more difficult to define and assess, as they tend to belong within the realm of personal conduct. Some teachers regard the various attributes of cognition, such as inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers and communicators as entirely self-evident. Indeed, they find it hard to imagine how teaching of the formal curriculum is even possible without an emphasis on these attributes. According to one

teacher: 'a lot of these attributes are academic characteristics... inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers... a lot of them enter the basic curriculum across our subjects' (INA Teacher). At the same time, other teachers understand the need to specify these attributes as a way of reminding students why and how the subjects do not simply involve a set of facts but also a wider range of factors relevant to the processes of learning.

The attributes of cognition are assumed to be universal by almost all teachers. This is not the case with the attributes that belong within the realm of ethical conduct. These attributes are highly contested. So, for example, many teachers observed that attributes such as open-mindedness and risk-taking are deeply troublesome in some cultural contexts, while the meaning of notions such as reflective and caring are far from clear. It might be assumed that the meaning and significance attached to these attributes of morality might correspond to various cultural and national differences; that, for example, in a traditional community such as India open-mindedness and risk-taking may be contested to a greater extent. The data collected for this study however did not support this assumption. Indeed, objections to risk-taking were more widely asserted in Australia and Hong Kong. In an Australian school, the Director of Teaching and Learning expressed a fear that some of her Asian parents might object to open-mindedness and risk-taking. We heard similar concerns in Hong Kong, but always couched in terms of the possible reactions to these attributes from parents. Very few of these teachers were able to name the instances where concerns about open-mindedness and risk-taking were directly expressed by parents, so their fears seem to have been based more on assumptions than on actual incidences.

If the list of LP attributes provided by the IB consists of two different categories then the question of how DP teachers might use the attributes of cognition, which are already embedded in the formal curriculum, to develop in students the attributes of morality is clearly a significant one. This question has been considered by some of the more reflective IB teachers who believed that the LP should not be viewed as a list of ten discrete attributes but as a set of inter-related ideas that define and give meaning to each other. So, for example, caring, open-mindedness, balanced and reflective should be seen as interconnected values, each reinforcing the significance of the others in developing 'internationally-minded' people, who recognise their common humanity. This focus on interconnectedness of the attributes is something that was recognised by a few teachers in this study, and should perhaps be further highlighted in IB policy documents and professional development activities. Indeed, according to one teacher, interconnectedness of our values and interdependence of our communities could be presented as a kind of 'meta-attribute', highlighting

an overarching perspective from which teachers can show their students how attributes of cognition and morality are inextricably linked.

The extent to which the ten LP attributes represent a comprehensive list is also an issue that was raised by both students and teachers at each of the nine schools in our study. While some teachers regarded the list as perfectly apt, others viewed it as too long, preferring a list that had no more than five attributes. Still others thought a number of key attributes for living, working and thriving in the global era were missing from the list. As noted in earlier sections of this report, creativity was mentioned as a major omission, as indeed was imagination. Some teachers felt that in an era in which change is relentless and in which new solutions are needed to address both old and emerging problems, creativity was essential to the development of active participants of local, national and global communities.

A number of teachers also argued that the list was far too individualistic and should also highlight collective values, such as teamwork and cooperation. At a school in Australia, a teacher suggested that given the IB's commitment to the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) subject, it was surprising that the capacity to learn collectively across national and cultural borders was not included in the list. A teacher in India insisted that it is the list's 'individualistic orientation', which more than anything else, makes it appear Eurocentric, grounded in the Western traditions of rational individualism. It further reinforces, according to the teacher, 'the impression that the IB is designed primarily for an emerging transnational class of people comfortable with neo-liberal ideologies' (INB Teacher). A few teachers at other schools concurred with the suggestion that the list did not make use of the fact that most IB schools are culturally diverse and provide ample opportunities for cross-cultural and transnational learning.

6.3 Possibilities of Transnational Pedagogy

One of the most remarkable aspects of the IB schools in this study was that at each of these schools, by and large, teachers were prepared to engage in educational thinking and explore new approaches to pedagogy. The schools demonstrated a major commitment to considering how their pedagogy could be better aligned with the changing contexts of their work. Even those teachers who were trained in traditional methods were not reluctant to experiment with the pedagogic approaches suggested by the LP. A teacher in India, for example, recalled that:

The Learner Profile – when I read it for the first time - it compelled me to change my teaching methods. My three years of teaching right before being introduced to the LP [were different]. The first year, I was just facing the chalkboard, and rubbing chalk and solving problems. The second year, I turned halfway, where half of my focus was on the board and the other half was on the students, but more attention was definitely on the board. The third year – after reading this – I completely turned around and faced the students. It compelled me to turn to the students, and wonder, 'what are they doing? what are they thinking?' rather than [focus on] the maths I was doing. (INA Teacher)

In Australia, the importance of student-centred learning has been long recognised, but in India and Hong Kong, it is still new. The above example shows how the LP is directing teachers towards reflections upon their pedagogy: it is helping them to consider the requirements of the learner, not only the content knowledge imparted to their students.

In ways that are somewhat different, the IB's focus on the LP is also encouraging teachers in the three countries to think about the international contexts in which these IB schools are located, and to consider the requirements of learners who are globally mobile and hail from a wide variety of different cultural contexts. The transnational heterogeneity of their classrooms poses a range of challenges but also provides new opportunities. According to another teacher in India: 'when I first joined an international school, I was coming from a very different culture ... compared to the Indian system where I did all the talking, for 45 minutes, it was me, me, me. Now, here was a situation that was about 'us'. That in itself was liberating' (INA Teacher). According to this teacher, the LP was a tool for re-imagining his understanding of the teaching-learning process. Equally however, he believed that the international context of the school required him not to take the meaning of the attributes for granted but to consider how they applied to a culturally diverse body of students: 'I have to think about how attributes like open-mindedness and communicator should be incorporated in my lesson, where more than half of my students do not come from my own culture' (INA Teacher).

As has already been noted, the nine schools in this study have enormously diverse populations, both nationally and culturally. The learning spaces they provide are transnational characterised not only by their cultural diversity but also wide-ranging transnational connections. The question then arises as to how teachers might take advantage of these conditions in interpreting and enacting the LP. According to the DP coordinator of an Australian school: 'we do not make use of our diversity and global connections as much as we should... if we do, it is not in a creative or inspiring manner' (AUC Administrator). She believes that the transnationality of IB schools should be a major teaching

resource with which to interpret and discuss the various LP attributes. In India, the vice-principal of a school also noted that while the LP rightly focuses on cultural difference, it does not encourage reflections on global mobility and interdependence: 'Many of our students are great travellers, much more than our teachers. They are talking to their friends and family on the net on a daily basis. I often wonder how this affects their learning and what kind of learners they become' (INB Administrator).

What appears evident is that the transnational experiences that many of the IB students enjoy, and the transnational aspirations that many others have, increasingly constitutes the context in which the LP attributes need to be interpreted and enacted. This does not make their national 'locatedness' irrelevant but demands that it be interpreted within a broader transnational context. In other words, while it is possible to interpret the LP attributes in their local contexts, it is becoming increasingly important to also understand them against the realities of global interconnectivity and interdependence. What is required is a competence to understand cultural differences encountered in transnational mobility and lives – not only openness towards difference and otherness but also an ability to manoeuvre through the spaces between cultures, across different systems of meaning. This points to the ability to manage multiple and hybridized identities, often captured by the idea of 'third culture'. What is needed, then, are ways of thinking through which the LP attributes can contribute to the development of learners who are able to apply and adapt understandings, sensitivities and imaginations in transnational connections, and who are able to resolve communicative misunderstandings across a diverse set of communicative styles.

6.4 Integrating the LP into the Curriculum

The teachers reported facing a number of challenges in integrating the LP into the curriculum. While many of them saw the LP attributes as 'ways of knowing' and 'ways of learning', and not necessarily linked to the subjects they taught in any direct manner, others viewed integration as essential, defining their approach to the subjects. One teacher of Physics claimed that his approach to teaching Physics is shaped by his growing understanding of the LP attributes, especially those that relate to intellectual development. Another teacher in India insisted that a focus on the LP has helped him differentiate the distinctive character of the IB's Diploma Programme: otherwise, he maintained, 'my approach to teaching History would be no different to CBSE [Indian national system of secondary school certification]' (INA Teacher). For him, the very purpose of teaching History was not simply to impart historical facts but to also develop the LP attributes.

Such conceptual clarity and commitment to the LP was, however, not evident in many other teachers, who felt that at the DP level, the LP attributes are best developed outside the classrooms. One Indian teacher insisted that 'we already have a crowded curriculum; we can't fit any more in' (INC Teacher). He agreed that the LP attributes are relevant to guide younger students. 'I assume', he said, that 'the older [DP] students understand and can use them without having to be explicitly told about them' (INC Teacher). Some teachers also felt that the LP attributes are best developed through co-curricular activities, in spaces beyond the classroom both within the school and in the community. When asked what his colleagues thought about the LP, one teacher in Australia maintained that while 'no one would say it openly, there is a great deal of cynicism about the LP. Many of my friends see it as an imposition or else as a theory that has little relevance to what we are required to teach to get our students best marks' (AUB Teacher). Other teachers in each of the three countries felt that the LP was best integrated into the curriculum through Theory of Knowledge (TOK), Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) and the Extended Essay.

The IB's Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course is designed to help students consider such issues as what counts as knowledge, how it grows, who owns it, how it is used and what its value is. These are complex questions, instruction around which requires teachers themselves to be reflective, inquirers, thinkers and knowledgeable, some of the key LP attributes. According to the principals in this study, only some teachers have the skills and aptitude to teach TOK; and there is no guarantee that teachers of the Humanities and Social Sciences make the best TOK teachers. Indeed, in many of the schools we visited, TOK was taught by Science and Mathematics teachers, some in most engaging, thoughtful and insightful ways. TOK was also taught by many globally mobile teachers in India and Hong Kong. One such teacher, born and educated in the United States but with teaching experiences in no less than three countries, admitted that his transnational experiences had led to him becoming more reflective and open-minded about knowledge. He felt that in helping students think about knowledge, he was able to draw upon his culturally diverse experiences. Most TOK teachers felt, however, that their task was made easier if issues of knowledge were raised in most other subjects, with respect to the ways in which knowledge claims in those subjects are made and validated. This same American teacher succinctly captured the sentiments of many of his fellow TOK teachers across all three countries: 'If the students are familiar with the debates about knowledge claims in all their subject, then teaching TOK becomes easy; and, frankly, much more effective' (INA Teacher).

The same applies to Creativity, Action, Service (CAS). While CAS is not formally assessed, most teachers we interviewed believed that there was a close conceptual and practical relationship between CAS and the LP attributes. Teachers in charge of CAS felt that the co-curricular activities relating to creativity, action and service are much more meaningful to students when they have already been introduced to the LP, and when teachers have integrated the LP into their subjects. A DP coordinator at a school in Australia conceded that the teaching of academic subjects and CAS are often seen as two different streams of the IB, disconnected from each other. He has been struggling to convince the teachers at his school to bring them together, within the broader framework of the LP. In India, the Deputy Head of a School argued that while there was a long and noble tradition of service at his school, he feared that service was viewed by many students as an additional requirement of the DP, or else a line in their application for further studies at US universities, where such a resume improves chances of admission. The challenge, he felt, was to bring service and learning together, as an integrated set of human experiences that enable the development of internationally-minded people who recognise their common humanity. The LP, he believed, should be viewed as an attempt to ensure this integration.

6.5 Issues of Testing and Reporting the LP

A number of teachers in this study suggested that one of the reasons why the LP is not taken seriously by many teachers and students, and perhaps also by parents, is that it is not something that is tested and reported in a more formal manner. In the context of the rigorous requirements of the DP and the high aspirations that many students and their parents have for entry into prestigious and highly competitive colleges and universities, both nationally and internationally, a focus on the LP is often and understandably sidelined by many teachers. The question then arises if understanding and demonstration of the LP attributes should be tested, and how it should be reported in student assessment.

The views about testing in the three countries diverged. In Australia, any testing of the LP attributes were opposed on a range of grounds, including the belief that they are 'un-testable' and would impose an onerous new requirement on teachers without any high degree of reliability and useful purpose. In Hong Kong, however, while formal testing was rejected, students are assessed in a number of informal ways. For example, students are asked to rate themselves on a scale for each of the ten attributes to determine the extent to which their rating is consistent with that of the teachers. Many Hong Kong teachers routinely give feedback to their students on how they are

performing on the LP attributes, while insisting that it should not be formally assessed. As one teacher expressed it: 'I really don't think success in the IB should be conditional on passing a test about the LP. It sends the wrong message to the students; it suggests that the LP is an academic subject and that it something that is examinable' (HKC Teacher).

As for the reporting of achievement on the LP attributes, few schools have mandated it. However, reference to the LP attributes often appears in written reports, and at some schools is encouraged. At schools which already had their own distinctive values before the introduction of the LP, reference to these values is more common in the reports. One school in Hong Kong, however, appears to be considering a more formal approach to reporting on the LP: 'We are thinking of putting a mark about the LP on the reports. I think this might reinforce the importance of the LP to the students and their parents. I know some of the staff will balk at this but I think it will give it more prominence ... I know there will be problems with the logistics of how to do this but it is worth pursuing' (HKC Administrator). Exactly how the parents would interpret this assessment is unclear. According to a student in Hong Kong: 'Parents don't know what it [the LP] is. They would always skip that page [of the report]' (HKC Student). Another student concurred: 'to be honest, they [parents] would just ignore it because it is not related to more important stuff. They care more about the scores' (HKC Student).

6.6 Teacher Preparation and Development

This study has indicated that there is wide-ranging support for the principles underlying the LP in each of the three countries. However, the level of teacher understanding of these principles is uneven, resulting in strong commitment to the LP by some teachers, with a degree of confusion from others. At the same time, there is a great deal of interest in learning more about the LP, especially about the ways in which to reconcile the DP's competing requirements of academic content and examinations, on the one hand, and the LP, on the other. There is clearly a need to develop a better understanding of how these are not competing requirements but inextricably linked for an education designed to develop internationally-minded people. The IB's rationale for TOK, CAS and the Extended Essay are now clearly understood, but not so clear are the ways in which performance in these areas, and in the academic subjects, can be enhanced by viewing them within the broader framework of the LP.

Of course, the IB regards teacher professional development as essential for realising its ambitious goals, and offers a range of opportunities. However, many teachers in the schools we visited felt that much more can be done to explain the importance of the LP within the DP; how it is not a discrete area of activity but a defining feature of the IB's pedagogic philosophy. This is especially important to teachers who have never worked in the PYP or MYP, and those who had previously taught in another system of education, less focused on cross-curriculum priorities and the development of generic capabilities. In Australia, teachers used the principles of the Australian curriculum to view the LP as an extension of a whole history of debates about reforming the teaching-learning process. In India and Hong Kong, however, teachers who are relatively new to the IB find the LP's philosophical orientation challenging. According to a principal of an Indian school, born and educated in England, 'the LP is a major departure from the Indian system of education' (INC Administrator). However, this difference is not due to cultural differences between India and Europe, but marked in different pedagogic traditions. The same principal stated: 'The Indian system does not encourage teachers to question authority, and be reflective and critical. It is a hard job to get some of them to think in a radically different manner' (INC Administrator).

The ways in which culture enters into teachers' thinking about the LP attributes is an issue central to this study. It is clear that a teacher's own cultural traditions and experiences impact the ways in which they think about the LP. Some teachers in Australia believe that the LP attributes are culturally biased - according to one school administrator, the attributes are 'very Western':

I think they [the LP attributes] need to be taken up differently by schools, so you have them as the broader umbrella, but then schools can say, 'well this is our version of the Learner Profile', because to impose it ... I would hate to think that the IB is imposing something on schools that isn't culturally relevant - that wouldn't be principled! (AUA Administrator)

Somewhat unexpectedly, the assumption that the list of LP attributes is tilted toward Western humanism was not widely held among teachers in India and Hong Kong. Indeed, some teachers believed that similar values can be found in Indian and Chinese traditions. For these teachers, more important are the opportunities to debate about how these attributes applied to the diverse cultures represented within their classrooms and schools.

When asked directly about how cultural differences affect the implementation of the LP, most teachers, and indeed even students, related these to differences in pedagogic approaches and parental expectations, rather than to the specificities of cultural traditions. In China, as suggested by

a teacher in Hong Kong, 'people don't open up to new concepts ... in China, being a learner is about memorising things, not about learning like the IB says' (HKA Teacher). A student in India maintained that 'the teachers tell us what to learn and we learn it, we don't ask questions. Because of that I am not fond of communicating and reflecting. Since we have different values I feel that in the PYP in particular they are imposed on us' (INA Student). Finally, a student in Hong Kong pointed out that 'in Eastern education we are more academically demanding compared to Western schools. Our parents value results above everything else. My parents have told me that it is Harvard or Oxford after this year, non-negotiable. I think if it came down to the wire they would value my academic studies over the LP any day' (HKB Student). In IB schools, the teachers thus have to negotiate a wide variety of academic expectations that are often couched in terms of global aspirations.

There is a growing recognition in all three countries of the cultural diversity that exists in IB schools – that the students who attend these schools often hail from metropolitan centres and have transnational experiences and cosmopolitan sensibilities. These students are globally mobile and engage with opportunities for cultural diversity and exchange that are often inaccessible to the local teachers. For these teachers, issues of how the LP attributes might reflect local cultures are less important and urgent than the skills needed to teach for diversity – how to use the cultural diversity that exists in their classrooms as a pedagogic resource. In so far as they are enthusiastic about professional development around the LP, they would like future opportunities to take part in teacher dialogue both within the school and across other IB schools around the world, about the pedagogic challenges of diversity and transnational connectivity. According to one school administrator in Australia, teachers should be given 'more opportunities to go out and work with other schools in other countries' (AUB Administrator). She went on to stress the importance of teacher exchange, both physical and virtual, to discuss the ways in which the experiences of global mobility affects her IB programme in her own school, where more than half of the students are from various Asian backgrounds.

While there are important differences in the ways in which the nine schools we visited approach the LP, they all have students who are globally mobile and have transnational experiences and cosmopolitan sensibilities. For many of these students, the LP attributes embody these experiences and sensibilities. For teachers, then, the challenge is not how to get these students to relate to these attributes but how to get them to engage with the cultures of the local and national communities in which the IB schools are located. One of the risks associated with some of the IB schools, in India in particular, is that they become 'gated communities', divorced from the challenges of life outside

their walls. Teachers therefore face the task of how they might use the LP attributes to encourage their students to think about these challenges – to translate the attribute of caring, for example, not in the terms of some imagined national understanding but in terms that are empathic to the local issues of social disadvantage and inequality. In this sense, the challenge of the adaptation of the LP in different contexts appears to be linked not so much to national differences but to ways in which a transnational class of students might interpret and address the differences across the local communities in which their schools are situated.

Chapter 7

Key Findings and Recommendations

The Learner Profile represents a major component of the IB curriculum across each of its three programmes. Through a focus on ten key attributes, it aims to develop internationally-minded learners who recognise their common humanity and work towards creating a better and more peaceful world. The main aim of this report has been to provide an assessment of how these attributes are interpreted, adapted and implemented in the IB's Diploma Programme, across three countries with significantly different cultural traditions: India, Hong Kong and Australia. The purpose of this assessment has been to identify the various ways the LP is understood and enacted, and to recommend strategies for addressing any challenges that schools confront in implementing it.

The data upon which this report is based was collected over nine months, from July 2013 to March 2014, in nine IB schools, three each in India, Australia and Hong Kong. Data collection included both surveys of students' and educators' familiarity and attitudes towards the LP; as well as interviews and focus groups conducted at each of the schools to obtain further insight into the challenges of interpretation, adaptation and implementation. The views of school administrators, teachers and students were treated as equally important.

The data collected indicated a wide variety of perspectives on the LP in the nine schools, from cynical and negative to unequivocally favourable and positive. Chapter 4 of this report provided an overview of these multiple and contrasting perspectives. In Chapter 5, the students' perceptions were elaborated, while Chapter 6 focuses on the views of the teachers. In this final chapter, the main findings of the project are discussed and synthesised into six core themes, with specific recommendations linked to each of these themes.

7.1 Interpreting the Purposes of the LP

The research findings discussed in the previous three chapters indicate that while the concept of the LP is widely supported, there is no uniform understanding of its purposes. The diversity of views among teachers is almost as extensive as it is among students. Most teachers, with positive views towards the LP, regard the LP as a framework of ten academic and moral attributes that mark the IB's approach to pedagogy as distinctive. This is particularly the case with teachers in India and Hong Kong who had previously taught in other local systems. For some of these teachers, the LP was a

major factor in their wanting to teach at an IB school. For others, the significance of the LP was initially hard to comprehend, and remains perplexing. This raises important issues about whether teachers are provided with adequate orientation and professional development relating to the LP.

Teachers who had taught in a number of countries invariably emphasised the close conceptual and practical links between the LP attributes and the idea of international-mindedness. For them, the LP plays an important role in producing citizens who are able to negotiate the facts of rapid social change and the complexities and challenges of globalisation. Other teachers interpret the purposes of the LP in terms of its focus on a set of moral values, such as principled, caring and open-mindedness. In many schools, attempts are made to align the LP attributes to existing values embedded within the mission of the school itself. Recognising the enormous diversity that exists in most IB schools, many teachers regard the importance of the LP to lie in its role in generating harmonious relations within their classrooms through a focus on intercultural understanding.

It is possible to describe teachers' perspectives on the LP in terms of three broad yet overlapping categories. First, a relatively small number of teachers interpreted the LP solely in terms of that which is to be *learned* – that is, as a 'body of knowledge' to be taught in schools as additional curriculum content. Here the thinking appears to be that students need to become familiar with each of the LP attributes and be able to demonstrate their understanding through relevant practices. Second, a larger proportion of teachers viewed the LP as *learning* – that is, whereby the LP attributes are taken into account in order to inform a particular approach to pedagogy. Here the LP attributes such as inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers and communicators are emphasised in order to define a particular way of approaching the content knowledge relating to the various core subjects that students study in the Diploma Programme. The LP is therefore expected to enhance the students' capabilities in completing the set tasks. Third, a more complex understanding of the purposes of the LP emerged among some teachers, who interpreted it as a strategy for developing a particular kind of *learner* – that is, the focus on the LP is expected to foster personal growth and self-reflection among students. The LP is thus assumed to be a pedagogic tool with which to develop learners who are open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective, who are able to demonstrate these attributes not only in their IB education but also throughout their future studies and careers, and life more generally.

Students also interpreted the purposes of the LP in highly varied ways. A number of students in this study were largely unfamiliar with the LP and the rationale underpinning its promotion, despite the

attributes being displayed on posters around their schools and being referred to in class discussions. Understandably, the students who were introduced to the LP attributes during their PYP or MYP had a much more elaborate understanding of the purposes of the LP than those whose experiences of IB were limited to the Diploma Programme. Some students were able to speak about its importance to their learning with a great deal of confidence and conviction. For most of these students, the main purpose of the LP was ethical, to become globally aware and recognise our common humanity. They seldom viewed the LP in terms of its focus on intellectual attributes such as knowledgeable, inquirers and thinkers, which they invariably took for granted. Indeed, many questioned the validity of the attribute 'knowledgeable', which they did not see as fitting in with the rest of the attributes. A number of students also stressed the need to have more discussions about the purposes of the LP in their classrooms, in order to develop a better understanding of how the LP related to the academic tasks they were asked to complete, and also to become more independent and effective learners. As they approach their tertiary studies, many DP students appreciated the relevance of the LP to their academic and career futures.

Recommendation 1:

Schools should consider providing both teachers and DP students who are new to the IB with a more effective orientation to the LP. Schools should also encourage regular discussions about the role of the LP in developing independent and effective learners who are able to negotiate the future demands of tertiary studies and the changing world of work.

7.2 Utilising the LP as a Pedagogic Tool

Across most IB schools that participated in this study, debates existed about the construction of the list of LP attributes. Some teachers asserted that there was a lack of clarity about the reasons for the selection of these ten, rather than some others. Questions were also raised about why ten had been chosen, rather than a larger or smaller number. Interesting discussions were also had about whether some attributes could easily be discarded from this list, or about whether some attributes were missing and should have been included. In summary, the data collected suggested widely differing views about what the ten attributes mean and the degree to which schools and teachers were free to define them in their own terms. There was also uncertainty reported about how they should be scoped and implemented in the curriculum, and whether they were still relevant at the DP level. The extent to which these attributes were assessable and should constitute the basis of student performance and achievement in both their academic subjects and more generally were issues that

were widely canvassed, as were issues about whether reference to the LP attributes should be included in students' reports.

It was widely believed by teachers and administrators in the nine schools that the LP attributes were of two kinds: *intellectual* and *ethical*. Attributes such as inquirers, knowledgeable and thinkers were described as falling unambiguously into the first category while caring, open-minded and balanced clearly belonged in the second. Many teachers struggled to understand how these different kinds of attributes related to each other. Some felt that the descriptions provided by the IBO were either incomplete or confusing. In some cases, teachers felt that the descriptions introduced additional attributes, which themselves demanded further clarification. For example, caring is defined in terms of empathy, compassion and respect, each being highly contestable both within and across cultural traditions. Teachers also suggested that in recent years, there had been a great deal of debate about the attributes of 'risk-takers' and 'open-minded' in particular, mainly around whether these attributes conflicted with some cultural traditions. It was suggested on more than one occasion, for example, that to expect all students to be risk-takers was to be disrespectful to some parents and teachers, and to venture outside the norms of their societies. It was also argued that each of the ten LP attributes implied the need for students to work independently, rather than working together in cooperative ways. Indeed, such an emphasis on autonomy, it was suggested, could be viewed as contrary to the traditions of some societies, and perhaps also to the emphasis that many contemporary management theorists (for example, Koehn & Rosenau 2002) place on teamwork and collaboration in the evolving global knowledge economy.

Questions of this nature about the list of LP attributes are of profound philosophical and pedagogic significance. Exactly how they should be addressed within the IBO and the network of IB schools is a question that demands a complex set of reflections, not only by the policy makers and curriculum designers but also school administrators and teachers, as well as students. What is abundantly clear is that the meaning of each of the LP attributes is highly contested (and contestable), as indeed is the case with the bulk of normative ideals. Beyond questions of meaning, the significance and relevance of each of the attributes to a particular community cannot be easily specified, prior to actual encounters. For example, among some groups of people and in some circumstances, risk-taking might be highly valued, while in other situations it might be culturally inappropriate or even morally dangerous.

What is clear then is that the list of attributes should be regarded neither as complete nor essentially definable. Instead, the list should be seen as a resource for robust conversations about what it means to be an internationally-minded learner. The list should also encourage students and teachers to explore how these attributes relate both to different cultural traditions, on the one hand, and to contemporary conditions of global interconnectivity and interdependence, on the other.

Recommendation 2:

IB schools should be dissuaded from regarding the current list of LP attributes as complete. Instead, school should be encouraged to view the list as a pedagogic tool to help position students to explore the meaning and significance of learning attributes, in relation to both local traditions and contexts, and to the requirements of an increasingly globalising society.

7.3 Reconciling the LP with the Demands of the DP

The data collected as part of this study appears to suggest varying opinions, especially amongst teachers, as to where the LP should be best positioned within the DP. In attempting to integrate the LP into the overall structure of the DP, some teachers saw the LP as being a discreet aspect, whilst others viewed it as being an adjunct, or of support, to the DP. Some teachers used opportunities within CAS (and to a lesser extent TOK) to explore the LP attributes with their students. However, a number of students in particular felt that not all of the values of the LP aligned with those of the DP. In particular, some students claimed that ‘open-minded’, ‘balanced’, ‘risk-takers’ and ‘inquirer’ were in conflict with the ways in which the DP was taught and learnt in their school, with many stating that the DP’s rigorous academic requirements do not encourage an open-minded, risk-taking or curiosity-driven approach from students.

As the IB has grown, from originally offering only the DP to including the MYP and then the PYP, the issue of how the various programmes of the IB cohere has become more important. It is the IBO’s intention that each of the three programmes articulates the aims and values of the IB. These aims and values are partly expressed in the LP, which points towards the type of learner the IB hopes to develop through its programmes. The three IB programmes are thus assumed to be elements of an educational continuum that stretches from early childhood to Year 12, while also able to be undertaken separately. Each programme, although an element of this continuum, is different – as seen by way of the curriculum (written, taught and assessed) and school organisational structures. The LP is designed to mitigate this difference. So while the programmes change, the LP is ostensibly

stable, enabling a sense of continuity to exist within the IB as a whole through the type of learner the IB is focused on developing. This continuity is embodied in the LP.

As has already been noted, the LP originated within the PYP and can be assumed to be well-designed to meet the needs of early years of schooling. This carries forward to the MYP, even though the curriculum and school organisation change markedly. It could be said that these changes make the LP a very valuable pedagogical tool in the MYP because it articulates a way of being a person that provides a deeper sense of engagement with the curriculum. However, it appears that when students undertake the DP – even if they have experienced the PYP and MYP, and developed as learners up to this stage in the way the IB hopes – the competitive academic character of the DP suggests a different way of being a learner than that espoused within the LP. In the context of the DP, a competitive academic character points to the way learning is designed in the group subjects. So while the more specialised aspects of the DP are considered the core of the programme – the Extended Essay, the TOK subject, and CAS activities – it is the group subjects which deliver students the bulk of their points.

In this study, teachers and students alike recognised that a significant aim of the LP, and thus the IB, is to develop a well-rounded person who can function in a globalised world. Yet they also noted that participation in the globalised world requires a score at the completion of the DP, which enabled access to a quality university and relevant degree course. A significant difference between the DP and both the PYP and MYP can be seen in the meaning of this final score, which is the key to the next step beyond the DP: the transition from school (and the IB) to an institution of higher education. Students and teachers (and parents) seem very aware that the majority of points earned towards the DP come from the group subjects, with TOK and the Extended Essay contributing a lesser number. This awareness shines a light on assessment practices, which in the DP are primarily external examinations. Compare this to the assessment practices of the MYP and PYP, which are chiefly school based, and can therefore be more in line with the aims and values of the LP.

The competitive nature of the DP therefore challenges the continuity of the LP. This overly academic orientation is deliberately avoided in the MYP and the PYP through all three versions of the curriculum – written (what is learned), taught (how it is learned) and learned (how it is assessed). In the DP, however, it is very difficult to avoid this competitive academic nature, mainly because what follows the DP is not another IB programme, but transition to higher education; access to which requires a DP score but not necessarily the LP, even though the LP will most likely support the

achievement of success once a student is in higher education. The presence of what are essentially two contrasting value systems in the DP – competitive academic and the LP – creates problems for students, who must navigate both. Many students in this study were aware of the conflict and confusion created by these two sets of aims and values. They raised specific situations wherein they felt that they must choose between the competitive academic aims and values and those embodied in the LP. At times, teachers were similarly caught in this conundrum. While the TOK subject, CAS activities and the Extended Essay all work to mitigate the impact of this tension, many students, teachers and parents continue to remain quite attentive to the competitive academic nature of the DP.

Recommendation 3:

The IBO should commission a discussion paper which addresses directly the challenges presented by the competitive academic character of the DP to the integrity of the LP, focusing on the contrasting pedagogical demands made on teachers and students.

7.4 Challenges of Implementation

If the task of integrating the LP into the overall structure of the DP presents a significant conceptual challenge, then its implementation also involves a range of practical issues for teachers in the DP. These issues are of course linked to the conceptual tension relating to the academic character of the DP. While the three IB programmes are assumed to be elements of an educational continuum that stretches from early childhood to Year 12, and must therefore serve similar functions, the data collected as part of this study suggests that in practice this is not necessarily the case, and that at the DP level the LP has the potential to perform a range of additional functions. These include the role it can play in preparing students for tertiary studies, often outside their country, and helping them imagine their careers in the rapidly changing world of work. Given that at the DP level, concerns about tertiary studies and career choices cannot be avoided, the challenges of implementation that teachers at the DP level therefore face are somewhat different. Within the PYP, the LP attributes need to be more strikingly visible and widely referred to, in order to develop in students their sense of identity as learners. At the MYP level, the LP is more directly applied to pedagogic planning, assessment and personal reflection. At the DP level, dominated as it is by the concerns of academic content and examinations, the role of the LP is less clear, leading many teachers in this study to admit that they did not know how best to implement the LP attributes. Not surprisingly, therefore,

references to the LP attributes in the DP are either not made or are made in ways that are symbolic and tokenistic.

Furthermore, the lack of attention to the LP was most evident in this study among teachers in areas of the DP most directly linked to preparation for tertiary studies. Moreover, some teachers found it difficult to justify an emphasis on the LP within the DP, especially for those students who were determinedly focused on their university education, and subsequently concerned by the demands of a rigorous workload. The issue of heavy workload was repeatedly cited by teachers and students in this study as the main reason why they could not devote more attention to the LP. This view is mistakenly based on an assumption that the LP is somehow an additional task, and not simply a perspective through which all other tasks should be performed. Just the same, it is a widely-held view among teachers and students alike, and needs to be addressed.

Admittedly, there appears to be lack of opportunities for teachers to consider and discuss the ways in which the LP attributes might be embedded within the DP curriculum. Clearly, teachers need to exemplify the ten attributes if they are to assist students in their adoption and development of the LP attributes. Some teachers acknowledge the need to model the ten attributes in their own behaviour and pedagogic practices in all learning areas, but few have a reflective understanding of this need. Without such an understanding, they are unable to seize upon the opportunities that often emerge organically in their teaching with which to reinforce for students the significance of the various LP attributes.

This short discussion underlines the importance of teacher preparation and professional development, reinforcing the observation made in Section 7.1 of this chapter. The practices and programs designed to orient new teachers to the IB curriculum in IB schools are uneven, particularly as they relate to the introduction of the LP. Even with experienced IB teachers, opportunities to discuss the relevance of the LP to all learning areas within the DP are rare, as indeed is the exploration of the ways in which the LP attributes can speak to the requirements of tertiary education. In recent years, the development of media literacy, for example, through the discussion of current events has been shown to be of utmost importance in the development of critically reflective citizens of local, national and global communities. Secondary school students are vitally interested in emerging political and cultural developments, and often draw teachers into their conversations about topics that interest them. These informal conversations clearly represent

opportunities when the LP attributes can be brought into play, ensuring greater coherence to what might otherwise be random opinions and streams of consciousness.

This suggests that, at the DP level, the LP attributes are best approached in an organic fashion, in incidental and informal learning, ensuring that students begin to view all aspects of life as opportunities for learning. Whereas some teachers are more adept at steering students towards organic and incidental learning, for others these pedagogic skills need to be developed. Of course, for organic learning to be effective, teachers need to know their culturally diverse students, hailing in the IB schools from a wide variety of national backgrounds. Invariably, international teachers are able to use their experiences to relate to the globally mobile and aspiring students. Local teachers, in contrast, are not always familiar with the diverse traditions of their students, and the institutions to which they are destined. One way of addressing this issue is to consider for DP teachers opportunities of international teacher exchange, through which to build their knowledge and skills base.

Recommendation 4:

The IB schools should provide additional support in the form of teacher workshops and professional development activities around the LP's significance, and its implementation within the DP, together with increased opportunities for international teacher exchange.

7.5 Managing the Tensions

In this report, a range of tensions surrounding the interpretation, adaptation and implementation of the LP in the DP have been examined. These tensions emerge in the form of debates amongst stakeholders about the competing ideas about the LP. For example, should the LP be implicitly or explicitly taught? Should it be globally or locally orientated? Should its attributes be tightly or loosely defined? Should the LP seek to foster diversity or uniformity? Should the IBO prescribe assessment or reporting methods for the LP or leave these decisions to schools? Should some attributes be removed or new ones added? This study has found a wide-ranging diversity of views in relation to these questions.

How should the IBO and IB schools think about and address this diversity of views? Clearly, the existence of these tensions surrounding the LP suggests that the LP pulls schools in different and sometimes opposing directions. In some cases, these tensions are inevitable and irreconcilable, and

are grounded in long-standing debates within educational philosophy and curriculum theory. The LP's design and purpose, for example, requires us to consider fundamental questions about what constitutes 'a learner' and 'a curriculum'. These questions have troubled the best of educational thinkers for centuries and will not be resolved through contemporary research into the IB curriculum and LP. Other tensions, however, can be usefully managed and mediated by the IBO and IB schools, and thus require careful consideration when developing the LP into the future. These *manageable tensions* should not be viewed in simply negative terms, but instead should be viewed as *productive* in nature, and as capable of leading to a range of potential interventions.

The productive nature of tensions is best illustrated by reflecting on one core tension in particular: the tension between *diversity and uniformity*. This is arguably the most useful tension to reflect upon as in many ways it represents an overriding tension through which several other debates can be captured. For example, this tension speaks not only to debates about the global and local, but also to broader issues about how curriculum and assessment should be shaped, about how considerations of cultural diversity should be managed, and about how prescriptive the attributes should be. The tension between diversity and uniformity may be regarded as both productive insofar as both extremes of this binary are undesirable. As a result, it is possible to use the tension between diversity and uniformity to establish ongoing conversations. For example, the culturally mediated nature of education means no matter how much the IBO seeks to ensure *uniformity* of understanding and practice, the LP will inevitably be understood and enacted differently in different schools and classrooms, and with different teachers and students. Ultimately, no central dictate from IBO can ever exert absolute control over the LP when translated into practice. So rather than viewing this tension as a hurdle to be overcome or as a puzzle to be solved, the IBO can instead choose to celebrate the diversity of provision, framing this as a *productive tension* that is part of the richness of the IB's global approach. Diversity is required, therefore, as ultimately the success of the LP relies upon its ability to be transferable and adaptive to diverse school settings and local contexts.

The tension between diversity and uniformity, however, can also be *unproductive* if not managed carefully. For example, an ill-defined or overly flexible LP, or a lack of guidance from the IBO about the ways the LP can be understood and put into practice, could easily see the LP lose its normative power and fail in its attempts to engender commonality in terms of what constitutes an 'ideal' IB learner. Put differently, if too much diversity is promoted, then the LP will lose its 'common core' and risk being a meaningless element of the IB curriculum. At the other extreme, it would not be a good thing if the LP were to adopt an overtly prescriptive and rigid approach, as this would likely be

viewed by educators and students as top-down and as imposing a hegemonic vision of learning that does not adequately allow for cultural interpretation. For example, whilst the IBO might consider the benefits of more explicitly defining its understanding of the term ‘international-mindedness’, forging a tighter definition risks imposing a particular model of what it means to be internationally-minded upon schools, which might cause conflicts with local cultural traditions and inhibit a diversity of useful meanings and practices from emerging around the term. Any attempt to more tightly define the term is thus fraught with complexity.

An important question for the IBO to consider, therefore, is: To what extent should differences in understandings and enactments of the LP be *tolerated* between IB schools? And linked to this: What steps should be taken to ensure a productive balance between diversity and uniformity? At the end of the day, therefore, if a certain measure of diversity is to be expected, and indeed promoted, then the core issue for the IBO is how to maintain a productive level of diversity without losing sight of the principles of commonality underpinning the LP. In short, productive tensions should be celebrated and problematic tensions should be identified and addressed.

Recommendation 5:

Recognising that there is a perennial tension between diversity and uniformity in most attempts at curriculum reform, the IBO should view the various conceptual and practical tensions surrounding the LP as productive, encouraging IB schools to promote robust conversations about the ways in which meaning and significance of the LP can be locally interpreted and implemented, without compromising on its core aims.

7.6 Working across Differences

If the IB schools are free to interpret and implement the LP in their own distinctive ways, then it is not surprising that the data collected for this study would indicate important differences across the nine schools. Significantly, however, the data also suggests that these differences are more marked across different schools than they are across the three countries. In other words, a major conclusion of this study is that national differences appear to be less significant than institutional differences. This appears to be the case for a number of reasons, including the demographic composition of the schools, their pre-existing ethos, their modes of governance, and the transnational lifestyles and aspirations of students and their families.

Many of the schools in this study appear to view the LP through the conceptual prism of their existing and distinctive school ethos. For many schools, this ethos was not informed by national traditions but by commitments to a distinctive set of either religious or ideological principles. In Australia, for example, one of the schools we studied is inspired by a set of progressive educational principles. These principles have formed the basis upon which the school has developed a distinctive understanding of the LP attributes. Another Australian school is a Catholic school, and has long been committed to a particular mission, within the framework of which it has integrated each of the ten LP attributes. This school has developed a complex matrix, with the values articulated by its mission statement on one axis and the LP attributes on the other, thus seeking to merge the two sets together. The third Australian school is an all-girls school in the Methodist tradition, where staff members consider the school's values to be entirely consistent with the LP attributes.

In India, two of the three schools are new international schools funded by large multi-national corporations, initially for the sons and daughters of their globally mobile workers, but now increasingly for the children of a new Indian 'moneyed' class (Fernandes 2006) which by and large aspires to cosmopolitan sensibilities, lifestyles and aspirations. These two schools attach a great deal of importance to the LP attributes, and consider them to be in line with the practices and aspirations of the transnational communities they serve. The third school in India, however, is part of an international network of colleges, with an educational philosophy revolving around the values of care and compassion for others, the willingness to accept responsibility, and concern and tenacity in pursuit of truth. In addition, the school has a strong commitment to international and intercultural understanding, the celebration of difference, mutual responsibility and respect, service, respect for the environment, a sense of idealism, and personal challenge and action. At this school, these values appear to take precedence over LP attributes, even though the school believes that conflicts between its values and LP attributes are rare.

One the three schools we studied in Hong Kong SAR belong to the same aforementioned network of colleges. Not surprisingly, therefore, its approach to the LP appears to have more in common with the Indian school in its network than it has with the two other schools in Hong Kong. Indeed, this school regards its focus on the LP to be secondary to its greater commitment to the mission of the global network to which it belongs. In contrast, the other two schools in Hong Kong place a great deal of emphasis on the LP in all aspects of their work, attempting in one case to report formally on student achievements against each of the ten attributes. Yet the differences in the ways these two

schools interpret the LP are also significant, with one school aligning its understanding to a more global outlook, while the other paying much greater attention to a set of national concerns.

The institutional differences in the ways in which the LP attributes are interpreted and enacted can also be explained by the demography of students at each school. For example, all of the nine schools are characterised by considerable cultural diversity. In one of the Australian schools, for example, a large proportion of students in the DP are international students from different countries in Asia, while many other students are from Asian migrant backgrounds. The school is most conscious of this diversity and has attempted to ensure that its understanding of the LP attributes avoids a national Australian bias and is filtered through a global perspective. Fifty percent of the students from two schools in India and Hong Kong (the two that form part of the global network) are mandated to be from other countries. These schools view themselves as global communities with only tangential links to the cultural traditions of the countries in which they are located. The other schools in this study are also culturally diverse and seek to construct a transnational learning space for their students, many of whom are globally mobile to an extent that is often greater than their teachers, with extensive diasporic links from which they derive their cultural orientation and resources.

The highly transnational composition of the nine schools in the study makes it difficult to draw any simple inferences about the relationship between the ways the schools approach the LP, on the one hand, and national cultural traditions, on the other. This relationship is further complicated by the fact that in India and Hong Kong, most of the senior leaders at the schools are from overseas; mostly English-speaking countries such as England, Australia and Canada. By their own admission, their understanding of the cultural traditions of India and Hong Kong is limited, so invariably their take on the LP is filtered through their European backgrounds, even as they insist on the need to be respectful of local traditions. Furthermore, interviews with school staff members suggest the majority of the local parents appear to favour this Western orientation as it is seen to provide a more adequate preparation for the global aspirations that they often have for their children.

The nine schools in this study are therefore, more accurately characterised as *transnational* (Vertovec 2009) rather than *national*, providing learning spaces in which a range of culturally diverse perspectives jostle for attention. Most schools are aware of the need to respect and cherish local traditions, but do so against a transnationally dominant liberal perspective. This has understandably created an impression that IB schools generally privilege Western humanist values, rather than any specific set of national values. Indeed, the LP attributes are themselves viewed by some as an

expression of this bias. Accordingly it is believed that Eastern values are sidelined, and that teachers employed at IB schools are expected to conform to the dominant Western values. The principals and many senior teachers in the study were deeply conscious of these claims of bias, and try to overcome them in a number of ways.

While these claims of bias are understandable to some extent, not least because the internationally mobile teachers in India and Hong Kong appear more comfortable with the LP than locally trained teachers, they are also misleading. For the East-West distinction upon which they are predicated does not sufficiently acknowledge the growing realities of the cultural exchange and the hybridity of cultural traditions in the metropolitan transnational spaces where most IB schools are located. In each of the nine schools in this study, there are serious attempts made to engage with the local communities and cultures, but the teachers believe that this is not easy, because their students bring a wide variety of cultural resources to their learning, and local students are often more comfortable with a globalising culture than they are with their own cultural traditions.

In sum, it is clear that the LP attributes are increasingly interpreted and implemented in transnational learning spaces, and that these spaces are constantly evolving. The cultural spaces within which IB schools operate are dynamic: local traditions matter but are filtered through globalising cultural practices. This suggests a need to transcend anxieties about how national cultural traditions might be reflected in the LP and other aspects of IB Diploma Programme, and focus instead on the dynamic processes of the circulation of cultural ideas and practices. The LP should be viewed as a pedagogic tool that enables IB schools to help their students acknowledge the importance of national traditions in their lives but also realise that these traditions are dynamic, and are now increasingly negotiated in transnational spaces, in the contexts of cultural exchange and innovation. In such spaces, the role of the LP is to steer students towards an engagement with diverse cultural ideas and practices, together with recognition of their common humanity.

Recommendation 6:

In view of the dynamic cultural shifts taking place around the world, the IBO should explore how the LP attributes might be used to encourage students at the DP level to think about and critically reflect on the ways in which their academic and career prospects will increasingly reside in transnational spaces.

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Appendix 1

Descriptions of Participating Schools (Pseudonyms)

Australia

Maria Demonti School (AUA)

A progressive school located in Melbourne, Australia. Maria Demonti School offers a full curriculum from the preparatory years (Prep) to Year 10, aligned with its philosophical commitment to student autonomy and self-directed learning. It is a small school with approximately 180 students. In years eleven and twelve, the school offers the IB Diploma Programme, because its approach pedagogic approach is deemed consistent with the school's ideological outlook. Students are, however, able to combine the IB Diploma with the state-based Vocational Education and Training (VET) options in years eleven and twelve.

Memorial College (AUB)

Memorial College is a Catholic school located in Adelaide, Australia. The College is co-educational from Prep to Year 12 and currently provides education for approximately 1,250 students, including 70 international students. The school delivers all three International Baccalaureate Programmes: the Primary Years Programme from Prep to Year 5; the Middle Years Programme from Year 6 to Year 10, and the Diploma Programme in years eleven and twelve. Students in years 11 and 12 can choose to study the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) as an alternative to the IB Diploma.

St. Agnes Ladies College (AUC)

St. Agnes Ladies College is a private girls' school, located in Melbourne, Australia. The school offers education from the Preparatory year to Year 12, and currently provides education for approximately 2,200 students. Students in years eleven and twelve have the option to study for either the IB Diploma or the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). Some Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificate programmes are also available to students studying their VCE in the senior years. The school also attracts a large number of international students from Asia.

India

Regent International School (INA)

Regent International School is a co-educational independent day school that was established in 2008 in a rapidly growing industrial area by a large Indian multinational corporation. The school has an enrolment of 1,300 students with 26 nationalities represented across staff and students. It offers the IB Primary Years programme from 'Nursery' (Reception) to Year 5, followed by the Cambridge programme from Year 6 to Year 8. The IGCSE Program is offered to students in grades nine and ten with the IB Diploma programme offered to students in years eleven and twelve.

Global Academy of India (INB)

Global Academy of India is one of fourteen in a global network of colleges committed to the values of care and compassion for others, the willingness to accept responsibility, and concern and tenacity in pursuit of the truth. It is an independent, co-educational boarding (only) school for students in years eleven and twelve. Located in a wooded area, the Academy is distinct in that it only offers the

IB Diploma Programme. There are currently 56 nationalities represented amongst the 240 students enrolled at the College.

Gothford International School (INC)

Gothford International School is an international co-educational independent day and boarding school located in an industrial area in India, specialising in the development of IP products and software engineering. Established by a large global corporation, it offers an IB education to students from pre-school to Year 12 (PYP, MYP, DP). There are approximately 250 students enrolled with more than twenty nationalities represented in the school community drawing from company sponsored families, non-resident expatriate Indian families and local Indian families.

Hong Kong

International Collegiate Institute (HKA)

International Collegiate Institute is a Chinese, independent, global school based in Hong Kong, which opened in 2009. Technically not an international school, it is approved by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong as a Private Independent School. However, it is an IB World School offering MYP for grades six to ten and IB DP for years eleven and twelve. Located in the Kowloon area of Hong Kong, it is a bicultural, bilingual school and it prides itself on its Chinese heritage and traditional culture, which it bases its programme on.

Future Leaders Academy (HKB)

Future Leaders Academy is located in the New Territories in Hong Kong and was opened in 1992. It is a part of the same network of fourteen schools as Global Academy of India in India. Approximately 260 students attend the school and classes are for year eleven and twelve only. It exclusively runs the International Baccalaureate DP programme. The school admits students from over 100 countries.

St. Kevin's Boys School (HKC)

St. Kevin's Boys School is a single-sex boys' school in Mong Kok, Hong Kong. It is one of the longest established boys' schools in Hong Kong and one of the oldest secondary schools in the city. It offers education from primary year one through to secondary year six. Its student population is 1,359 and there are 118 teachers (both locals and of overseas origin). Since 2010/2011 it has offered the IB Diploma Programme.

Biographical Notes on the Research Team

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Nima Sobhani is a doctoral student in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education and provided research and editorial assistance to the research team. He has taught in primary and secondary schools across Asia, the Pacific Islands and Australia. His PhD project addresses the shifting politics of development partnerships in education in South Pacific countries, especially in light of the emergence of China as a major aid player in the region.