Working Papers Series

International and Global Issues for Research

Intercultural Understanding: What are we looking for and how do we assess what we find?

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Italy

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INTRODUCTION

As an upper school principal in a European international school that offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, as an English literature teacher, and as a teacher-workshop leader for International Baccalaureate literature courses, I frequently focus on the question of developing intercultural understanding in students. From a principal's perspective, I see instances of lack of respect for cultural differences between Italian and Chinese students, or American and Italian students, and wrestle with the reasons and the consequences. As a teacher and teacher trainer, I witness the weight of pre-conceived or uncritical approaches to the question of culture, generically, and cultures, specifically, when discussing literary texts, choosing course material and designing classroom activities. Specifically, I see the struggle that some teachers face when critically thinking about how to develop intercultural understanding in their students through structured activities, the study of chosen texts and classroom discussions, which can at times be difficult and uncomfortable, at times enlightening and cause for hope.

In all of these instances, I recognize my personal assumptions that intercultural understanding is important and can be purposefully developed. However, in agreement with Chavanu (1995), who points to the issue of cultures that are silenced in the classroom when curricula does not attend to cultural diversity, and Lin and Martin who fear that studying texts from diverse cultures can become 'a neocolonialist textual journey into different "exotic" temporalities and localities,' (2005, p. 2) I believe the study of cultures to be complex and problematic. An earlier research project I undertook consisted of analyzing the way specific curricular guidelines presented the concept of culture and the goal of developing intercultural awareness (Williams-Gualandi, 2011). The analysis was followed by interviews with teachers who were implementing the curriculum, and interpreting the guidelines in their classrooms. The results of the project lead me to believe that many teachers are concerned, conscientious, and often unsure of how to manage the topic of difference in the classroom, for fear of simplifying, reinforcing stereotypes or appearing naïve. Developing intercultural understanding in our students is an important task that must be examined by teachers and school administrators, if we are to help our students meet the challenges of a changing, fluid world, regardless of where we teach and who our students may be.

Intercultural understanding is a concept that has received increasing attention in educational and research settings over the past few decades. The focus on understanding different cultural responses to different aspects of human experience is due in part to increased international mobility, and in part to the impact of globalization at local and national levels (Tong & Cheung, 2011; Ward & Eden, 2009; Ozga & Lingard, 2007). From an educational perspective, more students find themselves learning in schools outside of their culture(s) or nation(s) of origin. More national schools offer an international education (Bunnell, 2008) and more international schools exist worldwide (Hayden, 2011). More students find themselves in classrooms where diverse cultures are represented. As Hayden and Thompson (2013, p. 186) have argued, 'an internationally focused curriculum may be assumed to be important for international schools with globally mobile pupils, but is increasingly being recognized as of relevance within national contexts too.' Given this growth in diverse areas, one may ask what different internationally focused curricula, such as the International Baccalaureate, may have in common with the International Primary Curriculum, for example.

One area of commonality found in some national and international curricula is the concept of intercultural understanding. For example, from a national perspective, the Australian Curriculum emphasizes the importance of developing intercultural understanding as students 'learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others' (ACARA, 2013). By engaging with diverse cultures, students are expected to 'understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture.' From an international perspective, the mission statement of the International Baccalaureate Organization reads, 'the International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect' (IB, 2014). At a European level, a publication destined for language teachers in Europe, published by the Council of Europe (2002), states prominently that 'education for intercultural understanding remains central to the Council of Europe's activities to promote greater mutual understanding and acceptance of difference in our multicultural and multilingual societies' (p. 5).

The term intercultural understanding is not explicitly mentioned in all internationally or globally focused curricula. However, a variety of other terms are used to refer to related areas. For example, the International Primary Curriculum (IPC, 2014) emphasizes 'internationally-minded' approaches to learning, while the US College Board's Advanced Placement International Diploma aims to develop 'global perspectives' (College Board, 2014). Conceptually related terms such as 'international mindedness' (Hill, 2012), 'global citizenship' (Marshall, 2010) or 'cosmopolitanism' (Weenink, 2007) are employed in research about internationally focused curricula and schools. Even when the term intercultural understanding is employed, varying definitions of what intercultural understanding is, and what conditions are necessary for it be achieved, exist (Perry and Southwell, 2011; Hill, 2006; Heyward, 2002). This adds complexity to the task of understanding what it is we are trying to achieve when supporting the development of skills and knowledge related to intercultural understanding.

This paper, therefore, aims to present the conceptual foundation for a research project designed to better understand how a sample of secondary students in schools offering the I.B. diploma demonstrate intercultural understanding. The future research project will focus on an analysis of structured student written and oral responses to questions that purposefully elicit a demonstration of intercultural understanding. It will rely on data from one international curriculum, the International Baccalaureate, which will serve as an example to help further our understanding of the extent to which curricular aims in relation to intercultural understanding are transformed into demonstrable learned outputs. In view of the importance given to intercultural understanding in current educational trends, this research project will contribute to a better sense of whether curricular intentions and classroom practices are being translated into their desired outcomes. It will also contribute to the discussion about what is meant by the concept of 'intercultural understanding' and what means are available to successfully assess it.

THE CULTURE IN INTERCULTURAL

The concept of intercultural understanding places culture at the centre of meaning making. What is meant by culture in the first place is a matter of discussion. As Raymond Williams has famously stated, culture is 'one of the two or three most

complicated words in the English language' (1983, p. 87). One view of culture, often referred to as high culture, assumes a significant ethical and aesthetic component to the concept. A concept identified in Cicero's *cultura animi* (Tusculan Disputations, Book II, 3), which views education as the means to the 'right' development of the young mind, the classical ideal of the 'cultivation of the soul' was inherited by the Renaissance humanist school curriculum (Corneanu 2011, p. 49). Culture is viewed as something to acquire, a body of knowledge and skills to be taught. This classical-humanist view of culture relies on a hierarchy of values. For Bourdieu (1979, 1982), this idea of culture contributes to the definition of a body of knowledge and skills that represents 'cultural capital'. Its replication and institutionalization perpetuate and reinforce social divisions, because this understanding of culture assumes a singular definition, a set of definable means for acquiring it and a value system attached to possessing it.

Broader ways of conceptualizing culture were introduced through contributions from the field of anthropology, where culture is no longer viewed monolithically, as an inheritance of the Western tradition, but as a facet of all human experience. Boas (1940) developed the idea that there are many cultures, not just one, a culture being what unites a group of people in a particular society. This view allows for the existence of multiple cultures in the same society, and for a single person to belong to a variety of cultures. There may be school cultures, family cultures, religious cultures, national cultures and cultures that extend beyond national boundaries. Herskovits (1948) extended the multi-faceted idea of culture into the realm of individual meaning-making to argue that 'experience is interpreted by each individual in terms of his own enculturation' (p. 63).

This notion of culture as relative to individual experience led Geertz (1973) and other symbolic-interactionist anthropologists to consider how interactions with others allow individuals to construct social identities and how they become the basis of social rules. In Geertz's definition of culture as 'an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in a symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about attitudes towards life' (p. 89), the 'pattern of meaning' may be read as the pattern of the dominant group, while the definition itself has been criticized for excluding the possibility of change within social groups and societies (Byram 1997, p. 18).

Hall (1997, p. 20) extends the notion of culture as construct in his work on the relationship between language, representation and culture, where culture contributes to the creation of conceptual maps that allow one to identify common ways of interpreting the world, to identify when one 'belongs to the same culture' as another person, or when another comes from 'a different culture'. Kramsch (1998), too, posits that language expresses and embodies cultural realities, and argues that sharing a language creates historical continuity and pride. Street's suggestion that culture is better understood as an active process, something that is 'done', emphasizes the constructive and active nature of culture more clearly:

> 'There is not much point in trying to say what culture is. What can be done, however, is to say what culture does. For what culture does is precisely the work of defining words, ideas, things and groups. We all live our lives in terms of definitions, names and categories that culture creates. The job of studying culture is not finding and then accepting definitions but of discovering how and what definitions are made, under what circumstances and for what reasons' (1991, p. 25).

This sociocultural view does not consider culture as systems of fixed bodies of knowledge possessed to the same degree by all members of clearly defined culture groups, but as 'recurrent and habitual systems of dispositions and expectations' (Duranti, 1997 in Hall, J., 2002, p.16). As in Street's view, culture is seen as a series of different actions at specific moments in time.

When Hunsinger (2006) refers to heuristic approaches to culture, such as those presented by Hofstede (1984) or Trompenaars and Turner (1997), which view culture as an 'autonomous essence posing as a set of durable habits and practices' (p. 34), he criticizes this view of culture as static and rigid. Furthermore, this static definition of culture implies that cultural identity is 'something that is brought to communication rather than constructed and mobilized during communication' (p. 34). Cultural identity becomes a causally linked 'manifestation' of culture. Appadurai (1996) moves more radically towards an individually driven notion of culture when he posits that culture is 'an arena for conscious choice, justification, and representation' (p. 44), which

Hunsinger (2006, p. 31) views as a positive move away from more ethnographic preoccupations with locating definitive examples of 'culture'.

In terms of how the concept of culture is employed in the concept of intercultural understanding, Van Oord (2005) states that when we are 'speaking of cultural differences, multiculturalsim, cross-cultural communication or intercultural education we are utilizing the anthropological approach to culture' (p. 176), an inheritance of Boas. However, this statement does not address the more complex considerations of whether, in educational settings, the concept of culture in intercultural understanding is viewed as a static entity, or, as Appuradai (1996) would argue, an active process, involving the economic, political and historical forces of the moment, 'a site of social differences and struggles' (Johnson, 1987, p. 39). The extent to which culture is viewed as static or fluid, singular or multiple, inherited or constructed, matters greatly in our conceptualization of intercultural understanding and its inclusion in educational settings.

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Discussions about what is meant by intercultural understanding are varied and complex. Hill (2006) defines intercultural understanding as a combination of knowledge about other cultures at a cognitive level, combined with a set of attitudes at the affective level. Knowledge includes knowledge about one's own culture, other cultures, and the similarities and differences between cultures. However, knowledge on its own does not comprise intercultural understanding. One can know, and continue to judge and dismiss. Attitudes of empathy, respect and open-mindedness are essential to move from initial awareness to understanding about other cultures. Looking at the types of outcomes that a curriculum dedicated to developing intercultural understanding would develop (2007), Hill sees *knowledge* in terms of knowledge *about* world issues, social justice, equity and cultural diversity. *Skills* involve critical reflection, problem solving, inquiry, and cultural literacy and *attitudes*, which are the combination of knowledge and skills to 'fashion individual values', include commitment to peace, social justice and equity and respect for other cultures (pp. 33 – 34).

Hill's definition has much in common with Heyward's (2002) definition of intercultural literacy. Heyward presents a developmental model of intercultural literacy, defined as

'the competencies, understandings, attitudes, language proficiencies, participation and identities necessary for effective cross-cultural engagement' (p. 10). He extends Hill's categories of knowledge, skills and attitudes to include identities, which underlines the fluid nature of identity, and the impact of identity-building in the process of encountering new cultural experiences. The term intercultural literacy, therefore, includes many of the attributes of Hill's intercultural understanding, with a more specific focus on the individual's ability to assume the perspective of another, to move between cultural identities at will and to undergo personal change while doing so. Heyward defines the highest level of intercultural literacy as follows (p. 16 – 17),

- understandings include showing 'awareness of how culture(s) feel and operate from the standpoint of the insider ';
- competencies include 'mindfulness, empathy, perspective-taking, tolerance, and communication';
- attitudes are 'differentiated, dynamic and realistic' and demonstrate 'overall respect for integrity of culture(s)';
- participation includes 'well established cross-cultural/transcultural friendships and/or working relationships';
- language proficiencies are 'bilingual or multilingual'; and identities are bicultural, transcultural, or global, while individuals can 'consciously shift between multiple cultural identities'.

Another developmental model, originating from the field of intercultural communication, but with significant commonalities with Heywood's intercultural literacy model, was created by Hammer and Bennett through an instrument called the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, Bennett, Wiseman, 2003), adapted from Bennett's earlier Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The basic premise of both the IDI and the DMIS models is that 'as one's experience of cultural differences becomes more complex, one's potential competence in intercultural interactions increases' (Hammer and Bennett, 2001, p. 1). At the 'adaptation' stage of intercultural sensitivity, an individual engages with her own and with other cultures with a critical and appreciative approach. Patterns of cultural difference are recognized and may influence decision-making, which leads to cognitive change. An understanding that cultural differences may influence how people interact

and relate leads to possible behavioural changes. The 'integration' stage of development may also include the inclusion of multiple perspectives into one's own identity (Hammer and Bennett, 2001), hence, like Heyward, the authors acknowledge the impact of intercultural exchanges on issues of identity formation.

Bennett (1993) emphasizes the gradual development of attitudes to intercultural issues, which Heyward agrees is 'an empowering additive process' (2002, p.15) that occurs as intercultural sensitivity grows. Bennett (1993) and Heyward (2002) both focus on the engagement of contact, but recognize that the cross-cultural experience on its own is not enough, and that the risk of only learning '*about*' (p. 18 - 19) cultures exists if the appropriate social or educational structures and support needed to develop intercultural understanding are not present. The concepts of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural literacy as presented by Heyward, Hammer and Bennett, therefore, appear to be closely linked, and provide a more detailed description of the process of developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes described by Hill under the broader term of international understanding.

Fennes and Hapgood (1997) emphasize the importance of the active side of intercultural learning as well, which they view as made up of process, practice and reflection, defining intercultural learning as 'confronting differences, understanding our prejudices, recognizing stereotypes as what they are' (p. 2). This does not necessarily imply accepting another's values, but does require the learner to see from 'another cultural filter' (p. 48) than one's own. Intercultural learning would therefore appear to emphasize the active side of cross-cultural experiences, including some of the skills in Hill's definition, and necessary precursors to reaching the higher levels of Heywood's literacy or Hammer and Bennett's sensitivity.

Pearce (2001) points to the development of two possible contrasting ends when issues of intercultural understanding are addressed in the classroom, one a 'convergent' tendency aiming for a single 'transcultural' identity and skill set, and the other, a 'divergent' tendency, moving towards multiple identities. Looking specifically at the International Baccalaureate Organization, Van Oord (2007) raises the concern that the IBO's programmes of study and assumptions about learning are 'Western-biased and monocultural' (p. 387) and the development of intercultural understanding would

necessarily be influenced by that bias. Van Oord and Corn (2013) argue that the prevailing definitions of culture and intercultural understanding may be too limited to embrace fully the implications of a culturally dynamic and varied world, and argue for the pursuit of 'cultural liberty – an individual's freedom to embrace or defy his/her own tradition' over a 'single-minded pursuit of intercultural understanding' (p. 23). The authors appear to give priority to personal identity-making in relation to one's own tradition(s), suggesting that they view the prevailing definition of intercultural understanding as more focused on understanding other cultures over one's own. This concern is, in fact, addressed in Heyward's emphasis on bicultural or transcultural identities and shifting between multiple cultural identities, in his definition of intercultural literacy.

The future project related to this paper will apply Heyward's developmental model as the basis for understanding levels of intercultural understanding. Intercultural understanding will be viewed as a developmental, experiential process that involves both engagement with other cultures, and engagement with an understanding of self. However, it is clear that the data chosen for this research project, written responses by students, will not exemplify all of the areas that Heywood mentions, as some manifestations of intercultural understanding are reflected in experiences and lived moments. One can anticipate that the areas of *understandings*, defined as 'awareness of how culture(s) feel and operate from the standpoint of the insider', *competencies*, in terms of perspective-taking and empathy as well as *attitudes* of respect for integrity of cultures will be evident to varying degrees in written responses. This partial application of Heyward's model suggests that the future study will be strengthened by triangulation in the form of interviews or observations in the field.

Related fields - intercultural communication and communicative competence

With its roots set originally in the area of foreign language acquisition and the foreign services, the rich field of intercultural communication research offers helpful overlapping or related categories regarding how individuals learn about other cultures. For example, while looking at the 'foreign' student's learning in a different 'host culture and language,' Hammer et al (1989) focus on the individual's knowledge of and attitude towards the host culture as indicators of the relative success of communication. While

the concept of a host culture and language suggests a reductive, singular and static state of correspondence between speakers of a language and members of a culture, the importance given to knowledge and attitude about another culture (or cultures) in relation to the success of communication suggests that prior knowledge of other cultures as well as an individual's attitudes towards learning about cultures are significant categories in assessing what contributes to the attainment of intercultural understanding. This coincides with elements of Hill and Heyward's definitions of intercultural understanding or literacy, as examined above.

The field of intercultural communicative competence expands beyond foreign language learning and communicative competence, encompassing elements that contribute to the capacity to understand and relate to people from other cultures and linguistic backgrounds. Byram (1997) underlines the relationship between learning languages and learning about cultures, 'the acquisition of a foreign language is the acquisition of the cultural practices and beliefs it embodies for particular social groups' (p. 22). Language acquisition is not only an additive process of increasing knowledge. It also contributes to the process of relativising 'what seems to the learner to be the natural language of their own identities, and the realization that these are cultural, and socially constructed' (p. 22). Linguistic competence and intercultural competence are therefore taught and learned inseparably.

Byram (1997) and (Byram et al, 2002) identify knowledge, skills, attitudes and values as components of intercultural communicative competence. Intercultural attitudes (*savoir etre*) provide the base from which learning can start. Curiosity, openness and a willingness to relativise one's own values, beliefs and behaviours are included in the attitudes that contribute to the attainment of intercultural communicative competence (2002, p. 5). This definition of attitudes focuses on the learner's basic approach to the new and unknown, with some overlap with respect to Heyward's 'dynamic, realistic, respectful' attitude and Hill's attitudes of empathy, respect and open-mindedness.

The area of knowledge (*savoirs*) includes knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country. This knowledge also encompasses 'knowledge about how other people see oneself as well as some knowledge about other people' (Bennett 2002, p. 6). The skills (*savoir comprendre*)

involve comparing, interpreting, relating to one's own culture. They also include the ability to 'acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills', (*savoir apprendre/faire*) (p. 6). Finally, Byram includes critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*), which is 'the ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries' (p. 7). Critical cultural awareness extends Heyward's idea of 'understanding from the standpoint of the insider', where the learner attempts to put himself in someone else's shoes. Byram accounts for a new appreciation and potential distancing from one's own culture, because of interactions with someone from another cultural or linguistic background.

This concept of the changing self is also present in Collier (1989), who examines the area of cultural competence from within the foreign language learning field as well. Collier identifies a 'cultural identities' approach to understanding cultural competence, which is based on the assumption that 'knowledge about self is based upon comparisons and information from others in discourse' (p. 298). Cultural competence therefore also relies on an individual's understanding of his/her own identity, as it emerges and changes based on encounters with others, which is similar to the 'integration' stage of Bennett's DMIS model (above). When considering the development of intercultural understanding through the classroom study of texts, such as in the IB Language and Literature course to be examined in the proposed research project, the use of textual comparisons to reach an understanding of culture and how it relates to one's own emerging sense of self, offers a potentially interesting research direction.

Chen and Starosta (1996) and Bennett (2009b) agree that cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects must all be taken into account when theorizing the concept of intercultural competence in communication. Chen and Starosta identify three elements: sensitivity, awareness and skills, with particular emphasis on the sensitivity element in their Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen and Starosta, 2000), while Bennett's DMIS model conceptualizes a progression of 'worldviews' that identify different stages of understanding, moving from more ethnocentric views to ethnorelative views of one's own culture. The progression involves

'acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural context (world view), including one's own, and developing greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts as both an immediate and long-term effect of exchange' (Bennett, 2009a, s2).

As a tool for assessment of intercultural understanding, Hansel (2005) argues that intercultural sensitivity correlates well with indicators of intercultural learning.

Intercultural competence leads to appropriate and effective communication, and core competencies can be developed that are not specific to any culture (Root and Ngampornchai, 2013, p. 516). The idea of developing core competencies that can be generalized to multiple situations and multiple cultures may offer an important parallel in understanding how to work towards a broader state of intercultural understanding by transferring specific classroom work on culture through the study of texts and structured discussions to different situations outside the classroom. This would provide specific examples of how knowledge contributes to the development of skills and leads to specific actions.

Related terms - international–mindedness, cosmopolitanism, global citizenship

As Hayden and Thompson (2013) have indicated, there may be a significant overlap of ideas behind the different terms that are being employed in research into international education, intercultural education or multicultural education, to name only a few. One such term is 'international-mindedness', which is considered here in its relation to intercultural understanding. Hill (2000) has suggested that the term 'education for international-mindedness' be adopted to be as inclusive as possible of the work being done in a wide variety of educational contexts with an international focus, and to designate the outcome of successful international education. It involves knowledge 'about global issues and their interdependence and cultural issues' as well as critical thinking skills. Importance is given to the use of this knowledge and these skills, in terms of actions that make 'the world a better place' (Hill 2012, p. 246). Intercultural understanding is included as part of international-mindedness, as the appreciation of cultural diversity and the varied perspectives related to it.

Haywood (2006), however, argues that the term international-mindedness continues to be understood differently depending on the context in which it is used, and pushes for a more robust engagement with the meaning of the term. Haywood unearths the complexity of the term by examining how its application to the different areas of diplomacy, politics, multiculturalism, etc. leads to different, and sometimes contradictory outcomes. This allows for a further honing in on essential components of international-mindedness that, according to Haywood, a school should provide. These include:

- 'knowledge and understanding of the scientific basis that identifies the earth's environment as a common entity of value to everyone'
- curiosity and interest in the world 'based on knowledge of the earth and on its human and physical geography'
- open attitudes and a 'predisposition to tolerance' regarding other cultures and their belief systems
- values of 'respect for other ways of life with care and concern for the welfare and well-being of people in general' (86 – 87).

Haywood's essential components provide examples of knowledge grounded in curricular areas such as science and geography in an attempt to guide schools more specifically. There is significant overlap between the attitudes of curiosity, open-mindedness and respect in Hill, Heywood and Byram's definitions of attitudes necessary for intercultural understanding, literacy and competence.

The concept of international-mindedness is also presented in relation to *cosmopolitanism*, which can be described as a combination of skills, including the ability to move with ease between different social and cultural contexts, as well as an attitude of acceptance of the 'coexistence of cultures in the individual experience' (Hannerz 1990, p. 238) with a 'meta-cultural' view of experience. Gunesch (2004) argues for a definition of cosmopolitanism as a form of internationalism, with a particular focus on individual identity formation, free of the educational or institutional frameworks inherent in the literature on international-mindedness or internationalism. He argues that the concepts of internationalism or international-mindedness exist within the logic of nations and that the concept of cosmopolitanism more easily transcends

such separation (p. 267). Weenink (2007) views cosmopolitans as another cultural group, created and perpetuated by transnational networks, such as international schools. He argues, in Bourdieu's terms, that cosmopolitan capital exists, and is of significant importance in parent's choices for their children's education. This definition suggests that cosmopolitanism differs from the broader concept of international-mindedness, or intercultural understanding, as it does not include commitment to improving the world, peace or justice. Rather, it limits itself to communicative success and feeling at ease with the assumption that multiple cultural points of view may exist together, and the types of experiences that follow from that assumption. This narrower view of cosmopolitanism contrasts with Marshall (2011), for example, who uses the term cosmopolitanism interchangeably with global citizenship, to which I will now turn.

Another area in the field of education that overlaps considerably with the goals of intercultural understanding is global citizenship education. Oxfam (1997), for example, defines a global citizen as someone who is 'aware of the wider world and has a sense of their role as a world citizen, respects and values diversity, has an understanding of how the world works, [...] is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place and takes responsibility for their actions'. This description has much in common with the attitudes and values Heywood cites as part of international-mindedness. There is also overlap with Hayward's definition of intercultural literacy in terms of competencies of mindfulness, perspective-taking and participation in cross-cultural relationships. However, as defined by Oxfam, global citizenship centers more on the active outcomes of awareness and understanding, rather than the awareness and understanding themselves, which make up a significant part of Hayward's definition. Jenkins (1998) also focuses on the importance of action, in relation to knowledge and attitudes, when outlining the importance of global issues in education today.

Marshall (2011) identifies a number of different types of global citizenship education, depending on the degree to which they are oriented to the global economy or oriented to other citizens, groups and societies throughout the world. She also recognizes a key similarity within different types of global citizenship education, as 'a particular vision of a "better future" entrenched in a set of norms and values about perceived political, economic and cultural conditions' and a belief in global connectivity (p. 414).

This succinct overview of concepts related to intercultural understanding highlights areas of overlap, as well as differences in emphasis, when discussing international mindedness, cosmopolitanism and global citizenship. While all encompass a combination of knowledge, attitudes and skills, the extent to which these three areas lead to actions aimed at having a positive impact on society may differ in focus and degree. However, a common notion of the significance of the context in which the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes are developed is evident. I will now turn to the specific context of international education, and its role in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes related to intercultural understanding.

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Having examined some definitions of intercultural understanding and conceptually related terms, it is important to consider now the relationship between the goals of achieving international understanding through education and the field of international education itself. It has been noted that the concern with developing intercultural understanding is not limited to schools that offer international curricula or provide education to the children of globally-mobile parents, and is central to some national curricula as well. As Hayden and Thompson (1995) have argued, an international school may make no claim to offer an international education, while an international education may be acquired in a school that does not claim to be international at all. Cambridge (2012) has suggested that there may be no 'single entity' that can be typified as an international school, given the variety of definitions and examples of what constitutes an international school (p. 232). As Hill (2012) has pointed out, the definition of international education itself has moved from associating it with a type of school to the process of education taking place in a given institution (p. 256), which aids in moving us beyond Cambridge's definitional impasse in terms of the 'international school'.

Looking more specifically at the field of international education itself, that is, what is taught in schools regardless of their claim to be international or not, Tate (2013) identifies international education as based on an explicit ideology that both promotes a vision of how the world should be, and a commitment to developing the 'values, vision, attitudes, characteristics, dispositions and habits that will make it more likely that this

desired world will come about' (p. 254). He therefore distinguishes between two elements. The first is a core belief in a vision of an improved world and the second is a set of beliefs about the characteristics people should have. Tate recognizes that the second element is not unique to international education (p. 256) as the development of specific characteristics and qualities in students is included in most educational objectives. Cambridge and Thompson (2004) identify two forms of international education. They distinguish between 'internationalist education', an example of which is Tate's definition, and 'globalist international education' (p. 161). The latter has its roots in the world of economics, the process of globalization and aspirations for free trade, including transferable school-leaving qualifications. Some identify this education as contributing to the formation of a 'transnational capitalist class' (Sklair, 2001; van der Pijl, 1998; Brown and Lauder, 2009). The former may be identified with the desire to cultivate 'positive attitudes towards peace, international understanding and responsible world citizenship' (Cambridge and Thompson, 2004, p. 164). It is worth underlining the fact that these internationalist or ideological views of education shares a focus on the affective as well as the cognitive growth of the individual, and view education in terms of a process. Both elements have been identified as intrinsic areas in the development and identification of intercultural understanding, as presented in the section above.

Hill (2007) looks at the definition of international education through the lens of the common goal of intercultural understanding found in both international and multicultural educational settings. Tracing the history of multicultural education as originating in the recognition that minority cultures must be included and understood by the dominant national culture, he states that 'multicultural education succeeds when the individual is no longer suspicious of those who are different from his or her own experience, when the individual is comfortable with the notion that "different" does not mean "worse" or "better"'(p. 247). If this is a fundamental goal of multicultural education, and intercultural understanding is 'the principal means by which the issues of cultural diversity at the local, national and international levels are addressed' (Hill 2007 p. 250), one of the main differences between multicultural education and international education lies more within the situation (multicultural aimed at national students and immigrants, and international aimed initially at students who move around the world) than within the aims. While Hill considers intercultural understanding as a fundamental component of international education (2006, p. 6), as it is central to

multicultural education as well, he sees this overlap as potentially important for understanding how to develop it in the classroom. Fennes and Hapgood (1997) employ the term 'multicultural' to name a situation where diverse cultures are present, and distinguish between a multicultural *classroom* and intercultural *education*, where 'intercultural' underlines the interactions and relationships that can exist between different cultural groups in a multicultural setting.

The International Baccalaureate – an example of an international curriculum

One example of international education is the curriculum developed and implemented by the International Baccalaureate Organization. Originally created to meet the educational needs of a globally mobile body of students attending a small number of international schools, IB programmes are now offered in a wide variety of schools, both national and international, to a broader student population. The curriculum offers three programmes, the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) (IB, 2011) The three programmes are guided by the organization's mission statement, and the learning outcomes related to the mission statement, as described in the IB learner profile. The mission statement prominently states the role and importance of intercultural understanding, 'The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect' (IB, 2014). Sylvester (2007) identifies different factors in the development of international education that are reflected in the IB mission statement: the necessity for a curriculum that would lead to tertiary education around the world, the demand for a curriculum that had more of an international perspective than national systems, and the ideal of an education that encourages peace and cultural understanding. The learner profile includes statements such as 'we critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others' (IB, 2013). The IB standards and practices document (IB, 2011) states 'the school develops and promotes international-mindedness and all attributes of the IB learner profile across the school community' (p. 2).

Specifically, the Diploma Programme, a two-year programme designed to prepare students for university, requires students to complete a course in two Languages,

Individuals and Societies, Experimental Sciences, Mathematics, and a sixth course from one of these groups or the Arts. Students must also complete a course called Theory of Knowledge, the Creativity, Action, Service program, and a 4000 word research essay called the Extended Essay (IB, 2014). In a case-study aimed at investigating the extent to which the Diploma Programme meets the aims of the IB mission statement, Lineham (2013) identified the core IB elements of Theory of Knowledge and CAS as 'providing the most opportunities for the development of the IB mission statement ethos' (p. 275), with further opportunities provided by languages and humanities. Wilkinson and Hayden (2010) also identified the Theory of Knowledge course as one contributor to IBDP students changing attitudes over the course of the two year programme, but emphasized the importance of both formal and informal contact between students and between students and their teachers, as well.

The extent to which the IBO's programme of study can be the basis for developing intercultural understanding is also put into perspective if we consider the degree to which the international school environment is a prime factor in nurturing what Hayden and Thompson (1995) and Hayden and Wong (1997) identify as international understanding. As Hayden and Thompson have argued (1995), curriculum is only one factor in the educational experience. They found that contact with students of other cultures in school and outside school was the most important factor in developing international attitudes (pp. 398 – 9). Interactions with students and teachers of varying backgrounds and cultural identities are considered a stronger factor in developing awareness than curricular intentions. Hayden and Thompson (1996) later identify contact with other cultures outside the classroom, the make-up of the student body and teaching staff, and the philosophy of school managers as significant. According to student responses in this study, the academic program was of less significance in contributing to development of international understanding, while interactions with fellow students outside of the curricular program were of prime importance, 'exposure to those of other cultures was deemed to be important in the development of an international attitude' (p. 397). When the formal curriculum was identified as a contributing factor, it was through language classes or the study of literature from other cultures (p. 339 – 400). Though a student's understanding of the concept of intercultural understanding may be shaped by purposeful curricular planning and

school philosophies, it is also influenced by multiple factors that lie outside the walls of the classroom (Hayden et al, 2003).

It is interesting here to note Bennett's (2009a) distinction between *cultural* learning and *intercultural* learning. He posits that cultural self-awareness must precede intercultural learning, because if an individual does not have a conception of his/her own culture, he/she will have difficulty recognizing and integrating cultural differences. Although one may learn something about a particular foreign culture, this does not in and of itself lead to intercultural understanding and the creation of 'culture-general categories for recognizing and dealing with a wide range of cultural differences' (p. s4). Bennett cites the finding that students in total immersion education in host-cultures don't learn as well as students in mixed situations - with host culture students, international students and other compatriots – to support the idea that 'more processing of cross-cultural experience is associated with greater intercultural learning,' (p. s8) and that this processing contributes to the creation of culture-general categories. This supports Hayden and Thompson's (1995) point that exposure to students of multiple cultures is fundamental.

Another factor to consider regarding developing intercultural understanding in the school context is the role of the teacher. The teacher's interpretation of intercultural understanding will shape classroom activities and curricular choices (Carson, 2005). Bodycott and Walker (2000) argue that 'the development of intercultural understanding [...] must begin with the teacher's attitude, and the scaffolds created to support student learning' (in Crabtree and Sapp, 2004, p. 121). The role of the teacher is not only central to the presentation and interpretation of content and concepts related to intercultural understanding, but also in assessing the extent to which the goals related to its development have been met.

ASSESSING INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

The question of what to assess and how, in the area of intercultural understanding, is of importance if we are to measure any success in meeting the objective of developing it. The interplay of knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions has been identified as fundamental in understanding what is meant by intercultural understanding, and while the literature on assessing intercultural competence in the field of language learning is rich, research into assessing the related but separate field of intercultural understanding

is limited. Hayden and Thompson (2013), for example, posit that the chances of validly assessing something that relates to attitudes of mind, and behaviours arising from those attitudes, is unlikely. Deardorff (2006), instead, using Byram's definition of intercultural learning as the most representative, 'knowledge of others, knowledge of self, skills to interpret and relate, skills to discover and/or to interact, valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors, and relativizing one's self' (Byram, 1997, p. 34), claims that intercultural learning can be measured (p. 258), but cites the importance of on-going, primarily qualitative assessment, developing indicators and delineated objectives for measurement.

Acknowledging the difficulty of valid assessment of attitudes due to their subjective and often unarticulated nature, there is nonetheless a belief amongst some researchers and practitioners that the study of texts from different cultural points of view can contribute to the creation of attitudes of mind that support intercultural understanding. Referring to the study of literary texts in the classroom, Dasli (2011, p. 11) points to the potential for dialogic classroom discussions that allow students/readers to voice their differences, biases and culturally determined beliefs as the study of the text unfolds. Byram and Feng (2004, p. 13) cite the study of literary texts as an authentic opportunity for personal opinion forming and reflection, and therefore a site for development of knowledge and attitudes in relation to self and others. If the 'existence of cultures is only realized when we are confronted with the presence of something different' (Fennes and Hapgood, 1997, p. 13), the structured and purposeful inclusion of difference through the study and discussion of texts in the classroom is one of many starting points for the development of intercultural understanding.

While acknowledging the importance of other factors in developing intercultural understanding, the project related to this paper will be based on the premise that the curricular objectives of studying literary texts to influence a student's sensitivity to and understanding of multiple cultural points of view can be assessed. As stated in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2013):

> 'In interpreting and analysing authors' ideas and positions in a range of texts in English and in translation to English, they [students] learn to question stated and unstated cultural beliefs and assumptions, and issues of intercultural meaning.

> Students use Intercultural understanding to comprehend and create a range of texts, that present diverse cultural perspectives and to empathise with a variety of people and characters in various cultural settings.'

Though less significant than factors outside the classroom, when students did identify the formal curriculum as a contributing factor to developing understanding, Hayden and Thompson (1996) found that it was through language classes or the study of literature from other cultures (p. 339 – 400).

Specifically, the future project related to this paper will employ a qualitative research method to allow for an exploration of the meanings students give to questions of culture and to focus on individual and possibly complex responses. To respond to the question of how to assess students' intercultural understanding in relation to a specific curricular objective of developing this understanding, student written responses to specific written prompts will be analyzed. In addition, classroom discussions and interviews will be used as student-created 'texts' to analyze. Discourse analysis is chosen as a strategy because of its focus on language and patterns that emerge across texts. Discourse analysis views language as a reflection of an individual's different views of the world and different understandings, and aims to identify these views, and broader patterns, through close examination of texts, whether spoken or written. As an analytical strategy, it also attempts to identify how these patterns, or discourses, are structured and how they influence questions of identity and social relationships (Paltridge, 2006). In the research area of intercultural understanding, the question of how identities and social relationships are constructed is central to a clearer vision of how the concepts of culture and intercultural understanding are being developed in different educational settings.

This assessment approach relies on the assumption that a relationship exists between teaching aims and student written and oral production. It also assumes that students' productions can be treated as texts that can be approached through a discourse analysis method. The aim of the discourse analysis method is to identify emerging themes in student responses, and determine what they reveal about how students' activate the concept of culture, how this relates to intercultural understanding, and what this reveals about the relationship between curricular objectives and learning outcomes. The purpose of the research project is therefore to use specific student generated data to

determine how the increasingly significant focus on intercultural understanding at a philosophical and curricular level is reflected in purposeful student responses.

CONCLUSION

The importance of developing intercultural understanding and related concepts, such as international-mindedness or global citizenship, is attested to by increasing references to these areas in curricular aims and objectives from varying sources and in varied locations and types of schools. One of the challenges teachers and researchers face is determining what it is they are trying to develop, and how to determine whether they have been successful. The combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and resulting actions that are seen to be significant in the development of intercultural awareness makes its identification complex, but not impossible. Indeed, given its importance for our world today, this complexity must not hinder efforts to try. The specific approach outlined in this paper focuses on one aspect of development, identification and assessment, through the purposeful study of literary texts in the secondary classroom to develop an awareness and appreciation of other cultures. The limitations of the approach are clear, as research shows that the most significant factors in developing intercultural awareness take place outside of the formal curriculum. However, given that teachers are expected to address the area of intercultural awareness, it is essential that they understand what it might look like in the classroom in order to define and promote practices that will support the broader objective of developing an appreciation of others. This paper therefore outlines one approach to assessing success, through the use of texts in the classroom and related student responses, and will contribute to a better understanding in the field of how to achieve what we aspire to do.

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