

International-mindedness

International-mindedness

Summary

- International-mindedness is a view of the world in which people see themselves connected to the global community and assume a sense of responsibility towards its members.
- The learner profile and approaches to learning provide the dispositions and foundational skills for the development and demonstration of international-mindedness.
- The learning community envisions, creates, articulates, and models a culture of international-mindedness.
- An internationally minded learner takes action for positive change.

Defining international-mindedness

International-mindedness is central to the IB mission and is a foundational principle to its educational philosophy; it is at the heart of the continuum of international education.

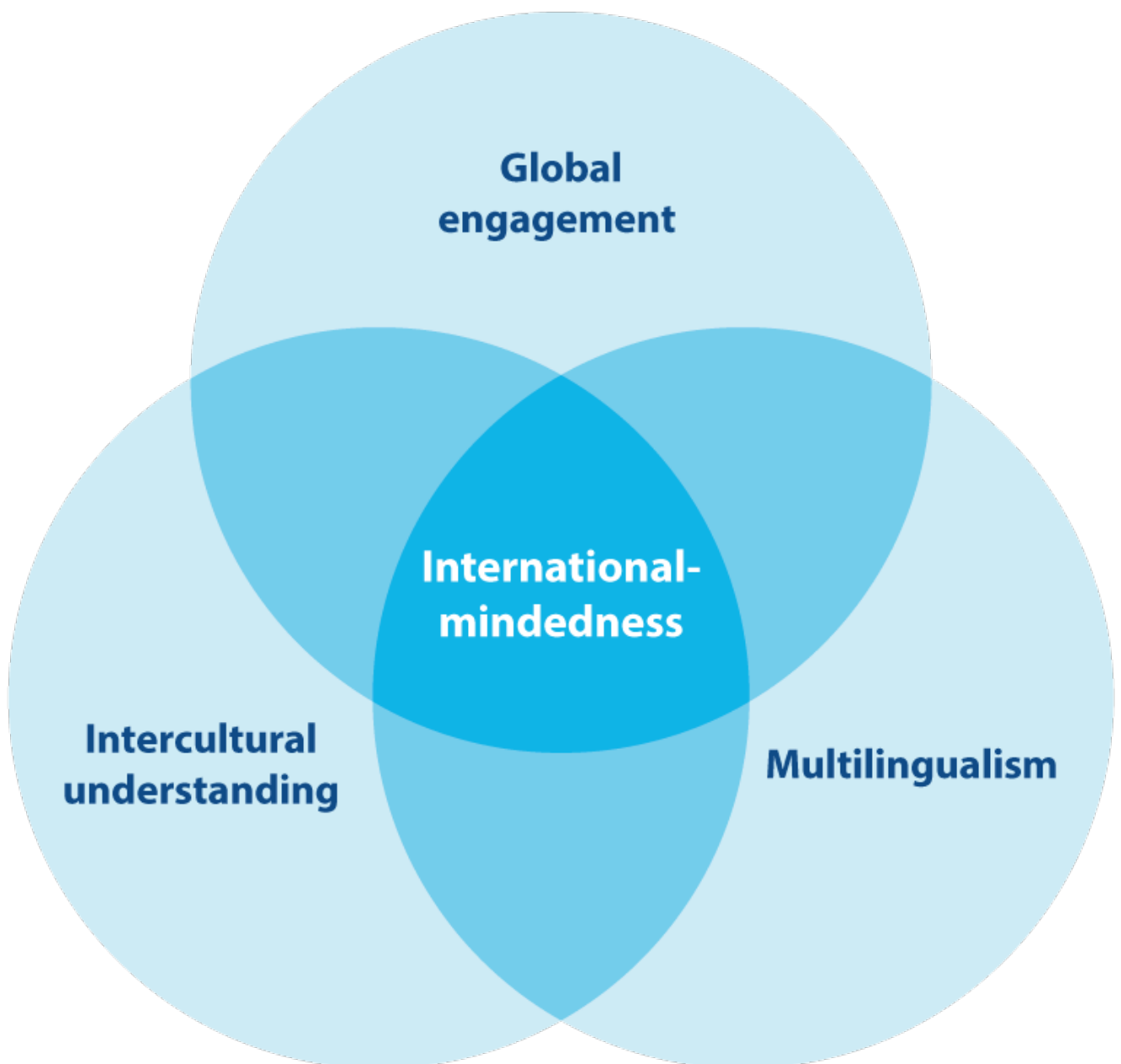
International-mindedness is a view of the world in which people see themselves connected to the global community and assume a sense of responsibility towards its members. It is an awareness of the interrelatedness of all nations and peoples, and is a recognition of the complexity of these. Internationally minded people appreciate and value the diversity of peoples, cultures and societies in the world. They make efforts to learn more about others and to develop empathy and solidarity towards them to achieve mutual understanding and respect (Oxfam 2105; UNESCO 2015).

Primary Years Programme (PYP) learners and their learning communities have a range of perspectives, values and traditions. The concept of international-mindedness builds on these diverse perspectives to generate a sense of common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet.

Developing international-mindedness

Education for international-mindedness begins by creating a culture in the school that values the world as the broadest context for learning. To build an internationally minded school culture, schools may consider:

- focusing student inquiries on global human commonalities
- creating opportunities for meaningful cultural exchange and action in the local and global communities
- embracing multilingualism to enhance intercultural dialogue and global engagement.



The learner profile attributes and the approaches to learning (ATL) provide the foundational skills and dispositions for the development of international-mindedness. An internationally minded learner:

- is a competent communicator
- is open-minded and knowledgeable
- is a caring and principled thinker
- uses his or her curiosity and research skills to inquire about the world
- thinks and reflects critically about opportunities and challenges
- takes action for positive changes (for example, to promote intercultural understanding, foster caring relationships, to care for self and others)
- takes risks to further self-development and understanding of others

(Boix Mansilla and Jackson 2011; Oxfam 2015; Singh and Qi 2013; UNESCO 2015).

Fostering the development of international-mindedness

The development and demonstration of international-mindedness is complex and nuanced. While there is no single formula for supporting internationally minded development, a 2017 IB-commissioned research project examining how IB World Schools conceptualize and implement international-mindedness identified promising practices.

The study found that IB schools demonstrate international-mindedness based on two interrelated concepts:

- “reaching out”, to consider how we interact with others
- “reaching in”, to understand ourselves in relation to others.

More importantly, schools in the study considered international-mindedness as a journey rather than an end point. This journey is a constant process of defining, learning, acting, reflecting and redefining. Similar to the programme of inquiry in the PYP, the process of developing international-mindedness is seen as being more important than the product.



The role of school and the learning community

The journeys of IB World Schools include several practices that schools may consider within their own context when fostering the development of international-mindedness (Hacking et al. 2017). Schools are encouraged to modify and expand on these practices based on their own context.

Creating a culture of international-mindedness

The formal leadership team plays a significant role in visioning, creating, articulating and modelling a culture of international-mindedness. This includes:

- ensuring that international-mindedness is embedded in the school ethos through mission statements and policies
- encouraging participation in school decision-making by all members of the learning community
- providing opportunities for the learning community to model, develop and demonstrate aspects of international-mindedness.

The informal leadership team facilitates the adoption of an internationally minded culture by creating a learning environment that:

- conveys diversity through the use and display of languages, images and books
- challenges assumptions through inquiries that honour diversity (for example, writers from diverse cultures, male and female pioneers, inventors from a broad range of backgrounds, public figures/representatives from local and global communities)
- reinforces desired values, dispositions and behaviours in class and in the playground
- provides ongoing opportunities to discuss and reflect on cultural, linguistic, ethnic and social diversity.

Providing professional development

Having a focus on international-mindedness in staff professional development, as well as induction, is a significant aspect of a school's work on international-mindedness. Staff benefit from opportunities to:

- explore what international-mindedness is
- reflect on what it means to them, both personally and collectively
- share ideas to support students' development of international-mindedness.

Making provisions for language learning

PYP schools actively encourage language learning, both for its communication and cognitive benefits and for its direct links to international-mindedness. Language itself is valued by the community as a window into culture—through learning and understanding how a language works, learners gain insight into their own and other cultures, as well as ways of thinking.

The IB encourages multilingualism as a means to supporting students' self-awareness, perceptions, abilities and actions that are necessary for developing positive interpersonal relationships as well as affirming cultural identity. Encouraging students to speak their home and family languages, and to learn an additional language, demonstrates commitment to international-mindedness. It sends the message to the learning community that language is crucial to deepening understanding of one's own and others' cultures, and alternative and multiple perspectives.

Infusing international-mindedness within the PYP framework

International-mindedness and the learner profile are key elements of the PYP curriculum framework, which focuses on knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills, dispositions and action.

Inquiring about human commonalities, ideas and questions that emerge through discussions and conversations can contribute to the development of international-mindedness. Student-led inquiry—where students pose questions based on their own curiosity, background and interests—also provides rich opportunities for intercultural understanding to develop. Schools provide opportunities for local and global engagement by:

- allotting time for sustained inquiry into a wide range of locally, nationally and globally significant issues and ideas
- exploring global concerns at a developmentally appropriate level, including the environment, peace and conflicts, rights and responsibilities, migration and displacement, and governance across a variety of geographical and cultural dimensions
- critically considering inequalities and power dynamics in inquiry, action and reflection—recognizing the factors that influence the challenges faced by different groups (for example, women, youth, marginalized populations)

- considering sustainable development in inquiry, action and reflection—recognizing that the living hold the earth and its resources in trust for future generations.

Inquiries offer students opportunities to share their knowledge, conceptual understandings and perspectives with peers and teachers, avoiding the potential bias of imposing certain “correct” views. Sharing dialogues with people who are different from oneself, and hearing others’ perspectives, are essential to exploring international-mindedness. Cultural similarities and differences and lived experiences, shared through the inquiry process, can broaden and enhance knowledge, understandings and perspectives.

Expanding intercultural understanding to extra-curricular activities

Events and learning experiences, such as the arts (for example, music) and sport, can provide meaningful ways to develop friendships and make connections between students:

- from different cultures, nationalities and social backgrounds
- with different learning styles and perspectives.

These sporting or musical events further promote international-mindedness based on the origins of the sport or the musical instruments or music played. At the same time, music and sport involvements are intensely personal, involve a significant degree of student agency and, therefore, are important in developing the attributes of the learner profile and international-mindedness.

Examples of other school events and activities that recognize and celebrate cultural diversity might be oriented around:

- literature
- cultural festivals
- past and current influential public figures
- food and fashion

These events, activities and experiences are some of the ways in which cultural diversity can be explored. Deeper, more critical and personally involved approaches may involve the learning community:

- going out into the community to engage with another school that is different from their own
- taking appropriate action to support particular groups within the local community.

Schools often take trips and excursions to provide students with the opportunities to learn about themselves and others. Sharing and contributing in reciprocal ways in different settings or cultures enhances intercultural understanding. First-hand experience through language and culture exchanges are also an invaluable and effective means to learn about cultural similarities and differences.

Inviting speakers and visitors to share with the learning community can be equally beneficial and can have a powerful impact on learners. With the advent of technology, students can invite guest speakers, locally and globally, to participate in part of the inquiry process or social activity to provide alternative perspectives.

Celebrating diversity

Schools celebrate diversity by creating a safe school environment where members of the community feel secure, respected and trusted to voice their differences. For example, posting signs or notices and displaying student learning in different languages not only promotes a sense of acceptance of difference but also sends the message that diversity enriches learning.

Teachers play an important role in celebrating diversity through modelling internationally minded values and dispositions. For example, teachers:

- encourage and support students to explore multiple perspectives
- share their own experiences, interests and viewpoints with students
- use artifacts, quotes or pictures to bring subjects to life
- are prepared to respond to, and discuss, difficult topics such as national identity or local and global conflicts
- encourage safe and respectful dialogues
- create opportunities for role play
- encourage independent and collective thinking

- challenge disrespectful or insensitive behaviour and comments
- have no tolerance for bullying
- show respect and kindness to all community members.

Through teachers' actions, students learn both explicitly and implicitly that differences and diversity are the norms, which creates a feeling of respect, tolerance and acceptance.

Engaging with, and building relationships in, the school community

Involving and including parents and legal guardians in learning and teaching in an inclusive way is an expression of international-mindedness. This two-way process raises school and teachers' awareness to home cultures and expectations. This reciprocal process with the student, the learning community and the family supports everyone to have a voice in school decision-making.

Supporting students, families, teachers and staff in transition through thoughtful induction programmes is both critical to helping them establish a sense of belonging and to developing international-mindedness among all community members.

Local engagement, through a collaborative and constructive relationship with the school's local community, is another important expression of international-mindedness.

Towards international-mindedness—the role of the students

Developing international-mindedness begins with a positive mindset about the learning environment, the people within the environment and one's relationship within the community. Many attributes of the learner profile can support the development of this mindset, including being open-minded, principled and caring. Through the development of these attributes, students learn to be:

- tolerant and respectful—understanding that other people, with their differences, can also be right
- empathetic— understanding and sharing the feelings of another.

<p>Being open-minded is a requisite to intercultural understanding. When students are open-minded, they demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be aware of their own feelings and attitudes towards others • listen to other perspectives without making judgment • value peers and teachers for who they are • let go of their own assumptions or prejudices • be aware that body language can also send messages of inclusion or exclusion • be curious • seek opinions from diverse peer groups. 	<p>They also develop the capacity to resolve conflict and to build relationships through caring for, and sharing with, others. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • including others in games in the playground and in social activities • engaging with different students in the playground and in inquiry groups • being sensitive to the needs of others • treating everyone with mutual respect, including those who speak a different language, come from a different country or have a different learning need or belief • resolving conflict through dialogue • using multimodal communication strategies to engage as many people as possible. 	<p>Students further demonstrate international-mindedness through principled actions. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping new students feel at home in the learning community • translating for a peer who is at the early stages of developing language capability • taking responsibility for their own actions • sharing own cultural traditions and stories in classroom discussions and assemblies • supporting students who have been bullied • modelling appropriate behaviours when insensitive behaviours are observed
--	--	--

Figure IM03 *Engaging with international-mindedness*

Bibliography

Cited

Boix Mansilla, V and Jackson, A, 2011. *Educating for global competence: Preparing our youth to engage with the world*. New York, NY. Council of Chief State School Officers' EdSteps Initiative and Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning.

Hacking, EB, Blackmore, C, Bullock, K, Bunnell, T, Donnelly, M and Martin, S. 2017. *The international-mindedness journey: School practices for developing and assessing international-mindedness across the IB continuum*. The Hague, the Netherlands. International Baccalaureate Organization. <http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/ib-research/continuum/international-mindedness-final-report-2017-en.pdf>.

Oxfam. 2105. *Global citizenship in the classroom: A guide for teachers*. Oxford, UK. Oxfam. <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/global-citizenship/global-citizenship-guides>. Accessed on 28 September 2016.

Roberts, B. 2009. *Educating for global citizenship: A practical guide for schools*. Geneva, Switzerland. International Baccalaureate Organization.

Singh, M. and Qi, J. 2013. *21st century international mindedness: An exploratory study of its conceptualization and assessment*. Sydney, NSW, AU. University of Western Sydney.

UNESCO. 2015. *Global citizenship education: Topics and learning objectives*. Paris, France. UNESCO. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002329/232993e.pdf>. Accessed on 28 September 2016.

