

1 'International-mindedness': a field of struggle, confusion and
2 hope

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6

7 **Abstract**

8 Typically, educators of today recognise the importance of international-mindedness and realise
9 that it is in some way related to international education. However, it has been particularly
10 hard for educators to pin down exactly what international-mindedness is and what its
11 development actually involves. This paper examines current literature on the topic of
12 international-mindedness. It sets out to illustrate that in the literature on
13 international-mindedness, no single narrative account that clearly defines
14 international-mindedness or explains developmental ways of developing it exists. Rather,
15 many divergent and convergent discourses surround this term creating confusion and
16 unresolved debates related to international-mindedness. The paper concludes by highlighting
17 areas that are silenced and places where there are gaps in research and literature on
18 international-mindedness, from which proposals for future research can then be contemplated.

19

20 **Index terms**— International-mindedness, international education, IB learner profile, International Baccalaureate

22 **1 INTRODUCTION**

23 This paper sets out to illustrate that in the literature on international-mindedness, no single narrative account that
24 clearly defines international-mindedness or explains developmental ways of developing it, exists. Complex and
25 newly emerging literature discussing its notion or ways of developing it present innovative ideas, yet many clashing
26 themes. Given that many international schools are currently exploring the term international-mindedness, it is
27 time that tensions in the literature as well as gaps in current research on international-mindedness are examined.
28 It is anticipated that by examining the literature and research to date and connecting shared themes, silenced
29 areas and points of contention on international-mindedness, more research enthusiasts may be able to consider
30 this topic as a needy topic worthy of further investigation.

31 **2 II.**

32 **3 INTERNATIONAL-MINDEDNESS AND CURRENT LITERATURE**

34 Literature devoted to the development of international-mindedness is exceptionally scarce. As Haywood (2007)
35 argues: 'The literature is scanty as regards research to identify hard learning outcomes' (p. 80). The most recent
36 additions to literature devoted to the topic of international-mindedness are from ??kelton (2008), Cause (2008
37 ??ause (, 2009 ??ause (, 2011)), Ellwood (2010) and Haywood (2007). Other literature from Marshall (2007),
38 Sampatkumar ??2007), Hill (2000Hill (, 2003 ??ill (, 2007)), Snowball (2007Snowball (, 2009)), and McKenzie
39 (2004) make close reference to the term international-mindedness either through discussion on its relationship to
40 international education or in relation to ambiguities over different terms associated with international education.

3 INTERNATIONAL-MINDEDNESS AND CURRENT LITERATURE

41 Overall, this newly emerging literature on internationalmindedness presents many innovative ideas, yet many
42 opposing themes. The risk is that the deficiency of literature, along with the clashing themes may lead educators
43 to the idea that the term internationalmindedness is too vague and cannot be achieved.

44 At the time of writing, the most recent addition to literature that combines dialogue on international education
45 was the book titled The SAGE Handbook of International Education, edited by Mary Hayden, Jack Levy and Jeff
46 Thompson (2007). This book mainly presents current discussions, results from research and debates that exist
47 on issues related to the topic of international education. Contributing authors maintain a close association with
48 international education and international-mindedness, referring to the term from time to time throughout their
49 discussions on issues related to international education. Four contributing chapters specifically provide emerging
50 ideas on the definition of international-mindedness and address problems with the development of international-
51 mindedness (Gunesch 2007 ;Haywood 2007 ;Marshall 2007 ;Skelton 2007). Haywood (2007) recognises the
52 struggles over defining the term international-mindedness and urges for a clearer consensus:

53 Regarding international -mindedness, there seems to be a prevailing perception that "we know what we mean"
54 even if the definition is still under construction...we cannot simply assume that "we know what we mean"...It is
55 time that we face these issues and move towards identification of what our educational objectives should really
56 be since the absence of a more articulate position is not helpful to schools or to students. (p. 80).

57 Haywood argues that by getting closer to understanding what international-mindedness is, the objectives of
58 international education could become clearer. This follows on from an earlier proposal presented by Hill (2000),
59 who recommends that the term T Hill's suggestion could move educators closer to focusing on the outcomes
60 of education rather than the processes. They both agree that this change may make it easier for schools to
61 adapt key international educational experiences for their particular school context. However, Haywood's main
62 reservation with this suggestion is that the existing confusion over the term international-mindedness could cause
63 more confusion for educators, as 'Hill's invitation to explore the meaning of this term has still not led to any
64 agreed understanding on what is really involved' (p. 80).

65 Ian Hill, (2000) Deputy Director of the IBO in Geneva believes that an internationally-minded person is
66 someone who understands that people of different backgrounds hold different views, examines why they hold
67 them and respects other points of view without necessarily accepting them.

68 He claims that international-mindedness is fundamental to the mission statement of the IBO. The IB learner
69 profile exists in order to offer a broad common ground from which any teacher or student in any IB school
70 worldwide can understand international-mindedness (2007). It lists the outcomes that the IBO claim an
71 internationally-minded person should demonstrate. These outcomes are expressed as ten attributes: reflective,
72 principled, inquirer, knowledgeable, thinker, communicator, principled, open-minded, risk-taker, balanced, caring
73 and reflective ??IBO 2007). The attributes of the IB learner profile are expected to be reflected in the 'school's
74 organization, philosophy, the formal and informal curriculum and in all interactions with the wider school
75 community in order to provide a learning environment in which international-mindedness can be nurtured' ??Hill
76 2007, p. 35).

77 Hill asserts that the IBO hopes that each student will graduate from an IB school as a student who demonstrates
78 the attributes of the IB learner profile -someone who 'in the struggle to establish a personal set of values, will be
79 laying the foundation upon which international-mindedness will develop and flourish' (IBO, 2007, p. 4). However,
80 although the IB learner profile explicitly defines the attributes that the IBO believes an internationally-minded
81 person would embrace, many educators in the literature argue that the model has its shortcomings. For example,
82 Haywood (2007) argues that although the IB learner profile explicitly states the outcomes any child from any
83 culture needs to express, it lacks guidance on specific learning experiences to form the basis of international-
84 mindedness:

85 The IBO has gone some way towards defining international-mindedness through the ten attributes of the
86 learner profile and international educators have become familiar with their generic aspirations. Even so, there
87 is scant guidance on assessment and reporting and little formal basis for understanding precisely what outcomes
88 each attribute will lead to or how the profile might be reflected in students at different stages of development
89 through the programme. (Haywood 2007, p. 79) Findings from a recent research project on international-
90 mindedness (Cause 2009) raise another concern with the IB learner profile. Findings suggest that it is possible
91 to demonstrate all attributes of the IB learner profile yet not really demonstrate them in an international sense.
92 For example, it is possible to be knowledgeable but not necessarily be knowledgeable about global issues. Cause
93 argues that teachers often forget that these terms need to be understood with a strong sense of internationalism.
94 If the attributes are taught by themselves and not embedded in a curriculum and school culture that offers a
95 deep international experience, then the attributes merely provide the background to becoming a friendly person
96 -not necessarily an internationally-minded one. Haywood (2007) argues that 'there is no monopoly on the right
97 way to think and act internationally and the educator ought to avoid any form of indoctrination even if well
98 intended' (p. 85) -yet the IB learner profile states that an internationally-minded person must demonstrate all
99 ten attributes of the learner profile, suggesting that there is one set way to act internationally-minded. In this
100 way, Haywood claims that the IB learner profile is too dictatorial. Recent research substantiates this notion, as it
101 suggests that educators teaching international-mindedness from the IB learner profile feel limited to developing
102 the ten attributes, leaving little room for students to come to their own realisation of international-mindedness
103 and develop their own expression of international-mindedness (Cause 2009).

104 4 a) Research on International-Mindedness

105 5 Theresa

106 Hurley's (2008) publication International-Mindedness in Education represents one of the only books ever
107 published solely on the topic of international-mindedness. The book discusses her single case study on
108 international-mindedness at the IB secondary school she taught in, which was located in Chairo, Egypt. Her main
109 research questions were: 1. How does international-mindedness manifest itself at AISS-E? 2. How is international-
110 mindedness constructed by selected stakeholders of AISS-E, specifically, administrators, parents/guardians,
111 students, and faculty? 3. How do selected stakeholders of AISS-E, specifically, administrators, parents/guardians,
112 students, and faculty negotiate internationalmindedness in their host culture? (p. 22)

113 Hurley interviewed 11 stakeholders from her school and analysed documents, artefacts and her own field notes
114 to try and understand how international-mindedness can vary from person to person. For this reason, she argues
115 that international-mindedness should not have one definition because students and educational organisations will
116 inevitably make their own sense of the term as they 'constantly reconstruct their own versions of reality' (p. 6).
117 However, her conclusion to the project also suggests that a clear consensus is necessary. She concludes that the
118 term is a 'slippery concept for the purposes of implementation and development in an educational setting' (p.
119 129).

120 Hurley urges for more study and research to be undertaken on the construction of internationalmindedness
121 as 'there is not yet any clear social consensus of how it manifest itself or how it can be effectively negotiated'
122 (p. 140). The analysis of literature found her project and the fore mentioned project by Cause (2008) to be the
123 only empirical studies ever completed on international-mindedness. This confirms Hurely's notion that there is
124 a severe lack of attention to this topic. Considering the term now plays a significant role in many school mission
125 statements around the world, one would think this topic would be worth far more attention.

126 Gunesch's (2007) recent research on international education included a focus on the overabundance of
127 terms under the topic of international education. Gunesch's main research interests are cosmopolitanism,
128 internationalism and globalisation, and the relationship between these terms. He acknowledges confusion in
129 literature when defining international-mindedness and hypothesises that this could be because of the sheer
130 overabundance of terms now circulating in current literature on international education. Gunesch, argues
131 that it is time to stop squabbling over different terms and time to stop trying to further clarify international-
132 mindedness and its relationship to international education. He suggests that the term be abolished altogether.
133 As such, he proposes the model of 'cosmopolitanism as an alternative or complementary element' (p. 91) to
134 internationalmindedness:

135 It may come as a surprise that within the literature on international education, there is no single
136 coherent picture of the 'internationalism' or 'international-mindedness' within the individual that, presumably,
137 international education aims to develop. Indeed, current concerns over international education appear to centre
138 on definitions of the field and of international schools, the nature of an international curriculum...even those
139 contributions that imply aims and outcomes of international education in terms of desirable developments and
140 transformations in the individual learner contain remarkable little in terms of clarification and theorization of
141 their nature. ??Gunesch 2007, p. 90).

142 The notion of cosmopolitanism could provide engagement with different cultural identities and cultural issues
143 within and outside the nation-state but the model, like literature suggested on the IB learner profile and other
144 literature on international-mindedness, lacks objectives, specific aims and expectations for students of different
145 ages. Gunesch acknowledges himself that cosmopolitanism 'is only concerned with cultural diversity' (p. 96). Yet
146 at the same time, he states that 'cosmopolitanism can soundly and emphatically inspire international education's
147 internationalism, now and in the future' (p. 97).

148 Although he proposes that cosmopolitanism could be viewed as complimentary to internationalism, his model
149 leaves many quandaries. Furthermore, given that cosmopolitanism needs to be understood as a term to be
150 amalgamated with internationalism, ensuring educators merge the two terms into one could make an even more
151 ambiguous term to understand than international-mindedness, as educators would be faced with deconstructing
152 two terms rather than one. Like the IB learner profile, his model lacks empirical research on its implementation
153 -aspects educators suggest are necessary in order to reduce frustration when implementing it. Hence, his ideas
154 stand to be tested.

155 Skelton argues that the complexity of international mindedness is often far too easily overlooked by educators.
156 He claims that typically, educators comprehend the term with far too much optimism in hope that the frightening
157 state of the world's environment and conflict between nations will be solved if everyone becomes internationally-
158 minded. Although he puts a lot of emphasis in the difficulties of becoming internationally-minded, he believes
159 that it would be very worthwhile finding out how to develop internationalmindedness in children. In particular, he
160 urges for a more sophisticated understanding of how to develop internationally-minded children so that teachers
161 and parents can understand and take more of an active part in the process.

162 Skelton draws from the work of Gardner (1981) to demonstrate the difficulties of children developing
163 international-mindedness. He argues that children initially start the continuum of human development in the
164 egocentric stage, where they are incapable of thinking about themselves and unable to differentiate themselves

6 CONCLUSION

165 from others. Gradually, their egocentric inclination starts Skelton's (2007) research on internationalmindedness
166 is also theoretical but is combined with recent brain research.

167 He defines internationalmindedness as 'a part of the continuum that represents the development of "self"' (p.
168 380) and argues that there are difficulties with children becoming internationallyminded. His central concern is
169 that internationalmindedness is 'the most complex development of the relationship between "self" and "other"'
170 (p. 380). As such, he proposes that its development is problematic. Skelton states that 'the development of
171 international mindedness, then, is anything but straightforward...we need to see international-mindedness as
172 essentially problematic rather than straightforward' (p. 382).

173 to decline as they move through the other stages of human development and the 'self' starts to develop
174 and emerge. As the 'self' starts to develop the child can then start to develop an awareness of others around
175 them. He claims that children must become aware of their 'self' before they can develop an understanding
176 of other identities. Skelton proposes that the development of international-mindedness depends on each child
177 successfully moving from the egocentric stage to a sophisticated understanding of their 'self' that understands
178 the interdependence and independence of humans and nations at a global level. Haywood (2007) acknowledges
179 confusion over the term international-mindedness, but unlike Gunesch, he proposes that international-mindedness
180 can be developed in children. However, he stresses that teachers need to understand that internationalmindedness
181 is expressed in different ways amongst different people. Haywood urges educators to move beyond the IB learner
182 profile into new ways of thinking about international-mindedness. Central to his thesis is the contention that
183 international-mindedness 'is actually a multifaceted entity that can be represented in a wide variety of practical
184 forms' ??Haywood 2007, p. 81). This coincides with Hurley's (2008) conclusion that international-mindedness
185 is negotiated by different people in different ways.

186 Haywood proposes a typology to illustrate some of the various ways that international-mindedness may
187 manifest itself. His typology breaks the different ways that international-mindedness can be articulated
188 into the following broad categories: Diplomatic international-mindedness, Political internationalmindedness,
189 Economic and commercial internationalmindedness, Spiritual international-mindedness, Multicultural
190 international-mindedness, Human rights international-mindedness, Pacifist internationalmindedness, Humanita-
191 rian international-mindedness, Environmentalist international-mindedness and Globalisation and internationa-
192 mindedness. His typology is not an exhaustive list of all possible the ways that international-mindedness can be
193 recognised but serves to demonstrate that international-mindedness is not an invariable, constant state of being.
194 They also serve to demonstrate that international-mindedness can be represented in a variety of way by different
195 people and at different times.

196 As such, Haywood stresses the need for students from different cultures to be encouraged to each come to their
197 own realisation of internationalmindedness rather than teachers promoting one set way of being internationally-
198 minded:

199 The educator's role is not to direct students towards a particular style of international-mindedness, but is
200 instead to encourage a predisposition towards international-mindedness in general that will allow students to
201 develop their own responses and channels of expression...there can be many distinct ways of limited by our
202 current cultural conditions but neither must we promote any single model for international learning as universal
203 in relevance or as superior to other forms. ??Haywood 2007, pp. 85-6) However it is important to remember that
204 his research, like Skelton's, is theoretical. To draw any significant conclusions from this thesis, one would need
205 to investigate if his ideas actually reflect school practice. As Hurley argues, the term international-mindedness
206 represents an area of research that is severely lacking in empirical research. Hence, his thesis stands for further
207 verification.

208 Conclusions from Cause's (2008) project on international-mindedness concur with Haywood and Hurley's
209 premise of international-mindedness. Cause concludes:

210 International-mindedness can be articulated or expressed slightly differently and different priorities may be
211 given to different attributes of internationalmindedness that may affect the ways in which different people
212 demonstrate international-mindedness. Therefore, it is not the teacher's role to indoctrinate the teacher's
213 own understanding of internationalmindedness. Rather, educators need to be openminded to variations of the
214 interpretation of internationalmindedness and must not promote their own interpretation of the attributes or
215 values of internationalmindedness as the only acceptable way of being internationally-minded. ??Cause 2009,
216 p. 13) However, the project did not pinpoint explicit and developmental strategies for developing international
217 mindedness -areas currently lacking in research.

218 III.

219 6 CONCLUSION

220 Clearly, confusion related to defining the term international-mindedness is a palpable recurring theme in all
221 literature on international-mindedness ??Cause 2009; Hayden & Thompson 1995; Haywood 2007; ??ill 2007; Hurley
222 2008; Marshall 2007; Räsänen 2007; ??ampatkumar 2007; Sylvester 2007). Given that the only projects ever
223 completed on internationalmindedness have not yet focused on the development of international-mindedness,
224 it is too soon to consider Global Journal of Human Social Science Volume XI Issue VII Version I educating for
225 international-mindedness. We must not be moving forward with Gunesch's suggestions of abolishing the term
226 altogether.

227 With the significant gap in research on international-mindedness and the absence of research on ways
228 of developing it, what is happening in literature on international-mindedness is a developing acceptance
229 that international-mindedness is too complex to describe. This idea can be clearly seen in the discussion
230 on cosmopolitanism, where Gunesch (2004Gunesch (, 2007)) proposes introducing a new term to replace
231 international-mindedness. Even if Gunesch's premise is correct, further research is still necessary before we can
232 confidently move towards the remote possibility of reconsidering this term's future.

233 Overall, the literature is newly emerging with several unresolved issues. Many scholars contributing to the
234 literature base lack empirical evidence to support their proposals.

235 Specifically, more research is necessary that focuses on developing curricula and assessment practices of which
236 international-mindedness is an intrinsic part -even if this just means clearly underscoring the difficulties in
237 providing answers. More empirical research could also work towards validating, contesting or extending existing
238 theories on international-mindedness. It would enable some of the unresolved debates on international-mindedness
239 to become constructive ideas that can encourage social consensus in the field of international education and our
240 global thinking. ^{1 2 3 4}

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²November-mindedness was understood and constructed at one school at one point in time. Her conclusions support her initial premises of international-mindedness, as they indicate that international-mindedness is experienced differently by different people and, that human perceptions and perspectives of international-

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