

Exploring Teachers' Beliefs on Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum within an IB MYP International School Environment

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Abstract

The following paper explores International Baccalaureate Middle Year Programme teachers' views on what constitutes good teaching, meaningful learning, and quality curricula within an international school environment in the Netherlands. Twenty-five teachers, from a variety of countries, were asked to share their personal beliefs through semi-structured interviews. The inquiry also considered the ways in which teachers' beliefs had been affected by moving to an international school environment. The results indicate that teachers hold a range of perspectives on what signifies good teaching, meaningful learning, and quality curricula. Many of these beliefs align closely with the underlying philosophy of the MYP, such as beliefs in life-worthy curricula, student-centered learning, constructivist approaches to teaching and learning, inquiry, the transfer of understanding, and the challenging of perspectives. The changes in beliefs that occurred following the move to an international context included an increased emphasis in teachers' attention to universal concepts, intercultural themes, lifelong learning, the application of understanding, inquiry, critical thinking, interdisciplinary learning, and team-teaching. Aspects of teaching and learning that did not arise spontaneously during the interviews were beliefs concerning community service, global contexts, and approaches to assessments, all of which are integral components of the IB MYP. The findings of the study provided guidance for the design and development of professional development opportunities.

Keywords: beliefs, teaching, learning, curriculum, intercultural