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## **Ethnography and the Classroom Challenge: Exploring the use and assessment of Ethnography in the IB Diploma Programme**

Angela Rivière  
Curriculum Manager, International Baccalaureate Organisation

### **Abstract**

This paper discusses the teaching and assessment of ethnographic material in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) Social and Cultural Anthropology (SCA) course in the context of a major review of the programme. It provides an outline of the historical and ideological development of the IB and the DP, locating anthropology as a discipline within this framework. Using examples from the classroom and examinations, the paper discusses how ethnographic material is used at a local level (by teachers) and how it is assessed, at a global level, by the IB, in terms of the skills in reading ethnography. The paper also reflects on some of the challenges of teaching anthropology through ethnography presented at a global level – in the design of the curriculum; and, at a local level – in the teaching of the course. In conclusion, it is argued that understanding these challenges from both perspectives is necessary if the “ideals” of the course become a reality in the classroom. Getting this “right” requires not only shared understandings of these ideals, but also the recognition that strategies need to be articulated and exemplified.

**Keywords:** Diploma Programme, International Baccalaureate, Social and Cultural Anthropology, ethnography, critical engagement.

### **Introduction**

*“Anthropologically insightful, analytically sophisticated, carefully nuanced with astute observations on the nature of the discipline, fully contextualised and well justified selection of ethnographies, critical integration of ethnography and anthropological theory” (IBO 2008-2011a).*

These are some of the reflections made by examiners on the work of outstanding students of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme Social and Cultural Anthropology (DP SCA) course. Unfortunately, such comments are the exception rather than the norm. Students and teachers alike face the challenge of developing skills in reading ethnography critically, and in a way that engages them to think anthropologically. Anthropology is not just a matter of learning content but rather a way of thinking. The centrality of ethnography in the DP SCA course provides opportunities for students to understand how this mode of enquiry embodies anthropology as a discipline.

This paper reflects on how best to develop the skills needed to read ethnography critically. Using examples from teachers, I will share some of the ways in which ethnography is used in IB classrooms, and assessed in IB examinations. I show how an understanding of the interaction between 'local' teachers and students and 'global' examiners and curriculum developers has

informed my current role as curriculum manager responsible for the review and development of the course. At the global level, this means designing a course flexible enough to be taught in many different contexts. At a local level, it concerns the choice of ethnographies; the exploration of core themes and theoretical perspectives; and the ways in which students become acquainted with anthropological perspectives and ways of thinking so that they can engage critically and reflectively with the ethnographic material. From an IB perspective, this critical engagement has two dimensions - a specific approach to the study of ethnography and anthropology, and a particular worldview which students are expected to gain through this study. Since candidates are assessed through the same exam questions no matter where they are in the world, or whatever ethnographies they have studied, the classroom challenge is to get this “right.”

This paper examines the pedagogical challenges manifested in the classroom: the tension between the realities of teaching the course and the standards and “ideals” of the IB in relation to both curriculum design and the assessment of the course. The responsibility for preparing students to get it “right” is not just that of the teachers, but also the curriculum developers, the course review team<sup>1</sup> and examiners. The aim is to provide a bridge between the visions articulated in the expected learning outcomes and pedagogical practices in IB classrooms.

The impetus for this paper stemmed from my experiences working in Diploma Programme Development for the IB, currently as the curriculum manager responsible for the review and development of the SCA course. The arguments also reflect my own experiences of having taught the course at an international school in Mexico City. Whilst my current role is to review and develop the ideals of the course, I am also able to relate to the experiences of teachers at a local level, who strive to translate these ideals into the realities of their classroom practice. The conclusions reflect the views and experiences of some twenty IB teachers and examiners based in Argentina, Denmark, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States, who were willing to share their experiences. The schools range from public and state schools, to national private and international schools, and despite the variety of views and challenges, some common patterns emerge.

## **Planning for the Future**

The Social and Cultural Anthropology IB course is currently being redesigned; this is a part of the thorough review that each subject undergoes every seven years. The aim is “to ensure that each curriculum is fit for purpose in a changing world and incorporates the latest educational research as well as lessons learned from a thorough evaluation of the existing curriculum” (IBO 2009). This collaborative undertaking brings together subject consultants, IB teachers and senior examiners, and ensures a sense of collective ownership of the curriculum. Throughout the review process we aim to ensure that there is local representation. The IB operates in three global regions – Africa, Europe and the Middle East, and the Americas/Asia Pacific. In the initial stages of the review academics from these regions are commissioned to evaluate our course. We examine global trends in the development of the subject and consider how these relate to the local circumstances of our schools and students. During the development meetings teachers of the subject are invited to collaborate in devising and writing the new course. This is done through virtual discussion groups, surveys, focus groups and face-to-face meetings. Whilst this is co-ordinated at a global level, local perspectives are given full consideration as there is a continuous dialogue throughout the review process.

Going beyond the mere exercise of simply updating the course content and revising the assessment strategy, this is an opportunity to reconsider the anthropological agenda, not just in terms of the potential applicability of concepts, theoretical approaches, methodological developments or ethical issues; it is also about addressing the tension that exists when trying to develop a course of global significance whilst ensuring local relevance. Whether the student studies this course in Lima, Lisbon or Lusaka, they all sit the same exam. The challenge for curriculum developers in all subjects in the DP is to maintain the core principle that “the aims, objectives, content and assessment criteria are written in

order to develop international-mindedness<sup>ii</sup> while, at the same time, ensuring that teachers have enough choice to make the course locally relevant and grounded” (IBO 2009a: 6). Understanding the tensions between local actors and perspectives, and those at a global level is key. The aim is a rigorous review process that leads to more clearly defined learning outcomes and more opportunities for students to engage with anthropology as a discipline, whilst developing their ability to think anthropologically.

These tensions manifest themselves in many different ways and are not unique to the anthropology course. However, what is very specific to the discipline is the use of ethnographic material in the teaching and assessment of the course. This paper explores some of the challenges the use of ethnographies and ethnographic material present. Ethnographies and the use of ethnographic material is central to our discussions, not just in terms of whether we should provide recommendations or more explicit guidance, but in terms of the impact changing the themes of the course would have. The body of the course is currently designed around themes, and in choosing the ethnographies and journal articles to study, teachers have to be cognisant that they provide sufficient coverage. Changing these to integrate more contemporary anthropological areas of study may present additional challenges for teachers. Some teachers may choose to try and “fit” their teaching of the new themes to the ethnographic material already at their disposal, making choices that are not academically sound or in the best interests of the students (Balzani 2012). The challenge is to develop the course so that it is a more attractive course of study for students, reflecting their interests and the developments in the discipline, whilst maintaining the integrity of the subject and acknowledging the difficulties that teachers face in updating their ethnographic material.

Discussions indicate a desire to give the course a more contemporary feel, making it more relevant to the world as it is now and focused on areas of anthropological research that speak to the lives of students, as well as representing and reflecting developments in the discipline. Whatever direction the new curriculum takes, from an IB perspective justification for the changes has to be based on sound educational choices, fully underpinned by thorough research and collaborative discussion.

Anthropological approaches, methodology and theoretical perspectives will continue to provide the unifying rationale and framework through which students engage with ethnographic material when studying the course (Balzani 2012).

More than this, though, the new course needs to articulate shared understandings of what it means to get it “right” in the critical reading of ethnography. What is being learnt throughout the review process, and is exemplified in this paper, is that there are many IB teachers who are getting it “right” in the classroom and that the ideals of the course are being realised in creative and innovative ways. The diversity of teaching practices at this level reflects the beauty of an international course; but it also highlights some of the challenges.

## **The International Baccalaureate**

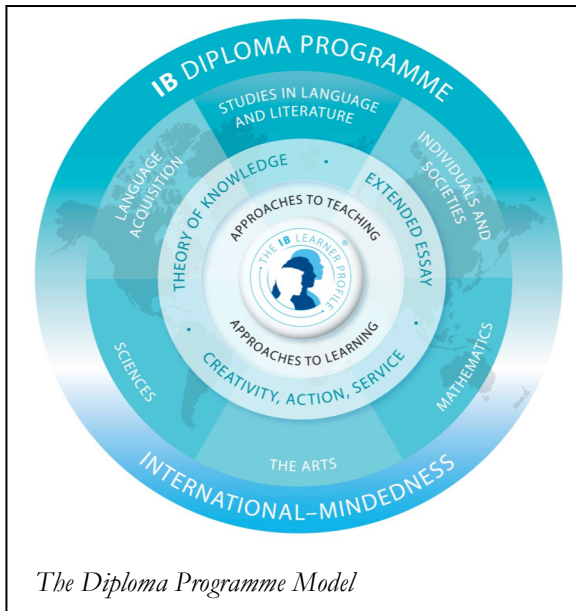
The International Baccalaureate is a non-profit educational foundation that offers four programmes of study for students aged 3-19 focused on developing the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalising world. Founded in 1968, the IB currently works with approximately 4000 schools in 147 countries and over 1,098,000 students.<sup>iii</sup>

The International Baccalaureate was the culmination of the work of several leading educationalists who came together, as Hayden’s quote encapsulates below, both from an idealistic and a pragmatic standpoint to develop the skills needed for a globalised world in which families were becoming increasingly transient and mobile:

Before the concept of globalisation entered our collective consciousness, they [the early proponents of the IB] sowed the seeds of a form of education encouraging young people to be internationally minded, to think beyond their home context, to feel responsibility for the global, and not just local environment (Hayden 2010: 11).

The IB is, however, more than just its educational programmes. It is a more encompassing educational experience – one which is grounded in an IB mission statement; the promotion of international-mindedness and inter-cultural understanding, and the development of IB learners through the learner profile. It has earned a reputation for quality, for high standards, and for pedagogical leadership (IBOb).<sup>iv</sup>

### The Diploma Programme: Where Social and Cultural Anthropology Fits



The Diploma Programme is designed as an academically challenging and balanced two-year pre-university education programme for students between the ages of 16-19.

Students undertaking the IB Diploma Programme study six courses at higher level or standard level. Students must choose one subject from each of groups 1 to 5, thus ensuring breadth of experience in languages, social studies, the experimental sciences, and mathematics. The sixth subject may be an arts subject chosen from group 6, or another subject from groups 1 to 5. In addition, the programme has three core requirements that are included to broaden the educational experience and challenge students to apply their knowledge and understanding. These are the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, action and service.<sup>v</sup>

### Social and Cultural Anthropology in the IB

Anthropology was one of the original subjects offered in 1968, and has been part of IB landscape for over forty years. In many respects it is the subject that most implicitly embodies the essence of an IB education – “fostering the development of students who are globally aware and ethically sensitive” (IB mission statement in IBO 2008). The number of students studying SCA remains relatively low – approximately 2,400 candidates were entered for the examinations in 2013. This is in comparison to history, with 38,000, and psychology, with 7,500.

Social and Cultural Anthropology is one of the subjects offered in Group 3 (individuals and societies) of the DP. There have been some notable changes to the course over the years and several changes of name. However, the essence of the nature of the subject has remained:

The IB social and cultural anthropology course offers an opportunity for students to become acquainted with anthropological perspectives and ways of thinking, and to develop critical, reflexive knowledge. Social and cultural anthropology contributes to a distinctive approach to intercultural awareness and understanding, which embodies the essence of an IB education (IBO 2008: 4).

Offered to students at both standard level (SL) and higher level (HL), the main differences are in the number of hours taught, the ethnographies students are expected to have a detailed knowledge of (three for SL and four for HL), and the theoretical understanding HL students are expected to demonstrate. Whilst both SL and HL students complete an internally assessed piece of work, higher level students are required to undertake limited fieldwork.

The aims of the social and cultural anthropology course at SL and HL are to enable students to:

1. Explore the principles of social and cultural life and characteristics of societies and cultures.
2. Develop an awareness of historical, scientific and social contexts within which social and cultural anthropology has developed.
3. Develop a capacity to recognise preconceptions and assumptions of their own social and cultural environments.
4. Develop an awareness of relationships between local, regional and global processes and issues (IBO 2008: 6).

Assessment<sup>vi</sup> is an integral part of the teaching and learning of the DP SCA course and students are assessed on their abilities in four key areas, identified as assessment objectives:

1. Knowledge and understanding;
2. Application and interpretation;
3. Synthesis and evaluation;
4. Selection and use of a variety of skills appropriate to social and cultural anthropology (IBO 2008: 7).

This paper is not about the finer details of the assessment objectives as they relate to the whole course, but how they are used in relation to the use of ethnography. The subject guide is explicit about the various ways in which students are expected to use and apply ethnographic material, and they are assessed on their ability to demonstrate critical analysis and evaluation of ethnographic material within a conceptual, and at HL, theoretical framework. This means that they have to demonstrate an understanding of anthropological concepts and apply these concepts to ethnographic data, to produce sound analysis and anthropological insight into social and cultural behaviour. Furthermore, the ability to compare and contrast characteristics of specific societies and cultures through the use of ethnographic examples is also assessed. Additionally, HL students are expected to incorporate a theoretical framework into their responses, recognising theoretical perspectives or theories used in ethnographies, as well as using theoretical insights to evaluate these materials (IBO 2008).

The ability and skill to meet these criteria is not something that we can expect of the average 16-18-year old. The students need to be taught how to read ethnographic material so that they can unravel the meanings and interpretations in the narrative. The challenge is in identifying and communicating the strategies to achieve this, given that most ethnographic material available is not written with this age group in mind. The following section explores how teachers take the syllabus and translate the “ideals” and expectations into classroom practice.

### **Translating Ethnographic Ideals into Pedagogic Practice**

Ethnography has a central place in the course and students are required to read between three to four complete ethnographies over two years. Teachers supplement these with journal articles that will allow students to make comparisons across time and place.

Ethnography might be considered by some an unusual genre of academic writing – detailed and evocative descriptions of other peoples’ worlds combined with analytical arguments – but they are at the heart of what anthropologists do. The writing of ethnographies is the way in which anthropologists develop their conceptual and theoretical arguments through narrative, transforming their data and observations into text and other forms of media that inspire discussion and debate, and ultimately generate a particular kind of knowledge. Ethnography is also the product of an ethnographer’s relationship to and understanding of anthropological concepts and themes, and wider theoretical debates. However, the writing practices and conventions of anthropologists are not always transparent, and it is not always evident when engaging with ethnographic texts, quite what or where the questions, data or conclusions came from. Thus, the reading of ethnographic material can present a challenge in the classroom when students are expected to develop the skills that will allow them to discern and

analyse the author's intentions, and in a sense "deconstruct" the text in order to use it to "(re)construct" an argument in relation to a particular question asked.

In a section entitled *The construction and use of ethnographic accounts*, in the social and cultural anthropology guide (IBO 2008: 14-15), teachers are given guidance on the use of ethnographies in the teaching of the course. This guidance focuses on how students should use ethnographic materials to begin to think anthropologically. "This requires the development of skills for the thoughtful and critical understanding of how ethnography is constructed: the research question, the theoretical orientation and the processes used to decide what data to include" (IBO 2008: 14). According to the syllabus, students are required to understand not only the relationship between fieldwork data and ethnographic accounts but also the challenges that this relationship presents. This may include having an appreciation of the issue of representation, or the necessity (or problem) of contextualisation, or the question of how anthropologists connect local perceptions to their analytical framework.

One of the challenges at both the local level (for teachers) and the global level (for curriculum developers and examiners) is the question of how these issues inform the reading of ethnographic material, the evaluation students make of it and then the assessment. This critical engagement requires them to recognise that whilst ethnographies may focus on specific questions, they also link to wider patterns of continuity and change, both within and across societies and cultures. Ethnographies are the result of decisions that anthropologists make about what to study and record. They reflect points of view, which may be explicit or implicit; and that must be contextualised within the wider discipline. In order to be able to discern and assess the extent to which the claims made by an anthropologist are supported by the evidence they present, students need the opportunities to develop a good conceptual understanding; the ability to validate claims through comparison; and, at HL, the ability to identify and understand the theoretical frameworks within which anthropologists operate. As readers of ethnography, and following Gay y Blasco and Wardle's (2007: 178) analysis, students must enter into a dialogue with the author since it is here, in this dialogue, that they will come to understand the meaning of the narrative of the ethnography. In the context of the IB course, this means choosing ethnographies that your "average" 16-18 year-old can engage with. The challenge for a teacher at a local level is balancing this engagement whilst also ensuring that the themes, concepts and theoretical perspectives are directly addressed.

Gabriela Grinfeld, Deputy Chief Examiner and IB teacher articulated this challenge in the following way:

[...] the IB syllabus is negotiated twice. Once with the teacher, who receives a guide [...] [designed] globally, [...] [knowing the] complex realities of his/her own educational environment [...] [it] goes through a [...] [process of] adaptation/appropriation as planning takes place. A second instance is [...] [throughout] the process as teachers and students re-negotiate the actual content and practices on a daily basis. For example, I present my students with many options of ethnographic readings which we may discuss briefly before I let them choose one to study. In my experience – year-to-year – different groups with different dynamics and identities surprise me by choosing very different materials (and this is in the same school with a rather homogenous community).<sup>vii</sup>

This process of negotiation will vary from teacher to teacher and will depend on a number of factors, which reflect the local circumstances of the schools. The reflections below are from experienced IB teachers, and demonstrate both the breadth and depth to which ethnographic material is being incorporated into the classroom.

#### **Example A:**

Over the 1<sup>st</sup> year I use each ethnography to develop knowledge and understanding of themes, relevant concepts and approaches, as well as foundational skills of description, analysis and comparison. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, as we examine how anthropology has developed over time, we return to each ethnography and revisit it in terms of theoretical perspectives and approaches. Students seem to enjoy revisiting materials that are now

quite familiar to them, they recognize how much they know and are ready to think with and about them more critically.

Initially I used to organize and teach by theme, going backwards and forwards between different ethnographies, but in response to changes in the programme and to student feedback, I have shifted to treat each ethnography more holistically, still focusing on themes but returning to them and extending them from one ethnography to the next. To engage students critically with ethnography, I have come to believe that it is essential to present any ethnography as a whole; otherwise ethnography becomes little more than bits and pieces of evidence for various claims rather than an attempt at representing others' lives in their complexity, and sometimes contradictions; it risks reducing culture in ways that misrepresents the lives of others, ethnography and anthropology. This conviction is perhaps also linked to what I see quite often as an examiner where bits and pieces of ethnography are presented as fragments without any sense of context.<sup>viii</sup>

### Example B:

To introduce the students to what the subject is about, I like to present two key concepts of the discipline – the 'other' and ethnocentrism – by reading and discussing classic but engaging short texts: Bohannan's *Shakespeare in the Bush* (2011), Horace Miner's *The Nacirema* (2011), and Malinowski's *A Fragment of Baloma* (2009).

To discuss key topics/themes, such as ethnicity, poverty, marginalization, colonialism, gender relations in the context of modern capitalist society, Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* (2002) is an ethnography students find engaging. It also allows for interesting discussions in terms of theories and theoretical perspectives, as well as his methodological approach.

Other ways we explore theoretical perspectives is through their contrast: For example, we read Malinowski's account of a funerary ritual as a case of cohesion centered approach, and contrast this with the work of neo Marxist anthropologist M. Godelier's (1986) ethnography about the Baruya's rituals. In this way we analyze the same theme but through different perspectives and theories.

This year we will be reading *Flammable* (2009), by Javier Auyero, about shanty town dwellers' perceptions of their own polluted bodies and environment. We will draw from Bourdieu and a very interesting discussion of the multiple layers in the construction of reality and power relations.<sup>ix</sup>

These discussions indicate that teachers are mindful of the challenge of balancing the organisation of the course around the study of ethnography. They also aim to ensure the themes, concepts and theoretical perspectives are directly addressed. Very often teachers choose ethnographies that have some personal or local relevance to their students. This is important since it helps dispel the misconception that anthropology is only about "primitive" cultures or how people in other societies are different. These comments also reflect how ethnographies are chosen to demonstrate contrasting perspectives and theories, and how teachers have over time tried different approaches to teaching and learning that suit their students. The course design facilitates this flexibility.

However, this flexibility also presents challenges. Whilst the course defines what anthropology is and the core concepts to be explored, it places no real parameters on the potential range of theoretical perspectives to be taught. The selection and teaching of these relies on a teacher's ability to make a judgement about how much coverage will be sufficient to fulfil the requirements of the course, as well as what they are able to elicit from the ethnographies they have chosen to teach. Newer teachers and those who are not subject specialists understandably feel anxious that they may not get it "right" in their choices. A focus group with twelve teachers in the US highlighted these concerns. They sought reassurance that their choices were not only valid and would allow them the scope to cover the requirements of the course, but that they would also provide sufficient depth to develop a "real" understanding of anthropology.

Increasingly, more and more teachers are using "ethnographic films" and other visual media in the teaching of the course. The guide states that "these must be treated in the same critical and reflective manner as the written ethnographies" (IBO 2007: 14). The following is an edited version of a discussion that took place between three teachers on the IB Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) forum.<sup>x</sup>

**Example C:**

Teacher 1:

My first recommendation is Marc Singer's documentary film *Dark Days* (2000). I intend to use this film in combination with Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* (2002). The film, for those unfamiliar, is about “homeless” people (many, but not all, addicted to crack) living in “The Freedom Tunnel” in Manhattan. Like Bourgois' ethnography, the documentary puts into focus the juxtaposition of affluence (symbolically, above ground) with the hyper marginalized (below ground) tunnel dwellers.

Initially, the film focuses on how the “residents” of the tunnel carve out a living in difficult and precarious circumstances. As the film develops, more space is given to the life histories of the dwellers. It is significant, I think, that the narrative of the dwellers is, without exception, one of agency-centred self-blame. This, of course, echo's [sic] Bourgois' key informant Primo who, in the introduction to the ethnography, proclaims, “man, I don't blame where I am right now on nobody else but myself”.

Teacher 2:

Interestingly, I use the HBO Film *The Corner* (2000) when I teach *In Search of Respect*. The film does a nice job talking about the relationship between the cops, the junkies, and the regular citizens [...]. While I only use one part of the six possible selections, I find that students respond really thoughtfully to it in conjunction with the chapter on *Crack House Management*. There is even a sequence where one character tries to get a “legit” job at a seafood restaurant and can't do it, and the lure of dealing is just too great.

Teacher 3:

The film ideas are important. I use two videos that relate rather directly to *In Search of Respect*: these are, *That Old Gang of Mine* by Carlos De Jesus from 1999, and *Throwaway People*, a PBS Frontline production, from 1990.

*That Old Gang of Mine* looks centrally at the perceived changes in the sense of community held by residents of the barrio. Old barrio residents are interviewed, some of whom have left long ago. Their sense of a general loss in community can be played against the more analytical social science approach of Bourgois in describing and explaining the demographic, economic, and social changes which have produced the social marginalization central to his analysis of the drug society he studied. The people in De Jesus' film, however, are not a drug society, but ordinary Puerto Rican barrio residents. It is a satisfying complement to *In Search of Respect*.

*Throwaway People*, the PBS production, with Roger Wilkins and others, is a rather touching look at the process of cultural and social marginalization in Shaw District, Washington D.C., an old ghetto dating from the 19th Century, which became a “truncated community” – that is, when better-off Blacks were free to leave the ghetto after the civil rights legislation of the 1960's, the paradoxical effect of this progressive move led to Shaw becoming a more uniformly poor, socially and culturally isolated area, with many abandoned buildings and a plummeting tax base, and since the late 1980's, a target for gentrification – just another way to go in understanding urban transformations!<sup>xi</sup>

This discussion shows the considered and educationally sound justifications for the use of film as a complement to the teaching of a monograph. It is evident that anthropological insights are being teased out of the films and meaningful connections made to Bourgois' ethnography. Unfortunately, examiners at a global level report that it is evident when students have not had the benefit of reading ethnographic material in conjunction with viewing these films. Their responses tend to lack depth and often reflect a very limited “snap-shot” view of a culture rather than a more holistic understanding. It is understandable that teachers keen to engage their students may see visual material as more accessible (and interesting). Moreover, access to visual material may be easier for some schools and economically more viable. Film can bring culture to life and given the prevalence of visual image in the lives of students it is understandable why they have become a common resource in the classroom. However, as Bird and Godwin (2006) argue, teachers cannot assume that the films speak for themselves. Visual media need to be contextualised in terms of how they relate to anthropological concepts in the same way that ethnographic text has to be.

From a global perspective, IB curriculum developers and examiners are not saying that the use of film does not have a place in the teaching of the course, but they would not advocate it as a substitute for written ethnographies. Whilst film “can present much at which the words of a written ethnography can



only hint”, it cannot “communicate all the information that we can legitimately ask of ethnography” (Heider: 2006: 116). As Paul Henley argues in his paper, *The Promise of Ethnographic Film*, “in order for ethnographic film to become of central importance to anthropology, its theoretical status has to be articulated in terms that relate to the current theoretical and methodological concerns of anthropology more generally” (1996: 6). “We [must] consider them as a means of representation that may be used in conjunction with written texts to provide more rounded and comprehensive ethnographic accounts, [rather than] as a direct alternative to ethnographic texts” (1996: 20). If promoted in this way, the use of ethnographic films in the classroom will not reduce anthropological knowledge to just more or less interesting images, but will complement it. It is not just a question of the “authority” of the filmmaker, whether he/she is an anthropologist or not, but of whether anthropological methods, perspectives and analysis have been used. More specifically, if students want to use film in their responses, the use and evaluation they make has to reflect sound anthropological analysis. In other words, they have to apply the same critical approach used in the reading of ethnographies.

The current course does not prescribe the ethnographies (monographs or journal articles) to be studied but, instead, advocates a more flexible approach – leaving teachers at a local level to decide. Very often, new teachers, and in particular those who may not be subject specialists, want to be advised which ethnographies to use. You may well ask why at this level they are not given more explicit guidance. The aim to be flexible so that the course can be locally grounded is an important reason, but there are a number of other reasons as to why ethnographies have not been prescribed. These include:

- **Financial costs** – ethnographies are relatively expensive and so buying a class set is a substantial cost to schools on a limited budget;
- The **personal interests** of the teachers and/or students will vary from region to region and school to school;
- **Local/regional** relevance may be particularly significant in increasing the engagement students have with the subject;
- **Vetting** – some education boards may prohibit the teaching of certain content—for example, witchcraft;
- **Language** – the course can be taught and examined in English, French and Spanish – finding a good range of translated ethnographies in all three languages may be problematic;
- **Readability** of ethnographies not written with this audience in mind;
- **Access** to ethnographic material through academic journals is difficult both in terms of the expense and also readability of the articles;
- **Location** of the ethnography or the group studied – some may not be chosen because of where the ethnography took place and the national/political positions of some states;
- **Dynamic nature of the subject** would mean that in prescribing ethnographies the creativity of teachers to explore anthropological issues using a variety of ethnographies could be stifled.<sup>xiii</sup>

These reasons are all valid and reflect the local perspective – and realities – of individual schools and teachers offering the course. However, from a global perspective this flexibility can be a “double-edged sword”. On the one hand, flexibility in choice of ethnography ensures that the course is relevant and meaningful to students whether they are in Beirut, Brisbane or Buenos Aires. However, the freedom given may actually hinder some students’ understanding of the discipline if material is poorly chosen or not really suitable in terms of covering the themes and concepts. At a global level, and in terms of the aims and objectives of the course, the perspective of curriculum developers is that whilst there are a huge variety of ethnographies to choose from, teachers must consider the quality of data and interpretations with relation to the material, representation issues, and readability. Furthermore, from a global assessment perspective, the ethnographies chosen must collectively cover the themes outlined in the course and provide sufficient coverage of theoretical perspectives. Students are not assessed on which ethnographies they study but on how they *use* the ethnographic material at their disposal, making it relevant to the questions asked. In this respect, variations in the quality of the responses from students may be the result of the pedagogical choices of teachers.

In an effort to try and overcome some of these issues teachers share teaching ideas and resources on the Online Communication Centre (OCC). It is a good example of the way in which an international course can be taught collaboratively. The sharing of resource ideas, and innovative and creative teaching strategies in the use of ethnographic material is important in the development of skills needed to compare ethnographic material. This practice allows students to question the differences and similarities in the interpretations and analysis of patterns of behaviour between cultures/societies, as well as between groups within the same culture/society, using a range of material that portrays the same/similar group or issue. Whilst this is a challenge, the ability to do this leads students to question the context that may have influenced the way in which data is presented and interpretations made. This critical engagement reflects the approach to the study of ethnography and anthropology that the programme seeks to foster. The issue, however, is that this “ideal” has to be communicated to teachers and translated into classroom practice. Clearly, some teachers thrive on the flexibility the current programme allows them: “as demanding as the programme is, a lot of its success lies in the fact that it is highly negotiable” (Gabriela Grinfeld),<sup>xiii</sup> while others want, and need more support and guidance. From a global perspective, the current review participants are themselves *negotiating* a balance between maintaining this flexibility and providing a more guided approach.

### The Assessment of Ethnography

The focus of this paper now turns to the assessment of the course as it relates directly to the use of ethnographies and ethnographic materials. It examines how the use of ethnographic data is assessed in different ways on each of the three exam papers.

#### *Paper 1:*

This paper is based on an unseen ethnographic text of about 600-700 words. The purpose of the unseen text is to assess the students’ ability to critically read ethnographic material in relation to their own general anthropological knowledge and understanding. The assessment of critical reading requires the students to demonstrate that they recognise the conceptual framework guiding the presentation, analysis and, to some extent, the degree of *anthropological imagination* within the ethnographic piece. The general qualities being assessed here are: *anthropological understanding, insight and imagination*<sup>xiv</sup> (IBO 2008: 28).

The questions that are set in relation to this text are classified into three types:

- *Description and generalisation*
- *Analysis and interpretation*
- *Comparison*<sup>xv</sup> (IBO 2008: 29).

Gabriela Grinfeld maintains that, “the candidate for Paper 1 is required to exercise an intellectual activity which places him or her in a situation similar to that of an anthropologist, relating to knowledge in an active manner”.<sup>xvi</sup> This exam paper is not just about knowledge but also about the ability to apply knowledge by critically reading an ethnographic text, interpreting it and demonstrating a sense of conceptual and comparative framing. When students (and teachers) get it “right” – “the very best scripts demonstrate[d] excellent comprehension skills, critical thinking and the ability to relevantly interweave materials/ethnography/anthropological concepts to make strong and well-developed points” (IBO 2011).

In May 2011, students were given an adapted extract from Sirimarco, M. (2004): “*Gender Markers, Bodies of Power: Discourses on the Production of Masculinity in the Making of Police Subjectivity*”.<sup>xvii</sup>

The examiners' comments below give a sense of how students responded to the text and demonstrated their ability to think anthropologically. They also highlight some of the challenges still to be tackled.

Question 1: *Describe the link between hierarchy and gender that police recruits learn to make in police academies in Buenos Aires, Argentina.*

The weaker scripts relied too heavily on [quoting] the text rather than summarizing the text in their own words. Those candidates who performed well were able to clearly explain the concept of hierarchy and demonstrate how this might be linked to a moral order, drawing connections to both the gender and police/civilian divide within the Buenos Aires police force. The very best answers were able to describe how feminine attributes are linked with civilians of both sexes and also to recognise that women police recruits are to some extent transformed into masculine beings, but that the sexism of the police academies nonetheless maintains a hierarchical distinction between male and female officers of the same rank (IBO 2011: 7).

Question 2: *Incorporating theoretical perspectives in your answer, explain how a civilian is transformed into a police officer.*

Some candidates developed their answers by referring to material on rites of passage and the viewpoint of the anthropologist as relating to symbolic perspective in social and cultural anthropology. Others linked the viewpoint of the anthropologist to feminist work in anthropology. Some candidates were able to discuss the transformations that civilians undergo to become police officers in terms of identity and the performance of gendered identities as an aspect of the self which is socially constructed and made through rituals (IBO 2011: 8).

Question 3: *Compare and contrast how the police academies in Buenos Aires conceptualise power with how power is understood in **one** group or society you have studied in detail.*

Candidates who did particularly well often did so because they chose well-contextualised and well-justified comparative ethnographies; these included comparing the power relations and hierarchies found in the police academies in Buenos Aires with those found in other societies with clear social and/or gender inequalities. Candidates articulated a comparison between the forms of violence used by the powerful on those who are socially marginalised with the symbolic violence used on the police recruits to feminize their bodies before the new masculine police identity could be made (IBO 2011: 9).

#### *Paper 2:*

This paper comprises of ten essay questions, of which two must be answered. These ten questions relate to the themes of the course. The purpose of this paper is to assess the students' knowledge and understanding across the breadth of the syllabus (IBO 2008: 29). In order to be successful on this paper, students must appropriately balance between description, generalisation and specific ethnographic examples used in support of their arguments. Furthermore, they "must recognise that any ethnographic description is historically and geographically specific, constructed by a particular person under particular circumstances, and answers should reflect these considerations" (IBO 2008: 29). In other words, students need to be aware of context.

Hilary Ainger, a principal examiner for Paper 2, argues that the number and range of questions, the internal variations offered on at least two of the ten, as well as the open choice, allows candidates to select questions that are most directly relevant to the themes and ethnographic materials they have studied. Thus, candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate their specific knowledge, skills and understandings in relation to the approach and materials provided by their course. Hilary firmly believes that this provides both parity and fairness as it accommodates regional, cultural and teacher differences.<sup>xviii</sup> For Paper 2, ethnography really is the core of the answer and students' ability to distil and synthesise ethnographic material into two one-hour essays is a phenomenal task. However, the skills being assessed here are highly valued. Learning content is no longer sufficient, and, as has been previously argued, anthropology is not just a body of knowledge to be learnt – it is a particular mode of thinking about the world, one which requires students to assess, synthesize and evaluate information as well as use it to creatively construct knowledge. To facilitate this, tasks need to be open-ended in order to reflect the nature of the subject in that there may be many diverse but correct responses to the same

question. Of the ten questions on the May 2011 exam, the following popular choice is indicative of examiner comments:

Question 8: *To what extent do global processes alter local economies?*

This was a question that was very well answered by a good proportion of candidates. Very strong answers included the impact of western money on the Tiv and how this altered local understandings of value and exchange drawing not only on the work of anthropologists such as Bohannan and Mauss but also on economists such as Karl Polanyi. Others considered the impact of international finance and credit cards on the witchcraft beliefs of Akan traders in Ghana.

These scripts tended to demonstrate both good detailed ethnographic knowledge and also sound conceptual knowledge which was directed to answering the question. Another popular source for ethnography used to answer this question drew on material about Kula and Lisalabadu mortuary exchanges in the Trobriand Islands. A few candidates chose to write on Nash's *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines* (1993) (IBO 2011: 13).

The comments made by examiners on both Papers 1 and 2 reflect the need for teachers to “help candidates achieve a balance between conceptual development and theoretical exposition and analysis. This works best when the concepts are closely linked to ethnographic material so that candidates can see how the concepts help to explain the descriptive materials they read” (IBO 2011: 14). Furthermore, candidates need to be introduced to a broad range of anthropological theories and concepts as well as to ethnographies, which serve to link with, or exemplify those being taught. This includes ensuring that they are given the opportunity to explore more contemporary ethnographies and theories.

When questions are tackled well, students demonstrate a keen ability to select and use relevant concepts, making comparative points that draw on both ethnography and theory. Examiners state that really capable students go beyond this and are able to compare the work of different anthropologists working in the same societies and to evaluate the differences in terms of theoretical assumptions, method and conclusions in a reasoned and critical manner.

Yet this is not the norm: responses by students do not always make connections between anthropological concepts, theories and the ethnographic material being studied. As one examiner commented, students need to “be encouraged to develop more conceptual understanding of the ethnographic material they read. [Since] it is this conceptual framework that will enable them to discuss the ethnographic materials more effectively and critically” (IBO: 2012). What this means in practice is that key concepts need to be taught, discussed and constantly used in relation to the different ethnographic materials students are reading. An understanding of these concepts is what facilitates students' development away from the merely descriptive to the more analytical and evaluative. Without an understanding of concepts and the way in which they are applied, understood and interpreted within the context of an anthropologist's fieldwork, students are unable to draw comparisons, or evaluate conclusions in a reasoned and critical manner.

One concern is that teachers may not be choosing or do not have access to ethnographic material which allows for the core anthropological concepts of the course to be explored in sufficient depth. Examiners report that this is evident when students do not have in-depth knowledge of societies but rather try and string together an argument using “bits and pieces” from several. The exam does not require students to detail everything they know about a particular ethnography, but rather they need to be able to use that knowledge selectively to shape their responses in relation to the concepts given in the question. To score highly on this aspect of the assessment criteria the response must present ethnographic material that successfully establishes relevance to the question. This is one of the reasons the course requires the reading of complete ethnographies. And, whilst supplementary articles from anthropological journals serve a purpose in complementing full monographs – in providing comparative or critical material – the course cannot and should not be taught using these alone.

This is a good example of where a tension continues to exist between the “ideals” of the course in terms of expectations of how it *should* be taught and the “realities” of what happens in the classroom. Working in an international context, in 145 countries, the IB has to be cognisant of national variations in approaches to teaching and learning as well as size of classes and access to materials. And, whilst the aim of both curriculum development and the assessment of the course focuses on encouraging sound pedagogical and constructive student involvement in learning, teachers will interpret the course guide in ways that fit with their own knowledge and understanding of the subject, the cultural context in which they are teaching, as well as the resources at their disposal. The examples presented in this paper are evidence of this. From a global perspective, it is important to be flexible enough, both in the design of the course and in the subsequent assessment of it, as to accommodate the different cultural contexts in which the course is studied. As decisions are made about the direction of the new course, how to negotiate this challenge whilst at the same time maintaining the integrity of the discipline, and the aims and objectives of the course is at the forefront of discussions.

Another factor that may influence the extent to which students get it “right” in the use of ethnography is whether they are interpreting or understanding the assessment criteria<sup>six</sup> in the way in which it is then applied at a global level by examiners. These criteria are not IB secrets, only known to the examiners. Teachers and students have access to them as they form an important part of the course guide. Yet, how they are used in the classroom may vary. Once again, I found in my conversations that teachers wanted clarification of IB’s interpretation of the criteria and how the examiners apply them to ensure that they understood them in the same way. They are concerned that they do not disadvantage their students because they have not interpreted the criteria correctly themselves. To help overcome this and to ensure transparency, Teacher Support Materials are produced by the senior examining team which consists of exemplar student responses and the corresponding examiner marks and commentary. Further to this, the senior examiners and assessment manager for the IB produce a subject report after each exam session. This report provides an overview of the exam paper as well as a more detailed analysis of performance on each component and question in relation to the specific assessment criteria. It also offers recommendations to teachers with regard to how they can help improve student performance by highlighting and explaining the skills that students need to acquire in order to ensure they address the requirements and demands of the assessment criteria.

### *Paper 3 (HL only)*

Paper 3 comprises of five essay questions of which students answer one. The focus of this paper is on “theoretical perspectives in anthropology, their application to ethnographic material and their manifestation in particular historical contexts” (IBO 2008: 20). The use of ethnographic material on this paper is in its relevance to demonstrate how theory helps make sense of and organise the material and data presented.

The subject reports written at the end of each exam session suggest that a good range of ethnographies are being used on this paper, including: Bourgois’ *In Search of Respect* (2002), Ortner’s *Life and Death on Mount Everest* (2001), Malinowski’s *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (2010), Weiner’s *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (1988), Abu-Lughod’s *Veiled Sentiments* ((2000) and *Writing Women’s Worlds* (1993), Ong’s *Spirits of Resistance* (2010), Scheper-Hughes’ *Death Without Weeping* (1993), Ngai’s *Made in China* (2005), Parreñas’ *Servants of Globalization* (2001), Pascoe’s *Dude You’re a Fag* (2011) and Fernea’s *Guest of the Sheik* (2000) (IBO 2011). The ethnographies mentioned here are just a few that are regarded as being conceptually rich and engaging, allowing students to make strong connections between themes, concepts and theoretical perspectives.

Laura Fulton, the former principal examiner for Paper 3, and a long time IB teacher states:<sup>six</sup>

The greatest strength of Paper 3 is the focus on perspectives. These allow students to make meaningful links between theory and ethnography. The perspectives encourage critical thinking and help students tease out the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ of anthropology (both in terms of theory and ethnography). Similarly, they provide

teachers with tools with which they can help students understand the world around them. [...] The requirement that students aim to triangulate theoretical perspectives, theoretical schools and ethnography provides them with a solid picture of the field of anthropology while developing higher-order thinking skills.

The key to getting it “right” on Paper 3 is the ability to critically integrate theory and ethnography. The teaching of theoretical perspectives at HL is an integral part of developing a student’s ability to think anthropologically. The IB, through Teacher Support Materials, encourages teachers to recognise the view that in developing an approach to the study of theory, an appreciation for the distinction between ethnography and theory is required. If ethnography can be seen as the practice of writing about other groups of people as a way of making sense of their “worlds”, then theory is our way of making sense of our own anthropological ways of thinking, which in turn frame the way in which we see these other “worlds”. These understandings are inevitably formed at the nexus of ethnography and theory. By exploring these theories students come to better understand ethnographic materials, method and presentation, as well as the rationale for questions that anthropologists ask, the historical context in which particular anthropological enquiry is set, and how anthropological theory has developed. Since ethnography does not exist in a vacuum, it would be quite meaningless without theory (IBO 2008). The logic behind this is to foster a critical understanding of ethnography and theory that moves beyond memorising details of schools of thought or ethnographic description, but instead integrates them. These expectations are reflected in the assessment criteria for Paper 3, which cover theoretical perspectives, use and understanding of theory, ethnography, connections and comparisons and anthropological insight.

Clearly, to those familiar with assessing work in anthropology, the assessment criteria and expectations of skills in the course may be reflective of what it means to think anthropologically, but these are also quite sophisticated and demanding skills to develop. The DP has, from its inception, aimed to provide students with an academically rigorous course of study that would allow them to compete for places at universities across the globe. This is often the reason cited by schools, parents and students when asked why they commit to undertaking or offering an IB education. And so whilst some might argue that these criteria appear to demand impeccably high standards, it is these standards and the philosophy of the DP to design assessment which is “high-stakes” that maintains the IB’s reputation as an educational provider.

Nick Swann, Chief Examiner and a lecturer at the University of Wales, states:

While the assessment criteria for the course are demanding, they encourage the development of critical thinking amongst students and a movement towards a nuanced and contextualised understanding of the advantages and limitations of ethnographic material. This is, perhaps, a lot to ask at this level but the better students are certainly capable of engaging with anthropology in this way and meeting the high-end assessment criteria, and only a small minority fail to demonstrate at least some ability to meet the lower end of these.<sup>xxi</sup>

Devised in collaboration with the senior examiners, who represent both university-level anthropology and teachers of the IB course, the criteria do come with a dose of realism about what can be achieved in the time given and with 16-18 year-olds. The abstract nature of the criteria may appear hard to make sense of unless seen in the context of actual student work and the way in which the criteria translates into practice.

Robin Julian, a teacher and examiner at a school in Sydney, Australia, reflected on his experiences with students and the assessment of the course.<sup>xxii</sup>

DP teachers will [...] pay [...] attention to the need for their students to become comfortable in their understanding and use of anthropological concepts, theory and terminology. Their teaching and learning in this regard is consequently quite ‘visible’ and feedback consistently obtained through specific class discussion and regular practice essays, for example. Teachers understand that anthropology is essentially an unknown quantity to their DP students, so work from the basics and build towards [a] more sophisticated understanding as the course progresses over two years.

Consequently, [...] students have considerable practice at writing to the [...] [assessment] criteria as set out in the[...] syllabus [...]. The desired outcome is that they have to a large extent internalised this process by the time they come to write their final examinations. The practice of doing past examination papers and receiving quality feedback also helps students to develop their ability to ‘think on their feet’ and thus choose questions which both suit the ethnographies they have studied and also effectively address each of the [...] [assessment] criteria.

Just as the design of the course has to offer the flexibility to be appropriate and relevant across a variety of cultural contexts, the same must be reflected in the assessment of the course in order to ensure parity and equity for students. As Hilary Ainger pointed out, the variations of questions on Paper 2 ensures that all students regardless of the ethnographies studied are able to engage with the exam questions. And, as Robin Julian has highlighted, it is not that teachers and students are not aware of the expectations, or the demands of the course, as these are “visible”.

As the examples here have highlighted, the use of ethnographic material really is central to the teaching of the course. When I asked Marzia Balzani, what she was looking for in exam responses with regard to the use of ethnographic material, she stated:

A sense of engagement with anthropology and getting students to make a case using ethnographic material is what I look for in a good answer. I think my first point would be that the ethnographic material has to be relevant or made relevant by the candidate [...]. Better answers tend to be those that might select fewer descriptive examples but develop these into a reasoned answer to the question.

The really good answers are also those that are able to weave the theoretical perspectives of the ethnographer whose work is being used into the essay. Truly excellent answers are those that are able to suggest the limitations of any theoretical perspective and to understand how knowledge itself is a product of a particular type of education in particular social and historical contexts and that this develops over time.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Marzia’s words encapsulate what those who teach, examine and study the course feel the subject is all about – a sense of engagement. An engagement from which, having studied anthropology and read ethnographies, students can demonstrate that they have developed a critical attitude for the knowledge and understanding that anthropologists gain from living and experiencing life in other peoples’ worlds. The evidence of this is not just about the ability to, as Tim Ingold has said, “get *into* ethnography, to describe cultural diversity, since this is a wasted effort if we do not teach them how to get *out of it*” (1985: 15). Within the context of this course, being able to reflect on ethnographic data through application and interpretation and synthesis and evaluation, and then to apply what they have learnt to wider questions about the nature of human behaviour demonstrates, in the IB’s opinion, an ability to think anthropologically.

### Assessing Fieldwork

Whilst the internal assessment task for Higher Level (HL) students does not explicitly assess them on their use of ethnographic material as a task in itself, the opportunity for students to carry out their own fieldwork is important for them when engaging with the work of anthropologists. What better way to understand how anthropologists do anthropology than envisioning how they themselves would ethnographically investigate an aspect of their own society or culture, or, in many cases, that of another. The fieldwork element of the HL course is usually introduced at the end of the first year of teaching, when a significant amount of the course has been taught. Typically, students will carry out their fieldwork during the summer break or early in the autumn term of the second year. The aim of the fieldwork task is to give students the opportunity to:

- Use techniques and strategies in the generation of anthropological data;
- Appreciate methodological and ethical issues involved in fieldwork;
- Discover how to collect data and present data as an anthropological description;
- Derive conclusions from the fieldwork.

Students are encouraged in their planning to think initially in terms of either a context-focused or an issue-based approach. As their planning progresses students realise that context-based fieldwork must reflect anthropological issues or it will remain superficial, and that issue-based fieldwork must be grounded in concrete settings in order to be feasible. Examples of more recent fieldwork undertaken by students include a study of the changing economic and cultural meaning of artisanal production in Bogota, Columbia; a study of support networks involved with attachment parenting in London; examination of multigenerational variations in the interpretations of healing rituals in one Southern African ethnic group; an analysis of the social context of music performances in public spaces; and a study examining how gay and lesbian teens negotiate between online “out” identities and everyday “closeted” identities (IBO 2012 & 2012a).

On completing their fieldwork and returning to the classroom students have to analyse their own data, deciding what to include and what to exclude, assessing the ethical issues they faced, balancing their voice with that of their informants and deciding how to frame their analysis both conceptually and theoretically. The assessment places emphasis on:

- Critical comparison and evaluation of the methods and techniques chosen in terms of the kinds of data provided;
- Some reflection on the fieldwork experience, including a consideration of both practical and ethical issues;
- Appropriate presentation and analysis of the data (IBO 2008).

Robin Julian articulates why he believes giving students the opportunity to engage in their own fieldwork is important in the reading of ethnographies in class:

Most ethnographies, which represent an anthropologist’s ‘writing of culture’ following fieldwork, include sections in which the author discusses and explains his or her fieldwork: the aims, the setting, methodologies, ethical considerations, failures, successes etc. Highlighting and discussing these materials, either before, during or following the students’ own fieldwork experiences helps them to design better fieldwork by having real models to refer to, then to reflect critically on both their own practice and the practices of the anthropologists they have come to know through reading ethnographies (or viewing visual ethnographies) and discussing these with their teachers and peers. How much more meaningful ethnography becomes when a person has ‘been there’ him/herself, albeit in a limited way! <sup>xxiv</sup>

As highlighted here, going into the field and collecting and evaluating data are essential complements to the work undertaken in class. The challenges that students face in the *practice* of anthropology mirror their *reading* of ethnography, they must ask and answer quite similar questions. In both reading and fieldwork, students engage with questions and decisions that anthropologists have to make. This reinforces the idea that ethnography can be seen as a product, perspective, and process/method. Reflecting on their own experiences, choices and decisions, as well as on the way in which their own preconceptions and interests influenced these, allows students to question more critically the ethnographies they were reading in class. Put simply, they start to think anthropologically.

The fieldwork undertaken by students may well be limited but teachers report that in giving students the opportunity to experience what is ultimately at the heart of what anthropologists’ do, students’ ability to engage critically with the ethnographic material they are reading is enhanced. And, given that the course – quite unavoidably – does give priority to literary sources, understanding the practice of anthropology through authentic experiential learning facilitates students’ ability to reflect critically on the way in which ethnographies are constructed – equipping them with the requisite skills to deconstruct and analyse the ethnographic material they read in class.



## Conclusion

This paper has highlighted how teachers of the IB social and cultural anthropology course are engaging students in the use of ethnographic material, and the challenges of assessing this learning. Understanding and articulating what getting it “right” looks like in practice is a challenge for curriculum developers to address given the centrality of ethnographies to the course. How students engage with the course in terms of their ability to apply knowledge and understanding, to interpret and articulate a reasoned argument, and demonstrate anthropological insight and imagination will depend on what is happening at a local level, in schools and classrooms.

Working collaboratively with academics, anthropologists, teachers and examiners, the curriculum review process aims to ensure that the “ideals” of the course designers *can* and *do* become the reality of the teaching. The examples in this paper give an insight into the ways in which teachers across the globe are striving to engage students critically in the reading of ethnography and developing their ability to think anthropologically. There are some who would argue that anthropology at this level is just too demanding. This paper demonstrates the rewards of relishing rather than avoiding these challenges.

In many respects the study of anthropology is the essence of an IB education, since the aims of the subject and the organisation seem to go hand in hand: notably the emphasis on inter-cultural understanding and respect. This is not only an interesting time in the development of our course, but an opportune one, since more and more schools and education systems are looking towards teaching for international mindedness and global engagement in an increasingly complex world. As a result, anthropology has become even more meaningful and relevant in the lives of our students.

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## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Participants in the review of the course include teachers of the course, who may also be examiners, senior examiners

<sup>ii</sup> International-mindedness in the IB has three dimensions – multilingualism, inter-cultural understanding and global engagement.

<sup>iii</sup> Statistics correct as of May 2013 and taken from [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org).

<sup>iv</sup> For more information on the IB please visit [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org).

<sup>v</sup> The extended essay of some 4,000 words offers the opportunity for IB students to investigate a topic of particular interest to them, usually from one of their six DP subjects. They can also choose to undertake a world studies extended essay, which is inter-disciplinary and requires students to investigate an issue of local relevance from a global perspective. Theory of knowledge is a course designed to encourage each student to reflect on the nature of knowledge by critically examining different ways of knowing (for example, perception, emotion, language and reason) and different kinds of knowledge (for example, scientific, artistic, mathematical and historical). Creativity, action, service requires that students actively learn from the experience of doing real tasks beyond the classroom. Students can combine all three components or do activities related to each one of them separately (IBO).

<sup>vi</sup> The assessment of the course is divided into both externally assessed examinations, undertaken by IB examiners and an internally assessed (graded by the teachers) but externally moderated (by the IB) piece of work.

<sup>vii</sup> Personal communication, May 2013.

<sup>viii</sup> Teacher of DP SCA in personal communication, March 2012.

<sup>ix</sup> Teacher of DP SCA in personal communication, March 2012.

<sup>x</sup> The OCC is an online forum for teachers of IB anthropology to share teaching ideas and resources.

- <sup>xi</sup> IB Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) – accessed on 03/03/12. This is a secure online forum for teachers and staff of the IB.
- <sup>xii</sup> Some of these reasons were provided by Marzia Balzani, a principal examiner in personal communication, March 2012, and others reflect discussions with groups of teachers.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Personal communication, March 2012.
- <sup>xiv</sup> This imagination may refer to the ability of the student to imagine themselves in the situation described in the text, or the recognition that there are possible connections and implications between different kinds of data and different levels of analysis
- <sup>xv</sup> *Description and generalisation* – students are expected to represent the material in the text in their own words. *Analysis and interpretation* – students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the anthropological issues raised in the text, and the ability to apply anthropological terms and concepts to the material in a critical way. *Comparison* – students are expected to show an ability to think about the text in relation to other contexts and to draw explicit comparisons. The comparative material used may have both similarities and differences and must be identified and situated in terms of ethnographic present, historical context, location and author (IBO 2008: 29).
- <sup>xvi</sup> Personal communication, March 2012.
- <sup>xvii</sup> *Marcas de género, cuerpos de poder. Discursos de producción de masculinidad en la conformación del sujeto policial*. Cuadernos de Antropología Social N° 20, pages 61–78.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Personal communication, March 2012.
- <sup>xix</sup> Assessment criteria are used when the assessment task is open-ended. Each criterion concentrates on a particular skill that students are expected to demonstrate. An assessment objective describes what students should be able to do and assessment criteria describe how well they should be able to do it. Using assessment criteria allows discrimination between different answers and encourages a variety of responses.
- <sup>xx</sup> Personal communication, March 2012.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Personal communication, May 2013.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Personal communication, May 2013.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Personal communication, March 2012.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Personal communication, May 2013.