



## **Comparison Between Leadership in IB Organisation and an International School in the Middle East Region**

### **Introduction**

Leadership refers to the art of motivating a team to work in order to achieve a common goal. It entails the development of practical skills necessary to guide an individual, team, or an organization as a whole. Therefore, it is safe to say that leadership is quintessential to the success of educational institutions. Leaders can prosper only in the environment that encourages self-reflection and dialogue. It is crucial for teachers to continually discuss and analyze the curriculum and how to replicate it to achieve the intended learning outcomes (Dantas M. 2007, 76). However, the views of different schools on the matter and their approaches to the curriculum vary drastically. In this paper, I aim to review the difference between the syllabus and a general approach to the teaching strategies in an international school in the Middle East and the International Baccalaureate (IB).

### **Leadership in IB Organisation and an International School in the Middle East Region**

Cambridge is a curriculum that focuses on staff development. According to Cambridge (2011), the syllabus is based on a comprehensive and coherent development plan to span various learning outcomes (122). However, the syllabus at an international school in the Middle East that is developed on the Cambridge system allows innovation. Different learning tools are used to address the content of the syllabus, and it certainly prepares students for future challenges. Teaching requires different strategies to help pedagogues learn how to exercise their judgment in the classroom in order to meet the constantly changing patterns of learning behavior in students (Cambridge J. 2011, 122). Teaching in an international school in the Middle East has developed my capacities to make independent and informed decisions and formulate educational goals.

The platform has enabled me to motivate and challenge students as well as create an engaging and exciting environment to improve the learning outcomes (Dantas M. 2007, 82-92). The Middle East international school holds a forum where staff engages in pre-service teacher education programs. During these sessions, teachers are able to discuss the technical competence of their students (Zeichner K. & Liu K. 2010, 67). The learning setting allows me to analyze the impact of the school program on the student intended learning outcomes.

As a teacher in an international school in the Middle East with a Cambridge system, I find the educational programs of a tremendous benefit. It is worth mentioning that my performance as a teacher is guided by the ethics and morals of practice developed in the international school in the Middle East. However, even taking these facts into account, I find IB better in establishing an emotionally safe learning area that encourages teamwork.

Addressing the complexities of technical rationality in the context of reflective teaching is one limitation that compounds reflective process when considering the teaching skills as well as strategies developed by an international school in the Middle East (Pitsoe V. & Maila M. 2013, 211). The instructional methods of the curriculum exclude a teacher's reflection at the end of the teaching process (Scheffler I. 2010, 12). Teachers using a curriculum at an international school in the Middle East are denied an opportunity to develop their own reflective view on education but are rather expected to fine-tune as well as adjust the means for accomplishing the goals determined by others (Liu, L. & Milman N. 2010, 624). Teaching in this school is, therefore, a technical activity guided by the demands of a Cambridge curriculum (Tarc P. 2009, 235-261). IB framework, on the other hand, is guided by the inherent philosophy that for a teacher, leadership entails self-reflection (Bunnell T. 2011, 272-274).

Such shortcoming in the curriculum of an international school in the Middle East implies that teachers are less likely to alter the program in a way that helps students achieve crucial educational goals (Heikka J. & Waniganayake M. 2011, 510). Even though an instructor's primary concern during teaching is understanding of the classroom setting and students, I believe that it is unwise to restrict the attention of the teacher to these alone. A curriculum requires a certain degree of flexibility that would allow teachers to adjust educational goals and methods used to reach them depending on a situation (Connell M. 2014, 17).

In view of IB, an instructor's involvement in matters beyond the classroom does not drift their attention from the core mission with learners (Lee M., Hallinger P., & Walker A. 2012, 668). I find this extremely appealing considering that in certain circumstances, it is important to create more opportunities for instructors to participate in school-wide decisions about the present curriculum, staffing, and instructional methods in order to facilitate the education process (Jäppinen A. & Maunonen-Eskelinen I. 2012, 50).

### Action Plan

Considering the current curriculum at an international school in the Middle East where I teach, I think that the setting there is not adequate for teachers to undertake self-reflection. However, I have a belief that the IB education framework might help to bring positive changes in the curriculum at my school. I, therefore, look forward to being a part of a working community guided by the goals of the curriculum. The action plan for my future curriculum is structured as presented below.

Introduction	According to U.S. philosopher Israel Scheffler (2010), teachers' attention cannot be restricted to the classroom alone (11). Scheffler further adds that teachers must take responsibility for the goals, which they commit to and determine the social setting within which such goals can be achieved. Scheffler emphasizes the importance of teachers' flexibility, which I believe is not taken into account by a curriculum of an international school in the Middle East. It is integral for a curriculum to nurture leaders through a personal reflection in a flexible environment. (Weber L. 2011, 174).
Goal	Develop my future leadership practice as a professional in IB school

Objective: To develop a critical reflection on the professional practice

Current Position	MYP Homeroom teacher
Strategy	Adopt critical reflective practice in teaching English and Literature
Action Area	Take active responsibility in the social setting of the school to improve learning outcomes

Barrier	<p>Learner interest</p> <p>Lack of parenteral support</p> <p>Lack of resources</p> <p>Inconsistency of assessment policy</p>
Progress Metric	<p>Better knowledge of the curriculum of an international school in the Middle East</p> <p>Understanding of IB educational practices</p>