

## **Original Goals Statement**

### **Kimberley Daly**

Just about 10 years ago, as I was completing my master's degree, I was assigned the task of writing an educational philosophy statement. In thinking about writing this personal statement, I went back to that assignment. Although some of the language was geared to getting a job as a high school English teacher, I was amazed at the diction that seemed to be so in line with the topics that I deal with on an everyday basis, especially during the last five years of my teaching career as I have become involved with the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. I discussed transforming students into lifelong learners through constant development of critical thinking skills, creating authentic learning communities, and promoting mutual respect as well as intellectual and emotional growth. These ideas are all contained in IB curriculums and in the IB Learner Profile. Somehow, early on, I knew the concepts and ideals I would get involved in. I have always believed that teaching was not only conveying subject matter but a broader understanding of how we know things and why we know things – the philosophy behind the learning. It is the idea of understanding other cultures and cultivating mutual respect for yourself and others.

I am not really surprised that my path in life has brought me to this point. The fact that I want to specialize in international education does not surprise me either given my background and interests and the sheer diversity of my students. Over the last 12 years, I have taught in an urban and Catholic school setting where students did not have access to a library or a computer lab. Many parents were absent for a variety of terrible reasons. I taught in a small high school where most parents would be classified as lower middle-class because of a factory closure several years earlier. I taught in a Jersey-shore community where many parents commute to New York City daily for jobs. I taught English language learners at a community college. All of my students were instructed in core concepts but I also tried to instill the ideas that they could all be successful learners and there was a greater world around them. These students came from all over the globe and brought their cultures with them. That rich tapestry was always present and I often integrated that into instruction.

I do think that my background probably does play a part in driving my career and educational development. I am American with Ukrainian and Welsh heritage. The Ukrainian side came to the United States mainly before World War II. I do not speak for any other family except mine here but I will say that Ukrainians are proud and nationalistic. As history knows, Ukraine had been a part of the Soviet Union. My family was not fond of the Soviet regime. This sparked much curiosity in me throughout my formative years and prompted my studies in Russian at my undergraduate university. I also minored in

political science in order to better understand the situation. When I traveled to Russia in January 1992, a coup had occurred five months earlier. I found Russia to be a fascinating place, each day a different demonstration by a different group but always wondered why we (meaning Americans) do not look for more similarities rather than worry about our differences. I still follow Russian politics although my language skills need remediation. Later, I volunteered to teach for a summer in Ukraine. At this point, Ukraine was a free state and issued their first hryvnia coins the summer I was there. In my volunteer work, I developed lessons and created materials for a class of students, some of whom had come from a local orphanage. It was in Ukraine that I first became interested in the idea of students having equal access to education. The access question to me is not only an international issue. I have often wondered what some of my former students could have accomplished if they simply had access to certain things. There's "access to education" in general and then there is access in education.

Over the last five years, I have taught IB English A1 HL at Thomas A. Edison High School in Alexandria, Virginia and have become in not only teaching the program but in recruitment of students for the program through a week-long Pre-IB Summer Camp program called IB Connections. This camp focuses on giving rising 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students a taste of IB classes in the hopes that they will enroll in at least one IB class the following year. I was on the original grant committee for the camp and have been continually involved. In addition to participating as a workshop teacher, I have taken on a greater administrative role each year. This year, our camp theme was "Acculturation from the Inside Out" and my specific contributions included partnering with another teacher to conduct a workshop of portrayals of immigration and acculturation on film, processing all camp registrations, and complete coordination of a field trip to the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery and American Art Museum including creation of a scavenger hunt for campers to complete while in the museum. In addition to being involved with the actual camp, a colleague and I have completed three presentations about our program.

I am choosing to pursue the doctoral program at George Mason University because of the international education concentration. This concentration will allow me to study not only the process of how we know what we know, but will allow me to explore issues of educational access and social justice as well as conduct research concerning the International Baccalaureate. I am extremely attracted to this program because it is individualized and inter-disciplinary. I am hoping to have a future career in either program development or in research. I have also already started the George Mason University Certificate in Advanced IB Studies and would like to incorporate this into my Ph.D. work if possible.