

Reflection - EDUC 600/621
Teaching and Learning in IB Programs
Linda Smith
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This was the first course I took at George Mason and it also introduced me to the possibility of a Ph.D. in international education. I enrolled in this course because I was, at that point, a teacher of IB English HL with five years of IB experience and I was excited that Mason had been approved to offer the Certificate in Advanced IB Studies by IB. EDUC 600 or 621 as it is now called, is the first of the program and focuses on all three programs, giving teachers an overall education into IB theory and practice including information on IB Program Standards, Learner Profile, and Mission Statement. In addition, I had to complete observation of other IB programs and synthesize my observations and my learning with my current teaching practice.

What this class did for me was make me finally decide what I wanted to get my doctoral degree in and what I wanted to area of specialty I wanted to have. Getting a doctorate was something that I wanted to do for a long time, but my interests have always been varied. I have a degree in Russian (technically foreign languages and literatures), another degree in humanities, and yet another in education. I read widely and worked as a journalist. For years, I wondered what kind of doctoral program would let me combine my varied interests in history, literature, education, politics, language, and economics. I already knew that I loved what I did in the classroom. I was at a point where I knew I needed more and EDUC 600/621 gave me that final push to apply to the Ph.D. in Education program with a specialization in international education.

As for artifacts that represent my learning in this course, I believe the two pieces of work that best represent my thinking at that time would be the Mission Statement Paper and my first Observation and Standards Reflection. In the Mission Statement Paper, I was asked to reflect on connections between the IB Mission Statement, Learner Profile, and my professional practice. The paper was written about two weeks after I started the course and I think the paper shows my attention to detail, especially in my ability to pick apart language and meaning. The second paper shows critical thought turned inward on my own English department as I try to apply the ideas I was learning in EDUC 600/621 at the time. Despite my lack of knowledge of APA style at the time (a mistake I have since corrected), these papers show my ability to synthesize information and think deeply about the issues presented.