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The Microcosm of teaching and learning within the macrocosm of technological change and the challenges of a globalised world, what assessment strategies to adopt?

Abstract:
Teaching and learning with the aims to promote social justice, to emancipate the academic community, and to build resilience in the future generation demand constant knowledge of the factors affecting each society in particular its new generation. Equally pertinent is the assessment modalities to adopt that best suits the expectations and challenges awaiting the 21st century learner. Assessment techniques should spawn enthusiasm rather than apprehension in a teacher as the reality of which is anchored in best teaching practices and understanding the demands of the globalised world. Peeking in a pedagogical stance within the globalised world, contemporary educational ethics should rest on developing students who share, cooperate and contribute responsibly to a global society. Indeed, such ethics encompass the way students are assessed that will ultimately impact on reflecting a society of responsible citizens. What type of assessment then? The inevitable inclusion of technology in our lives has skewed the learning rate, the teaching methodologies and the assessment methodologies in a way unthought-of few years ago. Technology enhances teaching and learning but the application of technology is made devoid of meaning if there is absence of democratic ethics within the learning microcosm. Learner-based assessment can promote the adaptation to an ever-changing environment endorsing appreciation of values and diverse cultures. The types of assessment backed up by a global curriculum should aim at inspiring students to convey the spirit and ideals of a responsible citizen.

Keywords: assessment strategy, learning, teaching, technology

1. Introduction
Stepping into this present millennium has brought about tremendous changes in the manipulation of information rendering it more accessible and indispensable. Education has the main aim to promote socio-economic progress through a collective attainment of specific academic achievement and values primordial in the 21st century socio-economic challenges. Today’s education should adopt a student- and competence-centre approach. The intertwined nature of economic progress is rendering the educational field more challenging especially its modes of assessment. Education should prepare students for life as the ongoing discourse is about the quality of education. In this globalised world
which rely enormously on applying tech-savvy expertise in all aspects of development and progress, teaching and learning aim at promoting social justice among individuals. With the advent of technological advancement, communication being enhanced, this should facilitate an emancipation of a healthy academic community with the primary vision of building resilience in the current and future generation. In this same pipeline, curriculum should promote the creation, acquisition and utilisation of knowledge and skills as intertwined in the 21st century global society. Curriculum developers should bear in mind that a syllabus should develop attitudes and values necessary for personal and socio-economic development which will allow the emerging generation to be an active participant in globalisation post developing an awareness of the factors affecting each society. Whether at secondary or tertiary level, academia community is re-evaluating their strategies to better cope with the prospects born from the mobility of the job force to internationalization.

Probing into the historical debate about the social, economic and political aspect of education, a new educational discourse began at the end of the Cold War and the birth of the European Union. The collapse of some subjects in favour of others brought about a significant overhaul in the educational arena. During the Cold War, subjects like History had a pro-American or pro-European agenda. Post the Cold War, such subjects had a more social purpose, that of generating awareness on the symbolism of freedom and combating communism. Taking a cue from this historical background, Balgobin (2013), mentions that a large number of educational institutions redefined their vision by integrating the primary philosophy of diffusion of knowledge through a constant exploration of the medium of teaching. Other schools of thought see the world with a more administrative and economic aspiration of a nation state and a vision to participate actively in the national identity of the country. With globalisation in mind, this approach helped schools to realize the need to integrate the microcosm of an educational system more entitled towards excellence, quality teaching and assessment. This meant surfing other horizons in search of the epistemology of education to in turn embark on building competence and excellence in education. This approach further channelled schools and colleges to develop partnership and cooperation with other institutions to be recognized in the tempo of educational excellence. Gradually with the permeation of globalisation in the educational field, institutions started to empower themselves through providing a unique quality-based education and assessment techniques. That’s where the exchange of curriculum, of syllabuses, of assessment strategies transpired. Via the exchange of ideas, consensus is reached on how to channel youngsters to integrate the global competitive society. China for example, according to Balgobin (2013), is actively engaging its young generation to be fluent in multiple languages, embracing new cultures be it European or Asian. Indeed, the culture of assessment is based on the capacity of each country to understand the demands of the future world and adopt strategies to develop a competency-prone academic hub.

The decline in the academic results declared for several international examinations (IB, IGCSE, GCSE) has sparked a lot of debate on the performance of candidates. In the league table, there is an overgrowing anxiety among schools about the declining performance of their students. Of course examinations, whether internal or external, are the pulse of what is happening at the level of the school and more microscopically what is happening in class. However, examination is not the ultimate indication of what is happening at school, neither does it give a qualitative overview of the school’s
performance in the table league. Some have called the examination process a ‘mill’ (Twigg, 2013). With the demands of the globalised world, the approach is not only to play the system. As a result, the debate on the need to review the curriculum has flared to gauge the demands of our learners. Several discourses fuse the urgent need to review our curriculum and weighing the alternatives of shifting curriculum to be more equipped to face the 21st century challenges. The system should be adapted; it should be integrated in the child’s life with a ‘big bang’ effect with the aim to creating a knowledge economy. Why is the performance dwindling? That is principally because the ways of learning are changing. Children learn in different ways to that a decade ago. Any student whether they have a mobile or not would be tech-savvy. Globalisation has impelled the idea of inter-culturalism in curriculum, provoking at the same time –because of the advent of technology- a techno-consumerism society, which may not necessarily be detrimental to the academic world. The new generation needs to be equipped with a set of skills which were not necessary to prior generations.

These skills essentially aim at enabling a smooth transition from school to the world of work. The expectations of the job markets on new graduates project that they are able to:

- Adapt to an imprecise and ever-changing environments
- Be proficient in communicating with others
- Be an entrepreneur in the broadest sense of the term
- Be a responsible citizen
- Involve in decision making
- Be able to cooperate in a team
- Be an adept of innovation.

The need to strike a balance between national needs with globalisation and with technological advancement, encapsulate that students need to be prepared to embrace the globally intertwined nature of economic, social and academic development. By so doing, the school constructs individuals who are able to share, cooperate, are curious, participate, aware of the demands of society, sensible to the opportunities being offered, sensible to various inequalities (gender, academic, professional) and are autonomous learners. In terms of assessment, globalisation calls for a student who is able to appraise what type of assessment best suits him, who displays readiness for work. This in turn demands that students are able to understand and integrate a fast changing society and endorsing the philosophy of a modern society. Such aims of the educational platform imply that the challenges of assessment have become more pronounced. Assessment at school level should encapsulate the capacity of the student to apply his learning and competence acquired in authentic situations. It should empower students through creativity and problem solving skills which in turn can promote the apt attitudes (avoid impulsivity, aggressive behaviour, influence, mimicking…) among our youngsters.

The explode of technological gadgets have brought about an unprecedented change in the mode of teaching which unfortunately many educators do not integrate in their learning methodologies. This break-through in education demands that assessment models be reviewed to adapt to the changing technological and social world. In its Curriculum and Assessment Policy, the Ministry of Education of Lesotho recognizes the importance of academic philosophy to be in line with the demands of a
globalised world: “Education systems face a challenge of balancing national needs and globalisation, particularly regarding advancement in technology and communication. This is even more critical taking into account the globally intertwined nature of economic development. Thus, each country has the onus of acquiring, utilising and disseminating necessary scientific, technological and economic skills for survival and maintaining competitiveness…Curriculum should therefore promote the creation, acquisition and utilisation of knowledge and skills as well as development of attitudes and values necessary for participation in advancing personal and socio-economic development and participation in globalisation. It should help learners to select relevant concepts and skills to better understand the world. Curriculum should strive to endow learners with skills, attitudes and values such as creativity, critical thinking, initiative, working with others, communication, problem solving, scientific, technological, entrepreneurship, psychosocial and a willingness to learn in order to promote personal and social development and to achieve an improved quality of life for all” (Ministry of Education and Training, Lesotho, 2008). Education and assessment should build on students’ knowledge by using technological scaffoldings. Educators and education leaders have the primary aim to make understanding of a concept learner-friendly by adopting strategies pertaining to students’ vast knowledge of technology. Indeed assessment is part of a conglomeration where teachers, learners, administrators all come together to work towards the holistic development of a child. Assessment is not a segment of the academic macrocosm; it is intertwined in the hodgepodge of different clusters of attainment.

2. Expectations of a globalised world

The changing expectations of the job market are making new demands upon graduates. The world turning into a global village and the fast advancement towards a global knowledge society, survival skills is of paramount importance. These expectations imply shaping individuals who are able to adapt to an imprecise and ever-changing environments, who should be proficient in communicating with others, who are entrepreneurs in the broadest sense of the term, are responsible, involve in decision making, able to cooperate in a team and adepts of innovation. Assessment techniques as ways to gauge the pupil’s performance require that students are considered proficient for that type of assessment. That is why parents, students, school management, teachers, employers should all come together as a unit to work towards finding the right assessment techniques that will benefit the society at large. An ideal mode of assessment is one that allows the learner to assess their readiness for work, their ability to understand and integrate a fast changing society. Evaluation as part of teaching and learning should be contextualize and should adapt to the present social, pedagogical, economical and psychological needs. Formative and summative assessments help for remedial actions. Unless the present social context is understood, remedial measures are devoid of meaning. Educators are aware that both academic and attitudinal feedbacks provide further opportunities to gauge the requirement of the child, the school and the community at large.

Moreover, evaluation with the aim to build a resilient-prone generation who adapts to the technological advancement and the challenges of a globalised world should not be restricted to enterprise demands and fostering employability skills. Evaluation and assessment strategies should be means to gauge the physical and mental health of a society. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), “an
effective school health programme can be one of the most cost effective investments a nation can make to simultaneously improve education and health. WHO promotes school health programmes as a strategic means to prevent important health risks among youth and to engage the education sector in efforts to change the educational, social, economic and political conditions that affect risk” (WHO, 2013). The dreadful upsurge of teenagers towards alcohol and drug abuse is ringing the alarm bell among school leaders. “Worldwide, 5% of all deaths of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 are attributable to alcohol use” (WHO, 2013). Therefore, the fate of a healthy future society lies in the building responsible citizens who take charge of their physical, social, cultural environment. Adopting the right strategies to enlighten our youngsters of the demands of the future world should also forsake the belief that an academically-verse student may not necessarily be a citizen of the world, collaborating for the progress of humanity.

3. What assessment strategies then?

Dr John Barge, State School Superintendent of Georgia is indeed right to say that “Regional expertise, cross-cultural competence, and advanced language proficiency are no long skills reserved only for those who plan for a career overseas - they are skills that will enhance any career field, encourage international investment to our state, and develop a workforce that is successful in working on diverse international teams to collaborate and solve global problems” (Georgia Department of Education, mission, 2013). Learners should display an appetite for knowledge and apply this knowledge to demonstrate values and attitudes crucial to address existing and emerging situations. Assessment therefore is mulling over the attainment of both academic achievement and attainment of core values. Until recently, there has been a substantial movement from the teaching for knowledge to teaching of competence where the focus is on the acquisition of aptitudes and skills. “In particular, much more attention has been paid for ensuring the cross-curricular competences such as social and civic, entrepreneurship, learning to learn, digital and cultural competences”1. It is primordial that assessment techniques have a formative objective. It should be inclined towards enabling students to reflect of the why and how of their learning, allowing them to make meaning of a concept, of instigating a level of understanding beyond facts, figures, formulas and concepts. The objective a successful pedagogy is one that teaches the child to apply his learning in everyday life, to reason out the meaning of concepts learnt and be able to understand the why and how of social, economical, academic and psychological dilemmas. Therefore there should be an assessment process whereby the student is able to orient his thoughts and reasoning that will ensure a just and fair judgment of things he should be sensitive about. After the proclamation of GCSE 2012 examinations, because of sharp decline in the performance of candidates in the English paper, the decision to eliminate the speaking and listening component (primordial to integrate a job market that seeks communicative proficiency) from the GCSE examination has provoked quite uproar among educators. Languages cuts across all subjects studied at school. Literacy skills are the pre-requisite to integrate the work force but also to attempt any form of assessment. Removing a syllabus just because the technicalities of which do not work, is un-pedagogic. The appropriate approach is to review a syllabus that has a high rate of academic failure by making it more adaptable to the 21st century learner. In the Mauritian context, analysing the role of quality

1 http://www.kslll.net/MutualLearning2020/clusterDetails.cfm?id=18
assurance officers in a grasping newspaper article, a long standing educator is convinced that “The public has the right to be informed of the strategies to be used to bridge the gaps that cause so many students to fail.” (Mahadeo, 2013).

Among various strategies to be espoused in the educational world to empower our learners who are more versed towards what’s visual and kinaesthetic are through the use of pedagogical tools like the Smart board or the Ipad. Upgrading the infrastructure of schools is a springboard towards quality education and more engaged learners. As so rightly specified by Mahadeo, S (2013), “The nature of infrastructural change in this country testifies to our implicit belief that quality is one of the cornerstones of sustainable and reliable development”. He further points out that “a quality endeavour is a political measure because it involves the necessary duty of the ministry to asses, propose training programmes for, investigate cases of poor performance and suggest measure for improvement. a serious Quality Assurance officer is accountable to the minister and to the public to inform us of the strengths and weaknesses of education.” The discourse is how to make the system more dynamic and momentous. But one note of caution, “as long as schools are judged by attainment, rather than the threshold achievements, then the system should be fairer, incentivize taking core subjects, and may even be beyond gaming. For the one lesson every education secretary has surely now learned is that if schools are told to jump through a hoop, they will. But don't blame them if they bring a ladder” (The Guardian, 2013). Indeed, forsaking threshold measures would be one of the primary steps towards dealing with loopholes in the educational system.

4. Assessment strategies to promote employability skills

It has been noticed that there exists a gap between the skills acquired at secondary schools to that at university level and later on in the job market. The mismatch therefore creates fissure in the learners’ acquisition and ultimately finds it difficult to integrate and contribute to the progress of the enterprise. The economic crisis beckoning, enterprises are finding it difficult to recruit individuals who can bring forward the mission statement of the enterprise, which in an environment that keeps fluctuating, are appraising their objectives. Acquiring competencies demand certain knowledge of integration of various subjects. Acquiring competencies in Math only may not benefit an enterprise where communication skills are primordial. So the adaptation of the assessment modalities to the 21st century learner will also depend of revisiting the curriculum, where a more inter-connected defined-competencies among various subjects will enable an adequate approach to guarantee that the learner satisfy the needs of employers. According to Halliday-Wynes (2012), effective strategies need to “involve the learner, helping the learner make sense of new knowledge and skills and promoting a thorough understanding of the subject matter, rather than their simply learning sets of facts and information to be reproduced when required”. This way of assessment which departs from the traditional paper-pencil test is known as ‘clustering’ and it justifies the need to adopt new strategies to build resilience in the new generation. Assessment strategies should aim to get students to develop their critical thinking skills. As stipulated by Halliday-Wynes (2012), assessment modalities should ‘assist
students to consider what is important, such as key concepts and principles, relationships between ideas and relating new concepts to previous knowledge.\textsuperscript{2}

The Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning (2010), is a “support mechanism for both the Education and Training 2010 work programme and its successor, the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training”. The system aims to carry out brainstorming sessions and debates on prioritized fields of education to promote lifelong learning. Based on one of its group discussion on ‘The Quality Issues and Challenges Associated with Assessing Individual Learning In Accordance With Predefined Learning Outcomes’, it states that:

- Terminologies of Knowledge, Skills, Competencies and Learning Outcomes should be well defined at national and international levels.
- Assessment and qualification towards acquiring desired learning competencies should not only focus on skills useful in the workplace, but should report on other competencies acquired and essential through learning.
- Moderating bodies should forsake the rigid system of bureaucracy when monitoring achievement. An assessing body should be trustworthy with a local tailor-made procedure and local managerial expertise that adapt to the local context. Learning outcomes should not be generalized in the monitoring of achievement.
- The pertinence of behavioural skills/transversal competences should not be ignored. Learning outcomes to develop these skills should be well-defined.
- Learning outcome should be able to delineate the most common and basic type of learning. It would be in the interest of the child to spell out learning outcomes that take into consideration each stage of the child’s physical and mental development.
- Different stakeholders to come together to develop learning outcomes that enhance learning and foster a better adaptation to the changing environment and the demands of the job market.
- Learning outcomes with well defined bands to better relate to the level of achievement. Terminologies such as ‘To be Acquired’, ‘Average’, ‘Pass’, ‘Excellent’ bands are most commonly used in reporting. These targets should be understood locally and internationally for better transparency of the system.
- Learning outcomes should underpin the unavoidable stage of remedial work. Educators are to realize that unless remedial action is a centre point of their teaching, quality teaching and education cannot be spelled out. Educators should be a farsighted practitioner where learning outcomes are understood and adequately implemented in teaching methodologies.
- Finally, learning outcomes should embody trust of an institution and its academic community. In Mauritius, there is the endeavour to upgrade the educational system according to international standards to embody a more trustworthy system.

Compared to Mauritius where the validation of assessments for high-stake examinations is carried out by an external body, “in many VET systems, especially those of Germany, Denmark and Austria, the assessments of competence are graded and this provides a diagnostic tool in quality assurance”

\textsuperscript{2} \url{www.vetinfonet.det.wa.edu.au/progdev/docs/t16%clusteringcompetence_v7.pdf}
Therefore, assessment should be approached holistically and not as a sum of discreet parts. Learning outcomes, teaching methodologies, targets, levels, assessment criteria bands all should be well defined to improve transparency, validity and reliability. According to the Peer Learning Activity (PLA) on the ‘Role Of Quality Assurance In Defining, Describing And Assessing Learning Outcomes’ (Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning, 2010), the way forward intertwines different stakeholders working together in providing a unanimous “definition of learning outcomes…However, traditionally they use different concepts and terms, and learning outcomes have different roles in the various education and training subsystems at national level. This makes it challenging for countries to share expertise and for educational institutions from different countries or subsystems to share qualification information”. The sharing of learning outcomes as a way to promote transparency that enables diagnosis of the progress of learning and teaching indeed is one of the pertinent procedures of any examining bodies like the Cambridge International Examinations or the International Baccalaureate Programme. Stipulating the same assessment objectives for all countries taking the examination is indeed in the benefit of a globalised world. Moreover the articles further encapsulate the idea that “The shift to learning outcomes has been less problematic in describing job-related or vocational skills for which many countries already employ competence based standards and assessment system for measuring achievement. Countries find the greatest difficulty in using learning outcomes to define transversal competences (such as problem solving and creativity) in a standard and measureable format”. Indeed if we are to develop these creativity and problem solving skills (which are the essence of a globalised world) in students, it is pertinent to make these learning outcomes the generic of model assessment strategies.

5. HSC Professional and the International Baccalaureate

The need to develop job skills in our learners at school has become more pronounced than ever before. That is why Mauritius is in the process of introducing and implementing a new curriculum that will witness the different tangent the educational world is pointing to. The Higher School Certificate Professional (HSC Pro) is being developed to provide a pathway to those students who after their Higher School Certificate are looking for a course more geared to the world of work; while still have the option of going for tertiary studies. This syllabus encourages students to stay in formal education by providing them with the opportunity to get ready for the world of work while still being at school. As stipulated by (Halliday-Wynes, 2012), “quality competency-based assessments require the collection of sufficient relevant evidence of demonstrated performance and/or experience and accurate and consistent judgments of competence.” Therefore the placement of students in enterprises demand further research about the learner’s achievement and what type of competencies the learner need to acquire. That is why the “traineeship (that is, a combination of classroom and on-the-job learning generally based on 12-18 months duration) was a good model for the development of workplace competence: the components of the course can be contextualized to the needs of the workplace…to ensure both the validity and reliability if training and assessment” (Halliday-Wynes, 2012, p17). Both employers and students have highlighted the mismatch that often exists with which students who complete their HSC leave school. The HSC Pro aims at closing the gap, by drawing on industry expertise to finalise course content and also by remaining sensitive to the requirements of the job market throughout. Students follow courses that include an applied learning dimension. Also inbuilt in
the HSC Pro curriculum is a structured and supervised work placement component. Students integrate Industry, with a works place supervisor monitoring their development at all stages (Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, 2013). The HSC Pro syllabus as it is being developed is specific to Mauritius. Yet it has been inspired by the Australian TVET and the Canadian CEGEP systems where after spending five years at secondary level, if students choose to pursue their schooling they integrate the CEGEP where “they either spend two years preparing for university or three years studying a profession or trade (nursing, document design, architectural technology, animal health, etc.)” (Siobhan Curious, 2008). The key benefits of the HSC Pro are that it develops academic progress and a culture of learning in students. It also accentuate the understanding of the world of professional skill developing employability skills including problem-solving, managerial, cooperation and team building in students (Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, 2013). Just like any worthwhile syllabus, the HSC Pro promotes experiential learning.

Similarly, another curriculum which enables journeys of self-discovery is the International Baccalaureate syllabus adapted by mostly international schools but because of its social aspect, is being considered by many public schools as well across the world. While frankly-speaking, the International Baccalaureate curriculum is not opportune to any type of learner; it reflects a curriculum that fosters the holistic development of a child. This curriculum is adopted mostly by international schools where there is the culture of endorsing excellence in education. The Diploma Programme prepares students for effective participation in a rapidly evolving and increasingly global society as they:

- develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically
- acquire breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding,
- develop the skills and a positive attitude toward learning
- study at least two languages and increase understanding of cultures, including their own (The IB Diploma Programme).

The International Baccalaureate syllabus enables citizens of tomorrow to develop bold characteristics that facilitate an embracement of perpetual changes. They are meant to act locally but think globally. The syllabus enables youngsters to understand their country’s position in the international spectrum. However, it is worth analyzing the transition of a colonized country like Mauritius into the global world through adopting an internationally recognized and demanding curriculum. The majority of schools in Mauritius opt for the Cambridge International Examinations syllabus but gradually there is visible alteration towards syllabuses more entertained with a social vision. Of course opting for the IB Diploma Programme is within the means only to a specific category of the population. Its financial and social implications have given a new dimension to the value attributed to a smooth integration in the competitive and demanding global world. Parents who opt for the IB programmes for their children, let’s be frank, are those who being already in the fast spinning-wheel of global and technological advancement paradoxically do not want their offspring to integrate the globalised world with a competitive mind but be a global citizen who can face the challenges of the global society. His Highness Aga Khan (2008) was indeed right to view the IB programme “incarnating a powerful idea, the confidence that education can reshape the way in which the world thinks about itself.” Parents who have opted for the IB curriculum have understood this idea. In Mauritius, more and more parents do not
want their child to face the competitive traditional educational system where the child is made to postulate for laureateship and be part of a rat race towards a ridiculous ranking system. Unfortunately, this system remains the only option for families who cannot afford the IB curriculum.

The IB is a mean to bridge the gap between secondary and tertiary level. Rowing in the world of work could be easier to the IB student than to the laureate who has even won a scholarship in some prestigious university but who had opted for a traditional syllabus. The IB community (including parents), are aware that the new generation need to be conscious of the wider world and “and to deal effectively with both its bewildering diversity and its increasing interdependence” (His Highness, Aga Khan, 2008). From a post colonial perspective, the analytical thoughts of His Highness Aga Khan is worth quoting: “The IB program has wrestled vigorously with one of the basic conundrums of the age - how to take account of two quite different challenges. The first challenge is the fact that the world is increasingly a “single” place - a wondrous web of global interaction cutting across the lines of division and separation which have characterized most of its history. This accelerating wave of interdependence is something we first defined as “internationalization” when the IB program was (first) launched. We refer to it now as ‘globalization’. It brings with it both myriad blessings and serious risks - not the least of which is the danger that globalization will become synonymous with homogenization. Why would homogenization be such a danger? Because diversity and variety constitute one of the most beautiful gifts of the Creator, and because a deep commitment to our own particularity is part of what it means to be human. Yes, we need to establish connecting bonds across cultures, but each culture must also honour a special sense of self. The downside of globalization is the threat it can present to cultural identities” (His Highness Aga Khan, 2008).

This erosion of homogeneity is very much palpable in the Mauritian society. Yet, if we analyse the Theory of knowledge component to attain the Diploma degree, there is the call for students to transcend geographical barriers, inquiring into the nature of knowing. Exploring knowledge as a human construction allows students to assimilate a different type of culture, which is the culture of knowledge. Globalisation calls for emancipating the academic world through developing this culture of knowledge. By so doing, students embark on critical thinking, on amplifying a critical insight on aspects of knowledge common to all individuals, all societies, all cultures, leading to the homogeneity of knowledge which should be understood by the world. Globalisation is about accepting that unique truth. The impact of the IB programme on students’ knowledge should be the same in all countries, in whatever culture merging the world into that central point of interconnectedness; interconnectivity without discriminating between cultures, between races, between available resources but interdependence with a central theme of truth and a central debate about progress.

With rising competition for jobs, and an ever increasing pressure to excel in the workplace and a mad pursuit to immediate promotion and success, striking the right balance between professional commitments and social endeavours has become challenging. This is where the CAS (Creativity, Action, Service) component of the IB programme aims to involve students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies engaging in the arts, creative thinking, and actions through physical activity. As mentioned earlier, one of the aims of education is to promote social justice. Through the CAS programmes, students are called to serve the community which implies service to humanity.
billowing out the necessary skills in students. The CAS programme gives learning a new dimension where developing empathy towards others is valued. From a global perspective, with the rising competition for jobs and an ever increasing pressure to excel, the IB programmes through the CAS component inculcates the necessary principles and a culture of service in students.

Similarly, another component of the IBDP that develops the required competencies and spells the requirements for a smooth integration in the field of work is the Extended Essay. This extended writing piece asks students to engage in independent research which should coalesce with the other components of the syllabus. The skills required to carry out the thorough study of a question relating to a topic of global significance are not independent of the other components of the syllabus. Students are called to drill through the best of what globalisation means. The surge towards adopting the International Baccalaureate is a move that many schools should not apprehend. Yet, implementing the HSC Pro or the International Baccalaureate as new curriculum is a two-way traffic, as employers as well should reflect on the inevitable changing pedagogies and the surge of technological infiltration on the new generation. Moreover, because of the fickle market, various constraints are being faced both by the industry and the academic world. It is normal that employers want to recruit experienced and skilled workers. That is why the process of assessment should be understood first and schools and enterprises should work jointly to maintain consistency in assessment. Also, promoting assessment with a global perspective can provoke the phenomenon of brain-drain “fuelled by the development of knowledge economies and by the emergence of a global labour market for skilled professionals…is a major concern for the international community, and there is a need to innovatively think about the way in which people’s aspiration toward mobility and migration can be reconciled with states’ right to development” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation). In terms of assessment therefore, the dynamic forces of the academic community has the mission to counter the phenomenon of brain drain through assessment modalities. This includes finding best practices in education for skills acquisition pertaining to the demands of the country.

6. Health through school

As stipulated earlier, assessment is not only about developing employability skills in students. The World Health Organisation (WHO) is striving to bring the focus on a healthy society that will inevitably lead to improving teaching and learning. “The goal of WHO’s Global School Health Initiative is to increase the number of schools that can truly be called ‘Health-Promoting Schools’. Although definitions will vary, depending on need and circumstance, a Health-Promoting School can be characterised as a school constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working” (WHO, 2013). The way to proceed is as follows: “technical documents are generated that consolidate research and expert opinion about the nature, scope and effectiveness of school health programmes. Each advocacy document makes a strong case for addressing an important health problem, identifies components of a comprehensive school health programme, and provides guidance in integrating the issue into the components” (WHO, 2013).
One way of developing a healthy mind-healthy body vision, is by creating networks with different stakeholders to improve the physical condition of our youngsters. Interrelated activities that are mostly initiated during youth:

- tobacco use
- behaviour that results in injury and violence
- alcohol and substance use
- dietary and hygienic practices that cause disease
- sedentary lifestyle
- sexual behaviour that causes unintended pregnancy and disease (WHO, 2013)

These detrimental activities are ringing the alarm bell where there is an urgent need to cater for the physical health of our youth. There is a tremendous responsibility resting on each school to collect data on its scholar’s health, behaviour and expectations. As mentioned by the World Health Organization, there are different stakeholders who need to work together to achieve our aim to build on assessment more geared towards facilitating the entry in the rapid technological world. Appropriate networking services should be made available among the following:

- governmental and nongovernmental organisations,
- development banks,
- organisations of the United Nations system,
- interregional bodies,
- bilateral agencies,
- the labour movement and co-operatives,
- private sector
- health and education agencies (WHO, 2013)

In Mauritius the introduction of the subject Physical Education at A level is in line with different stakeholders advocating the germaneness of promoting a healthy mind and body in our students. Be it the exigencies of the modern globalised world, the oxymoron of a technology embodying dexterity and at the same time lethargy in youngsters, the introduction of the Physical Education syllabus assesses:

- Factors affecting performance
- Health, safety and training
- Reasons and opportunities for participation in physical activity (Cambridge International Examination, Syllabus and Support CD, Aims of Component 1)

Through such syllabus the candidate enjoys:

- an ability to plan, perform, analyse and improve, and evaluate physical activities
- knowledge, skills and understanding of a range of relevant physical activities
• an understanding of effective and safe performance
• an understanding of the role of sport and physical activity in society and in the wider world
• an excellent foundation for advanced study
• an enjoyment of physical activity (Cambridge International Examination, Syllabus and Support CD, introduction).

Yet a health promoting school as stipulated by World Health Organisation does not restrict itself to subjects like Physical Education or Health Education. In Mauritius the introduction and implementation of various other subjects aim to empower our academic community. These are:

• Marine Science
• Travel and Tourism
• Design and Textiles, Art and Design, Design and Technology
• Enterprise

These subjects endeavour to be in line with the socio-economic demands of the country and of globalisation. The constant debate about sustainable development encompasses the idea that syllabuses to be introduced and implemented should cater for emerging economies. The rising generation should be offered the opportunity to develop skills to adapt to the globalised world and be in the grapevine of economic and technological advancement. By so doing the above mentioned subjects empower students by developing creativity/entrepreneurship skills, skills so useful and relevant in this modern era. At the same time out academic world is made sensitive to the physiological, psychological and socio-cultural aspect of a subject. Moreover, these subjects will be devoid of meaning if students are not given the opportunity to emulate on-the-job situations that call for initiation to decision making, and developing new skills. That is why the simulated environment is realistic in assessment “especially for the demonstration of units of competency in which it is not appropriate to use real people. This allows the student to practice on mannequins and with equipment, enabling them to feel safe about making mistakes” (Halliday-Wynes, 2012). The idea of student learning through mistakes is an important aspect of assessment, the essence of formative assessment. Well-designed formative assessment as defined by Honey (2007), “are powerful tools with which to assess the often rapid and frequently uneven growth and development of children… formative assessments try to find the optimal conditions for making visible a young child’s understanding in order to enhance it. The importance of drawing out early learner’s thinking cannot be overstated.” Enhancing students understanding is indeed a key aspect of globalisation.

How to assess if someone is competent in a skill? The idea of retaking a module should a student fail in that module should make provision for the student to develop the skills to be acquired to ascertain competency in that subject. Yet the essence of assessment should not be jeopardized by valorising other competency and skills the student can excel at. Many students fail because either a specific competency has not been fully acquired or they don’t possess that innate talent. That is why assessment should be flexible enough to allow the student to excel in what he/she is good at. However, competencies that are primordial in the globalised world should be reinforced to give the assessor the certitude that the student can integrate the competitive world.
7. **The way forward**

One of the concluding remarks by the Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning (2010) states that “Governments need to provide steering mechanisms for the diversification of higher education and develop national strategic frameworks. They also need to look into the incentives for diversification through funding mechanisms and transparency tools can enhance diversification. The quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms are powerful tools for supporting diversification of higher education”.

In Mauritius, the government has recently recruited 16 Quality Assurance Officers in the educational field to ensure that learning is at par with the demand of an international curriculum. Moreover, learning outcomes should be in line with the employability objectives of an enterprise. Achieving a particular qualification should convey to students how these can lead to professional progress. Therefore educational bodies should work together with enterprises to spell objectives that branch both from an academic and a professional perspective. Skills and competency acquisition should in the end be meaningful to the teachers, to the students, to school administrators and to employers as “employers play a key role in ensuring the learning outcomes match the skills, knowledge and competencies required to undertake specific job roles” (Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning, 2010). To make accountability and quality a crucial mechanism of good governance in the field of education, no government should be timorous about recruiting a team of Quality Assurance Officers with the necessary baggage of educational clout to bring about the necessary overhaul an educational system requires. A sustained professional development programme is of paramount importance if we are to commit on a passport of professional competence for life. In Mauritius, there is the need to know about the teaching level and the nature of school-leadership. As encompassed by Mahadeo (2013) “School empowerment connotes the freedom to run a school according to mutually agreed objectives and to known criteria of success. Quality Assurance Officers only check whether rectors and those in positions of responsibility are delivering the goods effectively”. To develop the culture of assessment, schools should garner support from teachers, parents, school personnel, community leaders, policy makers to make assessment more in line with the demands of the globalised and technological world. That is why as stipulated earlier, there should be a strategic framework from the government to share the definition of learning outcomes of schools to that of an enterprise. There is the responsibility of each school to monitor trends in assessment based on demands for socio-economic progress and develop and implement appropriate techniques of assessment to counter negative behaviour with a focus on values and humanness.

This debate cannot be concluded without quoting the visionary insight of His Highness, Aga Khan on the role of educational leaders in the surge of globalisation in the academic world. He mused “The quest for identity can become an exclusionary process - so that we define ourselves less by what we are FOR and more by whom we are AGAINST. When this happens, diversity turns quickly from a source of beauty to a cause of discord. I believe that the coexistence of these two surging impulses - what one might call a new globalism on one hand and a new tribalism on the other - will be a central challenge for educational leaders in the years ahead. And this will be particularly true in the developing world with its kaleidoscope of different identities.” Globalisation indeed is changing the way we think and

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3 [http://www.ksll.net/PeerLearningActivities/PlaDetails.cfm?id=117](http://www.ksll.net/PeerLearningActivities/PlaDetails.cfm?id=117)
act. To enable the younger generation to better embrace the idea of globalisation, our educational system should strengthen in them Descartes philosophy of “I think therefore I am”.

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