The Award Winning International Educational Initiatives K-12 Global Curriculum: A Path Towards Moral Leadership

Michael L. Higgins & Judith A. Johnson

Abstract

This presentation describes the International Educational Initiatives (I.E.I.), a not-for-profit Bahá'í owned educational corporation. We will describe its K-12 Spiritually-based Global Curriculum, and discuss its development from its initial iteration as the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk International School (YSIS) Global Immersion Curriculum. This was a content-based immersion curriculum, started by the authors in September 1992. It has been proven to be successful in the bilingual setting of the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk International School in Russia. The original curriculum has since evolved to the current I.E.I. Spiritually-based Global Curriculum Guide with an accompanying Teacher Training Coursebook and other ancillary materials. The rationale for the development of moral leadership skills through the use of the curriculum and the manner in which a content-based moral education program was effectively integrated into the curriculum is also described. Evidence of the curriculum's success, current status, and acceptance around the globe by a number of different educational institutions and Ministries of Education at the local, regional, and national levels will be presented.

Introduction

In this presentation we will describe the International Educational Initiatives (I.E.I.) K-12 Global Curriculum, and discuss its development from its initial iteration as the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk International School (YSIS) Global Immersion Curriculum (Johnson & Higgins, 1995). This was a content-based immersion curriculum, started by the authors in September 1992, that has been proven to be successful in the bilingual setting of the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk International School in Russia. The original curriculum has since evolved to the current I.E.I. Spiritually-

based Global Curriculum Guide (Johnson, Higgins & Baker-Malungu, 1999) with an accompanying Teacher Training Coursebook (Higgins & Johnson, 1995) and other ancillary materials. We will share with you the rationale for the development of moral leadership skills through the use of the curriculum and the manner in which a content-based moral education program was effectively integrated into the curriculum. Finally, we would like to present evidence of the curriculum's success, and its current status and acceptance around the globe.

The YSIS Global Immersion Curriculum

YSIS was established at the request of educators in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Sakhalin, Russia, who desired to give local children a bilingual Russian/English education that would enable them to realize their potential and prepare them to think and act locally, nationally and globally, contributing to the betterment of humanity. Recognizing the need for education that was more than intellectual, the Russian educators specifically requested a curriculum that would enable students to comprehend the spiritual aspect of their existence and their connection to the rest of the world and its peoples. At the same time, the Russian parents and educators wanted a curriculum that would employ high academic and moral standards within an English language medium.

The I.E.I. Curriculum as employed at YSIS, covers (and exceeds) all the academic requirements of the Russian Ministry of Education. The English language is used by teachers and students as the principal medium of instruction and communication throughout the entire school day. The goals of the curriculum are to: 1) establish and help students achieve high academic and moral standards, 2) help students comprehend the fact that all human beings are members of one family—the human family—so that they may actively work towards achieving world peace and unity, and 3) instill in students the conviction that service to humanity and protection of our environment are responsibilities of every individual. The realization of these goals requires an education that focuses on

49

individual student development, students' relationships with their immediate environments and the role of students as world citizens.

We began with four basic premises. The first: the essence of the human being is spiritual. Our definition of spiritual was part of "that energetic, unifying and generative power in the universe." (Barnes, 1998) The second: each individual is comparable to a mine of precious jewels, each possessing unlimited potential. As the essence of the human being is spiritual, this potential is of a spiritual nature and is transformed into feelings, beliefs, behavior, and the like through the process of education—the cutting and polishing which enhance the beauty and value of the gems. Viewing spiritual education in its most general sense, we envisioned its effect on humankind as energizing, unifying and generative. The third: All human beings are spiritually connected. And the fourth: Every human being is endowed with the capacity to understand. :*"God's greatest gift to man is that of intellect, or understanding."* ('Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks)

[I]ntellect or understanding is obviously not just the power of abstract conceptualization, which is the highest, the last and the most comprehensive of the mental faculties to appear. The gift of understanding is more like the individual's total possible conscious intelligence, and includes every one of the person's mental and sensory capacities for learning." (Barnes, 1998)

Educating the intellect cannot be limited to finite, academic content. Education should help individuals develop the ability to search for knowledge, evaluate it, and decide how to put it to use in meaningful ways. This process applies to all people regardless of age, sex, race, occupation, economic status or place of residence.

The overall student outcomes written for the curriculum are as follows:

Students will...

- Express opinions, attitudes and feelings that take into consideration the welfare of local, regional and global communities.

- Apply a variety of critical thinking, problem-solving and consultation skills to solve problems and make decisions and to evaluate the reasonability and morality of results.

- Demonstrate a willingness to consider and appreciate different ideas and cultures and accept people impartially regardless of sex, race, nationality or religion.

- Communicate effectively in a variety of forms and situations.

- Act consciously and take responsibility for their behavior, actions and decisions.

- Demonstrate a love for self and others through caring, cooperative and service-oriented behavior.

These outcomes comprise the road map that lets teachers, learners and parents know where this curriculum will lead them. If we don't know exactly where we are headed, it is easy to be sidetracked and get lost. The Outcomes help keep teachers and learners focused and on the right path. They were also used to determine the overall design of the Curriculum. To insure that the fundamental principles on which the education of humankind would always be those which guided the Curriculum, they were used to construct the Curriculum, itself.

The spiritual foundations of the Curriculum are the concepts of the oneness of humankind and service to the world of humanity. The framework consists of spiritual, educational and social principles—pillars which guide and support unified efforts to construct a new world order, such as unity, independent investigation, and service. Content which enables students to understand themselves, others, their immediate environment, and the evolutionary processes (spiritual and material) that led to the development of the complex global society in which they live is the primary building material. Steadfastness, higher order thinking, creativity, cooperation, love, and teaching and learning methods that cut across outdated cultural and pedagogical barriers are the principal tools used to realize the goals of the Curriculum.

The academic foundation upon which the curriculum was developed is Social Studies. The history of human development is the

general background for the developmental study of language arts, mathematics, sciences, fine arts, moral education and other subjects. All subjects are taught in harmony with each other and from a universal perspective—one organic unity. For example, in the introductory lessons, students learn language related to the individual and family relationships, while math focuses on simple counting and measuring skills. Science includes the primitive technologies of the use of fire, water and the basic concepts of the natural elements. Moral education at this level includes group cooperation as an improved means of individual survival. The next units move toward tribal living, with advancing concepts of agriculture and social diversity. In other words, history is not taught as a series of events, but rather as a sequence of human relationships in which the whole of civilization is reorganized to advance humanity's spiritual, mental and physical capacities toward maturity. The social, economic, political and religious evolutionary processes that the human race has experienced in arriving at its current maturity are studied to learn how past achievements have contributed to the present, to learn from past mistakes, and to acquire a consciousness of the unity and continuity of the human race.

Since service is one of the main foundational areas, it forms the basis of how the school and the curriculum are organized. If the concept of service is not a natural one for the social environment in which the school is located, then the teachers and administrators must make special efforts to guide the students to see that service is a natural outcome and benefit of the school's environment. For example, at YSIS, the concept of service was initially non-existent. The teacher's first made the students responsible for cleaning their own classrooms. When this was established, then students switched classrooms and cleaned a different room. Soon, they found it normal to want to have a clean school, inside and out, regardless of "whose classroom or space" it was. In addition, by forming peer-tutoring teams or small learning groups, they learned the importance of assisting each other in the learning processes. We'll look at this further in a moment.

The modular concept that was used to construct the YSIS and then the I.E.I. Global Curriculum is rather unique in that a module goes beyond the study of one topic and is unified in all its essential aspects. (See Figure 1) The concept includes and stresses the integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes (spiritual development), moral training and the ethic of service.

Figure 1: The I.E.I. Modular Concept
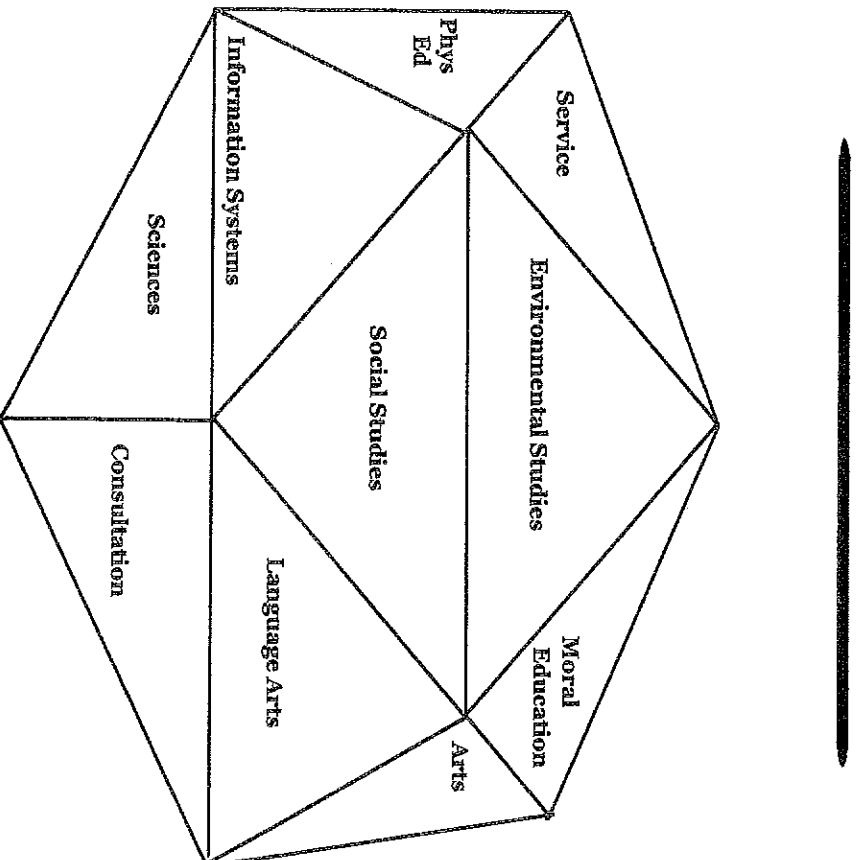
The modules are written in the format of student outcomes and instructional objectives, which are based on the academic and spiritual goals of the curriculum. These learner outcomes are broad enough in scope to allow teachers to write more specific objectives that are appropriate for the learning levels and needs of their students, or, including objectives necessary for meeting any special school or ministry of education requirements. Outcomes and objectives that are properly

written, help teachers clearly identify and convey to students and others the learning that students must accomplish. They help teachers plan, teach and evaluate more effectively. Although the curriculum modules are designed to be global in perspective, they are, at the same time, flexible enough to be adapted to diverse cultural environments. The curriculum can be used in both foreign-language immersion schools and schools which operate in the/an official language of the country in which the school is located.

In looking at the use of the curriculum's ability to assist in the learning of English, at the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk International School (YSIS), except for Russian Language Arts, Labor Arts, Physics, Physical Education and other foreign language classes, all classes are taught in English. This method enables students to communicate and study in English all day, thereby acquiring and using various 'sets' of vocabulary in natural situations (e.g. the teacher and students, and student-to-student interaction, in the classroom, on the playground, in the cafeteria, and so on). After using the same expressions, words, and concepts daily, the students internalize them and use them naturally, without translation.

Studies have shown (e.g., Cantoni-Harvey, 1987, Brinton, 1989, Widowson, 1983) that:
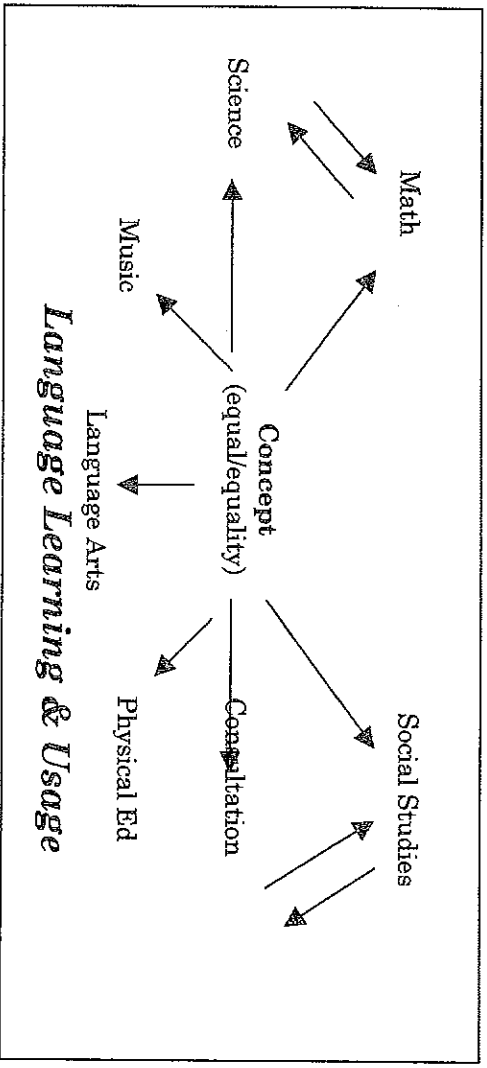
1. Language learning is more effective when information is presented within a defined context. This is also true for learning in general. If the subject is taught in relation to other subjects that have relevance to the students, learning is more effective and is accelerated. (Genesee, 1987.)

2. Presenting vocabulary, structure and concepts that are related by content helps students retain previous knowledge and aids comprehension of new knowledge. (Munby, 1978.)

3. When language learning is content-based, students must focus on meaning, not just form. (Krashen 1985a; 1985b.)

4. Function, setting, vocabulary, ideas, feelings, semantics, culture, as well as formal language elements, are essential to language acquisition. Performance levels are higher when students believe that the information they are learning is relevant to their present and/or future needs. The

YSIS Immersion Curriculum and the I.E.I. K-12 Global Curriculum reflect these findings quite well.

We believe that learning proficiency is acquired as a result of the combination of content-based language teaching and focusing on mastery learning. At YSIS, most subjects are taught in English, which makes the language and new vocabulary immediately relevant, employable and useful. The environment of YSIS and its school-organized community activities are carefully planned so that students can easily identify different contexts within which specific language (e.g. register, vocabulary, structure) is normally used. This is especially important for beginner-level language learners and younger children. New vocabulary, structure and concepts are generally introduced to YSIS students within the different content areas of the curriculum. Content-based learning activities are designed to give students opportunities to use newly acquired linguistic knowledge in concrete situations related to the content being studied.

The integrated-modular design of the curriculum makes it possible for teachers to help students transfer both their academic *and* linguistic knowledge to different content areas, thereby, simultaneously expanding and deepening their overall education. As English is the primary language used at YSIS, students have ample opportunities to express their ideas and feelings in a wide spectrum of situations that occur naturally during the school day (e.g. giving one's opinion, explaining an idea, apologizing, asking for something, expressing pleasure or displeasure, and making a suggestion). They learn how to address other students, teachers, school staff and visitors to the school. Figure 2 illustrates how knowledge and language are related through a concept. The arrows show that language usage is reinforced across content areas and that language learning takes place continuously throughout the school day.

Figure 2: Integrated Curricular Elements

Math

Science

Music

Social Studies

Language Arts

Physical Ed

Concept
(equal/equality)

Consultation

Language Learning & Usage

Based on the special psychological and pedagogical needs of lower elementary school children, for Grades K-4 in the I.E.I. Global Curriculum, the content taught during the entire academic year is treated as one module. By using the Second Grade content areas, we can see, specifically, how learning is integrated. A brief outline of the program is given below.

Table 1: A Brief Outline of the Second-Year Program

Theme: **My Neighborhood/Community**

Organizing Concept:

     are members of one family

     <u>Human beings</u>

Content Areas: moral education   social studies

                 service   language arts

                  consultation   mathematics

                  applications of science   technology

                  earth and space science   arts and crafts

                  music   physical exercise

                  personal and social development

Imagine that the concept, *equal*, is introduced when studying math. The "main" instructional objective is for the students "to develop a number sense for whole numbers from 0 to 1000 and common fractions to tenths". *Equal* is illustrated visually using graphics, pictures and numbers and in a variety of other ways that involve students' active participation. For example, they divide objects, liquids, or foods into *equal portions* of a whole. During physical education periods they are asked to divide themselves into *equal groups*. In music classes they use the concept to mark time or rhythm. *Equality of human beings*, regardless of race or place of birth is studied in relation to moral education. The division of the earth into two hemispheres and the Equator are studied in earth and space science lessons. Ways in which everyone can have an *equal opportunity* to speak, use certain equipment or play with certain toys, is the topic of consultation sessions or referred to whenever needed. Showing *equal respect* towards females and males is discussed as a social studies issue. The *importance of equality* or other topics related to equality are explored through literature and composition in language arts assignments. There is virtually no separation between subject matter acquisition and language learning in the curriculum.

Moral Leadership—A New Paradigm

In 1988 the World Health Organization (WHO) made "Health for All By the Year 2000" one of it's goals. The type of leadership that they said was needed to achieve this goal was "moral leadership". This was the first time for this term to be used by an international organization. It affirmed the relationship between moral and spiritual issues and economic development. Although there were enough resources and sufficient administrative know-how available to achieve the Year 2000 goal, the global community failed to do so. The reason? "The strategy to achieve health for all (implies) the generation of *moral leadership which is generally lacking in many societies.*" (WHO) Leaders of ministries of health, world wide failed in their duty to the world's peoples because they *did not have the moral commitment* needed to put the values of social

justice, equity, participation, unity and love and into practice to further the advancement of humankind. The time for a new paradigm of leadership is well overdue.

Leadership is always related to how groups function. Anello and Hernandez (1996), pioneers in the development of the concept of moral leadership, have identified three primary functions which contribute to the good performance of any group:

1) Conserving and strengthening the unity of the group;
2) Carrying out those tasks for which the group was created;
3) Developing the potentialities of the members of the group.

Different leadership styles realize these functions to varying degrees and with varying results.

A poll taken of 72 participants of the 1995 Salzburg Seminar 331, held in Austria on the theme "Leadership: Concepts and Challenges" showed that in the 35 countries represented, five styles of leadership were commonly practiced: know-it-all, authoritarian, paternalistic, democratic and manipulative. All five styles to some extent, result in group members' experiencing feelings of inferiority, resentment, dependence, mistrust and frustration—rendering them incapable of adequately coping with the 21st Century challenges which demand a more inclusive, equitable and progressive mode of leadership. The main problem with these leadership styles is that, ultimately, their foundations are egoism and the possession of power by an individual or limited number of group members. (Anello & Hernandez, 1996)

What is needed at humanity's present stage of development is leadership that, exercising wisdom and sincerity, undertakes the development of the capabilities of all the group's members, thereby increasing the capabilities of the entire group. The key to attaining this type of leadership is global education that nurtures individuals who strive to promote social justice, unity, compassion, respect, love, and other such values in their daily lives. These individuals will become moral leaders, in all walks of life, who are committed to their own personal transformation and the transformation of the societies in which they live. These individuals will become moral leaders who will help create and maintain

environments which enable group members, and the group as a unit, to strive to reach their intellectual, physical and spiritual potential in order to serve and further global well-being. These individuals will become moral leaders who will bring peace to the world.

A Content-based Moral Education Program

Education should be holistic in that it includes the spiritual, intellectual, physical and emotional growth of the child. However, it is with the development and training of human character that it must first be concerned. The most potent aspects of education for the individual and society are spiritual and moral education. Spiritual education should equip students to relate in a proper manner to the three worlds that human beings inhabit: the spiritual world of inner development, the social world of interpersonal relations and the world of nature. The spiritual world requires the individual to acquire the knowledge of self, which is the basis of all other knowledge and healthy cognitive, affective and volitional development. People need to know who they are, the purpose of their existence and how they should interact with the people and the environment surrounding them. They should know how to apply this knowledge to their everyday lives and to the contribution to the advancement of civilization.

Merely teaching the concepts of right or wrong in the classroom will not give students the foundation necessary for ethical behavior. The consciousness of the inherent and unique value of each human being in the context of the unity of humanity and all of creation must permeate and structure the whole learning environment; for example, how the school is organized, how students and teachers interact, the selection of teaching methods and materials, the application of the principle of service, the process of decision making and the ways in which values such as kindness, cooperation, love, responsibility, respect for others and generosity are fostered. Figure 3 is a list of the learning outcomes for Second Grade students.

Table 2: Sample second grade moral education outcomes

Moral Education Outcomes:	Students will

— comprehend that there is one race the human race and that the life of every human being is precious.

— identify and appreciate the different and similar attributes of diverse ethnic groups and cultures.

— comprehend that human being possess intellect and the power of choice.

— identify responsibilities of neighbors.

— demonstrate a commitment to being responsible community members.

— identify and practice virtues such as:

sharing	determination
humility	flexibility
spirituality	forgiveness
happiness	love
patience	truthfulness
respect	

In addition to specific moral education classes which deal with the historical roles and processes of religion and their cultural outcomes, and the planning and performance of school, home and community service projects, moral education and the development of universal human virtues are woven into all aspects of the curriculum. Group consultation time is a part of the weekly schedule and is closely related to moral education. In consultation periods students plan activities, make and discuss class rules and behavior, discuss and solve problems, and take care of other concerns of the "community" (class). Consultation helps children develop their communication skills, sensitivity to others, and leadership and "followership" skills. It gives them an opportunity to actively participate in and have some control over their learning process and environment. It

helps them develop a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others and for their own actions.

The virtue "helpfulness" is included in the regular activities of the second graders in a variety of ways. Virtues are frequently referred to in Moral Education, Consultation, or Language Arts. Stories are often used to provide an example of the virtue. Personal definitions and examples are given by the students and teacher. Students participate in service projects that focus on helping others at home, school and other places. Parents record on students' homework whether and how students are being helpful at home. Students are encouraged to offer to help other students, both peers and younger children, who appear to need assistance. Time is designated for older children to help younger students with their studies, or to read or play with them. Students record their reactions related to their tutoring experiences (e.g. if they tried their best to do a good job; whether the person being tutored was cooperative; if there were any problems during the tutoring session, and so on). Students relate to the class or write about a time they were helpful, explaining the results of their actions, and how they felt at the time. Helpfulness, the virtue of the week or month, is purposefully pointed out every day and at the end of the designated period, exemplary behavior is publicly acknowledged during a regularly scheduled school assembly.

Results of the YSIS Curriculum

The following three unedited comments below were written by sixth-grade students, after having studied English for 2 years, speak for the spiritual component of the Curriculum. (Directions: Using your best English, write a paragraph describing the most important thing you learned in moral education and why this will help you in your life.)

1.) I think that the most important things which we learned in moral are different teachings of Muhummed, Moses and others for example worship one God, respect women, be kind to every one an to animals, love your

nabours and enemy and so on. These teachings can help all people If man respect women and all people love every one. There will be no wars at all and people will live in peace.

2.) I like to learn about mesengers of God. I knew much interesting things about them. On the moral classes we learned prayers and every night before I go to bed I pray and God helps me. Moral class help me to understand my mistakes and learn how to live in right way. At home I teach my family about this and I think our thing became better.

3.) I think that the most important things for me were the prayers. Because when I call God by these prayers, God helps me and I feel that the stone falls down on the ground from my back. And I like to listen lifes of many mesengers of God and about their teachings. Because I want to be like these people who observed.

In addition to the teacher generated weekly quizzes in vocabulary, language usage and academic content, there were evaluations of both student progress and the accountability of the materials presented to the students to teach to the objectives. Evaluations were both process (on-going) and terminal. A summary of the main student evaluations made during the 1993 school year at YSIS covering English vocabulary, grammar, composition and writing ability showed that the students were reading and writing at or above U.S. grade level in spite of the fact that when they entered the program they had virtually no English. Russian Language Arts, Physical Education, and Manual Arts were evaluated separately, but all students were found to be at or above average for their grade level. In addition, math and art concepts, and academic content in Geography, Social Studies, History, Moral Education, Biology, Botany were evaluated and the results showed the students, again, at or above grade level in all subjects by the end of 1994. They have also been evaluated in Russian on subject or content areas that they did not cover

in either language with the same result: at or above grade level. This has continued to be true up to the present time, with the students at YSIS receiving awards and honors throughout the Russian Far-East for their academic and linguistic achievements. (Johnson & Higgins, 2000)

Effectiveness of the Curriculum

In June 1999, YSIS graduated its first class. Of the 19 graduates, 18 were from the original 44 students. One student entered in the 8th grade. Members of this graduating class took the top 12 of 15 places in the English Olympics for all of Sakhalin, and the top 4 places out of 5 for the Far East English competition. One student was the only Russian student selected by the U.S. Presidential commission for Educational Honors to receive a full four-year scholarship to Michigan State University to study International Relations. She also passed the Michigan Test For English with a near perfect score. . . one of the highest ever made. Every student was admitted to the university of their choice in Russia, the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., or Japan. After a thorough investigation of the school project, the curriculum was awarded the 1999 First Prize in all of Russia by the Federal Ministry of Education for educational innovation.

These are indicators that the Curriculum was effective in training the students for moral leadership. Looking at the three components cited by Anello and Hernandez (1996), which relate leadership to how groups function it was noted by parents, teachers and completely objective outside observers that the students took care in conserving and strengthening the unity of the group, responsibly carried out both group and individual tasks, and actively helped develop each other's potential. In addition to taking responsibility for their own learning (identifying what they needed to learn in order to solve particular problems in their surroundings), they showed responsibility and leadership in caring for and improving both their physical and social environments. All of this indicates that they have internalized a more inclusive, equitable, and progressive mode of leadership.

The expanded and improved I.E.1 curriculum has been adapted and used at schools in Japan, Tonga, the U.S.A., and the Czech Republic (where it was favorably received by the Ministry of Education and is under review for widespread use in the public schools). It has also been used in various forms in tutorial schools in Mexico, Vietnam, Thailand, and China. It is being adapted for use in rural education projects in Malaysia. The Teacher Training Coursebook has been used by long-time teachers as well as new (or not-yet) teachers in 22 countries around the world and is currently being adapted for on-line course work through the Internet.

'Abdu'l-Bahá. (1969) *Paris Talks*. London: Baha'i Publishing Trust.

Anello, E., & Hernandez, J. B. (1996). *Moral leadership*.. Santa Cruz: Nur University.

Barnes, W. (1998) "Spiritual education in school, home and society. In Explorations into spiritual education — the emerging paradigm of spirituality." Essays in *Education Series*. Juneau, Alaska: One Press.

Brinton, D.M., Snow, M.A., & Wesche, M.B. (1989). *Content-based second language instruction*. New York: Newbury House.

Cantoni-Harvey, G. (1987). *Content-area language instruction: Approaches and strategies*. Menlo Park, California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Covey, S. R. *Principle-Centered Leadership*. (1990). New York: Simon & Schuster.

Gardner, J. W., *On Leadership*. (1990). New York: The Free Press.

Genesee, F. (1987). *Learning through two languages*. New York: Newbury House.

Higgins, M.L., & Johnson, J.A.. (1995). *Teacher Training Coursebook*. Juneau: International Educational Initiatives, Inc.

Johnson, J.A. & Higgins, M.L. (2nd Revised ed., 1995) *I.E.I. Global Immersion Curriculum*. Juneau: International Educational Initiatives, Inc.

Johnson, J.A., Higgins, M.L., & Baker-Malungu, L. (2nd revised ed., 1999). *Spiritually-Based Global Curriculum Guide*. Juneau: International Educational Initiatives, Inc.

Kitagawa, H. (1995). "Lifelong Learning in Moralogy." In *Search of Moral Education for the 21st Century—Conference Papers*. The 2nd International Conference on Moral Education, 81-94. Tokyo: Institute of Moralogy.

Krashen, S.D. (1985a). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. London: Longman.

Krashen, S.D. (1985b). *Input in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative syllabus design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Popov, L.K., Popov, D., & Kavelin, J. (1997), *The Family Virtues Guide*. New York: Plume

Widdowson, H.G. (1983). *Learning purpose and language use*. New York: Oxford University Press.