

The Effect of the International Olympic Academy's Olympic Studies on Postgraduate Students' Work.

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Abstract

When Pierre de Coubertin introduced the modern Olympic Games, one of the central ideals underpinning the revival of the Games was education. As an established educational and cultural institution of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Olympic Academy (IOA) has been providing forums for education and research for 60 years. The aim of this study is to explore the educational aims of the IOA's International Seminars, and the effect of the seminar on postgraduates' subsequent work. The case study design used in this research permitted a deep examination of participants from a single country. Australia was chosen due to its long-standing association with the modern Games and the historical connection of the researchers' University with the IOA. Data were generated via IOA-related documents and semi structured interviews with past participants, and were subsequently thematically analysed. Key findings included the characterisation of the IOA as an inspirational place for participants to continue to critique, extend or implement Olympic aspects in their work. Further, participants' work, or certain aspects of it, seemed to have been directly and/or indirectly impacted by notions of Olympism, Olympics or the Olympic Movement, due to their IOA experiences.

Keywords

Olympic education, Olympism, Olympic studies, International Olympic Academy

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Introduction

Each year, numerous students from around the world travel to Olympia in Greece; here, the International Olympic Academy (IOA) hosts a range of educational programs for individuals interested in Olympic studies (IOA, 2012). One of these programs is specifically tailored to postgraduate students, offering opportunities to further learn about and embed themselves in Olympic studies, share research ideas, and network with likeminded people from various parts of the world. This study examines the effects upon completion of the IOA's International Seminars on the participants' work. To better understand the intended aims of the IOA's International Seminar for postgraduate students and its desired outcomes for participants, the foundations and origins of Olympic education must first be explored.

Origins of Olympic education

Olympic education is a term that first appeared in sports education and Olympic research in the 1970s (Müller, 1975a). Pierre de Coubertin saw himself first and foremost as an educator, and he considered his primary aim to be educational reform (Müller, 1986b). Since as early as 1900, and not exclusively within schools, Coubertin had been encouraging the idea of "making sport accessible" as a new form of educating students about their mind and body (Coubertin, 1901, pp.19-32).

However, despite the early origins of Coubertin's educational philosophy and the IOC's intention to promote the Olympic Movement and values through Olympic education, there has been a lack of specificity in the definition of the concept of Olympic education. Nevertheless, Coubertin did write

about the term Olympism suggesting that "Olympism can become a school for moral nobility and purity as well as endurance and energy (Coubertin, 1896, p.2). But this can happen only if you continually raise your concept of athletic honour and impartiality to the level of your muscular ability (p.2). Coubertin's own view and evaluation of Olympism as a "system" does not allow, therefore, "any unequivocal definition of what should be understood by Olympic education and Olympic values" (Naul, 2008, pp.189). In spite of this, in early 2000 the IOC formally added the definition of Olympic education to the Olympic terminology. Referring to it as "Information and activities that promote the development of the knowledge, values and behaviours that promote Olympism and the mission of the Olympic Movement" (IOC, 2017, p.89). For the purpose of this paper, we use the IOC's statement of Olympism which states that "Olympism is a philosophy of life which places sport at the service of humanity. This philosophy is based on the interaction of the qualities of the body, will and mind. Olympism is expressed through actions which link sport to culture and education" (The Olympic Museum, 2013, p.3).

Purpose and Research Questions

Despite not having a specific Olympic Academy, Australia has a longstanding relationship with the Olympic movement. It is one of only five countries to have participated at all modern Summer Olympic Games (hereon referred to as Olympic Games). Despite its relatively remote geographical location, in 2032 Australia will host the Olympic Games for the third time (Melbourne, 1956, Sydney, 2000). In addition to the strong

historical and contemporary links with the Olympic Games, Australia also has specific ties to the IOA. The hosting of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and the associated development of Centres for Olympic Studies (Vathi, 2011, p.191) contributed to strong Australian research involvement. Including dozens of Australian academics lecturing and 15 Australian research students participating in the IOA's International Seminars. Providing a compelling context for this study, engaging in a case study related to Australian postgraduate students' involvement in the IOA's International seminar permits a deep understanding of the educational effects on a specific cohort of participants over time. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to explore the educational aims of the IOA's International Seminars, and the effect of the seminar on postgraduates' subsequent work. The key research questions employed are:

1. What are the drivers regarding attendance at the International Seminar? Prompts: What was known about the Seminar prior to involvement? What specific factors influenced the decision to attend?
2. In what ways, if any, does the International Seminar influence participants' subsequent study or work? Prompts: Did participants continue or discontinue a pathway in Olympic studies? Did attendance impact subsequent work? Did participants make further contributions to Olympic education or Olympic studies? Did participants influence others?

Methodology

A qualitative case study design (Merriam, 2002) was the chosen methodology for this project to explore the educational effects of the IOA's International Seminar on postgraduates' work. In a case study, the researcher investigates a "real-life, contemporary bounded system (case) over time via rigorous data generation involving multiple sources of information" (Creswell, 2013, p.412). In this study, the case relates to the educational effect of the IOA's International Seminar on the work of Australian participants. The case is bounded by the unique Australian context wherein unlike most other countries, there is no specific Olympic Academy. Rather, a select few universities with Centres on Olympic Studies play a unique role in working closely with the Australian Olympic Committee and its educational programs, as well as their communication with the IOA.

Participants

Following institutional ethical clearance, study participants were purposively (Patton, 1990) selected. Postgraduate participants who had attended one of the IOA's International Seminars for Olympic studies between 2009 and 2019 were identified and contacted through an Australian-based Olympic Studies Centre. Out of seven past representatives (n=7) over the ten-year timeframe, five participants (n=5) consented to participate in this study. One participant was untraceable (n=1) and one past participant was the lead researcher (n=1) for this project. To maximize the anonymity of the participants, identifying information was removed as much as possible, and alphabetical letters have been randomly applied to each (e.g., Participant A, Participant B).

Data Generation

Methods used in case studies to co-construct data most often include observations, interviews, focus groups, document and artifact analysis (Merriam, 2009). In this study, the tools used to generate data were the collection of a variety of Olympic education related documents and the conduct of semi-structured interviews.

Documents

Qualitative document analysis has been comprehensively used in social inquiry (Bryman, 2015). Examples of documents accessed in this study include administrative documents (n=10) (e.g., program and outline of the IOA's International Seminar); formal studies including IOA-related papers or evaluations (n=54) (e.g., postgraduate evaluations); journal articles (n=24) (e.g., editions of IOA International Seminar Journals); and online materials (n=9) (IOA publications). The rationale for accessing and incorporating historical and contemporary documents was to gain further insights into the degree of incorporation and type of usage of historical documents (e.g., Pierre de Coubertin's foundations of Olympic education). Furthermore, the terms of the original establishment of the IOA, and the desired outcomes of the IOA related to the provision of Olympic educational programs.

Based on first-hand experiences with the IOA and using established IOA connections, the first author sourced the 'grey' literature for this study (e.g., reports and websites about the IOA and Olympic Education). In addition, materials were incorporated from more traditional sources (e.g., journals) resulting

in the inclusion of articles by the following authors due to their academic interests and expertise. In alphabetical order: Binder (2001-2012), Chatziefstathiou (2008-2020), Coubertin (1891-2000), Georgiadis (1986-2017), Müller (1988-2015), Naul (2005-2017) and Parry (1998-2006).

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were adopted because they provide the opportunity for the interviewer to explore preliminary themes and seek in-depth responses. Conducting the semi-structured interviews generated individual data and permitted the exploration of the participants' experiences and the influence of the IOA's International Seminars on their scholarship. The five semi-structured interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The interviews were held at locations of the participants' choosing. Where needed, due to COVID-19, measures were taken to conduct the interviews online (e.g., via Zoom). Open-ended questions were constructed to understand the effects on postgraduate students' subsequent study and/or work. Furthermore, the participants' responses to the questions contained direct links with the information gathered in the document analysis.

Data Analysis

The overall approach to analysis in this case study is through Clarke and Braun's (2017) thematic analysis. The thematic analysis encompassed six stages and "micro" analyses were employed. First, the documentary evidence gathered was thematically analysed, resulting in preliminary themes. Thereafter,

the semi-structured interviews were then analysed. Completing several “micro analyses” resulted in the creation of key themes. Finally, all themes and materials were thematically analysed as part of an overall iterative process.

As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2019), the resulting themes were named so that they would make immediate sense to the reader. They were then further analysed in relation to the overall research question, and placed in order related to the strength of the data and their centrality to the research question. An initial report of the findings was shared with the participants as an extended form of member checking. One participant requested a change in rephrasing a statement to ensure that the intent of it was projected correctly. This is an important step to not only ensure the information shared accurately reflected the comments and experiences provided by the participants, but to allow comment on the appropriateness of our analysis. Finally, throughout the preparation of the final report, the researchers continually reflected, learned and evolved (Braun & Clarke, 2019), while drawing connections with the context and existing literature.

Findings and discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore the educational aims of the IOA’s International Seminars, and the effect of the seminar on postgraduates’ subsequent work. As part of engagement in the iterative process of thematic analysis, five key themes were generated. These included (1) Origins (primarily related to the foundations and evolution of the IOA), (2) Internationalism (capturing the multicultural aims and the global network of support and advocacy). Followed by (3) Interaction (with

an emphasis on connection and exchange in relation to Olympic values and ideals) and (4) Outcomes (such as educational and research outputs). Lastly, (5) Legacy (related to documentary archives and the return involvement of professors and students).

These five key themes are the focus of this investigation and are addressed below in order of prominence as they relate to the research questions.

Theme 1: Origins

A policy for the Olympic Movement states that the development of Olympic education programs remains a key goal for the IOC. For example, host cities or nations are not only required to deliver an educational program during the actual Games, but also beforehand seven years between the IOC’s deciding vote, and the actual opening ceremony of the Games (IOC, 2017, p.88).

Furthermore, the IOC and the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) have made efforts in constructing institutional strategies for the promotion of Olympic education. The IOC established the IOA in 1961 as an international educational and cultural institution (Chatziefstathiou & Müller, 2014). Fully funded prior to 2020, the aim of the IOA is to deliver educational expert material and lectures for a select group of nominated students. One of the programs on Olympic Studies, that has been around for 30 years, is the IOA’s International Seminar on Olympic Studies for postgraduate students. Almost a decade ago, a book was written about the experiences of past participants (Georgiadis, 2011). Building on this, taking the view that for education to be deemed

effective there is a need for a continuous review process to be put in place (Naul, 2008, pp.189), participants were to provide reports. Including their learnings, experiences, and a closing statement of the IOA's International Seminars, as well as a contribution via a paper presentation. Participant C noted that "Those presentations and publications building repertoire for the participants that enhanced their portfolio for future work", highlighting the positive contribution the seminar makes to the ongoing work of postgraduate students.

While the IOA's International Seminars have undergone minor changes since they were first offered in 1993 (e.g., duration shortened from approximately five to three weeks), each annual International Seminar has hosted approximately twenty-five nominated and selected participants. The type of qualified and personally invested educators has remained largely unchanged. Another aspect that has remained stable is the excursions to archaeological sites, for example to Nemea where the late Professor Stephen Miller uncovered the Sanctuary of Zeus and the ancient stadium. The main characteristic of the IOA's International Seminars was a yearly changing special topic or theme around the trending Olympic issues. For example, in 2005 the topic was 'The Olympic and Paralympic Games of Athens 2004', whilst the following year's topic was 'Sport and Ethics'.

The IOA's International Seminars demonstrate the intention of the IOA "to extend its activity into the field of higher education and to approach young scholars to whom the opportunity is offered of attending seminar courses of an academic level. This while being taught by recognized University lecturers from all over the world" (Vathi,

2011, p.196). Summarised one could argue that the IOA sessions inspire, educate and pass on Olympism and its foundations of Olympic ideas, and simultaneously contributing to the Olympic Movement. As "the IOA was set up with the purpose of serving as an intellectual and educational centre for Olympism", "its work based on human relationships" and "a forum of free expression and views" (Vathi, 2011, pp.252-253). Arguably, this inherently contributes to Olympic legacy, as it is perceived as an inviolable principle. Participants X and Y both reported 'a sense of the honour done to them and their own value' in contributing to Olympic education by handing on their knowledge and experience in the place where the Olympic Games were born.

From the first Congress in 1894 when the IOC was formed, until his retirement in 1925, Coubertin made ongoing efforts to convince the IOC to take its role on behalf of physical education seriously. Indeed, eight out of twelve Olympic Congresses held between 1894 and 1994 were organized by Pierre de Coubertin before 1926, to promote his educational objectives. However, it was not until 1947 that Greek committee member Ioannis Ketseas successfully presented the 40th Session of the IOC in Stockholm with a proposal on the founding of an Olympic Academy. Thereafter in 1949 the Hellenic Olympic Committee funded and managed the creation of the IOA (IOAPA, 2007, pp.25-26).

Commencing in tents on a field within view of ruins of the ancient Olympic stadium in Greece in 1961 (Koulouri & Georgiadis, 2011), the IOA's proximity to the archaeological site of Olympia has appealed to many participants and lecturers. Participant B describes the experience at the IOA as follows: "The IOA's

presence and its meaning create a feeling that is hard to describe, perhaps a certain energy, but 'it' certainly fuels the Olympic spirit, or better the inner Olympic flame".

Associated ceremonies and past traditions celebrating the Olympic Spirit, the past and present Olympics, "multiculturalism and the pursuit of excellence encapsulated the majority of", as Binder (2010) describes "Olympic educational components" (pp.1-3). The strength and impact of the IOA appeared to be recognized by the IOC (Georgiadis, 2011), with various IOC presidents expressing their unreserved support (Müller, 1998). With the IOC giving its full support to the IOA's efforts, educational activities now focus on issues relating to the academic quality of studies in philosophy, objectives, methodology, content, and evaluation of Olympic education programs. Participant D describes the program as follows: "We had to prepare a draft paper to a certain topic set by the IOA, which seemed to be the theme for the lectures during the days of the program". Further, the impact of such programs appears to be long-lasting, with Georgiadis (2011) highlighting the many alumni who return to the Academy as lecturers, having taught subjects or undertook programs related to Olympism (p.19). This is evident in the statement of Participant E: "My nomination was endorsed by a lecturer who was part of the IOA program in the past". This is arguably an important part of the Academy's work; past participants becoming the advocates of its philosophy, having experienced Olympism.

Theme 2: Internationalism

Coubertin stated that Olympism combines, as in a halo, all those principles, that contribute

to the improvement of mankind (Müller, 2004, p.1). "Coubertin's 'Olympism' is therefore aimed at all people, irrespective of age, occupation, race, nationality, or creed" (p.4). Concerning the IOA's International Seminars, each individual applied, has been nominated, selected and decided to participate. In relation to their stage in life, it is evident that each individual was aware of the Olympics or the IOC. For example, Participant C stated, "I did actually go to the Sydney 2000 Olympics and that was a mind-blowing experience". Participant D mentioned; "I completed an Olympic study as an elective in my undergraduate degree". Like Participant D, some of the participants had already chosen to be directly or indirectly involved with Olympism or Olympic education. Participant A noticed "a link with the study direction and newly included sports at the Tokyo Olympics". Participants reported being exposed to Olympism at a very personal level, for example through study, volunteer work, or simply having a special interest in the spectacle of the Olympic Games. As might be expected, this shared interest became the common ground on which they could engage with others in "getting to know more" (Participant B) about Olympism and Olympic ideas in a spirit of sharing. In short, a key driver of participation was a personal curiosity and interest, and a shared identity related to the Olympic ideal (Koulouri & Georgiadis, 2011).

Perhaps proximity to the archaeological site of the IOA, its mythical location, and traditions, contributed to its operational existence, and the attraction to its programs. Participant B summarized the experience as "being part of a group with common interests in a unique place". The associated traditions

and ceremonies “seemed to make you be a part of something bigger, perhaps part of the Olympic family”, as Participant E described it. Participant C mentioned that it was “the site’s surroundings, as well as the layout of the program with dedicated lecturers that really creates that exclusive, special, scene and atmosphere”. Whether this contributes to Olympism as meant by Coubertin is unsure, but one can argue that it has effect on “the formation of intelligence or sensitivity as a harmonious whole” (Durántez et al., 2011, p.10). One of the effects was the reflection or conceptualisation on the participants’ work, identity and their direction taken post IOA experiences.

Pierre de Coubertin envisaged past participants “becoming the advocates of its philosophy, having experienced Olympism, they know that ‘Olympism’ is not the theory of practice, but the practice of theory” (Müller, 2000, pp.222-224). The majority of the participants acknowledged the effect the experience had on their career post the IOA’s International Seminar. For example, “It made me think about, for example value, and how I perhaps unintended, incorporate this in my daily practices”, according to Participant C.

However, in these reflections a certain conceptualization of Olympic values and Olympism resulted in some queries. For example, Participant A felt that “while everything discussed during the IOA’s International Seminars felt true, it was from a historical perspective and therefore had limited relevance to current practice”. The doubt in contemporary positioning of subjects could contribute to the initial creation of special topics during each year’s IOA International Seminar. This could relay

the initial aim of the IOA’s International Seminars; “This program was initiated to target students specializing in Olympic issues” (Georgiadis, 2011, p.19). Participant D commented on the changes and the origins of the program by saying “With the recent changes in emerging sports, and for example wrestling excluded from the Olympic Games, would this mean the message, of Olympism or Olympic education, changes too”? Perhaps this is why the IOA’s International Seminars have an important part to play in the design of Olympic education and the solutions it may bring in terms of Olympic issues. From the interviews, it was evident that each year the IOA’s International Seminars’ special topic changes. Participant C experienced the special topic aligning with, at that time, current Olympic matters by stating; “The topic evolved around values leading into a new Olympic Games”. The same participant felt that the contribution and the participants evaluation provided a soundboard, maybe even addressing solutions. Furthermore, three participants did decide to take upon further education to tackle similar issues or developed (educational) programs in their (work) community.

Theme 3: Interactions

All participants individually mentioned the IOA experience brought certain connections to light, that they had not explored in depth before. For example, Participant E mentioned “The trip from Australia to the IOA is a long journey to undertake, it is quite a novelty to meet culturally diverse but like-minded people or people with a common interest at the International Seminars”. One participant started working in governance

and international relations and found that the understanding and relation to Olympic values has helped in connecting with (overseas) diverse community groups. “Although some developing countries I worked in are economically viable [sic], the people do embrace respect, friendship, fair play, etc. and it seemed to improve social connections”, according to Participant B. Binder (2010) suggests that “The ‘lifeworld’ orientation’, as described by Naul, is represented by five ‘basic objectives’ which formed a pedagogical foundation based on the values of Olympism” (p.6). One of the objectives is intercultural understanding, which aligns with the multicultural mentioning of Olympic education in the Olympic Charter (2018). Müller (2004) discusses the concept of “peace and goodwill between nations”, “reflected by respect and tolerance in relations between individuals” (p.6), in one of the educational conclusions. These conclusions are derived from Coubertin’s writings on initial ideas around Olympism and Olympic Ideals. Either way, effects of the IOA’s International Seminar have been noticed in forms of continuation, reflecting or conceptualisation around Olympism with the majority of participants.

Theme 4: Outcomes

Two past participants mentioned their holistic view on Olympism and Olympic education, as well as Olympic ideas and values and have either indirect or directly implemented these in their work practices. For example, Participant E implements Olympic values and ideas during classes;

“I share examples of historic Olympic events and try to make the students aware about the rationale of a decision. A good example is athletics, where a marathon runner thought that he completed the race. He was miles ahead, but when he stopped, he did not actually cross the finish line. The runner-up made him aware of this and let him win, instead of taking over and finishing first himself”.

Another participant indirectly supports athletes in research around enhancement and, “understanding that not only fair play, but also their performance could lead to an Olympic pathway”. Via the IOA experience, both participants felt that they are inherently contributing to Olympic aspects through their support to well-rounded athletes (Participant D) or classroom students (Participant E). Binder (2012) discusses that certain effects and external influences on pedagogy could mould the direction it takes.

Theme 5: Legacy

Legacy was a theme related to the daily implementations and practices of postgraduate students beyond the seminars. Participant C mentioned “I never really thought about how some Seminar aspects and IOA experience may have an overlap in my work or relate back to it”. Some participants mentioned that continuing to be aware about actions linked to their IOA experience may contribute to create legacy, relating Olympic aspects to current work and educational programs. Participant C mentioned that “values like respect, friendship and excellence, are standard practice in the daily life”. “Discussing these values and

defining or connecting them with Sport Organizations raised awareness for respectful social connections through community projects”, as mentioned by Participant B. These examples are reflective of the long-lasting impact of the past (IOA) experiences on a person’s life.

Creating this legacy by a network of past participants of IOA International Seminars could contribute to the aim of the IOA sessions. To inspire, educate and pass on Olympism and its foundations of Olympic ideas, and simultaneously contributing to the Olympic Movement (Koulouri & Georgiadis, 2011). The impact has proven itself in the sense that most lecturers are returning Professors, who have been past participants in earlier programs. In the Fundamental Principles of the Olympic Charter, a section mentions “setting good examples” and is linked to “educational values” (IOC, 2017, p. 98).

However, Participant A questioned whether the “desired outcomes are measured well enough for Olympic education to be deemed effective”. During the interviews some participants reflected on their experience, but also on the program itself. A limitation could be that although the experience was overall positive, the intention of the program to have a strong influence on topics like the Olympic Movement, seemed to be unclear. A passage from the document analysis reveals that the IOA “would contribute, more than anything else, to the preservation and continuation of Pierre de Coubertin’s work”. Perhaps this passage describes indeed what the IOA’s International Seminar is meant to do; to provide an Olympic educational experience to a select group of people (Naul et al., 2017). Past participants expressed their strong desire

to (re)connect with their program peers and they also showed keen interest in the effect of current (Australian) Olympic programs. Participant D mentioned “to share that experience ‘you’ had, knowing likeminded doing something that is valuable for others”. Participant E shared “it is about the frequency of the connection [...] and making sure these people are accessible [...] they do well to inspire other people. An alumni connection group would be great, in a more research-based manner, [...] could have an influence like for example the ‘Olympic Unleashed’ program by the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC)”. Participant B hinted that “for example, the AOC could make use of experience and information gained at the IOA. As a ‘think tank’ or to get involved in current programs and bring expertise”. This is a positive outlook, and it shows the current interest in Olympic aspects, and additionally around the programs and the positioning of (Australian) Olympic education.

Conclusion

Pierre de Coubertin stated in his IOC addressed letters to revive the Olympic Games “The Olympiads have been renewed, but the gymnasium of antiquity has not – as yet. It must be”. The gymnasium of antiquity was not merely a training facility, but rather a cultural site. Coubertin envisaged educational locations dedicated to the “joy found in effort” as a fundamental Olympic principle (Naul, 2008). The IOA has perhaps become a “modern workshop of Olympism” as envisaged by Coubertin on the model of the ancient gymnasium. Or perhaps a part of “dialogue and reflection” for the Olympic family, which offers the best “teaching opportunities” in

the birthplace of the Olympic Games (Parry, 1998; Mueller, 1994, Mueller, 2000).

“Pierre de Coubertin, foresaw the creation in Ancient Olympia of an Educational and Research Centre. Envisioning a role for the IOA, in the Olympic Movement context, that ‘would contribute, more than anything else, to the preservation and continuation of his work, and would protect it from the deviations, which he was afraid to happen’. This arguably is the contribution of the IOA to Olympic Culture” (Kouvelos, 2018, p.4).

This research of the effect of the IOA’s Olympic studies on postgraduate students’ work delivered five themes, which summarized highlighted learnings, limitations and applications.

Firstly, the results of this research suggest that the IOA is an inspirational place and contributes to attract like-minded and vastly interested supporters of Olympism, Olympic Movement, Olympic Ideals and Olympic education as such. Olympism is metaphorically spread by individuals for whom their ‘inner Olympic flame is ignited or refuelled’. The impact noted is in relation to Australian scholars and their subsequent research projects and applied programs in their workplace and beyond.

However, there are some points of critique as the Olympic Games keep evolving and perhaps the IOA’s International Seminars need to evolve with them. New sports are included, and long-established sports are withdrawn from the Games. While it is currently a unique factor, the selection and nomination for the IOA’s International Seminars relies

on the proposed candidates, put forward by the respective body (e.g., National Olympic Committees, National Olympic Academies, Olympic Study Centres) leading to a somewhat narrow group of candidate possibilities. Future iterations may involve deeper consideration of candidates’ prospective careers, intentions or contributions to future Olympic topics.

There also remains great scope to “measure” the impact of the IOA’s International Seminars and other programs offered, so as to proceed, reflect and adjust Olympic education. As Müller (2004) argues:

“We must speak more about the ‘Olympic future’, and to do that we have a vital need for ‘Olympic education’. Anyone who thinks in terms of perfectionism and makes the total achievement of his aims a basic condition has failed to understand Coubertin and his Olympism (p.9)”.

Secondly, the IOA’s International Seminars were a reaffirmation and confirmation of the postgraduate participants’ motives to contribute in their work to Olympism, Olympics or the Olympic Movement. Visiting the cradle of Olympism in Ancient Olympia reportedly fuelled a desire, aligned connection or purpose in continuing or starting to contribute to certain Olympic aspects or reaching a greater audience.

Reflecting on possible overlaps of Olympic aspects in the participants’ current work and links with Olympic values or facets were seen as further (indirect) influences. Furthermore, there seemed to be a healthy willingness or recognition of the International Seminars intend and application in the work field

initially. However, some critique of long-term effects of the IOA's International Seminars show dependence on utilization of the gained participants' information and its (contemporary) relatedness to their work field, or the opportunity to do so.

Lastly, it seems that reflection and connection is needed to (re)confirm the meaningful intentions of Olympic educational practices. To capitalize on the IOA's International Seminars' effects, moments and continuity of it, there is a 'post IOA' desire for fostering the spirit in a geographically large and distant spread. While there is an online association for past IOA participants, there remained a craving for an Australian-based community aimed at associated local projects. A new focus on Australian initiatives that draw upon the IOA experiences of past participants has the potential to impact on a multitude of levels and in way that are locally embedded and generate a valuable legacy of their own.

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