CHALLENGING PERSPECTIVES

Teaching Globalisation and Diversity in the Knowledge Society

An E-Book of Development Education and Intercultural Education Research for Teacher Educators

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This publication was produced by the DICE Project core team:
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Layout and design by Kieran Nolan, Oldtown Design. Editorial support by Antoinette Walker.
Published with the financial support of Irish Aid at the Department of Foreign Affairs

DICE Development & InterCultural Education

Irish Aid
Department of Foreign Affairs
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha

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PREFACE

IN June 2008, the DICE (Development and Intercultural Education) Project organised a conference entitled 'Challenging Perspectives: Teaching Globalisation and Diversity in the Knowledge Society' to investigate these issues and to further facilitate a process which challenges perspectives on the role education plays in the 21st century, particularly regarding children's teaching and learning as global citizens. With a mix of keynote speakers, presentation of research and practical workshops, the conference provided insights into how educators can gain the capacity to impart a critical awareness of media representations of the Global South and thereby resolve some of the challenges posed by the knowledge society.

A call for papers invited scholars to contribute to the conference, and their contributions offered a fascinating insight into research and work going on in the sector. The DICE Project has therefore decided to publish some of these contributions and make them available to a wider audience. It is hoped that this e-book will facilitate further debate about and investigations into the issues raised by the papers.

DICE Project
2008

INTRODUCTION

CHALLENGING PERSPECTIVES: TEACHING GLOBALISATION AND DIVERSITY IN THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

MATTHIAS FIEDLER and
ASTRID V PÉREZ PIÑÁN
DICE Project

THINKING about education in the 21st century has to take into account the changing contexts in which we live. An increasingly globalised world and culturally diversified societies pose and create new challenges for learners and teachers alike. In Western societies the 21st-century learner is expected to become a 'global player', confidently moving around the world and in jobs while exercising key skills such as information processing, communicating, critical and creative thinking, and working with others. Looking at these realities, it is apparent that we will have to reorganise the way we educate future citizens. As Vanessa Andreotti noted in her opening remarks to the DICE conference on 7 June 2008, 'educational research suggests that the profile of the 21st-century learner requires a major rethink of education'. It is hoped that such a shift will be informed by perspectives that account for a global context, where inequalities, poverty and the further endangerment of our social and physical environment jeopardise the well-being of future generations. In short what we need are global citizens, not global players.

But what exactly is needed to educate further generations of globally aware and responsible citizens? Every attempt to answer this question needs to examine how exactly the societal contexts have changed. In other words, what do we mean when we talk about education in the knowledge society? In her book, *Catching the Knowledge Wave?*, the educational researcher Jane Gilbert describes the knowledge society in line with postmodern thinking as one which forms 'people's social identities' (Gilbert, 2005, p. 29) through discourses and patterns of consumption rather than through a fixed set of values and socio-economic status. She sees this as a societal 'paradigm shift' that has altered our understanding of how knowledge is perceived. In relation to

what education has to contribute to this shift, Gilbert claims that it has to radically change its underlying premises. According to her, our present 'production-line model of education' (p. 68) is a 'product of the industrial age' (p. 47), where knowledge was seen as a 'thing, a product' (p. 71) and perceived as a factual and true outcome of a thinking process that could be 'stored' in our minds and that established the foundation of what we have learnt to know as academic disciplines. In this view, knowledge is objective and exists independently of people as a factual 'thing' that can be accumulated, i.e. learnt over time.

While this type of education system might have served its purpose during the industrial age by preparing students for industrial age society and workplaces, this is no longer the case in today's society. Gilbert concludes that changes in society have necessitated a shift in education. For most Western societies, however, this change has not taken place and it is true, as Vanessa Andreotti mentioned at the DICE conference, that 'most schools are still delivering a 19th-century curriculum, in 20th-century buildings to 21st-century learners'.

When talking about the 'knowledge society', it is important to note there is no insinuation of 'other' societies being less knowledgeable. Instead, it is a deliberate use of a Western construct that highlights the development of technologies to make information more accessible than ever before to more people at the touch of a key. The questions are: Who has this easy access? What kind of information is being accessed and how? Who produced it and for what purpose? And crucially, when does information becomes internalised knowledge? To what extent is the learner exercising adequate levels of discernment? Is there enough awareness about the limitations of this 'knowledge' and the fact that pluralistic forms of knowledge exist which do not reach the cyberworld?

The 21st-century Western learner has been exposed to more information bytes than most generations by means of technology. This means that a diversity of skills are in operation at a faster pace and that sharper, more refined, critical thinking skills are needed. When looking to learn about global development issues, the critical use of these skills becomes a political act in itself. Living with the awareness of complexity is a prominent feature of life in the 21st century, more so than in other times. Valuing diversity becomes a significant aspect of one's value system as we seek to engage with more fluid and dynamic forms of knowledge. More perspectives on global development issues are often (but not always!) at our reach, and recognising when and how our knowledge is limited to Western notions of development is crucial to the globally minded learner. The learner should be able to take precautions

not to replicate old colonial attitudes of superiority based on the newly acquired knowledge.

The diversity of global issues often converges at more than one point, making the concept of interdependence come to life. For how can we talk about deforestation without mentioning poverty or internally displaced peoples or the toll taken in the animal kingdom? This also means that education of the 21st century should recognise the relativity of knowledge to its contexts and purposes. We cannot have a 'one size fits all' approach to answering the challenges posed by global issues. There is no one right answer. Uncertainty therefore is a prominent feature of development education (DE) and intercultural education (ICE) approaches to learning. A degree of open-endedness in the learning process is inevitable and should be a sign of maturity and respect for diversity.

DE and ICE can both be seen as educational responses to this need to empower young people to think critically, independently and systemically. With their strong emphasis on values and perceptions, they also prepare learners to participate effectively in society, both locally and globally, and make positive contributions towards a more just and equal world a priority. This is echoed in the definition of this term given by Irish Aid:

> DE is an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It seeks to engage people in analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship and participation. It is about supporting people in understanding, and in acting to transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect their lives and others at personal, community, national and international levels. (www.irishaid.gov.ie)

Process, analysis, reflection, action, understanding and transformation: all these key words emphasise the dynamic nature of this educational approach. As such, DE contains a number of elements, summarised by Roland Tormey in his introduction to *Teaching Social Justice*:

> [DE] is education as personal development, facilitating the development of critical thinking skills, analytical skills, emphatic capacity and the ability to be an effective person who can take action to achieve desired development outcomes. It is education *for* local, national and global development, encouraging learners

> in developing a sense that they can play a role in working for (or against) social justice and development issues. It is education *about* development, focused on social justice, human rights, poverty, and inequality and on development issues locally, nationally, and internationally. (2003, p. 2)

If we look at various definitions of what intercultural education entails, the similarities are striking. Echoing the dynamic understanding of development education, AM Sedano, for instance, identifies a framework in which intercultural education should operate:

> Understanding of the cultural diversity of contemporary society; increasing the possibility of communication between people of different cultures; creating positive attitudes towards cultural diversity; increasing social interaction between culturally different people and groups. (2002, p. 268)

Both Sedano and Tormey refer in their definitions to another skill that is key to DE and ICE: the ability to think systemically. In a diverse and multifaceted world such as ours, where one needs to make meaningful connections between a multiplicity of things and systems, this seems to be one of the key 'survival skills'. And it is, again, an argument for a more integrated way of teaching different subjects.

Indeed the fact that both DE and ICE transgress the traditional boundaries of academic subjects makes them a prime example of how teaching in the knowledge society may be furthered. Thus, both DE and ICE should be seen as much more than 'just' additions to the existing curriculum. With their existent repertoire of teaching methodologies, research and thinking about education in general, DE and ICE should play a pivotal role in crafting an education system that is capable of educating our children for a knowledge-based society. As many practitioners in DE and ICE have argued over the years, this imperative also necessitates a further development of the research dimension in both DE and ICE (Andreotti, 2006, p. 7).

In different ways, the research articles here are all aimed at stimulating debate and further responses to the challenges identified above. A common thread of all articles is that they are based on experiences in teaching that have been translated into theoretical or methodological considerations. Also in common is the way in which they challenge pre-established assumptions to some degree. This critical questioning of previously held beliefs has led to an in-depth analysis of various aspects of teaching and learning.

This e-book is divided in two main strands: the first is called 'Contemporary Challenges in Teaching and Learning about Globalisation and Diversity' and the second is 'Challenging Perspectives of the World in the Classroom'.

In 'Contemporary Challenges in Teaching and Learning about Globalisation and Diversity', the authors provide plenty food for thought in three main areas: theory, structure and methodology. The first article starts by rocking the foundations of how DE and ICE have been addressed in teacher training. Barbara O'Toole argues for the separation of 'development and intercultural education' in order to meet the needs of 21st-century Ireland. By doing so, she urges us to do justice to each discipline and preserve the value intrinsic to both. The second article of this section looks at the role of technology in addressing contemporary teaching and learning challenges. Anna Dillon and Deirdre O'Rourke discuss the integration of new technologies in the classroom as tools with which to maximise and globalise the learning experience.

The second strand of the book 'Challenging Perspectives of the World in the Classroom' begins with a critical discussion on how we inform our views of the Global South through our interpretation of images presented by the media. Son Gyoh and Gerry Jeffers each take us on a journey that challenges many deeply held assumptions about the so-called developing world and give us much-needed pointers on how to use images as learning tools to challenge misleading stereotypes. These discussions are followed by two school-based projects that have already taken the challenges of the knowledge society into consideration. The first, 'Teaching and learning in plurilingual schools: lessons from classrooms in Dublin 15', is based on the experience of several teachers working creatively with a mixed group of linguistically diverse students. Seán Bracken, Áine Clerkin, Brietta McDonnell and Nell Regan investigate the linkages between citizenship and identity, making explicit the importance of self-directed learning. The second project is based on the question 'Who lives here?' and portrays the journey of a classroom in developing their own awareness and knowledge about cultural diversity of their school. With the support of their teacher, Ronan Ward, they endeavour to creatively use modern technologies, and some go as far as making video clips!

A final word is inevitable in reasserting why DE and ICE should be at the heart of our education system. Most of the writing and thinking about the knowledge society has so far been driven by the economic interests of the Western-led business world, and hence defining society in the context of a capitalist marketplace. The added value of including

the expertise of practitioners and researchers in DE and ICE in this process is therefore almost self-explanatory: with its commitment to values such as sustainable development, human rights and global and social justice, both DE and ICE are perfectly positioned to create socially responsible global citizens.

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PART 1

CONTEMPOROARY CHALLENGES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT GLOBALISATION AND DIVERSITY

SEPARATING 'DEVELOPMENT AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION'

MEETING THE NEEDS OF 21ST-CENTURY IRELAND

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THIS PAPER is intended to open a discussion about the wisdom of combining development and intercultural education under one heading and as part of one initiative. Development and intercultural education have formed the 'DICE identity' since the beginning of the project in the early 2000s, and it now seems to be accepted that these two educations can be addressed alongside each other and even in combination with each other. This paper challenges this assumption, taking interculturalism as its focus. While there are issues in the debate that are also pertinent to development education, I believe these need to be the subject of a separate paper, although some of implications for development education will be touched on briefly towards the end of the paper.

The paper begins by briefly describing the emergence of interculturalism as distinct from multiculturalism and assimilationism. I will then follow two main arguments. Firstly, I will suggest that one of the implications of combining development and intercultural education is that it can encourage a view of 'interculturalism' as a homogeneous body of thought, which can lead to an overlooking of some of the critical variations, disagreements and nuances that are contained within that movement. I will explore some of those variations and will suggest that these are matters that require in-depth debate and discussion within contemporary education and that we gloss over them at our peril.

Secondly, I will suggest that an assumption of 'shared values' between development and education and intercultural education is misleading, as it ignores the lack of consensus about those values which exists in at least one of those 'educations'. I will take the principle of 'equality' as an example of how broad the interpretations can be within interculturalism, illustrating how simplistic it can be to assume that there is a sharing of values across both disciplines.

The paper will end with a call for a separation of development education and intercultural education in pre-service teacher education in order to allow space for an understanding of interculturalism to emerge in all its complexities. I will suggest that this would also facilitate development educators to proceed more effectively with their task, rather than being hampered by the combination with intercultural education, which is happening at present.

THE EMERGENCE OF 'INTERCULTURALISM'

Interculturalism is widely understood to have emerged from debates about assimilationism and multiculturalism. The National Consultative Council on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) states that 'interculturalism is now replacing earlier approaches such as assimilation and multiculturalism' (NCCRI, 2008). What do or did these approaches consist of?

Assimilation can be explained as the merging or absorption of an immigrant culture into the host culture, with people 'holding a shared view of the world ... personal and collective values, customs, and social and moral practices' (Parekh, 2006, p. 186). Modood (2007) states that 'assimilation' is where the desired outcome for society is seen to involve the least amount of change for the majority of the country and its institutional policies. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, can be described as the recognition of the range of ethnic communities within a country with no pressure on those groups to assimilate to the mainstream values of that society. Modood describes it as the recognition of group identities and of the social reality of different groups in society, a notion that is echoed by Dalal (2008), who states that in multiculturalism 'the ethos of rights is transposed from the domain of *individuals* to the domain of *cultures*' (p. 7).

While Ireland has decided on the policy approach of interculturalism, to date there has been very little debate about the precise meaning of that term (Fanning, 2007), so it can be challenging to find an exact definition of it in the literature. The NCCRI (2008) defines an intercultural approach as: 'The development of strategy, policy and practice that promotes interaction, understanding, respect and integration between different cultures and ethnic groups ... without glossing over issues such as racism.' Interculturalism could be understood as aiming to address some of the areas that multiculturalists neglected – by consciously and deliberating promoting interaction

between cultures and also by incorporating an anti-racism component which was seen to be lacking in multiculturalism. Parekh (2002) states that multicultural theory is a very recent phenomenon: 'As a political movement it is barely 30 years old, and a theoretical exploration of it only half as old' (p. 139). Lentin (2002) and MacÉinrí (2007) remind us that the debate on multiculturalism is still in its infancy in Ireland. Interculturalism, as an even more recent approach, contains very little of a theoretical or philosophical background, and instead largely draws from multiculturalist theory and anti-racism theory. This in itself is one of the problems with theorising interculturalism, as the body of work it draws from is relatively small and recent, and also because multiculturalism and anti-racism in themselves are such contested areas. In the words of Lentin (2002), multiculturalism is a 'port-manteau' term covering a wide variety of thinking and approaches ranging from postcolonial critique and anti-racism programmes to international food evenings: 'Multiculturalism is not a single doctrine, does not characterise one political strategy, and does not represent an already achieved state of affairs' (p. 228). Nevertheless, despite these limitations in the sense of the lack of common ground, I believe there is much that can be drawn from these writings on multiculturalism that can inform the debate on interculturalism in Ireland. I will draw from this work here.

'CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE AND PROMOTING EQUALITY'

One of the problems with combining development education and intercultural education is that, from a certain distance – which I think this combination imposes – intercultural education can appear to be clear-cut and unambiguous. The very act of placing two complex educations together means, I believe, that we create a kind of dual iceberg model, where we hope there is a common underlying area, while each education has its own distinct topics and themes. My argument is that in creating this model, we can encourage a perspective of looking first at one discipline, then the other, from a certain distance. And from this distance, interculturalism can appear to be a homogenised entity, and differences or ambiguities within the discipline can be rendered invisible. It is only on closer reading that we encounter not a unitary concept but something extremely complex.

This is my first argument against the current combination of development and intercultural education in pre-service teacher

education. I believe it can create a false picture of agreement and consensus, while glossing over some of the more contentious and challenging aspects of interculturalism. A recent assertion that intercultural education could be seen as a 'sub-set' of development education demonstrates, in my view, a clear lack of understanding of the complexities inherent in intercultural education (Fitzgerald, 2007; DICE Project, 2008). In order to illustrate these complexities, it is necessary to penetrate below the surface of taken-for-granted positions and presumptions about intercultural education. I am going to start the process by interrogating one of the most well-known slogans of intercultural education: 'Celebrating difference and promoting equality', a slogan frequently used yet rarely challenged. In the process of investigating it, it is possible to expose some of the problems inherent in the intercultural debate and to demonstrate the heterogeneity and complexity in this body of thought, as well as the fallacy of assuming that there are uncontested values and principles underpinning this movement.

What do we mean by 'celebrating difference', a term that we take very much for granted? Does it take the form of multicultural and multilingual displays in schools or international evenings with food and dance from around the world? While schools may be striving through their day-to-day practice to emphasise the value of each child, we must also investigate the societal backdrop against which this is taking place. The philosopher Charles Taylor (1991; 1994) writes about the politics of recognition, specifically the recognition of difference, stating that 'defining myself means finding what is significant in my difference from others' (1991, p. 36). He states that differences matter against a background of intelligibility, which he calls a 'horizon of significance'. If we are to define ourselves significantly, then these horizons must hold importance for us. For example, no-one would identify themselves according to the colour of their hair, or make discriminating judgements about differences in hair colour, because these do not hold any significance. On the other hand, if I am a Muslim, observing Ramadan would be a crucially important signifier of difference because this observance would form a central pillar of my religious beliefs. As Dalal (2002) states, differences are asserted by various groups because they have significance for those groups, not just because they are straightforward descriptors of difference.

So how does this operate when two or more cultures come into contact with each other, specifically when one of those cultures is a minority group within a country? How does the host culture come to learn the importance of aspects of another culture that might be radically different

from its own? And then, to what extent does a society extend value towards the 'horizons of significance' of another culture? Taylor suggests that the understanding of a significantly different culture necessitates a 'fusion of horizons', where we learn to move in a broader horizon: '...within which what we have formerly taken for granted as the background to valuation can be situated as one possibility alongside the different background of the formerly unfamiliar culture' (1994, p. 98).

Taylor's vision of the politics of recognition and of a fusion of horizons is problematic, however, because it neglects the critical issue of power, namely the power of the host society to confer recognition and value on aspects of a minority culture. The application of a Sikh man to join the Garda force in 2007 is one example of the tension between 'difference' and 'valuation'. This case illustrates the power of the host culture to filter out the horizons of significance of another culture and raises profound questions about the discrepancy between our overt declarations of interculturalism in Ireland and our actual practice.

My hypothesis about this is provocative. My contention is that, for the most part, the differences that are 'celebrated' are those that are seen not to be particularly challenging. Those differences may not reflect the horizons of significance within minority cultures, but may instead comprise non-contentious or superficial elements of culture, such as dress and dance or food and drink, which amounts to what is termed 'weak' multiculturalism because it neglects the incorporation of an analytic dimension, engaging people in a critique of contemporary societal inequalities in Ireland. Dalal (2008) would agree. His belief is that as soon as one introduces the word 'celebration' in relation to difference, then the whole notion of diversity collapses into a naïve multiculturalism that avoids grappling with complex and contentious issues. It becomes instead what Fanning (2002) defines as 'weak' multiculturalism, in which an imagery of diversity proliferates but in which structural inequalities remain unopposed. This illustrates one of the problems of engaging with interculturalism at a superficial level because it does not allow sufficient space to penetrate below the surface of a very complex body of thought and to critically explore the nuances of taken-for-granted positions.

The other strand of that phrase, 'promoting equality', brings us into very complex territory. What do we understand by equality? While liberal democracies subscribe to the principle of equality, on closer examination we find that their interpretations can be vastly different. French legislation on the hijab, brought into force in 2004, has helped to open this particular Pandora's box, and to reveal the tensions and disagreements surrounding understandings of equality (Wiles, 2007).

In France, the principle of equality is prized, going back to the French Revolution of 1789. According to Article 2 of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic of 1958, 'France is an indivisible, secular (*laïque*), democratic and social Republic. It assures equality among all its citizens without distinction according to origin, race or religion' (Kastoryano, 2006). However, this interpretation of equality could be seen as the promotion of cultural 'sameness' and assimilationism rather than the recognition of difference. Indeed, Wiles (2007) contends that it displays a belief that a common republican identity must take precedence over any divergence of identity, culture, language or religion. It was this interpretation of 'equality' that was used as the basis for the ban on religious signs and dress in French schools. Although the law was framed as applying to everyone, and therefore a sign of equal treatment, it is widely perceived to have been aimed at Muslims. Indeed, the law has become known as the 'headscarf ban' because the group most affected by it have been the Muslim community.

The legislation could also be construed as a manifestation of French concern over social fragmentation, which has been identified as one of the problems in Britain, where a contrasting interpretation of equality can be found. For example, the UK Report to the UN Human Rights Committee on measures they had adopted to give effect to the rights of minorities under Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that: 'Integration is not seen as a flattening process of assimilation, but as equality of opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual toleration' (quoted in Wiles, 2007, p. 705).

Within the UK interpretation of equality, the rights of groups and of group identities are recognised. Issues such as the wearing of religious symbols have been considerably less problematic, with the hijab, for example, worn openly in British schools without any restrictions imposed.

Discussion about equality in diverse societies is therefore fraught with tensions. Another contentious question concerns the approach a liberal society adopts towards the practice of illiberal culture amongst a minority group. Does equality of cultures mean that we do not challenge aspects of other cultures that we believe infringe human rights, such as female genital mutilation, polygamy or arranged marriages?

This is the perspective of the feminist writer, Susan Moller Okin, whose work, 'Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?' (1999), expresses the view that in recognising the rights of minority groups in society, the danger is that we are then sanctioning practices within those cultures which are oppressive to women. She maintains that the defence of 'cultural practices' is likely to have a much greater impact on women's

lives, and that because this impact is possibly going to be negative, multiculturalism often fails to protect women and children within minority ethnic groups.

Does 'inter'culturalism, with its requirement for interaction and dialogue between cultures, hold greater possibilities for resolving the complex questions which multiculturalism has failed to answer? The demands on the 'inter' component of interculturalism are enormous, and we have yet to discover the potential this movement contains. Dalal (2008) puts forward an argument that suggests potential problems in the interaction and engagement of cultures, which in my opinion cannot be ignored. He argues that where people feel duty bound to treat group differences with respect, any stance short of complete acceptance can be construed as 'an act of imperialism', which in itself would be an anathema to subscribers of multiculturalism or interculturalism. However, this fear of imposition of one's own values on another individual or group can lead to a kind of 'respect' that must become 'no contact', because to have contact would lead to an engagement with difference, and encountering those differences becomes problematic when they conflict with one's own values. This kind of double bind can lead directly to a cul-de-sac:

> They [multiculturalists] are enjoined to tolerate their differences so that each may be allowed an authentic expression of their cultural identity. But the only way in which this is possible is for each of the individuals to disengage and subjugate their own discriminatory processes. (Dalal, 2008, p. 9)

My suggestion is that 'inter'culturalists face a grave dilemma. Within interculturalism there is the *requirement* for interaction and engagement; therefore one has to take a position or a stand on issues of difference, which perhaps multiculturalists were able to side step somewhat. This brings us back to the principle of 'equality': issues within the 'equality' arena can particularly confront and challenge one's own beliefs. When these situations arise for us as interculturalists, does it mean that we take refuge in assimilationism or do we adopt a laissez-faire approach, even in the face of these contradictions to our beliefs? How do we hold to the principle of equality of cultures when we believe that someone's life or well-being may be in danger? Does an equality based on 'human rights' take over in this case and supersede equality of cultures? Who decides this? And who decides on the interpretation of those 'human rights'? In interrogating 'equality', we enter very choppy waters. There are no easy answers, but plenty of potential for heated debate, which I think has, for the most part, been conspicuous by its absence in contemporary Ireland.

This is where the combination of intercultural education with development education becomes particularly problematic. When we investigate interpretations of equality, we encounter a very broad sweep of views indeed. However, in the 2007 DICE research report (Fitzgerald, 2007), one of the arguments put forward for a combination of the two educations was that there are key underlying values shared by both. One of these shared values is named as 'a commitment to promoting equality and social justice' (p. 14).

I would contend that within intercultural education there is no shared understanding of what these values actually mean, so this assumption of shared values between development education and intercultural education is erroneous. The debate is in danger of being glossed over in an assumption of understanding and of shared meaning, which could result in a missed opportunity to penetrate below the surface of popular statements in order to look at some of the complexities and ambiguities of interculturalism in contemporary Ireland.

PROPOSAL FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

Throughout this paper, I have been arguing for the creation of sufficient 'space' in order to allow educators to debate some of the tough questions about interculturalism in Ireland. This space does not exist within the current model of a combined approach to development and intercultural education in pre-service teacher education and, as I have argued, the model can lead to a misleading assumption of homogeneity within intercultural thinking, which glosses over crucial variations and differences. Suggesting that intercultural education is a sub-set of development education (DICE Project, 2008; Fitzgerald, 2007) is an example of this glossing over and of the dangers of placing the two educations together. Relying on a kind of 'hybrid' model which occupies the supposed shared areas of development education and intercultural education is also problematic because there has been insufficient debate within intercultural education about what those values actually consist of, much less any consensus about their meaning.

There is provision for an 11-hour module in 'Development and Intercultural Education' as part of the Inclusive Education course on the Bachelor of Education (BEd) programme in the Trinity College-associated colleges. This is one of the courses that I teach. Within this 11-hour timeframe, both 'educations' are to be addressed. This is the only opportunity that students have for a discrete treatment of these areas on

their course, although aspects of both development education and intercultural education are incorporated into some other areas on the BEd.

My proposal is that the issues of intercultural education are now so complex in Ireland that this course should be completely rededicated to intercultural education. This would enable students to enter the debate with depth and rigour. It would create opportunities to explore the range of multiculturalisms, to be clear on the meaning of 'inter'culturalism, and to consider how practice might be developed in the light of this more penetrating investigation. Development education could then be fully incorporated into SESE (Social, Environmental and Scientific Education), history and geography, mainstreaming it as part of these subject areas and emphasising its place within the curriculum.

Development educators will object that if this were to happen then students might not get sufficient opportunities to explore vital aspects of development education, such as the Millennium Development Goals, trade and aid issues, sustainable development and so on. This argument actually strengthens my case for a separate treatment of both intercultural education and development education. Development issues need to be explored in their own right. In packaging them with intercultural education, we have created a situation where decisions must be made about priorities, especially on a very short course. Which topic should be addressed, anti-racism or the Millennium Development Goals; English as an additional language or Fair Trade; religious education in multi-faith settings or climate change? These are all weighty topics needing treatment of depth and quality. Or should we stick to a course that operates in the territory of the supposed underlying principles of both – and deal in the more abstract areas of 'respect for diversity' and the 'promotion of equality'. I have presented what I believe are the problems with that particular approach.

It is no longer feasible that intercultural and development education be combined on the BEd programme. This model does justice to neither. I hope I have illustrated throughout this paper just how complex and contentious intercultural education is. Development education is equally so. Creating an illusion of homogeneity of thought in either does both a disservice. Intercultural education requires the space to be investigated with rigour and depth, allowing the tough questions to emerge and be debated. Creating a hybrid model in which both educations are combined risks generating a watered-down approach that operates in some supposedly shared space but which neglects the discrete areas of both disciplines that need to be addressed in pre-service education. My vision for intercultural education is that it will stand alone on the BEd

programme, as a topic in its own right, and that student teachers will have opportunities to fully engage with its complex questions. I think we will then be able to properly equip our graduate teachers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to educate children and young people in the multicultural diverse society that 21st-century Ireland has become.

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THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ADDRESSING CONTEMPORARY TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES

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THIS paper presents two case studies of initial teacher education (ITE) electives available to Bachelor of Education (BEd) students in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. Both case studies strive to promote intercultural awareness in different ways, and this paper will explore how these electives integrated information and communication technology (ICT) into the presentation and assessment of the courses, as well as the implications for practice as advertised to the students.

TWO CURRICULUM SPECIALISATIONS

In the second semester of third year, the BEd students are offered a module in a curriculum specialisation of their choice. The range of courses on offer varies from year to year and would typically include courses such as inclusive education, drama, social and personal health education (SPHE), art, music education and so on. These class groups are of smaller numbers and would include study trips and guest speakers and would emphasise the practical application of learning. Students receive four hours a week in their chosen curriculum specialisation across the span of the semester, amounting to 48 hours in total. The authors of this paper both deliver curriculum specialisations entitled 'Modern Languages in the Primary School Classroom' and 'Development and Intercultural Education', respectively. Both electives are run separately but guest speakers were shared where a common aim was identified.

ICT IN THE MODERN CLASSROOM

ICT has up until recently been seen as a separate subject; teaching students how to use the technology was an end in itself. More recent guidelines by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) state that 'when effectively integrated into the Primary School Curriculum, ICT can offer teachers and children a powerful suite of tools to support their teaching and learning' (2004, p. i). This view is supported by Burnett et al., where they state: 'It may not be the case that the use of ICT transforms learning; however, it can certainly "enrich" learning, as Interactive White Boards replace whiteboards and websites replace worksheets' (Burnett et al., 2006, p. 12). ICT should be used to enhance the learning experience for students across the curriculum, and we in Initial Teacher Educators should be modelling this within the colleges of education.

ICT also presents a huge opportunity for those who want to bring development education (DE) and intercultural education (ICE) into their teaching. It can be designed to provide active, co-operative, peer-based learning, to stimulate critical thinking, to engage the students in higher-order thinking skills and to promote independent learning. ICT also lends itself to discursive-based learning. All these methodologies are core to DE and ICE.

In light of these statements, this paper will consider to what effect ICT was used in both curriculum specialisations, present learnings based on the inclusion of ICT in these curriculum specialisations, identify further opportunities for the inclusion of ICT in ITE, and briefly consider why ICT is not utilised more in ITE.

CASE STUDY 1: TEACHING OF MODERN LANGUAGES IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

While the title of this elective sounds quite narrow in its scope, over the course of the 12 weeks a variety of different areas were included. The general aims of the course were as follows:

General aims:

1. To prepare pre-service teachers for new developments in the curriculum over the next number of years (introduction of modern languages).

2. To highlight the need for teachers to develop cultural awareness in the classroom.
3. To afford pre-service teachers the opportunity to utilise their in-depth knowledge of a modern language in a pedagogical manner.

The second aim above shows the centrality of cultural awareness within the development of the course.

Course objectives:

The specific objectives of the course were as follows:

1. To enable student teachers to become proficient in the methodologies of teaching second and third languages.
2. To introduce student teachers to the theories behind *why* and *how* we teach modern languages.
3. To enable student teachers to develop attitudes and methodologies that will assist them in engaging with multicultural classrooms.
4. To afford student teachers the opportunity to engage with experts in the field of second language acquisition.
5. To develop ways of applying methodologies already known and practised by student teachers to the area of modern languages in the curriculum.
6. To enable student teachers to engage with the teaching of modern languages in a cross-curricular manner.

The third aim above particularly highlights the need for pre-service teachers to examine their own experiences of interculturalism and to investigate ways of incorporating intercultural education within the classroom, regardless of which subject it happens through.

Overview of modern languages curriculum

Modern languages (ML) have been taught in a number of schools since 1998. The subjects taught are French, German, Spanish and Italian, and at present approximately 500 schools are participating in the initiative (MLPSI, 2008). Draft curriculum guidelines were published in 1999, with teacher guidelines following in 2000. The ML curriculum is divided into three strands: communicative competence, language awareness (LA) and cultural awareness (CA). These are subdivided into the four strand units of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The two strands of LA and CA are of particular relevance to this paper. While the main focus of LA and CA is on the particular ML being taught in the school, provisions are also made for the recognition of other languages within those strands.

Modern languages in the context of intercultural education

The intercultural approach is most frequently defined in terms of combining its integration into specific subjects and its cross-curricular situation. It is never regarded as a subject in its own right. The subjects into which the intercultural approach is most frequently incorporated are history and geography, followed by four foreign languages, religion and the language of instruction. In just over a third of the countries, the intercultural approach is also included in lessons concerned with knowledge and understanding of society, such as those devoted to civics and political education, sociology or ethics, thus placing intercultural issues among the major concerns of education in citizenship (Eurydice, 2004, p. 59).

In terms of LA, most of the strand units would be relevant to exploring the languages of newcomer children. In particular, the child should be enabled to explore languages in the following ways:

- 'Investigate, where appropriate, the languages of children in the class whose culture and language are not those of the majority' (NCCA, 1999, p. 33)
- 'Where children's parents, grandparents or neighbours are native speakers of other languages, they could be invited to visit the class' (p. 33)
- 'Look at the alphabet in other languages and compare and contrast with alphabet systems already known' (p. 34)

In terms of CA, each strand unit is relevant to intercultural education, and at all times students were encouraged to integrate this strand into other areas of the curriculum besides ML. The following objectives are examples from the 'Speaking' strand unit:

- 'Learn stories, rhymes, songs and chants from countries speaking the language' (NCCA, 1999, p. 39)
- 'Identify typical children's names from countries speaking the language' (p. 39)
- 'Discuss traditional costumes and when they are worn using simple phrases or sentences' (p. 39)
- 'Learn and construct simple phrases or sentences about

famous people from countries where the target language is spoken' (p. 39)
- 'Discuss the currency' (p. 39)
- 'Talk about the flags of different countries' (p. 39)
- 'Talk about food from different countries' (p. 39)

It can be seen from this brief overview of some of the pupil objectives within the LA and CA strands in the draft curriculum guidelines that intercultural education has a relatively high status within the curriculum.

ICT within the presentation of ML

ICT was used in a variety of ways to display the possibilities for student teachers to develop their own intercultural awareness and to provide ideas for activities in the ML/intercultural classroom. For example, it was possible to examine videos on YouTube which would help the student teachers themselves to develop an awareness of some languages. The following links were used in showing:

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGAXxiwxFZk
  'Happy Birthday' sung in multiple languages, using a Disney theme.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtuhgjDOxUY
  An online phrasebook of Rumansch, a language closely related to French and Italian, spoken in Switzerland.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGMDFcUvCa0
  An online phrasebook detailing some basics of the Polish language.

The resource of Teachers TV (www.teachers.tv) was also used in an effort to use video case study analyses. Video clips regarding the use of a CLIL (content and language integrated learning) approach in ML teaching were examined, as were clips showing the integration of newcomer children in British schools. Ideas for good practice were identified and students found it beneficial to undertake in-depth analyses of these types of resources.

Assessment of module in context of ICT

Assessment for the module took the form of reflective journals, individual presentations and essay-style coursework. One of the lectures given was

regarding the use of ICT within modern languages, both from a CLIL approach and with a view to using ICT within the ML class. Students were required to write a journal entry regarding websites suitable for use when planning lessons, and those suitable for use with children.

The following are websites identified by students as being useful for the teacher in planning and delivering lessons:

- www.nacell.org.uk/resources/online_res_ger.htm
- www.labbe.de/zzzebranetz
- www.mlpsi.ie
- www.teachingideas.co.uk/foreignlanguages/contents.htm
- www.primaryresources.co.uk/mfl/mfl.htm

The following were identified as useful to the pupils in order to consolidate and further their language learning:

- www.ltscotland.org.uk/mlfe/c4modernlanguages
- www.voyagkids.com
- www.germany.info/relaunch/culture/life/G_Kids/index.htm
- www.kindernetz.de
- www.ukgermanconnection.org
- http://fr.boowakala.com
- www.pdictionary.com

The following were deemed by the students as being beneficial to both pupils and teachers in a variety of ways:

- www.momes.net
- www.teachnet.ie/clane/songsnrhymes.htm
- www.bbc.co.uk/languages

An interesting point is that the students seemed to pick many websites which do not cater specifically for the ML they will be teaching in the classroom. In fact, many of these websites cater for a variety of different languages and develop language awareness based on an examination of a variety of different languages, which is in keeping with the *Intercultural Education in the Primary School: Guidelines for Schools* (NCCA, 2005).

Furthermore, students were required to use PowerPoint or similar software in order to give a presentation five minutes in length, detailing a lesson plan for use in the ML classroom. Students were encouraged to use clips from YouTube, pictures from image searches on Google and similar search engines.

The students gave their consent to the material produced being used as part of an online forum: http://groups.google.com/group/mlpsmic. The group was administered by the course leader, and all students were encouraged to become members. Seven students chose to upload their lesson-planning materials to the forum, in an act of information sharing. The forum was identified as a way to share good practice in the future, and students now regularly update the forum with examples of language awareness and cultural awareness activities. For example, a student recently uploaded a picture from a pilgrimage site, where the students could be encouraged to examine the characteristics of different languages and the reasons why those languages might be among those displayed in that setting.

CASE STUDY 2: INCORPORATING DEVELOPMENT AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION INTO THE CLASSROOM

The curriculum specialisation in development and intercultural education is a very popular option. The motivation of the students varied: some had been to developing countries either as part of the Alternative Education Experience Africa (a sending programme within Mary Immaculate College) or during their summer holidays with various organisations; more were simply interested in social justice issues; while still more were seeking information on how to engage with the diversity they had encountered in the classroom while on teaching practice.

General aims and objectives:

The aims and objectives of the development and intercultural education specialisation were to:

- Create awareness among the students about DE and ICE issues
- Encourage the students to examine their own attitudes and assumptions in relation to these issues
- Emphasise to them the relevance of DE and ICE to the modern classroom and how it links into the primary school curriculum
- Foster confidence in the students in incorporating DE and ICE into their future classrooms by working on specific skills and methodologies

ICT within the DE and ICE curriculum specialisation

There are numerous examples of ICT that lend themselves to integrating DE and ICE into the classroom. This paper will focus on two technologies in particular, the 'interactive whiteboard' and 'eTwinning' that were introduced to the students during the course of the curriculum specialisation.

Interactive whiteboards

Towards the second half of the curriculum specialisation when much of the theory had been covered, the practical applications of DE and ICE in the classroom were focused on. From ongoing interaction with teachers bringing DE and ICE in the classroom and further independent research, the value of the interactive whiteboard (IWB) in the modern classroom became apparent. The interactive whiteboard is

> ...a large interactive display that connects to a computer and projector. A projector projects the computer's desktop onto the board's surface, where users control the computer using a pen, finger or other device. The board is typically mounted to a wall or on a floor stand.[1]

Many DE and ICE resources have in fact been designed specifically for the interactive whiteboard. The visual nature of the IWB is perfectly suited to making abstract ideas and global issues more tangible for students; it is also a very much child-centred technology. One such IWB game is 'Mapping Our World' produced by Oxfam Education, UK. The game is suitable for 8–14-year-olds and 'explores the relationship between maps and globes, and how different projections influence our perception of the world, challenging the idea that there is one "correct" version of the world map' (Oxfam Education, 2008).

These types of lessons link easily to both DE and ICE and the benefits they would have in the classroom are clear. One full curriculum specialisation session was devoted specifically to using the IWB as a tool for DE and ICE and familiarising students with it. The students reacted very favourably to the introduction of this technology as is evident from the quotes below:

> 'With regard to the interactive whiteboard I was in awe of the amount of resources and programmes for it available free on the internet ... I believe they are the most invaluable resource a class could have and should be installed in all classrooms.'

> 'I found this very beneficial as it had only briefly been explained to us in ICT lectures, yet I did not realise how beneficial it could be in teaching newcomer children.'

They were also quick to link IWB to the active and collaborative learning emphasis within both DE and ICE:

> 'I strongly believe that the interactive whiteboard promotes and creates active fun and child-centred learning. There are ample websites which can be used ... these websites will certainly assist the teacher's fearas.'

While being very positive about the potential benefits of the IWB:

> 'It also can be used at home, the child can log into the website and take the lesson plan further than it was in school, or can review the material covered that day in class in an effort to "catch up".'

> 'This resource really makes the job a lot easier. If I come across an object in a story that newcomers are unaware of, she can find a picture on the net and display it in no time.'

They were still aware of using the technology in a balanced way:

> 'A teacher [could] get too dependent on them [IWB] and rely too much on them as their main methodology. I also disagree with students looking at a screen all day. If I had one in my class I think, I would only use it for some subjects and use numerous teaching methods.'

'eTwinning'

The second technology introduced to the DE and ICE curriculum specialisation was eTwinning. eTwinning is a framework for schools to collaborate on the internet with partner schools in other countries (Léargas, 2007). According to Burnett et al. (2006), the rapid growth of different forms of eCommunication has become a popular and powerful force in the lives of young people in particular; as educators we should be exploiting this and bringing eCommunication into our classrooms.

eTwinning is an internet-based initiative which has really succeeded in increasing cultural awareness between schools. Exceeding the physical walls of the classroom, it allows students from different countries to engage in real-time discussions, provides them with the

opportunity to interact with those living in remote corners of the world, thereby creating a palpable global community.

According to Linklater (2007), the objectives of eTwinning are as follows:

- To develop collaborative school partnerships
- To share resources with other European schools
- To enable teachers to be more creative in their teaching
- To create an authentic context for learning.

To which encouraging cross-cultural communication and understandings as well as exposure to alternative perspectives can be added.

How do you go about setting up such a partnership?

Setting up an eTwinning partnership can be achieved in any number of ways through blogs, instant messaging, video conferencing, and so on. The use of Skype[2] was especially promoted with the students enrolled in the DE and ICE curriculum specialisation as it is easy to use, cheap and allows students to communicate in real time.

There are dedicated websites to facilitate schools and teachers in engaging in the eTwinning process.[3] eTwinning involves uploading school information to the website, stating the key interests of the school, and linking with other schools in order to fulfil shared objectives.

The kind of eTwinning projects that can be organised are only as limited as the imagination. The objectives may be subject or culture centred. For example, partner classes creating online presentations about customs and traditions in their respective countries or describing a typical day in their school and then discussing the similarities and differences would be culture centred. A more subject-centred project, for example maths, could have classes carry out a survey on recycling in their city, translating the results into graphs, commenting on them and suggesting solutions for the future. These examples and many more can be found on the eTwinning School Partnerships in Europe website in the 'Starter Kits' section.

One particular project, 'Once Upon a Blog', created between Saint Attracta's Senior National School, Dublin and Saint Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii School in Malta involved children from 6 to 8 years exchanging national myths and legends using blog and podcast technologies. The Irish teacher Joseph Molloy stated that:

> This project formed an electronic bridge between two island nations in the EU, one in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea and

> the other on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. The laughter and excitement of children dissolved international boundaries. The rich tapestry of accents and expressions in the podcasts and live video conferences added to the sense of overseas adventure and cultural exchange. It is important to note that the technology was invisible to the children – they could only see and hear each other. They only became aware of it when it malfunctioned and spoiled their serious fun.[4]

The Maltese teacher, Jacqueline Vanhear, was just as positive: 'The girls' enthusiasm grew more each day. At first this project started off as something new in the curriculum, but then it developed into a wonderful experience.'

Students in the DE and ICE curriculum specialisation could immediately see the potential of eCommunication in creating an intercultural classroom through eTwinning their class with one in Poland, for example.

Further opportunities

While ICT was the focus to a certain extent in these curriculum specialisations, it could be used much more. Two technologies that could be used in ITE specifically are del.icio.us and Rollyo.

Del.icio.us is a social bookmarking website: 'The primary use of del.icio.us is to store your bookmarks online, which allows you to access the same bookmarks from any computer and add bookmarks from anywhere, too' (http://del.icio.us/about). This would be of use to students from a research point of view. Many students rely on college computer labs for ICT access, queuing for computers and using whatever computer becomes free. A technology such as del.icio.us could help in creating more efficient and seamless research. It also allows for collaboration; groups of students can set up and maintain a shared account allowing them to collect and organise bookmarks that are relevant – and useful – to the entire group. This would be of huge benefit to students when carrying out research for group presentations, etc.

The second technology, Rollyo, would also be of use to pre-service teachers. The number of websites increases daily, which has implications for research, i.e. knowing where to start, what sources are reliable, etc. Instead of giving students a list of websites, Rollyo allows the lecturer/teacher to create a customised search engine that provides results from a selection of hand-picked sites. Rollyo is very user friendly and has obvious implications for the primary school classroom as well.

Why ICT is not utilised more

The case for education through ICT is persuasive: much ICT is specifically designed for educational purposes, it is free to download, is a viable way of gaining the attention of students, and promotes the methodologies of DE and ICE. However, as Burnett et al. notes: 'Despite creative and innovative uses of new technology outside the classroom, many teachers struggle with the practicalities of integrating ICT into the curriculum' (Burnett et al., 2006, p. 12).

Surely then the ITE colleges should be showing leadership in this area? Why is ICT not utilised more in initial teacher education? Naturally, teacher education colleges focus on education first and ICT and ICT training as a lesser priority. ICT classes can be extremely limited in both the time designated to them and the scope.

Specific research would have to be carried out to conclusively answer why ICT is not utilised more in initial teacher education. Contributing factors may be that the BEd programme as a whole is already overloaded and so there simply is no time/space to devote to introducing students to emerging technologies. Furthermore, there could be competing needs for the limited ICT resources that are available and, finally, keeping abreast of emerging ICT is one more challenge to add to already significant workloads in the ITE colleges. It is, however, a question worth considering.

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Notes

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interactive_whiteboard

[2] Skype is a free-to-download software program that allows users to make telephone/video calls over the internet to other Skype users free of charge, thus allowing simultaneous communication. All that is needed is internet access, a microphone and web camera, which can be bought a minimal cost.

[3] http://www.etwinning.ie/index.html

[4] http://www.etwinning.ie/index.html

PART 2

CHALLENGING PERSPECTIVES OF THE WORLD IN THE CLASSROOM

IMAGING *OF* THE SOUTH VS IMAGES FROM THE SOUTH

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THIS paper explores the use of images from the Global South in development education (DE) resources in Ireland, particularly at the early school level. It argues that there is a tendency of 'imaging' the Global South in the application of visual learning tools (VLT). This argument is premised on the context of the revolution in information technology and the exclusive structure of the resource-design regime in Ireland. The paper highlights the need to define the manner in which consent for publication is secured from vulnerable people. It proposes that the use of images in teaching resources needs to be subjected to the rigours of critical literacy.

DEFINING 'IMAGES'

There appears to be disconcertment between mainstream development education actors and Global South interest groups (particularly of Africa origin) on the type of images that represent a shift from stereotypical images of the Global South (Jabbi, 2008, p. 4). Within the DE context, 'images' may be understood as graphic representations in the form of photographs, cartoons, artwork, animations and similar visual media, whose content may influence a perception or view, whether intended or unintended.[1] This definition reinforces the Chinese proverb: 'One picture is worth a thousand words'.

INFLUENCING PERCEPTION

The advancement in information technology (IT) and digital photography has virtually privatised almost beyond regulation the manner in which images can be used to communicate knowledge that

influence perceptions. Today images are communicated in a variety of ways that are frequently independent. Yet their impact converges through the synthesis of digital technology to merge in influencing perceptions. While the media industry, development agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) may operate different agenda, their work is enhanced by the use of images that manipulate and prompt public interest in particular directions that may not be compatible with public education (Gyoh, 2008, p. 5). This potential conflict makes the choice and use of images a very important aspect of development education as a powerful tool in reframing and influencing perceptions (Scottish Further Education Unit, 2008).

HIGH VALUE AND LOW VALUE RESOURCES

Studies continue to suggest that the use of appropriate images can increase student comprehension of new materials by providing visual memory cues that stimulates understanding and perception (Technical Advisory Service for Images, 2008). An individual's memory or response to an image can be described in their own words, giving it a new life with strong communicable elements (Bond, 2007). An important point to note is that just as images are used to promote narrow and sometimes negative views, images can equally assist in avoiding or reversing misconceptions. The IT revolution in access to visual materials presents huge challenges for global citizenship educators in identifying what material might constitute *high value* and *low value* resources in teaching methodologies. It also has implications for sustainable approaches to inculcating values aimed at appreciating diversity and global justice (European Youth Centre, 1995).

Introducing the concept of high value and low value resources may begin to provide a systematic way of identifying the type of materials that constitute appropriate learning tools that promote good practice in realising the desired outcome of the growing field of development and intercultural education. High value resources would refer to those materials and images that offer fuller representation and a recognition of the context and diversity of the social and economic experiences in specific societies. Low value resources, on the other hand, offer a narrow and less engaging knowledge prone to a distortion of the desired output of citizenship education. Introducing low value resources to pupils would have the undesirable effect of 'imaging' rather than the use of images as a learning resource.

CHALLENGES OF VLT

One of the most urgent challenges for incorporating VLT in schools is the need for teacher training to acquire skills in identifying appropriate images relevant at the different stages of VLT application as a teaching resource (Technical Advisory Service for Images, 2008). There is also an absence of rigour in the selection and use of images as usually applied to textual material for classroom activity. Critical literacy in the use of images suggests that images are understood within the wider local context and that care is taken to adequately project related global dimensions, even where they may not necessarily harmonise with the narrow interests of the resource producer. Another major gap is the marginal involvement of primary stakeholders from the Global South at various stages of developing and implementing learning resources. Global South actors may play an important role in interpreting and identifying the quality of images used as VLT in early education, if the space is created for their involvement in the design of teaching resources: 'Images invoke lateral thinking ... they trigger a wide range of associations than words' (FILTER, 2008).

DIVERGENCE IN INTERPRETATION

While a published image may well be authentic, it may not be representative of a wider picture or serve the intended purpose of public education. It is at this point that the choice between *images from* the South and *imaging of* the South diverge. While the latter projects isolated and specific scenarios aimed at a particular interest as publicity and patronage, the former would be more contextual, serving a broader purpose of knowledge transfer. For example, much of the images that influence the perception of the average European about Africa are those exported to the outside world by the media, tourists, freelance photographers and aid workers, which centre on wildlife in the midst of war, misery, disease and poverty. These are the images exported (presumably in good faith) to further specific experiences and interests. 'Imaging' would therefore imply images that direct the mind's eye towards a linear thought process that promotes a particular interest. Where a visual learning tool does not incorporate a wider context of 'the picture', it falls victim to 'imaging'.

REINFORCING STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE

It is difficult today to see published images, outside Africa, of an average regular household other than the above stereotypical settings of impoverished rural life and desert villages. Quite remarkably, there are teachers whose perceptions of Africa are constructed on the highly circulated images of calamity and destitution and are truly astounded that normal societies exist in any part of Africa. This is because they have hardly encountered photographs depicting normal societies and urban settings in teaching materials at their disposal. While photographs of smiling but undernourished kids and hearty maidens sharing a waterhole with grazing animals may be a tourist delight and a charity's 'must have', they represent an imaging of Africa that reinforces stereotypical perceptions. These selective images of Africa and parts of the Global South often have the unintended outcome of promoting stereotypes, particularly for impressionable young children who may quickly associate such imagery with the 'faces' from Africa. It is critical at the early school stage to adopt approaches that highlight inequalities, even within the Global South, rather than using parallel comparisons that are clearly not context sensitive.

One common pattern by which imaging of the Global South occurs is the interpretation of traditional African settings from the lens of Western modernity. Most photographs used by the three leading DE resource developers in Ireland have stories of despair and destitution to match classroom activity packs. For example, the context of traditional African rural settings are virtually disregarded and quickly analysed from the point of Western modernity rather than an appreciation of diversity. Clearly, a kitchen set in a rural area with no electricity supply would need a stone grinder or mortar and not an electric blender. Firewood, stove and coal would be the sources of energy, not an electric oven, and the clay pot would be the means of cooling drinking water, not a fridge. These are the technologies compatible with the developmental stage of that society, and the intervention necessary to change those variables are beyond the scope of early school material.

Frequently, the tragedy experienced in about six African countries is used to portray the remaining 48 countries. It is always 'the famine' or 'the children' or 'the disease' in Africa. The disparities in the subsistent rural economy and urban relative poverty are conveniently missed in engaging with images. Again, this is the outcome of the use of images produced to solicit patronage for charity aid and not aimed at diversity *awareness*. Therefore, the import and misapplication of such material only result in

imaging that provides fertile ground for stereotyping and prejudice, which are the same attitudes DE aims to address. As Cromie (1999) states: 'Images connect to the "mind's eye"... every image tells a story.'

CONSENT AND COMPLIANCE

The need for a regime that defines the manner in which consent is secured from vulnerable people is quite important. It is rather presumptuous for publishers to quickly claim the consent to publish photographs of people who have no idea of the power of the media and the use to which their photographs may be put. The use of photographs to solicit patronage of any kind is a highly protective terrain in the Global North. However, photographs obtained from unsuspecting families in the South have no protection or assurances on regulated use. It is also highly unlikely that people photographed ever get to see such publications, or have any say in the manner of the photograph's usage. The onus falls entirely on the integrity of the publisher/photographer to ensure that this ignorance is not exploited.

One way to monitor compliance with the existing code of conduct developed by Dóchas (2008) is to evolve an inclusive mechanism that includes the participation of Global South migrant-led organisations involved in development education. Much of the work of Global South-led NGOs focus on issues around images and awareness of context representation. They could play an important role through exploring potential linkages in the South to improve awareness around consent on the use of photographs as well as provide an incentive for NGO compliance with the code of conduct.

While it is not suggested that DE should centre on concealing images of poverty in Africa or profiling the more affluent of the Global South, the choice of images included in sponsored publications and learning resources should be consciously defined by the wider goal and the suitability for the target audience. It is important that the target audience appreciate the global dimensions of local exclusion by portraying how inequalities in the Global South manifest differently in urban/rural disparities in the Global North. Recent research on black and minority ethnic community involvement in development education in Northern Ireland (Centre for Global Education, 2006) has identified a link between anti-racism work and development education, a perspective that is arguably yet to be clearly embraced in the design and planning of DE in the Republic of Ireland. The introduction of images

that present other sides to inequalities, even within Africa, may be more innovative and helpful to the wider objective of global citizenship education.

CONCLUSION

There is therefore a danger of imaging the South at the primary level of design and implementation of development and intercultural education. This danger also exists at a secondary level when images are misapplied, misinterpreted or where inappropriate materials are circulated at the various stages of early school education.

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Notes

[1] For further information see: www.thefreedictionary.com/images and www.answers.com/topic/image

BEYOND THE IMAGE

THE INTERSECTION OF EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT WITH MEDIA LITERACY

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THE DICE conference's challenge is a daunting one. The invitational brochure stated:

> In educating active global citizens the use of audiovisual media necessitates an education that stimulates a critical attitude towards the messages conveyed through diverse digital and other media. This critical attitude should empower children to see behind an image or a text and ultimately to understand the issues faced by our interdependent world.

In responding to that challenge, my contribution is a modest one. It is based on a relatively simple premise. To assist children and young people in developing this desired critical attitude, an analysis of individual still images is an important starting point. Furthermore, images such as photographs are versatile learning tools that can be used with relative ease in both traditional and hi-tech classrooms, by all teachers irrespective of their technological sophistication. In contrast to the more complex images from television, film or web-based virtual reality games, single images by 'standing still' are more easily interrogated, though, as I hope to demonstrate, are also highly complex.

IMAGE FOLDERS

This paper is based primarily on reflections from my own experiences as a second-level teacher and, more recently, my experiences as a teacher-educator listening to feedback from my students, particularly in the area of civic, social and political education (CSPE).

A starting belief is that when teachers build up their own individual 'image-folders', they have at their fingertips a valuable and versatile

resource for learning and teaching. Photographs culled from newspapers, magazines, calendars and other sources add an immediacy and an urgency that, by their very nature, textbooks cannot capture. Such image folders are especially relevant in the area of development education where immediacy and urgency are important values.

A somewhat old-fashioned ring binder with dozens of images, pasted onto sheets and housed in transparent envelopes or laminated, continues to offer the teacher extensive opportunities. It facilitates both collective and differentiated student responses to the images. Wall displays and deskwork can be used to engage individuals and small groups in a variety of learning activities. Transferring the image-folder concept to an electronic format extends the possibilities further, where massive databanks of images can be accessed instantly.

IMAGES AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

As well as presenting teachers of development education with rich opportunities for classroom learning, image folders also present challenges. Major challenges arise from the intersection of development education with media literacy.

For many in the West, our conceptualisation of the developing world, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, is, I suggest, strongly shaped by individual still images. In Ireland 40 years ago, much of the public interest that led to the foundation of Concern was generated by searing images of Biafran children, their stomachs swollen with kwashiorkor. TV images from Michael Buerk and Mohammed Amin in Ethiopia in 1984 triggered the Live Aid response. That famine also provided further unforgettable images of Africa. These cumulative images of hunger, disease, suffering and death continue to impact on our collective consciousness and so influence not only development educators but also the picture editors of newspapers, the editors of TV news programmes, the compilers of non-governmental organisation (NGO) promotional literature, and the developers of educational resources.

A predicament for the teacher of development education compiling an image folder centres on whether to include such images. Might they be reinforcing stereotypical conceptions of 'underdevelopment'? Might the use of such images – often taken without the subject's permission – be classified as exploitative, even abusive? Could the use of such images be contradicting other 'messages'? These enquiries prompt another question: how much is development education about controlling the

messages? If I decide to include such images in a folder, how might I use them in a classroom?

As I was compiling these thoughts, the May 2008 Concern newsletter, in electronic format, arrived in my email box. The lead item was about drought in Ethiopia. The accompanying image foregrounded three people – including a man – digging what looked like poor soil. It was a sympathetic picture, emphasising hardworking people at the mercy of forces greater than themselves. The accompanying report identified the three by name. How different is this approach to that of 40 years ago? Perhaps more importantly, what factors have influenced the shift? If a picture is more ethically acceptable, does it have the same fundraising, or consciousness-raising, power?

One marker of an increased awareness of the complexity of images relating to development is the approval in 2007 of the *Code of Conduct on Images and Messages* by Dóchas, an umbrella organisation of many NGOs. According to Dóchas, the choice of images should be based on three paramount principles:

- Respect for the dignity of the people concerned
- Belief in the equality of all people
- Acceptance of the need to promote fairness, solidarity and justice (Dóchas, 2006).

Analyses of educational photopacks can illustrate how these principles present their compilers with predicaments. The *Wananchi* photopack illustrates this well. The compilers of that pack demonstrate a clear consciousness of the need to move away from 'images of disaster' towards ones that challenge preconceptions and move towards greater analysis of development issues (Ireland Aid, 2001, p. 7). Careful study of the visual images used by Irish Aid (2007) in its various publications can also illustrate the difficulties posed by having to select a small number of images to convey the complex realities of Ireland's development programme.

In attempting to support classroom teachers in using images as part of development education, two particular concepts may be useful: (1) experiential learning and (2) denotation and connotation.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The first concept comes from the work of David Kolb. Kolb makes a number of incisive points about learning that are relevant to using

images with children. His perspective that learning is a continuous process grounded in experience leads him to contend that, put simply, 'all learning is re-learning' (Kolb, 1984, p. 28). He is keen to emphasise that the learners enter learning situations with some ideas – and varying degrees of articulacy – about the topic. Like Freire's critique of 'the banking concept' of education, Kolb also rejects the idea of teacher as 'depositor' of knowledge and the students as empty depositories (Freire, 1970, p. 53). As Kolb puts it, everyone is a psychologist, an historian, an atomic physicist: 'It is just that some of our theories are more crude and incorrect than others' (Kolb, 1984, p. 28).

When we focus on the refinement and validity of these theories, Kolb asserts, we miss the point. Rather, he contends, we need to recognise that the people we teach have held these beliefs whatever their quality and, until now, have used them in whatever situations they found themselves in that required thinking about psychology, history or atomic physics. Thus, children at every stage of development have already formed ideas about 'development', 'Africa' and a range of associated concepts. For Kolb, one of our challenges as educators is not only to try to implant new ideas but also to assist learners to modify or even dispose of their old ideas. Much resistance to learning stems from learners clinging to old beliefs, especially when they see new ones that are inconsistent with them. Thus, for Kolb, an important starting point is bringing the learners' beliefs and theories to the surface. In that sense, images can be used in a diagnostic sense, to elicit children's understandings of 'development' and the lives of people in developing countries. Critically, they can also be used to unpack underlying attitudes. To do this well, teachers need to listen carefully to how children 'read' photos. For example, children often focus on the familiar and on incidental details; their interpretations can be quite different from how adults 'read' images.

Every teacher who has attempted to engage a class in development education will probably recognise the validity and relevance of Kolb's remarks about learners clinging to old beliefs. In my experience, teachers frequently remark on the persistence of young people's negative beliefs about developing countries. Incidentally, teachers of CSPE, in particular, often make similar remarks about their students' views on immigrants and Travellers.

Kolb's views also offer a useful introduction to the concept of 'perspective consciousness', as highlighted in Comhlámh's 2008 guidelines for primary educators when working with photographs from around the world.

DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION

The second perspective comes from semiotics. Semioticians offer an instructive approach to photographs with their exploration of denotation and connotation. The familiar distinction often used with linguistic signs is between the 'literal' or 'obvious' meaning (denotation) and what might be the specific socio-cultural and sometimes more personal meanings associated with the sign (connotation). Current examples include 'tribunal', 'September 11th' and 'Lisbon'. Of course, connotations also vary depending on the age and social class of the interpreter.

Applying denotation and connotation to photography, Fiske states that 'denotation is what is photographed, connotation is how it is photographed' (1982, p. 91). Now – and for teachers this is a key point – in photography, denotation is foregrounded at the expense of connotation. Hence, many people regard the signifier (the image) as virtually identical with what is signified (the actuality). A major task for the media educator is to go beyond the image by exploring the connotations – the 'how' as well as the 'what'. In development education, analysis of photographs that explores connotation as well as denotation can be especially powerful.

INTERROGATING THE IMAGE

Elsewhere, I have attempted to draw up a series of questions that might assist the interrogation of a still image (Jeffers, 1997, p. 38). The questions were designed to demonstrate, first of all, how photographs are constructed. Secondly, the questions aimed to assist students in identifying aspects of the process that contributed to the meaning or 'the sense' they made of the image. The intention was to highlight the complexity of images, despite superficial simplicity.

A good starting point is to explore what is denoted in a particular image: *What do you see?* In encouraging clear and precise observation skills, it can be useful to attend to the details, to 'unpack' the contexts of the photo. Additional questions might include:

- *What's included?*
- *What's highlighted?*
- *What's left out?*

It is also worth extracting the impact the image has on the reader: *What is your immediate impression of this photograph?* This is an

important question because we process images so fast that we are often unaware of why we respond positively, negatively or otherwise to an image. Teachers need to be conscious that images elicit emotional and intellectual responses. When students say 'I like that picture', the act of inviting them to explore what exactly it is they like can also be productive, even if their initial response is to say they don't know.

The next stage is to begin to explore questions relating to 'how' the photograph was taken. For example:

- *Is the subject aware of the image being taken?*
- *If so, how does s/he feel about being photographed?*
- *How posed is the photograph?*
- *What was the photographer's point of view when taking the shot?*

These questions introduce in a very clear way the person behind the camera, a thinking person making deliberate choices from a range of options. Such interrogation is effective in promoting an appreciation of how images are constructed. In this, a central question worth revisiting regularly is: *What choices did the photographer make?* Keeping the focus on the choice of subject matter is crucial, for example, through questions such as:

- *Why this image rather than any other?*
- *What other images might have been made?*

One can then move on to exploring questions about 'how' the image was photographed; for example, questions about lighting such as:

- *Is the lighting natural or artificial?*
- *Is the subject lit from left, right, front, from above or behind?*
- *Is the lighting soft or hard?*

Other areas worth examining include the *context* in which the image appears (magazine, newspaper, as part of an advertisement, etc.), whether it is accompanied by a *caption*, what *other images* it reminds you of, and the *associations* the image brings about. However, pedagogically, a central focus should be on establishing a greater understanding of how connotations work, that the image is the end result of a complex series of deliberate choices, even if not fully conscious.

PERSISTENCE OF STEREOTYPES

Kolb's perspective brings into sharp focus the challenge many teachers face in development education, that of the persistence of negative stereotypes. Rosalind Duke's questioning of whether the discourse of development education is counterproductive is especially relevant when it comes to using images. She asks whether the discourse serves to perpetuate connotations of superiority and inferiority, reinforces negative stereotyping, and might even work against its own stated aim of challenging injustice and inequality by building up instead hierarchical images of Self and Other which undermine notions of equality (Duke, 2003, p. 201).

The value of this critical lens becomes evident when applied to particular images. The photograph of workers on the Ethiopian soil has already been mentioned. What is connoted by an image of an emaciated child photographed with the lighting that might be used for an advertisement in a glossy fashion magazine, the empty plate a lurid red? The clash of the slick world of advertising with the harshness of diseases of poverty is incongruous, though this may not be immediately obvious. The apparently simple image from Africa of a misspelling in a public place may bring a smile to the literate, but the teacher needs to ask whether beneath the humour lurks attitudes of superiority? Even a photograph of Irish volunteers building a wall that looks decidedly unsafe deserves critique. A shot from outer space that contrasts electricity consumption in Europe and in Africa can generate contrasting interpretations. What can be gleaned from the pictures taken by Irish tourists in developing countries? For example, what differences – particularly in how people are addressed – can be detected in 'snaps' from Soweto, Salou and Salthill? Why are we more comfortable taking images of people we have never met in some locations than in others? Teachers can also ask themselves how they might take and 'read' school scenes from developing countries compared to ones from nearer home? Dozens of other images could be selected for interrogation; by such interrogation the teacher develops sensitivity to the images' construction, to the possible meanings and interpretations and to our layered understandings of 'development' and 'development education'. A central concern has to be whether, unwittingly, in the taking and reading of images a sense of hierarchy is being reinforced, whether what is being emphasised in the Other as 'different' rather than what we have in common, particularly our humanity.

THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL

Two suggestions may help address any tendency towards seeing people in developing countries as 'different'. One is to consciously juxtapose the local with the global so that children can make the connections, that they see the shared humanity rather than the emphasis on difference. Thus, development photopacks might illustrate local Irish examples of development alongside those from developing countries.

The second suggestion is to encourage young people to take and make their own images. Back in the days when the dominant technology involved 24 shots on a roll of film, I often found that the idea of 'one photo per person' was effective in focusing minds and prompting students to think imaginatively about what image or location they might select. It proved especially valuable in framing questions of representation and how people wish to be represented, and the control – or lack of control – they have over images of themselves. This opened the way for a broader discussion about positive and negative representations of people. This, in turn, can lead to addressing topics such as social class, ethnic groupings, national identities and stereotyping.

With digital cameras the possibilities are extended further, though the ease with which images can be discarded and, with computers, manipulated, adds further issues. As the FÍS Project and the Fís a Dó Project illustrate, primary school students adapt comfortably to using cameras (Barnes and Flanagan, 2007, p. 39), so involving children themselves with manipulating the technology – once available – should not be an inhibitor.

SALGADO AND SPIERS

Finally, from a teacher development perspective, examining the work of an individual photographer can be a practical way of exploring further some of the issues touched on here. I offer two suggestions.

Brazilian-born photographer Sebastião Salgado told *The Times* of London last year: 'I have no claim to be a social photographer. People stuck that label on me, but I do a lot of commercial work like everyone else. I am not a political militant, I'm a photographer and that's all' (Sage, 2007).

It is not clear how much of this is tongue-in-cheek as, concerned about deforestation resulting from sugar-cane planting, Salgado and his

wife founded an environmental NGO called Instituto Terra. Hence, a question that arises, particularly for teachers who use the work of photographers in classrooms, is: is it possible for anyone to be 'a photographer and that's all'? If one is not familiar with Salgado's work, is one's response altered when his images are viewed? Salgado's images are powerful and at times controversial; some of them are readily accessible on the internet.

The work of Irish photographer Derek Spiers illustrates very well how photographers can position themselves sympathetically in relation to their subjects. His work over three decades is, among other things, a rich chronicle of the humanity of the marginalised in our society. At the opening of Combat Poverty's 20th anniversary photo exhibition in 2007, the social activist Fr Peter McVerry remarked: 'Just using this montage of photographs by Ireland's most renowned photographer of social scenes and social issues, Derek Spiers, could provide a major module in any civics or RE programme' (Combat Poverty, 2007).

Thus, if Derek Spiers' work is 'sympathetic', can other photographs be classified as 'unsympathetic'? The answer seems to be a resounding 'yes' and so carries consequences, not only for the photographs we use in classrooms, but also for teachers to sensitise young people in seeing such differences.

CONCLUSION

For the media educator, deconstructing images as outlined here can offer powerful lessons in how people make and shape the world according to their own perspectives. For the development educator, any exploration of images of development and underdevelopment needs to be attentive to children's exciting ideas and, indeed, such explorations can be attitudinally diagnostic. Additionally, teachers who appreciate denotation and connotation in photography seem more likely to be able to assist their students in developing more critical perspectives.

Image folders, whether in electronic or hard copy form, can be versatile tools for teaching and learning but need to be constructed carefully. Particular care needs to be taken not to unwittingly reinforce negative stereotypes. Close interrogation of still images can be effective in increasing the realisation that images are constructed in particular contexts, with particular agenda and perspectives. The ability to critique the construction of still images is a skill that appears to transfer readily to a similar critical perspective on film and TV images. Ultimately, the

educator needs to appreciate how complex individual images are and how contentious interpretations can be. Passing on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to such appreciation gives learners a resource with lifelong applications.

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TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PLURILINGUAL SCHOOLS

LESSONS FROM CLASSROOMS IN DUBLIN 15

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TEACHERS participating in the Multilingual Books Project in Dublin 15 initiated research around their experiences of the project. Findings from this research are featured in this article and illustrate in a fundamental way how children's lives in a globalised society can be linked to language learning and literacy development in the primary classroom. In addition to focusing on the outcomes of the research, the following article explores the wider contemporaneous context in which the research was conducted by illustrating how European and Irish policies on plurilingual and pluricultural education have the potential to be realised in appropriate classroom practices.

INTRODUCTION

Educators in Ireland recognise that there have been seismic shifts in the demographic profiles of children attending our schools, which have had significant implications for classroom-based practices and for the professional development requirements of school staffs (Martin, 2008; Deegan, 2007; Clarke & Drudy, 2006; Divine, 2005; Department of Education and Science, 2005). In the latest figures available from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), it is estimated that some 10 per cent of persons who now reside in the State come from a background other than white Irish (2007, p. 24). Some of the most dramatic changes in

demographic profiles have been recorded in the western suburbs of Dublin. For example, in Dublin 15 there has been a net growth in the total population of some 26.9 per cent between 2002 and 2006, resulting in a total population for the area of an estimated 91,000 persons. Added to this exponential growth in population has been the growing diversity evidenced among those who have recently arrived in this part of Dublin. The CSO reports that an estimated 27 per cent of all those living in Dublin 15 come from an ethnic background other than white Irish (McGorman & Sugrue, 2007, p. 33).

It is not overly contentious to state that in such a changed landscape for teaching and learning, the former content and methodologies for mediating the curriculum, which may have served a largely homogenous population in the past, are quite simply not good enough in the present circumstances. There is a necessity to reinvision how to engage effectively with diversity so that the educational experiences of all children are enriched by the experience of living and learning in a society which is typified by religious, ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity. We are faced with a situation where terms such as world citizenship or global citizenship (Cates, 1995; Audigier, 1999, p. 62) are increasingly applicable in the Irish context, especially in the case of schools where those from ethnic minority backgrounds form a majority of all children. The question then arises as to how we might be guided in the development of innovative practices which best serve both teachers and children within our schools in this increasingly globalised context.

LOCAL PRACTICES GUIDED BY GLOBAL CONCERNS

It is at the interface between localised and globalising forces as manifested in schools where space for dialogue can be found. In that space there is great potential for solutions to be identified, overcoming the challenges associated with diversity. Accordingly, a just measure of global progress requires that we investigate how the rights and representations of minorities in the regional domain are redistributed at the local level, particularly in those countries which have benefited from the impacts of globalisation (Bhabha, 2004 p. 15). Historically at a global level, there is a realisation that conflicts may arise where due respect is not afforded to minority communities who may have a different cultural or linguistic background. For this reason, the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) provided an assurance under Article 47 that 'persons belonging to ethnic, religious or

linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with others of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language'.

However, all too often the reality is that engagement with 'the other' is seen as problematic, a negative experience which can be fixed by assimilating those who may not fit into the dominant view of what a host society maintains as its own cultural, linguistic or religious identity (Cummins, 2002). Such an easy fix has the potential to backfire and to create inter-ethnic conflicts. Nevertheless, a certain level of tension will undoubtedly manifest itself where people from differing cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds come together. These tensions can be negotiated, at least in the educational context, with a revaluation of the current 'cultural positioning' (Leahy, 2005).

A critical engagement with the new cultural landscape enables teachers, parents and school children to recognise the importance of a shared identity while remaining cognisant that the prior linguistic knowledge which children take to school is an asset with a hitherto untapped potential for enriching the learning experiences of all children. A conscious decision to adopt this form of 'demographic pluralism' (Lo Bianco, 1987, p. 107) was one which informed educational practices in Australia until the recent past. Such a policy included the funding of English as an Additional Language (EAL) programmes in a context where there was also an appreciation for multilingualism and where inclusive educational policies incorporated multicultural education, first language maintenance, anti-racism and where parental participation was also very much encouraged within schools (Lo Bianco, 1998).

THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE AND THE CASE FOR PLURILINGUALISM

It is impossible to address issues regarding respect for cultural and linguistic diversity in Ireland, or indeed in any of the European countries, without giving due consideration to the Council of Europe's latest policy paper which addresses intercultural education and linguistic diversity. This policy document is entitled *From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (2007). The document sets out a strong case for advancing a Europe-wide vision of plurilingualism.

The term 'plurilingualism' had previously been used in the *Common European Framework for Languages* as an expression which drew

attention to the fact that: 'A given individual does not have a collection of distinct and separate competencies to communicate depending on the language he/she knows, but rather a plurilingual and pluricultural competence encompassing the full range of languages available to him/her' (Council of Europe, 2002, p. 168). The implications of this are quite revolutionary. There is a realisation that all languages have the capacity to contribute to the rich repertoire of language teaching and learning opportunities within classrooms. It is also recognised that because languages can convey certain cultural norms, a policy which encourages positive dispositions towards the recognition and use of a diversity of languages within schools also plays a pivotal role in facilitating what is known as 'pluricultural education'. Pluricultural education is further defined as encompassing any activity, 'whether carried out as a form of teaching or otherwise, which aims to raise awareness and positive acceptance of cultural, religious and linguistic differences, and the capacity to interact and build relationships with others' (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 18).

Thus, linguistic diversity is seen as a positive notion that should be enhanced and strengthened particularly within schools which are typified by linguistic diversity. In effect, the Multilingual Books Project provides a practical realisation of how this policy might be actualised. It is argued that the goal of realising a plurilingual society provides a sound basis for democratic European citizenship. Thus:

> Plurilingualism will ... be interpreted not only as having to bring about better communication between Europeans and the rest of the world, but as a means of developing intercultural sensitivity and as an intrinsic component of democratic citizenship in Europe.
> (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 35)

A growing and lifelong capacity to engage with a diversity of languages – including in Ireland's case English, Irish and additional languages which are spoken within communities – provides learners with an increasing capacity to engage positively with 'the other'. It strengthens pluricultural competence and creates shared spaces where persons from different communities can learn about each other. As expressed in the policy document, 'plurilingual education can enable both majorities and minorities to have a better understanding of the nature of their relationships and of their own aspirations' (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 71).

PLURILIGUALISM AND THE IRISH CONTEXT

Officially, there is support for the idea that languages which are spoken in children's homes provide the child with a sense of identity, a capacity to engage effectively with school, and enable the child to access cognitive pathways into the curriculum. For this reason, schools are encouraged to maintain and support these languages within the classroom (Department of Education and Science, 2005, p. 165). Nevertheless, according to a recent report, there is little evidence available to suggest that European policies on plurilingualism are given due consideration so that schools are provided with the practical guidance, professional development opportunities or the resources which would enable them to actualise this policy (Ó Dochartaigh & Broderick, 2006, p. 7).

The Department of Education and Science (DES) recognises that the major challenge for the future is to move away from an 'official but lame bilingualism (English/Irish) to the full recognition of differentiated plurilingual profiles'. This point was identified in a joint report developed by the Council of Europe and DES (2008, p. 34). In particular, the report highlights the role that schools have not only to meet the teaching and learning requirements of children of 'foreign origin' but also to ensure that the children who come from the host society are made increasingly aware of the linguistic and cultural plurality which exists within the country (p. 26).

In general, though, there is a paucity of information regarding how schools might engage positively with linguistic diversity and how schools might make better use of the knowledge base that exists in the wider community to enhance language and literacy learning. Additionally, there is a lack of familiarity regarding how communities typified by diversity might engage with teachers and support their children's learning and there is a lack of information regarding how teachers might take the initiative in facilitating a plurilingual approach. These were the teaching and learning concerns with which the Multilingual Books Project engaged. We now turn to the research in order to find some answers to the gaps in knowledge and skills as identified above.

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

In August and September 2007, as part of the Meitheal Project, which was funded by the European Refugee Fund and managed by the Blanchardstown Area Partnership, seven primary schools in Dublin 15

participated in a programme to develop multilingual books. The percentage of children who came from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds varied but all schools reported that between 40 and 80 per cent of their children were from minority ethnic backgrounds. The 11 teachers who elected to participate in the project had the option to attend two professional development workshops which focused on providing the knowledge and skills necessary to assist children writing their own books. The teachers came from both mainstream and EAL backgrounds. As a result of the project, children produced over 100 group or individually generated books which were written in the children's home languages. These were translated into English and also, at times, into Irish. Following the programme, the books were displayed in the Blanchardstown Public Library, thus validating the children's work.

Three of the teachers involved with the project have conducted follow-up research with fellow teachers and with a sample of the children involved in creating the books. These teachers were convinced of the need for the voice of children who generally do not feature in the research to 'emerge on equal terms with previously dominant discourses' (Ryan, 1999, p. 187). Following a collaborative process, the teachers designed their own research tool in order to elicit information from those who had participated in the project. The teachers invited all of the teachers concerned to meet and discuss their experiences. This meeting, which lasted for 60 minutes, was attended by six teachers; it was digitally recorded, and the semi-structured discussion focused primarily on how the experience had impacted on the teachers' perceptions and practices. The three teachers also designed a research tool to investigate the experiences of a small sample of children who had participated in the project. A group of five fourth class children were interviewed for a period of 45 minutes; their feedback also informs the findings from the research featured below.

FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH

The findings from the research provide scope for some of the teachers and children who were involved in the project to express their views regarding the experience. In the first instance, teachers were requested to reflect on the making of the books and to assess in what ways this might have impacted on children in their classrooms. Teachers prompted each other to discuss how the experiences had affected their perceptions of the children and their own practices as teachers.

Finally, the teachers were asked to provide some information about the role of parents in realising the project. Then children provided an insight into the learning which had taken place during the process.

All of the teachers remarked that the children's engagement with their learning had intensified when they were involved in making their books, as noted in one school:

> They are so motivated, and they are a lot more independent. You know, I had children begging me to stay in at lunchtime so they could do the work or if they were working at it in groups going to each other's houses and doing it, and you think what more can you achieve?

This fourth class teacher also commented that children were able 'to work at their own level, you know, differentiated learning'. The teacher had encouraged the children to act as autonomously as they wished and the result was that:

> They all wanted to do it on different things. Some of them wanted to do it in groups, others wanted to do it by themselves, so I just gave them free reign. And you could see the effect that it had, because one of the children had been asking all the year if he could do a book on Polish empires in the 17th and 18th centuries. When we began writing the books, that's exactly what he did!

This teacher illustrates that when children were provided with the latitude and supports required for self-directed learning, it provided scope for in-depth project-oriented work capable of producing high-quality outcomes in both English and the child's home language. One of the most significant but unexpected learning outcomes for the teachers was that by providing avenues for children to use their own languages, their peers began to view these children more positively. This point is made by one teacher, who stated:

> What was quite impressive was the children stepping back and seeing each other in a different light and being quite impressed with each other. And that was very important. Suddenly, they are saying, well these children are fluent and literate in another language; they are not just coming as a blank.

This point is also evident to a senior infants teacher in another participating school, who recalls:

> I had a child who had just arrived in from Iraq and he was quite shy and that kind of thing, and his English wouldn't have been that good, but when he began to write about what he knew in his own language, then they could see him for him and not just what he couldn't do.

Through recognising the child's heritage and language, the dynamic in the classroom is changed and the child is seen as an asset in the class rather than a 'non-English speaking liability'. However, the process of embracing diversity also appears to have a positive impact on host culture, as noted by one EAL teacher:

> This exercise has reinforced our own identity; there is a richness in our own language, there is a hope that if we were to do this on an ongoing basis throughout a school, you know, like, they would be able to put this down on paper.

This point was also made by another classroom teacher, who recounted:

> A Traveller child said: 'You know I can't write in another language', and I said, 'well what about Irish' and then he wrote the book 'Mo Leabhlinn Féin' and again his sense of pride in that. I think that this is a very important point for the Irish children to see Irish in a different light.

It appears that through learning about linguistic differences the children are provided with a capacity to reflect on their own linguistic identify. The learning of Irish is contextualised and also provides richness to the tapestry of languages within the schools.

When asked to reflect on their own learning from the project, one of the teachers involved recalled that her own perceptions of children from linguistic minorities had changed so that:

> As a teacher, I found it a very humbling experience that you were sitting beside a 12-year-old boy who had all this wealth of experience about a different language and about a different country, and we were leaving all of that out and that we were not bringing that information into the class.

Rather like the children in the class who viewed others in a new light, this teacher has discovered through incorporating children's prior linguistic cultural and linguistic knowledge that the classroom is enriched. This point is supported by one of the other teachers, who commented:

> I found it an overwhelmingly positive experience. There's a sense that you are learning from the children ... if you can draw out what's there. It had a positive effect on the class on the whole. It was lovely to see the range of books, providing very much a sense of who they were.

The learning then is not unidirectional; the teacher becomes less of a didactic imparter of information and perhaps more of a facilitator who opens avenues for enriching teaching and learning opportunities. This is certainly the case, according to one sixth class teacher, who referred to one of the books as follows:

> It's a great resource for children who are newly arrived into the school. For example, if a Polish child was to come into my class, she could take up Kasha's book and she would know things like, 'hello', 'my name is', all those things. If a child arrived, then she could learn how to say those things at home.

The book which was created might assist other children to gain access to the English language because it is bilingual. It is noteworthy that the books are not only useful for those who have recently arrived but may also provide a vehicle for all children to access the curriculum. As noted by the classroom teacher in Grange Educate Together school:

> The thing is that you use this for the curriculum, you know that could hit SPHE, SESE, language, you know ... it hits so many of the curriculum boxes, if you like. The question is how can I draw in as many curriculum objectives as I can?

One of the most important findings was that for one of the teachers working with the children it enabled her to learn more about them and this knowledge assisted her to better understand the learning requirements of individual children. This teacher recalls that:

> Some of the children ... found it quite difficult to talk about their homes, because you know they may have gone through a trauma. So, you know, I worked with these children one-on-one and we'd type the work up on the computer and you'd just get them to talk about their families and, you know, you just learn so much more about the children. It just gives you that kind of insight because you're very much unaware of what they might have gone through and what they are going through. It's just incredible the journey that they have made.

For this teacher there is recognition that in order to provide a better educational experience for all children, it is necessary to find out about their prior experiences. As illustrated above, this must be done in a supporting and trusting way. Another aspect of working with children to incorporate the linguistic and cultural heritage was that it fostered links with children's homes, as evidenced by the following teacher's experiences:

> Parents were delighted to be involved; they don't get much of an opportunity, you know, apart from parent teacher meetings. It was nice for them to feel that their experience was included and that our interest in their language transcended into the book ... that made them proud.

In one teacher's view the involvement of children's parents 'helped the children and gave them confidence that they probably wouldn't otherwise have had'. This confidence is reflected in the voices of some of the children who were involved in the project. There is also recognition too that completing a book is not an easy task. For example, one of the children shares the following insight into the process:

> My name is Olakunle and I made a book called 'My Life in Nigeria', and I wrote it in Yoruba and it's about how I lived with and those kinds of things. I enjoyed making it but most of the time I struggled on it and I knew if I put my head into it, I can get it and I did. And I got it done and it was really exciting. My favourite part was when I was writing about myself, where I had been from until now.

Despite the challenging aspects, what comes through in this child's voice is that there is also an appreciation that his life is meaningful and worthy of inclusion within the school. Other children from the same class focused on the process of writing the book and they were particularly excited about the methodologies involved. Nazrim speaks about how she feels:

> It was really good and my favourite part was that we got together and discussed it, how we were going to do it, the cover and who was going to go first, and all those kinds of things.

This reveals the potential for projects of this nature to foster meaningful collaborative learning engagements among children; it also illustrates how the classroom might begin to prepare children for democratic participation through shared decision-making processes. For one of the children, who comes from an Irish cultural heritage, the experience allowed her to learn from her peers; she states:

> I loved finding out about the other countries and I liked seeing about their countries and everything, I found out lots ... there was so much interesting about different things ... it was really interesting.

For teachers, incorporating children's languages and encouraging them to share their prior knowledge helped to facilitate a shift away from prior negative stereotypes of their children among their peers. This also impacts on how teachers themselves view children in their classes. Children and parents who may have been somewhat alienated from the educational experience begin to reengage when the curriculum is mediated in a more meaningful way for them.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

One of the most significant findings from the research was how children and their teachers began to review their preconceptions of 'the other', that is, children who belong to an ethnic or linguistic background which differs from their own. This is critical because as Cremin and Thomas believe: 'It is (the) contrast of oneself with others ... that tends to engender inclusion or alienation' (2005, p. 44). By incorporating a diversity of languages in their teaching and learning, the teachers had enabled the experience to act as a 'powerful contributor to a culture of human rights and equity' (Starkey, 2002, p. 12).

Other significant findings from the research are highlighted below:

- Working on the books enabled the children to engage in processes of active- and collaborative-based learning approaches
- Children's motivation and enthusiasm increased when they were positively engaged in an activity which recognises and celebrates linguistic diversity
- Focusing on children's own experiences created opportunities for parents to become more meaningfully involved with their children's education
- The experience allowed children to engage in differentiated learning so there was scope for everyone to contribute at his or her own level; significantly in the words of one teacher: 'Higher-achieving children can be stretched, while lower ability can achieve a significant measure of success with adult help.'

The exceptionally positive but limited experience which this project afforded teachers and children in Dublin 15 strengthens the case for a pilot project (NCCA, 2005, p. 76) to investigate whether and to what extent the incorporation of children's home languages might impact on teaching and learning within classrooms. In the longer term, there is a need to recognise the diversity of languages spoken within our schools as part of a national languages policy. In the event that such a policy is realised, there will be a requirement to strengthen professional development opportunities for teachers who engage with linguistic diversity within their classrooms.

CONCLUSION

As illustrated by teachers and children in Dublin 15, there is a real potential to achieve the policy goals identified by the Council of Europe to approach teaching in contexts of diversity from an asset-based plurilingual and pluricultural perspective. Classroom-based activities which incorporate this approach are recognised by the teachers concerned as providing a mechanism through which the linguistic identities of all children are celebrated. As identified in the research, teachers found that plurilingual strategies also have a positive impact on the teaching and learning of the Irish language. The experience also highlighted how plurilingual education allowed for a more positive space for liaising with parents in schools so that they were able to offer advice and support in a practical way for their children's learning. There are already significant pressures on teachers' time to implement the curriculum and there are dangers that national policies could view plurilingual as a non-essential add-on to the implementation of the curriculum. At present, there is no evidence that the School Inspectorate focuses on an incorporation of children's culture or language when they conduct visits to schools. This research provides one example of how to promote a plurilingual approach to teaching and learning without significantly impacting on resource implications of those schools.

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‘WHO LIVES HERE?’

DEVELOPING CHILDREN’S AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY: A SCHOOL-BASED PROJECT

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OUR school is a large suburban primary school accommodating approximately 700 pupils. Over the past five years, we have had an increasing number of children from diverse ethnic backgrounds being enrolled. Although these children seem to have integrated quite well, there have been isolated incidents of racist comments being made towards some of these children. The subject of racism had not been addressed by us as a staff hitherto; consequently, there was no clear policy on how best to deal with difficulties that might arise in relation to the integration of these children in the school. As a teacher, I felt that I should try to pre-empt any situations that might arise rather than wait for incidents to occur. Having discussed the issue with my class, we decided to explore how best pupils could promote the integration of ethnic minority children in our school.

RATIONALE

During one class lesson in geography, it became evident to me that the pupils in my class knew very little about the geographical, historical and cultural backgrounds of children from diverse ethnic backgrounds. During a class discussion on this topic, pupils expressed the opinion that bullying and racist comments were often caused by fear or by lack of understanding of other people’s backgrounds. When asked about fear, the children could not clearly identify what they feared. One child expressed the view that it was easier to make friends with people that you could understand. She followed this up by saying that she did not mean language or accents only, but having an understanding of where people were from, an understanding of games/hobbies they liked, foods

they enjoyed and general family backgrounds. Another pupil said that while many children from diverse ethnic backgrounds had enrolled in our school in recent years, pupils in general were completely unaware of the background of these pupils. In general, the class felt that they would like to learn about where the children had come from and how their lives differed from their own. An interesting point was made by one child who was born in Nigeria and who had lived in Ireland since she was three years of age. She stated that she had little or no information about her own home country, and that she was interested in learning about it. She was aware that her family setting had some similarities and differences to other children's families, but that she had never spoken about this at school, primarily because she had not been asked. There was a consensus that pupils wished to investigate these issues further, and so we set about identifying the types of information we wished to gather. Many different types of questions were forwarded, including:

- *How many different nationalities attend our school?*
- *What are the geographical features of these countries?*
- *What history is associated with these countries?*
- *What are the national flags, emblems and costumes of these countries?*

For ethnic minority children, how did living in their home countries compare to living in Ireland?

- *What difficulties did they experience in their home countries?*
- *What difficulties did they experience in Ireland?*
- *Questions regarding climate, food, clothes, racism and bullying*

Having set our research question, i.e. 'How best can we promote the integration of children from diverse ethnic backgrounds in our school?' we[1] identified three main aims that we wished to fulfil:

- *To identify children from diverse ethnic backgrounds in our school*
- *To learn about their backgrounds and cultures*
- *To foster more tolerant and understanding attitudes towards other nationalities living in our community.*

From a pedagogical perspective, the project could be of a cross-curricular nature addressing the aims as laid out in **Appendix A**. The sixth class curriculum in the subjects of history, geography, and social, personal and health education (SPHE) address many of the questions that pupils posed.

The children were also interested in how this project might be presented. They were aware that I had developed a 'TeachNet' project (www.teachnet.ie/rward/letsexploredisney) with a former class and felt that the proposed project could benefit by being presented in a similar format, i.e. by integrating digital technologies into the learning process. We explored the different digital tools (video filming, recording, PowerPoint, clay animations) that were available to us, and agreed that, initially, much of the preparatory work (information gathering, researching, drawing, painting, mosaic work, interviewing) would involve research via the internet. The use of other information technology (IT) tools would arise at a later stage when pupils were deciding on how best to present their findings.

ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE STUDY

Some ethical issues arose concerning the interviewing of parents who had been born in other countries. The initial idea was for pupils to audio-record these interviews. Some parents expressed reservations about this. One parent did not wish to divulge any information regarding her own personal history nor of her present circumstances. In order to overcome these issues, we formulated an interview sheet (**Appendix B**), with general questions that did not identify nor impinge on anyone's personal details. The parents concerned were happy to give information regarding their country of origin, their childhood experiences and how the transition to Ireland affected them.

A second ethical issue that arose concerned the use of pupils' names at the end of documents which the children produced. The pupils were very keen that they would have ownership of work created, i.e. that other pupils would not get the credit for research that they did! As this project would be published on the internet, it was very important that pupils could not be identified. Having discussed this issue with the children, they agreed that only their first names would appear with any documents.

A third issue that arose was the publication of photographs of the pupils working on the project. Again, I explained the dangers to the children and we agreed that any photographs used could not identify a pupil, i.e. that a pupil's face would be turned away. I was surprised at how quickly the children adapted to this rule. Once a camera was in use, they automatically turned away.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study evolved over time. Initially, the plan was for pupils to research and study countries from which children from diverse ethnic backgrounds in our school had come. However, as the work progressed, pupils identified other areas that fitted under the umbrella of our study. The study of multiculturalism covers a vast number of issues and by its nature is open ended. The scope of this study was limited by time. The children involved were finishing primary school at the end of June 2007, so we set deadlines in order to have the project finished before school closed for the summer. Phase 1 of the study, which started in February 2007, involved identifying the children from diverse ethnic backgrounds in the school and exploring the historical and geographical backgrounds of their countries. Phase 2, which began following the Easter holidays in early April, involved exploring social issues that arose in relation to immigration and integration in a new society.

THE SITE, SETTINGS AND PARTICIPANTS

Twenty-eight sixth class pupils (11 boys, 17 girls) participated in this study. The classroom became the main site for the project. It housed two desktop computers, and pupils also had the use of the school IT room, with access to 30 desktop computers. Broadband was available throughout the school. I used my own personal laptop to correlate all the work that the children did, and I was able to show the work to the children on a daily basis using a data projector and screen. As the majority of the children had access to home computers, much of the initial research was done out of school by the children on a voluntary basis.

METHODOLOGY

The pupils first set about identifying the children from diverse ethnic backgrounds in the school. Due to the size of the school and possible difficulties that could arise concerning meeting with, communicating with, and interviewing pupils outside of our classroom, we decided to restrict the research to pupils from third to sixth classes (a total of 12 classes, 365 children). A form was sent to each classroom teacher involved (**Appendix C**), requesting the teachers to furnish the information required. This information identified 15 families and nine

countries from which children from diverse ethnic backgrounds had enrolled in the school within the previous five years. We then contacted these families seeking permission to gather information from them using a specifically drawn-up interview sheet (**Appendix B**). Contact was made by the classroom pupils who knew the families or who were related to them. The completed questionnaires were returned to the classroom, where pupils at a later stage recorded the information onto audio files (www.teachnet.ie/rward/wholiveshere/interviews.htm), using their own voices and speaking in the third person, e.g. 'Elizabeth was born in Australia. As a child she...'

The next stage of the project involved children researching the historical and geographical backgrounds of the countries from which identified families had come. Pupils worked in groups of three or four, deciding on which country they wished to gather information about and on what aspects. Much of the research was done using the internet. We set aside one hour per day when pupils accessed the classroom computers and the school computer room. However, much of this work was done by the pupils after school, meeting in their respective homes. Figure 1 highlights the topics which pupils researched at this stage.

Figure 1: Topics researched

A timeframe of three weeks was set aside to complete research into their respective areas of enquiry. The children formed self-selected groups according to their interests. These areas of interest were flags, emblems, costumes, history of countries and geography of countries. They reported back regularly to me, the class teacher, regarding problems and progress. One of the main problems that arose during this research period was the difficulty that pupils experienced in evaluating and summarising information. Initially many groups inserted words relating to their area of interest, e.g. costumes, Italy, flags, into a search engine and accepted the first information at hand. They also directly

copied and pasted the information they found, regardless of the source. I set aside some time for us to discuss and examine the quality of information that was being gathered. In order to set criteria to the quality and relevance of information, and also to avoid plagiarism, we set up times during the week when groups would present information/findings to the rest of the class. Feedback was given to the group involved by other pupils and by myself. When it was felt that changes were needed, the group would redraft their work and re-present at the next feedback session.

At the end of the three weeks, pupils had gathered all the information that they required. The next stage involved deciding on what tools should be used to present the pupils' findings. The pupils were already familiar with using PowerPoint, Microsoft Word and with making audio files and therefore easily transferred their data using one of these digital tools. Some pupils felt that the study should be enlarged to address the problems of bullying and racism, as it seemed to be an issue experienced by children from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The pupils were keen on producing some type of visual material that could highlight this problem. I demonstrated how to use the Frames software (formerly Videoblender) in the classroom and pupils were very eager to try it out. When they had completed their audio, Word, PowerPoint and Photo Story files, they set about producing some clay animations using the Frames software.

The making of clay animation films involved a planning stage, followed by pupils making clay figures and backgrounds, and then proceeding to photograph scenes for their stories. The pupils' enthusiasm to produce clay animation films led to some problems during the initial planning stage. Poor planning and inadequate storyboarding on their part did not produce good-quality films. As a teacher, I had to resist the temptation to intervene by insisting that proper planning take place. It was only when the finished product, i.e. the clay animation film, was produced that many pupils realised and accepted how important planning was as a stage in developing a strong message in visual form. For many, it was back to basics again! The final films were produced using Frames (www.teachnet.ie/rward/wholiveshere/clayanimation.htm). Figure 2 illustrates the different presentational aspects of the project and the digital tools that were used in presenting them.

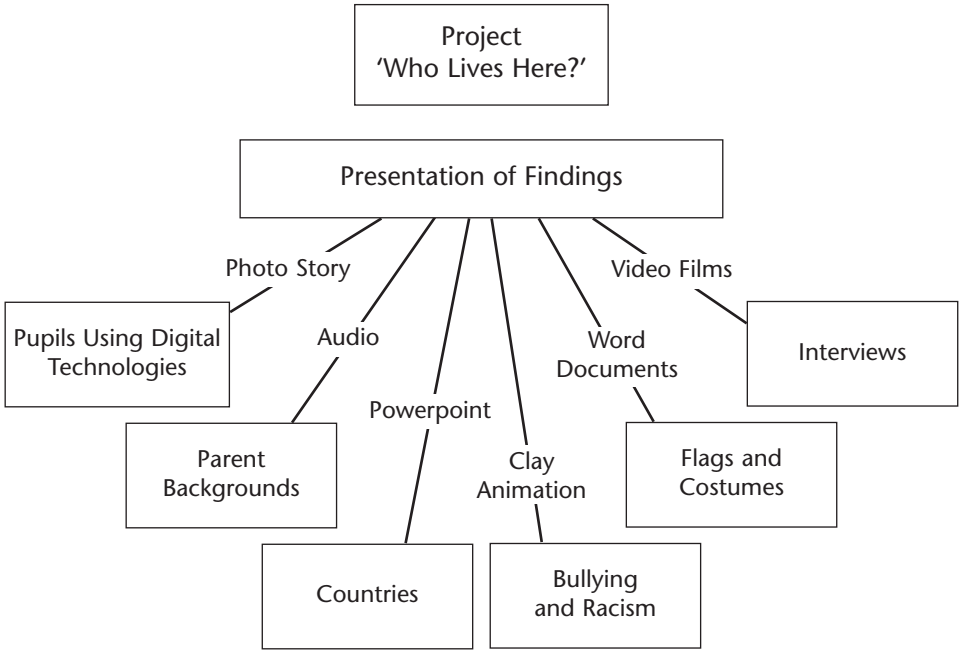

Figure 2: Presentational aspects and digital tools

During this whole process of researching, discussing and producing, the pupils often expressed different ideas on how they wished the project to progress. During one discussion on how the project could be made more practical from the point of view of addressing the integration of ethnic minority children in our school, one pupil forwarded the idea of having a food fair at which different nationalities could bring their national food to the school. All pupils felt that this would be a good way of promoting integration, as love of food was something that most people had in common! A letter (**Appendix D**) was sent to parents of ethnic minority children, inviting them to showcase food in the school hall. It proved very successful with parents, teachers and children mixing together for the first time. Pupils photographed the occasion and later produced a Photo Story (www.teachnet.ie/rward/wholiveshere/worldfoodfair.htm).

A good example of how unforeseen circumstances can have a strong bearing on the work being done in classrooms is illustrated in the following story, which took place towards the end of the project. A general election had been called in 2007 and the Minister for Foreign Affairs happened to live quite close to our school. One of the pupils had met him while he was canvassing and came up with the idea of interviewing him in relation to immigration. Contact was made with him and he was only too delighted to come to talk to the pupils in our classroom, especially with an election looming! Some pupils interviewed him, some took photographs to make a Photo Story, and others videoed the visit (www.teachnet.ie/rward/wholiveshere/visit%20of%20minister.html).

The final phase of the study involved deciding on how best to showcase

the work that the pupils had done. As already mentioned, the pupils were eager to build a web project. They felt that the project could be of benefit to other children in other schools who wished to address issues relating to multiculturalism. They were also anxious that the study could be seen by as many people as possible, especially by parents and families. Using Dreamweaver software, the pupils decided on the basic layout of pages, i.e. colour, font size, use of captions, titles and images. I inserted the different files that pupils had built onto the pages, and as this work progressed, pupils made comments and suggestions, leading to drafting and redrafting, until we felt that the work was concise, informative and aesthetically acceptable (www.teachnet.ie/rward/wholiveshere/index.htm).

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In order to gauge how pupils felt about this project, I invited them to write a few comments on what the project meant to them. Figure 3 reflects some of these comments.

'I think it would be a useful project for other children because they could learn a lot about other countries.'	'I would encourage other classes and schools to get involved in the project.'
'I felt it was a fun project and it gave us great experience with computers.'	'I think other children should look at this website to let them see what movements you can do with slideshows. I enjoyed clay animations and making mosaics.'
'My favourite part was going on the computers and copying and pasting to Microsoft Word.'	'Our group really enjoyed the clay animation. I think people will not be bullying any more.'
'Informative.'	'I thought it was great fun because I got to go into groups with my friends.'
'I enjoyed it so much that I would love to do it again.'	'It was different to normal work.'
'Good fun and funny too. It was the best project I ever did.'	'I felt good that we had made a website. It was hard work.'
'I learned a lot about other countries and nationalities.'	'I learned about other cultures.'
'I think that people will be gobsmacked by our work!'	'It was good fun but hard work and I don't usually like hard work!'

Figure 3: Children's responses

It would seem from these responses that, apart from feeling stimulated in this type of learning environment, pupils found the use of digital tools useful in relation to researching and presenting findings.

One pupil in this class, Mark,[2] is diagnosed with DiGeorge syndrome, a mild learning disability that makes it difficult for him to concentrate or focus for any sustained period of time. Although he has good oral skills, he underachieves in literacy. Mark showed great enthusiasm when this study started. He had difficulty summarising and recording information in Word or PowerPoint forms. However, he excelled when pupils moved on to using clay animation. Being artistic, he enjoyed making clay figurines and painting backgrounds for his film scenes. He also planned his storyboards carefully. He showed great patience and focus as he photographed each frame of his film. The use of IT tools had engaged him for prolonged periods of time, much to my surprise and to the surprise of his parents.

Two groups of people took a particular interest in this study. The parents of the pupils carrying out the study attended a function in our school hall, at which the project was explained and presented to them. One parent commented that she was surprised at the wide range of subject areas that had been addressed by the study and that she felt her son had learned much more by participating in this type of study than if he had been learning from textbooks. Quite a few parents showed surprise at the children's level of competence in IT skills, and at how well these skills integrated with the learning process. Another parent talked about how excited and animated the children were when they were working at the study. It had made learning interesting and enjoyable.

The parents of children from diverse ethnic backgrounds in the school also showed great interest and involvement in the study. They were delighted to have been invited to showcase their national foods at the World Food Fair. Many actually came dressed in their national costumes and brought their families. One of these parents said that it was the first time she had stood in the school, although she had three children attending it. She felt that she was being made feel welcome and that she had something to offer, a sign perhaps of integration at work. From the group of people who attended the information night, it was evident that they appreciated the school was interested in learning about their diverse cultures.

CONCLUSION

This study proved to be a positive experience for me, as a teacher, and also for the pupils. Although it started off with the aim of examining the historical and geographical backgrounds of children from diverse ethnic backgrounds, it evolved to also examine other issues such as emigration, immigration, bullying and racism. The cross-curricular nature of the study allowed me to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum for my class in an integrated way, i.e. subjects such as history, geography, SPHE, art and English were covered without losing focus on the main theme of our study.

From the pupils' points of view, it would seem from their feedback that the experience was both enjoyable and positive. The study allowed them to develop skills such as researching, analysing, summarising, collating and presenting information. They experienced working in collaboration with peers, with their teacher and with adults. They employed a wide range of IT tools, allowing them to develop skills in word processing, in making PowerPoint presentations, interviewing using audio equipment, constructing animations and capturing still images. The study also allowed for differentiation within the class. Lower ability pupils not only participated but experienced success in completing their work.

The study had a strong impact on the school community. The World Food Fair, the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the project information night heightened awareness amongst teachers, pupils and parents of how our school has changed in recent years with the growing number of children from diverse ethnic backgrounds. It created opportunities for integration between all ethnic minority groups, both pupils and parents. It heightened awareness of the potential for bullying and racism and created a forum for discussion on these issues.

Due to the success of the project,[3] our class received a lot of media attention, generating debate not only on the subject of multiculturalism, but also on the role that IT can play in the learning and teaching process.

Notes

[1] The project was of a collaborative nature in that the teacher and pupils held co-ownership of it. The teacher acted in an advisory capacity, directing, organising and facilitating.

[2] Mark is a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the pupil.

[3] 'Who Lives Here?' won a Microsoft European, Middle East and Africa Innovative Teacher award in Paris in 2007 and represented Ireland at the Worldwide Innovative Teacher Forum in Helsinki in November 2007.

APPENDIX A: MAPPING CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Who Lives Here?

This project is of a cross-curricular nature in that it involved pupils carrying out research and study in history, geography, social and personal health education (SPHE), drama, visual arts and English. Outlined below are the main objectives that the project fulfils for this age group.

History

Strand: *Local studies*
Strand Units: Games and pastimes
Feasts and festivals
My locality through the ages

Strand: *Eras of change and conflict*
Strand Unit: Modern Ireland

Strand: *Politics, conflict and society*
Strand Unit: Continuity and change over time

Skills & concepts:

- Working as an historian to develop an understanding of:
  - Change and continuity
  - Synthesis and communication
  - Empathy
- Enable the child to acquire a balanced appreciation of cultural and historical inheritance from local, national and global contexts
- Use ICT to access, retrieve, store and present relevant data
- Learn about the people, events, issues and cultural experiences which have helped to shape the local community and the environment
- Develop tolerance towards minorities in society and appreciate the contribution of various ethnic, cultural, religious and social groups to the evolution of modern Ireland
- Develop a sense of personal, local, national, European and wider identities through studying the history and cultural inheritance of local and other communities

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

Strand: *Myself and others*
Strand Units: Myself and my family
My friends and other people
Relating to others

Strand: *Myself and the wider world*
Strand Unit: Developing citizenship

Skills & concepts:

- Respect the diversity of people
- Become aware of various ethnic and linguistic groups
- Identify behaviour that is harmful to health, i.e. bullying
- Critically evaluate own communication and that of others through group work and class discussion
- Plan, undertake and present project work

Drama

Strand: *Explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding*
Strand Units: Explore and make drama
Co-operating and communicating in making drama

Skills & concepts:

- Children will co-operate and communicate in making drama
- Participate in interactive dramatic experience
- Create drama as a group or individually
- Present drama to class or other group
- Plan dramatic activity
- Understand the use of script
- Develop different styles of drama, e.g. tragedy/comedy
- Reflect on drama: explore bullying from perspective of bully/victim

Visual Arts

Strand: *Drawing*
Strand Units: Make drawings

Strand: *Clay*
Strand Units: Developing form in clay

Skills & concepts:

- Explore colour using mosaics
- Have enjoyable and purposeful experiences of different art media
- Explore, experiment, imagine, design, invent and communicate with different art materials
- Experience the excitement and fulfilment of creativity and the achievement of potential through art activities

English

Strand: *Competence and confidence*
Strand Units: Use of oral language
Reading for information
Write independently and for presentation

Strand: *Develop cognitive abilities through language*
Strand Units: Develop interests, attitudes and information retrieval skills
Clarify thought through writing

Skills & concepts:

- Discuss confidently a range of topics
- Read for information
- Research for particular purpose and within timeframe
- Write for presentation purposes
- Use information retrieval systems

Geography

Strand:	*Human environment*
Strand Unit:	People living and working in the local area
	People and other lands
	Physical features of Europe and the world

Skills & concepts:

- Develop a sense of place and implement the use of maps and globes
- Children will develop familiarity with the use of pictures, maps, models and globes
- Analyse, record and evaluate data
- Study locations in Europe – language, culture, education, play, physical features, climate
- Artistic activity – represent the data and findings investigated, measured and analysed
- Gather information and communicate it in a variety of ways to their peers
- Respect the diversity of people
- Become aware of various ethnic and linguistic groups

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of interviewer:

Name of interviewee:

Where were you born?

What language did you speak as a child?

What is the weather like in your home country?

What was your favourite food?

What games did you play?

What was school like?

What is your home country well known for?

What is the highest mountain/longest river in that country?

What is the capital city?

When did you come to Ireland?

Why did you come?

Did you feel welcome when you first came?

What was the most difficult thing about settling in Ireland?

What do you like best about Ireland?

What do you dislike about Ireland?

What is your favourite food in Ireland?

Would you like to return to live in your home country? Why?

APPENDIX C

SN Mhuire na nGael
Bay Estate
Dundalk

7/2/2007

Dear colleague,

My class is presently involved in a study relating to ethnic minority children who attend our school. I require certain information in relation to the number of newcomer children (i.e. children from countries outside of the Republic of Ireland) enrolled in classes from 3rd to 6th inclusive. I would be very grateful if you would furnish me with this information and return the form.

Yours faithfully,

_____

Ronan Ward

Class:

Country from which child came	Number of children

APPENDIX D

SN Mhuire na nGael
Bay Estate
Dundalk

22/5/2008

Dear parents,

My class has been involved for a couple of months in a study relating to cultural diversity in our school. The project won a European award recently in Paris. We now go forward to represent Ireland at the Worldwide Innovative Teacher Forum in Helsinki in November.

At the moment we wish to extend the study by holding a World Food Fair in the school. We invite you and your family to come along on Friday, June 8th at 12.30 p.m. and to take part in a presentation of national foods. Each family will be allocated a table at which food can be presented. We would appreciate if you could supply us with a copy of the recipe for the particular dish. The event will be recorded and added to the web project, which can be accessed at www.teachnet.te/rward/wholiveshere

Teachers, parents and pupils will have an opportunity to sample the different foods. Plates and cutlery will be supplied by the school.

I look forward to meeting you on June 8th.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Ronan Ward
(Class Teacher)

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Seán Bracken is a lecturer in development and intercultural education at Marino Institute of Education, Dublin. He has a master's degree in applied linguistics and a master's degree in school leadership. Seán has worked as an educator in Samoa, Ireland, the United States, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea. His interests in education include curriculum development, literacy, plurilingualism, and globalising influences on education and praxis.

Áine Clerkin is a teacher of English as an additional language in Mary Mother of Hope National School, Dublin 15. Her school was involved in the Meitheal Bilingual Book Project for the 'Celebrate Festival' in Dublin 15 in 2007. She is currently completing a diploma in minority ethnicities and minority languages in Irish education at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin.

Anna Dillon (BEd, MA Ed) has worked as a teaching principal in Ballyshannon National School, Kilcullen, Co Kildare for the last three years, and is currently on secondment to Mary Immaculate College of Education, University of Limerick. She lectures in educational methodologies and modern language pedagogy, and is the acting co-ordinator of microteaching. Her research interests are bilingualism, plurilingualism and immersion education.

Son Gyoh is a resource person and consultant in development practice. He has a BA (Hons) in African history, a postgraduate diploma in public administration and an MSc in development management. He is the founder of a community-led group, Awareness for Development, engaged in capacity projects aimed at improving access and awareness of new communities in Ireland. His interest in development education focuses on engaging Southern perspectives in early school development education resources in Ireland. He is from West Africa and has lived in Ireland for seven years.

Gerry Jeffers is a lecturer in the Education Department, NUI Maynooth. He has previously worked as a teacher, guidance counsellor and deputy school principal. Between 1998 and 2000, he was national coordinator of the Transition Year Curriculum Support Service. His published work includes various learning resources as well as a range of academic articles. Gerry recently completed his doctoral thesis, entitled 'Innovation and Resistance in Irish Schooling: The Case of Transition Year'.

Brietta McDonnell has worked as a primary school teacher for the past nine years in a number of schools in the Dublin area. She completed her BEd in Mary Immaculate College in Limerick and is currently undertaking an MSc in equality studies in University College Dublin. Her academic interests include children's education, identities and belonging. Her current research looks at how children negotiate a sense of belonging in the primary school.

Deirdre O'Rourke is a member of the Faculty of Education at Mary Immaculate College. In her current work, she acts as the DE and ICE (development education and intercultural education) lecturer. She also co-ordinates a distance education graduate certificate/diploma in development education at Mary Immaculate College. Her research interests span development education, intercultural education, teacher education, and active learning methodologies.

Barbara O'Toole is a lecturer in inclusive education at Coláiste Mhuire, Marino Institute of Education in Dublin. She is also a founder of Lóchrann, Centre for Intercultural Education, at Marino. She is currently a member of the advisory committee of the DICE Project.

Nell Regan is a poet and teacher based in Dublin. Her debut collection *Preparing for Spring* was published in 2007 and nominated for that year's Glen Dimplex New Writers Awards (Ireland and UK) and the 2008 Rupert and Eithne Strong Awards. She has worked in educational publishing and currently teaches full time in Dublin 15.

Ronan Ward lectures in mathematics education at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin. His research interests include the use of digital technologies to enhance the teaching and learning process and teachers' content knowledge, and teaching methodologies in mathematics education. He has been involved with 'Teachnet' (www.teachnet.ie) for a number of years in promoting the integration of web-based resources into teachers' instructional practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The conference on which this e-book is based would not have been possible without the invaluable work of conference secretary Susannah Sweetman and the support of the conference planning committee: Brian Tubbert, Deirdre O'Rourke, Rosalind Duke and Seán Bracken.

We would like to thank all the contributors to the e-book for their input. We would also like to thank the keynote speakers for their contributions to the conference: Dr Anne Looney, Chinedu Onyejelem, Dr Douglas Bourne, Kensika Monshengwo and Dr Vanessa Andreotti. We are also grateful to the workshop facilitators: Alicia McGivern, Lizzie Downes, Fionuala Cregan, Kensika Monshengwo, Vanessa Andreottti and Siobhán Twomey.

Thanks to our e-book editor, Antoinette Walker, and to our designer, Kieran Nolan, for their great work and support.

Special thanks to the conference rapporteur, Máirín Wilson, for bringing together so brilliantly in the reflective summary report the range of perspectives and key learning in true development education fashion, which is available on the DICE website.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of Irish Aid for this event.

The DICE Project is:
Dr Matthias Fiedler, Coordinator
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