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Organisational self-evaluation and teacher education for community relations in a transforming society?

Ron Smith^{a*} and Alan McCully^b

^a*School of Education, Queen's University, Belfast, UK;* ^b*School of Education, University of Ulster, Coleraine, UK*

During 2004, the School of Education at the University of Ulster embarked on an innovative three-year project designed to embed community relations objectives within initial teacher education. With the advent of more peaceful times in Northern Ireland, this was a precipitous time for initial teacher educators to review the preparation given to beginner teachers for teaching in an increasingly pluralist society emerging from conflict. The present paper reports on one very specific and time-limited element of the broader project. That is, development work designed to investigate the possibilities of using processes of self-review and evaluation as a lever for improvements in initial teacher education for community relations. Following a brief contextualisation, the background to, and the development of, a set of materials designed to support rigorous and systematic self-review of all aspects of provision in a university-based initial teacher education department is described. The Community Relations Index for Initial Teacher Education (*Cr-ITE*) was envisaged as being of use to initial teacher education establishments in order to help teacher educators take responsibility for rigorous learning from their practice, whilst placing inclusive values at the centre of organisational development. The final section includes further critical reflection on the role of organisational self-review in transforming teacher education for inclusion in a society emerging from longstanding communal conflict.

Keywords: Northern Ireland; initial teacher education; *Index for Inclusion*; community relations education; organisational review and self-evaluation; democratic practice

Introduction

Before offering an account of our research and development work, we need to place it within some broader theoretical literatures and ecological frameworks. We open with an overview of the community relations dimension in both schooling and teacher education in Northern Ireland (N. Ireland), including a discussion of why, at this time, providers of initial teacher education need to review the impact and content of their courses in respect of nurturing improved practice in the areas of inter-communal relations and cultural diversity. Finally, we provide a brief account of the role of self-review and evaluation in organisational development.

*Corresponding author. Email: ron.smith@qub.ac.uk

Contextualisation

The community relations dimension within schooling in Northern Ireland

Dunn and Morgan (1999) recalled how, during the 1960s, the outbreak of violence in N. Ireland had prompted a critical examination of the possible role of the denominationally divided education system in creating and sustaining social divisions. They remarked how, since the early 1970s, there had been a number of attempts at using education as a basis for developing improved relationships between the two main ethnopolitical groups. Two broad approaches had been pursued involving changes within the existing segregated system of schooling and the development of a third Integrated sector; both of which had moved through a number of policy phrases (Dunn and Morgan 1999).

In 1987, the Department of Education established the Cross-Community Contact scheme to encourage voluntary inter-school contact. In 1997, administrative responsibility for this scheme was devolved to the five Education and Library Boards (similar to LEAs in England and Wales), along with a change in the title to the School's Community Relations Programme. Furthermore, the Education Reform Order (NI) (1989) (the N. Ireland version of the National Curriculum in England and Wales) required that Education for Mutual Understanding (popularly known as EMU), and Cultural Heritage, became closely related and statutory cross-curriculum themes within the N. Ireland curriculum. In other words, all schools were required to reflect community relations themes within their curricula around four main objectives, i.e., respect for self and appreciation of others; appreciation of the interdependence of people within society; cultural understanding; and appreciation of how conflict could be handled in non-violent ways (Northern Ireland Curriculum Council 1990). The themes were portrayed as carrying a particular responsibility within the curriculum for addressing issues related to differences between Catholics and Protestants (CCEA 1987). As Smith and Robinson (1996) recognised, their inclusion within the statutory curriculum carried an explicit expectation that, as part of their teaching, teachers would attempt to address issues relevant to community division within contemporary society.

Despite the statutory basis for community relations education, some empirical evidence (see for example, Gallagher 1995; Smith 2001a, 2001b, 2003), and much anecdotal evidence, existed to suggest that there remained an extraordinary absence of pedagogy in classrooms that enabled students to discuss and reflect upon issues directly related to the conflict and its religious or political ramifications. Furthermore, when it came to having a say or being allowed to air their views about community relations policy and practice, the evidence suggested that the voices of students and parents were mostly silenced, disqualified or subjugated (see, for example, Smith 2001a, 2001b, 2003).

The declaration of cease-fires by paramilitary groups in 1994 created an opportunity for political dialogue that led eventually to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in April 1998. The Agreement was an attempt at a fundamental shift within society – a shift away from a 'culture of violence.' In its wake, the Department of Education (DE) was prompted to state its position with respect to the responsibilities of public institutions. As a result, the Education Minister (John McFaul MP) established a new working group concerned with the promotion of tolerance. The report of this group (Culture of Tolerance, Education for Diversity, DENI 1999) recommended that there needed to be much greater encouragement to regard the

development of respect for diversity as a core rather than peripheral element of the school curriculum. In addition, it pointed to the need for school-based approaches to strengthen the civil and political awareness of young people for democratic citizenship.

Subsequently, both the Government's Shared Future document¹ (OFMDFM 2005) and the Department of Education's Community Relations Policy Statement (Department of Education in Northern Ireland 2005) addressed the role of education in supporting sustainable peace. The former set out in detail the Government's response to the earlier consultation process on improving community relations in Northern Ireland. Published in March 2005, the framework committed Government to setting the pace on movement towards a shared society underpinned by the fundamental principle that, 'separate but equal' was no longer an option for N. Ireland. With regard to education, the report committed schools to preparing young people for life and work in a diverse society, and, more generally, encouraged educational providers to consider more effective ways in which shared activity might be promoted at all levels. Beginning in 2007, a revised Northern Ireland Curriculum (RNIC) was also phased in that aspired to a different approach to teaching–learning within schools. This major educational development placed a greater emphasis on a skills-based curriculum, enquiry-based learning and took the opportunity to drive forward new curricular requirements for Local and Global Citizenship as envisaged by the Culture of Tolerance, Education for Diversity Report (DENI 1999).

Teacher education and the community relations dimension

As suggested above, the formal education system at primary and secondary levels in Northern Ireland is still characterised by the overwhelming majority of Catholic and Protestant children attending separate schools. Polarisation on religious grounds is not however confined to schooling, teacher education at the two university colleges that offer 4-year BEd degrees (Stranmillis and St Mary's) remains predominantly denominational. On the other hand, uniquely, the University of Ulster and Queen's University, Belfast, are attended by students of all faiths and none. These institutions offer 1-year Primary and Post-Primary Postgraduate Certificate in Education courses (PGCE), whilst the Open University in N. Ireland offers full-time and part-time courses in selected subjects at post-primary level.

Notwithstanding these structural arrangements for teacher education in N. Ireland, as Moran (2009) pointed out, most student teachers were likely to undertake their placement experiences in schools from the tradition they attended, and, at the successful completion of their course, seek employment within their own tradition. The professional expectation of PGCE programmes was still likely to steer teachers towards schools similar to the ones they attended (Moran 2009).

On numerous occasions over the years, teacher education has consequently been identified as having a crucial part to play in addressing the prevailing social, religious and political differences that have existed in the province (Moran 2009). In the wake of the signing of the Belfast Agreement, the seminal role that teacher educators might play in promoting mutual understanding and respect for diversity was highlighted in the Culture of Tolerance report. This report however also noted how education for diversity and inclusion in N. Ireland was extremely problematic within both the segregated environments of the university colleges (St Mary's and Stranmillis), as well as the integrated domains of the universities:

Current evidence indicates that, in relation to EMU, the professional training of teachers ... is both patchy and sporadic and there are many teachers who have received no formal training in this area ... none of the Higher Education Education Institutions (HEI's) had been able to devote any significant attention to EMU in Initial Teacher Education emphasising the lack of opportunity for teaching staff within these institutions to engage in personal and professional development. (DENI 1999, 12)

A subsequent study commissioned by the Equality Commission for N. Ireland (Elwood et al. 2004) further revealed that, whilst all ITE providers indicated that equality issues were a consideration within their courses, the extent to which constituent aspects of equality (community background, race, gender and disability) were addressed varied between providers (Moran 2009). Moran reported how student teachers in N. Ireland, as opposed to the rest of the UK, felt that issues of equality were not addressed in their courses. In the main, student teachers considered that the equality issue given most consideration during their training was differentiation in terms of pupil ability (Moran 2009).

More recently, the Shared Futures document (OFMDFM 2005) made reference to the problematic nature of teacher education for community relations and the need for the entire education system in N. Ireland to prepare teachers and lecturers to educate children and young people for a shared society.

Self-evaluation as a lever for inclusive teacher education

Despite the various attempts to give prominence to the crucial role of teacher education in addressing wider issues of social, cultural, academic and religious divisions, it seems that teacher educators in N. Ireland have largely managed to resist the challenge (Moran 2009). Commenting on the role of teacher education in enabling teachers to address the increasingly broad range of differences met in contemporary classrooms, Marshall, Ralph, and Palmer (2002) argued that we had much work to do at the level of initial teacher education to help student teachers become inclusive practitioners. Likewise, Cochrane-Smith (2004) was of the view that:

many teacher educators themselves, perhaps even most teacher educators, had not had the transformative learning experiences necessary to interrupt the conservative assumptions underlying teacher education programmes at many higher education institutions. Few programmes and departments have built into their on-going operations, the intellectual and organisational contexts that support teacher educator's learning about, and struggles with, issues of race, racism, diversity and social justice in education. (Cochran-Smith 2004, 140)

Florian (2009) discussed the role of universities in preparing teachers for inclusive education. She argued that little co-ordinated national or international attention had, as yet, been paid to the type of systemic or institutional reform of university teacher education that would be needed to support classroom teachers in responding effectively to the demands of teaching diverse groups of students in schools. With respect to the issue of helping student teachers address cultural differences in particular, Melnick and Zeichner (1998) argued that much of the focus in discussions of multicultural pre-service teacher education has been on how the curriculum of teacher education programmes could be changed. The existing literature had however largely ignored the institutional contexts in which teacher education took place (Melnick and Zeichner 1998).

Moran (2009) argued that higher education, including teacher education in N. Ireland, had not escaped the growth in influence of educational reforms associated with the Conservative Government during the late 1980s when the basic values of schooling and the public services were configured along the lines of a commercial bureaucracy (see Usher and Edwards 1994; Gewirtz, Ball, and Bowe 1995; Bottery and Wright 2000; Watkins, 1999a, 1999b). Ball (2003) described the processes and effects of this realignment as the terrors of performativity. Privileged within performative cultures were educational discourses that emphasised prescription, accountability and technical elements of the curriculum where success was defined in narrow instrumental terms. The competence model of teacher education, and the explosion across higher education of external inspection and accountability, were two manifestations of this performativity. Moran argued that teacher educators needed to concentrate less on justifying actions for the purposes of external audit and demonstrating competence, and more on processes of honest stock-taking concerned with determining where their organisations stood in terms of establishing a positive culture, and commitment to professional growth and development.

The European University Association Quality Culture Project (EUA 2005) addressed similar issues. The project team argue that:

As important as external processes of accountability were, it was essential that universities developed a quality culture to monitor *internally* all their activities and services in a way that was congruent with core academic values ... if external accountability is becoming more systematic, then it is essential that internal procedures become more developed and visible. (EUA 2005, foreword)

It consequently sought to help participating institutions (50 institutions from 29 countries) embed a self-directed process of ongoing development and performance enhancement, including self-evaluation within their working environments. Furthermore, they recognised that universities (or units within them) needed to introduce reviews in ways that were consistent with their own objectives, and coherent with their own academic and organisational values.

Within the related international research on school improvement (e.g. Huberman and Miles 1984; Sirotnik 1987; Fullan and Stiegelbauer 1991; Hopkins, Ainscow, and West 1994; Barber 1996) there is a widely held belief that self-evaluation is a key requirement for school improvement. Barber (1996, 137), for example, went so far as to suggest that ... 'the essence of successful organisations in this post-modern world was the search for improvement, and effective self-evaluation was the key to this.' John MacBeath, a leading UK researcher and academic who has done much internationally to advance the role of school self-evaluation, has distilled a number of important design features for organisational self-evaluation (see, for example, MacBeath and Mortimore 1999, 2000; MacBeath, Boyd, Rand, and Bell 1995; MacBeath 1999). First, key stakeholders should be enabled to feel ownership over the quality criteria by which they might subsequently be judged. This necessitates the systematic gathering of a body of qualitative data from key stakeholders themselves and the use of flexible, productive and experiential methods that enabled key stakeholders to offer their own accounts of what makes for an effective organisation. In his commissioned work for the NUT, MacBeath's research team generated a substantial body of different criteria – *or indicators* – of school effectiveness by posing teachers (as well as pupils and parents) the question ... 'What, in your view are the characteristics of a *good school*?' (MacBeath, Boyd, Rand, and Bell 1995,

16). MacBeath argued that this process required the ability to listen, to prompt, to question and to use interactive data collection methods that created a climate of openness and trust that engendered inter-group dialogue. Second, that those developing self-evaluation frameworks needed to provide a model that organisations could themselves use when conducting a self-review. For MacBeath, the concept of a self-evaluating organisation was underpinned by the assumption that evaluation was an integrated set of tools and processes that enabled everyone in an organisation to *learn*, and which deliberately created an inclusive climate for doing so. It was an approach to organisational development that placed learning at the heart of matters and eschewed instrumental, controlling and bureaucratic change management strategies that had narrow foci on performance and efficiency. Implicit in the concept of self-evaluation was the capacity of practitioners to critically reflect on the data collected, and to act to improve practice accordingly.

Wilson and Eyben (2005), who work to develop learning organisations within the non-formal and community education sectors in N. Ireland, defined self-evaluation as people and groups taking responsibility for rigorously learning from their practice in order to enrich future work and possibilities. They helpfully pointed out that self-evaluation was more than just a set of tools, frameworks, or a particular methodology. However, as a number of school improvers have discovered, particularly in the early stages of developing self-evaluation for improvement purposes, organisations appreciate the use of tools and frameworks to help give shape to their self-evaluation efforts (see, for example, Smith and Neill 2005; Stoll 1999). ‘Good tools, as we know from the cave dwellers onwards, extend human intelligence ... simple, economical and routine evaluation tools are the media through which the intelligence of an organisation – military, business or school – expands and enriches’ (Argyris and Schon 1978, 7).

Finally, Booth, Nes, and Stromstad (2003) argued that what university ITE departments needed was an *Index for Inclusion for Teacher Education*. That is, materials to guide ITE departments through a self-review approach to, for example: the analysis of their cultures, policies and practices; the evaluation of their own progress; the identification of the barriers to learning and participation and decision-making about their own priorities for change. In other words, a model for honest institutional self-evaluation that facilitated a wide and deep scrutiny of everything that made up the organisation’s activities (CSIE 2002). To the best of our knowledge, to date, no such resource has yet been developed.

Developing an initial teacher education index for social inclusion

This then was the context within which the research and development work reported in this paper took place. The School of Education at the University of Ulster has had an acknowledged involvement and influence in the development of educational initiatives related to the improvement of community relations in N. Ireland, dating back to the Schools Cultural Studies Project of the 1970s. Initiatives have included: the Schools Apart (Darby et al. 1977) and Schools Together (Dunn, Darby, and Mullan 1984) research; the evaluation of Education for Mutual Understanding (Smith and Robinson 1996); research on values in N. Irish education (Montgomery and Smith 1996); research and development on the teaching of controversial issues arising from the Speak Your Piece Project (e.g. McCully 2006); the development of a three-year

pilot project to provide a curriculum framework for citizenship education at Key Stage 3 (see, Arlow 2004) and the evaluation of the Schools Community Relations Programme or SCRCP (O'Connor, Hartop, and McCully 2002).

During 2004, the School of Education at the University of Ulster was successful in receiving substantial funding from the International Fund for Ireland and the Northern Ireland Department of Education for a three-year project designed to better embed community relations/citizenship education principles within initial teacher education. The project aimed to: (1) strengthen the capacity and commitment of the school to community relations objectives by embedding these in its aims, policies, structure and practices; (2) identify the core skills, knowledge, values, competencies and dispositions essential for effective practice in the field of community relations-citizenship, and, incorporate these in such a way as to enhance the Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) programmes at primary and secondary levels; (3) initiate a 3-year programme of activities that would become integrated into, and sustained within, the long-term provision of the school in order to prepare teachers for working in a deeply divided society; and (4) enhance awareness of community relations issues and practice through the education system in N. Ireland so that young people developed the skills, knowledge and values to act for a more peaceful and just society. Taking account of the development work of MacBeath et al. within Scottish and English schools, as well as Booth, Nes and Stromstad's (2003) recommendation, we set out to investigate the following questions:

- Could the approaches used by MacBeath et al. to develop self-evaluation tools for use in Scottish and English schools, be applied or redeveloped within a higher education context in N. Ireland;
- What happens when teacher educators are asked what they really value when it comes to making their courses better places for community relations education?
- What quality criteria for an effective ITE department for Community Relations do teacher educators identify?
- Could self-evaluation processes be a basis for transformative awarenesses on the part of N. Irish teacher educators?

Phase one: generating the indicators of a good teacher education department for community relations education

This phase took advantage of a professional development day organised as part of the wider International Fund for Ireland–Northern Ireland Department of Education sponsored project. This was attended by 11 full-time colleagues who all tutored on the PGCE programme. The majority of the tutors were from the post-primary sector and there was a relatively even gender balance (six females and five males). The emphasis within this whole-day programme was on personal and professional development in the community relations context. Time and space were therefore created for the extremely sensitive and difficult task of trying to facilitate, amongst colleagues, the exploration of group relationships and social identities – and then the exploration of the significance of these for their own professionalism (see, for example, Carr 1993). Ethical considerations had been taken into account with colleagues having been advised, for example: of the purposes of the activities; that

participation was entirely voluntary; that they could withdraw at any time and that their anonymity would be strictly preserved.

During the morning session, the first author conducted a workshop session designed to gather data on the participants' own views about community relations education and the key characteristics of a good ITE department for promoting community relations education. Drawing upon the development work of MacBeath and his colleagues (e.g., MacBeath 1999; MacBeath et al. 1995), the authors had devised a framework for data collection that used experiential learning methods that could also be applied consistently with various groups of respondents including colleagues from other campuses. This involved posting four questions on flipchart sheets and placing them (initially with the questions hidden) in the four corners of the room. Participants were asked to form into pairs and each pair was then directed to stand beside one of the pieces of flipchart. Following this, they were instructed to turn over the flipchart paper to reveal the question in front of them, and then spend two minutes 'brainstorming' any ideas. The usual rules for brainstorming were emphasised, including asking participants to write down everything that occurred to them without comment or put-down of other people's suggestions. After two minutes, the facilitator directed participants to move in a clockwise direction to the next station – and so on, until the groups returned to their starting points.² People were then asked to work together in pairs to provide the larger group with a statement summarising the brainstormed ideas to the question that was now in front of them. The four questions were:

- What in your view are the key characteristics of a good ITE department for community relations?
- What does community relations mean to you?
- What does inclusion mean to you?
- What does citizenship mean to you?

This activity produced an extended debate amongst all participants. For example, with the first author probing, questioning and enjoying the animated discussion that emerged from this exercise, some time was spent discussing the common themes running through participants' views on the concept of community relations.

During the afternoon session, the first author facilitated a second activity that also drew inspiration from MacBeath's work. In order to capture social reality in as comprehensive a way as possible, and to ensure that the main enquiry questions were accessible to various groups of respondents, e.g. teachers, parents and pupils, MacBeath recommended using alternative data collection formats. In addition to asking respondents to devise their own characteristics of a good school, in a bottom-up-type way, his project team also provided respondents with criteria culled from the literature – including the OFSTED³ school inspection handbook. They were then asked, in small groups, to identify and agree the five criteria they regarded as most important, and the three they regarded as least important (see, for example, MacBeath, Boyd, Rand, and Bell 1995).

Likewise, the first author devised a card sorting exercise making use of the Northern Ireland General Teaching Council's (GTCNI) recently revised draft set of competences. Like the other UK jurisdictions, N. Ireland has teacher education programmes based on standardised competence or standards frameworks and, at the time of this project, a draft revised competence framework and Code of Values incorporating a reduced number of benchmark statements (from 92 to 27) had just

been released for consultation. Furthermore, some of the revised competence statements appeared, at face value, to be more explicitly expressed than previously (Moran 2009). As a consequence of this, in order to examine how colleagues interpreted the revised competences in terms of the requirements for teaching student teachers, we took the opportunity of facilitating critical engagement and reflection. On each of 27 cards, one of the new competencies was reproduced. Colleagues were then asked to spread the cards out on a table and agree on the five they regarded as most relevant to community relations education in N. Ireland, and the three they regarded as least relevant. As Moran (2009) argued, having explicit requirements for teaching was not in itself a sufficient condition to guarantee more inclusive approaches. Rather,

it was only through the process of engaging with, and exploring the broader meanings emanating from the statements that teacher educators and student teachers become aware of their own identities and value positions, and of their crucial role in preparing and forming future citizens for a democratic society. (Moran 2009, 52)

Phase two: analysing the qualitative data and piloting a draft community relations index (CR-ITE)

The morning session generated a list of 49 different criteria related to the key characteristics of a good ITE department for community relations and also much debate that threatened to exceed the allotted time span for the session. Dialogue centred on trying to agree on some kind of systematic order for the brainstormed items, and extended discussion with colleagues on what lay behind tutors' choices. As predicted, this process engendered much discussion that yielded interesting and illuminating insights into the attitudes of initial teacher educators towards school-based community relations work, and hence the role of initial teacher educators. Analysis of the data identified a number of basic assumptions and beliefs, having particular resonance for education in a divided society, that formed part of the deep culture⁴ within the department.

On the whole, discussions revealed that teacher educators, like teachers (see Smith 2001a, 2001b), played safe in terms of avoiding controversial topics and exploiting opportunities for promoting social reconciliation. The reasons for this were varied. One colleague believed strongly that his capacity to influence students' values and attitudes was limited and consequently community relations education was relatively futile. For this teacher educator, the key to understanding and tackling social inequalities and social reconciliation lay in addressing social and cultural inequalities brought about by colonialism. Since it obscured the state's primary responsibility for dealing with issues of inequality, economics and misuses of power, classroom learning based on a liberal multiculturalist discourse that emphasised intergroup communication, discrimination and prejudice reduction, was felt to be somewhat irrelevant. The majority of participants however argued that the PGCE course had an impact on student teachers' social values and attitudes through the indirect opportunities it offered for peer denominational contact, as well as interaction with children and young people during school experiences. Interestingly, little reference was made here to their own specific contribution in this area (see also, Moran 2009). Two tutors articulated a position of recognising the need for teachers to acknowledge difference and not make pupils feel that difference was wrong.

There was a sense however that this viewpoint illustrated a safe, voyeuristic diversity perspective involving a certain amount of tokenism in the celebration of cultural festivals and events – what Tronya et al. (1992) referred to as the 3Ss, or, ‘Saris, Samosas and Steel Bands’ (47) approach to multicultural education. On the other hand, one tutor did emphasise the need for diversity work to go further than acknowledge similarity and difference in the classroom in order to embrace a critical pedagogy that didn’t avoid controversial/ sensitive issues. Towards this end he emphasised the importance of communicative/dialogical pedagogical processes and the need for teacher educators to share their own stories or personal narratives with students in order to develop more of a shared balance of power between adults and students. This participant also argued that the imminent implementation of a revised curriculum including Local and Global Citizenship offered enhanced scope for all teachers to undertake a more direct approach to issues of prejudice reduction through their main subjects.

Like classroom teachers in the first author’s research (Smith 2001a, 2001b), these teacher educators predominantly believed that reconciliation in the wider society was directly influenced by school-based work designed to influence children’s personal identities (self-esteem) and inter-personal relationships (teacher–student; student–student). That is, they interpreted the community relations task as one of personality development and the resolution of interpersonal conflict. Key elements included the desirability of treating all children and young people as individuals worthy of respect (regardless of ability, religion, social background and gender) and strongly held assumptions about the role of self-esteem in motivating learning – in particular, the assumption that low self-esteem was one of the most significant roots of underachievement, and high self-esteem an asset. As one of the participants suggested ... ‘a child who was respected would respect others and would hopefully become a fulfilled and caring adult ... in this way, schools will be making a big difference’. Another commented:

I just feel that everybody should be happy, the children, the staff ... when people are happy they also feel secure ... if people are happy and secure then their self-esteem will be good and if their self-esteem is good there will be lots of spin-offs ... like, for example, tolerance towards the other community.

These findings however stimulated engaged dialogue around the concept of self-esteem and approaches to peace education. The conceptual wooliness surrounding assumptions about the role of self-esteem in motivating learning is a subject that been addressed by applied psychologists. For example, McLean (2003) argued that schooling didn’t actually affect esteem as much as people thought. He referred to Dweck and Sorich (1999) who regarded esteem-building approaches as laudable, but nevertheless argued that, in isolation, would not nurture confident learners. Furthermore, for some time now too, leading peace education researchers and commentators have distinguished between a personal-interpersonal skills or ‘human relations’ approach to peace education, and the intergroup or ‘collective identity’ approach. Salomon (2002), for example, viewed N. Ireland as a longstanding conflict requiring peace educators to focus on tackling perceptions about the collective other. Academic psychologists working in N. Ireland have also, for some time, recognised the important disjuncture or discontinuity that exists between personal identity aspects of the self-concept and social identity aspects. Consequently,

drawing upon ideas from Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel and Turner 1986), they argue that intergroup conflict, as in N. Ireland, was made possible by a process whose very function was to attenuate, override or eliminate individual and interpersonal identifications (Turner 1999). Evidence such as this suggests that the human relations approach to community relations may not be up to the task of supporting school transformation for life in post-conflict N. Ireland; thought by many peace educators and commentators to require encouragement to dialogue around the difficult conversations (see, for example, Morrow 2004).

The afternoon session, too, once again engendered much discussion that yielded interesting and illuminating insights into initial teacher educators' understanding of a good ITE department for community relations education. As can be seen from the results of the card sort exercise (see below), amongst the most relevant competence statements, reference was made to knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates about the nature and purposes of education, and of the social and policy contexts in which the aims of education were defined and implemented (Moran 2009). In respect of the latter, part of this statement referred to the OFMDFM's (2005) Shared Futures document and to the impact of specific school environments in N. Ireland, and on the impact of policy on professional practice during ITE. Another of the most relevant competence statements referred to the need to take account of significant features of pupils' cultures, languages and faiths, and to the celebration of diversity and the fostering of mutual respect (see also, Moran 2009).

The most relevant competence statements

- Understand and uphold the following core values: trust, respect, integrity, honesty, fairness, tolerance, commitment, equality, service;
- A knowledge and understanding of the need to take account of the significant features of pupils' cultures, languages and faiths and to address the implications for learning arising from these;
- A knowledge and understanding of the interrelationship between schools and the communities they serve and the potential for mutual development and well-being;
- Contributing to the development and life of the school, collaborating with teaching and support staff, parents and external agencies;
- A knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates about the nature and purposes of education and of the social and policy contexts in which the aims of education are defined and implemented;
- A knowledge and understanding of the factors that promote and hinder effective learning, and awareness of the need to provide for the holistic development of the child.

The least relevant competence statements

- Assessing the levels of pupils' attainment against relevant bench-marking data and analysing this information in order to set suitable challenging targets for their pupils;
- Focusing on assessment for learning by monitoring pupils' progress, giving constructive feedback to help pupils reflect on and improve their learning;

- Managing their time and workload effectively and efficiently and maintain a work/life balance.

Dialogue over the various structured exercises used to collect data yielded important additional insights into the sorts of issues, questions and concerns tutors raised about existing institutional arrangements for community relations education. These included:

- The need for supplementary teaching resources for working in the community relations field;
- The need for teacher preparation to challenge predispositions and belief systems;
- The need for ITE to take account of the diversity of school types in society where cultural and religious segregation was systemic;
- The need to enable student teachers, during teaching practice, to have the choice of crossing the religious divide to become immersed in an unfamiliar environment;
- The desirability of having further personal and professional development including opportunities to discuss how community relations could be embedded within their subject areas – some subject specific initiatives were in-fact mentioned, such as completing a field trip focusing on segregation in Belfast (Geography) and undertaking a citizenship residential (History);
- The need for more time to discuss how the subject of sectarianism could be infused within their main subjects;
- The need for more specific classroom guidance related to the revised competencies;
- The complexities of the partnership model of ITE, where, unlike other UK jurisdictions, partnerships with schools for ITE in N. Ireland are voluntary and no resources are transferred to schools. Furthermore, as it currently stands, PGCE students are on school placement for 22 weeks during their ITE year, and, in university for only 10 weeks; consequently, ITE tutors felt that they had little control over what happened on school placement and that there was a need for greater progression across the phases of teacher education, i.e. ITE; induction, early professional development (EPD) and continuing professional development (CPD);
- The need to survey PGCE students over what a good ITE programme for community relations would look like and whether learning should address the on-going divisions in N. Ireland;
- The need to take greater account of the interdenominational nature and ethos of postgraduate teacher education in N. Ireland;
- The need to ensure that initial teacher education was itself an inclusive environment.

Data analysis enabled us to set about constructing a pilot set of materials which, for convenience, we decided to model on the *School Peacebuilding Index or SPI* structure – a self-evaluation framework developed by the first author following work in a number of N. Ireland primary and secondary schools (see, Smith and Neill 2005). The draft materials were laid out in the form of a questionnaire, with the themes derived from our data analysis considered as *indicators of institutional life* that required attention if, in order to enrich future community relations work

and possibilities, the institution was to learn from its practice. The main themes or indicators were: teaching, learning and assessment; curriculum design, content and organisation; mobilising resources; placements; department policy; development planning; quality assurance; public relations; professional development; institutional culture. These indicators, or fine-grained aspects of school life, were followed by key questions that were designed to provoke critical reflection or collaborative analysis (see Table 1).

With the twin goals of piloting the materials, and also encouraging further dialogue and reflexive thought about embedding community relations education within the PGCE curriculum, the first author conducted a series of individual interviews with colleagues. The randomised 'names in a hat procedure' was used to select a small number of colleagues for interview. All five chosen names agreed to take part in a one-hour interview designed to consider each of the *Cr-ITE* items in turn and provide feedback on the vocabulary, meanings, and the suitability of language. This process was found to be an engaging and friendly way of exploring important themes related to education for diversity. Dialogue also led to a number of suggestions for making the draft materials more user friendly involving the omission of

Table 1. Section of Pilot *CR-ITE* Modeled on the School Peacebuilding Index (Smith and Neill 2005: see also Appendix 1).

Indicator: Teaching and Learning	Institution's own Rating (Emergent/Established/ Advanced)	Sources of Evidence
Do all initial teacher educators take responsibility for addressing controversial and sensitive issues relevant to the causes and consequences of social division within N. Ireland?		
Is a variety of teaching strategies and styles used by teacher educators e.g. collaborative learning, action-research, reflective writing and peer - assessment?		
Do teacher educators model being explicit about their positions on sensitive subjects?		
Indicator: Mobilising Resources		
Does the ITE department collaborate with other educational partners (e.g. ELB (LEA) Curriculum Advisory & Support Services) to provide CPD for teacher tutors in e.g. equality issues, human rights philosophy or, the CR dimension of schooling?		
Is the ITE department committed to the full involvement of partnership schools in understanding and supporting a community relations dimension?		
Does the department devote a specific resource area containing materials relevant to school-based community relations education and cultural diversity		

*1. Emergent practice = Limited development or partial implementation

2. Established practice = Mostly functional level of development and implementation

3. Advanced practice = Fully functional level of development and implementation.

some key questions, the inclusion of others, and the development of an alternative overall framework for thinking about what happened in organisations. This alternative framework was based on the idea of institutional *cultures, policies* and *practices* – where culture was understood as meaning deeply held attitudes, values and beliefs and changing culture deemed essential to sustained development; policies were concerned with how the organisation was run and practices were concerned with teaching-learning activities, developing and using resources (see, Booth and Ainscow 2002 and Appendix 1). As can be seen from Appendix 1, a set of indicators took the review to the next level of detail while indicators connected to a series of detailed questions that further refined organisational exploration.

Concluding comments

There is an emerging consensus and body of wisdom about what a healthy system of *school* evaluation looks like. Its primary goal is to help schools maintain and improve through critical self-reflection. It is concerned to equip teachers with the know-how to evaluate the quality of learning in their classrooms so that they do not have to rely on an external view, yet welcome such a perspective because it can enhance and strengthen good practice. (MacBeath 1999, 1)

As we write, the hailing voices of the rational scientific measurable world of *techné* (Gale and Wyatt 2008, 16), of technical rationality (Gerwitz 2002) and performativity assail us with questions over the value of the exercise described in this paper. Lest there be any misunderstanding, let us be clear about our intentions in this particular study. On this occasion we were not concerned with providing a methodologically rigorous account of the development of a technically robust self-evaluation tool for hard pressed ITE departments to follow ritualistically, nor, present an evaluative case study of such a received protocol in actual use! Whilst anticipating that objectives such as these would form the basis of follow-up research, the purpose of the research and development work reported here was to discover whether the methodology and methods developed for Scottish and English schools by MacBeath (e.g., 1999) could be applied or redeveloped within a higher education context. To the best of our knowledge, no one had attempted to investigate this before. We wanted to learn from colleagues, to test out ideas with them, and to tease out from those experiences common strands and collective insights on the characteristics of a good ITE department for community relations education. We saw it as important that any framework for self-evaluation should take careful account of the people who carried the responsibility for its success and improvement. The essential thing, as MacBeath (2003) argued, was that organisations owned the process themselves and felt free to radically adapt or radically change any tools that they used to help them with the process. Quoting Kathryn Riley, he argued that indicators of effectiveness should be seen less as barometers than tin openers; that is, tools for opening a can of worms rather than providing definite measures of an organisation's quality.

According to Mayo (2003), any assessment of the transformative potential of an educational initiative would have to focus attention on the following questions: 'Does it contain a language of critique?' 'Does it expose forms of institutional oppression?' and, 'Does it provide a language of possibility?'. In light of the evidence presented here, we would argue strongly that processes of self-evaluation modelled on development work undertaken by MacBeath and his collaborators, has the potential to leads

to transformative awarenesses amongst teacher educators relevant to teacher education for inclusion. Our conclusion in this regard should not, we feel, be minimised, since it needs to be viewed in light of the following issues. First, implicit in the concept of self-evaluation is the capacity of practitioners to critically reflect on the data collected and to act to improve practice accordingly. Community relations practice inevitably encounters deeply held positions, so such reflection must go beyond technical improvements in planning and delivery to examine value systems. Second, institutional work designed to develop a language of possibility for creative action has to penetrate the problematic of what most peace scholars now regard as the most obdurate of all the barriers to the transformation of education for peace in N. Ireland, and central to understanding the way in which sectarianism in N. Ireland reinforces itself (Smith and Neill 2005). This refers to the culturally ubiquitous narrative within wider society that discourages open discussion on the causes and consequences of social division (see, for example, Smith 2005 and Smith and Neill 2005). Recently, Liechty and Clegg (2001) suggested that this phenomenon was part of the dynamics of sectarianism in local settings in N. Ireland which they referred to as ... 'the Level':

The level refers to a certain community equilibrium that sets limits on what people talk about, that everyone knows, and most people usually accept and observe. The level sets the point one does not go beyond in sectarian terms. The level might in any given situation tell people things like: where they may shop and where they ought to shop; what they can talk about with their own (group: my emphasis) and what they may talk about with others; what happens to mixed marriage couples; what it means to join a different church; where they should live; to whom they may sell land ... the level may speak to many other areas as well, and the level will include some understanding of the cost and penalties incurred by violating it ... it is an intensely local phenomenon ... however some features are characteristic of almost everywhere in N. Ireland. (Leichy and Clegg 2001, 205)

Within the context of the broader IFI/DENI Project at the University of Ulster (see also, McCully 2010),⁵ our development work proved valuable as a foundation for experimentation. The process of reflection, itself, leading to the construction of the *Cr-ITE*, encouraged colleagues to engage in a level of professional and personal intervention on sensitive issues not before experienced in formal departmental discussion. That subject tutors then undertook to implement a community relations/inclusion related initiative with their own subject domains, beyond existing practice, may reflect financial support then on offer through the project, but there were also indications that their awareness with respect to the efficacy of the work was enhanced. This is particularly so of individuals who accompanied the project leaders on residential experiences and, for the first time, engaged with students in frank exchanges on difficult cultural and political issues pertaining to events associated with the conflict and its legacy. It is notable that several of the initiatives put in place survived the life of the project and the time pressures inherent in a PGCE programme. Indeed, two PGCE colleagues, who previously had no track record in community relations practice, have subsequently acquired additional funding for small community relations projects of their own.

At course level the work contributed to having a commitment to the *Shared Future* agenda stated explicitly in the course documentation and an accompanying statement that students should expect to have their community values challenged during the course of the year. However, the bid to have a similar affirmation within

the School mission statement was diluted to a more general commitment to inclusion. When the Community Relations lectureship position, originally supported by project money, came up for renewal, again management of the Faculty failed to support its sustainability. This forced us to recognise that, in a multi-layered institution like a university, it is insufficient to effect change at practitioner and departmental level without the full commitment of higher management structures. Thus, the outcome reinforces the premise that any self-evaluation exercise has to encompass all levels of decision making, which includes fundamentally challenging managerial cultures.

Collective self-evaluation has to do with ensuring that the collective whole exceeds the sum of the parts (Brighouse and Woods 1999). As Brighouse and Woods (1999) argued, it provides an organisation with an opportunity to increase the common wealth of its curiosity, an extension of knowledge through the sharing of other people's ideas. It requires growing and nourishing a culture in which people, across power, identity and educational differences, are able to meet and reflect together (Wilson and Eyben 2005). The evidence from our work to date is that it is very possible to engage teacher educators in the challenge of addressing wider issues of social, cultural, academic and religious divisions (see also Moran 2009). On the other hand, a major limitation of the self-evaluation approach is that, in reality, there are few organisations with the self-assurance and inner resources to reform themselves (MacBeath 1999). As Macbeath (1999) suggested, no organisation likes cans of worms to be opened and will only expose them to the sunlight if there is some faith that they can be found a less slithery lifestyle. Experience in the school effectiveness and school improvement fields (SESI) suggests that, in order to support self-evaluation and change, organisations very often need *friends* – trusted and 'critical friends'.⁶ In the case of the project featured here, a steering committee was established to provide critical support. It consisted of a representative of the funding body and two senior colleagues from within the institution, both of whom had long practice and research experience in community relations work but who were not directly involved in ITE. The group met on four occasions during the project's life-time and provided valuable advice as to future action. We would envisage organisations making use of a self-evaluation framework, and self-evaluation tool such as the *Cr-ITE*, as part of a broader framework of *assisted self-evaluation* — described by Wilson (2005) as a process whereby an external group of practitioners acted as a resource for a group of people to help them reflect and examine their practices *in situ* – and then arrive at agreements about those they wish to change, grow or cease.

By way of final comment, some contemporary developments in social policy in N. Ireland, as well as notable trends in teacher education development, serve to maintain our interest in the impact of self-evaluation systems within ITE and future research concerned with the practical out-workings of the *Cr-ITE* process. For example, the inspection of initial teacher education within colleges and universities in N. Ireland is now highly derivative of the Ofsted school inspection regime in England – itself, interestingly, influenced by John MacBeath's efforts to create a healthier system of centralised school inspections where self-evaluation played a greater role and Ofsted is encouraged to try to make itself as redundant as possible (Hall and Noyes 2009). It is a sequential model whereby the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), working on behalf of the Department of Education (DE) and the Department for Learning and Employment (DEL), sets out to check the validity of the ITE's own evaluation of its performance.

In relation to community relations education, in June 2008, the Minister for Education (Caitríona Ruane) established a new advisory group to review existing community relations policy. The focus was intended to bring forward policy recommendations which reflected the ongoing changes in the political, social, cultural and educational landscape within N. Ireland and the need for work to address issues of division and community relations within the wider context of equality and diversity. The resulting policy text (Community Relations, Equality and Diversity or CRED: DE 2011), recommended that, during initial and continuing professional development, teachers should be helped to develop the confidence to support learners to deal with issues of equality, diversity and discrimination. The role of community relations in education was viewed as helping to build a shared and safe society which challenged sectarianism and discrimination in all its forms, and supported children and young people to play their part in eliminating sectarianism and discrimination within their communities. The report indicated that the Department of Education (DE) would work with higher and further education providers to strengthen community relations, equality and diversity modules so that the qualified education workforce was supported to improve the outcomes for children and young people dealing with issues of equality and diversity. Furthermore, that the DE *would work to develop indicators for this work with the capability of being used for self-evaluation.*

Cochran-Smith (cited by Moran 2009, 59) used the metaphor of ‘walking the road’ to describe the long, complex, challenging and seemingly endless journey that teacher educators need to embark upon as they seek to discover the various meanings and different paths associated with educating teachers for diversity and social justice. Teachers are needed who are prepared to learn and re-learn the self, and construct and reshape their own professional identity, and, in so doing, refine their own personal and professional values (Moran 2009). In a world where serious conflicts pose barriers to sustainable peace in many societies, the vision and work of education for a culture of peace is indispensable and urgent. Furthermore, as contemporary societies become more heterogeneous, educational systems across the world are being challenged to address some fundamental questions about teaching and learning related to the accommodation of difference in all its manifestations. New times require new thinking! World-wide there is a drive towards inclusive education and it has been argued that teachers – and consequently teacher educators – are central to this movement (Pearson 2009).

Notes

1. A Shared Future: The Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland.
2. Dean Fink, who has an international reputation in the field of organisational development, introduced this group brainstorming exercise to an audience of Education and Library Board (ELB) advisers on the 17 October, 2006. Amongst advisers, it subsequently, and affectionately, became known as doing a ‘Dean Fink’!
3. The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) is the non-ministerial Government Department of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools in England (HMCI).
4. Corbett (1999) referred to the deep culture as the hidden curriculum of assumed knowledges, fundamental value systems, rituals and routines that formed the fabric of life within specific institutions. It was out of this mix of fundamental meaning structures, or

discourses, arising out of human interchange and linked to issues of power, that people constructed their identities.

5. For a detailed account of the work of the IFI project see McCully (2010) *Better Embedding Community Relations Principles in Initial Teacher Education: concluding report to funders*, Coleraine, UNESCO Centre, University of Ulster.
6. Brighouse and Woods (1999) cited Fullan (1992) who counterpoint the critical friend with the 'uncritical lover' and the hostile witness or 'unloving critic', both of whom are dangerous to the health of a school.

Notes on contributors

Ron Smith is a lecturer in Education at the School of Education, Queen's University Belfast, and PGCE Coordinator for Special Needs Education, Inclusion and DIversity. His current research is concerned with developing new approaches to teacher education for inclusion and developing the concept of inclusive pedagogy as an approach to special needs education that is distinguished from earlier concepts of special and inclusive education. He has a developing record of publication in peer-reviewed journals.

Alan McCully is a Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Ulster at Coleraine and PGCE History Tutor for the PGCE programme. His research interests are in the field of educational responses to conflict, particularly in the context of history and citizenship teaching, and teacher education provision.

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Appendix 1

Dimension A:

Indicator A1: Curriculum Design, Content & Organisation	Institution's own Rating (Emergent/Established/ Advanced)	Sources of Evidence
Is the curriculum for good relations and diversity overtly present in the programme documentation for PGCE and written into course planning as a curricular entitlement for all student teachers?		
Do all student teachers develop knowledge and understanding of the contemporary debates about the nature and purposes of community relations education? <i>e.g. understand the implications of the Shared Future Document?</i>		
Do all graduates develop personal understanding and positioning which informs their educational philosophy? <i>e.g. beliefs about: segregation v assimilation v pluralism; commonality versus difference; the culture of silence in N. Ireland; stereotypical views about children's and young peoples' abilities to understand social issues.</i>		
Are opportunities to acknowledge difference, and be at ease with difference, part of the planned and purposeful activity and experience of the PGCE curriculum for all student teachers?		
Are opportunities to explore their own social identities and group relationships, and the significance of this for their professional role, part of the planned and purposeful activity of the PGCE curriculum and experience for all student teachers?		
Do all student teachers develop knowledge and understanding of the factors that promote and hinder effective teaching, learning and assessment of community relations? <i>e.g. understand the importance of developing a classroom culture of trust and respect; understand the importance of developing a classroom culture of enquiry and evidence-based opinions. Understand the role of parental involvement.</i>		
Do all student teachers develop an understanding of the inter-relationship between schools and the communities they serve, and the potential for mutual development and well - being? <i>e.g. ways in which school-home -community relationships can be developed to support community relations education</i>		
Do all PGCE primary student teachers develop awareness of learning approaches that can be used to address the ongoing divisions within N. Ireland?		

(Continued)

Appendix 1. Dimension A (Continued)

Indicator A1: Curriculum Design, Content & Organisation	Institution's own Rating (Emergent/Established/Advanced)	Sources of Evidence
<p>Do all secondary PGCE secondary students develop awareness of learning approaches, through their main/subsidiary subjects, that can be used to address the ongoing divisions within N. Ireland?</p> <p>Do student teachers address, within their courses, a range of equality issues, not just high profile ones such as educational special needs?</p>		
Indicator A2: Teaching, Learning & Assessment		
<p>Do all initial teacher educators take responsibility for addressing controversial and sensitive issues relevant to the causes and consequences of social division within N. Ireland?</p> <p>Is a variety of teaching strategies and styles used by teacher educators e.g. collaborative learning, action-research, reflective writing and peer - assessment?</p> <p>Is pedagogy that is experiential and participatory modelled during ITE?</p> <p>Do teacher educators model being explicit about their positions on sensitive subjects?</p> <p>Are connections made between research, teaching, and student assignments within the department?</p> <p>Is there an inclusive approach taken to research within the department, such that all staff and students see themselves as researchers as well as teachers and learners?</p> <p>Does assessment criteria for all academic work recognise the importance of critical thinking skills?</p> <p>Do teacher educators monitor teaching materials for cultural bias?</p> <p>Are assessment procedures scrutinised to promote equality of opportunity as well as fair and anti-discriminatory practice ?</p>		
Indicator A3: Placements		
<p>Do the contexts and experiences offered to student teachers provide them with opportunities to visit, or conduct teaching practice, in schools whose socio-cultural profile differs from their own?</p> <p>Do the contexts and experiences offered to student teachers on placement provide them with opportunities to teach controversial or sensitive issues?</p> <p>Do the contexts and experiences offered to student teachers on placement provide them with opportunities to focus on embedding community</p>		

(Continued)

Appendix 1. Dimension A (Continued)

Indicator A1: Curriculum Design, Content & Organisation	Institution's own Rating (Emergent/Established/Advanced)	Sources of Evidence
relations education within their main/subsidiary subject?		
Indicator A4: Mobilising Resources		
Does the ITE department collaborate with other educational partners (e.g. ELB (LEA) Curriculum Advisory & Support Services) to provide CPD for teacher tutors in e.g. equality issues, human rights philosophy or, the CR dimension of schooling?		
Is the ITE department committed to the full involvement of partnership schools in understanding and supporting a community relations dimension?		
Does the department devote a specific resource area containing materials relevant to school-based community relations education and cultural diversity		

Dimension B:

Indicator B1: ITE Department Policy	Institution's own Rating	Sources of Evidence
In their course booklets, does the ITE department very clearly commit itself to the goals of A Shared Future through education?		
Is the department policy in keeping with the vision & aims within the whole institution/faculty?		
Are meaningful connections made between the good relations policy and other department/faculty policies? e.g. <i>equality of opportunity</i> ? <i>research policy</i> ? <i>policy on the connection between research and teaching</i> ? <i>policy on student's on the job training</i> ?		
Indicator B2: Development Planning		
Is there someone who has responsibility for the overall implementation and monitoring of initiatives in relation to promoting good relations ?		
Does the faculty/department produce a development plan in a participatory way?		
Is the department's position on promoting good relations and diversity reflected in the development plan?		

(Continued)

Appendix 1. Dimension B (Continued)

Indicator B1: ITE Department Policy	Institution's own Rating	Sources of Evidence
Does the department have action plans (which relate to good relations and promoting diversity) that indicate clear targets to be achieved, success criteria, tasks, relevant staff development?		
Does the development plan identify relevant staff development?		
Do initiatives in teacher education result more from individual initiative than from planned development?		
Indicator B3: Quality Assurance		
Does the department examine its policies and work, among other things by means of self-evaluation, to have its strengths and weaknesses evaluated by outside experts?		
Are student teachers involved in internal self-assessment processes?		
Does the internal quality assurance framework reflect the organisation's mission?		
Does the department monitor participation in ITE (recruitment & drop-out) according to a range of social groupings: ethnicity, religion, gender, disability etc.		
Is access to postgraduate and graduate courses encouraged for those who come from non-traditional educational backgrounds?		
Are students with a disability recruited to ITE?		
Are reasonable adaptations made for student teachers with educational special needs and/or disability attending ITE?		
Indicator B4: Public Relations		
Do all documents used to advertise ITE courses reflect institutional values on good relations, equality and diversity?		
Does the ITE department make every effort to provide publicity information in other languages?		
Does the ITE department organize multicultural careers events aimed specifically at attracting applicants from minority ethnic groups?		

Dimension C:

Indicator C1: Professional development	Institution's own Rating	Sources of Evidence
Is staff development time set aside for looking at the knowledge, skills and values essential for achieving community relations & diversity through ITE?		
Do teacher educators themselves receive cultural awareness, equality and diversity training?		

(Continued)

Appendix 1. Dimension C (Continued)

Indicator C1: Professional development	Institution's own Rating	Sources of Evidence
Is accurate information on equality legislation, as it relates to schools, provided and easily accessible to teacher educators?		
Is all relevant information on support for the CR dimension circulated?		
Is induction training available for new lecturers/tutors on equality, diversity issues etc?		
Indicator C2: Institutional-Based Professional Community		
Does management facilitate the development of a climate of trust and openness?		
Is reflective dialogue a strong characteristic of the department?		
Is consensus, shared norms and values, a strong characteristic of the department?		
Is there a sense of teamwork amongst the academic staff?		
Is sharing of practice a strong characteristic of the ITE department?		
Is openness to improvement a strong characteristic of the department?		
Do lecturers receive effective support from the leadership?		
Is trust and openness a strong characteristic of the department?		
Do lecturers feel that their voices are heard when decisions concerning their workplace are made?		
Is strong teacher - student relationships a characteristic of the department?		
Over and above the occasional course, is there a forum for conversations on teaching methods or syllabuses, for debating fundamental issues of educational philosophy such as community relations?		
Indicator C3: The Deep Culture		
Do teacher educators view education as a potentially valuable forum for challenging attitudes, assumptions, misperceptions of the 'other'?		
Are equality issues discussed openly and between staff?		
Are issues such as the nature of education designed to overcome the ongoing divisions within N. Ireland discussed openly between staff?		
Do teacher educators recognise the distinction between <i>interpersonal</i> and <i>intergroup</i> conflict - and the implications of this for teaching about diversity within the local context?		
Do teacher educators believe that young people should be helped to learn about how 'we are all the same' as opposed to 'teaching about differences'?		