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What does it mean to be a community relations professional in Northern Irish education? Some research-based answers

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An impressive evidence-base concerning teacher professionalism allied to community relations education in Northern Ireland has been derived from research conducted at the UNESCO Centre, University of Ulster. Reflective learning by the authors on three recent projects allowed them to construct a professional profile setting out what one might expect to see and hear in classrooms that foster effective community relations education. A brief description of the background research and the derived professional profile (the CR-profile) are included here. Our research speaks to the need for a more critical school pedagogy alongside changes in the professional development of teachers. We argue that professional development, at all levels, needs to be a transformative project underpinned by critical reflective practice. Against a backdrop of slow progress towards a more peaceful and plural society in Northern Ireland, and the continuing need for education to play its part in developing a new peace culture, this paper appears very timely.

Introduction

Before offering an account of our projects, we need to place them within some broader frameworks and theoretical literatures. Consideration of the impact of wider social and political contexts upon issues of teacher professionality[1] exposes some paradoxes. For example, while teachers in Northern Ireland (hereafter NI) are seen to have an important part to play in the development of a post-conflict democratic society, and, despite the rhetoric of policy documents, the teaching profession and teacher education have been subject to discourses[2] which represent the antithesis of democracy and make the autonomy of the profession highly problematic (Best & Rose, 2003).

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Contextualization

The Northern Ireland conflict

The 1998 Good Friday peace agreement (GPA) had the potential to usher in a radically changed environment for community relations in NI. However, to imagine that we had crossed some invisible rubicon where social conflict magically disappeared would be naive. A realistic assessment of the present peace process suggests that reconciliation remains as yet an unfulfilled dream.

Schools and curriculum responses to social conflict

Segregation is a feature of almost every aspect of life in NI. People live, socialize, work and shop in areas where they feel safe (Leitch & Kilpatrick, 1999). Consequently, a distinctive characteristic of the school system is its segregated nature. The vast majority of children and teachers attend schools that can be described as either Protestant (controlled schools) or Catholic (maintained schools). As Gallagher (1992) remarked, most schools are characterized by the religious homogeneity of their staff and students. There has been a trend towards integrated schools, although currently only 5% of the students attend such schools (Naylor, 2003).

Given the limited scope for decreasing the segregated nature of the school system, a number of peace education responses have been developed. These range from statutory education for mutual understanding (EMU)[3] to voluntary school-based cross-community contact. However, over the past two decades, a number of educational commentators have drawn attention to important limitations in the extant provision (see Cairns, 1996; Smith & Robinson, 1996; Richardson 1997; Gallagher, 1998; CCEA, 2000; Connolly, 2000). Despite statutory guidelines, schools appear to exhibit a culture of silence and avoidance by failing to address real issues of diversity and conflict within the curriculum. In the wake of the GFA, this prompted the Department of Education in Northern Ireland to state its position with respect to the responsibilities of public institutions. The 'culture of tolerance' report (DENI, 1999a) suggested that it was time to reinvigorate the work of the education services to help create a more tolerant society and to regard the development of respect for diversity as a core rather than peripheral element of the school curriculum.

A review of the NI curriculum began in the autumn term of 1999. To date this includes the recommendation that all young people should be provided with curricular opportunities to develop as individuals, as contributors to the economy and as contributors to the environment. Furthermore, it recommends the inclusion of a citizenship strand within personal development work at the primary stage and, at secondary level, a dedicated programme for 'local and global citizenship'.

Teacher education and teacher competences

Teacher education in NI has a critical role in supporting interventions in the field of community relations (Smith, 1994; Montgomery & McCully, 2000). In relation to

this, a DENI commentary on the culture of tolerance report (DENI, 1999b) made specific reference to teacher education. This suggested that all bodies providing initial teacher education and teacher professional development[4] should review the content and impact of their courses relevant to community relations education.

However, against the backdrop of such policy statements, initial teacher education appears to have proven problematic in the community relations context; both in the segregated environment of the university colleges and in the integrated domain of the universities. Higher education has 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 reconfigured along the lines of a commercial bureaucracy (see Usher & Edwards, 1994; Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995; Bottery & Wright, 2000; Watkins, 1999a, b). Ball (2003) described the processes and effects of this realignment as the 'terrors of performativity'. Privileged within performative cultures are educational discourses that emphasize technical elements of the curriculum where success is defined in narrow instrumental terms.

The competency model of teacher education is one manifestation of this performativity. In this model stress is placed on the ability of teachers to perform to identified standards of technical excellence within a prevailing transmission model of the curriculum; assessed and inspected in terms of measured outcomes (Best & Rose, 2003). However, there is evidence that this has had detrimental consequences for the forms of teacher professionality shaping the profession. As Ball (2003) remarked, regimes of performativity encourage practices and relationships antithetical to social justice and democratic outcomes. Within such cultures what matters are outputs rather than beliefs, values or authentic relationships. Bottery (2000) argued that teachers were being turned into technicians rather than reflective professionals (see also Montgomery & McCully, 2000; McCully, 2006). Beckmann and Cooper (2004) suggested that performative cultures had profound detrimental impacts for students, educationalists and society. In the case of students, this included the increased production of uncritical thinkers compliant to the needs of the market. In the case of teachers and lecturers, it included the erosion of the role of schooling in facilitating critical thinking, respect and empathy; in other words, an erosion of some of the core essentials for a democratic, socially-just and socially-inclusive society.

Research-based knowledge: three projects

This section of the paper describes how knowledge was created in relation to three relevant research projects undertaken by colleagues at the UNESCO Centre, School of Education, University of Ulster. However, in order to keep our account within the wordage constraints, we have had to be succinct in reflecting on this important evidence-base. For example, in relation to the first project, we had to choose a small number only of the relevant key results for discussion. In relation to the second project, we had to omit discussion of some of the key elements within complex teaching–learning systems.

Table 1.   The schools

	School	Sector	Denomination	Urban–rural	SES	% free school meals
A	Abbey	Primary	RC	Urban	Mixed	23.75
B	Burrens	Primary	Protestant	Urban	Mixed	22.00
C	Connor	Primary	Protestant	Urban	Low	65.00
D	Dreenagh	Primary	RC	Urban	Low	61.72
E	Errigal	Primary	RC	Rural	High	16.08
F	Ferns	Primary	RC	Urban	Low	68.00
G	Garnish	Secondary	RC	Urban	High	5.29
H	Headford	Secondary	Protestant	Rural	Low	41.3
I	Inch	Secondary	RC	Rural	Low	50.00

Project 1. Schools as institutions for peace

During the 1998 autumn school term, nine schools (see Table 1 above) were contacted and invited to take part in research designed to investigate the perceptions of key stakeholders on, 'what makes a good school for community relations'. A number of criteria were included in the frame for selecting cases, i.e., perceived effectiveness with respect to community relations education; school sector (Catholic/maintained and Protestant/controlled); school level (both primary and secondary); schools having contrasting experiences of political violence; schools serving communities with contrasting socio-economic circumstances (higher, mixed and lower SES). Although the project directors recognized that there were a number of dimensions to school-based community relations work, they decided to identify case study schools on the basis of their perceived commitment to the cross-community contact dimension. This decision reflected the relative transparency of this criterion and the lack of an obvious alternative.

Research contact was made with a total of 343 individuals across all schools, of which 87 were members of staff, 228 were pupils and 28 parents. The main method used was the focus group interview, and an adaptation of the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and naturalistic enquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was used for data analysis.

Drawing on the views of staff, parents/carers and students, the research produced a substantial body of rich data which yielded important and illuminating insights. Nineteen factors or themes mediating school effectiveness and improvement for community relations were identified. These factors operated at three levels of influence and were found to interact in complex ways creating different patterns at different institutional sites(see Table 2). At the individual teacher level, five themes were identified: teachers' beliefs about community relations; teachers' professional knowledge; teachers' social beliefs regarding cultural diversity versus assimilation; teacher prejudice and teacher motivation, self-efficacy and confidence.

Teachers' beliefs about community relations.   Teachers' epistemological beliefs, that is, their beliefs about the nature of community relations knowledge and how students acquire this, were found to be strongly associated with community relations

Table 2. Key organizational factors for effectiveness and improvement

Individual teacher level	School structural and contextual factors	External context-based factors
Beliefs about CR	School culture (e.g., instrumental versus expressive code; culture of diversity; assimilation v pluralism; risk taking; optimism; support and mutual respect)	Demographic factors (e.g., degree of polarization; urban vs. rural; degree of political conflict in the local area)
Professional knowledge	Student subculture	Ongoing political situation
Social beliefs	Collaborative relationships with other schools and community agencies	Symbolic practices associated with local communities
Prejudices and stereotypes	School leadership	Culture of silence/avoidance
Motivation, self-efficacy and confidence	School size	Involvement of PSNI (Police Service Northern Ireland)
	Parental involvement	Professional learning infrastructure
		Fear of the future as an aspect of Unionist identity

outcomes. The construction of learners, learning about community relations and prejudice in terms of deficits in personal identity aspects of the self-concept were found to be greatly overvalued. Typically teachers said things like, 'our school encourages mutual understanding of both traditions (Catholic/nationalist/republican and Protestant/unionist) by developing the pupil's self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline'. On the other hand, for some time now, psychologists have rejected personalized views about prejudice and violence and have tended instead to draw attention to the important disjuncture or discontinuity between personal identity aspects of the self-concept and social identity aspects of the self. As Turner (1999) explained, in situations where social identity becomes salient, a change in the level and context of the self occurs whereby people categorize themselves as group members in contrast to other groups; this is a change from the 'I' to the 'we'. Our results confirmed the views of commentators such as Cairns (1996) who speculated that community relations education focused far too much on personal–interpersonal skills as opposed to intergroup issues. As Salomon (2002) suggested, the conflict in NI is an example of an intractable conflict requiring programmes of peace education that prioritize changing mindsets about the 'collective other'.

Despite the fact that cross-community contact schemes were non-statutory, many teachers believed that community relations and contact were synonymous. This belief structure was underpinned by individualized views of prejudice based on static, fixed and natural personality traits, e.g., 'it's hard to get it out of them'; 'it's born into them' or 'it's ignorance'. Bringing children together physically in order to 'let children see how normal the other side could be' (Ferns teacher) was thought to be the only remedy for this. As predicted by Gallagher (1995), this view of community relations tends to limit teachers' curriculum and other interventionist perspectives on the task.

Professional knowledge.   Across all case study schools, students' understanding of the NI political situation and conflict greatly exceeded the expectations of most teachers. The view of this Burren's teacher was not untypical when suggesting that:

> … some of them maybe (at Year 7, aged 11-years-old) would be fit for it but a lot of them would not; a lot of them would be completely lost so you might be shaping things and you could be inculcating things by approaching the subject too early.

A colleague expressed the view that it would 'probably be with the brighter ones (Year 7) that you would ever think about say, trying to explain the issue of stereotyping'. These sorts of views supported Rudduck *et al*'s (1995) conclusion that children in school were not normally regarded as socially competent when it came to making decisions on a range of issues and 'this bracketing out of their voice was founded upon an outdated view of childhood which failed to acknowledge children's capacity to reflect on issues affecting their lives' (Rudduck *et al.*, 1995, p. 172).

Teacher prejudice.   The difficult issue of communicating stereotyped and prejudiced perceptions was raised by all the groups. These discussions very often focused on the teaching of history which had a common and agreed syllabus including learning outcomes specifically designed to encourage the exploration of alternative ethnopolitical worldviews. While agreeing that this curriculum specification existed in theory, one Garnish teacher suggested that:

> … you could still treat issues in a biased way by either evading other points of view or saying things like I'm convinced the other side was wrong; this definitely goes on and so it comes down to the individual teacher's own political and social views.

One Errigal teacher agreed, 'you could still put a different slant on things, you could, for example, look at the Famine in Ireland in a particular way if you wanted to'. Two departmental heads insisted that their own colleagues fell over themselves to be objective, but conceded that this was not the case in all schools. There was good support for the idea that curriculum interpretation was down to the individual teacher since, 'they were all a product of the environment' and that it was very easy to pass on preconceived social–political ideas that children were quick to pick up on.

Project 2. Teaching controversial issues in a divided society

> Questions of partnership, of building bridges, bonding and linking relationships and of dialogue around the most difficult conversations must now become central to how we do business in N. Ireland. (Duncan Morrow, Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council; Morrow, 2004, p. 4)

The culturally ubiquitous story that discourages open discussion on the causes and consequences of social division, particularly in the company of people from the other main tradition, is reflected in the approach of teachers. As mentioned, despite curricular guidance, there is widespread absence within Northern Irish schools of classroom pedagogy that enables students to discuss and reflect upon issues directly related to

the conflict and its religious or political ramifications; in other words, this is an aspect of institutional life that manifests a pervasive 'culture of silence'.

Throughout his career, McCully has had substantial involvement with issues pertaining to the teaching of controversial or sensitive subjects. That is, with what postmodern, feminist and postcolonial theorists call 'borderlands' and 'border pedagogy' (see Giroux, 1992). Where borders delineate not just lines on a map, but also social, cultural and psychological divisions, borderlands represent those areas that reside at the margins of experience—'the third space' (Bhabha, cited by King, 2004, p. 15) that exists between apparently opposing identities, perspectives and commitments (King, 2004).

In order to try to inform teacher education, McCully (2006) attempted to distil the perceptions of experienced border pedagogues. Such practitioners not only manage the demands of very complex social settings, they also turn them into educational environments. He was interested in how they did this, what their raw materials were and what they had at their disposal in the learning context to facilitate learning. The participants were 9 teachers and 11 youth workers who had been involved in the development work associated with a three-year university-based research and development project entitled 'Speak Your Piece'. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the twenty participants and permission was given to have the discussions tape-recorded for later transcription.

Goals. Goals are the central and cohering element of complex teaching-learning activities (Watkins *et al.*, 1996). They hang the whole activity together. At their worst,
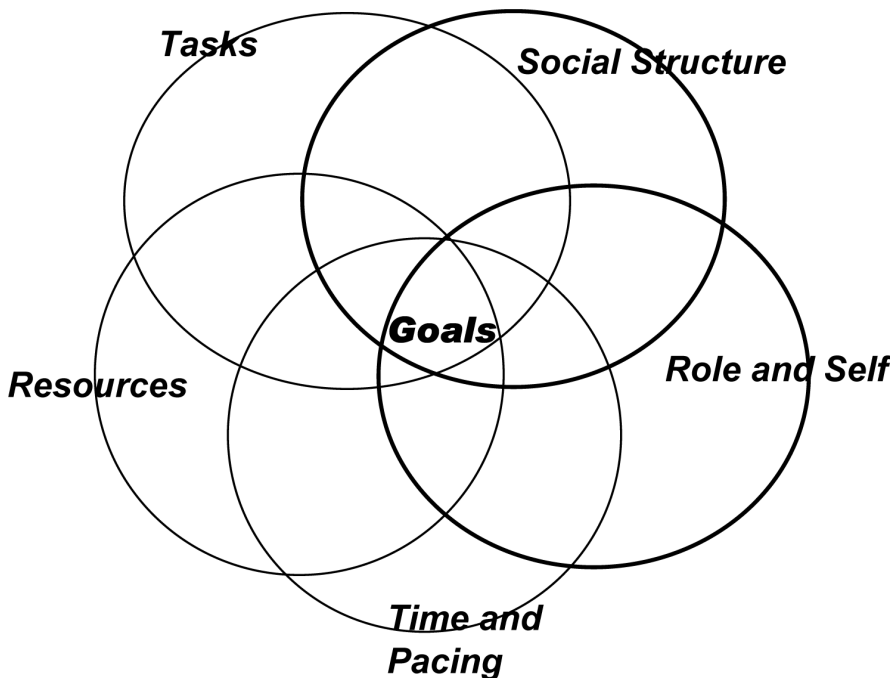

Figure 1. Key elements of effective border pedagogy. Adapted from Watkins *et al.* (1996)

goals have become narrowed to doing well on performance tests or getting 'learning in the head' (Watkins, 2004). However, it emerged clearly that effective pedagogues saw their work as developing students' higher-order skills, strategies and approaches including an enhanced sense of self. The concepts of learning they carried appeared neither shallow nor passive but deep and active, speaking to outcomes such as: nurturing critical reasoning; participative decision-making; solving problems; conducting enquiries relevant to students' lives and providing contexts for dialogue and democratic action. As opposed to the traditional emphasis on what teachers do, the emphasis was on a richer sense of learning as a process whereby knowledge was created through the transformation of experience.

Effective pedagogues laid an emphasis on their own learning as well as that of their students. One participant described this as 'seeing learning as a journey as opposed to a programme'. Stradling *et al*'s concept of 'cultivating tentativeness' (1984, pp. 4–5) was also identified as a discourse across the cases. This is a central goal of emancipatory forms of learning. It refers to helping students tolerate ambiguity and emerge from the 'cloud of giveness' (Greene, cited by King, 2004, p. 3) in which students (and teachers) regard the world as it is, as both natural and necessary and hold current assumptions, beliefs and opinions as bedrock and secure.

Tasks.   In many contexts, tasks reduce learning to short-term procedures in which some tangible (i.e., simply assessable) product emerges, but the process of learning is not addressed (Watkins, 2004). For the effective pedagogue, learning was:

- A personal–social process understood as enhanced through personal–social attention. Effective pedagogues appeared highly attentive and responsive to the emotional domain and the emotional development of students.
- Highly authentic and affirming of the life experiences of students.
- Collaborative.
- Communicative/dialogical; students were seen 'as crew not passengers' (Watkins, 2004).
- Active/experiential prioritizing such approaches as group/pair work, drama/role play, biography and storytelling.
- Open and transparent. McCully's effective pedagogues viewed the 'neutral chairperson' position as unrealistic (Steinhouse, 1970). They also believed that adults needed to share their own stories or personal narratives in order to develop more of a shared balance of power between adults and students.
- About promoting self-directed (but no asocial) learners.
- About ownership, allowing, for example, students to be involved with setting agendas and setting ground rules.
- About creating genuine inconclusiveness.
- Provocative.

Social structure.   Effective pedagogues came to understand that learning was enhanced, indeed created, through various social processes that encouraged

interdependence and solidarity (see also Watkins, 2004). These results were consistent with the clear research evidence on teaching for effective learning which suggests that knowing and learning are whole-body processes involving multiple modes of experience and that intuition, emotion and feeling are central to cognitive activity (Heron, 1992, cited by McNiff & Neill, 1998). Furthermore, that schools and classrooms organized around a personal–communal model are more effective than those organized around a rational–bureaucratic one (see Lee *et al.*, 1993, cited by Watkins, 1999a).

Project 3. A review of school-based contact programmes

As mentioned, although not a statutory element within Northern Irish peace education, so many teachers consider community relations practice to be synonymous with contact that it appears to be an implicit theory underpinning practice. During the year 2001–2002, over one million pounds (excluding substitute teacher cover) was allocated to support school-based contact programmes across the five Northern Irish Local Education authorities.[5] Contact is based on one of the most durable ideas in the literature of racial and ethnic relations; that is, the belief that inter-group contact, the mere fact of interacting, reduces prejudice (Ellison & Powers, 1994, cited by Connolly, 2000). Since the contact hypothesis was first introduced and developed by Allport (1954), a number of additional effectiveness factors (or core conditions) have come to be advanced (see Pettigrew 1997).

   During 2002, the Department of Education commissioned the UNESCO Centre at the University of Ulster to review the work of the SCRP (see footnote, below) and identify effective practice. Interviews were subsequently held with a broad range of stakeholders including, the Inspectorate, local authority advisers and teachers. Of relevance here are some of the conclusions related to teacher professionality. For example:

- Contact experiences tended to bring children together physically but not socially. Like other elements of school-based peace education, there was a strong 'culture of silence' during contact around dialogue over controversial or sensitive issues.
- Meaningful intergroup contact required exposure to border crossing narratives and border pedagogies (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1992).
- Alongside changes to the curriculum, teachers believed that change was also needed within teacher education at all levels.
- The ability to organize and facilitate residential experiences was highly regarded, as was the ability to plan progression and continuity within contact work.
- In many ways, teachers believed that they had much to learn from traditional youth work practice and informal education, particularly in relation to reflexive and dialogical learning.

A professional profile for community relations education (CR-profile)

On the basis of our research, we felt it both feasible and desirable to attempt to develop some tools and frameworks that would help educational practitioners undertake a deep scrutiny of everything that makes up institutional life in order to

improve learning–teaching for community relations. This had proved helpful in the past. For example, Smith and Neill (2006)[6] developed and piloted a range of self-evaluation tools.

The CR-profile (see Tables 3 and 4) offers practitioners a research-based and practical tool to help them, in tandem with others, become more reflexively self-aware with regard to their own lived practice and supportive of their professional learning.

It also attempts, albeit very tentatively, to take account of three decades of research in different countries that demonstrates how learners who focus on 'performance' bring some counter-productive strategies to learning while those who have a 'learning orientation' are more flexible, more aware of their own learning and more successful (see Dweck *et al.*, 2000). This research suggests that a focus on performance can depress learning whereas a focus on learning can enhance performance (see the Appendix). We found it remarkable that, in the past, the motivational effects of the criteria used for assessing professional competence had been neglected by policymakers. As Watkins (2000) suggested, the difference between the teacher as performing functionary and professional who makes a difference may depend on how we think of teachers' competencies and how much of the hierarchy in Figure 2 we consider.

Concluding comments

What we might expect to see and hear in effective border crossing classrooms will be different from the dominant teacher-centered classroom. Our research speaks to the need for a critical, self-reflective and transformative pedagogy (see also, de los Reyes and Gozemba, 2002, Hagan *et al.*, 2003) including the idea of the classroom as a
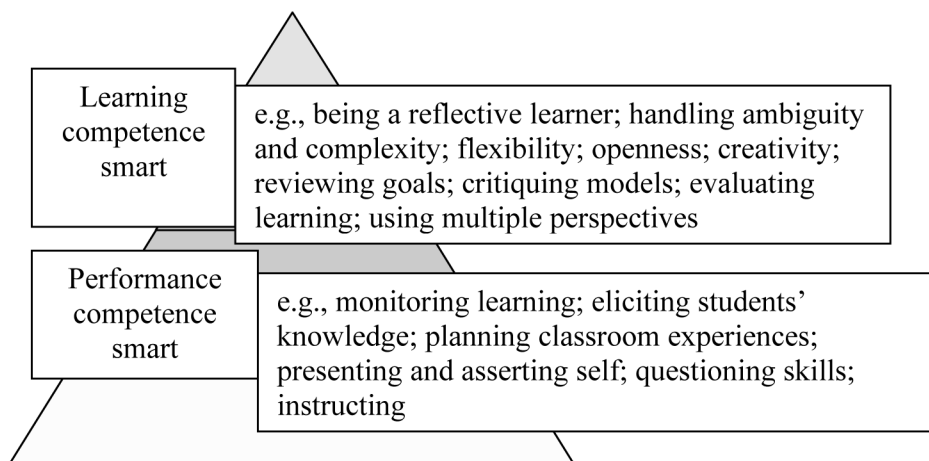
Adapted from Watkins (2000).

Figure 2.   Learning and performance competencies

Table 3.   Learning competencies smart: an effective educator for community relations in the formal sector will encourage activity systems that, e.g:

Are sensitive to the differing experiences of children and deal with expressions of diversity

Promote rich goals for learning and rich concepts of learning e.g., *learning equals meaning-making or creating knowledge as part of doing things with others*

Promote a personal–communal set of classroom norms rather than rational-bureaucratic

Promote respect for human rights

Actively promote children's reflective engagement with their own backgrounds and that of the other main ethnic and cultural group

Promote learning that helps students understand exploitative conditions within public organisations and society more widely

Provide students' with opportunities to change the social injustices they meet by taking social action

Encourage a spirit of inquiry where: students inquire into their own learning; inquiries into learning are made public; students' writing on their experiences and insights into their own learning are displayed

Reflect a view of students as socially competent and their lives as socially embedded

Promote collaboration, dialogue and classroom experiences where learners are more engaged with each other, where more peer helping and reciprocal teaching occurs from which students emerge with expanded potentiality for effective relationships

Overcome barriers to inclusion based on gender, race, social class, disability and religious differences

Reflect a view of personality and identity development as malleable and responsive to change; as opposed to fixed

Demonstrate more of a shared balance of power between adults and students

Help students to plan and reflect before proceeding with tasks/projects and to make choices about strategies

Embed classroom work in the life experiences of students

Offer students the opportunity to acknowledge others' viewpoints and to defend or modify their own in the light of new evidence

Allow teachers' to be explicit in describing their positions on sensitive subjects

Focus on social identity issues (e.g., intergroup behaviour in Northern Ireland) as well as on personal-interpersonal development

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learning community[7] (see Watkins, 2004). Encouraging school-based dialogue around the most difficult conversations now lies at the heart of the problem of school improvement for peace in NI.

   Collective reflection on our research led us to agree that, alongside this, there needed to be radical changes in the development of the teaching profession towards notions such as the 'transformative' (see Sachs, 2003) and 'democratic' professional (Whitty, 2003). We understand such forms of professionalism to mean more than the simple idea of transcendence towards practice as described by Schön (1983). Like King (2004), we believe that teacher education needs to be a transformative project where some deeply embedded and taken-for-granted beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, prejudices and suppositions that inform teaching can be subjected to critical scrutiny. Professional development needs to offer teachers potential sites to express experience, to engage in 'critical reflection' about the dominant social

Table 4.   Performance competencies smart: an effective educator for community relations in the formal sector will encourage activity systems that, e.g.:

Reflect a view of the teachers' role where collaborative working arrangements with other colleagues is seen as essential e.g: team teaching; collaborative action research; observing colleagues

Give equivalent time to the study of peacekeeping and peacebuilding to that of conflict and war in the past

Work collaboratively with parents to plan, develop and implement programmes

Develop cross-community contact programmes where, at some stage, group membership is made salient and a topic for discussion rather than ignored

Develop learning experiences which demonstrate progression and continuity

Promote self-assessment procedures including learning logs

Give the teacher more of a 'guide on the side' than 'sage on the stage' role

Develop authentic forms of assessment that focus on the ability of students to discover and use knowledge (and takes cognisance of children's multiple intelligences)

Make storytelling a significant part of curriculum development

Make visible the contribution of cross-community contact to the achievement of programme goals

Deal with disempowering classroom language and behaviour in a sensitive and appropriate way, e. g., sexist, racist and sectarian remarks

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discourses constituting organizational life (see also Carr & Kemmis, 1986) and encourage generative discourse; that is, ways of talking or otherwise representing that simultaneously challenge existing traditions and offer new creative possibilities for action (see Gergen, 1999). In pursuit of this, the School of Education at the University of Ulster has recently received substantial funding for a three-year project to better embed community relations/citizenship education principles in initial teacher education.

School improvement for peace, including teacher professional development, will need to raise awareness of some of the stories in the wider context whose plots run counter to the task of developing the educational project suggested by our research. This may help to avoid appearing to load all the blame onto teachers for the current state of community relations education by illuminating the many influences on school and classroom life; as well as opening up the possibility of practitioners taking a role in trying to enhance some of these unhelpful stories rather than falling prey to them.

Finally, two contemporary developments on the Northern Irish educational landscape require to be mentioned. Proposals in relation to the revised NI curriculum show a shift from what the late Basil Bernstein called a 'knowledge code', involving discrete lumps of knowledge which are highly 'classified' and strongly 'framed' (divided into subjects) towards the development of a skills-based curriculum. In addition, the Northern Ireland General Teaching Council has just published a draft report on a review of teacher competencies and continuing professional development in NI (GTCNI, January, 2005). The current teacher competences and accompanying core criteria have been revised and restructured and the total number of competence statements have been reduced from 92 to 27 (GTCNI, 2005).

At this stage, it must be said that we just do not know how these wider policy developments will impact on community relations education nor how they will be interpreted by teachers. It is possible to read the curriculum proposals as being no more likely than past curriculum reforms to be disposed to what Yates (2002, p. 3) referred to as a 'cultivation of the arts of peace'. This is because the proposals seem deliberately designed to fix teaching–learning within an individualistic set of assumptions about human psychological functioning. The humanistically oriented and child-centered language of self-actualization and responsible decision-making contained within the policy documents reminds one of what Foucault referred to as the 'technologies of the self' (cited by Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 45). This refers to the way in which people quite willingly subjugate themselves to subtle forms of power (Gergen, 1999). As Usher and Edwards suggested:

> … the student-centered curriculum, although apparently focused on the intrinsic characteristics of the learner and the rightness of students making decisions about their own lives, actually works to increase the efficiency of the learning system. (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 45)

The first author is currently investigating how teacher educators, and students who opt to take a citizenship module as part of their one-year postgraduate teacher training course, interpret the revised teacher competencies. To date, this leads him to be less sanguine than the policy-makers about the possibilities of a revised competence-based model helping to construct a new generation of teachers with new forms of professionality (see Smith, in progress). His work highlights the lack of linearity between policy formation, distribution and implementation and the complex mediations that take place at each level of the process; ideas familiar to scholars working within the field of critical policy analysis (see Bernstein, 1990; Ball, 1990; Bowe *et al.*, 1992).

Notes

1. Hoyle (1974) distinguished between the terms 'professionalism' and 'professionality'. By professionalism he meant the strategies and rhetorics employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve status, salary and conditions. On the other hand, professionality referred to the knowledge, skills and procedures employed by teachers in the process of teaching.
2. 'Discourses are about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority. They embody meaning and social relationships, and they constitute both subjectivity and power relations' (Ball, 1990, p. 17).
3. Following the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, education for mutual understanding (popularly known as EMU) and cultural heritage became closely related and statutory cross-curricular themes in the Northern Irish curriculum. Their inclusion within the statutory curriculum carried an explicit expectation that teachers would attempt to address issues relevant to community divisions within contemporary Northern Irish society.
4. Initial teacher education is provided at: St Mary's University College, Belfast; Stranmillis University College, Belfast; The University of Ulster; Queen's University Belfast and the Open University in Ireland.
5. 59% of N. Irish schools were involved with what is known as the 'Schools Community Relations Programme' or SCRP.

6. The Institutional Map for Peace with Social Justice (I-MAP), the School Peacebuilding Index (SPI) and the Dual-Axis Organisational Analysis for Inter-School Contact (Da-ORG).
7. See Watkins (2004) for a useful discussion on the concept of the 'classroom as a learning community' and the similarities and differences between this and the related concepts of the 'classroom as a community' and the 'classroom as a community of learners'. The idea of the classroom as a learning community refers to a stance where the agent of enquiry is a knowledge-building community as opposed to an individual.

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Appendix. Motivational styles and their characteristics after Dweck *et al.* (2000) (from Watkins *et al.*, 1996)

Learning orientation	Performance orientation
A belief that effort leads to success	A belief that ability leads to success
A belief in one's ability to improve and learn	A concern to be judged as able, and a concern to perform
A preference for challenging tasks	Satisfaction from doing better than others or succeeding with little effort
Derives satisfaction from personal success at difficult tasks	Emphasis on interpersonal competition, normative standards, public evaluation
Applies problem-solving and self-instructions when engaged in tasks	Helplessness: evaluates self negatively when task is difficult