

International Fund for Ireland (Community Bridges)/DENI Community Relations Project



Better Embedding Community Relations Principles
in Initial Teacher Education

CONCLUDING REPORT TO FUNDERS

**UNESCO Centre/
School of Education**

IFI (Community Bridges)/DENI Community Relations Project

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BACKGROUND

The project was initiated on the premise that the education system is a means of developing deeper understanding of the values that might support a sustainable peace in Northern Ireland. The school, youth and community education sectors have an important contribution in challenging sectarianism, raising awareness about citizens' rights and responsibilities and encouraging participation in new democratic processes. The School of Education at the University of Ulster has direct involvement in educational development within Northern Ireland through its teaching, research and development roles. One of its central responsibilities is teacher education both at pre-service and in-service levels. The School has had a long engagement with educational responses to conflict, having had substantial involvement and influence in the development of initiatives related to the improvement of community relations in schools over the last forty years. This includes the *Schools Cultural Studies* and the *Religion in Ireland* projects in the 1970s, *Speak Your Piece* in the 1990s and the pilot project for Local and Global Citizenship, 1999-2003.

Initial Teacher Education

Currently, as a provider of initial teacher training, the School runs a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) for those wishing to become primary teachers and a PGCE Post-primary programme for those wishing to specialise in the teaching of Art, English and Drama, Geography, History, Home Economics, Music, Physical Education and Technology and Design. At the time of application for funding for the project there were 70 primary and 120 post-primary places. In 2009-10, as a consequence of perceived over-supply these numbers currently stand at 40 and 95, respectively.

The proposal submitted to the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) Community Bridges programme aimed to strengthen the commitment of the School of Education to community relations work by promoting initiatives at initial teacher education level. Though student teachers in the University of Ulster are drawn in approximately equal numbers from the two main traditions in Northern Ireland (in addition, there are a minority of students from outside the Province) the formal education system at primary and post-primary levels is still characterised by the overwhelming majority of Catholic and Protestant children attending separate schools. In turn, student teachers are likely to undertake their school placement experience in schools from the same tradition as those they attended and at the successful completion of the course, to seek employment within schools of that tradition. The professional expectation of PGCE programmes is, also, likely to steer teachers toward schools similar to the ones they attended. It is highly desirable that in these circumstances young teachers should carry with them a greater experience and understanding of diversity to enable them both to impart this to the young people they teach and to critique the prevailing cultural ethos of the schools in which they work. A greater awareness of diversity is also vital for those teachers recruited to the growing number of 'integrated' schools and grant-aided Irish-medium schools. Given the extent of segregation, the diversity of types of schools and the recent increase in sectarian incidents in and around schools, a more systematic approach is required to prepare beginning teachers to respond, both reactively and pro-actively, to teaching in a deeply divided society.

Initial teacher education has often proved problematic in the community relations context both in the segregated environment of the colleges and in the integrated domain of the universities¹. The initial Northern Ireland Curriculum (1991) and the competency model of teacher education have tended to place stress on teachers addressing prescribed learning outcomes and related methodological approaches, largely defined

within curriculum subject areas. Sometimes, this has been to the detriment of critiquing the values that underpin the curriculum itself, and to tackling more sensitive issues. Perhaps, the veneer of professional training has inhibited students from sharing their personal as well as their professional biographies. The revised Northern Ireland Curriculum (introduced in September 2007) requires that teachers in future have the capacity to engage with an enquiry-based curriculum that places emphasis on personal, societal and economic development. In consequence, the School of Education has sought to re-examine the values that underpin its initial teacher education programmes. It was important that the School of Education established a strong commitment to ensure that teachers' capacity and confidence to work effectively to address the problems of a deeply divided society are greatly enhanced.

Aims and Strategy

The IFI Community Bridges funded project *Better Embedding Community Relations Principles in Initial Teacher Education* (hereafter the CR project) ran from October 2004 until March 2008. A condition of funding was a commitment from Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) Community Relations Branch to fund a lectureship within the PGCE structure of the School of Education to support the work of the project. The DENI Community Relations post (hereafter the CR Lecture) was extended until August, 2008.

The aims of the CR project were to:

- 1) Strengthen the capacity and commitment of the School of Education to community relations objectives by embedding these in its aims, policies, structures and practice.
- 2) Identify the core skills, knowledge, values and competences essential for effective practice in the fields of community relations/citizenship and incorporate them to enhance PGCE programmes at primary and secondary level.
- 3) Initiate a three year programme of activities to prepare teachers for working in a deeply divided society that will become integrated into, and sustained within, the long-term provision of the School
- 4) Enhance awareness of community relations issues and practice through the education system in Northern Ireland so that young people develop the skills, knowledge and values to act for a more peaceful and just society.

Strategically, the project team learned from a previous initiative which sought to embed Development Education within the PGCE programmes. In this case, the work of a lecturer appointed to support the work was exclusively focused on her Development Education role. Consequently, she remained at the periphery of the course teaching teams and her work, although valuable, was associated largely with her contribution in her specialist field and failed to become regarded as central to the work of the PGCE team. The plan, instead, was to place the new appointment, Clodagh Kelly, at the heart of the work of the core primary teaching team. Primary work was prioritised for her as it was felt that (a) this was where the greatest challenges lay and (b) the Project Director, Dr. Alan McCully, as a subject tutor for History, already had a central role within the post-primary team.

The CR Lecturer took on a core teaching role within the primary team. Therefore, in addition to teaching and support work directly related to community relations/Personal and Social Development/Citizenship Education, she was allocated a student tutoring role alongside the other lecturers and also took on her share of teaching practice supervision. This involved observing and supporting students during their school placements across the full range of curriculum provision. As a result of taking on these duties, inevitably, she spent significant time on work not directly related to community relations. Conversely, by making these contributions to the general programme she demonstrated her commitment and that of the project to the programme. This "insider" role proved to be of considerable value. Her general contribution was

reciprocated by other members of the team, thus developing an obligation to support CR work. It enabled her to attend course planning sessions as an integral and equal member and, therefore, to promote community relations principles and articulate her needs in that forum. The professional trust established was important in encouraging staff to participate directly in community relations related activities.

Exerting influence at post-primary level presented its own challenges. In the taught aspect of the programme there are three one hour sessions per week (two lectures and one seminar) when students on the Coleraine campus are together to examine generic educational issues. The Project Director, therefore, had some opportunity to address community relations work in these classes but the staff-student ratio was high and the prevailing style of teaching didactic. However, for the majority of the time (four x three hour sessions) students are in their main subject groupings. These groups are tightly knit and develop a strong bond as the year progresses, potentially, making them a suitable forum for the exploration of more difficult community relations related issues. However, on the debit side, participants and tutors in subject groups are primarily focused on the needs of their own discipline. Therefore, the challenges facing the CR project lay in using the time granted in the generic lectures and seminar meaningfully, and in convincing subject tutors of the potential for community relations work within their own specialisms.

In the early months the project also benefited from work done on its behalf by Dr. Ron Smith. Ron provided valuable research and development support in auditing existing provision in the School of Education, in conducting interviews to ascertain the attitudes of colleagues to the inclusion of community relations as a central theme of initial teacher education and in evaluating innovative approaches initiated through the project. Retrospectively, not enough money within the budget was allocated to provide this type of support on a continuous basis.

Theoretical Context

The CR project was informed by the work of Hewstone and colleagues on refining the *contact hypothesis*. The underlying assumption of the contact hypothesis is that conflict arises between groups because of the lack of information about each other, and the lack of opportunities to meet. In such circumstances, intergroup anxiety is a catalyst for out-group hostility. This hostility can be reduced by bringing together individuals from opposing groups “under optimal conditions”.

The research of Hewstone² argues that contact works best when mediated by:

- reducing inter-group anxiety and negative emotions;
- fostering common goals;
- promoting self-disclosure, perspective-taking and positive emotions;
- encouraging individuals to be aware of, and refer to, their respective group membership during contact.

Thus, the initiatives developed by the CR project sought to engage students in activities which featured cooperation on common tasks to build positive relationships. These encouraged empathetic understanding of different perspectives while, from the outset, making students aware of each other’s cultural backgrounds.

DEVELOPMENT WORK

Structure of the Report

The initial proposal to IFI Community Bridges identified eight areas for development:

1. Institutional and Structural Implications.
2. A Review of the Teacher Education Model of Competences in the context of teaching in a deeply Divided Society.

3. Staff Development.
4. Resource Support.
5. The Integration of Community Relations Values and Practice into the PGCE Primary programme.
6. Professional Preparation for addressing Diversity and Conflict through the PGCE Secondary Programme.
7. Supporting Student Teachers in/between their Placement Schools.
8. Monitoring and Evaluation.

1. Institutional and Structural Implications

Aim one of the project undertook to embed community relations objectives 'in the aims, policies, structures and practice of the School of Education.'

At the outset, it was felt important to directly involve senior staff in the management of the project. Therefore, the Director of Teaching, Barry Burgess, also responsible for the post primary PGCE, and the Course Director of the primary programme, Delores Loughrey, were co-opted as co-grant holders. Consequently, throughout the life of the project, each of them was kept informed of developments and both attended the advisory group meetings with IFI and DENI held during the next three years. On reflection, though both of them were kept in touch with the day to day decision making processes (and had the final say in authorising action in their respective courses) not enough effort was given to engaging them in the developmental process itself.

During the first year, an audit was conducted of staff attitudes to community relations issues. The data for this were collected at a staff training day organised by the project (the morning was divided between discussion on the purpose and nature of community/good relations and an encounter exercise designed to help staff articulate the influence their personal biographies have on their outlook to CR work) and the implementation of an audit tool designed by the project for that purpose. The latter included the distribution of a questionnaire and individual interviews with the Head of School and each PGCE tutor. Findings from the audit indicated that:

- ITE staff believed that they have a role in preparing teachers to teach in a divided society and they welcomed the opportunity (and resource provision) to facilitate an initiative in their subject area but they were also aware of the sensitivities of community relations work and perceived a need for greater understanding of its practice.

Findings also revealed areas of divergence in staff thinking:

- *community influences v. schooling* – there were differing views as to how far schools should intervene; and how much impact they could have;
- *segregated v. Integrated* – there were differing opinions as to how far teacher education should recognise the realities of structural difference; should it be accepted that the majority of students will teach in a segregated environment and therefore, accordingly, be prepared for this, while also encouraging them to challenge their own and their pupils assumptions;

OR

should emphasis be placed on the aspiration of education contributing a more plural society through an integrated model of schooling;

- *commonality v. difference* - there were variations in thinking as to how far tutors should concentrate on drawing out what students had in common and how far they should explore difference. The view was expressed that the latter had the potential to cause rifts within groups that had to work closely together. Alternatively, it was asserted that failure to do so simply fuels the culture of politeness (and avoidance) that perpetuates existing patterns of division;

- *re-active v. pro-active* - how far should students be prepared to deal with sectarianism when it impinges on their professional practice. For example the use of inappropriate language in class; and how far should we be preparing them to be pro-active in tackling sectarianism?
- *some subjects more than others* - this focused around the nature of specific subjects and their appropriateness as a vehicle for community relations work. There was a clear perception amongst some that certain subjects afforded limited opportunities;
- *all teachers v. the committed* – there was doubt expressed as to whether all student teachers were potentially capable of participating in community relations/citizenship education practice. What should be the training entitlement for all students? Should provision be concentrated on those who display a particular commitment to community relations principles;
- *values v. methods* - preparation for student teachers and tutors was perceived at two levels - those who saw it as primarily about the acquisition of skills to handle sensitive issues and those who defined needs as much in terms of exploring personal biographies and clarifying personal value positions as a necessary pre-requisite to engagement with young people;
- *challenging sectarianism and/or opposing prejudice on a broad front* - there was discussion on the extent to which the project should be targeted specifically at traditional divisions in Northern Ireland society and how far it should address race, gender and sexuality issues. It was recognised that prejudice is likely to manifest itself in various guises but also that other issues should not deflect from dealing with the core divisions related to political and religious division.

Analysis of these findings was important in shaping future approaches to staff, particularly in encouraging colleagues of the efficacy of directly engaging students in controversial and sensitive issues.

Members of staff were informed of the aims of the project from the outset but the first training day, referred to above, did not take place until several months into the project. This delay was indicative of a major constraint on the work of the project. Generally, whatever the focus, it has proved very difficult to create space within the PGCE programme to enable staff to reflect on practice and develop new initiatives, such is its congested nature. At the insistence of IFI staff very substantial financial resources were provided within the project to create space to enable the “buying out” of staff to pursue the objectives of the project. With the exception of the time of the Project Director this was not taken up on a significant scale by PGCE staff. This is less of a reflection on lack of commitment to community relations but more an indicator of the reliance of the course on specialist tutor knowledge and the deep commitment of tutors to the interests of their students.

A second staff training day was held in the second year of the project. This was run in alliance with colleague Dr. Derick Wilson’s *Future Ways* project. It examined the implications of *A Shared Future* policy for education, in general, and the School of Education, in particular. Again, this day was well received by colleagues. Discussion was animated and perceptive and out of this came important actions in relation to School policy:

- i) enshrinement of the Shared Future commitment into the PGCE course document re-validated by the university in 2005-06 and the inclusion of community relations principles and practice throughout course documentation (This has been sustained and enhanced by the next re-validation, November, 2009);
- ii) PGCE course handbooks in their introductory sections to include a statement of the course commitment to the Shared Future agenda. The course handbook represents a “contract” between institution and the student so, in accepting it, students were consenting to be open to challenge on community relations related issues;
- iii) agreement that there should be direct reference to *A Shared Future* in the proposed revised School Mission Statement and Objectives (this was included in draft versions but was removed from the Mission Statement by the School Executive in the final version);

- iv) commitment that Shared Future/community relations objectives be used as a desirable criterion when selecting new PGCE students;
- i) PGCE post-primary tutors committed themselves to a community relations initiative within their subject study programmes.

At the end of the second year of the project the DENI post came up for renewal. A combination of rising university salaries and a shortfall in DENI community relations funding required the university to make up a 20% deficit in costs for the extended year. After considerable lobbying this was agreed at Faculty level. This represented an important boost for the project team in that it was felt to signal a renewed commitment to the community relations agenda within teacher education.

2. A Review of Teacher Competences

It was a major desire of the IFI Community Bridges funding that the project should seek to identify the “knowledge, skills and dispositions” required by practitioners to engage in community relations work in the formal educational sector. The duration of the project coincided with a General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland (GTCNI) revision of the model of teacher competences. The project team took the decision that its work had best chance of making an impact if it worked within the revised GTCNI model. This delayed progress but when the GTCNI draft proposals became available the team worked closely with the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU)/Citizenship officers to, first, identify those general competences relevant, and, then, to develop these into specific qualities deemed essential in an effective community relations practitioner. The outcome was a chart identifying five core competences and their application to CR. Progression in each aspect of the competences was mapped across the four stages of teacher development – Initial Teacher Education, Induction, Early Professional Development and Continuing Professional Development (See appendix one).

Potentially, this work makes a significant contribution to teacher education in the fields of citizenship and community relations. It has influenced training both in the university and at Western Board level but deserves dissemination to a wider professional audience. Initially, this was delayed by GTCNI having its proposals ratified by DENI and has yet to be pursued.

3. Staff Development

Aspects of two staff development days have already been covered in Section One. In addition, the afternoon session of day one included a workshop run by Nichola Lynagh introducing staff to the IFI sponsored *Joined Up* resource and methodologies. The project also sponsored two research seminars into community relations practice; a presentation by June Bam on educational responses in post-apartheid South Africa and one by Diana Hess, of the University of Wisconsin, on the teaching of controversial issues.

Alternative strategies were adopted for developing practice ideas amongst the primary and post primary staff, respectively.

At post-primary level, once staff had committed to developing a community relations related initiative, they were asked to submit the idea to paper and work out costings. The Project Director then worked with them to ensure it was in accord with principles of practice. The outcomes are detailed in Section Six.

Staff development at primary level was facilitated by the CR Lecturer. This was pursued in the context of course committee planning meetings. The process involved negotiating for additional teaching time and gaining consensus to move the programme toward engagement with more controversial and sensitive issues. Once new material was agreed a strategy of team teaching was employed. This approach was important in convincing the Course Director of the value of the work but also, later, in preparing another

member of staff to take over the teaching in the event of the CR Lecturer post not being renewed. The details of the primary initiative are provided in Section Five.

4. Resource Support

Provision was set aside in the grant budget to purchase resources to support community relations work. It has been demonstrated that when appropriate, innovative and attractive resources are available they are an important catalyst in inspiring confidence and encouraging young teachers to engage in community relations practice.

Throughout the three years of the project, citizenship and community relations related resources were added to the Educational Resource Centre in the School of Education. This continued a process begun for the field of Development Education and Education for Sustainability set in place by a previous project. The overall result is that the Centre now has an excellent range of resources supporting the teaching of such themes as globalisation, development education, inter-culturalism, conflict resolution, diversity, racism and sectarianism.

5. The Integration of Community Relations Values and Practice into the PGCE Primary Programme

From the outset the primary programme was deemed a priority area for development, hence the positioning of the CR Lecturer within the core team. Previous to her arrival, input had been limited to four sessions which stood largely outside the core course structure. Beginning with a re-vamping of these sessions, primary provision evolved over the life of the project, both in expanding the contact time available and in expanding the scope and depth of issues addressed. Two guiding principles were adopted. First, all innovation should have the approval of the full course team and, where possible, team members should contribute to the teaching and supervision. Second, there should be a gradient of complexity and sensitivity and this should be managed within a controlled environment of integration. Most teaching on the primary programme takes place with students sitting in tables of six. From the second year of the project students have been organised from the outset in “mixed” groups and paired in a mixed “buddy” system.

Re-vamping and enhancement took place at each of the three stages of the primary education programme: Foundation, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two.

At Foundation level work addressed the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding element of the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum. The planning placed some emphasis on acknowledging similarity and difference but the main focus was to build trusting relationships within groups and to encourage open communication as a pre-requisite for work later in the year.

At Key Stage One the primary Course Director “team taught” with the CR Lecturer. The four existing sessions were re-worked under themes addressing conceptual understanding and its application to Key Stage One classrooms. The areas now cover an Introduction to Community Relations, Classroom Contracts and Personal Biographies, Conflict Resolution and Key Stage One Resources, and their use in the Classroom. In addition to familiarising students with practical approaches, tutors encourage student interaction to promote an exploration of personal values.

At Key Stage Two the programme evolved toward a sharper engagement. Six two hour sessions were negotiated in the first year of the project and these have come to embrace the exploration of the themes of Human Rights, Democracy, Law and Order, Local and Global Diversity, Cultural Symbolism and Sectarianism, Racism, Disability and Stereotyping, as they impinge on children’s lived experience.

The primary programme has been further enhanced by peer education and school exchange strategies. These are reported in Section Seven.

6. Professional Preparation for addressing Diversity and Conflict through the PGCE Secondary Programme

Initiatives in the Post-primary course operated at four levels:

- plenary lectures and seminars aimed at the whole cohort of ITE students;
- a specialist elective Local and Global Citizenship module for 15-25 students;
- specialist main subject initiatives;
- special events.

Plenary Lectures and Seminars

Prior to the project three lectures and one seminar addressed community relations related themes. Several years ago attempts to hold more interactive sessions on controversial material with up to 90 students had proved problematic and produced a negative response in a significant number of students. This was partly as a consequence of the numbers involved but also because tutors had not had the opportunity to build trust and understanding within the student cohort. Consequently, the lectures had reverted to a more traditional approach and were used largely to inform students of curricular responsibility and opportunities regarding Education for Mutual Understanding, Local and Global Citizenship and cross community contact.

As a consequence of project deliberation the three lectures/one seminar format has been retained but, in revising the sessions, emphasis is placed on progression and engagement.

Lecture One is held in the first week of the programme on the theme of Community Values. Many of the students recruited to the PGCE have come through the success orientated grammar school system with little exposure to non-selective schools and educational under-achievement. Students are asked to consider the roles for schools in the communities in which they are set and the contribution schooling might make to the Shared Future agenda. Then video clips (for example, extracts from Graham Reid's *Hidden Curriculum*/ extracts from a *Spotlight Special* illustrating the research³ of Connolly on young children and sectarianism) are shown to the group as the stimuli for small group discussion. A series of questions are asked on the responsibilities schools and teachers have for fostering greater social cohesion in local communities and wider society. During each of the three years of the project this session was followed by a social gathering to foster friendships and provide a forum for further informal discussion of the issues raised.

Lecture Two fulfils the informative function. It provides a critique of community relations policy in general and examines the responses of education to conflict, and post conflict, since the early 1970s: cross community contact, integrated education and curricular initiatives. The origins of Education for Mutual Understanding, and then its transition to Local and Global Citizenship, are traced. Students are presented with a continuum of teacher intervention - from making a general contribution to an inclusive school ethos to becoming an active teacher of citizenship promoting cross community links. They are asked to consider where their own contribution might lie.

Lecture Three takes the theme, reactive and pro-active responses to conflict. Through video news clips it is established that sectarianism (and racism) manifest themselves in schools and that teachers must be equipped to respond. In small groups students (drawing on their experiences in schools to date) are asked to discuss strategies for dealing with intolerance in classrooms. The second half of the session argues for pro-active interventions to address sectarianism and racism and promotes a set of principles of practice for teaching controversial and sensitive issues.

In the general seminar allocated to a community relations theme, usually held in the second semester, students are in discussion groups of eleven-twelve, facilitated by a tutor. Prior to the seminar, students

are asked to use a structured audit sheet to carry out an evaluation as to how inclusive (across a range of indices including race, religion, special needs and social class) they found their first placement school. Their findings are used as the basis for critical discussion on current policy and practice.

The Local and Global Citizenship Elective

Between ten and twenty-five students elect to follow this course every year. Its aim is to introduce participants to the knowledge, skills and dispositions (or competences) required to teach Local and Global Citizenship effectively in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The elective consists of ten x three hour sessions over two semesters. The time available is long enough only to provide a foundation of training but it is envisaged that from this group “change agents” will emerge – that is, teachers who are prepared to engage in the challenging practice required to model inclusive, democratic and evidence-based discourse for young people; teachers with the confidence to deal with the emotional reactions that often accompany the expression of prejudice. During sessions, this group are encouraged to explore controversial and sensitive issues for themselves, including racism and sectarianism, and to clarify their own positions in class discussion. Further, they are encouraged to take on a peer education role as citizenship “tutors” to the general cohort, particularly during the Contemporary Issues Day and the residential programme.

Specialist Main Subject Initiatives

PGCE post-primary students identify strongly with their subject specialism and research indicates that performance in this area is often their first priority. Therefore, from the outset, the project sought opportunities to promote community relations practice within main subject teaching. £1,000 was set aside for each main subject and tutors were asked to commit to facilitating at least one innovation with a community relations dimension, additional to the established student experience. Seven out of the eight main subject areas – Art, English, Geography, History, English, Home Economics, Music and Technology produced an initiative in at least one of the three years of the project’s duration. Inevitably, the activities that were developed reflected, at least to an extent, the vision of the subject tutor to community relations work.

The Art tutor offered her group the opportunity to develop their own initiative. Working together, they designed and made a collection of puppets. Activities were then created whereby the puppets became the focus for work exploring the themes of prejudice, stereotyping, racism and sectarianism. Two of the group, both participants in the citizenship subsidiary programme, then took the resource into schools and trialled it with classes. The Art group of the following year adapted the resource and again used it during their school experience.

The English course is combined with Drama. The English tutor wished to use drama to address controversial and sensitive issues. An ambitious pilot programme was envisaged using the work of a current PhD student who was using Boal’s Forum Theatre approach as a medium to explore sectarianism with groups of second year pupils in two Londonderry/Derry schools. Given the success of this innovative work in schools it would have had great value for ITE students. Unfortunately, a family tragedy prevented the PhD student participating and the idea had to be suspended. Instead, another drama tutor was recruited and groups over the next two years pursued interesting work using drama to also address prejudice, stereotyping, racism and sectarianism. A useful follow up was a presentation to the general cohort demonstrating drama approaches such as “conscience alley” as a way in to controversial issues.

The Geography group focused on the themes of diversity and contested space. The group was a diverse one reflecting both geographical and cultural diversity. It emerged in class discussion that two of the group were from West Belfast and that a number of others had never visited that part of the city. The two “locals” took responsibility for organising and facilitating a field trip to the area based around the core concepts identified. The visit took in the peace-line, a number of republican wall murals and the republican plot in

Milltown Cemetery. The event was followed by a computer-based discussion in which students were asked to evaluate the experience, articulate the learning that had taken place and respond to the reflections of others. Both this discussion and a focus group session, conducted by a project team member, indicated that the day had a significant and positive impact on participants.

The History initiative ran for each of the three years of the project and has been sustained subsequently. It is the contention of the tutor, supported by research evidence, that a significant number of History teachers in Northern Ireland do not tend to make direct connections between past and contemporary events when teaching Irish History⁴. They can also “hide” behind their professional persona as an objective arbiter of evidence and, therefore, fail to acknowledge that their own cultural upbringing and values may influence the way they interpret and teach the contested past. Accordingly, a field visit was organised around the iconic events of 1916 – the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme. On Day One the group tour Kilmainham Gaol, the site of the 1916 executions, and after an overnight stay in Dublin, on Day Two they travel to the Somme Interpretative Centre, near Newtownards. At one level the students are being asked to evaluate the sites as possible educational resources but, more fundamentally, they are encouraged to step off their professional pedestal and explore their emotional reactions to the experiences. An informal discussion is held immediately after the Kilmainham visit and this is followed by a computer-based exchange. Data gathered over each of the years indicates that the field experience has a significant impact on deepening students’ understanding of the interface between history learned informally in the community and that learned in the History classroom.

Home Economics is a less obvious area for a community relations dimension to be developed. In the final year of the project the group investigated the origins of products and consumer patterns. In a one day session facilitated outside the university by an independent community relations practitioner they examined how food production, distribution and consumption in Northern Ireland, and elsewhere, is influenced by cultural background and attitudes and explored how this might be addressed in classrooms.

Developments within the Music group were hampered by the absence of the tutor through illness for a period during the life of the project. However, in addition to exploring the cultural diversity implicit in Music education, in successive years groups devised strategies for bringing young musicians together from their respective schools to contribute to a community-based evening that would illustrate this diversity, especially in an Irish context.

Finally, the Technology group took it on themselves to test the hypothesis that pupils, influenced by cultural background, select from a restrictive range of colours when involved in design work.

The initiatives described above provide examples of how each subject area was able to devise activities that had validity in the field of community relations work. Indeed, several of the initiatives proved very valuable to students. However, given the financial resources made available the outcomes, particularly in terms of sustainability, are disappointing. To an extent, this might be thought to indicate the low priority given to the work by tutors but, as indicated previously, it is just as likely to reflect the pressures caused by a congested ITE curriculum. Certainly, the positives indicate the importance of extra resources being available and the value of additional activities which take place outside the normal environs of the university. On the negative side, day to day financial and time constraints restrict the vision of tutors (and students) to think beyond what are regarded as the necessities of survival in the classroom.

Special Events

In addition to the established curriculum the project sought to promote events that would enhance the community relations dimension within the PGCE programmes. Integrated into these initiatives was the

notion of peer education; that contact with committed peers in this field was an important catalyst in generating involvement of others. At post-primary level this featured a Contemporary Issues Day and the introduction of a three day residential programme.

Contemporary Issues Day: This one day programme was not new to the PGCE course. Under the guise of a previous Department for International Development (DFID) project promoting Development Education it had run for three years and was regarded as a successful event in opening students up to global citizenship perspectives. With the cooperation of the development officer of that project the agenda was opened up to embrace both local and global citizenship. In the years that followed a strong rationale for the day has evolved. It is clear from observation (and research conducted internally) that PGCE students often identify with “single issue” agendas. Their commitment may be community relations orientated but, equally, may be in the direction of human rights, global or environmental issues or some other form of social activism. This single focus can lead to indifference toward other concerns. The Contemporary Issues Day seeks to demonstrate the inter-connectedness of all these themes through the application of the concepts of Local and Global Citizenship: Diversity, Social Justice and Democratic Participation– and to the importance of tackling problems on a broad front, both locally and globally. From the community relations perspective, this strategy has been effective in convincing students that one cannot support aspects of social justice elsewhere in the world without also getting to grips with problems of inequality and injustice at home.

The avoidance and discomfort once displayed by students toward addressing difficult local issues now sometimes expresses itself in arguments that community relations work is no longer necessary because the violence is over, and society has moved on. Rather than risking alienation as before, this strategy has evolved to help students confront the challenges still to be faced in Northern Ireland. The Local and Global Citizenship area is viewed as a walled garden (see figure 1).



Figure 1: The Walled Garden of Local and Global Citizenship

Student teachers who are interested in contemporary social and political issues are encouraged to enter through whichever gateway best engages their interest. Once in, the task of the tutor is to facilitate the exploration of the core concepts in a way that enlightens participants to the inter-connectedness of local and global issues.

The Contemporary Issues Day consists of four phases (see appendix two). First, a guest lecturer makes the conceptual links between the local and global. In each of the three years of the project, Dr. Colm Regan, of 80:20 laid down the challenge by drawing on the work of this organisation in Africa and in Belfast interface areas. Students then break into workshops of their choice, provided by a range of outside agencies. These offer local, global, and environmental options on themes such as sectarianism, racism, globalisation, sustainability and educating ethnic minorities. In the third phase, students work in their main subject groupings to prepare a “showcase” presentation demonstrating how their subject can contribute to the core concepts highlighted earlier in the day. Finally, each group presents to the others. The experience is unique within the PGCE programme in that it is the one occasion when Coleraine and Jordanstown students work together face to face.

The Community Relations/Citizenship Residential: Residential courses were held in May in each of the three years of the project. The first took place at Corrymeela and the other two at An Creggan, near Omagh. They each stretched across three days. Participation was on the basis of two factors. In each year the course was mandatory for all those taking the Local and Global Citizenship elective. The equivalent number of places was then made available to the wider post-primary PGCE cohort. Consequently, 26 students and six staff attended in 2005, 28 students and five staff in 2006 and 38 students and four staff in 2007. The latter included Jordanstown students for the first time.

The inclusion of a residential experience was deemed a vital component of the project proposal. Numerous previous initiatives have demonstrated that bringing individuals together in a residential context over at least a three day period provides a supportive environment for in-depth exploration of controversial cultural and political issues, and for informal social interaction. It was envisaged that the residential would take place at the end of each year, building on the trust and understanding established to that point and represent the culmination of the work of each year. It should contribute to developing further the knowledge and skills required by student teachers to engage young people in community relations work in classrooms – but it should also involve participants in the experience of discussing difficult issues, thus clarifying their own positions and giving them greater insight into the challenges of working with young people. Research from the *Schools’ Cultural Studies Project* and *Speak Your Piece* indicates that teachers work most effectively when they have first experienced community relations exchanges for themselves in peer groups.

Peer education was an important element of the residential programmes. By this stage of the year all participants are qualified professionals. At least several of the Local and Global Citizenship group have experienced teaching themes such as sectarianism and racism at first hand in a range of settings and have gained considerable professional insight. The programmes for each of the three residentials varied but each had time set aside for the citizenship group to work with their classmates on core themes, ideas and teaching approaches. These sessions contributed to building professional confidence. Detailed evaluations were carried out during each residential and two of these are included in this report as appendices (see appendices three and four). All three courses were intense and, at times uncomfortable, particularly when working on the *Epilogues* material dealing with themes such as violence, revenge and social justice. Yet the evaluations support the view that residential work is invaluable in helping students to recognise the importance of placing their work in schools in the wider context of a divided society emerging from conflict. The logistics of sustaining such experiences in the future are addressed in the conclusion of this report.

7. Supporting student teachers in/between their placement schools

Attention has frequently been drawn to the fact that student teachers in Northern Ireland at the two Colleges of Education are largely educated separately on the basis of religion and cultural background. Initial Teacher Education students at the University of Ulster find themselves in a mixed environment though they are still likely to pursue teaching practice, and later teach, in schools associated with their own religious and cultural tradition. Only a small number are likely to gain student experience in the integrated sector and/or go on to teach in integrated schools. Therefore, in addition to facilitating interpersonal exchange between students from different backgrounds the project also sought to provide opportunities for them to experience schools from the other tradition in the expectation that this might contribute to greater awareness of the “other” and widen employment opportunities. The primary and post-primary strands of the PGCE approached this in different ways.

The Primary course committee introduced a Personal Development Week in 2005-06. The aim of this was to provide students with a placement in an institution or organisation that worked with young people but which went beyond what they might normally encounter in their placement schools. In response to the intervention of the CR Lecturer it was agreed that this should include the option of experience in a school of the other tradition. In that year twelve of the 40 students opted for this. Afterwards, several students acknowledged that their pre-visit apprehensions were unfounded. Indeed, one participant was subsequently asked to become a substitute teacher in the school she visited after completion of the course.

In the following year only one student availed of the opportunity. However, because of the success of the Personal Development Week an alternative peer education programme had been put in place for the Key Stage One practice. The aim here was to give students the chance to watch each other teach and critically reflect on both their own performance and that of their colleague. In pairing up, participants were encouraged to work with a partner from a different religious background. Thirteen pairs (36 out of 40 students) took up the offer. The experience was evaluated using questionnaires, both before and after the process. Again, apprehension was expressed prior to the exchange but the majority thoroughly enjoyed the event and several felt that it had helped to dispel myths about the other tradition.

By the final year of the project, Key Stage Two training in the university was encouraging students to engage with more controversial and sensitive material. Therefore, it was important that students then had the chance to take this learning into Key Stage Two classrooms. Consequently, a community relations pilot was initiated using the Ulster Weans A-Z visual resource as a stimulus. All students were required to take part.

The objectives were to:

- develop friendships and sustain professional contact between students;
- breakdown barriers and myths;
- gain a better understanding of one another’s culture;
- encourage independent learning in students and their pupils;
- promote team and group work skills;
- support students to create their own community relations resource for their classroom;
- enhance ICT skills through use of email and conferencing;
- gain insight into community relations classroom practice in an alternative community setting;
- increase awareness in host schools of the potential of curricular and cross community community relations work.

Having initially critiqued the A-Z resource students, in inter-denominational groups, were required to

devise an educational A-Z PowerPoint for Northern Ireland. This was to be used to introduce the activity in their own classrooms. Then, individually, students had to create another A-Z PowerPoint representing the locality in which they were teaching. Having used this with their own class they then paired with someone in their group and took their resource to the class of their partner in another school, used it to teach that class and then responded to questions from pupils. Further links between schools were sustained by computer conferencing and email.

The pilot was monitored using pre and post intervention questionnaires. Again, it was adjudged by students to be of value, particularly in widening their experience. Only one school did not participate and another did not allocate enough time for its completion. However, there were logistical obstacles. Students found the project time consuming, set against their other demands of planning and preparation. Schools also had reservations about the time allocated. Limitations in the ICT knowledge of pupils were also a constraint. The idea of a common task across schools, the exchange of student teachers and the sharing of each others' outcomes has great potential but, unfortunately, the project terminated before another cycle of the pilot could be implemented.

At post-primary level effort was put in to encouraging students to follow a teaching practice in a school of another tradition. In practice, only a small minority, around six to ten in each of the three cohorts took up this challenge, though those that did found it a rewarding venture. Research from an Economic and Social Research Council/Teaching and Learning Research Project (ESRC/TLRP) sponsored project (conducted concurrently with the CR project) concluded while students profess to have no difficulty with teaching in the "other" school system the prevailing norm is to assume that one will only be employed in your "own" system. Therefore, there is little point in applying to the other system. The whole policy of school exchanges requires review in the light of the evidence reported here.

However, there were also positive signs. In addition to the encouraging comments of those who did seek alternative school placements there were individual students willing to seek partnerships across the systems. The project team made it known that support was available for pairs of students who wished to innovate in a cross community context. Again, uptake was small but two experiments are worthy of note. Two PGCE History students applied for financial support to work together on a project focused on the iconic events of 1916: the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme. Both were teaching in Belfast grammar schools, one state and the other Catholic, and they aimed to engage their classes in debate around the contemporary significance of the two events. It helped that the two schools were already co-operating in a virtual environment under the University of Ulster based Dissolving Boundaries project. First, the students planned a unit of work together which incorporated video conferencing and e communication using LNI between the two classes to share observations and findings. Next, a field trip was organised around West Belfast taking in some of the significant wall murals relating to the two events. This "tour" was facilitated by a former History Inspector. School History staff from both institutions accompanied the students. For them this was a new and challenging approach. Afterwards, further video and computer conferences were held to consolidate the cultural exchange and the learning. So impressed were those observing that the students were asked to present their work to a major international conference in Belfast a few weeks later.

A second initiative was taken by two Geography students. Again, each was teaching in a state and Catholic grammar school, respectively. The students used their own close relationship to facilitate a school exchange between their respective Geography Heads of Departments. In turn, each teacher accompanied their Head of Department to the other school for a day and, when there, engaged in collaborative work with a community relations theme. These are the two best examples of the project having an impact in schools, beyond the initial teacher education sector.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The project proposal did not have provision for an external evaluation. Instead, aspects of the project were monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis. The project team held monthly progress meetings and reported to the funders on a quarterly cycle. The Project Director and CR Lecturer both kept reflective diaries. Specific initiatives were evaluated as they occurred. For example, student feedback on initiatives in the primary programme including that relating to the Personal Development Week, peer observation and the “A-Z” initiative. Feedback was collected through the completion of questionnaire surveys. On the post-primary pathway research colleagues from the UNESCO Centre in the School of Education were available to conduct detailed evaluations on the impact of the Geography and History fieldtrips and the residential experiences, using observation and individual and focus group interviews. Residential one and three were evaluated by Dr. Alison Montgomery and Professor William Timpson of the University of Colorado evaluated residential two.

The CR project ran in tandem with another high profile research initiative in the School of Education. A team of researchers led by Professor Alan Smith (and including Dr. Alan McCully) secured a Teaching and Learning Research project grant from the Economic and Social Research Council to investigate A Values-based Approach to Teacher Education. Though the brief of this work was wider than the IFI funded project there were complementary and reciprocal aspects to their work. For example data collected by the ESRC/TLRP project on staff and student attitudes to community relations and citizenship education policy and practice was of great benefit in informing development work on the PGCE programmes. Conversely, the the IFI sponsored project acted as a development arm for the ESRC/TLRP work, providing it with concrete examples of how initial teacher education might prepare students to teach in an increasing diverse but still divided society. The conclusions drawn by the ESRC/TLRP project, including reference to community relations initiatives, were reported to the Northern Ireland educational policy community at a seminar at Queen’s University Belfast in April, 2009.

To date three academic papers have resulted from the project’ work:

Smith R., Hartop B., Kelly C., McCully A. and O’Connor U. (2006) What does it mean to be a community relations professional in Northern Irish education? Some research-based answers, *Reflective Practice* Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 215–231

McCully A. and Montgomery A. (2009) Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions: Educating History Teachers in a Divided Society, *International Journal of History Learning, Teaching and Research*, Vol.8, No.2

McCully A. and Montgomery A. (2009) ‘ “Crossing over to the other side”. Student Teachers’ Experience of Teaching History in Schools from the Other Cultural Tradition in Northern Ireland.’ Paper (with Dr. Alison Montgomery) presented to the History Educators’ International Research Network Conference, 14 – 16 September, Coleraine.

CONCLUSIONS

This section of the report measures the achievements of the project against its four initial aims.

- 1) Strengthen the capacity and commitment of the School of Education to community relations objectives by embedding these in its aims, policies, structures and practice.
- 2) Identify the core skills, knowledge, values and competences essential for effective practice in the fields of community relations/citizenship and incorporate them to enhance PGCE programmes at primary and secondary level.
- 3) Initiate a three-year programme of activities to prepare teachers for working in a deeply divided society that will become integrated into and sustained within the long-term provision of the School
- 4) Enhance awareness of community relations issues and practice through the education system in Northern Ireland so that young people develop the skills, knowledge and values to act for a more peaceful and just society.

1) To strengthen the capacity and commitment of the School of Education to community relations objectives by embedding these in its aims, policies, structures and practice.

The project claims to have made considerable progress with regard to the above. community relations principles have been firmly embedded in School and PGCE documentation. Aspects of community relations practice, developed during the lifetime of the project, are clearly present in the PGCE course aims, structures and teaching programmes. Considerably enhanced time is now set aside for specific teaching sessions on both the PGCE Primary and Post-primary programmes. At the outset, students are made aware of this and agree to commit themselves to an exploration of the Shared Future agenda. PGCE staff recognise the importance of addressing community relations issues through the medium of their teaching.

Yet there are indications that while the community relations agenda is taken seriously it is not regarded as a core priority across the work of the School. For instance, commitment to *A Shared Future* was removed by the School Executive from the draft mission statement of the School prior to agreement on a final version. More crucially for the implementation of the work, the post of the CR Lecturer was not continued when it came up for a second renewal in the summer of 2008. If, as has been demonstrated on many occasions, capacity, skill and personal disposition are critical elements in fostering change then the loss of this post was a major blow, not least because of the professional growth and expertise achieved by the occupant in her three years in the job. In practice, she had worked effectively within the course team to prepare colleagues to take over much of her teaching – but it is much harder to replace the energy and enthusiasm of a committed agent of change. The circumstances leading to the termination of the post were complex and desire illumination. For much of the time that the CR Lecturer was in post there were doubts concerning the continuation of DENI Community Relations Branch Core funding. When the funding was renewed on the first occasion there was a 20% shortfall in meeting the required salary. After some discussion the School of Education agreed to meet this deficit. A year later, a decision on a second renewal was delayed for several months making it difficult for school management to make contingency plans. When the decision came pressure on funding resulted in the grant on offer being reduced to 50% of the total salary cost. Purely on financial grounds the Faculty regarded this as unsustainable and a redundancy notice was issued. The university is a large organisation with multiple layers of authority. In retrospect, it was a weakness in the project strategy to concentrate only on influencing structures at School level. In a top down culture of financial accountability the layers of management directly responsible were unable to take wider educational considerations into account. The Project Director regrets not having sought to influence senior figures in the university as to the efficacy and value of the project to the future of Northern Ireland. Further, caught out by the indecision of DENI, and ongoing pressures on his own time, he failed to access additional external funding to meet the deficit.

2) Identify the core skills, knowledge, values and competences essential for effective practice in the fields of community relations/citizenship and incorporate them to enhance PGCE programmes at primary and secondary level

The project team are convinced of the utility of the adaptation of the revised competency based framework to identify the core skills, knowledge and values required to teach community relations and citizenship effectively. The manner in which this document was produced, working collaboratively with WELB staff, enhances its rigour. The outcomes have been incorporated into the School's PGCE courses but much work has yet to be done to disseminate the learning to the wider social education community.

3) Initiate a three-year programme of activities to prepare teachers for working in a deeply divided society that will become integrated into and sustained within the long-term provision of the School

There is evidence to demonstrate that the project produced a number of innovative interventions in the fields of community relations and citizenship which impacted positively on the understanding, skills and commitment of student teachers'. However, particularly in the post-primary course there was some unevenness in their application across specialist subject areas. Undoubtedly, the availability of financial support was a catalyst for many, though not all, of the successful ideas. Indeed, several of the teaching developments have been sustained beyond the life of the project without recourse to extra financial resources.

Activities outside the university such as field trips and residentials do require significant funding – and it is these type of activities, which combine sustained social interaction alongside deep experiential learning, that appear to have the biggest impact on students. Without the support of project money these activities would not have been developed. Therefore, one must be realistic regarding sustainability. The reality is that the finances of ITE are such that enhanced experiences like extended fieldtrips and residentials cannot be met from the earned budget. In order to continue such events funding must be sought on a recurring basis from outside agencies. In pursuit of this the School, recognising the value of these activities, is currently cooperating with Non-Governmental Organisations to ensure that a community relations orientated residential experience is available to all students who wish to attend.

The original project budget was generous in its allocation of funding both to support innovative practice and to release staff to work on new ideas. A considerable proportion of the latter went unspent. This does not necessarily indicate a lack of commitment on the part of PGCE staff. Indeed, arguably the opposite. It reflects the reluctance of staff to relinquish time working face to face with their students in university and on placement. It also indicates an important lesson learned from the project. The curriculum for Initial Teacher Education as it currently operates is largely externally driven and very congested within a nine month time-frame. However, important community relations work is deemed to be, students have to face huge demands on their energy alongside anxiety over classroom preparation. Above all, their everyday encounters with children and young people are dominated by what happens in the classroom. While a sound skills and values foundation has been acquired by our students in the Initial Teacher Education phase for community relations/citizenship teaching, effective practice evolves as it becomes allied with professional and life experience in the early years of a teaching career. More consideration is needed as to how this foundation can be supported and developed in the early professional development phases of teacher education.

4) Enhance awareness of community relations issues and practice through the education system in Northern Ireland so that young people develop the skills, knowledge and values to act for a more peaceful and just society.

It can only be speculation as to how far the activities of the project influenced the schools in which students were placed. Certainly, in the cases of the “A-Z” initiative, the History mural project and the geography departmental exchange, teachers in schools commented favourably on the ideas initiated by student teachers. In general, the project team accepts that its work has yet to be disseminated to a wider audience. Hopefully, this report represents a first stage in making its outcome available outside its own host institution and that further publications will follow.

Summary

Overall, the project has had a positive impact on community relations policy and practice within the Initial Teacher Education programmes of the University of Ulster. Statements of intent are firmly embedded in all levels of School documentation. Staff, generally, have become familiar with community relations principles and language. Students are made aware of this institutional commitment and expect to be engaged positively with the practice it espouses. Further, a number of innovative activities have been developed which have the potential to be replicated in other teacher education institutions.

At its conclusion two significant constraints can be identified. One is that management, while valuing the aims and work of the project, and the financial resources it provided for innovation and staffing, felt unable to prioritise community relations to the extent that the recurrent budget allocation would be altered to ensure the permanence of the CR Lecturer post. Two, the congested and pressurised environment of initial teacher education militated against community relations being perceived by staff and students as anything other than one of several important themes within the teacher education programme.

It remains to thank both the IFI Community Bridges programme and DENI community relations Branch for providing PGCE staff at the University of Ulster with the opportunity to develop this work. They can be assured that the insight gained will continue to shape course development for a considerable time to come.

ⁱ Montgomery A. and McCully A. (2000) What have values got to do with it?, Easdown G. ed., *Innovation and Methodology: Opportunities and Constraints in History Teacher Education*, HTEN, Lancaster, pp.55-66.

ⁱⁱ Hewstone M. and Brown R. (1986) Contact is not enough: An Intergroup perspective on the Contact Hypothesis, M. Hewstone and R. Brown (eds.) *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, pp. 3-44.

ⁱⁱⁱ Connolly P. (1998) *Early Years Anti-Sectarian Television*, Belfast, Community Relations Council.

^{iv} See, for example, Kitson, A. (2007) ‘History Education and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland’, E.A. Cole (ed.) *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, pp.123-134

Appendix One

Knowledge, Skills and Aptitudes Mapped to Teacher Competences

2 A knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates about the nature and purposes of education and the role of the state, and the policy implications of these debates, are defining and implementing.

Understanding of the implications of 'The Shared Future' policy
 Develop personal, contextualising and positioning skills to address their school and national situation
 National Curriculum Framework
 Community v. Civil service
 Individual v. Society
 State of affairs v. Underlying issues
 Education v. Common good
 Rights v. Moral rights v. Religious Values

To be able to take this forward and contextualising and reflect (personally) in the context of the statutory obligations.

6 Knowledge and understanding of the nature that parents and all other stakeholders bring, and the ways of their need to provide for the holistic development of the child.

Has knowledge and understanding of how structural racism, diversity, and related to many factors which is heard by domestic and understanding of people, parents and it questions and knowledge of how a social, psychological, developmental and cultural approach can address children's achievement/learning in a positive or negatively.
 Understanding the importance of developing a classroom culture of 'Brilliant Not Just'
 Understanding the importance of developing a classroom culture of equity and inclusive based spaces
 Awareness of learning opportunities in the area of art and CPD

8 A knowledge and understanding of the need to take account of the rights and interests of pupils, cultures, languages and faiths and to address the implications for teaching and learning from these.

Willingness to engage openly with other cultures, religions and languages
 Capacity to recognise prejudice is yourself or and the challenges this might bring
 Recognising the features of their own cultural, religious and political identity and the legal context of this for their professional role
 Explore and understand their own level of awareness/identity

12 A knowledge and understanding of the inter-relatedness between schools and the communities they serve and the potential for mutual development and well-being.

Have knowledge of the policy context relevant to community relations and evidence for diversity in education (including the concept of Social Capital and the related issues of 'bonding'/'bridging')
 Understand the potential for teachers to be agents of social change
 How principles of democracy and social justice can be modelled in the school community
 Ways to set the school and community agendas to work together to enhance partnerships and support education for community children.
 The potential and skills of using ICT to network locally, and across communities

23 To contribute to the development and life of the schools, collaborating with teaching and support staff, parents and external agencies.

Development of interpersonal skills and the ability to negotiate and resolve conflict.
 Clarified personal values in relation to education
 Understand the purpose of a school relations agreement and shared values

Developing and sharing individual educational philosophy in the context of the schools values and policies

Being able to use the statutory curriculum to explore these issues

Develop a more shared balance of power between pupil and teacher

Provide opportunities for people to explain others view points and defend or modify their own in the light of new evidence

Capacity to recognise prejudices in yourself, peers and pupils and the challenges this might bring

Develop opportunities to use provision of pupil from another culture as a means of celebrating diversity
 Being able to respond to a wide range of positive and negative emotions appropriately.

Working your group and preparing for the conceptual learning, where groups are coming from, being sensitive to personal traumas and being professional judgement.

Modeling democracy in the classroom as an exemplar

Work together with community agencies to support pupil learning with the core values

Development of interpersonal skills and the ability to negotiate and resolve conflict and provide guidance if requested

Can establish effective working relationships with parents
 Develop effective relationships with staff in associated schools when in reality

Knowledge and understanding of the school's own values and expectations which would include values and expectations shared which would include values and expectations
 Ability to form open positive opportunities relationships with teaching and support staff and parents

Knowledge and understanding of the schools roles on statement and shared values which would include values and expectations

Ability to form open positive opportunities relationships with teaching and support staff, parents,

Contributing to shaping school values and policies

Be able to engage colleagues in reflection on these issues within the school

Being able to balance the cognitive and emotional dimensions in order to challenge, develop and effective learning

Be able to use the pupil biography and responses to develop effective learning

Skills to be able to create active paths/policy learning

Capacity to recognise prejudices in yourself, peers and pupils and the ability to challenge them

Create opportunities to use provision of pupil from another culture as a means of celebrating diversity

Being able to respond to a wide range of positive and negative emotions in yourself and others.

Learning to manage and negotiate environments where strong opinions can be expressed without conflict

The discussion, debates and relationships between the concepts of a community development, community education, community relations in creating the necessary conditions for learning from each other

Influencing policy and practice and its relationships with other communities

Modeling democracy in the classroom as an exemplar

Working partnerships with the local community through young people, community services, action projects, local initiatives, initiatives across the communities - sharing and developing ideas, school to community practice

Using collaborative groups to explore issues within the wider community including governance issues

Development of high level interpersonal skills and the ability to negotiate and resolve conflict and provide guidance if requested
 Can establish effective working relationships with parents and staff in a wider range of challenging issues

Knowledge and understanding of the schools mission statement and shared values which would include values and expectations. Be involved in the formation of the school's mission, statements of values aims and objectives

Ability to form open positive opportunities relationships with teaching and support staff, parents, where appropriate and all those who have concerns regarding the welfare of the child

Appendix Two

Contemporary Issues Day Programme

2007

Contemporary Issues and Education

Event	Venue	Time	Speaker/Facilitator
Opening address-			
Local & Global Citizenship: an introduction Building	LT1 South	9.45 - 10.00am	Alan McCully
Connections between local and global, challenges and links	LT1	10.00 - 10.50am	Colm Regan & John Johnson
Tea and Coffee LT1	Outside	10.50 - 11.10am	
<i>Workshop 1: Issues and Concepts 11.15am -12.45pm</i>			
1. Teaching children from minority ethnic backgrounds	LT3		Mary Yarr
2. Educating and Acting for a Better World	B036		John Johnson
3. Children in Crossfire: the Price of Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals	B247		Emily Haggan
4. Children in Conflict	B134		Catherine Anderson
5. Challenging sectarianism in the Classroom	B139		Yvonne Naylor
6. Challenging Sectarianism and Racism in Sport	B305		Michael Boyd
7. Play for Change	B304		Aine Weir
8. Young Environmentalists Award	D089		ECO UNESCO
9. Celebrating special places in Northern Ireland	B302		RSPB
<i>Lunch 1.00 - 1.45pm</i>			

Event	Venue	Time	Speaker/Facilitator
<i>Workshop 2 – Subject Groups 1.45 - 3.00pm</i>			
1. Art and Design	B134		Jackie Lamb
2. English	LT3		Jude Collins
3. Geography	B304		Linda Clarke
4. History	B139		Alan McCully
5. Home Economics	B305		Dorothy Black
6. Music	B302		Barry Burgess
7. PE	B247		Walter Bleakley
8. Technology and Design	D089		Wesley Hamilton
<i>Showcase and close LT1 3.00 - 4.00pm</i>			

Appendix Three

Community Relations/Citizenship Residential Evaluation Report

2006

Evaluation of the PGCE Citizenship/ Community Relations Residential, May 2-4, 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Twenty-six PGCE students gathered with faculty from the University of Ulster's School of Education and staff from the UNESCO Centre for a three-day residential training program on citizenship. Alan McCully organized and led this training, using funds from a grant to pay for accommodations at the *An Creggan Visitor Centre* and travel. At the core of this time together were three extended sessions on the legacy of violence from *The Troubles*, that period of protests, killings and intimidation that left some 3,500 dead in Northern Ireland and much of the population scarred, scared and silent. Two film makers from Derry's Gaslight Productions trialed three sections of their DVD of video dramatizations interspersed with interviews of forty individuals representing all sides of the political spectrum and questions for reflection and discussion. Fulbright Senior Specialist William M. Timpson, a professor from Colorado State University and expert in post secondary teaching and learning, served as external evaluator.

In general, this experience proved important for every student and transformative for some. Long held silences about violence from the past were broken and ideas for working with students explored. Several of these future teachers acknowledged the serious gaps in their knowledge about these times and events became obvious and were eager to continue their learning. Everyone seemed to recognize the importance of citizenship education in helping elementary and secondary students critically think about the past and their role in a shared vision for Northern Ireland.

The participants

School of Education: Alan McCully; Linda Clarke; Bernie Boyle
UNESCO: Ron Smith
PGCE Students: 26
Gaslight Productions: Jim Keys; Stephen Gargan

Evaluation methodology

Four sources of information comprised this evaluation:

1. Evaluator notes and observations during the various sessions.
2. Formal, anonymous exit surveys from the 16 students remaining at programme's end.
3. Informal interviews with participating students during the programme.
4. Informal interviews with staff before, during and after the programme.

Ground rules

McCully set the agenda for the three days with a discussion of ground rules; examples follow:

- everyone had a right to express;
- everyone had a right to challenge others;
- change is not to be considered a weakness;
- it is important to show respect and empathy, to listen, to be open;
- teamwork is valued;
- confidentiality is important.

Warm up introductions: Bafa Bafa

Developed for use in preparing people for cross-cultural experiences, Bafa Bafa is an active, interactive

role playing simulation of two cultures with very different values (happiness, trading), customs and communication patterns.

Evaluation

In the program evaluations, many students (16 or 56%) rated this a “5” on a 5-point scale or “very useful” although some thought it was “a bit much” as a first activity for people new to each other (i.e., 4 or 25% rated it a “4” as “useful” and 3 or 19% rated it a “3” with “1” signifying “not useful at all”).

They clearly had some fun with this activity and despite the discomfort of some, it may have served a very useful purpose in breaking down some of the reticence associated with the “culture of politeness” and reserve.

Epilogue Programme

The Gaslight DVD production, with funding, at least in part, from the International Fund for Ireland, addresses several issues that are connected to the “Troubles.”

- 1) Violence
- 2) Loss
- 3) Revenge
- 4) Forgiveness
- 5) Justice
- 6) Human Rights

However, only three of the six sessions were shown during this residential.

The ground rules that were established complemented what had already been introduced:

- every view would be respected and accepted;
- anyone can opt out;
- confidentiality must be honored, i.e., “*what is said here, stays here*” except for generalized comments without names. This is an issue of safety and trust;
- connections to the United Nations declaration on human rights.

Reactions and evaluation

On the formal written exit survey, 13 students (81%) rated these sessions a “5” or “very useful” while the remaining 3 (19%) rated these as a “4” on this 5-point scale.

In the debriefing sessions that followed each segment listed above, certain themes emerged over the three days.

- 1) Several agreed that this experience was “powerful”, that many emotions long buried and avoided were stirred up. Yet, as one asked, “if we as teachers do not talk about these issues, how can we expect our students to do the same?”
- 2) Many agreed when one referred to the DVD resource as “brilliant.” Others noted how they were introduced to new ideas, that gaps in their knowledge of their own history had been filled.
- 3) The interviews on the DVD were valued because they *personalized* and *humanized* events that these students knew something about. This made the events described more meaningful, real and memorable, “the cost of the violence and the suffering.”

- 4) The DVD interviews “got them thinking.” For example, they heard from some who saw that the violence was an outgrowth of a declared war while others deplored the senselessness of loss of life. One student noted how desensitizing the news was about violence and death.
- 5) Several questions then surfaced about assessing these conflicting claims and “how to determine who was right.”
- 6) One noted how some would resist “raking up all this difficult past”, that it’s easier to forget about it all and just move forward. Many people “just don’t want to talk about these things.”
- 7) The DVD material illustrated for some “how fragile their society was” and how important it was for teachers to play a role in addressing the legacy of the violence and help students develop useful ways to think about the past.
- 8) Some students were very clear that the issues discussed on the DVD, constitutional questions of independence or sectarian differences, “were not worth the killing.”
- 9) A few students noted how “scared they were by the justifications made for killing by some on the DVD.”
- 10) Several noted the “snowballing” effect that Bloody Sunday had on the violence, recognizing that for many, here was “proof” that peaceful, nonviolent protests would not be successful and that violence was the only mechanism left for “defending a community.”
- 11) Some noted how this material stirred up thoughts and feelings that had been long buried.
- 12) A few wanted to “hear more from the 90% that were not caught up in the cycle of revenge and were clear about wanting peace.”
- 13) It seemed evident that these teachers were reacting to the DVD content and sorting out their own thoughts, feelings and values.
- 14) Several participants asked whether the crimes of the past have been solved, or if they haven’t, will they be or should they be? One participant asked, “How can you resolve all the conflicts of the past?”
- 15) Much agreement surfaced about relief from the suffering but recognized the challenges in sorting out claims and the dangers of “victimhood”.
- 16) Several comments surfaced about the role of the state and the legitimacy of the legal system when there was this apparent state of war.
- 17) The connection between the local and global surfaced several times with comparisons made between the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and what unfolded in Northern Ireland as well as with more contemporary comparisons with the Middle East and the War in Iraq.
- 18) Both the DVD and participants noted how “Bloody Sunday” seemed to accelerate the “talk of war.”
- 19) Clarification was made about a clandestine “civil war,” how the “soldiers” on either side had to have a cover, had to blend in; some were “perfect students with white shirts and ties, people you would never expect.”

- 20) Several noted how challenging it is to teach history well. One teacher mentioned how her history teacher refused to allow any questions when she covered this era, fearing arguments or offending anyone.
- 21) Many noted the “generational baggage” that they had been given. For example, some had been warned, overtly and subtly, NOT to associate with the “other.” Accordingly, they all agreed that the three day training was “encouraging” about these barriers eventually coming down and that as teachers they could “make a difference.”
- 22) Many seemed to agree with the idea that citizenship education is “important and necessary,” that they had to exercise their “freedom of speech,” that they had been used to NOT talking about these issues from the past. They had to “overcome avoidance” and the “culture of politeness.” Teachers had to deconstruct their own prejudices and develop skills for “honest frankness.”
- 23) Several were surprised at how little they knew about the “other,” how the other side practiced religion, for example.
- 24) Many agreed with the need for follow-up courses for teachers, that this work was important enough and required attention over time to unravel problematic beliefs and feelings and build a truly shared vision for the future. One student also mentioned the need for “time to digest it all.”
- 25) Several nodded agreement when one said that she was reinvigorated by the connection between the local and the global.
- 26) Some participants commented on the apathy of their peers about getting involved in the political process, i.e., that many are unaware of what they want and, thus, don’t vote, that the extremists are voting but that those in the middle can be active and informed about the peace process.
- 27) Several wondered how this material would work with those whose positions were “hardened.”

Citizenship education

Material was present by McCully

- about citizenship in a divided or contested society;
- to what goes beyond national identity and can serve as the underpinnings of human rights;
- to the importance of getting young people involved in public issues;
- to the need to connect the local and the global;
- to focus on diversity and inclusion;
- equality and social justice;
- democracy and active participation;
- human rights and social responsibility.

Citizenship education was not intended as a “set curriculum, but one that would include the news and involve constructivist designs.”

Peer education sessions

These student led sessions had a tight focus on classroom activities that could be used for citizenship education. Presenters were well organized and had engaging, stimulating lessons to share with their peers.

Evaluation

On the written exit survey, 9 students (56%) rated these as a “5” or “very useful”, 4 (25%) rated these as a “4” and 3 (19%) rated them as a “3”.

Active learning approaches

On the morning of the second day, Bernie Boyle modeled and facilitated the use of a personal “map” for describing various “journeys” in life beginning in the late 1960’s and the “Troubles”, i.e., political, religious, etc.

Evaluation

On the exit surveys, 7 students (44%) rated these a “5” or “very useful”, 4 (25%) rated them a “4” and 5 (31%) rated them a “3”.

This was a very engaging activity that revealed much about how these students saw themselves. It forced them to step back from their own lives and make some summary descriptions and assessments. For a second day of this 3-day residential, this seemed to be somewhat challenging and useful for building a greater sense of understanding and trust in the group.

Assessment of teaching and learning

Overall, this three day residential modeled many aspects of student-centered instruction and constructivist (discovery- or inquiry-based) learning. Session leaders modelled active listening while promoting involvement. There was much here that is supported, for example, in Davis (1993) or McKeachie’s (2002) ever popular work for instructors in higher education. However, more could be done in the future, e.g., monitoring participation and encouraging those who have not contributed.

The combination of challenging materials and this focus on student awareness has the potential of being truly transformative as these students face issues that they had previously avoided but now recognized as important for education.

- Using Perry’s (1999) model of cognitive development, I saw clear movement from *dichotomous* thinking toward a greater appreciation for the various views possible (*multiplicity*) as well as the complexities and ambiguities involved as Northern Ireland moved away from this intense period of conflict and violence.
- As another example, referencing the ideas of Parker Palmer in his wildly popular 1998 book for academics, *The Courage to Teach*, I could see evidence of students growth in their ability to perform “*both/and*” thinking.
- Using Kohlberg’s (1963) model, I could see evidence of a growing appreciation for the moral reasoning on both sides of the political/sectarian divide as well as on violence, civil and human rights generally.
- Using Piaget’s (1952) model, I could see the value of the *concrete references* to local events which were often connected to more *abstract* and global principles.
- Drawing on the classic work of Bloom et al. (1956), I could see students increasing their knowledge and moving toward understanding, application to the present, analysis, synthesis of the local and the global, and finally, evaluation.
- Noting Lowman’s (1995) work, I could clearly see the benefits of the rapport between students and the session leaders combined with high engagement in stimulating material.

- Drawing on my own work (Timpson & Bendel-Simso, 1996; Timpson, 1999; Timpson & Burgoyne, 2002), I could see clear evidence of a positive classroom climate (trust, safety, open communication, high morale) for addressing difficult and sensitive issues.
- Referencing my own work on peace studies (Timpson, 2002), I could see much evidence of real movement by students toward reconciling their fears and ignorance about Northern Ireland's troubled recent past.
- I saw several examples of the "*deeper learning*" that Ramsden (1992) contrasts with information transmission or "*surface learning*" of most teacher-directed classrooms.

Overall recommendations

- 1) The results of this Citizenship Education Residential are impressive enough to warrant **permanent funding**, either through the School of Education or from the students who participate.
- 2) Although an additional expense, sustain the **residential component** as an important mechanism for trust building and a focused look at personal and cultural resistance to examining the recent legacy of conflict and violence. One participant noted that "a longer residential and perhaps mini-tutorials would facilitate more of the information sinking in." Another wrote, "The isolation made sure we stayed together and bonded as a group." A third reported, "Holding the team together in a residential is effective in keeping the team focused." As one participant concluded, "The idea of a residential worked very well, better than 'day workshops.'"
- 3) Have students sign a **contract** about their commitment to the full program including scheduled start times of sessions. While informal feedback suggested that there was much value in the sharing that happened outside the formal sessions, some session time was lost on the second day and low energies made the DVD and discussion sessions that much more demanding. As one commented, "After a while, one DVD monologue was indistinct from another ... but maybe that's my responsibility (to get enough rest)." Another concluded, "The setting was excellent and an essential part for bonding with the group. It's a shame (that some left on the third day) ... This should be made compulsory. (Note: One carload of four had to leave because the driver had an interview for a teaching position on the third day.)"
- 4) Continue to encourage participants to take advantage of deeper **informal follow-on discussions** but discourage abuse of the time needed for sleep so that they can be reasonably rested.
- 5) Build in more **active learning outdoors** that ties in aspects of **sustainability** to the work of citizenship education and balances with all the time spent sitting indoors. See my most recent collaborative effort, *147 Tips for Teaching Sustainability*. One participant commented, "Although the Epilogues were brilliant, it was hard going. I got very sore sitting for so long. It also got a bit repetitive with the same routine of small and large group discussions. Perhaps more breaks and some activities in between to help with concentration. It would have been nice to get outdoors." (Note: The *An Creagan Visitor Centre* has some wonderful pathways in and around the bogs on the property complete with a few interpretative signs about the plants.)
- 6) Continue to use the **Epilogue** materials from Gaslight Productions. The local references make these events very real and meaningful.
- 7) Continue to develop and emphasize the connection between the **local** and the **global**.

- 8) One student remarked that we needed “more brainstorming on how to actively bring these issues into the classroom, especially for the age groups we will be teaching.” Another recommended more peer sessions to make this link.” Do more to connect the content from the *Epilogues* DVD to **classroom teaching**.
 - a. Developmental theories that identify stages and sequences (e.g., Perry, Piaget, Kohlberg, Gilligan)
 - b. Problem- and cased-based learning
 - c. Discovery and inquiry learning
 - d. Multiple intelligences (Gardner)
 - e. Cooperative learning (R. & D. Johnson)
 - f. Student-centered approaches
 - g. Democratic classrooms
 - h. Service learning
 - i. Debriefing lessons to support reflection and metacognition
 - j. The use of stories and narratives in teaching and learning
- 9) Given the intensity of issues and feelings, assess the **gradient of controversy** and how various models and frameworks (e.g., Perry, Piaget, Kohlberg, Gilligan) would help leaders choose and sequence material as well as facilitate student learning.
- 10) Teach students to **evaluate all sources** as to bias, legitimacy, credibility, etc. Some described their hesitancy to question anything in print. See my work on teaching diversity (Timpson et al, 2003; Timpson et al., 2005).
- 11) Create opportunities for these students to interact with **HECUA students** to explore more of the connections between the local and the global in a cross-cultural setting.
- 12) Develop courses, workshops, etc. for **follow-up study**. One participant wondered whether this residential would have a bigger impact if the timing of it changed: “An excellent experience but it should be at the beginning of the PGCE year.”
- 13) Consider recruiting other audiences. One participant recommended “more publicity” so that “more could benefit.”
- 14) Encourage participation from other tutors connected to the PGCE Programme.
- 15) Utilizing **Derick Wilson** at the University of Ulster, explore ways in which educators could collaborate with youth workers to extend this training and connect the schools with the community.
- 16) Drawing on the expertise of **Ulrike Niens** of the UNESCO Centre, explore further the potential for the Citizenship Education Residential to be truly transformative for these future teachers. Seek funding for longitudinal research.

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Appendix Four

Community Relations/Citizenship
Evaluation Report

2007

PGCE Citizenship Residential May 2007

Evaluation Report

Introduction

The PGCE Citizenship/Community Relations residential was held from 30 April to 2 May 2007 at 'An Creggan' Centre near Cookstown. Thirty-seven PGCE students attended the residential of whom thirty-two were female and five were male. Participants were drawn from both Coleraine and Jordanstown campuses and included PGCE history, geography, art, home economics, music, English and technology and design students. Tutors reported that at the opening session beginning the *Epilogues* process students had an opportunity to introduce themselves and assess the impact that the Northern Ireland conflict had had on them. A number of them considered that they had grown up largely detached or sheltered from the violence but a very significant proportion produced accounts of direct consequences which included death and injury to family and friends, and two instances of family members with paramilitary involvement.

The residential programme was structured around four main areas¹;

1. Experiences of diversity through the *Bafa Bafa* exercise (Seamus Farrell)
2. Community relations and themes of violence, loss, justice, and human rights through *Epilogues* (Jim Keys)
3. Interactive media resource for local and global citizenship through *The Big Picture* (Global Centre)
4. Discussions around diversity, equality and social justice, democracy, human rights and responsibilities through *peer education sessions* (PGCE students).

Staff attending the residential included Alan McCully (PGCE Citizenship tutor), Linda Clarke (PGCE Geography tutor) and Clodagh Kelly (PGCE primary community relations tutor). Alison Montgomery (Research fellow) attended on Days 2 and 3 as a participant observer and evaluator. In order to record PGCE students' comments following the *Epilogues*' sessions, the evaluator spent a short period of time sitting with each discussion group.

Reviewing the Residential

This evaluation focuses on four aspects of the residential. Firstly, it records the experiences of PGCE students during the second day of the residential, capturing their comments from the discussion sessions which followed screenings of various sections of the *Epilogues* DVD resource. Secondly, it records the evaluative summary comments from PGCE students about *Epilogues* at the end of the second day. Thirdly, it briefly outlines students' responses to *The Big Picture*. Fourthly, it analyses PGCE students' responses from the evaluation questionnaires. A brief summary highlights the main points.

1. 'Epilogues' sessions

Epilogues is described as

'an accessible **workshop based education programme** using a DVD and website to engage people in the everyday work of **peace-building and responsible citizenship**. It does this by exploring, within a workshop environment that models democratic process, six **key themes** that are central to an understanding of violent political conflict - **violence, loss, revenge, forgiveness, justice, and human rights**. The exploration is deepened through direct engagement with the perspectives of both victims of, and the various parties to, the violent political conflict in and about 'Northern Ireland'. www.epilogues.net

¹See attached programme.

During the discussion sessions on the second day, PGCE students explored the themes of Loss, Justice, and Human Rights using the DVD resource.

Exploring 'Loss'

Group A

PGCE students discussed the extent to which they believed they had been impacted by the Northern Ireland 'Troubles', reflecting on the violence, being protected from events and parental influence;

'It's scary – thinking people have been so affected by violence'

'We are sheltered from much of the Troubles, yet you find out about it through relationships...'

'...and yet we still inherit much of our parents' views...it's deep seated'

'I think we should address issues in class...culture, background...'

Group B

This group discussed the effectiveness of the resource and the impact of different voices in the programme;

'I found the hardness of some of the speakers hard...'

'I think the series works...without labels attached...it's not helpful to know if people are Protestant or Catholic, republican or loyalist'

'I think we do view people's loss differently...depends...'

Group C

Group C reviewed the issue of identity and its importance for people in Northern Ireland;

'The issue of identity...it's about pupils' freedom to express themselves versus a management of cultural identity...for example in integrated schools where there are debates about the poppy or Irish sports' shirts'.

'Remembrance day has meaning for British and Irish people...it's important we point out the relevance for both'

'I think it's important to acknowledge pupils' identity'.

Exploring 'Justice'

In a whole group discussion following this programme, PGCE students exchanged views on justice.

The nature of justice

'I think it's naïve to think "God will sort things out"'

'Justice needs to start from within through forgiveness...'

'Forgiveness is about inner peace'

'Forgiveness can go to a spiritual level'

'Restorative justice is forgiveness and justice'

'If justice is punitive, it doesn't require forgiveness or understanding'

'What makes one person able to forgive and another not?'

'The characters speak of what justice would mean...how do they know this will actually achieve justice for them?'

Defining justice

'Justice is to seek reason...justification...'

'It's the law'

'Punishment – people like to see perpetrators being held accountable'

'It's different in different societies...could be the death sentence or life imprisonment...'

'It's inner peace'

'There's a distinction between personal justice and societal justice'.

PGCE students then broke into four groups and discussed the issue of justice further.

Group A and B

These groups talked about the potential for people to develop a shared understanding of the Northern Ireland conflict and the legitimacy of taking up arms during conflict;

'It's never justified for the state to take up arms'

'It's never justifiable for people to take up arms and challenge the system'

'You need to find ways of working within the system'

'You need to leave some justice to God'.

Group C

This group talked about the challenges of dealing with justice in the classroom;

'I just feel untouched by many of the issues in Northern Ireland'

'Dealing with issues around justice in the classroom could be problematic'

'I would find it difficult to decide about issues of justice as I have been relatively untouched by it all...'

Group D

PGCE students in this group discussed why the Northern Ireland conflict continues to have an impact on young people. A number of History students explained the origins of the conflict to one member of the group. The group also discussed the concept of 'collective understanding and knowledge'.

'There's just so much inherited knowledge...or is it myth...'

'It's still there...you wonder if it could just take one small incident to set the whole thing off again'

'The vast majority of people really just want to leave this behind and get on with life...'

'The ongoing problems...continued dissatisfaction and ongoing engagement in violence is really down to a minority'.

Exploring Human Rights

A brief discussion with the whole group was convened after the human rights' programme. This focused on PGCE students' definitions of human rights (recorded on flip chart).

2. 'Epilogues' – summary evaluations

Seated in a large circle, each participant was invited to reflect on the impact which they believed 'Epilogues' had had on them. Their comments were as follows;

'We're not so detached as we thought'

'How bad things were, how far we've come'.

'The need for greater awareness of kids' biographies'

'A lot to take on – the possibility it could happen again'

'Pupil's beliefs and parental views are still an issue in the classroom'

'War makers need peace makers'

'We need to look forward and to be positive'

We have a lot to learn from our past...need to be positive'

'You revisited things that you never thought you would revisit again'

'Exhausting...emotional'

'It was useful to understand the complexity of forgiveness'

'...the impact of violence on families...need to look at their experiences and learn not to repeat them... talk about it'

'The power of biography'

'It was very self-reflective...gave us an opportunity to listen to others. We define people in boxes but you can't tar everyone with the same brush so we need to learn more about people'

'It was very depressing...should be looking at global citizenship...maybe people are in denial. It was very intense, maybe over time it would be better'

'I tend not to look at it really...but realise how terrible it has been'

'It's a very sad situation and realise it's going to be a long time before change...I think it helped but find it hard to know how to move on as a teacher with this stuff'

'The process can be confusing and exciting'

'You can see how far people have changed over time and look at the future through a brighter light'

'I enjoyed hearing everyone's views, enjoyed debate and discussion. It's good to reflect and transfer knowledge into the classroom'

'It's important to look at this stuff – we can be ashamed of the past but it's important not to let people think less of us. How do teachers undo the crap pupils hear at home? We [as teachers] can be very judgemental so it allowed us to reflect on our choices'

'Interesting to see the different spectrums of thought. I could see people's viewpoint. Could use this in school to allow pupils to debate views. I think things can only get better. We should learn from how we deal with the past for our treatment of minorities'.

'I have a deeper understanding of myself and others – and the conflict and different people's perspectives, e.g. the soldier. I feel I could teach this with more conviction now'

'Thinking about how we teach children about victims...'

'Better understanding of the perpetrators' perspectives...the bombers ..seeing things as less black and white'

'Have some insight into people's beliefs, motivations. Have to understand why people are believing what they believe'

'Increased my knowledge – think about what the terrorists are capable of and still accepting them...e.g. David Ervine ... it generated my interest in the 1960s'

'I'm better prepared for questions that might come up. Be interesting to see how individuals get on together, what issues could be raised in class'

'It was very emotional. Have some understanding of the logic of the terrorists. They were able to vocalise their views. Never studied this period of history in school but would like to know more about it'.

'There were some extreme views and prejudice...made me reflect on my 'inbred' views. I valued the opportunity to understand views and to become more sensitive to other people's views'

‘Made a greater connection with local history...I thought the Troubles were perpetrated by stupid, unintelligent people’

‘Gave me a deeper understanding of people’s view points around justice and democracy This will help in the classroom’

‘As a citizenship teacher I should be able to offer different opinions and be able to use videoclips and challenge pupils’ viewpoints’

‘I think I have greater confidence...I thought that the Troubles were over yet other people’s experiences can be interesting’

‘I recognise that people’s views still have the capacity to hurt me. I wonder could that have been me? Could I have got involved?’

‘I have a better insight into the past, present and future. More sensitivity about issues. I have also learnt about the human lives behind the story’

‘I’m still trying to process this. It will take weeks. I have a greater understanding of the meaning of perspectives in history ... and hope!’

‘I’m still trying to process this. I taught GCSE history around the Troubles. Had the knowledge but perhaps not a lot of understanding. Equipped me better to deal with the humanity of the situation. The fact that people can reconcile what happened to them is important’.

It was emotional listening to contributions. There are 3 sides to every conflict – the human side’

‘Breaking out of war orientation to peace orientation’

3. The Bigger Picture

The ‘Bigger Picture’ is an interactive website developed by the Global Centre to support teachers and pupils as they explore citizenship. Individual PGCE students were invited to use the website and its different facilities. The website facilitates an exploration of issues such as democracy, diversity, equality and discrimination through facts, games, puzzles and quizzes.

Students’ verbal evaluations following the session were extremely positive. The vast majority believed it was a colourful, interesting, and useful resource which they would consider using in the classroom.

4. Residential Evaluation Questionnaires² - summary of findings

Questionnaires were completed by 34 PGCE students. Of these, 17 were taking the citizenship subsidiary programme and 17 were not. In some questions, respondents were asked to rate activities on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing the most positive response and 1 the most negative response. A summary of PGCE students’ feedback is presented below. Where there are numbers in brackets, this indicates the number of respondents who gave that response. Responses from non-citizenship students (NC) are also indicated.

² Students also completed evaluation forms for the Epilogues’ component of the residential

Ratings of the three main components of the residential programme

Peer education sessions (average) = 4.5

21 students rated these as 'very useful', i.e. gave these sessions a '5'.

Of these, 15 were non-citizenship students and six were citizenship students.

Lowest score was '4' – given by five citizenship students

Bafa/bafa exercise (average) = 3.7

Eight non-citizenship students gave this a '5' as did three citizenship students.

The lowest score was 1, which was given by a non-citizenship student and three students gave the exercise a '2'.

Epilogues sessions (average) = 4.14

Nine citizenship students gave these sessions a '5' as did seven non-citizenship students. Eleven students described them as 'useful'. The lowest score was '2' (given by three non-citizenship students).

Did the residential meet your expectations?

Ten respondents indicated that the residential had exceeded their expectations:

'exceeded my expectations...challenging thought, provoking discussions ...particularly 'Epilogues'
'very much so...challenging, rewarding'

'surpassed them...didn't think I'd be that challenged'
'shocked by intensity of the course....did not expect it to be so beneficial...'

'Didn't think I'd be challenged...but it was very emotional and in-depth..'

'Better than I expected...really good activities...'Epilogues' excellent'

'Better than expected...very informative'

'More informative and interactive than I was expecting...it was great' (NC)

'I was really surprised by the residential...never thought it would challenge me as I had no connection with the Troubles, however I was wrong' (NC)

'Surpassed...didn't think it would be so personal and effective in helping me understand my past' (NC).

Twelve respondents indicated that it had met their expectations;

'Challenged me in variety of ways...enjoyed it but exhausting'

'Challenged my understanding of the 'Troubles'...developed discussion techniques...'

'Informative, challenging....helped consolidate citizenship group'

'Really enjoyed it...very interesting and would love to do whole thing again...did not expect Epilogues to be so emotional'

'I personally gained from the residential...'

'Highlighted issues I can talk about in classroom more confidentially'

'Everyone very welcoming...unaware of the vast range of topics covered in citizenship'

'I wanted a broad overview and I got it'

'Chance to explore subject...and meet others from the university and explore local citizens'

Found peer sessions extremely useful and exceeded my expectations' (NC)

'Surpassed my expectations but thought it would have been more focused on group work' (NC)

'Very hard-hitting and emotional. Made me realise that our past has not disappeared' (NC).

Six students said it had partially met their expectations and they expressed some reservations;

'Greater variety of activities would have...kept it fresh'

'Felt we were dropped in at deep end initially...'

'Very good but different to what I thought...thought more based towards teaching citizenship in the classroom...'

'Gained further knowledge and understanding but would have enjoyed more global with lesson plan ideas (NC)

'Epilogues' all very interesting and informative but seemed to dominate programme'(NC)

'Found it beneficial but don't think it is healthy to dwell on local issues for sooooo... long when there are a great number of pressing issues – poverty, carbon footprint' (NC).

Five respondents indicated that it had not matched their expectations;

'Not as interactive as I thought it would be...lack of range of activities...'

'Honestly thought that it was far too intense...expecting more interactive sessions...'(NC)

'Not what I expected...was disappointed with the lack of activities (NC)

'Expected more practical sessions to prepare me for teaching citizenship...however I appreciate the time with Jim' (NC)

'No...found sessions with citizenship most useful and beneficial...first two days were very repetitive... concentrated too much on Northern Ireland 'Troubles'' (NC).

Contribution to your personal knowledge and understanding

Respondents highlighted different areas where they believed they had developed knowledge or understanding;

Local and global issues

- 'Excellent contribution to local, not so much global' (2)
- 'More on global better'
- 'More informed about local and global issues'

Understanding of past/Troubles

- 'Deepened knowledge and understanding of past/'Troubles'/Northern Ireland' (10)
- 'Feel more confident to teach this topic of past to classes'

Own views/bias

- 'Helped me see different perspectives and take my own bias into account' (4)
- 'More awareness of own convictions' (2)
- 'Realised reducing individual's identity to a single label can cause problems'

General contribution to knowledge

- 'Contributed a lot to my knowledge and understanding/insight' (6)
- 'Left deeply engrossed in topics and with greater understanding and knowledge of subject'

Miscellaneous

- 'Group discussion'
- 'Greater understanding of democracy'

Selected areas or little contribution

- 'Group peer education contributed to my knowledge' (2)
- 'Very little'

Contribution to understanding core concepts of local and global citizenship

Again, PGCE students identified different ways in which their understanding of local and global citizenship had been enhanced;

Contribution to knowledge/understanding

- 'Reinforced my knowledge/understanding' (6)
- 'Good breadth of knowledge' (2)

Emphasis on particular areas

- 'Core concepts addressed but not enough attention to global' (4)
- 'Good emphasis on human rights, little else' (3)
- 'Better understanding of democracy' (2)
- 'Increased understanding of diversity' (2)
- 'Addressed social justice and human rights but not sufficiently'
- 'Addressed local and global citizenship'
- 'Developed knowledge of sectarianism but that is all'

Miscellaneous

- 'Alan's power-point was excellent, better late than never/more useful on first day' (3)
- 'Relation of core concepts to real life situations'
- 'Effective insight into couple of concepts'
- 'Techniques for teaching it'

Little contribution

- 'Not really' (2)
- 'Could have been clearer focus – got lost at times'
- 'Very repetitive on local problems'

Contribution to developing classroom practice in citizenship

PGCE students responses indicated whether they believed the residential had helped them to develop their classroom practice;

Specific sessions helpful

- 'Peer session useful' (9)
- 'Good – home economics girls were excellent'(1)
- 'Bafa bafa' – helped my understanding of diversity'

Personal/professional development

- 'Reinforced my confidence' (2)
- 'Developed my understanding' (2)
- 'Taught me to be more reflective when expressing my opinion'

Developed teaching techniques

- 'Got lots of useful ideas...feel well equipped with skills needed' (3)
- 'Improved my teaching' (2)

Insufficient attention/development

- 'Not really – activities and implementation not discussed' (5)
- 'Feel underdeveloped – would have liked more' (5)
- 'Developed understanding of sectarian issues – that's all' (2)
- 'Would have liked more explicit connections about how areas discussed could be implemented in classroom'
- 'Think that's down to personal style'

Contribution to understanding of handling controversial issues

Respondents considered if and how the residential had enhanced their understanding of how to handle controversial issues;

Approach to dealing with CI in classroom/methods

- 'Will be more atune when dealing with CI – will use sensitivity and awareness of others/more able to handle arguments (10)
- 'Yes – helped' (3)
- 'Dealt with issues head on' (2)
- 'Need to let children express themselves – issues need to be addressed and not skimmed over'
- 'Helped me see a variety of methods for tackling CI'

Interacting with peers on residential

'Last day and sharing experiences with peers'

'Yes...because we were a mixed group with varying views - gave more real life experience of how to handle CI'

Understanding of controversial issues

'Not so much – more understanding of issues than handling them' (3)

'Understanding of CI'

'Understanding of complexities of approach'

'Given me food for thought'

'Understanding of seeing CI from different perspectives'

'Good – shows everyone will have been affected, no matter how little'

Little contribution

'Better but still concerned' (2)

'Very little' (2)

Impact of residential on your values and attitudes

PGCE students reflected on how the residential had impacted on them;

General

'Made me reflect on views/values/attitudes didn't know I had' (8)

'Not really'

Northern Ireland conflict

'More upfront about 'Troubles' – question my beliefs and others' (4)

'Helped me develop wider knowledge/understanding of communities' (3)

'Exposed to different perspectives – particularly perpetrators of violence' (3)

'Opened my eyes to other potential victims – made me question my own judgements' (2)

'Need to investigate my own history before I learn about other communities'

'Greater empathy with British soldiers and UDA man'

'No – already had good knowledge and understanding of Troubles'

Miscellaneous

'Yes but will take a while for things to sink in'

'Interesting to be on residential with mixed group exploring different views'

'Realised importance of looking at personality and humanity in tackling issues linked to global citizenship'

Benefits of the informal aspects of the residential

Respondents indicated whether they had benefited and how they defined these benefits;

'Yes – good way to bond with other students, wouldn't normally have met' (12)

'Yes' (4)

'Discussions outside actual sessions' (3)

'Yes – pub quiz would have been good'

'Feel group is more coherent and able to discuss issues'

'Helped me discuss and speak out during sessions'

'Developed social skills'

'No'(2)

'No – same member of group talked to stir up discussion that was very narrow-minded'

N/A

Approaches/resources you would use in classroom

PGCE students listed the approaches or resources they were prepare to employ;

'Big picture' website (11)

Peer session resources/approaches (10)

'Epilogues' (4)

'Bafa bafa' (3)

All those on last day (2)

Global education

Human rights information

Consider complexity/sensitivity of subjects

Approaches/resources you would not use in classroom

Respondents indicated which approaches or resources they would not use;

Videos of epilogues (7)

Repetitive video and questioning (2)

Depending on class, possibly not sharing of biographies

Dark approach to NI issue – too gloomy

Intensive sessions

Pointless discussion and no outcomes

Too much on screen

All relevant (3)

N/A (2)

Most enjoyable aspect

PGCE students listed the most enjoyable aspects of the residential;

Meeting new people/peers hearing their experiences (7)

Peer teaching (7)

'Bafa bafa' – great active learning (5)

Group activities (3)

Epilogues – good learning experience (3)

Information on global citizenship (2)

Social aspects (2)

Discussing taboo subjects and sharing experiences and opinions (2)

Active learning

Being able to explore issues and coming to my own conclusions

Less frequent but longer breaks

Last day

Overall very positive

How residential might be improved

Respondents suggested areas for improvement;

- Break up long sessions of video clips (6)
- More active sessions (4)
- Extend residential (3)
- 'Epilogues' – bit too heavy' (2)
- Less intensive sessions (2)
- Too much crammed in short space of time (2)
- More lesson ideas (2)
- Variety of teaching styles and activities (2)
- More global citizenship (2)
- 'Look at forgiveness and revenge –need to look at whole process'
- More physical exercise
- Have it at earlier stage in PGCE
- Have more classroom activities
- Handout with guidelines on managing conflict
- 'Focus more on how we can improve things and move forward – otherwise teachers and students cutting their wrists'
- 'Relevant issues for teenagers'
- Look at sexual equality/inequality

Surprised by anything at the residential

PGCE students identified aspects which had surprised them;

Epilogues

- Personal loss and violence clips
- Difficulty watching videos
- Honesty of videos
- Timeline of events in NI
- 'Fact there are people still experiencing the 'Troubles''
- 'Fact that a presentation about the 'Troubles' can be presented for 2 days without showing any positive aspects – need to learn and move forward'

Emotional content

- Emotional rollercoaster (3)
- Emotional content of videos
- 'How emotive my reaction was to hearing about other PGCE students' background stories'

Personal impact

- 'How exhausted I am'
- 'How much I opened up'
- 'My own beliefs and values being challenged'

Miscellaneous

- Food excellent (2)
- Amount of information

- Nothing (5)

SUMMARY

Key findings from the evaluation are outlined below.

From the discussion sessions and evaluative summaries

Impact of the 'Troubles'

A majority of PGCE students suggested that the 'Troubles' had had a negligible impact on them, and that they had been 'protected' from or were 'untouched' by the violence. Some students expressed a desire to 'move on', to 'leave the 'Troubles' behind', claiming that it was more important to focus on the future and building a more positive society.

Engagement with issues

PGCE students demonstrated a real desire to discuss and debate the issues raised and particularly to reflect upon the meaning of complex themes such as justice, forgiveness, loss and human rights.

Impact of 'Epilogues'

Following the Epilogues programmes, PGCE students' comments indicated that the vast majority regarded the resource and the discussion sessions very positively. There was an acknowledgement by some that it had been a very 'emotional' and 'exhausting' experience. However, respondents believed they had developed a better insight and understanding of the issues and of the motivations and views of those involved. They enjoyed the opportunity to exchange of views, to reflect upon the issues and some indicated that they felt better prepared to engage with the issues in the classroom.

Classroom practice

While some students suggested that they would find it difficult to engage with these issues in the classroom as they had little experiences of them, most agreed it was important to be able to broach them with pupils. Respondents highlighted concerns relating to their own lack of knowledge, the appropriateness of teachers sharing personal views, their ability to manage discussions and debates, pupils' personal experiences and ability to understand the issues and the views of parents.

From the questionnaires

Overall experience

Reflecting on the entire residential experience, 65% of students (N=22) indicated that it had either met or exceeded their expectations. Students described the residential as 'challenging', 'rewarding', and 'very informative'. Respondents welcomed the opportunity to mix with peers outside their subject groupings and highlighted the benefits of engaging with issues and activities 'off campus'. Only five students suggested that it had not met their expectations, some highlighting a lack of variation in the activities and others, insufficient preparation given to teach citizenship.

Sessions

PGCE students (particularly non-citizenship students), clearly valued the peer education sessions, with 59% of students (N=20) describing them as 'very useful'. 26 students described the Epilogues sessions as 'useful' or 'very useful' and 21 rated the 'Bafa bafa' exercise as 'useful' or 'very useful'. Overall, the activities were rated very positively by students.

Contribution to knowledge and understanding

Every student indicated that the residential had contributed to their personal knowledge and understanding. This included knowledge and understanding of the 'Troubles', local and global issues, and personal views and bias. Non-citizenship students particularly valued the peer education sessions as they provided more insight into the content and structure of Local and Global Citizenship.

In terms of the contribution made to developing students' understanding of the core concepts of local and global citizenship, the responses were again extremely positive, as respondents highlighted particular areas such as democracy and diversity. Some students felt that more attention could have been given to global citizenship. Again non-citizenship students felt that more attention should have been given to outlining the contents of local and global citizenship and that this should have been presented at the beginning of the residential.

While students acknowledged that they would introduce ideas and activities from the residential in the classroom and that they felt more confident and better equipped, 38% of students (N=13), suggested that more attention should be given to the development of classroom practice in citizenship.

In terms of their understanding of handling controversial issues, the vast majority of PGCE students believed that the residential had contributed to this, or at least to understanding controversial issues. A small minority felt that it had made little contribution.

Impact on values and attitudes

Reflecting on the impact of the residential on their values and attitudes, 24% of students (N=8), admitted that it had made them reflect on values they were unaware they had. 44 percent (N=15) believed it had impacted on their views of Northern Ireland related issues. A small number believed it had no impact.

Value of informal aspects

The informal aspects of the residential were clearly valued by a majority of students (88%), with respondents reflecting on the opportunities it gave them to meet and 'bond' with other students. Several highlighted the benefit of informal discussions outside the 'formal' sessions.

Approaches and resources employable/not employable in the classroom

Listing the resources and ideas they would consider using in the classroom, 68% of students (N=23) mentioned the 'Big Picture' website and resources introduced during the peer education sessions. Only four students indicated that they would consider using 'Epilogues'. PGCE students were less likely to consider using Epilogues at this point, several suggesting that it was 'too gloomy' and the discussion sessions 'too intensive'.

Enjoyable aspects and areas for improvement

The most enjoyable aspects were the social dimension, where students had the opportunity to meet and engage in discussions with peers, and specific sessions, particularly peer education. Suggestions for improvement included some restructuring of the sessions with more breaks, more participative opportunities, more classroom preparation and activities and more attention on global citizenship. Several students felt the residential should be extended or held at an earlier stage in the course.

Conclusion

PGCE students' feedback was overwhelmingly positive, in terms of the venue, facilities, social activities and programme. Respondents highlighted many challenging but useful dimensions. Most welcomed the opportunity to engage with issues around the Northern Ireland conflict and just a few described the issues as depressing or irrelevant. A stronger focus on global citizenship would have been welcomed particularly by non-citizenship students. Some restructuring of the residential may be useful. For example providing an overview of Local and Global Citizenship at the beginning of the residential and bringing the peer education sessions forward. (Last year's residential had been structured in this way but availability of presenters had forced this year's changes). Some students also suggested that while the discussion groups were valuable, a more diverse range of activities would have been helpful. There was a desire for more guidance on classroom practice and activities, particularly from non-citizenship students.

Evidently, the citizenship residential is an extremely valuable aspect of the citizenship course, facilitating students' sustained and in-depth engagement with complex issues and contributing in a unique way to their personal and professional development. Funding from the Community Bridges programme was vital to enable the event to take place. It is unrealistic to expect that the cost for the residential can be met from within core funding of the School of Education. Therefore, it is crucial that another source of financial support be sought to enable the experience to continue.