NAILING OUR DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION FLAG TO THE MAST AND FLYING IT HIGH

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Abstract: This article aims to encourage discussion and debate about the terminology and definitions surrounding the term 'development education' (DE) in the Republic of Ireland. It sets out to provide a perspective on how the term DE is used and debated and the views expressed should be considered as part of a wider discussion amongst development educators in Ireland. The article begins by tracing the evolution of the term 'development education' in an Irish context primarily. It outlines how, from the 1950s and 1960s onward, DE was shaped by a political and often radical agenda with strong links to the civil society sector in Ireland. It shows how the community and voluntary sector have always had a strong impact on the story of DE in Ireland and continues to do so today. It also briefly charts the history of the Irish State approach to DE.

      The article then discusses three debates within the DE sector in Ireland. The first could broadly be called the 'development education and education for sustainable development (ESD)' debate. Tracing the evolution of both terms in Ireland, this article questions if there is some tension in academic discourse in Ireland regarding retaining the use of the terms DE and ESD. The article contends that we should be clear about the meaning of each term and that we should not allow the term DE to be replaced by the term ESD explaining why. The second debate concerns the term 'global education' (GE). The article contends that GE is not a more recent term for DE, but rather a generic term which includes DE. A third discussion focuses on 'citizenship education' (CE) or 'education for global citizenship' (EGC). The link between CE and DE has not been as strongly evident in Ireland as in the United Kingdom (UK) and elsewhere.

      What is important to state is that whichever terminology is used, the theory and practice which informs the author's work are based on traditions

which have strong action for social justice, development and human-rights underpinnings.

Key words: Definitions; Terminology; Development Education; Global Education; Citizenship Education; Education for Sustainable Development; Defining Development Education.

Evolution of the term development education in Ireland

DE was shaped by a political and often radical agenda with strong links to the civil society sector in Ireland. It is important to emphasise that the community and voluntary sector have always had a strong impact on the story of DE in Ireland and continue to do so today. O'Sullivan (2007) traced the growth of DE in Ireland to the social and political movements which were emerging in reaction to international developments, such as the war in Vietnam, the student movement of the late 1960s, the Nigerian civil war and the anti-apartheid movement. O'Sullivan singled out the Nigerian civil war and the public response to the plight of Biafrans which:

> "…not only stimulated public interest but forced successive Irish Governments to re-think their approach to the developing world. Aid agencies such as Africa Concern, the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace (ICJP) and later Trócaire encouraged public awareness and lobbied for change at government level" (ibid: 92).

The comprehensive Irish Aid report 'Mapping the Past, Charting the Future' (Fiedler et al., 2011) acknowledges that earlier DE was very much led by missionaries, returned development workers, activists, educators and campaigners. The term DE did not come into use until the late 1960s, when aid agencies, churches and the United Nations (UN) identified a need for education programmes that went beyond promotional and development advocacy work (ibid: 16). NGOs came to regard DE as something more than filling an 'information deficit' gap in the 'West' to 'seeing education as the very fuel for the engine of development both in the "West" and in the 'Third World'" (Regan and Sinclair, 2006: 109). DE emerged through direct

contact with social movements and solidarity groups around the world, alongside engagement with the work of critical educators such as Paulo Freire.

Fiedler et al. (2011) recognised that some of the DE practitioners interviewed as part of their mapping process, knew of missionaries who were influenced by liberation theology and Paulo Freire's radical pedagogical concepts, while others promoted the idea of the 'starving black babies' and what Paulo Freire (2005) called an 'assistencialist' mind-set towards poverty. Freire associates 'assistencialism' with colonialism, treating the person as a passive recipient of aid rather than an active transformer of his or her environment (ibid: 12). There have always been some tensions, within the DE voluntary sector in particular, between those whose awareness-raising approaches are framed by an idea of development as charity and those who espouse a justice or human rights approach. Difficulties arise too for NGOs, even today, who on the one hand need to fundraise and, in so doing, sometimes takes a charity approach in public, even when development educators within their own organisation work towards deeper understandings and favour educative approaches to engaging people with global issues.

From the Irish State point of view, the Fiedler et al. (2011) report charts the history of DE in Ireland under four phases: Phase I: 1950s to 1973: Early Influences; Phase II: 1973–1986: Opening up the Development Education Agenda; Phase III: 1987–2000: Coordination and Institutionalisation of Development Education; and Phase IV: 2001–2010: Strategies and Crises. Irish Aid is currently working from its third Strategic Plan which is aimed at all age groups and a wide range of sectors including education, youth and community organisations, trade unions, local authorities, arts organisations, corporate organisations, and non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs).

The division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which is responsible for overseas development, is Irish Aid. It was established in 1974, although its name changed to Ireland Aid in 1999, then to

Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI) in 2003, and back to Irish Aid in 2006. Since 2002, the work of the Development Education Unit (DEU) within Irish Aid has become more strategic and has worked from three strategic plans. It is currently working from the third plan 'Strengthening Ireland's contribution to a sustainable and just world through development education 2017 – 2023'. In this current plan Irish Aid define DE as follows:

> "Development education is a lifelong educational process which aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, development education helps people to critically explore how global justice issues interlink with their everyday lives. Informed and engaged citizens are best placed to address complex social, economic and environmental issues linked to development. Development education empowers people to analyse, reflect on and challenge at a local and global level, the root causes and consequences of global hunger, poverty, injustice, inequality and climate change; presenting multiple perspectives on global justice issues" (Irish Aid, 2017: 6).

It is interesting to note the different emphasis in this definition, from earlier definitions such as in the first strategic plan. The definition above places emphasis on 'environmental' and 'climate justice' issues, however the term 'political' has been removed from what was the 2003 definition:

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

and international levels" (Development Cooperation Ireland, 2003: 11).

One might ask if this matters or indeed: why does it matter? This article contends that it does matter. Of course, 'environmental' structural change is something that belongs in development education but, without the 'political', it is hard to see where accountability lies, either for 'environmental' change or any other social, economic or cultural issues linked to development. The current definition states that 'informed and engaged citizens are best placed to address complex social, economic and environmental issues linked to development' (Irish Aid, 2017: 6), whereas the earlier definition is also about supporting people to take action to transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect their lives. The latter is more cognisant of the need for structural reform and action for change. The former is somewhat weaker; it is about 'informed and engaged citizens' but not necessarily about the need for political structural reform.

DE and education for sustainable development debate

This emphasis on 'environmental' and 'climate justice' and the removal of the word 'political', is an interesting reflection of a wider debate regarding the use of the terms DE and ESD. Hogan and Tormey (2008) charted the linkages between environmental education (EE) and DE. DE traditionally focused on poverty and related issues but, by the 1980s, writers and practitioners were recognising the importance of the environmental link to human security. Hogan and Tormey contended that 'the integration' of DE and EE happened through the development of the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), particularly after the Brundtland Commission and subsequent report in 1987. The ESD concept drew significantly from the prior work of both EE and DE. Brundtland identified three components to sustainable development: economic growth, environmental protection and social equity. This was followed by the 1992 Rio Summit and the Agenda 21 report, where the interlinked nature of economic, social and environmental issues became a blueprint for sustainable development into the twenty-first century (Hogan and Tormey, 2008: 10).

These linkages between DE and ESD were evident more recently at the UN Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, when world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. In Ireland, a national Sustainable Development Strategy 'Our Sustainable Future – the Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland' (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012) was published on 6 June 2012 and was followed by a Sustainable Education Strategy in July 2014 which aimed to provide 'a framework to support the contribution that the education sector is making and will continue to make towards a more sustainable future at a number of levels: individual, community, local, national and international' (DES, 2014: 3).

There is some tension in academic discourse in Ireland regarding retention of the term DE and not allowing it to be replaced by the term ESD. Colm Regan (2015), while admitting that he found this debate 'tiring and unproductive' - and a distraction from the work itself - contended that the term DE is important and accurate. Abandoning it, he said, would weaken and dilute the DE agenda, particularly from an NGO perspective. He believed strongly that DE has a 'unique and specific pedigree' (2015:1) which is rooted primarily in the lived experiences of aid and development workers and organisations working in Africa, Latin America and Asia. He acknowledged, too, that 'there is another rich strand emanating from those working with marginalised communities in the "developed world"' (ibid). DE, he said, highlights the condition of the world's excluded, oppressed, poor and hungry and attempts to mobilise international action. DE is specifically political; something we are in danger of losing as DE becomes institutionalised:

"The interests of the poorest must be at the forefront of debates about sustainability, climate change, the SDGs, ethical trade and consumption. The place of DE is alongside the poor and the excluded in the world. It is not in academia and libraries, which are

increasingly inaccessible to all but a few. DE is about educational activism; it is about stimulating public debate … we would do well to reconsider some of our roots and histories and not be swept along, by the latest theory or fashion – our roots are strong, specific and political – we lose them at our peril" (ibid).

Hogan and Tormey (2008) took a pragmatic view. ESD and DE, they said, are similar in terms of content, methodology, ideology and commitment to action for positive change and it is essential that practitioners work together to 'share educational expertise, to combine forces and to strategically plan for a future that places DE and ESD at the centre of formal, non-formal and informal education' (Hogan and Tormey, 2008: 6).

I disagree with Regan that the debate is unproductive and a distraction from the work. The very essence of DE from a Freirean perspective is critical reflection (Freire and Macedo, 2001). Academics and practitioners must be critically aware of what they are seeking to achieve and rather than 'distract', a more informed, well researched and robust analysis is not just essential, but in my view is lacking in the general discourse in Ireland. I agree with Regan that it is vital that we remember the 'roots of our work'. Of course, as Hogan and Tormey (2008: 1) suggested, we must work with others but we must also hold onto our core aspirations, articulate them, strive to achieve them and understand more clearly who our allies are from all traditions and disciplines. However, ultimately I agree with Regan, the term DE in Ireland has a very specific political, action-orientated and social justice pedigree, and I see 'sustainable development' as a vital DE theme, alongside other themes such as human rights, gender equality, migration or trade.

I am aware that sustainable development educationalists might see ESD as the broader term, within which they might situate some of the DE themes. We should remember that this is not a competition about the best terminology to use. It is not that one academic/activist tradition is better or worse than another, although people may be drawn more to one than another.

It is about clarity of definition. Of course we should not ignore the influence of EE and ESD and the synergy that can exist with activist/academic strands within those fields which are also rooted in a strong justice and human rights tradition. It does mean that we are not swayed as an academic tradition and influenced by agendas that may take us away from the more radical 'roots of our work' or indeed away from how we have defined ourselves as an academic and activist community for decades.

Development Education and Global Education

A second debate about terminology relates to the term global education (GE). In the UK context, Scheunpflug and Asbrand, as cited in Priestley et al. (2010), traced how 'Third World pedagogy', 'development education' and, what is more recently termed 'global education', has a clear historical lineage, with one approach leading on to the next (Priestley et al., 2010: 3–4). In an Irish context, this is not precisely the case. GE is not a more recent term for DE; rather, GE includes DE. This is stated, for example, in the 2015 Peer Review by Global Education Network Europe (GENE) which uses the definition of the Maastricht Declaration on Global Education in Europe:

> "Global Education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all. GE is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education; being the global dimensions of Education for Citizenship" (GENE, 2015: 13).

The GENE report acknowledges that Irish Aid and most Irish practitioners use the term DE and both terms are used throughout GENE's Irish report as appropriate.

Development Education, Citizenship Education and Education for Global Citizenship

A third discussion relating to terminology focuses on Citizenship Education (CE) or Education for Global Citizenship (EGC). Priestley et al (2010) traced a strong link between CE and GE. They also saw EGC as allowing 'us to look beyond old barriers that have separated citizenship education and global education' (ibid: 9). The link between CE and DE has not been as strongly evident in Ireland as in the UK and elsewhere. In the first instance, CE has not been strongly valued in Ireland in the school system. Civics was first introduced into post-primary schools in 1966 (DES, 2005: 8). A new Junior Certificate (12-15 years) subject 'Civic, Social and Political Education' (CSPE) became mandatory for all first year students only in 1997 (DES, 2005: 8). Jeffers and O'Connor described the introduction of CSPE as a compulsory feature of the Junior Certificate as 'a significant breakthrough' (2008: 1).

However, they also pointed to the marginalisation of 'citizenship education' within the formal education system, which they describe as 'disconnected' from a broader community-based citizenship education. They highlight some of the challenges facing CE within the Irish education system. These include restrictions in the syllabus, the limited amount of time given to the subject, teacher turnover, lack of cross-curricular approaches and the isolation of schools within local communities (ibid: 11-12). Murphy's study of five schools' implementation of CSPE supports this view. CSPE remains a subject which is not afforded a high status in the school system (2003: 215).

At Leaving Certificate level (the final state exam at secondary level for students normally aged 17-18), CE features within a new subject called 'Politics and Society' which was examined for the first time only at the 2018 Leaving Certificate examinations (State Examination Commission - Examination Information, July 2017). A Citizenship Project Report will be assessed as part of this programme. There are opportunities within this new subject for a DE approach. The consultation process which took place as part of the development of this Politics and Society course illuminates the

relationship between DE and CE in Ireland. The consultation by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) included an invitation to the public to make written submissions.

The list of the 38 written submissions in the final report shows the strong influence of DE advocates, NGOs and academics (NCCA, 2010: 39). Indeed, there is questioning by other contributors of the lack of a distinctively Irish flavour, although such suggestions did not typically imply that there should be less of a focus on global issues (NCCA, 2010: 17–18). Overall, the Politics and Society course offers opportunities for DE and hopefully could also 'play a role in strengthening the institutional base for CSPE in schools' (NCCA, 2010: 10). However, in relation to the evolution of terms in Ireland, the terminology was not fostered under CE. Rather, those agencies, academics and development NGOs already rooted in the DE tradition, reinforced the incorporation of global issues in the syllabus. This also points to the relative strength of the development education sector in Ireland in influencing progress in this space and their interest and efforts to do so.

This does not mean that the concept of 'Active Citizenship' is absent in Irish discourse. For instance, the 2003 Report of the Democracy Commission discusses what citizenship should mean in twenty-first century Ireland. It states that Democratic Citizenship Education (DCE) should have a non-partisan political dimension, should include the provision of information and facilitate their participation in the political discussions and decisions that affect their everyday lives. The Commission used Will Kymlicka's definition of citizenship education:

> "Citizenship education is not just a matter of learning the basic facts about the institutions and procedures of political life; it also involves acquiring a range of dispositions, virtues and loyalties that are immediately bound up with the practice of democratic citizenship" (Kymlicka, 1999, quoted in Harris, 1996: 79).

Again, in 2007, a 'Taskforce on Active Citizenship' was set up by the Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) to:

> "review the evidence regarding trends in citizen participation across the main areas of civic, community, cultural, occupational and recreational life in Ireland and to examine those trends in the context of international experience and analysis" (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007: 29).

It states that any political arrangement requires active, educated and responsible citizens who behave according to various civic virtues (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007: 3).

The use of the term Global Citizenship Education (GCE) was Irish Aid's preferred overarching term for the first time in their 2017-2023 Development Education Strategy. There is a clear direction towards working closely with other government departments in order to achieve DE policy goals. The term GCE is described as:

> "…an umbrella term that encompasses the work of various government departments in developing active global citizenship among the Irish public. It provides an overarching coherent framework which includes both Development Education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and forms a common ground for future interdepartmental collaboration. Global Citizenship Education plays a critical role in equipping learners with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to deal with the dynamic and interdependent world of the twenty-first century. It builds a sense of belonging to a common humanity, fosters respect for all and helps learners to take informed decisions and assume active roles locally, nationally and globally" (Irish Aid, 2017: 16).

Here DE is placed as one strand of education in the 'global space', alongside, but not the same as education for sustainable development. The use of the

term GCE as an 'umbrella' term, allows for both generic and specific references to different strands within 'global space' education.

Conclusion

In Ireland, I would argue that we should, as an academic and activist community, continue to use the term DE. However, terminology varies across the world and/or by different academics or activists. Some use the term GE when referring to what in Ireland we might refer to as DE. Others might use GE as a kind of intercultural, global business or international education, which builds 'skills for living in a globalise world', without referring at all to issues such as global inequalities, social injustice, structural power imbalances and themes associated with DE. That is not to suggest that intercultural business skills are not important, they are, but they are not DE. The point is that it is important to be clear about how we define our discipline.

What can be confusing is that some will use the term global education, or other terminology, to define exactly what we mean by the term DE. What matters is the meaning given to a term in a particular place, but the meaning matters. What is important to state is that, whichever terminology is used, the theory and practice which informs work in this space is based on traditions which have strong social justice underpinnings. Activist, academic and state stakeholders in DE have fought hard to develop an action-orientated, development-focused, human rights-based agenda which works on global themes and in solidarity with the poor and marginalised of societies around the world, including Ireland.

Ultimately, I agree with Douglas Bourn (2014a) that DE is a pedagogy for global social justice, although I would include the word 'action'. Development Education is pedagogy of action for global social justice. Let us not allow this hard-won tradition to be diluted or swayed from its radical roots. Let us take control of our own terminology and definitions and let us not be led by current funding or political agendas, international and regional bodies, or any other players away from our goal.

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