

# Reviews

## *Global Dimensions: A Guide to Good Practice in Development Education and Intercultural Education for Teacher Educators*

Development and Intercultural Education (DICE) project

Reviewed by Nora McQuaid

This resource was produced by the Development and Intercultural Education (DICE) project team in 2008 after four years of collaboration with five colleges of education in the Republic of Ireland. The project team worked with the colleges to enable student teachers to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in development and intercultural education and introduce this practice into their primary school teaching. *Global Dimensions* is mostly a result of the work of the project, and summarises the theories and practice applied throughout.

Whilst the resource is primarily aimed at initial teacher education (ITE) providers in primary education, it is also relevant and useful to all practitioners of development, intercultural or global education. Indeed, many of the resource's activities are suitable for use with post-primary school students in addition to primary school teachers.

The resource is concisely laid out, making it easily accessible and usable. It is divided into four sections, each beginning with an overview and content outline. Part One gives a theoretical overview; Part Two focuses on a college-based approach; Part Three explores activities, methodologies and evaluation; and Part Four offers a useful reference section for more information and resources. Each section features practical information and points of interest outlined in three key boxes:

For an experienced global education practitioner, involved in ITE provision or otherwise, perhaps the most useful section is Part One. This part contains a crucial reflection on the terminology used within the global dimension sphere, including development education (DE), global dimension, global education, intercultural education (ICE), multicultural education and other 'adjectival educations'. The authors argue that development education employs 'probably the widest perspective of all these adjectival educations, allowing a variety of other adjectives to be included'. This is probably more accurate within the context of the Republic of Ireland, where development education is a known concept used in many areas of the schools' curriculum, most notably in civic, social and political education

(CSPE), geography and religious education curricula.

The authors explain the links between the understanding of development education and intercultural education, and their common values base. The core concepts for development education (which are the same eight concepts widely accepted as those for the Global Dimension) are compared with the five core themes or concepts within intercultural education used in guidelines published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in Ireland. The reader is encouraged to use the frameworks as a tool and to think critically about the use and application of the concepts themselves. A simple visual mapping diagram may have been useful here to further demonstrate the interrelatedness between development education and intercultural education .

Whilst the overall purpose of the resource is to develop skills and knowledge ‘necessary for understanding and responding to inequalities, injustice and discrimination both locally and globally’, the theoretical overview would benefit from the inclusion of specific reasons *why* global dimension learning is so important. A useful model here could be Bennett’s (1996) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity where he proposes six stages of intercultural sensitivity. The first three stages are ethnocentric (where one’s own culture is experienced as central to reality) and the last three are ethnorelative (where one’s own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures). This model can be used in conjunction with baseline and post-course audits as a means of assessment, to determine what the reader should aim to achieve and to evaluate whether those aims have been met. Bennett’s developmental model suggests that intercultural learning should strive towards arriving at the ethnorelative stages of intercultural sensitivity.

Part Two of the DICE resource is titled ‘Getting Others Involved’, and is an excellent introduction to the process of embedding the global dimension into teacher education colleges. Many of the ideas explored can also be easily translated into school scenarios and may prove beneficial for practising teachers and managers who are searching for ideas and inspiration on embedding the global dimension across the whole school. In particular the section on ‘Staff Development’ summarises the core needs for whole staff training, including a systematic and sustainable approach. Four areas are highlighted as the core focus for staff training: development of knowledge and skills; exploration of values and perceptions; working towards whole-college development; and engaging with networks and supporting inter-college collaboration. Most pertinent to staff development is providing the space and time needed for staff to ‘identify and critically engage with the origins of their own perceptions, assumptions and cultural values’. I strongly

agree with the authors' contention that 'such reflection is essential for an educator to teach in a global context' (Fiedler, Gill, O'Neill, & Pérez Piñán, 2008:46) whether it be in ITE colleges, primary or post-primary schools.

Part Three provides a sample short course with five two-hour sessions, including notes, worksheets and some activities that may be familiar to development and citizenship educators. They may also be familiar with concepts in the section on Strategies and Methodologies, which discusses the use of six classic active learning methodologies. Part Three is an excellent introductory resource for education practitioners new to development/global education not only within ITE and other areas of formal education but also within informal education.

The last section of Part Three deals with Evaluation and Assessment, which is traditionally a complex issue within global education, perhaps due to the focus on values and attitudes and the difficulty in measuring attitudinal and behavioural change. The authors suggest the use of the Kilpatrick model of evaluation which may prove useful. They then provide three sample assignments which provide ideas on how to assess students' work. The focus of the assessment criteria includes assessing general teaching skills and providing opportunities for assessment of knowledge, understanding and critical reflection of our own values and attitudes. As suggested, assessments carried out before, during and after the course may help track any attitudinal or behavioural changes. It may be useful to include here baseline mapping exercises; examples of exercises that might enhance this resource are described in the Reading International Solidarity Centre's (RISC)'s *How do we know it's working? A Toolkit for Measuring Attitudinal Change in Global Citizenship*.

It is worth emphasising that in using this resource, it is most important that ITE providers, teachers and non-formal educators be given the opportunity to critically engage with their own perspectives and assumptions. Equally important to personal critical engagement is the need to critically engage with the structures under which our education systems function. This is essential if we are to attain an ethnorelative stage of intercultural learning which acknowledges and becomes critically aware of the Eurocentric, nation-centric and indeed imperialist gaze that remains within many education systems, curricula, texts and resources. Bryan argues that education policy documents in the Republic of Ireland regarding diversity may only reinforce 'racial' inequality and discrimination.

"...by [policy documents] presenting homogeneity as the norm and diversity as new, and therefore as an aberration, and by abnormalising minorities by depicting them as 'strangers', 'fear' and 'intolerance' are

presented as natural or at least legitimate tendencies, not necessarily as racist responses” (Bryan, 2008:53).

A notable characteristic of many otherwise fine resources and texts have been references such as ‘rapidly changing’ and ‘newcomers to our shores’ that underpin language structures which create the notion that a diverse society is one with which ‘we’ have to contend or endure, or is ‘happening to “us”’. Such language accentuates the notion of the ‘other’ and the ‘foreign’. Enhanced awareness of such language used in teaching texts, education policy and curriculum documents, and its links with power relations, will enable educators to become more critically literate within their respective contexts.

*Global Dimensions* is a resource that has been well designed, structured and laid out. It summarises effectively the core practicalities needed to embed the global dimension into ITE institutions. The resource’s guidance on theory, whole college approach and examples of practice will undoubtedly prove very useful to ITE providers, teachers and other practitioners involved in global education, particularly those new to the sector.

## References

Bennett, J (1993) ‘Towards ethnorelativism: a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity’ in Michael, R (ed.) *Education for the Intercultural Experience*, Intercultural Press, Yarmouth.

Bryan, A (2008) ‘The Co-articulation of National Identity and Interculturalism in the Irish Curriculum: Educating for Democratic Citizenship?’ in *London Review of Education*, Vol. 6, 1, pp. 47-58.

Fiedler, M, Gill, B, O’Neill, C & Pérez Piñán, A (2008) *Global Dimensions: A Guide to Good Practice in Development Education and Intercultural Education for Teacher Education*, DICE, Dublin.

Reading International Solidarity Centre (2008) *How do we know it's working? A toolkit for measuring attitudinal change in global citizenship from early years to Key Stage 5*, RISC, Reading.

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