Global Education:

TEACHERS' VIEWS

DICE
Development
& InterCultural
Education

DICE works to integrate development and intercultural education within initial primary teacher education, and operates across five colleges in the Republic of Ireland.

DICE Stakeholders
Colleges of Education
Coláiste Mhuire, Marino
Froebel College of Education, Blackrock
Mary Immaculate College of Education, Limerick
St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
The Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines

Non-governmental sector
Compass – (network involved in the promotion of development education within the primary sector)
Comhlámh – Development Workers in Global Solidarity

State sector
Development Education Unit of Irish Aid at the Department of Foreign Affairs

Foreword

This research report 'Global Education: Teachers' Views' is a small-scale study which was commissioned by DICE and carried out by an independent researcher, Anne Rousseau, in a cluster of Dublin schools in January and February 2006. It took place in a range of schools, with different management structures and a different ethnic mix and was supported by funding from the CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit (European Year of Citizenship through Education 2005).

The research brief involved carrying out a series of focus group meetings with teachers over a number of weeks, in order to explore the 'journeys' of those schools and teachers in the area of global education. The aim was to explore the work that those schools and teachers were already doing in what they understood as 'global education' and to look at where this interest originated. It aimed to examine the philosophy underpinning practice, and to think with teachers about any challenges they had met along the way, as well as opportunities they could see for overcoming these challenges.

Many of the issues raised in the report have implications for the future work of the DICE Project, as well as for colleges of education and the Department of Education and Science. With this in mind, DICE has added a final section to the report which looks at some of the issues raised and explores their implications for future planning. These can be seen in the section: 'Issues raised by the Research Report and their Implications'.

DICE Research Committee
June 2006

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Written by the DICE Project, DICE Management Committee and the DICE Research Committee

INTRODUCTION

The DICE Project commenced in 2003 with the objective:

'to ensure that development and intercultural education forms an integral and sustainable part of initial teacher education.'

In 2005, the Project's activities included the publication of a literature review entitled '*Global and Justice Perspectives in Education*', which explored the existing body of international and Irish literature pertaining to development and intercultural education. That review reported 'a lack of research on how previously qualified teachers should be supported and trained' (p52) and identified a need for further research in this area. Based on that researcher's recommendations and this researcher's consultation with DICE the present project was commissioned. While the brief targets previously qualified teachers, these testimonies frequently referred to the needs of student teachers. As the participants reflected upon their experience in relation to Global Education[1], they identified lacunae in teacher education and offered suggestions for change.

The research will contribute to three areas.

1. The findings will inform practice by contributing to the design of courses and activities that DICE organises for students and lecturers in the five colleges of education in the Republic of Ireland.

2. It will inform DICE input to policy formulation within initial teacher education through updating knowledge of the issues and concerns facing schools in relation to global and citizenship matters.

3. It will facilitate colleges of education in developing their policies and procedures in relation to Global and Citizenship Education.

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[1] Instead of providing participants with a definition of 'global education' at the outset, it was deemed more useful for the purposes of this report that participants speak from their own understanding of the term. See Page 5.

Consequently, the research will support the objective of the DICE project as stated above and contribute to citizenship education in both schools and colleges.

The Research aims to identify

- The issues that teachers have encountered in relation to Global Education.
- How teachers have overcome any challenges they may have encountered in developing policy and/or implementing good practice
- Structures or support systems that would enable and sustain good practice in this area.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Selection

Members of the DICE research committee met with this researcher to select schools for the project. The aim was to establish contact with a broad range of schools in order to carry out a small-scale exploratory study. The committee members compiled a list of nine schools, taking account of different management structures and different ethnic mix. The DICE Project Coordinator sent a letter to each of these schools describing the study and inviting them to participate. The following week, the researcher contacted each of the schools by phone and completed arrangements. Six out of the nine schools were able to make accommodations to their timetable to facilitate meetings with the researcher and their co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Data Collection

A series of six focus groups were conducted during the last week of January and the first week of February, 2006. They were recorded and transcribed. The data was then processed and imported into a widely recognised software package for qualitative data analysis known as NVivo.

Study Participants

It is the policy of this research project to guarantee anonymity of both the teachers and the schools involved. Consequently, neither names nor school profiles are presented. There were 27 participants whose teaching experience ranged between one and twenty years with the majority in 0-5 years experience bracket. The groups included class teachers and language support teachers with the school principal participating in three**.** The focus groups lasted approximately one hour during which time the participants responded to questions constructed by the researcher in relation to the Focus of Inquiry. The participants were forthcoming and helpful and were keen to articulate their points of view. The discussions were recorded, transcribed, and subsequently entered as data for analysis.

Analysis

There were three steps in the analytic process.

1. The first step involved identifying

- The issues that teachers have encountered in relation to Global Education.
- How teachers have overcome any challenges they may have encountered in developing policy and/or implementing good practice.
- The structures and supports that would enable and/or sustain good practice in this area.

This was done by coding 2792 text segments from the focus groups into 240 categories.

It is important to point out here that instead of providing the participants with a definition of Global Education at the outset, it was deemed more useful for the purposes of this report that participants speak from their own understanding of the term. This revealed that many participants did not understand either the concept of Global Education or what it entailed, enquiring 'What exactly is Global Education?' In this case, they were informed that Global Education included Development Education; Intercultural Education and Citizenship Education.

2. The second step involved grouping the issues identified in step one into broad areas by distilling and coding from these 240 categories. 13 issues encountered by teachers emerged from the data:

- Help and Support
- Language
- Resources
- Training
- Communications

- Curriculum

- Same/Different

- Exclusion

- Racism

- Assimilation/Integration

- Religion

- Education of Teachers

- Social, Personal and Health Education. (S.P.H.E.)

3. The third step involved grouping these 13 issues under three broad headings as follows:

1. Training and Resources
2. Anxieties around Global Education
3. Religion and Ethos.

The data was analysed both in terms of:

1. The frequency with which an issue arose in the focus groups (Appendix 4).
2. The depth and breadth of the discussion (Appendix 5).

While the same two categories emerged as first and second priorities in each analytic stage, the order in which they appeared changed according to the particular analytic perspective. Thus, when examined according to frequency (how many times the teachers raised the issue, see Appendix 4) the order emerged as follows:

1. Anxieties around Global Education
2. Training and Resources
3. Religion and Ethos

When examined according to depth and breadth of discussion (number of texts coded, see Appendix 5) the order of priority emerged as follows:

1. Training and Resources
2. Anxieties around Global Education
3. Religion and Ethos

This report is structured according to the depth and breadth with which the topics were discussed by the teachers.

Findings

The findings will be presented in three sections according to the three questions in the Focus of Inquiry.

Section One (Appendix 1) identifies the issues teachers have encountered in relation to Global Education and presents them under the following headings and sub-headings:

1. Training and Resources
- Language
- Help and Support
- Resources
- Training

2. Anxieties around Global Education.
- Same/Different
- Integration/Assimilation
- Exclusion
- Racism

3. Religion and Ethos.
- Religion
- Teacher Education
- Curriculum

Section Two (Appendix 2) explores how teachers overcame any challenges they may have encountered in developing policy and/or implementing good practice and is presented under the following headings.

1. Bottom-Up Improvisation
2. Using Children to Bridge Cultural and Resource Gap
3. S.P.H.E.

Section Three (Appendix 3) presents supports and structures, identified by teachers, that they believe would enable and sustain good practice in this area. They are presented under the following headings and sub-headings:

1. Training and Resources
- Language Support
- Training

2. Anxieties around Global Education
- Stronger Links with Parents and Communities.
- Ethnicity of Teachers

3. Religion and Ethos.
- Consistent Policies for all State Schools

SECTION ONE

Issues Teachers have encountered in relation to Global Education[2].

1. TRAINING AND RESOURCES

One of the strongest and perhaps most significant patterns to emerge from the data is teachers' consistent reporting of feeling unprepared for teaching in a multicultural environment. The result is that many teachers are struggling to cope with social and cultural change in schools. Teachers have typically described a mismatch between teacher education and actual teaching experience in multicultural environments. Their testimonies vary little:

I came out of teacher training college 2 years ago and this was a huge rude awakening for me. The government really need to get on the bandwagon in training teachers for what's actually happening in schools

Lack of training in relation to different cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds; inadequate resources, particularly with respect to language; and the lack of appropriate support systems are some of the factors that contribute to the view that, as one teacher phrased it:

You just feel at times, you just can't cope and you feel that you're failing some of the children. ... All you want is the best you can possibly give the kids and you feel like you're hitting your head off a brick wall on occasions because it's just not there.

In addition, a perceived lack of policy and procedures in relation to religious diversity engenders uncertainty and anxiety among many young and indeed some older teachers. Thus, the reality of everyday school and classroom life in a culturally and religiously diverse society is, for most teachers in this study, challenging, often demoralising and

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[2] See Appendices 1,4 &5

frequently a source of concern. In fact, one teacher's honest and revealing narrative exposed a situation that is, at times, fraught with anxiety and even fear. While it would breach guarantees of anonymity to repeat specific incidents, it is deemed imperative by this researcher that the disturbing consequence of a particularly upsetting experience for that teacher be cited:

> *I felt I got so little support ... I went into class everyday shaking with nerves, not knowing what was going to happen ....I mean the Department had been negligent. I made it very clear that I wasn't supported and they said that I was and what could they do?*

Thus, the testimonies indicate a perceived lack of policies, procedures, training and support in managing diversity in schools generally and classrooms particularly. The participants repeatedly stressed the need for additional training for currently practising teachers and changes to initial teacher education. This also implies further professional development for staff in colleges of education.

It is important to emphasise that while most teachers experienced frustration and disillusionment, a small minority felt that much depended on the college of education attended:

> *I think it differs between the colleges as well and it depends on the lecturers. I had X in (names college) and she would have been very much into Development Education and I think in my 3 years in the college, we would have had modules each year on Development Education and speakers would have come out from different agencies and had workshops with us and shown us some of the resources and how they could be used.*

This section will explore issues identified by teachers, which has implications for training and resources under the rubrics of language; help/support; resources; and training.

Language

Language barriers were frequently cited as a source of frustration for teachers in multicultural schools (Appendix 4). The participants identified a range of areas in which problems occurred and which they believed to be the direct result of limited knowledge of the English language on the part of both parents and pupils. Inadequate support systems, resources and training further exacerbate these frustrations thereby creating a culture of uncertainty and the use of, often time consuming, trial and error techniques for teaching in a linguistically mixed classroom. Their emphatic language provides insights into the extent of the difficulties they experience in this respect:

> *Language is a very very challenging issue for us in the school. I mean, you just have to create so many resources for their visual aid. A lot of them when they come into junior infants have never been to pre-school. It's very very tough and then you have a lot of children who come in each year, in every year throughout the school, so even though they might come in in 3rd class they might come in with very very little English.*

The disquiet of one teacher at being unable to understand the distress of a pupil in junior infants is best illustrated in the teacher's own words:

> *I've a child in my class this year whose mother went to ----- for a month before Christmas. He cried for the whole month. He was left with his aunt and she couldn't explain to me what was going on. He couldn't explain. We got another boy down from another class who couldn't explain.*

The participants also revealed that exclusion and estrangement are some of the consequences experienced by pupils who do not speak English. Such sentiments, they argue, are intensified when the child has never been to playschool nor been in a classroom situation prior to starting in the school. They also cited the lack of language

skills as an obstacle that hinders not only the learning and achievement but also the integration of the English and non-English speaking pupils.

> *Certainly when there's a language difficulty that creates a problem straight away both for the teacher and the classmates – just to try and overcome that. If the parents have a language barrier as well, if English isn't the first language in the home or if parents are struggling with English ....It's tricky trying to integrate them if they don't have the English language.*

Teachers also pointed out that effective multi-directional communication between parents, teachers and children is crucial to the optimal development and integration of children in school. Such communication becomes problematic both qualitatively and quantitatively when the key actors do not speak the same language because as the participants point out:

> *The quality of what you're saying, the communication is obviously hindered in some way.*

> *It means that conversation is very stilted with parents and I haven't really met the parents that much because of that problem.*

While teachers' resourcefulness and imagination go some way to "getting around the problem" as one teacher phrased it, the study participants nevertheless identify this as an area of concern. Informing parents if a child is struggling with a topic, communicating details of school tours, or even alerting parents to the discovery of head lice were all cited as examples in this respect. Even more pertinent, according to many participants, is the issue of communication at parent teacher meetings that has resulted in the failure of some parents "to turn up at all". Their words provide insights:

> *It was interesting at the parent teacher meeting yesterday, one or two of the parents with no English – they actually failed to turn up at all, so I will have to chase that – you see they are the parents that I want to meet. I'm obviously*

interested in meeting all of them, but the communication wasn't clear enough there – but it's certainly something I need to think about.

As the participants spoke openly of the problems they were experiencing in relation to linguistic diversity, their words also revealed the consequential exclusionary and alienating effects with regard to school activities:

I think that parents would love to come in and ask how their children are getting on and maybe we don't meet them enough. I think you know we do distance ourselves. We don't deliberately distance ourselves from parents, but we don't really make ourselves – we don't make the effort, a genuine effort. I mean we don't invite them in. I mean we have parent teacher meetings every year and they come and they're very interested, but we don't invite them in to talk about their children and I think they would like to.

Many participants described their lack of pedagogical skill and competence in this area. Most participants expressed a feeling of being ill-equipped and unqualified to work in a class where, in some cases, more than 50% of the pupils do not speak English as their first language. The language employed by the following participant reveals a level of frustration that was endemic to many testimonies:

We're not prepared at all. I know we have the ALT teachers, they're great but they're still only taking the children a certain bit during the day and the teachers are left with children with no language skills and trying to look after the rest of the class with no background.

Another participant expressed some scepticism:

They're (student teachers) *only starting to get the training they need for children with special needs. It's only in recent years they've started to visit schools and spend time with the resource teacher and so on. I think this year is the first year we've had*

students in observing the resource teacher. So I think for them to start working on something like this would be so much else they still have to get around to covering.

Help and Support

Lending force to this discourse of material deficiency is the perceived dearth of language support teachers. Particularly lamenting the provision of only two years support for children who have no English, the majority of the participants hold the view that "they need a lot longer". Due to this perceived shortage of specialised teachers, the participants' discourses frequently portrayed feelings of irritation and dissatisfaction. The experience of many teachers who are trying to "fit EFL in" to an "already over-burdened system" is depicted in the conclusion of this teacher:

What you're trying to do is to organise something for them in the classroom that they can do while the others are doing Irish where really they should be talking because you want them to learn the language. So doing a load of written exercises while the others are doing Irish isn't really helping but you can't be stopping to have a sentence with them and then go back to the class and then have another sentence. It is very difficult.

Resources

Adding to this sense of frustration and inadequacy in relation to language, the majority of the study participants reported a lack of appropriate pedagogical materials and resources particularly in terms of books. While some explained that they endeavour to make imaginative use of "old thrown out readers for EFL teaching", others criticise the severe lack of "age appropriate" materials.

Who wants any one from 3rd or 4th class reading a junior infants reader, learning about Molly and Sam going to the shop.

One language support teacher with almost ten years teaching experience emphasised the need for "quality packages that are put together by teachers".

Testimonies also revealed a lack of knowledge as to where useful inexpensive resources could be found and indicated that much valuable time is spent "chasing the internet" for inspiration. One participant's comment on the lack of resources generally, summarises the views articulated by many teachers:

I would like to know where you would get resources like up to date maps and things like that, that you wouldn't have to pay a fortune for it you know? Whether you could download it and put it on a computer or do it through computers, where you would get something that is accessible to kids because a lot of the stuff we can find on other cultures is a big thick book and it's beyond them. The language is too much for them. Something that is more to their age group. I don't know where you go to get that information. I've tried myself to find it

A small number diverged from this view however. One participant with less than five years experience observed:

I think if you need them, they are there. I know in college we would have been shown a lot of the APSO[3] collection and we would have been brought to the library to look at the resources in Bishopshill in town. So we were shown a good range of them if we needed them.

Another experienced teacher, while concurring with this view, nevertheless felt that while quality resources are available, there is a need for thought and deliberation in order to produce additional and more appropriate materials:

A lot of what we have is good, but because we are having more and more children of different nationalities, we're going to need more resources and again when you are taking them out of the class in small groups you want to do things that are a lot different in many ways to what they do in class. Especially if they come in at 2nd class

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[3] This refers to the former DCI Resource Centre in Bishop's Square, Dublin 2, which closed in 2005

level and they cannot read and cannot write, that wouldn't be unusual so you don't really want, even if the child is bright, you don't necessarily want to put them on the junior infants' readers or pre-reading workbooks. The whole area needs to be thought about and time would need to be spent on it to produce work that could be used.

Training

The knock-on effect of training that does not correspond with the reality of school practice is keenly felt and articulated by the majority of the participants in this study. The view of the majority of teachers is that they are unprepared to teach in a multi-lingual environment, with no other training than 'a one day seminar once a year'. Speaking of 'being thrown in at the deep end' and 'left on their own', in terms of language support, some teachers went so far as to describe their initial experience in terms of shock:

This is my first year out and it was like a pure culture shock for me because, say, doing language support and learning support at the beginning, I hadn't a clue what to do with someone who had no English. It was a case of learning as I went along.

Adding to the discontent of most, if not all participants is the perceived lack of clear departmental guidance or support on these issues. Some teachers pointed out that while clearly stipulating that English must be taught, neither the 'cuiditheoir' (facilitator), nor the inspectors provide concrete guidelines for how to teach English to non-English speaking children. One participant's contribution clearly illustrates this problem:

Even when the cigirí (inspectors) come in they don't even know what to say to us because they're not even sure what they want us to be doing. Or how they want us to go about doing our job. I mean they just say 'teach them English', but there's no thought behind it, no idea of how we go about that or suggestions about how we should go about it. I mean there's a vague, very very vague outline.

2. ANXIETIES AROUND GLOBAL EDUCATION

Same/Different

When they come from different countries, different disciplines, different methods of behaving in class. Sometimes you have those issues and that's daunting, trying to figure out how you deal with that.

The participants' testimonies provide evidence that for many teachers diversity in the classroom is problematic. A consequence of inadequate policy, procedures, resources and training is that the child of a different religious faith or mother tongue is viewed as a 'problem' that teachers have to 'deal' with. Speaking of religious diversity, one participant phrased it thus:

It's hassle for teachers. Teachers don't like it because, with the best will in the world, you still have the problem of what to do with the kids. You have to do this religious programme and then you have the kids who are not taking part.

Also in terms of diversity, many teachers identified parental disciplinary methods that they associated with certain cultures, as a source of alarm. Explaining that often they were concerned about the consequences of reporting certain misbehaviours to parents, they expressed their 'reluctance at times to say anything' and avowed that at times 'we're not sure as teachers of what to do'. As one participant testified:

Often times I come across situations with_____ (names country), this is just as an example, where it is quite acceptable to beat a child if he's misbehaving in school. The parent will beat a child afterwards. You know you have to be quite careful how you approach parents because we'd probably be horrified to think what would happen to the child. Sometimes it could be quite a minor misdemeanour and you'd be responsible then for the child getting beaten. I've come across that quite a bit.

Closely linked to the preceding discussion of 'difference as a problem' is a 'them and us' discourse particularly in relation to religious diversity. While discussing their experiences

in relation to religious issues that arise in their practice, the data revealed that a significant number of teachers tended to hold the view articulated by the following participant:

They know it's a Catholic school they're coming into. It makes no difference to me what the group is, I'm not particularly Catholic myself. But I think they know they're going into a Catholic school and if they want to opt out of things that's fair enough, but knowing fully that they are going into a Catholic school I don't think they can expect a whole lot beyond that because that is the school. I mean that's the school you're sending them to and if that's a problem for you, I understand and respect the problem but maybe it's not the right school to send them to.

Many teachers from denominational schools reasoned in a similar manner:

We're a Church of Ireland school and the Church of Ireland curriculum is taught here and that's made very clear to parents from the start.

All parents know when the kids are enrolled that there's a Catholic ethos in the school and that's it.

These remarks raise the question of choices available to parents, which is beyond the remit of this project but warrants further exploration.

Integration and Assimilation

While a small number of teachers were unsure as to the difference between assimilation and integration, others held conflicting views as to whether assimilation or integration policies were most appropriate in terms of cultural and religious diversity in their classrooms. While some teachers took a child's viewpoint, others considered the practical and theoretical implications of assimilation and/or integration. Those speaking from the child's viewpoint tended to prefer an assimilatory approach:

What children want is to be in the classroom and not to be thought of as any different from anyone else…. within the classroom I think at this stage we would assimilate them rather than integrate them. Just let them blend in and I think that's the best way for the children. I think that's what the children themselves want.

Having described many initiatives undertaken to celebrate and affirm the many cultural and religious backgrounds encountered in more than ten year's experience, this teacher explained that often parents and/or children themselves do not wish to be spotlighted or identified as being different. Interestingly, although positing *assimilation* as best for the children, this participant's actions reveal a desire to *integrate* that has since waned as a result of negative reactions from either (both) parents or (and) children. Reasons for such reactions merit further analysis beyond the scope of this project. Those who considered the practical and theoretical implications argued that while colleges of education tend to favour integration policies in theory, in practice, without appropriate support 'integration breaks down'. As one participant commented wryly:

It's all very fine getting people to write theses about integration and that that's the way to go, but you know it fails the children. The reality is that the system is failing children, because the supports are not there.

Of significance to this project is that the stance adopted by the teacher in discourse was not always reflected in the descriptions of that teacher's classroom practice. Also, while more experienced teachers tended to favour assimilation, many younger teachers favoured integration. However, the younger teachers tended to be acutely aware of lacunae in their knowledge and training, saying that often 'they don't know what to do'. They were also more critical of the lack of resources and policies in relation to diversity:

There are no policies in place.

Exclusion

The effect of the many issues that participants have encountered in relation to Global Education may be grouped under the heading of exclusion. At an institutional level, the teachers commented on the absence of student teachers from non-Irish backgrounds on Bachelor of Education programmes. They also identified the requirement of a high standard of Irish as a barrier to non-Irish applicants for teaching positions:

> *It's very difficult when they do come over because to get the qualification in Irish they need a Leaving Cert Irish standard and there isn't really a course for them to start off. If they have their Leaving Cert Irish they could go on to get the Scrúdú, but for those who can't it is an obstacle definitely to getting a job.*

Referring to the Irish language examination (Scrúdú Cáilíochta na Gaeilge) teachers agreed that:

> *The scrúdú is not what you would use on a day to day basis in the classroom.*

They suggested that the consequence of such barriers is evident in the lack of teachers from non-Irish backgrounds on teaching staffs.

While some participants felt that children of different religious backgrounds experience exclusion in denominational schools due to religious instruction on their curriculum, others felt that language difficulties sometimes resulted in exclusion due to a child's inability to communicate. Yet another deplored the exclusion of 'international' children from some schools:

> *My pet gripe is schools that exclude international children because it's too much hassle. There are ways – I mean they shouldn't be doing it and it's illegal to do it, but I mean schools do it all the time. Some schools end up with all – the majority – of these kids*

Many teachers spoke of their school's endeavours to include parents from diverse backgrounds in the everyday activities of the school as well as on Boards of Management and Parent Committees. Some schools organise language classes for non-English speaking parents and others organise an annual intercultural festival. Conversely, one teacher revealed with some regret:

We've never had a parent – even though we've all these nationalities, we've never had an international parent on a board of management or the parents' association either or those kind of things. There'd be a few raised eyebrows (from the Board of Management, the Inspectors – wondering was it policy). We don't frequently have them involved in parental involvement type of activities.

Racism

The topic of racism was ubiquitous in the testimonies both explicitly and implicitly – explicitly in conversation and implicitly in the recurrent words and phrases of some participants:

I don't want to sound racist or negative but sometimes you'd get behavioural difficulties that you wouldn't get with Irish children.

Thus, the racial attitudes of some teachers are significant and worthy of further study and exploration because, as one teacher remarked, children 'take their lead from the teacher'. Commenting on the increasing diversity in many schools, the teachers frequently discussed perceptions of and attitudes towards difference. Consequently, a range of perspectives were considered as they identified issues that had arisen and voiced their concerns.

Many participants felt that children tend to welcome newcomers and often try to help them settle into their new environment. Arguing that the newcomers' personalities, rather than their national or cultural background, influenced children's responses to the new child, many teachers agreed that:

Once they come into the classroom, if they're pleasant kids, they're accepted immediately.

However, the participants pointed out that the same welcome is not always extended to children from the Travelling Community:

When we were talking about Travellers, you could see that they were very very negative towards Travellers and it was a completely different viewpoint they had on them and their differences.

Another teacher pointed out that while children integrate well initially:

The older they get, the more 'cliquey' it becomes, they kind of stick together. The children from other countries, irrespective of whether they're from the same country or not tend to hang round together.
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This view was also echoed by a small number of teachers all of whom teach in denominational schools that count a significant number of children from diverse national backgrounds among their pupils. Most teachers felt however, that while racist incidents occasionally occur, most children were 'quite sympathetic to people of different races':

There was a lot of them talking about coloured people _____ (names country) *people who have come to live on their street, and they've noticed how people are prejudiced towards them and they are quite sympathetic towards them.*

A few participants employed the term 'nip it in bud' when explaining how schools handle racist incidents and this was endorsed by most teachers. However, one teacher commented on the acceptance of racism in some schools:

I know lots of schools where racism is rife and it's just accepted as being part of life, part of the culture of people that live in the area. And there's very little that can be done about it if it becomes endemic, if it becomes accepted in that manner.

3. RELIGION AND ETHOS

Religion

Questions of school and college patronage and ethos underpin some of the issues identified by the participants in relation to the management of diversity within schools. Whereas the curriculum ascribes the development and delivery of religious instruction to the particular religious groups or churches[4], the teachers' testimonies suggest that the issue of religious instruction both explicit and implicit requires clarification -

There are lots of grey areas that still aren't clarified, huge grey areas -

and at worst fuels tension. A specific example of such lack of clarity lies in the teaching of religion in multi-faith classrooms in a denominational school. The testimonies of many teachers indicate that there are no clear guidelines as to how to deal with children who are not of the particular denomination, nor is clear provision made for those who choose not to participate. Teachers also suggest that references to, and celebration of various religious and/or cultural festivals during the school year can unwittingly cause offence and distress.

Teachers also express a need for clarification in relation to school policies on issues such as uniform. Ad hoc procedures vary not only according to type of school but also between same school types. Such procedures are, of necessity, principal and/or teacher led with a lack of consistent departmental policies. This means that according to the school they attend, children are treated differently with respect to the hijab and crests on school uniforms for example. While some schools allow young Muslim girls to wear the hijab, others don't. The same applies to uniform crests. Teachers identified

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[4] Primary School Curriculum (1999)

inconsistencies in the system created by this lack of policy. Compare the following testimonies:

> *One father insisted that his daughters wear the hijab. They had to wear it into school, but then we said **'not within the classroom'.***

> *There's a girl in the school … all the sisters are in the senior school. They all wear it **all the time**.*

Teacher Education

Participants frequently alluded to the denominational nature of education in Ireland, at all levels, as problematical:

> *The teacher training is all geared to the Catholic ethos. You don't hear anything of any other religions.*

While this participant's comment is not completely accurate in that it ignores the existence of a Church of Ireland college of education, it nevertheless indicates a perceived lack of modules on religious diversity in colleges of education. The majority maintained that 'multicultural issues and ways to deal with other cultures and religions' did not form part of their initial teacher education. One participant declared

> *The biggest challenge to me is my lack of knowledge and understanding of each of the religions*

Thus, teachers repeatedly testified to feeling insufficiently prepared for teaching in a religiously diverse classroom and they identified a need for change in this respect. While many participants thought that the 'religious stuff' they had studied at college was unsuited to teaching in a diverse classroom, one participant felt that questions as to how to manage such diversity were not considered:

In religion say we do look at different religions but at the same time if you do ask a question in class 'Well, what would you do?', they kind of forget that question and move on to the next question. I found that especially after teaching practices. Say I had a child in my class who would have a different religion. I didn't have a clue what to do with that child, it was kind of 'it's not our problem'.

Curriculum

Most schools in Ireland are denominational, the vast majority being Catholic, thus teachers point out that a religious ethos pertains and 'permeates absolutely everything'. Some participants express concern that while children may be exempted from attending religious instruction, they are nevertheless being taught religion by means of diffusion and a curriculum that is underpinned by a Christian/Catholic philosophy. For example, one teacher related:

I had the Earthlink book. There's history, geography and science. Today the word Lent or Advent just happened to be in a paragraph, a history paragraph.

Events such as St. Patrick's Day, Halloween and Christmas are instances mentioned by teachers as sometimes problematic in a religiously and/or culturally diverse classroom. Some teachers articulated concerns in relation to the lack of systematic procedures for children not participating in religious education classes:

They're free to opt out or whatever, but what we don't have is, and we've often talked about it, what we don't have is anything to do with them while they opt out. So if they opt out of say, going to Church for any particular occasion that would come up in the school year, they're sent either to me or to – but they're not sent to do anything in particular.

Of particular concern to some teachers are the potentially upsetting situations which can arise for some minority religious groups, when specific references to religious or cultural events arise within the curriculum. These are described by teachers in terms of 'conflict',

'serious problems', and 'huge issues'. In this respect, and with specific incidents in mind, some teachers expressed bitter disappointment at a perceived lack of support received from the Department of Education and there were perceptions of inflexibility at department level. Anxious to keep parents happy on the one hand, yet equally anxious not to incur sanctions from 'the department' on the other, they expressed the need for communication and discussion between the colleges of education and the various schools to find an acceptable way forward for all.

It is important to state here that among the Educate Together schools, issues of Catholic or denominational ethos did not pertain. As one Educate Together teacher phrased it:

We don't teach religion here. That's where the real exclusion would occur. I mean if you've got kids sitting there and this is the religious class that's where you'd feel the exclusion.

One of the difficulties that presents for teachers in classrooms where the religious practice of the pupils clashes with state legislation concerning gender, is exemplified in the following testimony:

The carers said that they mustn't go to Mr. X. They mustn't have a male teacher. It's just so alien to our education system. I mean the idea is that teachers are your resources and whoever the teachers are, whether they're male or female, they are the resources and it is expected that children will go to whatever class they're assigned to go to and whatever teacher is assigned. My feeling is that you can't actually compromise on that.

The "problem of difference"[5] is considered in the 'Integration' section of this report, however, one teacher's words emphasised the effects of teachers' attitudes to diversity while highlighting a need to rectify perceived lacunae in teacher education in order that integration may be achieved:

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[5] See Madge (2001)

In schools we are in the process of socialising children so the better we can do that, the better we make them understand and appreciate each other and their differences and similarities, which is one of my points, because we are more similar than we are different. At the end of the day, we all want to be loved, to have friends, to eat, drink, and sleep so I think that's not emphasised enough. It's all about how different everybody is; whereas the point is that we're all the same. We do things maybe differently, different customs and things that are important to us. I think it's lovely and I think because we're in primary school at the moment we're probably much more aware of it than say even my friends who aren't teachers, who went to a white Irish school as I did and my parents and all that kind of thing. I think we get a greater appreciation of how the world is changing. We all know people from different countries. I think it's great and I think that Global Education then is very important to enable us to deal with it. Because I actually think children take their lead from the teacher, how you deal with it and how you treat the children and if you always focus on their differences or if you think of them as different even with the best will in the world that would come across.

The participants' attempts to engage in best practice and their desire to be fair and inclusive is evident in their spontaneous and honest reflections on their practice. It is indicative therefore that the majority of those teachers admitted to scant knowledge of the publication, *Intercultural Education for Primary Schools* published in 2005 and distributed to every teacher in the state. The following testimony is representative:

It's part of an ever increasing pile of stuff, because you get reports coming in – you get three or four reports coming every week. It's another one of those books that's in the pile to be read. I mean very often, there are interesting bits, but you've to do an awful lot of digging to get to the bits that are actually relevant

In the same vein, a small minority questioned the appropriateness of some development education packs:

That is another thing that needs to be discussed. You've got to be careful because you know those Trocaire and Dev Ed packs about Nth Africa? Because you have children from Africa, you have to be very careful about the way you depict Africa. You know, you don't want to depict them all as coming from mud huts and that, and there are refugees who have come from horrific situations, so again, you don't really learn how to deal with that stuff in college you know?

Many participants believe that the provision of more 'add-on' college courses and modules in relation to global/intercultural/development education could go some way to alleviating the issues articulated here. This will be discussed in detail in part three of this document.

SECTION TWO

How teachers have overcome any challenges they may have encountered in developing policy and/or implementing good practice[6].

The issues encountered by teachers in relation to Global Education were identified in section one above. This section explores how the participants overcame challenges they may have encountered in developing policy and/or implementing good practice and is presented under the following headings.

1. **BOTTOM-UP IMPROVISATION**
2. **USING CHILDREN TO BRIDGE CULTURAL AND RESOURCE GAP**
3. **S.P.H.E.**

1. BOTTOM-UP IMPROVISATION

I think most of us kind of learn on our feet here and it's hard to say what's the right thing to do. I mean for me it would be, I'm not sure. I do things and they don't work and I try something else and it works and I do it again. I'm pretty much learning as I go.

The participants revealed that there is no systemic approach to diversity education in terms of policy or procedure. Thus, at present challenges are overcome essentially through bottom-up, teacher and/or school initiatives as opposed to initiatives that are top-down and department led. As one participant observed:

It's necessary to be creative and to have different approaches to deal with these things.

Some teachers mentioned using "a report sheet from Integrate Ireland Language and Training" to communicate a child's progress while others described creative initiatives to inform parents of school events. For example:

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[6]See Appendices 2,4 & 5

You know we have teachers' meetings once a month and for new kids you're writing down – today is Monday … Tuesday …Wednesday and then you're showing them a half. Because some of the parents won't call for them and then they're left here and somebody has to supervise them while our meetings are going on.

2. USING CHILDREN TO BRIDGE CULTURAL AND RESOURCE GAP

Almost all of the teachers who participated in this study revealed that in attempting to overcome communication problems, they have frequently used other children as translators. One junior infant teacher described how some children in the class explain the content of a note home to the non-English speaking children, thus relying on young children to transmit the message accurately. Another participant referred to children as 'a huge resource' in that they work with and help new children:

The children I worked with in different places, they are a huge resource with children coming in. They work with them. They help them. I have children learning French to try and communicate.

3. S.P.H.E. AND OTHER RELATED CURRICULUM AREAS

Two teachers indicated that S.P.H.E provides a forum in which issues such as racism or difference may be considered, but there is little evidence of other teachers trying to solve these issues in this manner in the data. The same teachers also suggested that Global Education occurs in S.P.H.E

I think we have enough in terms of curriculum, enough to cover already (agreement from other teachers) … it's covered in SPHE and Geography and other subjects.

However, the testimonies reveal that S.P.H.E. is largely under-utilised in addressing these issues. Another teacher explained:

A lot of the issues we would deal with them as they come up. I mean with the child who was _____ (names country), I had a book in my class called 'all kinds of people' and it talked about – some people wear glasses and some people don't; some people have freckles and some people don't; some people are tall, some people are short. I just read that and we had a short discussion and that seemed to deal with it.

Yet another teacher reported that these topics arise frequently in the senior curriculum, particularly in history and geography, and are considered during these lessons:

In history we'd be talking about discrimination through the ages and so on and it always leads on to conversation about discrimination say nowadays. It comes up in geography. We actually did a great project this year all about children's rights and it came up a lot in that area, talking about different races, religions and so on.

However, whether they spoke of S.P.H.E or other subjects there is little evidence of teachers saying they are addressing these issues although they posit these subjects as a solution. Indeed, one participant considered the limit of the schools' ability and the extent of the State's responsibility in this respect:

I honestly believe that the government, the Department of Social Welfare, all the various departments dump every social issue in the country into the schools and expect the schools to have a programme and a policy to deal with it.

SECTION THREE

Identify Structures or Support systems that would enable and sustain good practice in this area[7].

Section One of this document identified the issues teachers had encountered in relation to Global Education while Section Two explored how teachers overcame these issues. This section presents the structures and supports, identified by teachers that, they believe, would enable and sustain good practice in this area.

Participants were unanimous in their belief that education at both primary and tertiary level is not meeting the needs of pupils or of some student teachers. Their testimonies pointed to a lack of resources and support at primary school level for both teachers and children, and at tertiary level, inadequate preparation for teaching in a multicultural environment. Indeed, as one participant phrased it:

> *There are people in the training colleges and they're trying to train you but they've never encountered these problems.*

A wide range of suggestions for change was presented in three major categories:

1. **TRAINING AND RESOURCES**
2. **ANXIETIES AROUND GLOBAL EDUCATION**
3. **RELIGION AND ETHOS**

In terms of presentation here, these categories are referred to by teachers both from the perspective of a teacher in a primary school and from the perspective of the student teacher. Also, while categories are useful for organisational purposes it is important to point out that in terms of content there is often considerable overlap[8].

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[7] See Appendices 3,4 & 5
[8] See Appendix 3

1. TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Language Support

Teachers identified two main areas where they felt additional supports and structures were urgently required in order to enable and/or sustain good practice at primary school level. Firstly, they suggested that additional supports and resources were necessary in terms of language learning. In this respect, they named computer software, workbooks, games and even 'just ideas'. In addition, it was pointed out by many teachers that existing resources are often unsuitable; either too advanced for children in junior school or not advanced enough for older children. Thus, they specified that such resources ought to be age-appropriate:

> *If the child is bright, you don't necessarily want to put them on the junior infants'*
> *readers or pre-reading workbooks.*

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In addition to a need for more resources, teachers also expressed dissatisfaction at the present provision of two years language support, arguing that many children acquire only a functional knowledge of English in this time.

From a third level perspective, the majority of the participants called for additional language and literacy modules particularly aimed at ESL (English as Second Language) students. Also,

> *Learning about how people learn a language, what kids go through and how you can*
> *work with that – teaching strategies for kids who are acquiring a language.*

Many participants expressed a need for modules on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) however some disagreed with this arguing:

> *I don't think it should be up to the teacher to go off and learn how to teach English as*
> *a foreign language. It's up to the department to train people specifically to do that. If*

you're teaching a class of 25 or more you're not going to have time to teach EFL to that one child in your class who has no English. They need to be brought out and taught by somebody who is qualified in that area.

The second area where teachers felt that additional supports and structures are required is under the heading of communication. Teachers identified issues relating to communication as problematic in their interactions with non- English speaking parents. Section Two explored how, due to inadequate support structures and resources some teachers often overcome such problems inappropriately, often using other children and/or parents as translators. Consequently, many participants identified a need for language supports specifically for parents. They advocated language classes as an essential resource that would greatly reduce communication difficulties:

Language supports for the teachers is very important I think. Whenever the parents are here I have to get a translator, another parent or child, somebody to read notes.

Furthermore, many suggested that access to a translator would be beneficial:

I think if we could get a translator in. Obviously you may need a few translators in a few languages. For the parents you need to have a list of them on hand and to be able to say they're calling to the school for half an hour every morning, you know, like a drop in kind of clinic if a teacher needed someone to translate.

Another suggestion consisted of providing a booklet in several languages of 'general kinds of situations and problems' that arise regularly in the primary school:

I suppose you could find out what kind of information you're trying to impart all the time, say like meetings, the times. What's important for the parents. What do they need – what's the most important thing that they need so that they won't stay away from the school because they haven't got the language. You probably could break it down into

sections, you know, picking up times, going home times, early finishing times, school tours.

Training.

Participants held the view that Global Education modules should be included in teacher education programmes.

I think it is important that in all of the training colleges that there would be a module done on [Global Education]

While positing the need for such modules at third level, the participants also felt that Global Education should be included at primary level, not as an add-on subject but rather as an integrated element of the curriculum. Referring to the surplus of reports and packages that are 'sitting on the shelf' the participants argued that the distribution of resources in this manner is ineffective as teachers already struggle with an 'over-loaded curriculum' to which 'something new is added every week'. Thus:

The consensus here is that it should be integrated, but with clear guidelines.

Commenting on the value of such modules, one participant remarked:

I did a course as an elective that was run by DICE on multiculturalism and I found that quite useful. So far, I've used bits and pieces of things when I've actually come into a classroom and I found that quite useful.

They also pointed to a need for supplementary courses for qualified teachers, who, they suggested, 'need to familiarise themselves with Global Education'.

The participants frequently referred to the denominational nature of teacher education colleges, which they point out, results in the exclusion of other religions from consideration. The majority felt that a module on comparative religions rather than a

focus on one particular religion would be more useful in preparing students to teach in a religiously diverse classroom. As one participant phrased it:

A module on comparative religions – really geared at preparing newly qualified teachers for what they're going to be faced with when they go out.

Conversely, a small number of participants argued against the provision of such a course:

You couldn't cover every single background in college and a lot of them you would forget until you actually need it. I mean, it's much more beneficial, if you know in the previous June that a child of a different faith is coming into the school in September, you can find something on the internet, or you can find a book and just read a few paragraphs. It's just to get basic knowledge. Then it will be a lot more real to you whereas if you're doing a course on it in college, you're going to forget it.

Many participants identified a need for greater variety in student teaching practice. They believe that in order to feel adequately prepared for teaching in a range of classroom situations, students need to have some experience of working in non-traditional school types:

Teachers who are being trained and should all get a little taste of working in these multicultural situations. Even if it's only for 2 or 3 days of the total training, they should have the experience.

In this context some teachers mentioned Educate Together schools while others mentioned specific denominational schools.

2. ANXIETIES AROUND GLOBAL EDUCATION

Stronger Links with Parents and Communities.

Many teachers were of the opinion that parents from diverse ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds could play a more active role in schools. In this respect, they suggested that parents could be invited to schools to talk about their respective cultures and religions.

> *I think it would be wonderful to use more parents within the classroom. I think the children would appreciate that.*

Ethnicity of Teachers.

The participants commented on the noticeable absence of teachers from diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds in schools. They also noted the absence of student teachers from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds in colleges of education. Commenting on this situation, many participants expressed the view that diversity among teaching staff would be beneficial. As one participant remarked:

I don't know what the department's views are on non-national teachers. For 15 year old East Europeans or whatever, if the only people they ever get to deal with are the white Irish reprimanding them, they feel, well they say that they've nothing in common with them. They don't understand them.

3. RELIGION AND ETHOS

Consistent Policies for all State Schools.

At present, the data shows that there is no consistent policy to cater for children from diverse religious backgrounds in denominational schools. Consequently, as seen in section one, teachers 'do not know what to do' with such children. They identify a need therefore for consistent policies in this domain (see page 22.)

SUMMARY

The stated aims of this research were to identify:

- The issues that teachers have encountered in relation to Global Education.
- How teachers have overcome any challenges they may have encountered in developing policy and/or implementing good practice
- Structures or support systems that would enable and sustain good practice in this area.

Section One identified the issues teachers have encountered in relation to Global Education and organised them under 3 major headings:

1. Training and Resources.

Teachers identified a mismatch between initial teacher education and the actual needs of practising teachers, focusing particularly on language issues and management of religious diversity within the classroom. They also expressed frustrations regarding inadequate and insufficient human and material resources, particularly in terms of support teachers and teaching hours allocated.

2. Anxieties around Global Education.

The testimonies were imbued with anxiety and concern in relation to the management of religious and cultural diversity in classrooms. Issues such as integration/assimilation, exclusion and racism were frequently articulated. Inadequate or non-existent policies and a lack of consistent procedures were found to exacerbate such anxieties. Conversely, a small minority of participants who had taken modules related to Global Education while in college, could locate resources and seemed more confident in their practice.

3. Religion and Ethos.

Issues relating to school and college patronage, school management, ethos, religious instruction and curriculum featured largely in the testimonies. Teachers expressed a need

for clear policies in terms of both religious instruction and the celebration of various religious festivals that occur throughout the school year. The denominational nature of teacher education was also discussed, with many teachers holding the view that modules relating to religious diversity would be beneficial.

Section Two explored how teachers overcame some of the challenges they may have encountered in developing policy and/or implementing good practice. The findings were presented under the following headings.

1. Using Children to Bridge Cultural and Resource Gap
The participants frequently use children to translate and/or interpret communications between teachers and non-English speaking parents. While some teachers did not believe this to be problematic, others felt uncomfortable with such situations.

2. Social, Personal and Health Education.
While many teachers thought that Global Education and issues such as racism, discrimination and exclusion could be considered during S.P.H.E, some felt that other classes, such as geography or history could be useful in addressing these issues.

Section Three presented supports and structures that teachers felt would enable and sustain good practice in this area. The accumulation of the testimonies, in effect, calls for a review of aspects of teacher education with the objective of creating and developing a cohesive strategy for the management of cultural and religious diversity in schools. They were presented under the following headings and sub-headings:

1. Training and Resources
The participants called for additional and age-appropriate resources that would include language support and communication aids. There were different views expressed on the provision of modules on Teaching English as an Additional Language during initial teacher education.

2. Anxieties around Global Education

While at present, modules on intercultural and/or development education are offered on an elective basis in some colleges of education and as a compulsory module in others, the majority of the participants agreed that a module on Global Education for all student teachers would be beneficial. A module on comparative religions, providing opportunities for teaching practice in a range of different schools. including more people from diverse ethnic backgrounds in the teaching profession and the establishment of stronger links with parents and community were all cited as essential to enabling and sustaining good practice in this area.

3. Religion and Ethos.

The teachers frequently called for clear and consistent policies and procedures that would enable them to manage religious diversity effectively.

The participants in this small-scale study, while providing insights into their anxieties and concerns, also offered many positive and useful suggestions as to how all stakeholders could help enable and sustain good practice in relation to Global Education. The representative testimonies from the data, cited here, indicate a high level of anxiety among many teachers relating to issues they encounter on a daily basis, the most frequently recurring being language related. Apart from their expressed need for language support and resources, the most pressing problem on a day-to-day basis is that of communication, not only with the children themselves but also with their parents. Their testimonies are imbued with an anxiety that they attribute to lacunae in their initial teacher education and to inadequate guidance, support and resources in schools and classrooms. Consequently, the prevailing view among teachers is that:

You're trying to give 100% all the time and 150% is expected. That's probably what we all feel. All you want is the best you can possibly give the kids and you feel like you're hitting your head off a brick wall on occasions because it's just not there and it's not something that the teacher training colleges can address. It's something the department has to address.

This report presents teachers' reflections upon their experiences in relation to Global Education. It does not analyse or draw conclusions from the views expressed. The following section presents the conclusions and recommendations offered by DICE in response.

Issues raised by the Research Report and their Implications

This research report raises a number of issues for DICE which have implications for the Project's strategic planning. It also contains issues for consideration by colleges of education and for the Department of Education and Science.

Terminology

One of the principal matters which DICE wishes to raise is in regard to *terminology*. The research project aimed to identify issues that teachers have encountered in relation to 'global education' yet it became clear on reading this report that, in the main, this was interpreted in a very particular way, namely, as 'intercultural' education. At the DICE Project, our understanding of 'global education' is that it encompasses both development and intercultural education, and as such, is concerned with issues of social justice at both global and local levels and with making connections between these[9]. This understanding of the term would include, for example, exploration of issues related to the Millennium Development Goals such as world poverty and hunger, sustainable development and human rights, not only the inclusion of newcomer children in Irish classrooms.

The participants in this small-scale study were asked about 'global education' but were not provided with a definition in order that they would speak from their own understanding and their own interpretation of the term. Very few teachers spoke of matters that we in DICE would associate with development education. In responding to a question about resources for example, most teachers related this question to the availability or otherwise of resources for children learning English as an additional language, while just one teacher spoke about the use of resources for teaching about a distant locality.

This teacher commented on the complexities involved in using development education resources about African countries when there are African children in Irish classrooms,

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[9] "Global education is the term used internationally to describe a form of education which (i) enables pupils to understand the links between their own lives and those of people throughout the world; (ii) increases understanding of the economic, cultural, political and environmental influences which shape our lives; (iii) develops the skills, attitudes and values which enable people to work together to bring about change; (iv) work towards creating a more just and sustainable future." *Teaching in the 21ˢᵗ Century – the Global Dimension in Initial Teacher Education,* **Global Teacher Project: World Studies Trust** (undated)

and the danger of stereotypical depictions of extreme poverty in developing countries which would suggest that he/she interpreted the term 'global education' in a broader sense and more in line with DICE's understanding.

Overall this raises a critical question about the use of terminology and the understanding of the term 'global education'. It suggests that while 'global education' may be a useful short-hand term for practitioners, incorporating both development and intercultural education, that for the purposes of exploration in the wider educational field, there is a more commonly agreed understanding of 'development education' and this could consequently be a more appropriate word to use in conjunction with intercultural education.

Management of diversity

It is striking that the overwhelming preoccupation of teachers in the study was with the *management of diversity* in their own classrooms. As we have noted, this could have been caused, in part, by confusion about terminology in that teachers seem to have interpreted 'global education' in this particular way.

Another possible conclusion however, is that teachers are currently encountering issues to do with diversity and difference in the classroom, which are perceived with such urgency and importance that the focus is, of necessity, on these matters. The representative testimonies from the data, cited here, indicate considerable levels of concern, even anxiety among teachers, relating to issues they encounter on a daily basis. This small-scale study on 'global' education reveals an overwhelming focus, among research participants, on the management of diversity in the classroom, and this testifies to those teachers' current concerns and frustrations.

While the current focus of the DICE Project is mainly on pre-service, nevertheless, many teachers in the study pointed to gaps in their initial teacher education in relation to what could be considered intercultural education, which is part of the remit of DICE. While some colleges of education currently require all students to undertake a ten-hour module in development and intercultural education as part of their Inclusive Education course in the B.Ed, other colleges offer these courses as 'electives'. This means that some students may not receive development and intercultural education as a discrete input during their

pre-service education. This underlines the value of the discrete module and also the importance of embedding the principles of social justice within all aspects of the B.Ed. It also has implications for pre-service and in-service providers, as these needs are present for practising teachers and by implication, for student teachers.

Language Teaching

There was a clearly expressed need for support for teaching children who are learning English as an additional language, with teachers relating how, in the absence of in-service training for mainstream classroom teachers, they have had to improvise and draw upon their own resources. Day-to-day communication was cited as an on-going concern in the schools surveyed, not only with the children themselves but also with their parents, pointing to the need for support with translation and interpretation in schools. Dealing with issues related to the teaching of English as an additional language goes beyond the scope of DICE, but it is clear from teachers' testimonies in this research that it is an area of huge concern for some schools, suggesting that there is an urgent need for colleges and in-service providers to address this.

The findings of this report clearly call for a comprehensive in-service programme for classroom teachers in multi-language settings, as well as for Language Support Teachers. Teachers' testimonies also point to the need for the availability of appropriate resources and materials for meting the language needs of children who are learning English as an additional language.

Religion

The issue of religion featured very strongly throughout the study. Teachers had concerns about the teaching of religion in multi-faith classrooms in denominational schools, the lack of a practical understanding of different religious beliefs and practices, dealing with casual or incidental references to religious festivals in curriculum materials, and formulating school policies around uniform and other matters in multi-faith settings.

While some of the above issues require input at policy-making level, others are pertinent for the colleges of education to consider. For example, some colleges already offer courses in 'Comparative Religions' or 'World Religions', but the evidence from this

study would suggest that these courses need to be available to all students. A knowledge-based approach that primarily involves 'learning about' other religions could be one approach but it may not be sufficient in supporting student teachers to understand their own responses to difference. It requires seminar-type engagement with students in order to allow for learning of a more experiential nature to take place, involving activities and discussions, critical questioning and reflection. The kind of learning involved in that type of exploration makes greater emotional demands on students but ultimately can be more productive and far-reaching than a purely cognitive approach as it would empower teachers to support children's exploration and understanding of difference.

Tutorials and workshop-style sessions allow for the exploration of such issues and there is a need for these methodologies to be included as far as possible in B.Ed courses so that student teachers have sufficient opportunity to explore these complex issues.

Overcoming challenges

The brevity of Section Two (headed "How teachers have overcome any challenges they may have encountered in developing policy and / or implementing good practice.") is striking, suggesting that teachers' anxieties and concerns about the challenges outweigh the strategies they have been able to generate to address those challenges.

What emerges from the findings is that teachers are working on an ad-hoc basis, attempting to generate appropriate responses.

Study participants were acutely aware of the deficiencies inherent in this system of improvisation and informal dissemination of ideas, even though the ideas themselves were creative and innovative.

Of particular concern is the use of children to bridge language gaps in schools, cited by teachers as sometimes the only means of communication with parents, but which raises issues such as confidentiality and inappropriate responsibility being placed on children; and exposes the dilemma facing schools when often this is the only means of communication at their disposal.

Ethnicity of teachers

Participants commented on the noticeable absence of teachers from diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds in schools, along with the absence of student teachers from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds in colleges of education. Clearly, until this situation changes, the likelihood is that teachers could continue to consider migrant children as 'other', as described in the research of Devine, Kenny and McNeela[10].

This has implications for policy-makers. While the situation will change over time, with 'newcomer' children progressing through the school system, and then going on to colleges of education, the hiatus in the meantime could result in growing levels of disaffection amongst young people who will rarely encounter a member of an ethnic minority group among the teaching staff of their schools. Indeed, this has been the reality for Traveller children in Irish schools for generations.

Other global education challenges

A small number of teachers raised issues that indicated awareness that the new context of having international children in the classroom, including refugee children and children from so-called developing countries, required them to use curriculum opportunities differently and to pay attention to teaching materials used in the classroom. Firstly the issue of stereotypical depictions of extreme poverty in developing countries was raised in the context of having, for example, African children in one's class and the perceived danger that development education resources might reinforce these stereotypes. These are concerns that have always been pertinent, and were relevant prior to the integration of newcomer children in Irish schools. However, the arrival of children from overseas has highlighted the issue. The implications for DICE are to continue to emphasise the need for balance in depictions of developing countries as well as encouraging teachers to select case material that depicts real people actively working to better their own lives and communities. This is important as an antidote to the 'victim' stereotype so often prevalent in the popular media. DICE could also play a role in the promotion of guidelines in

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[10] 'Ethnicity and Schooling – a study of ethnic diversity in a selected sample of primary and post-primary schools', 2002

relation to the use of images from the global South, currently being drawn up by development educators in non-governmental organisations.

Secondly the issue of having refugee children in the classroom highlighted for one teacher the lack of preparation she/he felt in terms of dealing with potentially very traumatised children:

"...and there are refugees who have come from horrific situations, so again, you don't really learn how to deal with that stuff in college you know?"

While the issue is perhaps a wider one that should be addressed in the Psychology of Education module, there are also components of SPHE courses that could specifically focus on how teachers can work to support children in making the transition to a different culture, particularly those who may have experienced traumatic situations. There are therefore implications for pre-service education and in-service training to include material both for addressing refugee issues in class but also for assisting teachers to work with the children themselves in supportive ways.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted key areas to be addressed in initial teacher education and in-service training particularly in relation to interculturalism in Ireland. Investment of resources in both schools and teacher education could pay dividends in the future, in terms of increasing the motivation of children and raising the morale of teachers. The increased diversity of Irish schools offers opportunities as well as challenges – opportunities for intercultural exchange and communication and for a greater cultural richness in our classrooms. It would be regrettable if those opportunities were lost or even reduced through a lack of funding of appropriate support systems for schools, particularly in relation to language teaching. The testimony of teachers in this research seems to suggest that they would welcome a more pro-active role from the Department of Education and Science in these matters.

The report also suggests that, confusion about terminology aside, teachers' focus is firmly on intercultural matters and that until these concerns are addressed through training and support, this is likely to remain the case. However there are also issues for development educators to consider here, about how to help teachers and student teachers understand the interrelatedness of development and intercultural education – that an understanding of the local is not fully possible without a broader global justice perspective. This research shows that teachers are concerned with intercultural education. However, we believe that both development and intercultural education need to be addressed in order to fully attend to a global dimension.

Development education also has a key role in supporting teachers to sensitively teach about other countries, particularly 'developing' countries, when there are likely to be children from those countries in classrooms. It suggests that a set of guidelines for teachers on development education would perhaps be timely, again a consideration for DICE in collaboration with organisations representative of new communities and other relevant agencies.

We in the DICE Project are most appreciative of the teachers who took part in this study. Their honesty has been stark, even unsettling and disquieting at times, but they are speaking from the real context of Irish classrooms. While this was a small-scale study, the issues that participants have raised may be familiar to many teachers across the country. It is imperative that these issues are addressed.

DICE Project
DICE Management Committee
DICE Research Committee

APPENDICES

Group 1 Training & Resources

Appendix 1 – The Issues that Teachers Have Encountered in Relation to Global Education

Q1 - Issues Identified

(4 17) Language Support

(14) Communications

(4 13) Resource

(4 5) Training

(4 1) Help and Support

(4) Search Results

Exclusion

(4 10) Integration and Assimilation

(4 11) Same

Group 2 Religion & Ethos

(4 2) Racism

(4 8) Religion

(4 11 1) Different

(4 9) Education - Catholic - Teacher - Global

Group 3 Attitudes to Global Education

(4 18) Discipline

(4 15) Curriculum

52
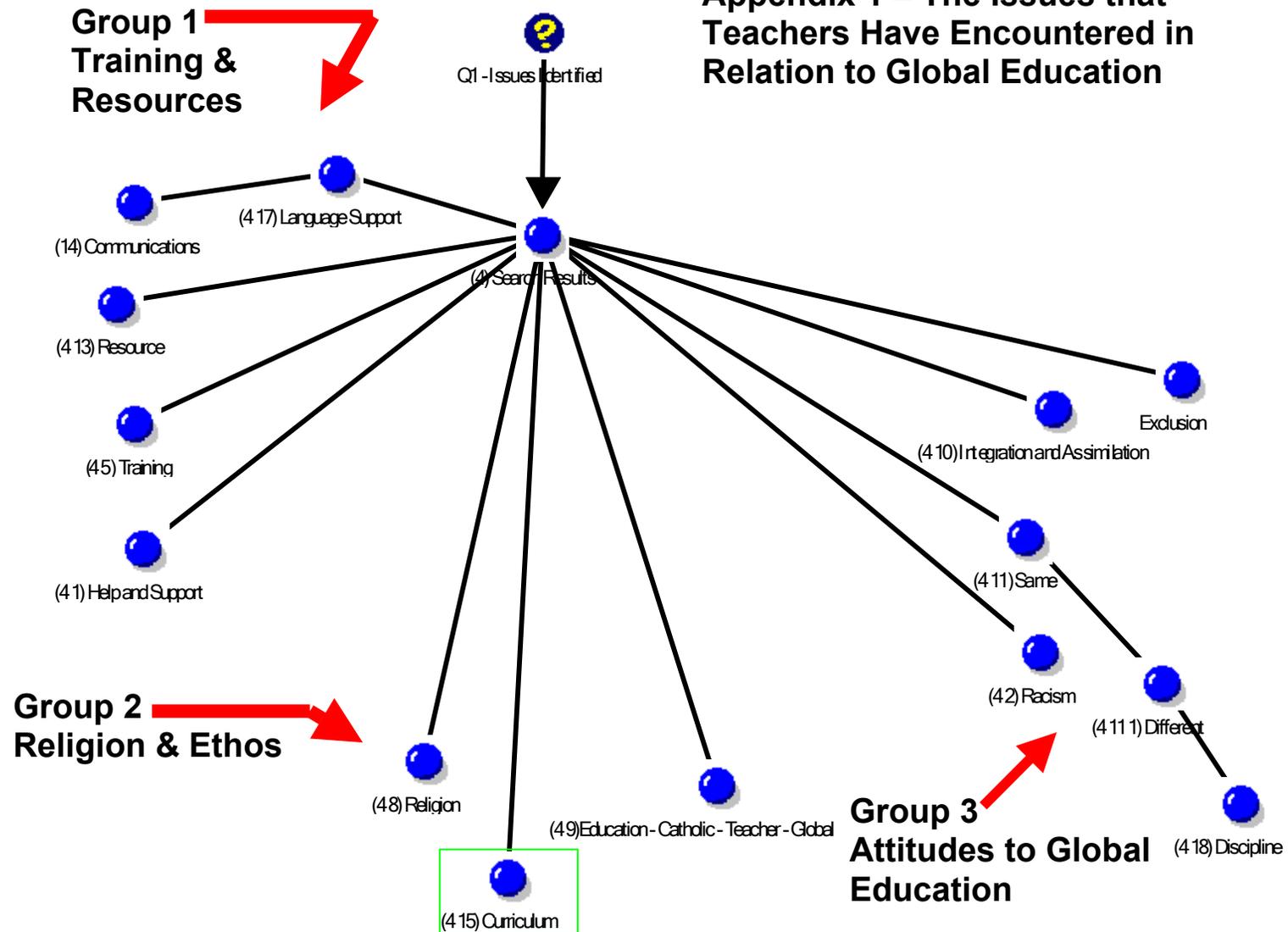
**Appendix 2 – How Teachers Have Overcome Challenges Encountered Developing Policy and Implementing Good Practice**

Q2 - Overcoming Challenges

(4 6) Overcome - Inappropriate

(4 7) Use of Children to Bridge Cultural / Resource Gap

(4 16) SPHE Underutilised in Addressing Challenges

(4 4) Challenge - Identified in Q1

Teacher / School Inititive
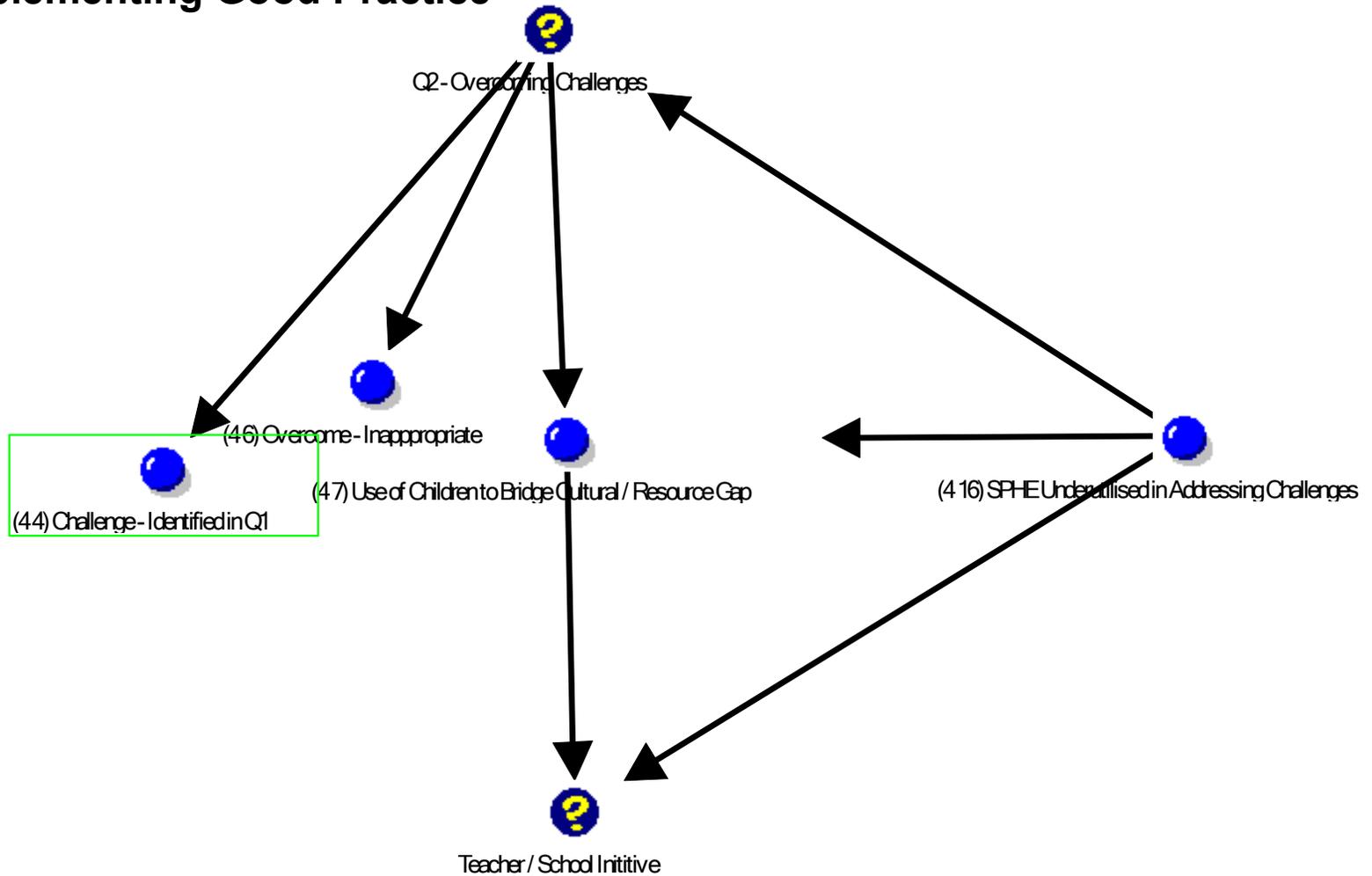
Appendix 3 – Structures and Support Systems that Teachers Feel Would Enable and Sustain Good Practice in Global Education
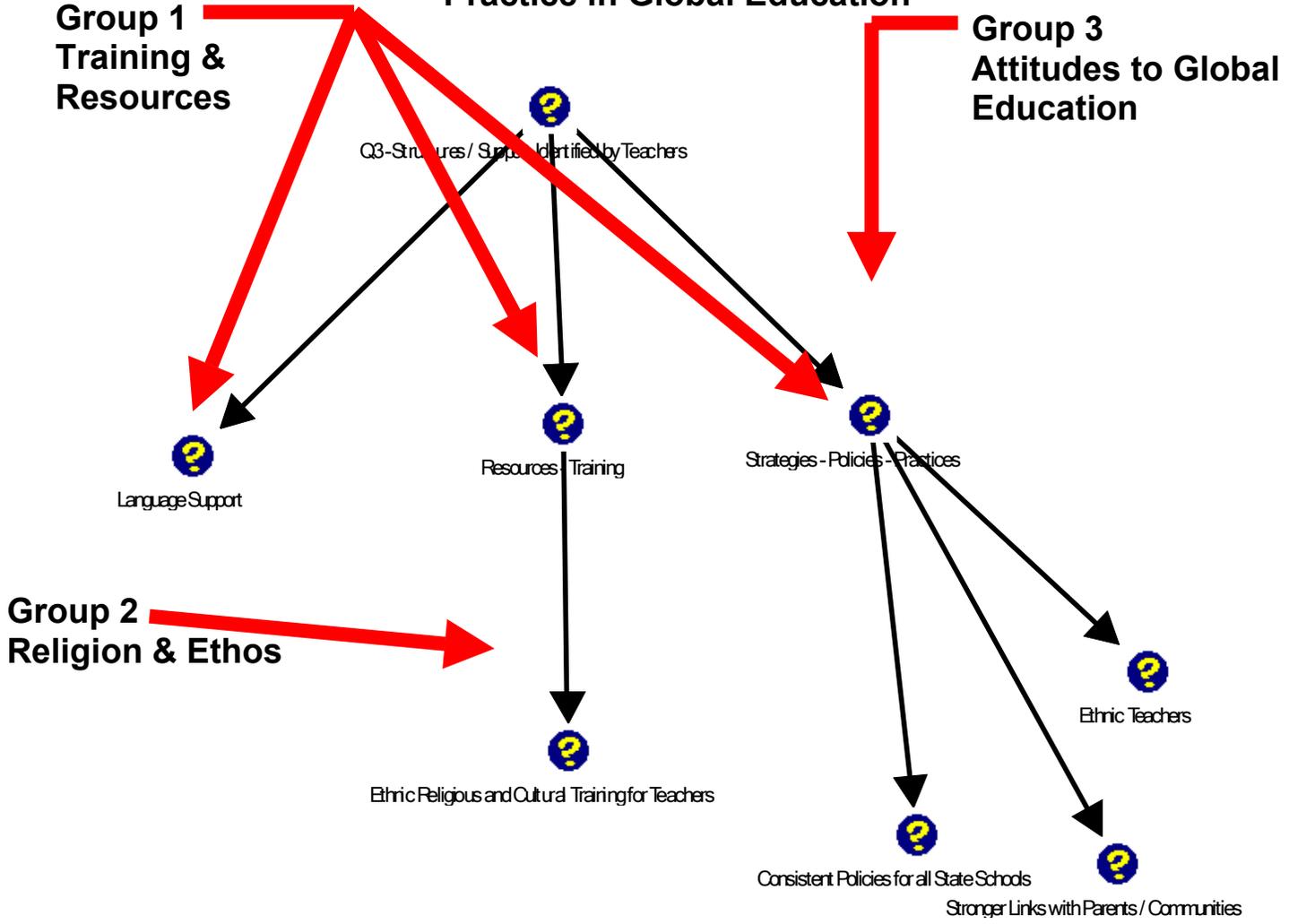
Group 1
Training &
Resources

Group 3
Attitudes to Global
Education

Q3 - Structures / Support Identified by Teachers

Group 2
Religion & Ethos

Language Support

Resources - Training

Strategies - Policies - Practices

Ethnic Religious and Cultural Training for Teachers

Ethnic Teachers

Consistent Policies for all State Schools

Stronger Links with Parents / Communities

Focus Group

Number of Times Issues Were Raised	Site ARL	Site SWET	Site MS	Site CET	Site GST	Site SD	Total Coding x Group Coding x Issue	
Same / Different	54	1	4	31	31	87	208	
Integration / Assimilation	39	3	5	29	27	59	162	
Religion	15	7	11	29	22	24	108	
Exclusion	14	3	2	21	7	17	64	
Language	14	6	5	19	7	16	67	
Education of Teachers	14	2	2	11	15	12	56	
Curriculum	13	9	7	10	9	25	73	237
Racism	9	4	9	17	7	12	58	492
Help & Support	13	17	3	15	4	15	67	
Resources	9	8	3	5	6	11	42	
Training	6	1	3	7	4	8	29	
Using Children to Bridge Gap	3	7	12	5	4	2	33	248
Use of SPHE	0	0	3	2	2	3	10	
Total Coding x School	**203**	**68**	**69**	**201**	**145**	**291**	**977**	**977**

Colour Coding x Group				
	Represents	Anxieties Around Global Education	1	492	
	Represents	Training & Resources	2	248	
	Represents	Religion & Ethos	3	237	977

Matrix Nodes	Site = ARL	Site = CET	Site = SD	Site = GST	Site = MS	Site = SWET	
(4 1) /Issues Identified/Help and Support	47175	29372	52841	34571	32104	5995	202058
(11) /Teach	47175	29372	52841	13094	17392	5034	164908
(4 7) /Issues Identified/Use	19886	10383	31450	5940	16790	4383	88832
(4 11) /Issues Identified/Same	18466	7238	25678	5441	10366	4189	71378
(4 11 1) /Issues Identified/Same/Different	17727	6408	19526	5441	10048	2657	61807
(4 17) /Issues Identified/Language	8564	5665	14422	3695	5691	2352	40389
(13) /Exclusion	8564	5506	7509	3009	5591	2315	32494
(7) /Teachers	7930	4525	7389	2771	5495	1618	29728
(4 9) /Issues Identified/Education of Teachers	7702	5467	7176	2317	5217	1178	29057
(4 13) /Issues Identified/Resource	6365	4438	7124	2317	5053	1135	26432
(4 5) /Issues Identified/Training	5935	4141	6802	2262	4901	1025	25066
(4 2) /Issues Identified/Race	5657	4066	6504	2141	4820	590	23778
(4 14) /Issues Identified/Catholic	4305	3353	6504	1760	4325	545	20792
(4 8) /Issues Identified/Religion	3922	2632	6094	1675	3666	246	18235
(14) /Communications	3190	1756	5996	1496	2982	48	15468
(4 4) /Issues Identified/Challenge	2999	1718	5540	1330	2537	0	14124
(4 10) /Issues Identified/Integration	2821	1692	4988	1074	0	0	10575
(4 18) /Issues Identified/Discipline	2701	1505	2863	699	0	0	7768
(4 15) /Issues Identified/Curriculum	2264	1310	2083	502	0	0	6159
(4 3) /Issues Identified/Issues	2197	1305	1397	468	0	0	5367
(9) /Learn	2039	1279	1303	354	0	0	4975
(8) /Ethnic	2029	639	976	0	0	0	3644
(4 6) /Issues Identified/Overcome	1665	0	898	0	0	0	2566
(4 12) /Issues Identified/Legal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(4 16) /Issues Identified/SPHE	1	2	2	1	0	0	6
Total Coding by Focus Group	**231279**	**133772**	**277906**	**92358**	**136978**	**33310**	**905606**

Colour Coding x Group					
	Represents	Training & Resources	1	485848	
	Represents	Anxieties Around Global Education	2	314402	
	Represents	Religion & Ethos	3	105356	905606

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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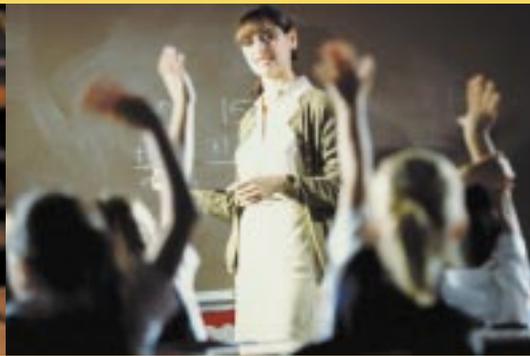
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