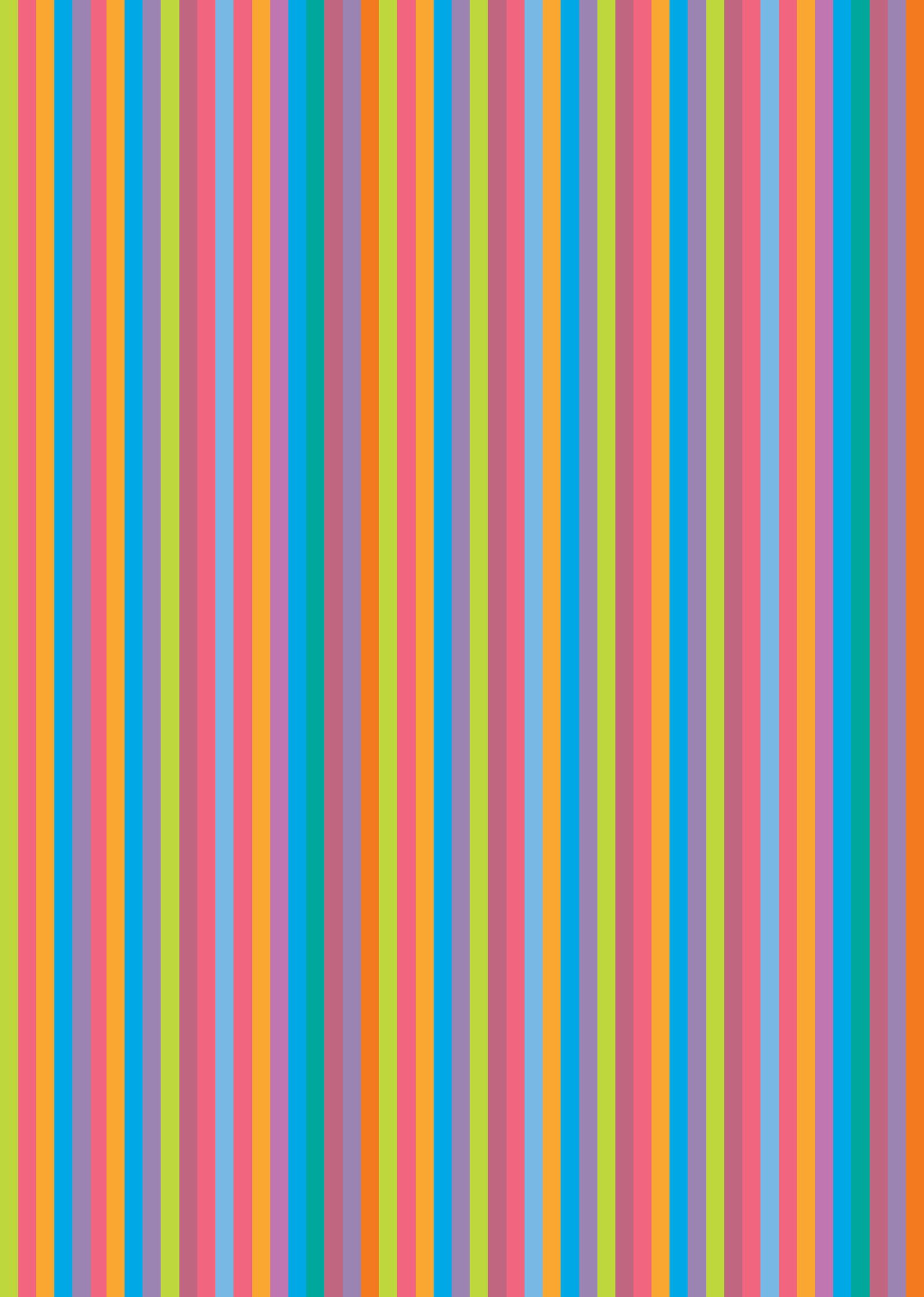


# INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

IN THE  
POST-PRIMARY  
SCHOOL

Enabling students to  
respect and celebrate  
diversity, to promote  
equality and to challenge  
unfair discrimination





**INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**ENABLING STUDENTS TO RESPECT AND CELEBRATE DIVERSITY,  
TO PROMOTE EQUALITY AND TO CHALLENGE UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION**





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## SUBJECT STATEMENTS

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Additional resources, including curriculum audits for each subject identifying opportunities for exploring intercultural themes and exemplar lessons, can be accessed on the accompanying CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).



## INTRODUCTION

**Education is therefore an education in freedom—freedom from inherited biases and narrow feelings and sentiments, as well as freedom to explore other cultures and perspectives and make one’s own choices in full awareness of available and practicable alternatives.**

(Bhikhu Parekh, 1986)

### WHAT IS INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION?

At its core, intercultural education has two focal points:

- It is education which respects, celebrates and recognises the normality of diversity in all parts of human life. It sensitises the learner to the idea that humans have naturally developed a range of different ways of life, customs and worldviews, and that this breadth of human life enriches all of us.
- It is education which promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination and promotes the values upon which equality is built.

Intercultural education is a synthesis of the learning from multicultural education approaches and anti-racist education approaches which were commonly used internationally from the 1960s to the 1990s. Ireland has long had an experience

of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. This can be seen, for example, in the way in which bilingualism in Gaeilge and English has played an important part in Irish life as well as in the long-standing presence of the Traveller community and of minority religious groups. In recent years this diversity has been added to through immigration. Different words like ‘multicultural’ and ‘intercultural’ have been used in recent years to describe the changes that have been happening in Irish society. Common to them all is the idea of ‘culture’. Both these terms describe a situation where there is more than one culture in a country. While the term ‘multiculturalism’ is sometimes used to describe a society in which different cultures live side by side without much interaction, the term ‘interculturalism’ expresses a belief that we all become personally enriched by coming in contact with and experiencing other cultures, and

that people of different cultures can and should be able to engage with each other and learn from each other.

Education not only reflects society but is also an influence in shaping its development. As such, schools are one of the institutions that have a role to play in the development of an intercultural society. While education cannot bear the sole responsibility for challenging racism and promoting intercultural competence, it has an important contribution to make in facilitating the development of intercultural skills, attitudes, values and knowledge.

An intercultural education is valuable to all students in equipping them to participate in an increasingly diverse Ireland, Europe and global society. Equally, an education that has a limited cultural focus will be less likely to develop these capacities in students.

In *Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second Level Schools*, (pp.20-21) the Department of Education and Science (2002) has defined intercultural education as aiming to:

- foster conditions conducive to pluralism in society
- raise pupils' awareness of their own culture and to attune them to the fact that there are other ways of behaving and other value systems
- develop respect for lifestyles different from their own so that pupils can understand and appreciate each other
- foster a commitment to equality;
- enable pupils to make informed choices about, and to take action on, issues of prejudice and discrimination
- appreciate and value similarities and differences;
- enable all pupils to speak for themselves and to articulate their cultures and histories.

Some key features of intercultural education are:

- Intercultural education is for all students irrespective of their ethnicity. Since all our students live in a country and a world that is becoming increasingly diverse, we need to prepare them for that world. Intercultural education is an important part of every student's educational experience whether he/she is in a school which is characterised by ethnic diversity, in a predominantly mono-ethnic school, or whether the student is from the dominant or a minority culture.
- Intercultural education is for all students irrespective of their age. Recognising that diversity is normal in humans is something that is appropriate at all ages.
- Dialogue and story are identified as fundamental components of intercultural education. While it is important to give young people accurate information and to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions, equipping them with intercultural capacity is more effective if it is done through open dialogue which allows them to express their thoughts, fears and perceptions rather than simply telling them the 'right and wrong' of the situation.
- Intercultural education happens naturally through the 'hidden curriculum' of the social and visual world within which the student learns. While it is possible and necessary to include intercultural ideas in the taught 'formal curriculum', the images, messages and values that are conveyed throughout the school culture are also crucial. In exploring the hidden curriculum it is important to note that what is absent can be as important as what is present.
- Intercultural education is concerned with ethnicity and culture and not simply with skin colour. Intercultural education would

be equally concerned with discrimination against white minority ethnic groups such as people from Eastern Europe or Travellers, or against other cultural minority groups such as those for whom Irish is a first language.

## AIMS OF THE GUIDELINES

These guidelines identify the ways in which intercultural education can be integrated into the curriculum in post-primary schools. While the examples in these guidelines focus mainly on Junior Certificate subjects, intercultural education is relevant to senior cycle education too and there are ample opportunities within senior cycle programmes and subjects to incorporate intercultural perspectives.

The aim of these guidelines is to contribute to the development of Ireland as an intercultural society through the development of a shared sense that language, culture and ethnic diversity is valuable.

They aim to contribute to the development of a shared ability and sense of responsibility to protect for each other the right to be different and to live free from discrimination.

The specific objectives of the guidelines are to:

- support the aims of post-primary curricula in the context of a growing cultural and ethnic diversity in a way which will maximise and enrich learning for all students and make the curriculum as accessible as possible for students from minority ethnic groups
- address the curriculum needs of all post-primary students, whether from a minority or the majority ethnic group, which arise in the context of a growing

- cultural and ethnic diversity
- facilitate schools and teachers in creating an inclusive culture and environment
- raise awareness within the educational community on issues which arise from linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity in Ireland
- provide an overview of assessment in an intercultural context.

## USING THE GUIDELINES

The audience for the guidelines include those with a responsibility for and interest in post-primary education. The document is of particular relevance to teachers, school managers, school support staff and policy makers. It is hoped that these guidelines will support teachers, both individually and as teams, in developing a more inclusive classroom environment. They will also support whole school planning and policy development within schools and so contribute to developing a school culture that is welcoming, respectful and sensitive to the needs of all students.

The guidelines are written so that they can be used in a number of ways. Some people will read the guidelines from the beginning and work through them to the end. Others will find it useful to focus initially on the specific chapter that addresses a need that is pressing for them and then expand their reading to include the rest of the chapters. In order to facilitate these ways of using the guidelines, key ideas are occasionally repeated at intervals throughout the guidelines.

**Chapter 1** provides background information that places the rest of the guidelines in context. It outlines the extent and nature of cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity in contemporary Ireland and also defines terms like ‘racism’ and ‘institutional racism’.



**Chapter 2** articulates the major elements of an intercultural approach to education.

**Chapter 3** highlights the ways in which intercultural education should be taken into account in school planning, policy development and in shaping the whole school environment. It identifies that all of the members of the school community have an important role to play in ensuring an intercultural ethos within the school.

**Chapter 4** focuses attention on the classroom and classroom planning. It explores the ways in which the social, visual and educational environment of the classroom can maximise the intercultural experience of all students in school. It also looks at choosing resources and welcoming a student from another culture.

**Chapter 5** explores the integration of intercultural themes—identity and belonging, similarity and difference, human rights and responsibilities, discrimination and equality, conflict and conflict resolution across a range of Junior Certificate subjects. While the examples in the guidelines relate to Junior Certificate subjects, intercultural education is equally important for and relevant to senior cycle students. The CD-ROM included with the Guidelines and the NCCA website [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) provide exemplars of classwork incorporating the intercultural themes.

**Chapter 6** identifies and describes the approaches and methodologies that are particularly suitable for intercultural education. It also offers practical tips on dealing with controversial issues in the classroom.

**Chapter 7** deals with assessment and cultural diversity. It highlights the ways in which different forms of assessment can become biased or unreliable in a culturally diverse context and it provides guidance on how teachers can broaden the range of tools used for assessment.

**Chapter 8** explores the creation of a supportive language environment for learners of Irish and English, with particular reference to students who are learning the language of instruction as a second language.

These guidelines are designed to provide support for all the members of the school community, including teachers, school managers, support staff and parents.

In this respect, they deal with a wide range of issues, including school planning, classroom planning, assessment and the language environment.

While these guidelines focus on discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, many of the underlying ideas are equally applicable to other forms of discrimination such as sexism, ageism or discrimination against people with a disability.

These *Guidelines on Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School* are accompanied by *Guidelines on Intercultural Education in the Primary School*. Both sets of guidelines are based on the same key principles and themes. Together, they provide a context in which young people will continue to develop intercultural competence in an integrated way as they transfer from primary to post-primary education.

**“ Intercultural education is important for all students to help them to participate in an increasingly diverse Ireland, Europe and global society...”**



## **The Context of Intercultural Education**





## THE CONTEXT OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

**The more people who are on the margins the weaker is the centre... we all have a stake in building a future which respects and celebrates diversity—a generous sharing Ireland that encompasses many traditions and cultures and creates space for all its people.**

(President Mary McAleese, 24 February 2000)

The growth of immigration into Ireland since the mid-1990s has brought the issue of ethnic and cultural diversity to the forefront and has encouraged discussion around diversity. However, it would not be accurate to suggest that Ireland has only recently experienced diversity. Significant minority ethnic, linguistic and religious groups have long been part of Irish society. Ireland has a long history of cultural diversity that has contributed to making Ireland the country it is today. In a wider sense, membership of a European and global community has also played a significant role in the experience of being Irish. In the context of growing diversity, and growing awareness of diversity, issues of discrimination, particularly racial discrimination, have come into focus. Anti-discrimination has been written into Irish law and into education policy. All these factors combine to provide the background within which these guidelines operate.

### ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN IRELAND

The growth in ethnic and cultural diversity in Ireland in recent years has arisen for a number of reasons, including increased movement from other EU countries (Table 2), as well as increases in asylum seekers (Table 4) and in those issued work permits (Table 3). This diversity is not, however, an entirely new phenomenon: Ireland has, in fact, a long history of cultural diversity.

**Table 1: Place of birth of people usually living in Ireland in Census figures, 1991 and 2002**

Place of Birth	1991	2002
Ireland	93.9 %	89.6 %
Northern Ireland	1.0 %	1.3 %
Great Britain	3.8 %	5.1 %
Other EU	0.4 %	0.9 %
USA	0.4 %	0.6 %
Other Countries	0.6 %	2.5 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**Table 2: Estimated immigration to Ireland of people of EU nationality**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
UK	8,300	8,200	8,300	7,900	7,100	7,000	5,100
Rest of EU	5,000	5,500	5,800	6,800	7,100	5,800	6,100

Note: A substantial number of those included in the above statistics are not immigrants in the strict sense but returning Irish migrants. The figure for returning Irish migrants peaked in 1999, at 55 per cent of all migrants. At present is it under 40 per cent.

As EU citizens, Irish people enjoy the right to move to other EU states. Other EU citizens, including the 10 countries that joined the EU in May 2004, also enjoy the same right, and many have chosen to live and work in Ireland. From May 2004 to April 2005 85,114 people from the ten accession countries were allocated Personal Public Service Numbers (PPS No) in Ireland. We cannot be certain that all those people are now working in Ireland but it would be the intention of the majority of those applying for PPS Nos to work. This movement of people across European borders has contributed to a cultural exchange between European countries as well as affording people an opportunity to identify the similarities that underlie our European identity.

During the economic boom years of the late 1990s and early 2000s, significant labour shortages developed which had a negative impact on economic growth. The number of workers from EU countries was not sufficient to meet the economy's labour needs. As a result, work permits were issued to non-EU citizens to fill specified jobs. Apart from EU citizens living in Ireland, significant numbers of migrant workers have come to Ireland from countries such as Russia, Romania, the Philippines, South Africa and the Ukraine.

**Table 3: Employment migration to Ireland from outside the EU**

<b>2000</b>	18,000 work permits issued
<b>2001</b>	36,000 work permits issued
<b>2002</b>	40,000 work permits issued
<b>2003</b>	47,551 work permits issued
<b>2004</b>	34,067 work permits issued

Another group of recent immigrants to Ireland comprises those who are seeking asylum. The asylum process is designed to protect those who have a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin. In order to protect such people, the right to ask for asylum was written into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Those who are granted asylum are known as refugees. The numbers of asylum seekers and refugees internationally grew during the 1980s and early 1990s. In the UK, for example, the number of asylum seekers grew from 2,905 in 1984 to 22,005 in 1990 and 44,845 in 1991. In Ireland, at the same time, the number of people seeking asylum rarely rose above 50. In 1991 it stood at 31.

**Table 4: Asylum Applications in Ireland**

Year	
1992	40
1993	90
1994	360
1995	420
1996	1,180
1997	3,880
1998	4,630
1999	7,720
2000	10,938
2001	10,325
2002	11,634
2003	7,900
2004	4,766

During the 1990s Ireland began to receive a larger share of asylum seekers (Table 4). These asylum seekers came from many countries including Nigeria, Romania, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Russian Federation, Algeria, and the Ukraine. In addition to those who sought asylum in Ireland, the Irish government has, at various times, welcomed groups of people who were fleeing persecution, such as those from former Yugoslav states such as Bosnia-Herzegovina during the period of genocide in that country, or at a later date, those fleeing persecution in Kosovo. These were known as Programme Refugees and did not have to go through the asylum process. In recent years the number of applications for asylum in Ireland has been decreasing.

Simply listing the numbers of people and the countries from which they come in this way does not fully represent the reality of cultural diversity, which these immigrants represent. A country like Nigeria, for example, contains three major ethnic groups and, perhaps more than 240 minority languages and ethnic groups.

Other countries of origin may also be quite diverse.

Although the recent growth in immigration has given rise to a greater awareness of cultural diversity in Ireland, it could be argued that Ireland has long been culturally diverse. One of the largest minority ethnic groups in Ireland is the Irish Traveller community. There are an estimated 25,000 Travellers in Ireland, a further 15,000 Irish Travellers living in the UK and 10,000 living in the USA. The Irish Government's 1995 *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community* identifies that Travellers are a distinct ethnic group in Ireland, but also identifies that this has often not been fully recognised.

It is clear that the Traveller community's culture is distinct and different. 'Settled' people generally recognise the difference but fail to understand it as cultural difference. This is a phenomenon, characteristic of many societies, where the majority culture sees itself as holding a universal validity or norm in relation to values, meanings and identity.

Ireland has also long been a linguistically diverse society and has two official languages, Irish and English. The island of Ireland is also the home of a number of other native languages, including Ulster Scots, Irish Sign language and Gammon or Cant (a language historically known to and used by Irish Travellers). Indeed, like many societies world wide, Ireland is characterised by some degree of bilingualism. The 1996 Census showed that, as well as being speakers of English, 43 per cent of the Irish population were speakers of Irish. In Gaeltacht areas, this rises to 76 per cent. On a national basis, one quarter of those who speak Irish use it daily. This rises to 60 per cent in Gaeltacht areas. For some, Irish is their first language (usually with English as a second

language). For others, it is a second language, learned in addition to the language of their home. This highlights the complexity and diversity of the linguistic environment in Ireland, and indeed in Irish education. Both Irish and English play an important role in Irish identity and society, and both languages are required subjects of study for students following the junior cycle programme.

Religious diversity is also a feature of Irish society. The 2002 Census shows that over 11% of the population belong to minority religious groups. Alongside the 3.4 million Roman Catholics in the state, over 200,000 people were described as having no religion or did not state a religion, while over 115,600 people described their religion as Church of Ireland or Protestant. Presbyterians and Muslims each account for about 20,000 people while the Orthodox Church accounted for over 10,000 people. Other significant religious groups in Ireland include Jews and Jehovah's Witnesses. While the religious make-up of Ireland has changed over the years, Ireland has long had significant religious diversity. Indeed, in the past the Protestant and Jewish populations in Ireland would have been significantly larger than in more recent times.

Even within the majority ethnic group (although the term 'ethnic' is often applied to minority groups, everyone has an ethnicity) there exists significant diversity in lifestyle, values and beliefs. A number of studies of Irish attitudes and values show significant differences between urban and rural dwellers, as well as differences across age, education level and social class. This suggests that, even without looking at minority ethnic groups, the generalisation that is called Irish culture hides a great diversity of ways of life. Diversity in food, music, lifestyle, religious beliefs, language, values, ethnicity and, increasingly, in skin

colour, are a core part of Irish life. They each play a role in contributing to the rich mix that is Irishness.

In this respect, Ireland today mirrors Ireland at various times in her past. Ireland has been forged from diversity, from successive waves of immigration including Celtic, Viking, Norman, English, Scots and Huguenot, something which can be seen in the diversity of origins of names which are typical in Ireland. The Irish Nobel Prize winning playwright George Bernard Shaw expressed this when he wrote, "I am a genuine typical Irishman of the Danish, Norman, Cromwellian and (of course) Scotch invasions."

## RACISM IN IRELAND

Some researchers indicate that a traditional view of Irishness—one that does not recognise the cultural and ethnic diversity, which has long existed in Ireland—has made many Irish people from minority groups feel excluded. In a similar way, the idea that 'Irish' means 'settled' has meant that there has been little accommodation for what is distinctive in Traveller culture in Irish society. These can be understood as some of the manifestations of racism in Irish society.

### UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice

**Article 2:2** – Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviour, structural arrangements and institutionalised practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally justifiable; it is reflected in discriminatory provisions in legislation or regulations and discriminatory practices as well as in anti-social beliefs and acts...

### UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

**Article 1** – "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

The term 'race' appears in inverted commas each time it is used here (except in quotes) because scientific research has now made clear that, although the term is widely used to describe groups of people who are thought of as biologically separate, there is, in fact, no genetic or other scientific basis underlying the term.

Racism is one of a number of forms of discrimination that exist in contemporary societies. Others include sexism, ageism and discrimination on the basis of a disability. All involve rules, practices, attitudes and beliefs which have the effect of denying or impairing someone's access to the same basic rights and freedoms as everyone else. Despite their similarities as forms of discrimination, racism is sometimes wrongly perceived as being worse than other forms of discrimination, perhaps because it is often associated in people's minds with violence, genocide or 'hate crime'. The term racism, used properly, has much wider implications than a narrow focus on 'racial' hatred or violence would suggest. It encompasses a range of *attitudes or beliefs* on one hand and *practices or rules* on the other. This means that the term 'racism' actually includes some things that may not

have appeared as such to many people at a first glance.

- An *attitude or belief* is racist if it implies that some groups are superior or inferior to others based on their 'race', colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin. This might include the belief that certain groups (for example, Traveller, Asian or Middle Eastern cultures) are more primitive or contain less intrinsic value than others.
- A *racist practice or rule* is one that distinguishes, excludes, restricts or gives rise to a preference based on 'race', colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin. Racist practices and rules make it more difficult for members of some groups to attain the human rights, access to opportunities and life chances to which they are entitled. Racist practices or rules may be practised by *individuals* (for example through name-calling, racist graffiti, excluding people or using violence against them), or by *institutions* (for example, through the application of rules or regulations which do not make allowance for cultural difference).

These interlocking dimensions of racism are represented graphically in Figure 1.

### RACIST ATTITUDES OR BELIEFS

Studies in Ireland from the 1980s onwards have consistently found a significant minority who held hostile attitudes. In his study of *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland* Micheál Mac Gréil found that in the late 1980s there was a significant minority of Irish people who expressed racist views:

- 16.7% of his national sample said that black people could never become as good Irish people as others because of their basic make up.
- 10.8 % believed that black people were inferior to white people.

# THE CONTEXT OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

- Only 13.5% would welcome a Traveller into the family through marriage while 59% would not welcome Travellers as next door neighbours.
- When asked if an American person would be welcome into the family, 78.6% said that they would welcome a white American, while only 26.2% would welcome a black American.
- 95.6% said they would have white Americans as a next-door neighbour, but only 59% said they would similarly welcome black Americans.
- 31% support promoting equality at all levels of social life (also the lowest in the European Union)
- Irish people are more prepared to welcome Muslims and people from eastern and central Europe than are other EU citizens, but are less welcoming of people fleeing human rights abuses or situations of conflict
- Only 32% of Irish people feel minorities enrich our cultural life compared to 50% of all EU citizens surveyed.

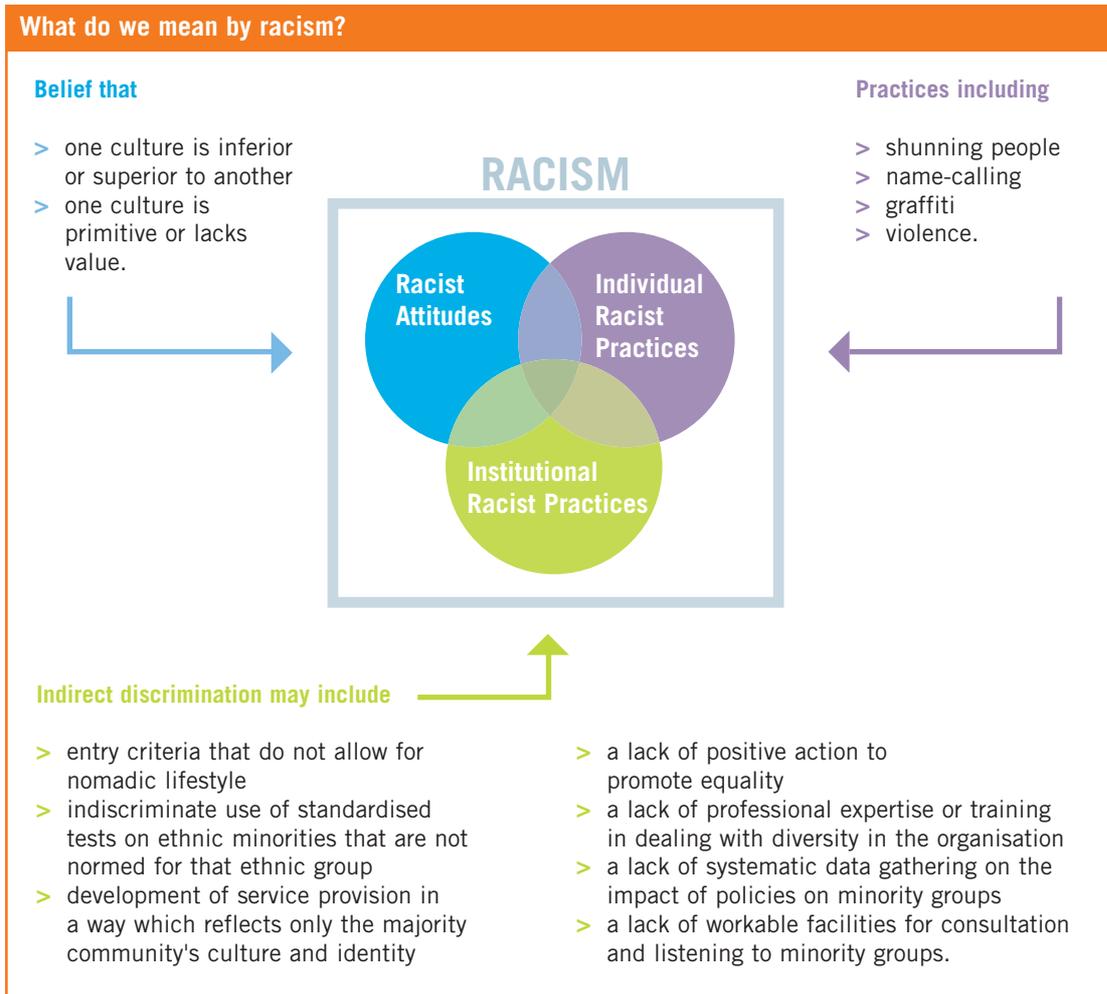
A 2000 *Eurobarometer* study found that, in Ireland

- 13% of the national representative sample had very negative attitudes towards minorities
- 24% support the outlawing of discrimination against minorities (the lowest figure in the European Union)

Recent studies have found that some school children associate black people with images of poverty, warfare and helplessness with which they have become familiar from pictures and stories from Africa which are commonly used in Ireland. While such attitudes may express themselves through ideas of charity and aid, they can be understood as racist attitudes, if they are based on a sense that African cultures are inferior to Western cultures.



**FIGURE 1**



**RACIST PRACTICES BY INDIVIDUALS**

Evidence of racist practices by individuals can be found in studies of the experiences of ethnic minorities in Ireland. In a 2001 Amnesty International survey of ethnic minorities in Ireland, 78 per cent of more than 600 respondents from a variety of ethnic minorities living all over Ireland highlighted that they had been a victim of racism, most often in public places like the street, or in shops or pubs, and over 80 per cent of the sample tended to agree that racism is a serious problem in contemporary Ireland.

In 1995, the Government’s Task Force on the Travelling Community noted:

Discrimination at the individual level is most common when a Traveller seeks access to any of a range of goods, services and facilities, to which access is denied purely on the basis of their identity as Travellers. Examples abound of public houses refusing to serve Travellers, hotels refusing to book Traveller weddings, bingo halls barring Traveller women, leisure facilities barring access to Travellers, and insurance companies refusing to provide motor insurance cover. This experience can also include physical and verbal attacks and intimidation. (pp 70-80).

## RACIST PRACTICES BY INSTITUTIONS

While individual racist practices and attitudes are sometimes the most obvious form of racism, they are not the only form of racism. The term institutional racism is used to describe racism in the form of discriminatory provisions in legislation, regulations or other formal practices. Institutional racism includes:

- indirect discriminations
- a lack of positive action to promote equality
- a lack of professional expertise or training in dealing with diversity in the organisation
- a lack of systematic data gathering on the impact of policies on minority groups
- a lack of workable facilities for consultation and listening to minority groups.

Indirect racism and other types of indirect discrimination occur when practices or policies, which do not appear to discriminate against one group more than another, actually have a discriminatory impact. It can also happen where a requirement, which may appear non-discriminatory, has an adverse effect on a group or class of people. For example, a school that, because it is oversubscribed, offers places first to children who have a sibling there is likely to disadvantage nomadic families who move into and out of a given area. While the practice did not originate from the prejudiced intention of reducing the numbers of Traveller children, this will be the effect. Such a practice would also have the effect of reducing the numbers of children of recent immigrants in the school. Practices such as these are defined as indirect racism.

Indirect racism may be found in the application of culturally inappropriate

criteria in rules or regulations. For example, if the entry criteria for a society, club or school required people to be resident in an area, this may discriminate against nomadic families. Indirect racism may also be found in the development of provision which reflects only the majority culture or which assumes that everyone belongs to that culture. For example, if information or services are made available in a way that assumes that everyone will have a good proficiency in the language of the majority, those who have difficulty with that language may be discriminated against. If clinical testing or interviewing is only carried out in the language of the majority or in a way which reflects the culture of the majority, or using criteria which are derived in respect of the majority population, incorrect judgements may be reached concerning members of minority groups.

## DISCRIMINATION AND INTERCULTURALISM IN LAW AND POLICY

In recent years, the Irish Government has worked to challenge racism and to promote intercultural practices in Ireland. To these ends, it has introduced both legislation and initiatives. These have

- provided a framework for people to challenge racism and discrimination in Ireland across a range of grounds
- promoted equality and interculturalism through education and public awareness.

A National Action Plan Against Racism (NPAR) has been developed by the Government. This was a key commitment, which arose from the World Conference Against Racism, which was held in Durban, in South Africa, in 2001. This will include an education action plan against racism.



Legislation which provides a framework for people to challenge discrimination includes the Employment Equality Act (1998) and the Equal Status Act (2000). These make it illegal to discriminate against a person in employment, vocational training, advertising, collective agreements, the provision of goods and services and other opportunities to which the public generally have access, if the discrimination happens on one of nine grounds. The grounds are gender, marital status, family status (having children or being a carer), age (between the ages of 18 and 65), disability, race, sexual orientation, religious belief, membership of the Traveller community.

Much of Ireland's policy framework for education has sought to promote equality and interculturalism through education. The 1995 *White Paper on Education—Charting our Education Future* highlights that equality and pluralism are two of the key considerations, which underpin

educational policy. It also notes 'the democratic character of this society requires education to embrace the diverse traditions, beliefs and values of its people'.

These principles are also endorsed in school curricula. The Primary School Curriculum recognises the diversity of beliefs, values and aspirations of all religious and cultural groupings in Irish society and acknowledges that it has a 'responsibility in promoting tolerance and respect for diversity in both school and the community'. This is reiterated in two of the aims and principles of the Junior Certificate education which states,

The Junior Certificate programme aims to

- contribute to the moral and spiritual development of the young person and to develop a tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of others;

- prepare the young person for the responsibilities of citizenship in the national context and in the context of the wider European and global communities.

*Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second-Level Schools*, issued by the Department of Education and Science in 2002, also emphasise the importance of interculturalism within the school. In this, they emphasise the two elements of intercultural education, appreciation of diversity and the challenging of inequality.

An intercultural approach is important within the curriculum in order to help students to develop the ability to recognise inequality, injustice, racism, prejudice and bias and to equip them to challenge and to try to change these manifestations when they encounter them. Young people should be enabled to appreciate the richness of a diversity of cultures and be supported in practical ways to recognise and to challenge prejudice and discrimination where they exist. (p. 20).

All children, irrespective of their country of origin or their reasons for being in Ireland, are entitled to free primary and post-primary education. All children are required to attend school from the age of 6 to the age of 16, or until the completion of three years of post-primary education, whichever is later. The Department of Education and Science does not differentiate between ‘national’ and ‘non-national’ children.

Intercultural education is one of the key responses to the changing shape of Irish society and to the existence of racism and discriminatory attitudes in Ireland. As an approach, it emerges naturally from existing educational policy and is in keeping with other equality legislation and initiatives.





**Intercultural Education  
in the Post-Primary School**

# 2



# 2

## INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development, for personal and family life, for working life, for living in community and for leisure.

(The aims of the Junior Certificate as stated by the Department of Education and Science)

If the primary aim of education is the preparation of young people for the challenges of living in the world today then intercultural education is an essential part of that process. Intercultural education is not another subject to be added to the curriculum, nor does it involve extra material to be covered in particular subjects. It is an approach to education that can be integrated across all subject areas.

Chapter 5 illustrates how such an approach might be taken in a range of subject areas. However, it is important to emphasise that there are opportunities for all teachers to promote the knowledge, values and skills associated with intercultural education through their interactions with students both within formal class time and informally.

Two of the aims of the Junior Certificate programme are to:

- contribute to the moral and spiritual development of the young person and to develop a tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of others;
- prepare the young person for the responsibilities of citizenship in the national context and in the context of the wider European and global communities.

This is echoed in the statement of purpose and aims of senior cycle education:

The fundamental purpose of senior cycle education is to enable and prepare people to live lives to the fullest potential within democratic society.

(Developing Senior Cycle Education, NCCA, 2003, p.37)

One of the specific aims of senior cycle education is to

- educate for participative citizenship at local, national, European and global levels.

Intercultural education is one way that a school can make provision for the realisation of these aims.

It can also inform and support whole school development planning and it can contribute to the development of a school culture that is open, positive, inclusive and sensitive to the needs of all students. These guidelines for post-primary schools must be seen in the context of a longer process.

Guidelines have also been produced for primary schools and it is hoped that both sets of guidelines will support and build upon each other providing teachers with a coherent and comprehensive menu of ideas for incorporating an intercultural perspective across the student's full learning experience.

This chapter outlines some of the characteristics that underlie contemporary good practice in the area of intercultural education.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

The following seven characteristics of intercultural education are discussed in this chapter:

- Intercultural education is for all children;
- Intercultural education is embedded in knowledge and understanding, skills and capacities, and attitudes and values;
- Intercultural education is integrated with all subjects and with the general life of the school;

- Intercultural education requires a real-world focus;
- Language is central to developing intercultural abilities and capacities;
- Intercultural education takes time;
- The school as a model of good practice.

## Intercultural education is for all

Intercultural education is based on the general aim of enabling the student to develop as a social being through respecting and co-operating with others, thus contributing to the good of society. Intercultural education is beneficial to all the students in our schools, irrespective of their skin colour or ethnicity, since all students need to learn how to live within and contribute to the evolution of our growing multicultural society.

As the Rampton Report in the UK has stated:

*A 'good' education cannot be based on one culture only, and ... where ethnic minorities form a permanent and integral part of the population, we do not believe that education should seek to iron out the differences between cultures, nor attempt to draw everyone into the dominant culture.*

All students have a culture and ethnicity. Learning to value their own culture and ethnicity is central to their self-esteem and sense of identity. Intercultural education facilitates all students in coming to value their own heritage and the heritage of others.

Intercultural education has many benefits:

- It encourages curiosity about cultural and social difference.
- It helps to develop and support young people's imagination by normalising difference.

- It helps to develop critical thinking by enabling people to gain perspective on and question their own cultural practices.
- It helps to develop sensitivity in the student.
- It helps to prevent racism.

**Intercultural education is embedded in knowledge and understanding, skills and capacities, and attitudes and values**

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development. Intercultural education is built on this vision, and is outlined in these guidelines under the headings of knowledge and understanding, skills and capacities, and attitudes and values.

Neither racism nor interculturalism is based on knowledge alone. Both are informed and enforced by emotional responses, feelings and attitudes as well as knowledge. Simply providing people with facts and information or focusing on cognitive development will not, on their own, be sufficient to tackle racism, since there may be an emotional resistance to changing one's mind in light of new evidence, facts or ways of thinking. In particular, the development of positive emotional responses to diversity and empathy with those discriminated against plays a key role in intercultural education. The school that places a high value on the personal well-being of all its students and staff will foster the kind of environment where positive attitudes towards diversity can thrive.

However, intercultural education may give rise to some conflict and to a range of

strong emotions. When people (students, teachers, parents and others in the school community) explore their own attitudes and values and when they look at their own past reactions to certain situations they may get defensive, angry or upset. Learning to deal with one's own emotions and the emotions of others is an integral part of the intrapersonal (self-understanding) and interpersonal (understanding of relationships with others) skills essential for personal, social and educational fulfilment. This is best done within a school and classroom ethos, which is characterised by a caring relationship between staff and students and by providing young people with a positive, inclusive and happy school experience.

**Intercultural education is integrated across all subject areas and into the life of the school**

The integration of knowledge and understanding, skills and capacities, and attitudes and values across all subject areas provides the learner with a more coherent and richer learning experience. It is also more likely that appropriate attitudes and values will be developed by young people if they are integrated across subject areas and within the whole life of the school, than if they are dealt with in a piecemeal or 'one-off' fashion. Intercultural education therefore, should be central to all aspects of school life. It should be reflected in the hidden curriculum of the school, in school policies and practices and the teaching of the different subject areas.

**Intercultural education requires a real-world focus**

It is a fundamental principle of learning that the student's own knowledge and experience should be the starting point for acquiring new understanding. In this

respect, first-hand experience that connects students with the world in which they live and with people of different perspectives and experiences is the most effective basis for learning.

Students' lives will provide the teacher with many opportunities to explore intercultural themes and to develop intercultural competence. Young people may well experience examples of unfairness, discrimination or conflict in their own lives that will enable them to engage in a concrete way with the concerns of intercultural education. Conversely, unless young people are encouraged and facilitated in critical reflection on their own lives, they may well identify with intercultural ideas in abstract but not engage in intercultural practices.

Teachers should be aware that looking at situations which involve conflict or

disagreement between ethnic groups may well give rise to strong emotions, especially if students are being asked to consider if they are part of the dominant or discriminating group. Nonetheless, looking at such situations is central to developing in students the ability to apply intercultural ideas to their own lives.

Examining real-life situations can also play a role in developing a sense of empathy for those who are discriminated against. Many young people will identify that they have been treated unfairly at one time or another, whether that means having had someone else getting preference over them unfairly, or having had assumptions made about them because of the way they look or where they live, or having someone in authority refuse to listen to them. Such experiences mean that students can often readily empathise with others who are victims of discrimination.





### Language is central to developing intercultural abilities and capacities

Whether difference is seen as normal or abnormal, whether equality is seen as a good thing or a problem will depend on the language that students learn to apply to situations. Language not only expresses thoughts, ideas and values-it shapes them too. Because language is so crucial to the learning process the use of dialogue and discussion is a key teaching strategy in all education. Dialogue also allows us to recognise the value of differences. Through dialogue it is possible to see that two people can view the same thing and interpret it differently. Unless we value the differences in our ideas, beliefs and perceptions, unless we value each other and give credence to the possibility that life is richer for all its diversity then we will have difficulties meeting the challenges of an increasingly diverse and complex world.

Dialogue facilitates the exploration of experiences, ideas, and emotions through increasingly complex language. Through dialogue students can also be brought to reflect on the way language is used and the power of language in labelling people. The aim of dialogue in the context of intercultural education is to develop empathetic listening. Empathetic listening means listening with the intent to understand. It means getting inside another person's frame of reference, seeing the world the way they see the world and trying to understand how they feel. Empathy is not sympathy.

*The essence of empathetic listening is not that you agree with someone; it's that you fully, deeply, understand that person, emotionally as well as intellectually. (Covey, 1998, p. 240.)*

Both Irish and English play an important role in Irish identity and society, and an experience in both languages is the right of every child. Experience of a second language is thought to have a number of additional benefits for pupils including enhancing cognitive development and increasing the capacity for learning subsequent languages.

### **Intercultural education takes time**

Children will already have developed some ideas about diversity even prior to entering primary school. By the time they enter post-primary school many of their ideas and prejudices are already well established. These ideas and attitudes are developed over a period of time throughout the child's early years experience. They can be reinforced or challenged as students move through post-primary education.

For adolescents and teenagers conforming with the majority view and behaviour is very important. Kohlberg called this stage of moral development the conventional stage when young people are typically concerned with doing what will gain the approval of others. Therefore developing the skills and capacities to reflect critically and independently and act ethically within that world will not be achieved in one class or one term. It is acknowledged that many adults never go beyond the conventional stage of moral development to the post-conventional level where one's actions are based on moral principals and values and a genuine interest in the welfare of others. Hence building intercultural sensitivity and challenging prejudicial beliefs, attitudes and actions is a lifelong process.

### **The school as a model of good practice**

The social context within which learning takes place is a key influence on the nature and effectiveness of the learning process. In teaching the knowledge, skills and attitudes of intercultural competence the education system can model good practice for the students.

Students will learn attitudes, values and skills through seeing them modelled by those in the school and in the school community. In teaching young people to think critically about the world in which they live, it is appropriate for us model this by thinking critically about our own actions and the institutions within which we work, and if necessary, to vet school policies in relation to the potential for discrimination. Indeed, in this respect, intercultural education will bring benefits to the school and the education system in general, alongside the benefits to individual students.

The concepts of 'indirect racism' and 'institutional racism' help us to understand how institutions such as schools may in fact be unintentionally racist in their operations. When a school prioritises the culture of one ethnic group to the detriment of others it may be guilty of institutional racism. Those in the school community who are responsible for policies, practices, and the cultivation of the school ethos should always be vigilant in ensuring that the culture, beliefs and way of life of all the children in the school are respected.



**School Planning**



3

# 3

## SCHOOL PLANNING

**Formal and informal policies and practices related to all the different components of the life of the school have a significant impact on the experience of students and other members of the school community. The school community develops an experience of, and positive engagement with, cultural diversity through the policies and practices which shape and make up the student's total experience of school life.**

As such, intercultural education extends beyond a narrow focus on the content of classroom teaching. Using an intercultural perspective when addressing the school plan is central to the effective development of an inclusive, intercultural school.

### **THE ROLE OF ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

It is important that all the members of the school community, students, parents, teachers, support staff and management are involved in the collective responsibility of developing and maintaining an inclusive and intercultural school. One of the underlying principles of successful school development planning is good communication between all members of the school community. While some of the actions arising from the planning processes will be mandatory, for example, changes in the school behaviour code or keeping

records of racist incidents, most of the real change will depend on the voluntary actions and goodwill of all the members of the school community. It will be important, therefore, that everyone involved has the opportunity to have their views heard and feel a sense of involvement in the process of change. People may engage with the process with differing levels of enthusiasm and some may be somewhat resistant to certain initiatives. It is not unusual for people to be surprised at some of their own attitudes and beliefs as various issues are discussed. Such resistance, handled sensitively, can provide a valuable opportunity to raise people's awareness and develop their intercultural capacities and knowledge. It may provide an impetus for staff to explore these issues further in training aimed at developing a sense of the value and normality of diversity and at enabling them to recognise and challenge unfair discrimination and racism.

### STUDENT COUNCILS

As the representative structure for all the students in a school, the Student Council can play a very important role in the development of an intercultural school environment. In fact working in partnership with school management, staff and parents on planning for an intercultural school can provide the Student Council with a focus that could lead them to be involved in a number of related activities. For example:

- liaising with Principal and Board of Management on intercultural issues of concern to students
- involvement with the school planning process of the school
- making their views known in relation to policies that are being developed or modified to reflect an intercultural perspective, for example the reception and induction of new students
- making suggestions for improving the physical and social environment of the school
- contributing to the development of a school charter that celebrates diversity and promotes equality
- ensuring an intercultural balance in the school newsletter/magazine
- mentoring programmes for newcomer students.

The Student Council should listen to the views of the students in the school when drawing up their calendar of activities for the school. In this respect it would be important that the council would ensure that newcomer students to the school are represented in the collection of views. Further information on the work of and setting up of Student Councils is available on [www.studentcouncil.ie](http://www.studentcouncil.ie)

### THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Parental involvement is crucial to a student's success in school. The involvement of parents in the formal education of their children complements and acknowledges their central role in the child's development. Parents may feel reluctant about approaching their child's school. This may be particularly an issue for parents from minority ethnic groups or for those whose first language is not that of the school. In order to improve school contact with all parents and the wider community, schools might consider

- supporting the work of the parents' association and encouraging the association to become involved in the development of school policies and plans



- providing information to parents in a way which takes account of the existence of a diversity of literacy levels as well as cultural and linguistic diversity. For example, parent-teacher meetings, school handbook, inviting parents in to the school for special events
- providing opportunities for informal meetings of staff and parents and establishing parent—teacher contact that offers opportunities to discuss and understand each other’s points of view
- addressing parental fears and concerns
- inviting parents to become involved in extra-curricular activities or intercultural events
- identifying opportunities where parents and other members of the community can support the school, for example, language support, translation, homework clubs
- developing strategies to involve the wider community in an intercultural approach, for example, inviting individuals or community groups that may have a particular area of expertise.

### SCHOOL PLANNING FOR AN INTERCULTURAL SCHOOL

School planning for an intercultural school can be incorporated into school planning work which is being started in schools or is already underway. Each school community will be at a different stage in the school development planning process and will also have different conceptions of the most appropriate way of developing an inclusive and intercultural school. These differences will affect the way in which each school community engages in the planning process.

In the Department of Education and Science’s *School Planning: Developing a School Plan-Guidelines for Second Level Schools*, it is suggested that there are four main stages that might be considered by schools: review of current practice and

provision, design of a plan, implementation and evaluation. These stages form a cyclical process, which continually underpin the work of the school. Further details on the review, design, implementation and evaluation process can be accessed in the support materials provided by the School Development Planning Initiative ([www.sdpi.ie](http://www.sdpi.ie)).

There are many approaches to school development planning and it is important that the school community adopts an approach that suits its particular situation. However, sometimes it can be difficult to know where to start. The following guidelines may give some ideas about how a school might include an intercultural perspective in school planning.

The planning process should assist all the members of the school community in developing an inclusive and intercultural school that addresses the needs of all its students. The planning process should include the following:

- conducting an intercultural school review
- including an intercultural awareness in the school mission, policy and action plan
- implementing the school plan
- monitoring and evaluating the action plan.

### The school review

As an initial step in the planning process it is useful to engage in a review of where the school is positioned at the moment in relation to being inclusive and intercultural. To this end the school community could engage in an intercultural school review. The School Review Checklist (Figure 2) could be used as a model for planning this review.

**FIGURE 2: SCHOOL REVIEW CHECKLIST**

**For each question place a tick in the appropriate box.** The more positive answers the more intercultural the school context is. Negative answers identify opportunities for further development. Use them to make a list of what you need to do, and try to set achievable deadlines for addressing these issues.

	YES	TO SOME EXTENT	NOT YET
<b>School mission or vision</b>	✓	✓	✓
Is the mission statement written in such a way that it is easy for all in the school community to understand?			
Does the mission or vision include a commitment to help each student towards achieving his or her full potential?			
Does it reflect the principles of equality and diversity?			
Does it promote a positive self-concept for each student?			
<b>Current practice</b>	✓	✓	✓
Do all aspects of the school plan have an intercultural perspective?			
Are school organisational and administrative procedures fair and considerate of the needs of all students?			
Is the language of the school, both spoken and written, inclusive of all cultures?			
Is the school environment, both physical and social, inclusive of all cultures?			
Is the school complying with the relevant legislation in this area?			
<b>Other issues to consider</b>			
How have our practices changed in light of cultural diversity in recent years?			
What intercultural issues are staff most concerned with at the moment?			
Who should be involved in drawing up a plan for an intercultural school?			
What aspects of school policy and practice need to be addressed?			
What resource documents should be referred to in the planning process?			
What resources, human and capital, are employed to facilitate intercultural education?			

## Developing a school mission, policy and plan

Once the review has taken place decisions can be made as to what needs to be done next. It is important to pick the issues that are of most relevance to the school at this time and to include some issues that can be addressed quite quickly so that the school community can see something happening in the short term. This is not to undermine the importance of addressing the bigger issues that may take longer to happen, as these are likely to effect the more long-term changes in school culture that will have the greatest impact.

### The school mission

The fundamental purpose of the school development plan is to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all the students in the school. The mission statement will reflect the ethos of the school community and encapsulate the aspirations, expectations and traditions of the school. In formulating this mission and in reflecting on its own ethos, the school community will build a shared vision of how it can help each child towards achieving his or her full potential. A school philosophy that accommodates principles of equality, diversity and the promotion of a positive self-concept and personal well-being for each individual is likely to ensure a supportive environment in which the particular educational needs of all young people may be met.

All schools have a sense of mission or vision. In some schools this will have been considered as part of the school development process and will be clearly articulated. Other schools may not have reached a stage where they have formalised the mission statement but nonetheless may have a clear sense of what the school is about. Therefore, in reviewing the school's

provision for the education of all students in an inclusive and intercultural school, considering the mission statement and characteristic spirit of the school may be a good place to start.

### School organisation and management

The school planning process facilitates the formulation of basic policies in relation to important routines and procedures of daily school organisation and management. Consistency in the implementation of agreed policies greatly assists in the effective running of the school. The school plan incorporates a coherent set of general policies that reflect the particular situation in which the school operates. Schools may have policies on

- school enrolment and admissions
- school code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy
- programme and subject choices
- religious education
- involvement of parents in the school and home-school-community liaison
- the allocation of specialist resources
- assessment
- the special responsibilities of the staff of the school
- school uniform
- healthy eating
- tours and extra curricular activities
- homework
- learning support
- home-school partnership
- induction and reception of new students.

All schools are required under the Education Act (1998) to ensure that the school plan supports principles of equality of access and participation. These principles should be reflected in the school's general organisational policies and the school plan should formally set out the measures the school proposes to take to achieve these objectives. One way to

ensure this is addressed at all stages of school planning and policy making is to have an *Intercultural Education* heading for every section of the School Plan, and for each policy addressed therein. As part of the planning process, reference should be made to

- the Education Act (1998)
- the Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- the Equal Status Act (2000)
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004).

### Curriculum and assessment

How the school manages curriculum and assessment is informed by its educational aims and objectives. The school's broad curriculum programme should be sufficiently comprehensive and flexible to ensure that the needs of all students are catered for.

Intercultural education promotes an engagement with a diversity of cultures for students of all ethnic groups and religions. As such, students of ethnic groups (minorities and majority) become aware of and develop intercultural attitudes towards a diversity of cultures at the same time and in the same way. It should be noted however, that the Education Act does not 'require any student to attend instruction in any subjects which is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the student or in the case of the student who has reached 18 years, the student'. The place of intercultural education in the school's mission and the value to all students of engagement with a diversity of cultures should play a key role in decision-making on subject options and a school assessment policy. Such a context is also important in discussing that work with parents. Collaborative planning in relation to the intercultural dimension of some subject areas will greatly enhance the planning process.

Please refer to Chapter 5 for further information on the planning of lesson content and to Chapter 7 for further details on assessment and cultural diversity.

### Including intercultural education in all areas of school planning

In addition to ensuring that an intercultural perspective is brought to reviewing existing elements of the school plan, there are other areas that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the school is an inclusive school. They include the following:

- incorporating an intercultural and anti-discrimination approach to staff development
- ensuring equality of access and participation
- promoting intercultural education in the classroom
- recording and reporting racist incidents
- creating an inclusive physical and social environment in the school
- providing language support
- providing age-appropriate placement of newcomer students in class groups
- selecting appropriate resource material for learning and teaching
- celebrating special events in the calendars of a diversity of cultures
- developing a communication policy: within the school, between school and home, and between home and school
- developing a school charter that celebrates diversity and promotes equality.

A review process that looks at the school's practice in response to these issues will enable the school community to establish clear development *priorities* and to undertake specific action planning activities that will enhance the educational provision for all students.

## Action planning

The school may choose to respond to the need to develop an intercultural school culture by beginning with an action plan model as used in the School Development Planning Support materials (details available on [www.sdpi.ie](http://www.sdpi.ie)). The *action plan* is a working document that describes and summarises what needs to be done to implement and evaluate a *priority*. It serves as a guide to implementation and helps to monitor progress and success. The advantages of using the action plan as a tool for a whole school approach are that representatives of the whole school community may be involved in different elements of the process. The school can work on a number of areas at the one time as different groups can work on a variety of tasks, and the plan can focus on making some things happen quickly. Some schools may have had their own action plans in place already and therefore may be ready for a broader planning approach.

Some of the key components of the action plan are

- outlining the roles and responsibilities of the various personnel in relation to the actions
- identifying the resources needed
- setting targets and success criteria
- specifying a timeframe
- putting in place procedures for monitoring and evaluation.

## Implementing the action plan

Having developed an action plan, the members of the school community will engage in the process of implementation. The identification of roles, targets, success criteria and a timeframe, through the action plan model, will facilitate the school in turning policies into practice. In the implementation phase, not all actions will

happen simultaneously. Areas identified as priority may be dealt with first, with the school culture becoming increasingly intercultural as work in these areas progresses and other areas of intercultural work are focused on. It may happen that in the course of the implementation new issues arise and require attention. Implementation must, therefore, be flexible to respond to changing circumstances while remaining true to the mission and policies that incorporate the school's intercultural perspective.

## Monitoring and evaluating the school action plan

The plan should include a procedure for monitoring, review and evaluation by a given date. Successful implementation should contribute towards

- promoting greater awareness of interculturalism;
- helping all students to achieve their potential;
- promoting a supportive and inclusive learning environment which will foster the development of the self-esteem of all students;
- breaking down of stereotypes and celebrating diversity.

As the school planning process is cyclical, this evaluation will inform a further phase of review, planning and implementation.

## Using a school development planning model to develop a physical and social school environment inclusive of all learners

Important messages are conveyed to all those who enter the school, whether as teacher, visitor, parent or student, by the physical and social environment of the school. This environment includes the learning experience in individual classrooms (see Chapter 4), the visual

environment, the learning resources available in libraries, the extra-curricular activities encouraged, the language environment, school policies and how they are implemented and how special events are celebrated. Intercultural education is not confined to a single subject within the curriculum, or indeed to the learning experience within the classroom.

It is embedded in the practices and dispositions that make up the classroom and school climate, and in all aspects of school life and the hidden curriculum. Planning the physical and social environment of the school will be a key component of school development planning. In this example, the first two stages of the school development planning model are described in relation to this area. Stages three and four (implementation and evaluation) will evolve as the process moves into practice.

### **Planning an intercultural physical and social environment**

The messages that are communicated through the physical environment of the school are important. Inclusive schools are characterised by learning environments that reflect and show pride in the language, ethnic and cultural diversity that characterises Ireland. As such, they provide a support for the positive self-image of all students irrespective of their ethnicity, as well as reinforcing the normality of diversity for all children. The examples quoted in Chapter 4 on planning the physical environment in the classroom can be adapted to the planning of the school environment also.

#### *The physical environment*

Some of the key issues involved in planning the physical environment include

- representing diversity as a normal part of Irish life and human existence
- ensuring that representations of minority groups do not focus on the spectacular or colourful events, as this may lead to stereotyping and may counteract the desire to represent diversity as normal
- ensuring that all students irrespective of their colour, ethnic group, religion or ability can feel at home and represented within the school.

#### *The social environment*

The student's social environment is important in making them feel welcome and comfortable within the school. For all students, arriving in a new school has the potential to be both a stressful and exciting experience.

For students from some minority ethnic groups (Irish-Chinese or Travellers for example), the dissonance between the social, linguistic and cultural environments of the home and school may be a source of acute tension. For students who have newly arrived in Ireland the unfamiliarity and stress of the situation may be compounded. Even in the case of older students, the differences between the organisation of education in Ireland and in their country of origin may make their first contacts with Irish education a bewildering experience. Differences between education systems are commonly found in

- the age at which children start school
- the subjects and topics which are covered
- the age at which subjects are covered
- the sequence in which they are covered
- the approach to homework
- the amount of noise or activity which is acceptable in the classroom
- commonly used discipline strategies
- commonly used teaching strategies

**FIGURE 3: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT REVIEW CHECKLIST**

**For each question place a tick in the appropriate box.** The more positive answers the more intercultural the school context is. Negative answers identify opportunities for further development. Use them to make a list of what you need to do, and try to set achievable deadlines for addressing these issues.

	YES	TO SOME EXTENT	NOT YET
<b>Physical environment</b>	✓	✓	✓
Are the diverse cultures and ethnic groups of Ireland and of the school represented in pictures, multilingual signs, and other elements in the school's physical environment?			
<b>Social environment</b>	✓	✓	✓
Are routines in place for welcoming new students, for assisting them in becoming part of the school and for ensuring that their culture is affirmed in the environment?			
Are there procedures in place for ensuring that the capabilities and needs of new students are recognised?			
Are school routines and expectations made explicit in a way that can be understood by all?			
Are there procedures in place for dealing with racist incidents? Is there a variety of extra-curricular activities to choose from?			
Are special events planned to be as inclusive as possible of all the cultures in the school?			
Is there recognition given to important festivals and special days of all the cultures in the school?			
Are members of minority ethnic groups encouraged to develop a positive sense of their identity?			
Has the school a proactive response to racist behaviour or incidents that seeks to reduce conflict and promote interpersonal skills?			
<b>Choosing resources</b>	✓	✓	✓
Is there a method for vetting the appropriateness of images and messages contained in school texts and other resources?			

- physical layout and design of the school buildings
- the length of the school day.

In aiding students, whatever their ethnicity or background, in becoming accustomed to a new education system and a new school the main concerns should be

- to create an environment which is experienced as warm, welcoming and positive
- to enable the person to be seen by others and to see herself or himself in a positive way in the classroom
- to enable the student to learn the ways of the school and the education system as soon as is practicable.

#### SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR NEW CHILDREN

It is valuable to take time to explain school procedures to new students and their parents at an early stage. Try to find out as much as you can about newly arriving students, their capacities and their particular needs. An enrolment form may be developed which requests the same information in relation to all students irrespective of their ethnicity or background. Issues which may not have a place on such a form (the pronunciation of names or some key words in the student's first language, for example) may arise in discussion with parents or guardians concerning the education of their children.



### Important information includes

- the correct pronunciation of their name (being able to pronounce a student's name as it is used by their family or guardians correctly, without shortening it or using nicknames, is important in affirming to them and to other pupils that they belong and that their language, while different, is accepted)
- their language abilities and needs (in many countries it is normal for people to have two or three languages)
- a few key words in their first language, if possible (hello, welcome, well done/very good, please/ thank you, join in, stop, etc.)
- their religion, a basic understanding of how they practice it (not all members of any given religion will practice their religion in the same way), and whether that has implications for classroom planning (for example, whether physical contact between pupils might be deemed inappropriate in Drama or PE, whether producing representations of the human body or religious symbols may be inappropriate in Visual Arts, whether pop music might be inappropriate in Music)
- whether there are any subjects the student will not be taking (the Education Act does not 'require any student to attend instruction in any subjects which is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the student or in the case of the student who has reached 18 years, the student'. In addition, the student may, under some circumstances, be exempt from learning Irish under the Department of Education and Science's Circular 10/94).

### CHECKLIST: WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE GATHERED WHEN A NEW STUDENT COMES INTO THE SCHOOL?

- ✓ How are the names of the student and their parents correctly pronounced?
- ✓ What language(s) does the student have, and what is their level of proficiency in these language(s)?
- ✓ How does one say some key phrases in the student's first language, such as a greeting, 'please/thank you', 'join in', 'stop', 'well done/very good' etc?
- ✓ Are there subjects the student will not be taking and what will they be doing during those times?
- ✓ Are there any cultural practices that might affect classroom interaction? Are there actions which are deemed inappropriate or rude in the student's home culture but which may not cause offence to members of the dominant ethnic group, or vice versa (showing someone an open palm or the soles of the foot may be rude in some cultures; a child making eye contact with an adult may be rude in some African cultures while in Traveller culture children often speak very directly and openly to adults, something which is sometimes seen as rude in schools; standing close to a person may be deemed rude in some cultures, while it may be normal in others, etc.)?
- ✓ How is teaching the student the culture of the school to be handled?
- ✓ What is the student's religion, how is it practised, and has this any implications for classroom planning?
- ✓ Will there be specific issues for students concerning, food, jewellery or clothing (for example, the range of tastes catered for by the school canteen or the symbolism of the school crest on the school uniform)?

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Our interpretations of parents who care may simply be parents who are like us, parents who feel comfortable in the teacher's domain.

(Finders and Lewis, 1994)

Parental involvement is a key factor in a school successfully welcoming and including students from diverse backgrounds. This too can be one of the biggest challenges. Low-income, immigrant and minority parents tend to participate less than white middle-class parents of the dominant culture in formal activities organised to promote communication between school and home. This is not because they care less about their children but in the context of an increasingly diverse community, many parents may be uneasy fitting in with current models of parental involvement in schools. For example, parents may not feel comfortable talking to teachers in the school if English is not their first language. Instead of expecting parents to participate in the school in ways that may place them in situations where they may feel uncomfortable, schools can reach out to parents in two ways.

- Find appropriate ways to invite parents into the school building, to encourage direct contact with teachers, and to establish genuine two-way dialogue. The Parent's Association may have a role to play here.
- Support parents by sharing with them some of the strategies that can be used at home to promote school success, for example, parents showing an interest in the student's learning, setting aside time and space for study in the home, etc.

## CHECKLIST FOR IMPROVING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- ✓ The school is creative and flexible in finding ways to invite parents into the school (such as involving parents in a Festival of Cultures, sports activities or art/music activities within the school).
- ✓ Written communication with parents is in a language they understand.
- ✓ Sensitivity is shown to the linguistic and cultural background of parents in the planning of parent-teacher meetings.
- ✓ Parent networks are established as a means of communication and support.
- ✓ Parent-teacher communication consists of a two-way flow.
- ✓ Parents are invited to help the school in ways that are appropriate.
- ✓ Organised community groups play a role in the school.
- ✓ Parents receive advice on how to help their children at home.

Adapted from Elizabeth Coelho, *Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools*, 1998, p.120.



**Classroom Planning**



4

# 4

## CLASSROOM PLANNING

**The key idea...was to take what we are already doing in the classroom and take it one step further by exploring the knowledge, skills and attitudes of intercultural education through these lessons. By seeing the opportunities that exist in our lessons for intercultural perspective, we can easily make our lessons intercultural...The opportunities for an intercultural perspective are always in our lessons but can be easily missed if we don't look for them.**

*(The teachers involved in the Celebrating Difference: Promoting Equality Project)*

Intercultural education provides benefits to all students, whether they are members of the majority community or members of a minority ethnic group. Although particular issues may emerge in classrooms where there are students from minority ethnic backgrounds, for example, specific language needs or the need to prevent discrimination, the development of an intercultural classroom environment will be of value to all students. Irrespective of the cultural or ethnic make-up of the school environment it will aid their understanding of the normality of diversity and help them to develop their imagination, their critical thinking skills, their ability to recognise and deal with prejudice and discrimination, and their social skills.

This chapter looks at the development of an intercultural classroom. It explores the development of an intercultural context in

- reviewing the classroom environment
- building a co-operative learning environment
- welcoming a new student
- creating a supportive language environment.

### REVIEWING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

As Chapter 2 identified, intercultural education is not confined to a single curriculum area, or indeed to areas within the 'formal curriculum'. It is embedded in the practices and dispositions that inform both the classroom climate and the 'hidden curriculum'.

The same process which is used in planning for a school community and which was described in Chapter 3 (the review-plan-implement-evaluate process) can be used for planning the physical and social environment of the classroom as well as lessons.

Use this exercise to review current practices.

### CLASSROOM REVIEW CHECKLIST

For each question place a tick in the appropriate box. The more positive answers the more intercultural the school context is. Negative answers identify opportunities for further development. Use them to make a list of what you need to do, and try to set achievable deadlines for addressing these issues.

	YES	TO SOME EXTENT	NOT YET
<b>Physical environment</b>	✓	✓	✓
Do the pictures, images, and displays in the classroom and school physical environment reflect in a current and accurate way the diverse cultures and ethnic groups of Ireland and of the school?			
<b>Social environment</b>	✓	✓	✓
Are routines in place for welcoming new students, for assisting them in becoming part of the class, for ensuring that their culture is affirmed in the environment and for ensuring that their capabilities and needs are recognised?			
Are classroom routines made explicit to all students?			
Can students and teachers properly pronounce each other's names?			
Do students engage in co-operative learning activities which enable them to recognise and benefit from each others strengths?			
Do students share responsibility for classroom organisation and for ensuring that all feel welcome and included?			
Are members of minority ethnic groups affirmed in a positive sense of their identity?			
Have strategies for dealing with discriminatory behaviour been considered and put in place?			
Has consideration being given to ensuring appropriate language and interactions between teachers and pupils?			
Is a supportive environment created for second language learners?			
<b>Choosing resources</b>	✓	✓	✓
Is there a method for vetting the appropriateness of images and messages contained in school texts and other resources?			

## PLANNING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE CLASSROOM

The messages that are communicated through the physical environment of the school and classroom are important. They are often the first messages that parents and pupils receive in a school, and they remain as a constant reminder of the person's place in the school. Intercultural classrooms are characterised by learning environments that reflect and show pride in the language, ethnic and cultural diversity that characterises Ireland. They should provide a support for the positive self-image of all students, irrespective of their ethnicity, as well as reinforcing the normality of diversity for all children.

Some of the key issues involved in planning the physical environment of the classroom are

- representing diversity as a normal part of Irish life and human existence
- ensuring that representations of minority groups do not focus on 'spectacular' or 'colourful' events
- ensuring that all students irrespective of their colour, religion, ethnic group, or ability can feel at home and represented within the classroom.

Some areas for attention include

- classroom displays
- textbooks and other resource materials
- classroom behaviour and structures.

**Classroom displays** should represent diversity in Ireland in a positive way.

- Images displayed might include representations of people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Sufficient images from minority ethnic groups should be used to ensure that the dominance of the majority ethnic group

in images of Ireland in everyday life is balanced. Care should be taken to ensure that there are also balanced representations of different age, gender, and social class and ability groups.

- The images should be chosen to reflect accurately people's current daily lives in Ireland, rather than focusing solely on colourful events like feasts or festivals or over-relying on images from other countries. This will help to overcome stereotypes.
- Class displays might represent positive role models drawn from the diverse ethnic, cultural, gender, social class and ability groups that make up Ireland.
- Artwork and cultural displays, including the students' own work, should be drawn from a range of cultural traditions.
- Writing signs and notices in both Irish and English has long been common practice in many Irish schools. Expanding this practice to recognise the other languages of the school in this way will be of value.
- Signs, notices and announcements should reflect and affirm the language diversity of the class and should support the needs of second language learners. As such, notices may be in a range of languages (Irish, English and, as appropriate, Cant/Gammon, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian or Yoruba, for example).

### Choosing textbook and other resource materials

The influence of textbooks on student attitudes is well documented. It has been found that the words and pictures not only express ideas—they are part of the educational experience that shapes ideas. For example, how members of minority groups or women are treated in textbooks influences student attitudes and values. Favourable stories engender more positive

attitudes; unfavourable stories engender more negative attitudes. Bias in textbooks can be conveyed in a number of ways. The four most common forms of bias are inaccuracy, stereotyping, omissions and distortions and biased language usage. Developing the ability to recognise bias is a key skill for helping students become critical readers for life. This skill should be fostered not just in relation to reading textbooks but also in relation to using the internet, films, videos and other media.

There are a growing number of intercultural education packs available in Ireland as well as resources in the related areas of human rights, conflict and peace and development education. The Development Education Unit of Development Co-operation Ireland (Dept. of Foreign Affairs) produces an annual guide to available resources that may be of use to teachers. Pavee Point also produces lists of resources that promote equality and diversity in schools. (See the resource list for an extensive list of resources.)

In many cases teachers do not need to look beyond their existing texts and curriculum documents to find the necessary resources. Where existing resources offer limited opportunities to explore difference, to promote equality or to develop critical thinking skills, this can, in itself be turned into a resource. Through questioning what perspectives are missing and how the same material or event might be presented or viewed differently or through comparing texts with other possible source materials, teachers can use limited material to develop pupils' capacity to think about the way in which information is presented to them.

The following checklist will be of use in choosing and using texts or resources for use in the class. These issues apply equally to fictional and factual resources. For example, questions regarding the

representation of a diversity of ethnic groups apply as much to an English language reader as they do to a Geography textbook.

**The resource should make realistic assumptions about the background knowledge of the learners.**

- Does it choose examples, stories or illustrations, which are predominantly drawn from one culture, or does it use stories, examples and illustrations that might be familiar to different groups of children from their home life?
- If the material is biased, how can the teacher mediate this to bridge the gap between the starting point of the pupil and that of the resource?

**The resource should realistically and positively reflect a diversity of ethnic groups in its text, illustrations and exercises.**

- Are there sufficient representations of members of minority ethnic groups used to ensure that the dominance of the majority ethnic group in images of Ireland in everyday life is balanced?
- Are the images chosen to reflect accurately people's current daily lives?
- Are minority ethnic groups or people from other countries represented in stereotypical ways (for example, are Africans largely depicted as living in poverty and in need of aid, are Native Americans depicted largely in terms of frontier wars and struggles, are members of minority groups depicted largely in terms of their feasts or festivals)?
- Are particular groups represented only in terms of their membership of that group (for example, are Travellers represented in 'ordinary' maths questions or stories, or do they only appear when minority issues are under discussion)?



- Are pejorative or evaluative terms (like savage / primitive / unusual / crafty / corrupt / docile) used to describe people from other countries or members of minority ethnic groups?
- Are members of different ethnic groups (as well as men and women) shown engaged in a variety of different activities (different jobs, working at home, engaged in leisure activities)?
- If the material available is biased, how can the teacher use such materials in order to sensitise students to bias in images and texts?

**The bias in the resource should be identifiable and transparent.**

- Does the resource represent white or middle class culture or lifestyles as being the 'normal' one? (for example, a geography text dealing with European

countries may or may not recognise and identify that significant numbers of Europeans are non-Christians or members of ethnic minorities, while many popular comic book stories have few, if any, members of ethnic minorities represented).

- Are pejorative or evaluative terms used as if they were unbiased descriptions (for example, George Washington and Michael Collins could both be described as either 'patriots' or 'terrorists', depending on your perspective. Likewise, terms like 'progress' or 'developed', when applied to cultures, depend on the perspective of the writer).
- If perspectives are not presented clearly as perspectives, how can the teacher use such materials in order to sensitise students to bias in images and texts?

The resource should make it possible to raise and discuss issues of equality, inequality, human rights, discrimination, conflict and conflict resolution and the value of diversity.

- Does the resource contain information or stories which highlight intercultural issues?
- Does it contain positive role models of people who engaged in justice struggles, both political leaders (like Gandhi or Nelson Mandela or Nan Joyce) as well as ‘ordinary’ women, men and children?

Apart from justice struggles, the resource should refer to and depict experts and people in positions of authority as drawn from a range of ethnic groups and countries of origin, where appropriate.

- Are the scientists, historians, politicians or other people who are identified as having made a contribution to our world drawn from a variety of ethnic groups?
- Are members of minority ethnic groups represented only in terms of their membership of that group (for example, are people from India or Afro-Americans represented for a range of contributions to society or are they only represented when they are people who fought for Indian or Afro-American rights)?

The resource should also contain sufficient balanced representations of men and women, people of different ages and people with a disability.

- Are men and women depicted as displaying the full range of human emotions and behaviours?
- Are members of minority ethnic groups or people with a disability shown in a variety of settings?

## CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR AND STRUCTURES

Many of the more interesting intercultural moments are those that are unplanned-moments arising from incidents in the school or issues raised by children themselves. These incidentals or unplanned moments offer a great chance for dialogue and often provide some of the best opportunities for intercultural education.

**(Quote from a teacher involved in the Celebrating Difference: Promoting Equality project.)**

The interactions which take place within the classroom will be framed by a set of agreed rules of classroom behaviour, which emphasise that classroom members treat each other with respect. This respect will be further emphasised through being embedded in the minute interactions of classroom life.

Students sometimes respond to diversity (for example, in skin colour, physical features, language or names) with discomfort and may identify diversity as abnormal. They may also respond out of prejudice. Such responses might include laughing, name-calling, shunning or aggression. Such responses offer one opportunity for engaging in intercultural work.

In approaching such incidents it can be useful for the teacher to

- intervene immediately, rather than ignoring it or waiting to see if the behaviour will change on its own;
- challenge the ideas-not the person;
- gently make clear that certain behaviour or responses are inappropriate by making reference to the agreed rules of classroom behaviour doing so in a way which does not leave the students who have engaged in discrimination likely to withdraw from conversing with the teacher;

- support the student who was the target of discriminatory behaviour, and with due regard to the sensitivities of other students, affirm them with specific reference to the focus of the others student's discrimination. For example, if other students have made fun of their name, identify that their name is beautiful and that millions of people world-wide would love to have that name;
- enable students who engage in discriminating behaviour to relate to how they would feel if they were discriminated against in a similar way;
- help students identify why they were uncomfortable with difference. For example, identify if there is a misconception or a prejudiced belief which underlies their actions and address these causes immediately, and if, appropriate, in on-going work.

(These suggestions draw on the work of Derman-Sparks' (1989) *The Anti-Bias Curriculum*.)

Teachers can, through their interaction with students, provide unintentional inappropriate cues to students. They may, for example, find it difficult to pronounce unfamiliar names or identify appropriate language for referring to ethnic groups such as not knowing whether to refer to someone as black, white or a Traveller. Teachers may also have unconsciously held ideas about the normality of cultural artefacts ('normal' homes, 'normal' food, 'normal' hairstyles etc.). In order to prevent inappropriate messages being inadvertently transmitted to students, it is valuable for teachers to reflect on their own language and interactions in the classroom as part of the process of reviewing the classroom environment.

## BUILDING A CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Traditional classroom organisation emphasises individualistic, competitive values. However, alternative approaches to classroom organisation, based on a cooperative model, can produce positive academic and social outcomes for nearly all students.

Co-operative learning opportunities give pupils an opportunity to work closely with people from different social, ethnic or ability groups. Co-operative learning should give rise to frequent, meaningful and positive contact in which the diversity of skills and capacities of different members of the group are brought to the fore and can be recognised. Such interpersonal contact provides a key site of learning. Relationships between students of different groups have been demonstrated to improve significantly if mixed-group co-operative learning strategies are used, irrespective of the content that is covered. In addition, ethnic minority students have shown greater academic gains in cooperative settings than in traditional classrooms. Through the use of mixed-group co-operative learning strategies, every subject can provide an opportunity for children to develop intercultural competence, irrespective of its content.

Placing people in a position where a skill could be practised will not always be sufficient to ensure it is learned. For example, making books available is no guarantee that someone will learn to read. This is also true of the social skills and attributes which give rise to intrapersonal and intercultural competence. Simply organising students in groups is no guarantee that they will learn how to engage in co-operative learning.

Care should be taken to ensure that students are given an opportunity to identify and learn the understandings and capacities that will enable them to work constructively as part of a group. These include

- specific co-operative behaviours such as asking questions, listening, speaking clearly and concisely, explaining reasons, etc.
- the social norms for group work, such as taking turns to contribute, engaging in planning, evaluation, and working in different roles such as chair or recorder
- the understandings and skills specific to conflict resolution, such as recognising the value of different views, de-personalising conflicts of opinion, identifying common interests and inventing opportunities for mutual gain.

When organising groups and tasks it is important to ensure that there are opportunities in the assigned tasks for people to positively contribute to the group, and that no-one should be characterised as needing to be ‘carried’ by the group. The group work process may need to be supported by the teacher in order to maximise co-operation and inclusiveness. In the context of promoting an inclusive classroom environment it is better that classroom duties and responsibilities are shared by all rather than by a small select group of students. All students can take turns in such tasks as collecting homework, checking attendance, distributing materials and equipment, room set-up, welcoming visitors, etc.



## WELCOMING A NEW STUDENT

The importance of supporting students entering a new school has been identified in a range of research with ‘students from lower income and minority ethnic groups found to be potentially more “at risk” in making the transition to post-primary school’ (Gutman and Midgley, 2000). Recent research exploring students’ transition from first to second level schools in Ireland has shown that students tend to settle quicker and experience less difficulties in schools where more developed student integration programmes exist and

students from non-national or Traveller backgrounds report more transition difficulties than other students. (ESRI/NCCA, 2004. p.283)

There are a number of ways in which a classroom teacher can help support the integration of a new student.

- Introduce new students in a positive way, focusing on their capacities (“Goran speaks Croatian fluently, and also speaks some English”) rather than on their needs (“Goran doesn’t speak English well”).
- Provide structured opportunities for new students to work with other students for the first few days. Where language allows, this can be done through paired work or group activities in most classes. Where there is not a shared spoken language, art, music or drama activities provide ideal opportunities.
- If possible, seat those who are beginning to learn English with someone who speaks their first language for the first few weeks. If there is no-one who speaks their first language in the class, it may be possible to introduce the student to another member of the school community (another pupil, for example) who speaks their first language during break time or at lunch time during the school day. These arrangements should be discontinued after a few weeks, in order to ensure that the newly-arrived student has an opportunity to develop relationships with his or her classmates.
- Establish routines in the class which are clear and explicit and which can be learned and understood by students who are new to the peculiarities of the Irish education system or who are learning the language of instruction as a second-language. This will provide some basis of familiarity, which will allow pupils to learn the ways in which the school system works.
- Support all the students in developing an inclusive community in the classroom (rather than one in which the teacher simply polices and prevents discrimination) by identifying how students can make each other comfortable and feel that they belong. This may mean that the students will agree strategies which they themselves utilise to ensure that no one in their class is excluded.

## CHECKLIST: WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD THE SUBJECT TEACHER HAVE WHEN A NEW STUDENT JOINS THE CLASS?

- ✓ How are the names of the student and their parents correctly pronounced?
- ✓ What language(s) does the student have, and what is their level of proficiency in these language(s)?
- ✓ How does one say some key phrases in the student's first language, such as a greeting, 'please/thank you', 'join in', 'stop', 'well done/very good', etc?
- ✓ Are there subjects the student will not be taking and what will they be doing during those times?
- ✓ Are there any cultural practices that might affect classroom interaction? Are there actions which are deemed inappropriate or rude in the student's home culture but which may not cause offence to members of the dominant ethnic group, or vice versa (showing someone an open palm or the soles of the foot may be rude in some cultures; a young person making eye contact with an adult may be rude in some African cultures while in Traveller culture young people often speak very directly and openly to adults, something which is sometimes seen as rude in schools; standing close to a person may be deemed rude in some cultures, while it may be normal in others etc.)? How is teaching the student the culture of the school to be handled?
- ✓ What is the student's religion, how is it practised, and has this any implications for classroom planning?
- ✓ Will the student have specific requirements concerning food, jewellery or clothing (for example, the range of tastes catered for by the school canteen or the symbolism of the schools crest on the school uniform)?

## CREATING A SUPPORTIVE LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

Language is a key component of a person's identity as well as playing a central part in the learning process. Ireland is, and has historically been, characterised by linguistic diversity, with both Irish and English existing as first languages. To this must be added the range of languages of recent immigrants. The right to have one's own language is important in enabling people to develop a strong positive self-image. People also generally find it easier to develop complex thinking in their first language. For both ethical and educational reasons, then, it is important that the student's first language is valued and affirmed within the school context. It is also important to create an environment that supports the learning of a second language.

Learning in a multi-lingual environment can be a positive experience for all students. It highlights concretely the diversity of languages and cultures in the world and, as such, constitutes an important resource for developing intercultural capacities and abilities in all students irrespective of their ethnicity.

Recognition and affirmation of the student's first language can be achieved through

- the teacher and students learning some key words or phrases (greetings, simple instructions, etc.) in the students' first language
- communicating positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity and multi-lingual student's skills and recognising the capacities of second language learners rather than identifying them primarily as people with 'language needs'
- providing multilingual resources where possible.

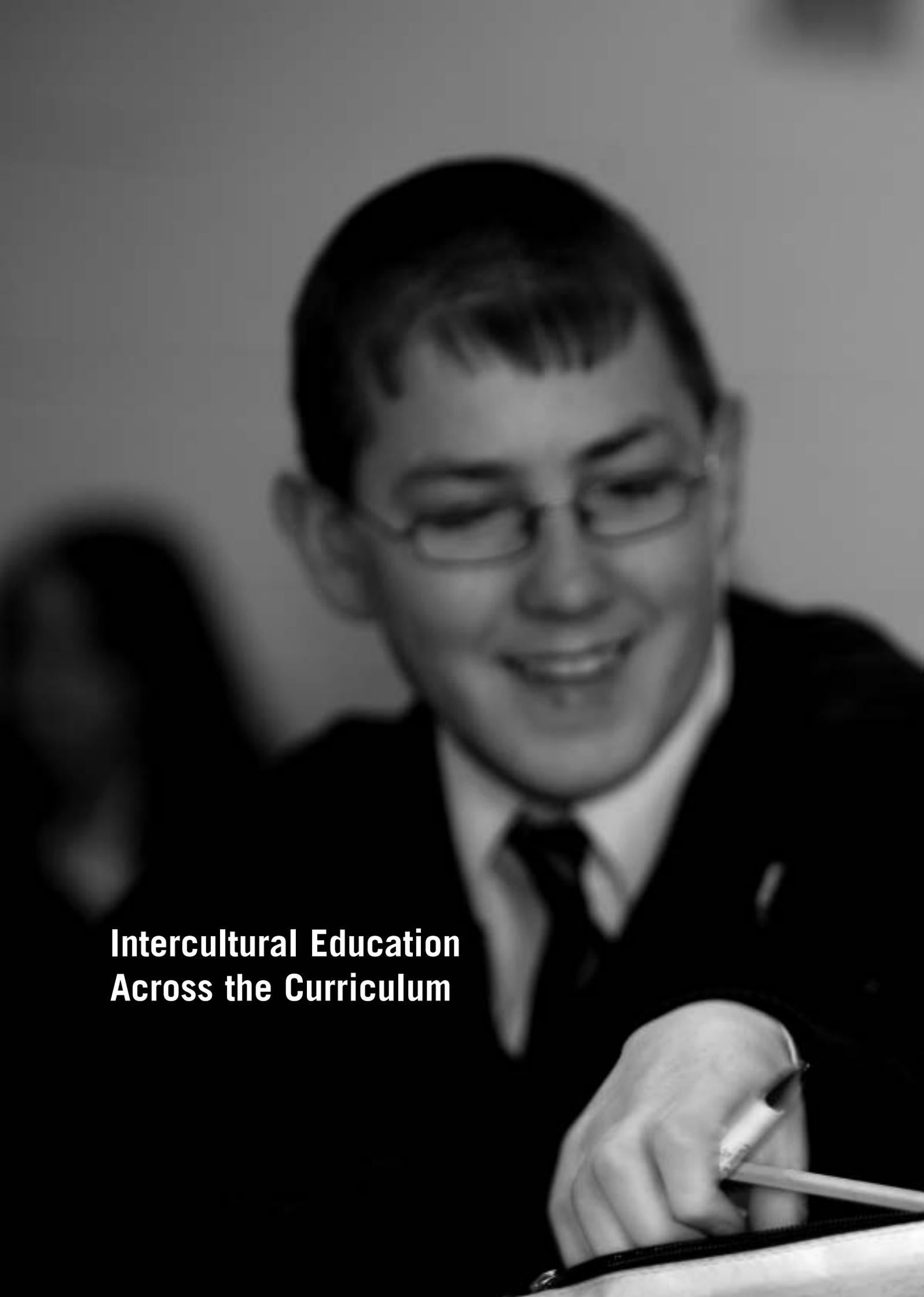
For learners of a second language, it is important to provide a range of cues and supports in order to enable them to understand the language that is being used. Gesture, other non-verbal means of communication and pictures can be a useful support to a second language learner in understanding what is being said. The class community can become a resource for learners of a second language, and can, in the process, develop important intercultural capacities and abilities.

Some of the strategies for doing this are as follows:

- Ensure that all students understand that the classroom is a place in which people learn the language of instruction at the same time as they learn other subjects (History, Mathematics, etc.). Explain the importance of a supportive environment where people can speak and make mistakes without fear of ridicule.
- Suggest ways in which the students can support and help their classmates, such as repeating or rephrasing statements, or using gesture, pictures or written words.
- Model and role-play strategies for asking for clarification and for confirming comprehension.



**“ Intercultural classrooms are learning environments that reflect and show pride in the language, ethnic and cultural diversity that characterises Ireland...”**



**Intercultural Education  
Across the Curriculum**



5



# 5

## INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

### 5.1 Integrated thematic planning of lesson content

As stated at the beginning of Chapter 2, the content of intercultural education is compatible with the aims and objectives of post-primary education. As such, intercultural education is relevant to all subject areas. The integration of intercultural content across a variety of subject areas provides the student with a more coherent and richer learning experience. It is more likely that appropriate attitudes and values will be developed by students if they are integrated across subjects areas and within the whole life of the school, than when dealt with in a piecemeal or ‘one-off’ fashion.

Although integration can be planned in a number of ways, many teachers find that a thematic approach to planning is useful. This provides them with the means of ensuring the acquisition of appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills,

capacities, values and attitudes through classroom planning and interaction that are already a part of their teaching in their subject areas. To support integration and teaching of intercultural knowledge, understanding, skills, capacities, values and attitudes, the content of intercultural education is presented within the context of five themes. These themes are overlapping and interlocking; they are not separate bodies of knowledge. The themes are:

- Identity and belonging
- Similarity and difference
- Human rights and responsibilities
- Discrimination and equality
- Conflict and conflict resolution.

This content is relevant for all students irrespective of their ethnicity or cultural background. The ways in which it is dealt with will differ from classroom to classroom in order to ensure that it is age and subject appropriate.



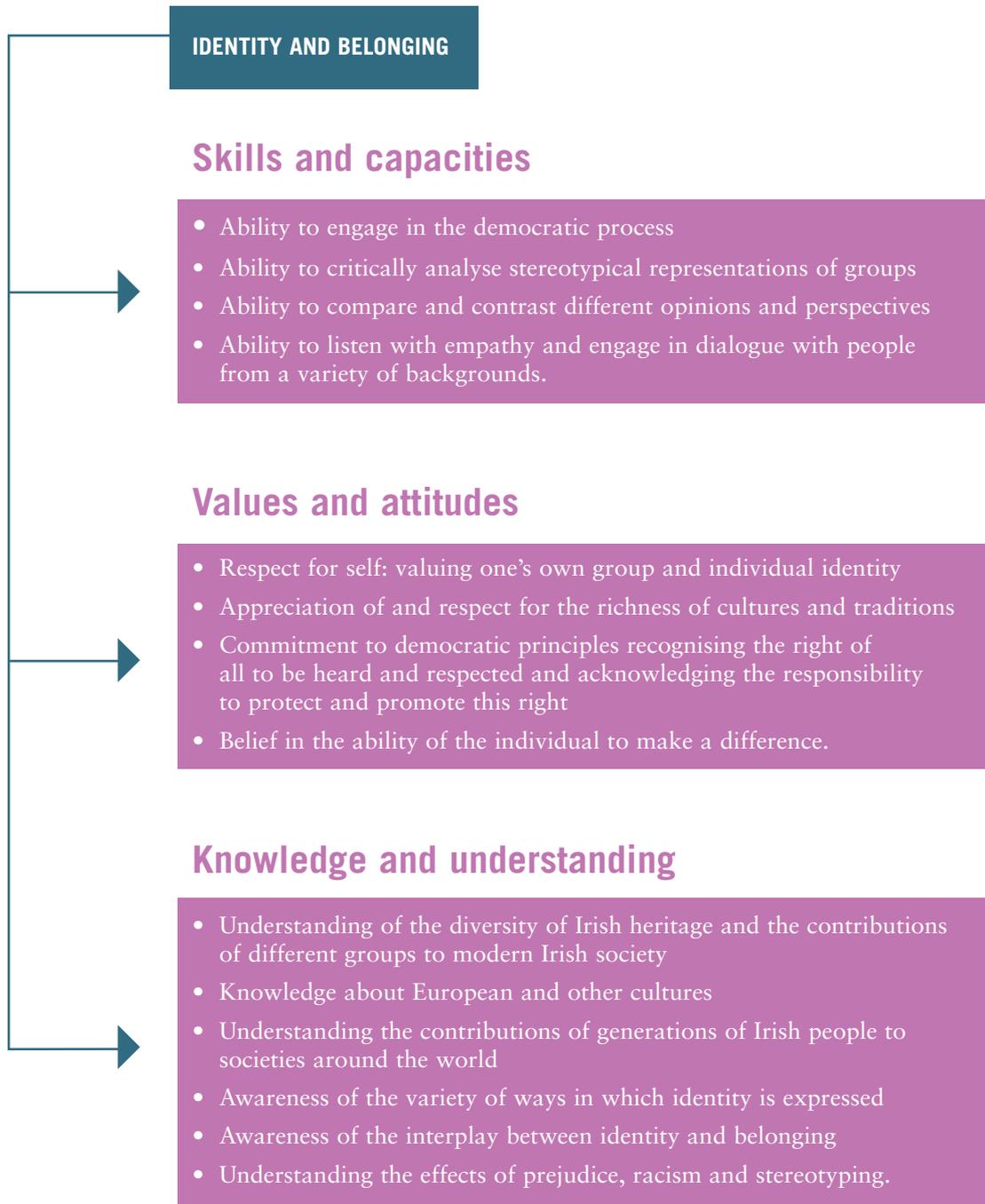
- **Identity and belonging**
- **Similarity and difference**
- **Human rights and responsibilities**
- **Discrimination and equality**
- **Conflict and conflict resolution**

## IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Children have a right to understand and participate in the diverse cultural, linguistic, social and artistic expressions of Irishness. The recognition of the contribution of different communities to the richness of diversity in contemporary Ireland is identified as a key learning aim of the curriculum. This recognises that diversity is a characteristic of the groups who can be regarded as ‘belonging’ in Ireland. As was stated in Chapter 1, this is true of both historic and contemporary Ireland. This recognition may mean, in practice, the exploration of the broad spectrum of Irish culture in Irish, English, and, increasingly in other languages also. For junior-cycle students, becoming aware of the concepts on which our national political culture is based (justice, democracy, equality, rights, etc.), will be an important part of coming to make sense of their identity, historically and at the present time.

Similarly, the links with European culture and a balanced and informed awareness of the diversity of peoples and environments in the world is also identified as a key issue in post-primary education. Such awareness contributes to young people’s personal and social development as citizens of an intercultural Ireland, Europe and the global community. Recognition of the links between Irish cultures and languages and the cultures and languages of other European countries (for example, the links between Gaelic, Welsh, Breton and Scots Gaelic) will enable the student to develop a strong positive sense of national identity without this being seen as hostile to other identities.

The development of a positive sense of self is central to intercultural education, and indeed to education generally. Members of minority ethnic groups who are discriminated against, or whose culture and way of life is not represented as normal or typical in their environment, may be in danger of developing a low sense of self-esteem or of wishing to deny their cultural or physical heritage. For example, some Traveller children may wish not to be identified as Travellers due to the negative images of Travellers to which they have been exposed while some black children may develop negative attitudes to their skin colour due to the preponderance of white people in our culture’s representations of beauty. There is also a danger for members of the majority ethnic group that their sense of self-esteem may become tied to a sense of their culture’s normality or superiority. For young children this sense of self-esteem will be developed through a growing awareness of their physical and cultural attributes (their home culture, their skin colour, etc.), and a sense that their own attributes and those of others are equally valuable. This positive sense of self as an individual, as a member of a cultural or ethnic group, and as a member of an intercultural society will be further developed in all children throughout their schooling.



## SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE

All education recognises the uniqueness of individuals, in terms of their own personal history, experiences, wants and needs. Part of our uniqueness is that we are all members of particular social groups, which means that we share some experiences, wants and needs with other members of those groups. Different cultural, language or ethnic groups often have diverse experiences and needs. A fair society is one that can cater for both people's individuality and their shared identities. As the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (The Parekh Report) has noted:

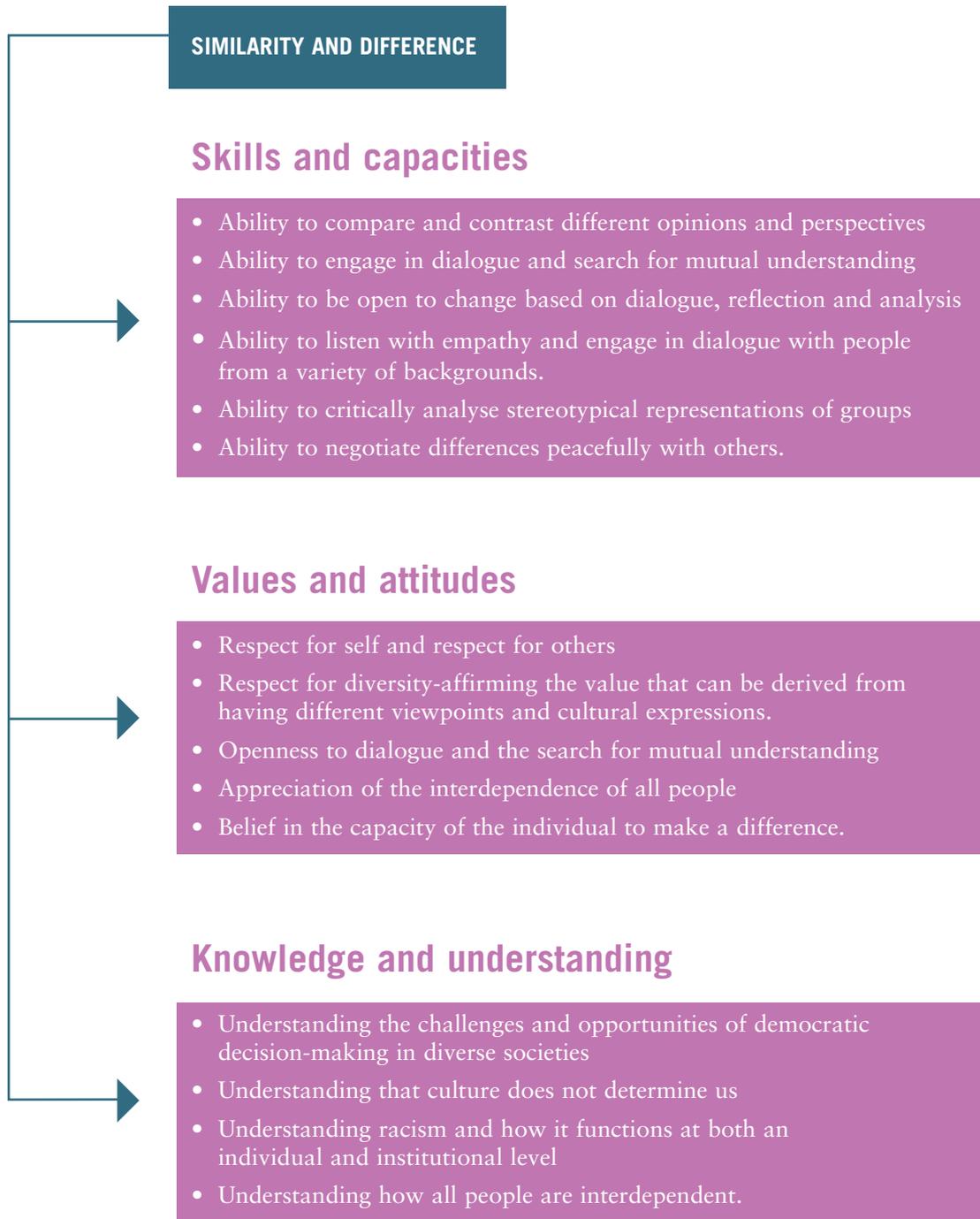
Since citizens have different needs, equal treatment requires full account to be taken of their differences. When equality ignores relevant differences and insists on uniformity of treatment, it leads to injustice and inequality; when differences ignore the demands of equality, that results in discrimination. Equality must be defined in a culturally sensitive way and applied in a discriminating but not discriminatory manner.

Culture does not define us or determine us. Within the white Irish settled population there is a great deal of diversity of values, beliefs and ways of life. Other ethnic and national groups also display a great deal of diversity. Recognising this is important in overcoming stereotyping.

A person is not simply defined by one aspect of their lives. People's identities are complex and made up of many layers. A person can be at the same time, a mother, a Traveller, a childcare worker, an artist, a sister, an Irish person, a fan of 'anyone but Manchester United'. Usually we have something in common with members of other groups and should therefore be able to relate to and empathise with them. Such factors need to be explored, in order to break down the limiting and stereotyping of people that can take place.

For young children, an awareness that humanity contains great diversity and that there is no one way of life that is 'normal' will be developed through their exploration of the world around them, and through their being exposed to a rich and diverse mix of images and cultural artefacts. As children progress through school they will become increasingly aware of the various cultures that have contributed to Irishness through their influence on our arts in both Irish and English (and the interface between the two), our values, our mathematics, our technology and on the ways in which we benefit from the inter-penetration of cultures.

It the early stages of primary school children can come to realise the ways in which images and accounts are framed. During their progress through post-primary school this awareness can be developed by enabling them to develop a critical capacity, to recognise bias and stereotyping in text and images and grow to understand its effects in shaping attitudes and behaviour.



## HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We are all members of the human group. As a consequence of our membership of that group we all share certain rights as well as the responsibility to protect those rights for each other. It is important, when looking at the things that we share with other people, to work for a better understanding of human rights, what they are, and how we can make them work in practice.

While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most broad-based description of people's rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is also a key statement of rights relevant to pupils.

The responsibility for enforcing these rights lies with each of us, individually. The Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

... every individual ... keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance.

- Rights are *universal*. They apply in every country. Something that is a human right cannot be denied to a person simply because they are in one place or another.
- Rights are *indivisible*. All rights are to be recognised equally. This means that universal social and economic rights like the right to medical care, choice of a job, leisure time and necessary social services, are not more or less important than universal political rights, like the right to a fair trial.
- Rights are *inalienable*. They cannot be denied or taken away from people.

There is a well-founded fear that developing an awareness of the needs of members of some groups in society may lead to a sense of the

superiority of the dominant culture over the culture of other groups. There is, for example, some evidence that images of Africa used to raise funds in Ireland for aid work may have played a role in developing a sense of superiority towards Africans among Irish children. The concept of rights seeks to prevent the development of this sense of superiority, focusing as it does on the rights and responsibilities of each of us. In this respect, rights are not simply an issue for the needy or those discriminated against: we each have rights and by virtue of having those rights we have a responsibility to protect them for each other.

The recognition that responsibilities come with rights is essential. If any group, the majority or an ethnic minority, is to demand of other people that their rights are respected, members of that group have, in turn, a responsibility to protect and to promote the rights of other groups. Sometimes conflict can arise due to an apparent clash of rights. The ability to use such conflict constructively to produce solutions is related closely to the ability to apply the concept of rights and responsibilities equally to everyone.

Those who framed the Universal Declaration recognised that not all countries would protect these rights. Since they recognised that the responsibility to protect rights did not have borders, they identified that everyone would have the right to seek asylum should their own home country refuse to protect their rights.

Human rights are one of the things that bind us all together. As such they provide a basis for developing empathy between people. They also form a context within which immigration and various forms of discrimination can be understood without promoting ideas of cultural superiority.

Younger children will begin to develop an understanding of fairness and unfairness

and will apply these ideas to a range of practical situations (having a say, taking part in decisions, getting a fair share, etc.). They will also develop an understanding of the application of rules and the way in which adherence to rules makes life more palatable for everyone. These understandings can be developed throughout their time in primary school so that when they leave primary school they will have gained an understanding of the

development of the concept of rights and the application of a rights framework to everyday situations. These understandings will be further built upon in post-primary education when students will learn about the role of international institutions, legislation for protecting human rights, issues of human rights and how they can be addressed, the role and responsibility of individuals and groups in promoting and protecting human rights, etc.



## DISCRIMINATION AND EQUALITY

In a literal sense, to discriminate simply means to recognise a difference or to make a judgement. People discriminate all the time in deciding what food to eat, or who to employ in a job. Where discrimination becomes a problem is when the choice or distinction is made unfairly.

In Ireland, it is against the law to discriminate against a person in some areas on the basis of

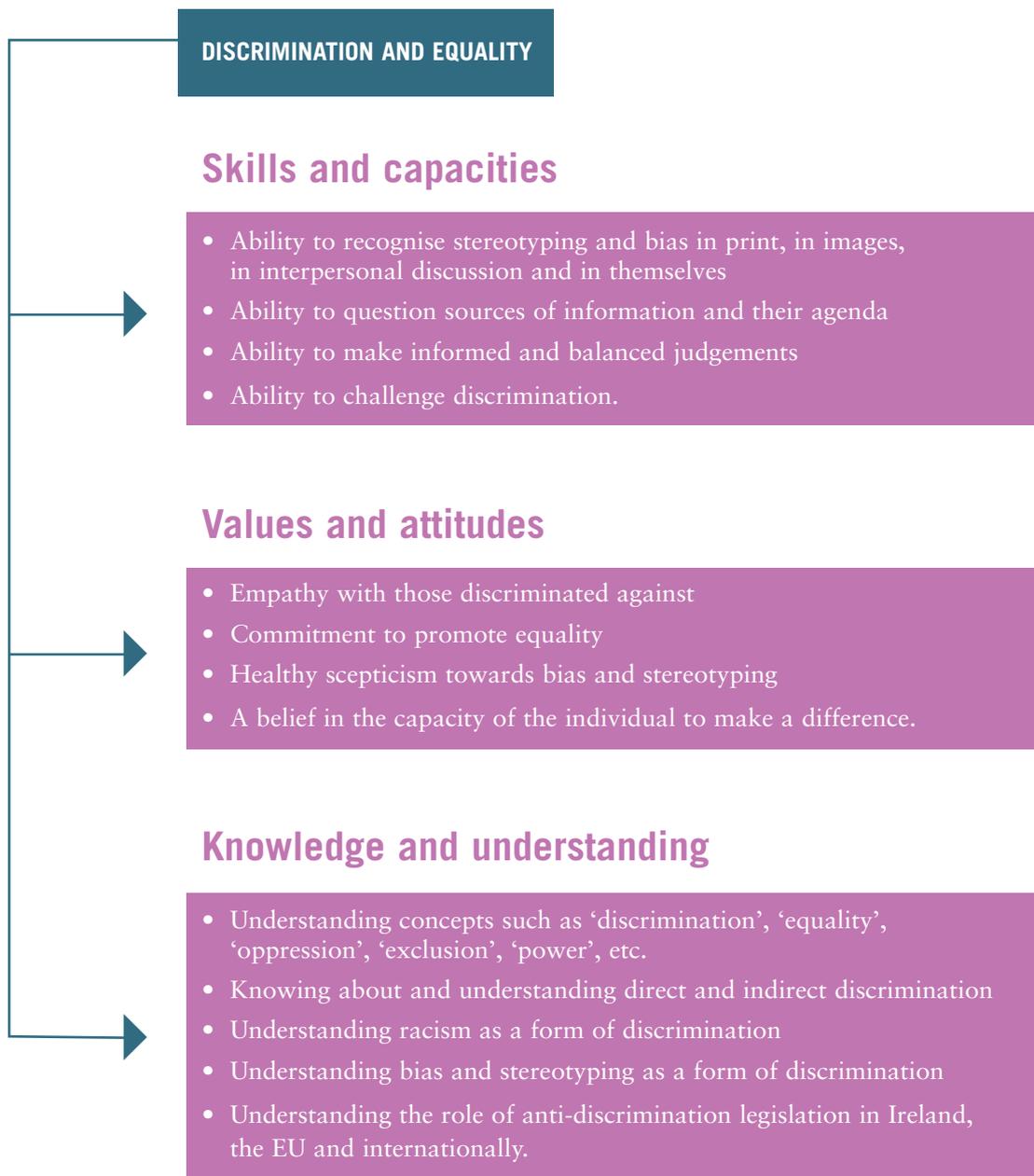
- gender
- marital status
- family status (having children or being a carer)
- age (between the ages of 18 and 65)
- disability
- race
- sexual orientation
- religious belief
- membership of the Traveller Community.

(Equal Status Act, 2000)

Two different types of discrimination are recognised: direct discrimination and indirect discrimination. Both need to be understood if they are to be addressed. Direct discrimination is the most obvious and easiest to see. If someone is treated differently because they are a Traveller or because they are black (refused access to a pub, called names, treated with suspicion etc.) then they have been directly discriminated against. In a 2001 survey of ethnic minority attitudes in Ireland, 78 per cent of more than 600 respondents from a variety of ethnic minorities living all over Ireland highlighted that they had been a victim of such racism, most often in public places like the street or in shops or pubs.

Indirect discrimination means that applying the same policies or opportunities to different people may appear fair, but may not be fair if they give rise to different outcomes. For example, if the same subject is taught to both boys and girls, but all of the examples are chosen to interest the boys only, this may discriminate indirectly against the girl. If entry to a school is decided in part on whether or not a child has siblings there, this may inadvertently discriminate against nomadic people. Likewise, if accommodation provision does not cater for people who move from place to place, then this may discriminate indirectly against Travellers. Treating people the same is not the same as treating them equally.

As with the concept of rights, young people will begin to develop an understanding of fairness and unfairness and will apply these ideas to a range of practical situations (having a say, taking part in decisions, getting a fair share, etc.). As they progress through post-primary school they will develop a deeper understanding of discrimination as they learn to recognise discrimination in everyday situations and as they gain an understanding of inequalities in their community and in the wider world. Students can also be encouraged to take action in defence of those who suffer inequality and discrimination as they gain deeper knowledge and understanding of the issues.



## CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Sometimes the differences between people become a source of conflict. Different cultural traditions, for example, may bring people into conflict with each other. People may come into conflict with each other because of a perceived clash of rights and responsibilities. Intercultural education can equip people with the skills to work through such conflicts and arrive at a resolution. These skills will be useful and necessary to all students even if they do not regularly come into contact with members of different ethnic groups. Conflict should be seen as natural and normal and can be viewed as an opportunity to arrive at solutions and bring about positive change. Certain principles should underlie approaches to conflict, whether the conflict is interpersonal, inter-community or political.

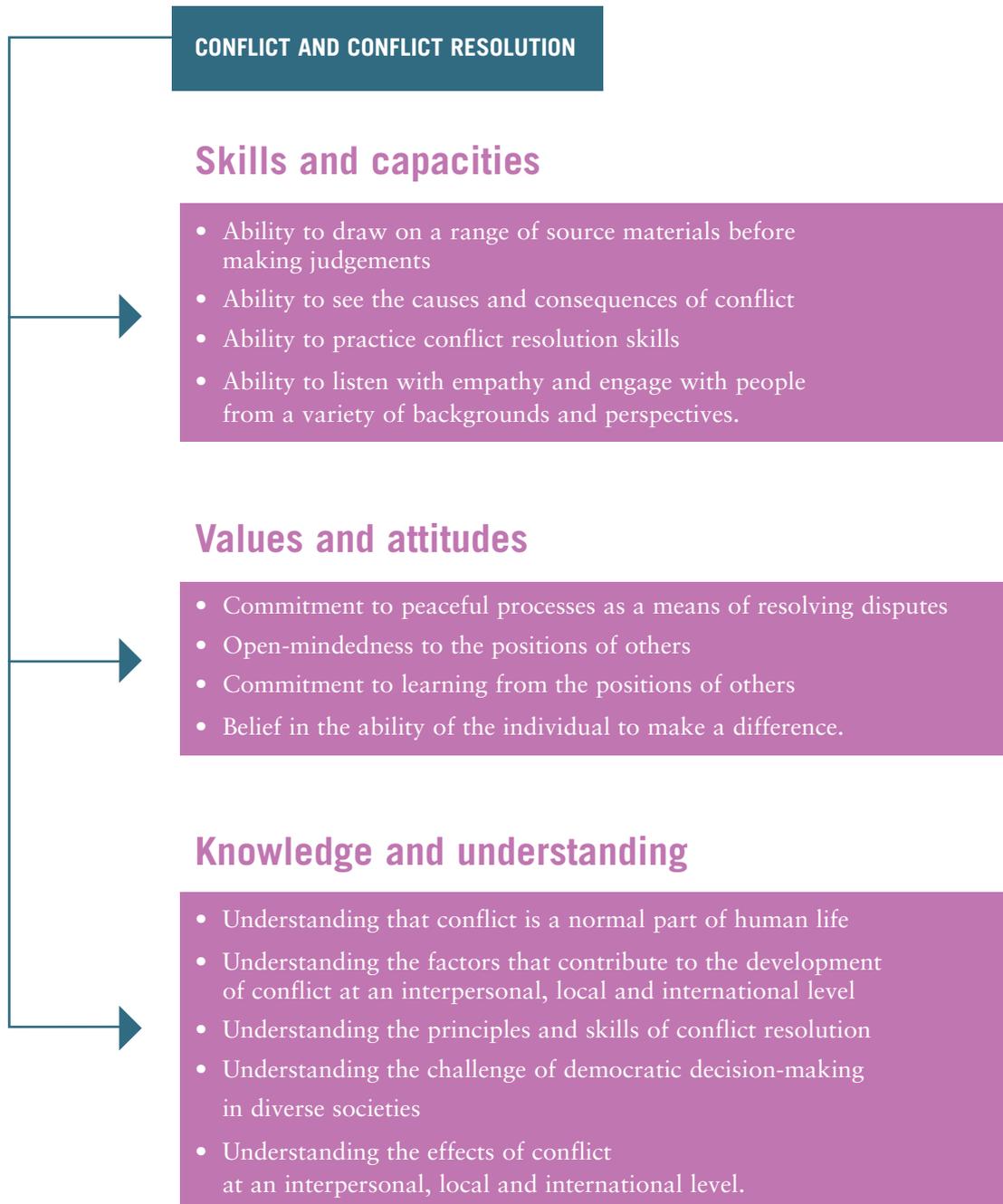
These include the following:

- *Conflict should not be avoided.* Since conflict is normal it provides an opportunity to build something positive. We should focus on equipping people with the ability to negotiate through conflicts rather than avoiding them.
- *Separate people from the problem.* In a conflict situation there can be strong emotions, communication breakdown and differing perceptions of the facts or the importance of facts. These issues need to be dealt with in themselves, and should not be by-passed through one side or both gaining concessions. One does not need to like someone to come to agreement with them, but one does need to be able to talk to and listen to them, and to be able to see things from their point of view.

- *Focus on interests, not positions.* Rather than focus on what people are looking for, explore why they want it. Behind opposing positions may lie a range of shared and compatible interests on which a reso
- *Invent options for mutual gain.* Look at a range of possible solutions, without the pressure of having to decide what is practical or doable. Look for a variety of possibilities rather than a single answer, and do not rush to judgement.

There are many models of conflict resolution based on these principles. Clearly, such approaches to negotiating resolutions to conflict will only work if both partners are willing and able to engage in the process. When people are not skilled in the process of conflict negotiation they may need a facilitator to aid the process of resolution. However the focus should be on developing skills so that people can manage their own conflicts. For children in the early years of primary, peace skills are built through the development of a capacity for co-operation, for sharing, for identifying potential consequences of their actions and through developing a language with which to name and express their feelings. Building on this, middle and upper primary classes will develop a deeper capacity to cope with their feelings, as well as a capacity to compromise and accept group decisions.

At post-primary level, students should now be able to discuss and express emotions in a non-threatening way, listen actively to both concepts and emotions, negotiate with each other and begin the process of practicing peaceful resolution of conflicts.



## 5.2 Intercultural education opportunities across the curriculum

As an aid to classroom planning, this section outlines some of the opportunities for intercultural education work as they arise across subject areas. It identifies, for a range of subjects, opportunities for dealing with identity and belonging, similarity and difference, human rights and responsibilities, discrimination and equality and conflict and peace. All subject areas contain opportunities for engaging in intercultural education. This is not an exhaustive list of such opportunities. Teachers will, in their planning, identify many more such opportunities. It is intended to be a starting point for such planning.

### Art, Craft and Design

Intercultural education seeks to encourage an appreciation of the value of diversity. The study of art is particularly well suited

to communicating the rich diversity of a global culture and to expressing common universal human themes. It can help students to develop positive attitudes to the diverse nature of cultures, peoples, traditions and lifestyles. This is consistent with the aims of Art, Craft and Design syllabus that includes the aim ‘to develop in the students an understanding of art, craft and design in a variety of contexts – historical, cultural, economic, social and personal’ (Junior Certificate Syllabus, page 2). Art, Craft and Design also aims to develop a sense of personal identity and self-esteem in the student, both of which are vitally important in embracing an intercultural world. It also plays a key role in the development of the young person’s imaginative capacity which is central to their capacity to find alternative ways of imagining the world. Many of the objectives of the Junior Certificate Art Craft Design syllabus support the principles of intercultural education.

This course develops the student’s ability to:



1. Give a personal response to an idea, experience or other stimulus.
  - These may cover a broad range of intercultural ideas and stimuli.
  - The teacher can help create visual literacy and understanding of art as crossing cultural areas.
2. Work from imagination, memory and direct observation.
  - These may cover a broad range of intercultural ideas and stimuli.
  - Students can learn to make informed judgments about a range of visual stimuli.
  - Students can develop awareness and understanding of the diverse nature of worldwide cultures, peoples, traditions and lifestyles.
3. Use drawing for observation, recording and analysis as a means of thinking and for communication and expression.
  - Students can explore and understand the original meaning and function of the artefact.
  - Look at people's way of life in the context of the artefact.
4. Use the three-dimensional processes of additive, subtractive and constructional form-making in expressive and functional mode.
  - Different cultures exhibit different preferences for forms, colours and materials in their artefacts.
5. Use and understand the art and design elements.
  - Colour and pattern have different associations in varying cultural traditions.
6. Develop an awareness of the historical, social and economic role and value of art, craft and design and aspects of contemporary culture and mass media.
  - Need for sensitivity and awareness in the choice of some materials e.g. leather or parchment and vegetarians.
  - Students can learn to make informed judgments about a range of visual stimuli.
  - Students can develop awareness and understanding of the diverse nature of worldwide cultures, peoples, traditions and lifestyles.
  - Students can explore and understand the original meaning and function of the artefact.
  - Students can look at people's way of life in the context of the artefact.
  - Students can develop an understanding of the necessity for each culture to maintain its own identity, while building on the strengths of all humanity.

### In an inclusive Arts programme

- students learn to appreciate the artistic forms and traditions of many cultures, as well as their own
- the role of cultural interchange in the development and life of the arts is explored
- students are encouraged to discover and talk about variety in visual expression from different times and cultures and its role in those cultures
- students are encouraged to explore and practice styles of work that reflects cultural and ethnic diversity
- they see and are encouraged to produce work that reflects cultural and racial diversity
- students learn to appreciate the artistic forms and traditions associated with the diversity of cultures in Ireland

- visual arts are used as a stimulus for exploring stereotyping and ‘first impressions’
- arts are used as a basis for exploring representations of conflict and peace, human rights and discrimination
- a wide variety of students’ own work is displayed around the school.

Sample lessons for Art can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

### Civic Social and Political Education

Amongst the aims of CSPE is ‘to encourage pupils to apply positive attitudes, imagination and empathy in learning about, and encountering, other people and cultures.’ Young people’s understanding and appreciation of their identity as local, national and global citizens is at the heart of CSPE. All the core concepts which underpin CSPE are compatible with and supportive of intercultural education: stewardship, democracy, the law, human rights, human dignity, development and interdependence. Similarly, the four units which constitute the content of the course are hugely relevant to intercultural education: The Individual and Citizenship, the Community, The State-Ireland, and the Wider World. Action Projects (which represents 60 per cent of the total examination mark) provide students with an opportunity to take action on an issue of personal interest or concern. This might involve exploring an issue of discrimination and then taking action locally or globally to address the problem or it could involve organising a special event or awareness day to celebrate diversity in the school. The Action Projects also offer great opportunities for the development of skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, analysis of different opinions and perspectives and participation in active citizenship.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in CSPE as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

### English

The essential aim of teaching English in post-primary junior cycle is to reinforce and continue the work of the primary school in nurturing the intellectual, imaginative and emotional growth of each student by developing his or her personal proficiency in the arts and skills of language. This involves the enhancement of skills in three dynamically interrelated elements: personal literacy, social literacy and cultural literacy. In the living context of English teaching these three elements form an organic wholeness of experience. The Junior Certificate English syllabus sees language development as an integral element of personal growth through English, thereby recognising the centrality of language development in the learning and thinking processes. Growth in language proficiency does not occur in a neutral or value-free context, so the following aims are included in the syllabus:

- to achieve diversification and enrichment of each student’s personal, social and cultural linguistic base
- to enable, through language development, full and effective participation in society in a variety of roles
- to develop students’ critical consciousness in respect of all language use.

Diversity of language experience is crucial to the realisation of these aims and, as the syllabus promotes a holistic approach to course design and classroom methodology, students should engage with texts in a variety of ways and from a variety of perspectives. Teachers are free to choose the material they consider most suitable for

their students' programme. In choosing materials for study the teacher's choice will be guided by his/her knowledge of the students' general stage of development, linguistic abilities and cultural (inter-cultural) environment.

Teachers should aim to achieve a wide and varied language programme with their students. Diversity of texts, materials and approaches is a necessary condition for achieving the desired variety of linguistic experience.  
(Junior Certificate English Syllabus p.5)

In this sense, then, English can encourage the development of attitudes that support intercultural education, e.g. an appreciation of the value of difference, empathy for the experience and perspectives of other people including those who live with the effects of discrimination or inequality. The intercultural dimension of the English classroom occurs as an integral part of each student's language development in the personal, social and cultural domains and should not be viewed as added-on or compartmentalised learning.

The design of a programme in English in junior cycle may be viewed from a number of interrelated angles:

- as the development of a *range of skills* in listening, speaking, reading and writing in the personal, social and cultural domains;
- as a series of encounters with a diverse *range of texts* giving rise to personal and shared understandings and language experiences;
- as a *series of syllabus units* (selections of interrelated literary texts, cultural materials and linguistic assignments) which provide the substance, purpose and direction to work in the English programme.

In an inclusive English programme:

- students are provided with opportunities to express and respond to differing opinions, interpretations and ideas, thereby broadening their social and cultural experiences while developing skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing; students are helped to recognise prejudice, bias and stereotyping in print and images, and thereby develop a critical consciousness with respect to all language use
- students are enabled to empathise with the experience and point of view of others by being encouraged to interpret texts orally and attempt performances and productions
- students are exposed to literature from diverse cultures through courses designed achieve a wide and varied language programme
- syllabus units are planned around themes that are of interest to young people e.g. growing up, justice and equality, human rights, and so on
- the diversity of patterns of speech in English are recognised and validated, showing respect for each student's linguistic competence and the community characteristics of his/her language use
- in looking at the meaning or usage of words or phrases, teachers and students might usefully reflect on their origins in languages such as Latin, French, Irish, Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and so on. This will help to give students a sense of the cultural diversity in any one language and the interrelated nature of different languages.

English has historically been a second language in Gaeltacht communities in Ireland. It is also now being taught as a second language to an increasing number of students in Irish post-primary schools and in this context cognisance should be

taken of the need for appropriate teaching strategies for second-language learners.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in English as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Gaeilge

Irish can provide a useful vehicle for intercultural education. Since certain core elements of traditional and contemporary Irish culture are mediated through the language (e.g. identity and belonging, difference and similarity), students through learning Irish can derive a deep understanding and appreciation of culture. Irish culture represents an important threshold in understanding other cultures. Many of the themes which dominate Irish literature have a resonance today and can be used to develop empathy and understanding among students. Themes of emigration, identity, conflict, loss, oppression and freedom in particular can be explored with a view to making contemporary links. Cross-cultural and intercultural awareness can be promoted and developed in a holistic approach to the context and nature of interactional language (Feidhmeanna Teanga, pp 17-29 of syllabus) and through the exploitation of the potential of texts (reading and literary texts).

- *Aesthetic*: Texts associated with foreign music, film, or linked with customs of a different culture or different cultures found in Ireland including Shelta culture.
- *Sociological*: Texts linked to customs and institutions e.g. in the section on An Teach (page 39) Bia agus Deoch (p.39) Caitheamh Aimsire (p.39) Éadaí agus Faisean (p.40).
- *Semantic and Pragmatic*: Different

conceptual systems where culture is embodied in the language (some examples where appropriate from different languages), for example Dia duit - as-saláamu (Arabic) le cúnamh Dé - in shaa' Al-aah (Arabic) etc.

In an inclusive Irish programme

- students are led to insight and increased understanding not only of their own society and culture but also of the society and culture of other languages
- language learning leads to affective change, i.e. the development of positive and appreciative attitudes towards speakers of other languages
- by gaining a perspective on their own culture, students are allowed to develop a reassessment of what has hitherto been all too familiar and to make a comparison between the Irish experience, as mediated in its language and literature, and the present experiences of other societies
- students through cognitive and affective engagement with similarities in Irish and others societies' experiences are helped to arrive at an active understanding of our common humanity.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in Gaeilge as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Geography

The concepts of diversity, interdependence and human development are central to the study of Geography. By studying people and their environment locally and globally, students can come to value the richness of people from a diversity of cultural, ethnic, social and religious backgrounds. The Geography course at both junior and

senior cycle is built around a number of key concepts—the human habitat, population, settlement patterns and urbanisation, and patterns of economic activity. All these concepts are relevant to intercultural education and provide ample opportunities for exploring issues of equity, justice and interdependence. Amongst the aims of Geography at junior cycle are to

- encourage in students a sensitive awareness of peoples, places and landscapes, both in their own country and elsewhere
- contribute to students' understanding of important issues and problems in contemporary society (Syllabus, p.4).

The development of empathy with people from diverse environments and the development of an understanding and appreciation of the variety of human conditions on the earth are key outcomes of the geography curriculum. In this regard teachers have an important role to play in ensuring that 'third world' countries are not depicted as simply a basket of problems. A balanced perspective is vital in overcoming negative stereotypes of the developing world and its people. Geography also affords the opportunity for students to explore the normality of diversity throughout the world - that many countries are multilingual and multicultural.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in Geography as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## History

There is substantial correspondence between the aims and objectives of the history course and those of intercultural education. The introduction to the Junior

Certificate history syllabus notes, 'it (history) helps young people to develop a tolerance and respect for the values, beliefs and traditions of others, and to prepare themselves for the responsibilities of citizenship in a national, European and global context.' In Junior Certificate history, students engage with human experience in all its multiplicity and diversity. The syllabus 'provides young people with a wide tapestry of past events, issues, people and ways of life...' and, in the study of this 'wide tapestry' encourages 'An acceptance that people and events must be studied in the context of their time'. The awareness of diversity and context are also central to intercultural education.

The underlying values and approach of Junior Certificate history are also complementary. Students are encouraged to strive for objectivity and fair-mindedness and to develop an ability to detect bias and identify propaganda. The recognition that history is always mediated through human perspective and hence we can have many accounts of the same events provides students with a critical capacity to explore the role of the historian in 'creating' history. Students too can be helped to see the relationship between history and identity and the role of history in providing people with a shared story and collective memory of the past. Such an understanding is critical in fostering an appreciation and understanding of diversity. The working atmosphere of the history classroom, therefore, is one in which the values of intercultural education should be readily assimilated.

In an inclusive History programme

- students encounter diverse aspects of human experience in a variety of cultural contexts

- students learn that their own historical inheritance has many strands and facets
- students learn that human society is never static but constantly undergoing change and that change is, therefore, a constant dynamic in the on-going development of human history
- students learn how human history is created by the interaction of different individuals, groups and institutions in a variety of contexts
- students are provided with opportunities for reflective and critical work on historical evidence and biases and stereotypes are challenged
- students learn that our understanding of history is always enhanced by our ability to empathise with the perspective of ‘the other’.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in History as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Home Economics

The Junior Certificate home economics syllabus provides students with the opportunity to attain the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to live as individuals and as members of the family and community. Emphasis throughout the course is on management, creativity and living skills; to ensure that the student is prepared for personal independence and with the ability to partake in shared responsibility in the household and community in which he or she lives. The home economics syllabus promotes many skills and values – problem-solving, decision-making and design skills, personal responsibility, group work and co-operation – that are central to the themes of intercultural education.

There are many opportunities for the teacher to select activities and lessons in

home economics that promote the themes of intercultural education and contribute to the students’ value of diversity. Students select and plan dishes and meals to prepare, cook and serve using a design process model. Teachers can expose students to a wide range of diverse foods and meals from other cultures, impressing on students how the diversity of these foods add to the richness of meal choices we have access to. As much of this planning and practical work is done collectively, students learn how to co-operate with others and have respect for the needs of others.

In the Textile Studies section of the core and in the Textile Skills elective, the fashion and design components lend themselves to an exploration of the diversity of fashion and design that is available to us when we look to all the cultures of the world. Equally the richness of opportunity in the Design and Craftwork elective can be expanded by exposing students to the opportunities afforded them by exploring the crafts of many cultures. In this way students can be encouraged to appreciate and respect the richness of cultures and traditions that they have in their own communities and available to them globally.

In the Social and Health Studies section students learn about their own development as individuals and the development of their roles within families. Students can be encouraged to value themselves and their place within their family and community and also to respect the place of others within their social groups, their school class, their clubs, their community and their country. Issues of discrimination can be discussed in terms of students’ real-life experiences. Many students will experience discrimination due to their gender or age, for example, and can relate this to other forms of

discrimination, such as racism. This can create an empathy for others who are experiencing discrimination.

In Consumer Studies students learn to become aware of their rights and responsibilities. In fact consumer competence is a key concept of the course. Students can be encouraged to believe that they can make a difference by knowing their rights and responsibilities, to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of a course of action and how to act on their decisions and have their voices heard. An intercultural perspective can be introduced by encouraging students to consider their responsibilities as well as their rights and to recognise the right of all to be heard and respected.

In an inclusive Home Economics programme

- students learn to appreciate the value of foods, clothing, crafts and homes from many cultures, as well as their own
- students of all cultures are encouraged to contribute their experience of food, clothing and crafts from their own culture
- students learn the value of diversity in shaping the foods, clothing and crafts that we have available to us
- various cultural practices, rules and taboos about food are explored and choices are sufficiently flexible to allow students to include their own cultural choices, where appropriate
- students are encouraged to work in the traditions of their own cultures as well as to explore and produce work that reflects cultural diversity and learn how one cultural tradition borrows from others, for example in the diet or in fashion.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in Home

Economics as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Mathematics

Students should be aware of the history of mathematics and hence of its past, present and future role as part of culture. (Syllabus, p. 4)

Curriculum bias may not seem relevant to the mathematics teacher, who may often feel their subject is neutral and value free. However, no education is neutral. The Maths teacher is also presented with choices and opportunities for promoting an intercultural perspective. Students spend a lot of time solving problems in Maths. By choosing problems which present a real life issue (e.g. percentage of the world's resources consumed by different parts of the world) teachers can play an important role in developing students' innate sense of justice and equality. Mathematics can also be an important tool in intercultural education because of the skills it develops—problem-solving skills, skills in reasoning and logic and the ability to analyse data and draw reasoned conclusions.

In an inclusive Mathematics programme

- students are presented with opportunities to examine information on local and global issues (e.g. population flows, consumption patterns, military spending versus health spending as % of GNP, etc.)
- students are given opportunities to engage in group activities and investigative learning
- students compare calendars, number systems and mathematical contributions from around the world
- students use data from the social sciences, (e.g. surveys, census reports) to study trends, projections, charts and graphs

- students can explore the contribution of diverse cultures to our mathematical culture
- students can learn to value ‘the hidden mathematics embedded in cultural-economic activity’. For example, the maths practiced by identifiable cultural groups, by tribal societies, by those without formal education, and so on.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in Mathematics as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Modern Languages

The Junior Certificate modern languages syllabus makes several specific references to the importance of culture under its general educational aims, including ‘to give pupils an awareness of another culture and thus a more objective perspective on aspects of their own culture’. Similarly, at senior cycle, the general aims of the syllabus include ‘to equip learners with a broad acquaintance with the cultural, social and political complexities of the countries in which the target language is a normal medium of communication and thus to help raise their awareness of cultural, social and political diversity generally.’

Culture infuses every area of language teaching: for example, learning any verb in French involves learning the familiar *tu* form and the polite (or plural) *vous* form, with implications of register and appropriateness. Learning about how Christmas is celebrated in Spain will involve learning about *los Reyes Magos and turrón*. It is second nature to language teachers to then make comparisons with the students’ own language and culture, thereby inevitably raising their awareness of other cultures and sensitising them to

similarities and differences.

There is scope for taking the intercultural basis which already exists a step further: to consider more consciously and deliberately the diverse cultures and ways of life in the country (or countries) of the target language; to consider the diverse cultures in Ireland; to consider specifically issues of human rights and responsibilities and conflict and conflict resolution.

When students are discussing intercultural issues in the target language, they may have difficulty in expressing complicated ideas or responses. However, the very struggle to express themselves will sensitise students to the difficulties which may be experienced by non-native speakers of English now living in Ireland. If there are non-native speakers of English in the class, a language class can also provide the proverbial level playing field, where English-speaking students are not automatically at an advantage as they may be in, say, a history or geography class.

In an inclusive modern language programme

- students are sensitised to cultural differences with the country or countries of the target language and elsewhere
- students are exposed to a range of materials, including literature, which presents a variety of perspectives and allows them to explore values and attitudes
- materials touching on issues of human rights and responsibilities, discrimination and equality, and conflict and conflict resolution are used as source material for practising both receptive and productive use of the target language
- language is not approached simply as the study of language as a tool of communication or even as the study of a

body of literature: rather, it is seen as an exploration of a whole world.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in Modern Languages as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Music

Music is pan-cultural by nature. The three stands of music study, (performing, composing, listening), offer rich opportunities to highlight intercultural themes and to celebrate diversity. Students' appreciation of other cultures and traditions can be developed with guided teaching and directed learning opportunities (Aims 3). Students' sensitivity to their own performance and that of others can deepen and expand with instruction and guidance (Aims 2).

Students' sense of identity and belonging can be enhanced through creative involvement in music making activities (Aims 1).

The objectives of the Music syllabus include the following:

1. To facilitate the development of performing skills at an appropriate level by providing opportunity for the regular practice of vocal and/or instrumental music.

An inclusive Music programme will

- include performance items from other cultures
- incorporate a background study of these cultures
- organise a concert programme on a cultural theme, or musical journey through a number of cultures



- incorporate performance contexts which include costume, movement, scenery, etc.
  - invite local musicians from other traditions and cultures to perform to the students
  - utilise talents within the school community of staff, students and parents to present items from other cultures
  - identify and compare different types of response to music performance
  - develop a sense of integrity and respect for group decisions concerning music style and performance
  - encourage participative roles in group activities which demonstrate initiative for the good of the whole ensemble.
2. To develop aural perception in its broadest sense and to foster an awareness and an appreciation of the music of the past and of the present, and of its role in our own as well as other environments.

An inclusive music programme will

- refer to background cultures in the study of songs and works from other cultures (Set Songs and Set Works)
- select pieces (Choice Songs and Choice Works) which offer opportunities to encounter unfamiliar cultures and traditions
- discuss the significance of the role of music in these cultures
- consider genres and styles which highlight diversity and difference when selecting topics for the general study
- use video and live performance of traditional Irish music to strengthen the understanding of the relationship between music and culture
- explore differences and similarities between examples of music from different parts of Ireland and different parts of Europe and the world

- observe the different roles music can take in ceremony and social function, within Ireland and beyond
  - identify and investigate characteristics of music associated with particular contexts, purposes and styles in past and present cultures
  - explore music as an expression of struggle and hope, dealing with themes of conflict and peace, of liberation and discrimination.
3. To provide sufficient musical experience and factual information to enable the students to develop and practise listening and composing skills with greater understanding and interest, and to support performing skills with a more informed awareness of the related and necessary underlying facts.

An inclusive Music programme will

- expose students to a variety of notation systems (tonic solfa, numbering, non-western, tablature, graphic, etc.)
- investigate the dominance of the western major/minor tonality
- explore the growth of popular music, the effect of technology of music styles, the influence of the guitar with its tonic/dominant tuning
- involve students in collaborative compositional activities that demand respect for the contributions of others.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in Music as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Physical Education

Amongst the aims of the Junior Certificate Physical Education syllabus is 'to promote positive attitudes towards participation in physical activity and towards co-operation



with others in that participation’. This and many of the other aims of the physical education programme are compatible with and supportive of intercultural education e.g. ‘develop in students an ability to make informed judgements...’; ‘to enable students to take responsibility for the organisation and development of their learning...’. The P.E. curriculum embodies many values and skills central to intercultural education, e.g. awareness of the impact of many cultures on sport/dance and the similarities and diversity which exists; the importance of fair play; the ability to communicate and work in groups (co-operating, resolving disagreement peacefully and demonstrating respect for the opinions of others, etc). The underlying principles and approaches to physical education foster an acceptance of success and failure and provide challenges and achievement for all students through personal goal setting, co-operative games and group work.

Within an inclusive Physical Education programme:

- Students receive many opportunities to develop self-esteem and confidence, as a result of their experience within a broad well-balanced programme, which caters for the needs of all students.
- Students develop the ability to identify and challenge unfairness within physical activities and learn to respect the players, officials and rules associated with each activity.
- Students should experience a balance of competitive and non-competitive activities thus fostering a lifelong interest in sports/leisure.
- Students develop an awareness of the origins and history of many games and the modification of games over the years. Students may also be exposed to a range of different dance forms representing and celebrating a diversity of cultures/traditions (folk dance, line dance, salsa dance etc.).

- Students explore social issues through movement, where students respond to themes/stimuli thus expressing emotions/feelings.
- Students develop an awareness of safe practice within all activities and adopt behaviours, which ensure mutual respect for the safety of peers and self.
- Students should demonstrate respect for others' viewpoint, listen to each other and taking turns. In this environment students feel confident to give their opinion within group/whole class activities.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in P.E. as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Religious Education

Religious education should ensure that students are exposed to a broad range of religious traditions and to the non-religious interpretation of life. It has a particular part to play in the curriculum in the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding. It seeks to develop in students the skills to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other, or of no, religious traditions.

(Syllabus, p 4)

The syllabus for Religious Education, at both junior and senior cycle, places great emphasis on the value of religious diversity and on mutual respect for people of all beliefs. One of the primary aims of Religious Education is 'to provide students with a framework for encountering and engaging with a variety of religious traditions in Ireland and elsewhere'.

Both its content and its aims are compatible with the content and values of intercultural education. Religious Education aims to foster an awareness of the human search for meaning that is common to all peoples and encourages

students to recognize different responses to that search in different cultures and contexts. It also explores how religious traditions have contributed to the culture we live in and continue to have an impact on human behaviour and lifestyle. It seeks to develop in students the skills to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other, or of no, religious traditions. As such, it can play an important role in the curriculum in the promotion of respect and mutual understanding.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in R.E. as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Science

Junior Certificate Science provides students with a means of understanding the natural and physical world and the relevance and application of science to their personal and social lives. It provides knowledge about the world and opportunities for scientific investigation. The learning experiences enable students to develop positive attitudes towards themselves, others, the environment and science and technology. An intercultural perspective enables appreciation of individual and cultural differences. It considers multiple voices and multiple perspectives ranging from the voice of each student in the classroom to the contributions from the many cultures of the world to different aspects of science.

Science education, like intercultural education, is concerned with fostering skills of independent enquiry and creative action. The analytical thinking skills, which are learned through scientific inquiry, are transferable to the analysis of the social world, and contribute directly to intercultural competence. So too 'an ability to form opinions and judgements based on evidence and experiment' (aim listed in J.C. Science Syllabus, p.3) is vital in

overcoming prejudice and stereotyping. Many of the themes covered in Science, such as water, energy and ecology offer great opportunity for cross-cultural comparisons and learning.

The Junior Certificate Science Syllabus advises that the historical impact of science and society should influence the teaching of the course. An appreciation of how science has evolved is vital lest students are left with an image of the scientist as a white western male working in a high tech lab. This image fails to recognise the contribution of many people over the centuries and in the developing world to scientific discoveries. The development of scientific knowledge and the processes of scientific exploration represent the cumulative work of many cultures and ethnic groups over time, and it is on-going in all parts of the world. Therefore it is important that care is taken in choosing scientific examples, to ensure that the contributions of diverse peoples to contemporary scientific practices and knowledge are reflected. The Science teacher can also show how low tech and environmentally friendly solutions are appropriate and cost effective in addressing modern problems.

Because Science is a process of investigation as well as a body of knowledge the syllabus encourages the teacher to provide the student with opportunities to conduct investigative and experimental work. Incorporating an intercultural perspective involves focusing on the methodologies as well as the theoretical content of the class-work. In investigative work, where possible, group work should be encouraged and changing of the group members over time can encourage collaboration by students of diverse abilities, ages, ethnic backgrounds and gender.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in Science as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Social, Personal and Health Education

The understanding, knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and capacities of intercultural education are integrated across a range of modules with the SPHE programme. These include

### Belonging and integrating

Through investigating this theme students can move towards a deeper appreciation of how belonging and integrating can mean different things to different students and yet there are also many similarities. It is important to be aware that students may come to these learning experiences with different cultural perspectives which may effect how they participate, e.g. children from a Traveller background may have a different experience of 'family' than the settled community. Travellers for the most part, live in close relationship with their extended family. This would not be true of many students in the settled community. The influences on both sets of students will be different. Children from a Muslim background may have a different outlook on alcohol to children brought up in a Christian tradition.

### Differences and similarities

This module invites the students to explore how we are different and how are we similar? How might this awareness effect how we behave towards one another? How can we be respectful in our interactions with one another?

### Physical health

There are a number of culturally sensitive areas that may arise in this module, for

example, different perceptions of modesty and different practices at puberty. It would be important for teachers to be aware of and sensitive to how these differences might impact on the content and methodologies chosen. The focus of these lessons would be to facilitate a positive experience for each student.

### **Emotional health**

Once again, different cultures adopt different approaches to emotional development. Appropriate expressions of anger, affection or grief, for example, can be particular to a culture. Gaining an appreciation and understanding of different ways of dealing with emotions can enable students to realize that there are different ways of dealing with similar emotions. The important consideration is the extent to which these expressions are respectful of the person themselves and others.

### **Friendships**

Each class group will represent a wide range of values, attitudes and beliefs about what friendship means and what is appropriate in friendships between same sex and opposite sex. Learning in this area will not only inform students about the similarities and differences but can also help them to understand and respect difference.

### **Relationships and sexuality education**

The recommended lessons for this module can be adapted to bring out the intercultural aspects. As with other modules, the teacher can show sensitivity to the different expectations and values found amongst different cultures in the area of relationships and sexuality. Methodologies used in SPHE can greatly facilitate students in learning about themselves and others. Empathetic listening skills and skills of conflict resolution are particularly important in SPHE. Active

learning methodologies can maximize the potential for these skills to be developed amongst the students. When students share appropriate personal information, discuss their values, attitudes, thoughts and fears with one another, they can become aware that all people are different and yet share similarities. They can come to appreciate that every classroom includes a variety of cultures, even if all present were born and reared in Ireland.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in SPHE as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## **Technology subjects**

Three of the technology subjects at Junior Cycle, Materials Technology (wood), Metalwork and Technology, have a similar focus, notwithstanding some differences of emphasis, on the utilisation of a range of materials and components in design and manufacture. Common opportunities for intercultural education exist in each of the subjects in this group. The fourth subject, Technical Graphics, focuses on the application of two and three-dimensional reasoning to the solution of graphical and spatial problems of an abstract and practical nature. Technical Graphics provides affords opportunities for a different range of intercultural experiences than the other group of subjects.

### **1. Design and manufacturing based technology subjects**

These subjects seek to foster skills associated with creative activity where students interact with their environment, using appropriate materials and processes in response to needs, wants and opportunities. The fundamental problems that such a 'design and make'

technological experience presents to students are similar in any cultural context but its resolution will be dependent on the resources available in that community. Exploring ‘design and make’ situations where the availability of materials and processes is restricted to reflect a different set of cultural circumstance is an approach that has been used in these subjects and has considerably more potential.

These subjects seek to ‘contribute to the students appreciation of ecological and environmental factors and the use of natural resources’ (Materials Technology (wood) Syllabus, p.4) and ‘to develop the student’s knowledge and understanding of how technology impacts on society and an understanding of how it might be used to the benefit or detriment of the social and physical environment’ (Technology Syllabus, p.2). The engagement required by these aims leads to an appreciation of the often conflicting needs of a variety of cultures.

It is evident that these subjects can provide for the encouragement of curiosity about cultural differences. They can contribute to the acquisition of perspectives by students on their own practices and their impact on other societies which are all benefits of an intercultural education.

In an inclusive technology education experience

- students appreciate the origins of the main materials they work with in the classroom and the impact the production of that material has on the community they originated from
- students explore the solution they would propose to a design and manufacture problem, given a different set of economic and cultural constraints to those they are familiar with

- students will appreciate the contribution of other cultures to the advancement of technology
- students will have an appreciation of alternative manufacturing techniques and craft traditions from other parts of the world.

## 2. Technical Graphics

Technical Graphics develops the skills of students in representing the physical world in a graphical format. This representation conforms to internationally agreed norms which are in use worldwide resulting in a common graphical ‘language’ being used in most cultural contexts. This provides a unique opportunity for teachers to focus on the similarity that exists in communication across various cultures and to utilise graphic images that originate in other cultures as a basis for classroom activity.

In an inclusive Technical Graphics programme

- students will be presented with opportunities to draw logograms and other objects that originate in other cultures;
- students will read product assembly instructions presented to them in an unfamiliar language with associated graphical illustration;
- students will be presented with a situation that requires them to generate graphical images that can form the basis of communication with people in other parts of the world.

A detailed audit of the opportunities for including intercultural themes in Technology subjects as well as sample lessons can be found on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).



## **Approaches and Methodologies**



6

# 6

## APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

**Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace...**

(Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26.)

As the characteristics of intercultural education outlined in chapter two make clear, the approaches and methodologies that are particularly suitable for an intercultural approach are those that use active learning strategies, in particular the use of discussion. This chapter, and the subsequent exemplars, identify how active learning methodologies can be applied across a range of subject areas in the post-primary classroom.

### ACTIVE LEARNING

The real voyage in discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.

(Marcel Proust)

Today, active learning approaches are firmly rooted in post-primary teaching and are central to the successful delivery of a most subjects. Active learning is a process

in which students actively participate in their learning in a variety of ways. This increases the possibility that students will internalise what they have learned and be able to apply it to their day-to-day lives and to everyday situations. This makes active learning crucial to the development of responsible global citizenship.

### Active learning

- engages students physically, cognitively and emotionally
- places students at the centre of the learning process through ensuring that the content is relevant to their own lives and is engaging for them
- promotes responsibility, confidence and self-esteem as students become responsible for their own learning
- acknowledges that students learn from each other and teachers learn from students, as well as vice versa

- allows for flexibility of teaching methodologies and so accommodates different kinds of intelligence and different learning styles
- builds skills of problem-solving, critical thinking and co-operation
- requires an atmosphere of trust and support in order to ensure that students do engage and feel secure in expressing their own views or in trying out new skills
- promotes action, as students learn to recognise their own capacity and self-efficacy.

In approaching concepts like the value of diversity or rights and responsibilities, or in learning skills such as negotiated solutions to conflict it is often useful to utilise real-life situations within the learning process. The active learning methodologies outlined in the exemplars which support these guidelines (available on the CD-ROM and at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)) offer a range of ideas for doing this. Clearly, there are times when fraught emotions make this difficult. The section on dealing with controversial issues at the end of this chapter might be useful in such situations.

## Active learning methods

### Structured discussion

Discussion has a key role in intercultural education. It provides a chance for students to talk about their ideas and feelings and can open up opportunities for developing or changing their ideas or feelings where appropriate. It can develop a range of skills such as asking questions, active and positive listening, taking turns, summarising views, etc.

Crucial to engaging in open discussion is an atmosphere of trust and support. Students need to feel that they can speak

their mind. While students should be confronted about inaccurate, hurtful or hostile statements, this should be done in such a way that they are affirmed as a person, while their view is challenged.

It is not a good idea to throw open a discussion without first providing some guidance and ground rules for discussion. It is also the teacher's role to provide a suitable stimulus for generating discussion, such as a poem, newspaper article, piece of music, visual stimulus or physical activity.

### A sample set of ground rules might include

- everyone is shown respect
- everyone is given a chance to speak in the group
- everyone is listened to – no interruptions
- no put-downs
- everyone's right to their opinion is respected
- everyone is expected to back up their opinion
- everyone has the freedom to change their opinion based on reflective discussion
- no generalisations e.g. 'all refugees are... all Muslims are...'

Adapted from *Changing Perspectives: Cultural Diversity and Equality in Ireland and the Wider World (A resource for CSPE) 2002*, CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit.

### Simulation games and role-play

Simulation games and role-play are widely used to provide students with a chance to 'live out' a real life situation in a safe environment. For effective role-playing there is need for careful preparation, including preparation of role-cards, reflection questions and any relevant background information. It is important to choose a theme that is clearly focused and

is likely to generate worthwhile reflection, analysis and debate. Allowing sufficient time to bring students out of role and to discuss their experience of role-play is vital. Finally, teachers should respect student's choice not to participate in a role-play. In such cases they can play an important role in actively listening and reporting on what they observed.

### Debate

A debate works best if students are given a chance to debate a topic that is of genuine interest to them and if they are given time and support to prepare for the debate (background information, newspaper/magazine articles, useful websites, etc.) One of the pitfalls of classroom debates is the tendency amongst students to rigidly take up a position and not see the value of the alternative view. One approach which may help in this situation is to invite students to research and present a point of view on an issue, then switch sides and argue for the opposite point of view. Finally, the group tries to come to a consensus on the issues and writes a group report describing the issue and their combined thinking about it. The process requires students to make use of collaborative skills, and perspective taking and consensus are built into the procedure.

A walking debate is another good way of allowing students to debate an issue. According to this method, a statement is read out to the class and they are asked to position themselves at one end of the classroom if they agree and at the other end if they disagree. Those who are uncertain can stand in the middle. According to the issue is debated students can move their position. The movement encourages opinions to change and also allows for uncertainty and an acceptance that all issues are not black and white.

### Issue tracking

Issue tracking is a method by which students can follow and explore an issue or topic that is currently in the news. In the context of intercultural education it might be interesting to track the depiction of refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland or the issue of religious practice and religious diversity in Ireland. Issue tracking develops group work and cooperation skills as students must work in groups and decide on the best way to collect information. The teacher can stimulate the search by bringing newspapers to class on the first day or by showing a news report on the chosen issue. Students can compile a scrap book, or wall chart or use the internet and computer to compile an electronic scrap-book. This methodology allows for discussion on the difference between fact and opinion and the role of perspective and bias in the media.

### Photos, artwork and images

An image or photo can be a useful way of stimulating interest in a topic, especially if the image is slightly puzzling or challenging. Students can be invited to question the photo. Who took it? Where was it taken? What was happening at the time the photo was taken? What happened next? etc. It is important to avoid using images that may reinforce students' prejudices or stereotypes.

Students can also be invited to depict their own understanding of an issue through artwork, cartoons, collage or sculpture. It is important to reassure students that everyone's efforts are of value including those who are not 'good at art'.

The use of freeze-frame can be another effective way of using images to explore different experiences, perspectives and feelings. To do this the teacher might read

a poem or a story and then ask the students in small groups to pick one line from the story and create a still image showing what is happening at that moment. When the teacher places his/her hand on a student's shoulder they are encouraged to verbalise their thoughts in character. The range of attitudes and thoughts that emerge can be the subject for rich discussion.

### Survey/questionnaire

A survey or questionnaire can develop skills of communication, gathering and interpreting information and cooperation. It enables action beyond the classroom and can often involve the school or wider community.

## DEALING WITH CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

All educators can find themselves dealing with controversial issues in the classroom. Issues of justice and morality, of human rights and responsibility, of belief and practice, of life and its meaning, are at the heart of all education. Therefore, controversial issues are encountered almost daily in the classroom. These issues are controversial because there is no one fixed or universally held point of view. A controversial issue is defined as an area of inquiry about which people can hold sincere conflicting points of view. There are often diverse religious as well as secular perspectives on such issues.

Because issues are controversial they are likely to challenge students' values, beliefs, and world views. This can be very threatening and may even cause distress to some students. Therefore when controversial issues are addressed in the classroom teachers need special skills to ensure a positive outcome.

An important outcome in teaching about such controversial material would be to achieve a classroom atmosphere in which students engage in interesting and informed dialogues, free to express their opinions and relate their experiences, yet remaining respectful of both other students and other opinions.

Achieving a balance of 'freedom within structure' is not easy, and discomfort can result if the balance between the two is lost. This can arise from a too-tightly-controlled classroom in which students are afraid to speak or a too-loosely-controlled classroom in which unchecked or uninformed personal opinion monopolise class time. This section offers some guidelines for facilitating discussion to achieve this balance.

### Some tips for teaching controversial issues

The following tips are aimed at helping teachers keep control of the situation while maintaining open enquiry and dialogue.

#### **Make your classroom a safe place in which to ask questions and discuss ideas**

Before students can ask questions or discuss controversial issues, they need to feel that the classroom is a safe place in which to ask questions or disagree with classmates without being put down for it. Ground rules for discussion should be established early in the year and reinforced regularly - not just for discussions about controversial issues, but for all discussions.

#### **Appeal to students' better nature**

In introducing an issue that has the potential to become controversial, teachers can remind students of the importance of respect and tolerance. They might also make a humanitarian appeal to students to remember that prejudiced remarks made in class may offend or embarrass their classmates.

Most students do not want intentionally to hurt others, and, with this reminder, they may strive to couch their comments in less inflammatory language.

**Find out what students know and think about an issue before beginning an inquiry**

Find out what they know about an issue, what they think they know but aren't sure about, where their information comes from, and what questions they have. Their responses can come from direct questioning, brainstorming, group discussions, and journal-writing.

**Expose students to multiple perspectives**

Avoid classroom discussions on issues until students have had an opportunity to research and explore the issue from a variety of perspectives. But remember, exposure to different points of view on a controversial issue is necessary but insufficient. Students may listen, view, or read only to support what they already think or to find flaws, omissions, misinformation.

A key habit of mind the teacher seeks to develop through these processes is 'critical openness'—both a disposition to be open-minded to others' views and the ability to subject them to critical study, both the willingness to suspend judgment and the ability ultimately to reach reasoned conclusions that are open to change.

**Promote dialogue and active listening**

Students usually need help in understanding the differences between dialogue and debate. Dialogue aims for understanding, enlargement of view, complicating one's thinking, an openness to change. Dialogue requires real listening. It also requires humility.

How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I am closed to, and even offended by, the contribution of others?

**(Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed.)**

An excellent way to promote listening is by asking students to re-state the perspective of others. Have them paraphrase what they hear another student saying to gain this skill.

**Use active learning methodologies**

Students learn best when actively engaged in the learning. In teaching controversial issues it is important to provide opportunities for various kinds of group discussions: pairs, conversation circles, panels, fishbowls. In addition active learning methodologies can be useful in building empathy (e.g. role-play) and in challenging strongly held prejudices (e.g. a simulation game).

**Promote critical thinking**

Promote skills of critical evaluation and encourage students to interrogate information, its origins and possible biases. Ask critical question to help students to understand the origins of their ideas and attitudes.

**Some examples of critical questioning**

- What is your current understanding of (state issue)?
- Why do you think/feel that way?
- Where have your perceptions and understanding come from?
- How reliable is this information?
- Where have your images come from?
- What might be the role of the media in influencing how you see this situation?
- What about other influences – friends, family, religion?
- Can you imagine an alternative way of seeing this issue? What might it be like?

When dealing with controversial issues, teachers should adopt strategies that teach students how to recognise bias, how to evaluate evidence put before them and how to look for alternative interpretations, viewpoints and sources of evidence, above all to give good reasons for everything they say and do, and to expect good reasons to be given by others.

**(Bailey, 1998)**

## The teacher's role in dealing with controversial issues

### 1. Examine yourself

What do you, the teacher, think and feel about an issue? Why? Would you tell students at the outset what your views are so that they can allow for possible biases? Or should you not tell them, but guard against any inclinations to manipulate and propagandise?

### 2. Be responsive to students' feelings and values

Through such techniques as those outlined above, students' feelings and

values are likely to be revealed, for examining a controversial issue is not a bloodless exercise. Just as the teacher's role is not to tell students what to think but to help them learn how to think, so that role is not to tell students what feelings and values to have but to promote an atmosphere in which they can express them without fear, make them explicit to themselves, and consider their validity.

### 3. Model respect and fairness

Show respect for all students and their right to express their views. Show balance in representing opposing positions accurately and fairly.

The teacher cannot pretend to be neutral and has a right to express an opinion too. But it is important to state one's own opinion in a way that respects others and does not serve to close down the discussion.



#### 4. Correct misinformation

One important role for the teacher during a discussion on a controversial issue is to gently correct misinformation. Keep this information simple and to the point. Avoid entering into confrontation or adopting an argumentative stance with a student or group of students.

#### 5. Emphasise that conflicts are opportunities

Most controversial issues can generate conflict, and a discussion about controversial issues is a good time to remind children that conflicts are opportunities for learning and growth.

#### 6. Show your humanity

Admit doubts, difficulties, and weaknesses in your own position. Allow the students to question your position too.

#### 7. Establish a means of closure

Ensure that the discussion is brought to closure with due sensitivity to the feelings that may have been aroused.

### EMPATHETIC LISTENING

Listening lies at the heart of education for respect and mutual understanding. Without listening it is not possible to enter another person's world and hear their story. Empathetic listening means listening with the intent to understand. This is a skill that can be fostered amongst students (see exemplars on the web at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)) and also one that can be modelled by the teacher.

### CHECK LIST TO SEE IF I AM A GOOD LISTENING ROLE MODEL

- ✓ Do I really care about each student in my class?
- ✓ Can I find something good to say about each student?
- ✓ Do I speak respectfully to each individual?
- ✓ Do I let students finish what they are trying to say, and if they hesitate, do I encourage them to go on?
- ✓ Do I withhold judgement until the person has finished speaking?
- ✓ Am I able to avoid confrontation?
- ✓ Do I express understanding and empathy, as appropriate?
- ✓ Do I regularly give positive feedback to each pupil?
- ✓ Do I assume certain pupils are guilty before listening to the facts?
- ✓ Am I able to apologise when I treat a student unfairly?
- ✓ Is my body language consistent with my words?
- ✓ For example, do I ask them how they are getting on and look poised to rush off?

Adapted from *Quality Circle Time in the Secondary School – A Handbook of Good Practice* by Jenny Mosley and Marilyn Tew, David Fulton Publishers, London, 1999.

## CLASSROOM EXERCISE: LISTENING FOR FACTS, LISTENING FOR FEELINGS.

The aim of this exercise is to give practice to the art of listening and create awareness that listening is not only about listening to facts but also to the feelings of a person.

### Steps

1. Divide into groups of 3. Each group letters themselves A, B, C.
2. A is asked to speak for 2-3 minutes on a topic that they have strong feelings about, e.g. something they feel angry about or excited about. While A is speaking, B listens to the facts of what A is saying and C listens to the feelings A is expressing.
3. B gives feedback to A on the facts heard: C gives feedback on the feelings heard. A responds saying whether or not the feedback is accurate.
4. The exercise is then repeated with each person in the group assuming a different role.
5. When each person has had a turn being A, B, and C then the whole group comes together to share their thoughts on the exercise. The teacher might ask - Which did you find easier to listen to, facts or feelings? What did you notice about the body language of each speaker? Did it match the feelings being expressed? Are there times when we speak and try to conceal our true feelings? Why is it important to listen to both the facts being spoken and the feelings behind them?

Adapted from *Partners Companion to Training for Transformation*, compiled and written by Maureen Sheehy, Published by Partners, Training for Transformation, Dublin, 2000.



## **Assessment and Cultural Diversity**



7

# 7

## ASSESSMENT AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

**Assessment is an essential element of the teaching and learning process. Its purposes include fostering learning, improving teaching and providing information about what has been done or achieved.**

### PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment takes different forms and can be used in a variety of ways, such as to provide feedback to students on their progress, to test and certify achievement (e.g. Junior and Leaving Certificate), to determine the appropriate route for students to take through a differentiated curriculum or to identify specific areas of difficulty (or strength) for a given student.

As with other elements of the teaching and learning process, assessment also plays a key role in the building of a relationship between teacher and student. If the assessment process is positive then students develop a sense that the teacher is interested in them and they will be affirmed and motivated through the process. Dealing with assessment requires both the ability to build relationships that makes the assessment experience positive and formative for students, and an

understanding of the purposes and methods of assessment necessary to ensure that accurate and useful conclusions can be drawn to assist in future learning.

Post-primary teachers are presented with the additional challenge of preparing students for formal state examinations. Students for whom the language of instruction and assessment is not their first language require considerable support from their subject teachers and from the language support teacher in familiarising them with the various assessment methods that they will encounter and the examination vocabulary commonly used. While students may now use dictionaries in the Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations (S23/05, Use of Bilingual Dictionaries in the Certificate Examinations), it is important that they are familiar with the use of dictionaries in their classwork and school assessments.



In the past, the main purpose of assessment throughout post-primary schooling was to measure and rank what students had learned, and indeed this model is still widely used, particularly in formal state examinations. This model relies mainly on summative assessment which gives students marks or grades based on how much they have learned or the knowledge and skills they can demonstrate in an examination at specific points during their schooling. The emphasis is on products (the presentation of the ideas, facts, etc.) rather than on the process (how the students set about collecting, organising and interpreting the information). Elizabeth Coelho, points to the limitations of such a narrow approach:

The measurement and ranking model is based on an implicit belief that not all students have 'what it takes' to be successful, and the job of the school is to find those who do, and to nurture them. Closer examination often shows that 'what it takes' consists of proficiency in the

language of instruction, congruence between the cultural values and experiences of the home and those promoted in the school, educated parents, and higher socioeconomic status. **(Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools - An Integrated Approach, 1998)**

While schools and teachers are now more aware of the need to help all students attain high standards of academic achievement and they recognise that students' understanding, skills and achievements cannot be easily categorised into one box or summed up in a single grade, the predominance of written examinations that are heavily weighted towards knowledge recall make it difficult to measure students' performance over a period of time.

There is a growing awareness of the special difficulties associated with assessing students from minority and immigrant populations.

The validity of relying solely on traditional testing methods has been questioned as research shows that students from culturally diverse backgrounds typically score lower than students from the dominant culture on traditional standardized measures and are disproportionately identified as handicapped or in need of special services. (Lidz, C. *Handbook for Multicultural Assessment* p. 533.)

All this points to the need for teachers and the formal examination system to be sensitive to the rich cultural, linguistic and academic diversity that is the fabric of Irish student life while at the same time broadening their assessment tools to accommodate this diversity.

Assessment can have a number of different roles in the post-primary school.

- Used in a *formative* role, assessment involves appraising or evaluating the work or performance of the students and using this to shape and improve their learning. The *Assessment for Learning* model identifies that making available to students the criteria of judgement, the judgements which are made and positive directions in how to take learning forward, provides opportunities to positively reinforce and support students in future learning.
- Used in a *diagnostic* role, assessment enables the teacher and the school to identify specific areas of learning difficulty for a student and to use this information in planning for the student's learning.
- Used in an *evaluative* role, assessment provides teachers with an opportunity to identify how effectively the teaching strategies and curriculum content being used are working with the students their class and provides information on which a modification of approach can be based.
- Used in a *summative* role, assessment allows the teacher to identify outcomes of learning following the completion of a unit of work or when reporting to teachers, parents and others as appropriate. Formal examinations such as end of year school examinations or state examinations are also summative.



A number of assessment tools are used in post-primary education, including:

- teacher observation
- teacher-designed tasks and tests
- work samples, portfolios and projects
- curriculum profiles
- externally prepared tasks and examinations
- diagnostic tests
- standardised tests.

The qualitative and quantitative information provided by these tools is always subject to certain assumptions and qualifications. Any assessment tool does no more than provide information, which then must be interpreted by the teacher.

As all assessment tools contain a potential for bias, an awareness of the variety of assessment methods available and their strengths and weaknesses, is crucial to enabling teachers to arrive at balanced and informed judgements.

#### POTENTIAL BIAS IN ASSESSMENT

There is a longstanding debate regarding the appropriate strategies for use with minority populations and students with special needs. In Ireland, there is ample evidence to show that the system of assessment and certification in post-primary schools benefits certain groups more than others (Breen 1986, Hannan et al, 1996). In many studies, significant social-class differences have been found showing that those from poorer backgrounds do significantly less well than those from middle-class backgrounds at Leaving Certificate. The reasons for this are complex and while the system of assessment and certification plays a contributory role it is not the only reason for inequalities in the performance of students in state exams.

Many argue that the present state examinations assessment system reinforces and accentuates the strong academic bias in second level schooling (CORI, 1998). Others point out that not only are the modes of assessment strongly academic, they are also heavily orientated to linguistic and to logico-mathematical skills. Thus many human intelligences are not given recognition or respect, most notably personal intelligences (Lynch, 1999).

During recent decades new developments in education-such as the introduction of Transition Year, the Leaving Certificate Applied, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, and new courses such as CSPE and SPHE, have provided opportunities for developing different abilities and for pioneering different models of assessment. Even within the established Leaving Certificate we see a growing move towards more than one point of assessment. There are 31 Leaving Certificate subjects at present, of which fifteen involve one written terminal examination paper, eleven involve both a written exam and a project/practical, and five involve a written and oral exam. The recent review of senior cycle education in Ireland resulted in proposals for two assessment components for all Leaving Certificate subjects, with an emphasis on broadening the range of skills assessed (*Proposals for the Future Development of Senior Cycle Education in Ireland* NCCA 2005).

#### Identifying potential for bias in assessment

There are a number of ways that teachers can be vigilant to the potential for bias in assessment. The following section outlines some of the ways that assessments can give rise to erroneous judgements about students, their learning or progress. This can happen when assessment tools are themselves biased, or when judgements are

based on data without sufficient consideration being given to the potential for bias. There are two types of error that can arise in this context with any assessment tool. These are (a) a *'false positive'* result—falsely seeing something that is not there and (b) a *'false negative'* result—failing to see something that is there.

(a) A *'false positive'* result occurs when the assessment identifies a phenomenon that is not in fact present. For example:

- Standardised tests in English which are normed on a majority English-speaking population may lead to a student being characterised as having language difficulties if the test is used on a student from an ethnic group which uses a different English dialect.

(b) A *'false negative'* result occurs when an assessment fails to identify a student's characteristics, competencies, or problems because the criteria used are not sufficiently sensitive. For example:

- Written assessments which are designed to identify the extent of a student's learning or skills in a particular curriculum area may fail to identify these in a student for whom the language of assessment is a second language. Such students may experience greater difficulties in formal communication of complex ideas than those for whom the language of assessment is their first language, even when the student appears fluent in the language of assessment in everyday life.

### What the teacher/examiner should look out for

There are three major ways in which cultural or language factors may give rise to these sorts of errors in assessment.

(i) **The content or construction of the assessment may be biased, giving unfair advantage to one group over another.**

For example,

- an assessment of English oral language which regards particular pronunciations as correct is likely to be biased against many fluent English speakers who speak in, for example, one of the African English dialects
- a standardised word recognition test which has been normed on one population group may well be biased against members of minority ethnic groups
- an assessment of a student's social engagement in class may conclude that a student who does not make eye contact with a teacher is shy or un-engaged, whereas in some cultures it is inappropriate for young people to make eye contact with adults
- there is evidence that the success rate of different ethnic groups in answering mathematical problems is dependent in part on how the problem is phrased.

(ii) **The formatting, mode of test administration or the examiner personality may favour one group of examinees over another.** For example,

- tests that have to be completed within a limited time may well penalise test takers who are not proficient in English but who are proficient in the material being tested
- students who are familiar with negatively marked objective tests may well have learned answering strategies

that maximise test scores, which will place students who are unfamiliar with such tests at a disadvantage.

(iii) **Assessment results may be used to base decisions on inappropriate criteria.** For example,

- a student may be allocated to an ability-based group based on social or other non-ability related criteria. For example, research in the US has shown the overrepresentation of Mexican American children in special education classes. (*Handbook of Multicultural Assessment*, p.18).

#### TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT

Teachers are becoming more familiar with the variety of assessment tools that are

available to gather information about students' learning. Asking questions, setting and correcting homework assignments, giving tests at the end of units of study, are all forms of assessment with which teachers are familiar.

Teachers use the results of this assessment to inform students on their progress, to report to parents and to plan future classroom activities. Difficulties arise when assessment methods are used that are clearly inappropriate for the situation. Teachers as assessors need an expanding repertory of assessment tools to ensure that assessment procedures are fair and responsive to the needs of all students, including students who are disadvantaged, coming to the system from another culture or those for whom the language of instruction and assessment is not their first language. There are many alternatives to



formal tests that can be employed in classroom-based assessment, such as one-to-one interviews, student journals, students making a presentation/demonstration, or observation of students completing tasks and showing certain skills. For example, in one-to-one interviews a teacher can ask a student to show comprehension or knowledge using concrete or visual stimuli, e.g. point to...., show me.... etc. Assessment through observation can be a useful way of seeing a variety of skills or aptitudes in action, e.g. interpersonal skills, team-work and cooperation skills, listening skills, problem-solving skills, technical skills etc. However, care should be taken not to misunderstand cultural traits. For example, if a student is not actively involved in group-work this might simply be due to the fact that active learning is not a familiar method of learning in the student's country of origin.

### Assessment for learning

Recent advances in our knowledge of how learning takes place and how learners make their way through classroom activities have led to new understandings of the importance of assessment in the promotion of learning. Some of this research is of particular interest for intercultural education as the focus in assessment activity begins to move from an emphasis on the assessment of learning to include assessment for learning; providing feedback to learners on how to improve their learning and familiarising them with a range of assessment methods and assessment vocabulary in a positive way.

Assessment for learning and assessment of learning are not opposing or contradictory practices. While the assessment of learning will always have a place in education and in classroom and school practice, the development of assessment for learning offers new opportunities for teachers.

This approach has been particularly successful in improving the motivation and performance of students, including examination performance (William and Black), who were not achieving to their potential. It is an approach that may also benefit students coming from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds because of its emphasis on the teacher/student reviewing learning together, the belief that every pupil can improve, the building of self-esteem, and the provision of ongoing feedback and encouragement. Furthermore, assessment for learning enables teachers to assess and recognise a diverse range of achievements so that all learners can have efforts recognised.

This approach is also useful in assessing the prior skills and learning of newcomers to a class. It enables teachers to establish prior learning in a way that is positive and non-judgmental and the focus is on moving the new student forward to develop new skills and learning.

For more on assessment for learning see [www.ncca.ie/junior cycle review](http://www.ncca.ie/junior%20cycle%20review).

The main features of assessment of learning and assessment for learning are set out opposite.

Assessment of learning	Assessment for learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• happens after the learning takes place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is an integral part of the learning process</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information is gathered by the teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information is shared with the learner</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information is usually transformed into marks or grades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information is available on the quality of learning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compares performance with the performance of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compares performance with aims and objectives is important</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• looks back on past learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• looks forward to the next stage of learning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focuses on the individual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focuses on the individual and on groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• often plays a significant role on selection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• outcomes are focused on progressing learning.</li> </ul>

### Performance-based assessment

The use of performance-based assessment involves the following:

- Showing the learners a variety of examples of good performance - sample work reports, student journals, projects, essays, practical work, videotapes of oral presentations, etc.
- Encouraging students to discuss why these samples show good performance and so agree the criteria for good performance.
- Providing opportunities for students to model good performance themselves with teacher guidance and support.
- Providing positive feedback on the process of learning as well as the product.
- Allowing students to assess their own work and submit the best examples as part of summative assessment.

### Self-assessment

One of the most important components of assessment for learning is the use of student self-assessment. Self-assessment, with clearly defined aims and criteria can enable students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses as learners, to evaluate progress they have made, and to suggest steps for improvement. Most students enjoy well-planned and carefully structured self-assessment activities. They can be a motivation for students and can encourage self-directed learning. Suggestions for improvement are integral to the self-assessment process, but it is important that students make their own suggestions as to how they might improve. This involvement of the student in the assessment strategy will by its nature be a learning process for teachers and students alike. It will involve a new way of looking at assessment to facilitate learning and to engage parents/guardians and the student in achieving their own goals and targets.



### Portfolio assessment

Many writers on the education of linguistically and culturally diverse students recommend portfolio assessment as a more equitable way of gathering information about students' learning. (Trumbull and Farr, 1996; Genesee and Hamayan, 1994; Freeman and Freeman, 1991).

#### What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a collection of work that shows an individual's efforts, progress or achievements over an extended period of time. The development of a portfolio involves documentation of achievements, self-evaluations and reflections on learning collected over a period of time. The use of portfolios is an effective method of assessment that can provide newcomer students with a positive record of achievement and progress made.

The portfolio is not simply a collection of samples of work; it is a record of progress and achievement. It is important that the portfolio includes more than one indicator of achievement and can enable a wide range of knowledge, skills and attitudes to be recorded. Several entries should reflect

different learning styles and key learning experiences, for example, key experiments, worksheets, essay answers, research projects, video recordings or audio presentations /interviews, reflective writing/ journal work, etc. It should also include the use of a learning log, recording the student's own observations and those of the teacher. Student's choice in the selection of work is also important. The management of the portfolio can be supported by the language support teacher, where appropriate.

The teacher's role is to

- explain the purpose of the portfolio
- focus the student's learning on the process of making the portfolio rather than on the mechanics
- agree the criteria for the selection and collection of materials
- advise students regarding self-evaluation and reflective statement
- agree expectations and criteria to be used in the assessment of the portfolios
- keep the portfolios simple to begin with and allow them to become more sophisticated
- help develop a management system.

## Guidelines for setting homework and assessment questions

- Keep questions as short and simple as possible.
- Avoid the unnecessary use of metaphors or colloquialisms.
- Where possible provide visual clues to show students what to do.
- Provide support to students whose first language is not English. For example, teachers can set questions and then can provide a set of words and phrases to choose from. Multiple choice questions can also be useful in this regard, although care should be taken as students from another education system may not be familiar with this method of assessment.
- Familiarise students with the structure and vocabulary of the tests and examinations. Explain commonly used words such as 'identify', 'describe', 'list', 'discuss'.
- Teach the students how to take the test by providing practice questions that are not scored. Give feedback on the practice questions.
- Do not ask the students to attempt the whole test paper at once. Break it up into manageable bites. It is less intimidating if students are faced with one section at a time.
- Avoid references to culturally specific and contextual knowledge that some students may not share.
- Encourage second-language learners to use dictionaries.
- Allow sufficient time for students to complete the examination.

- As part of its overall school plan, schools can set out clearly its policy and provision for redressing problems of disadvantage and inequality through school-based assessment. This might include provision of dictionaries for school examination purposes, allowing extra time for students for whom English is not their first language.
- Secondly, they can broaden the range of assessment tools to facilitate different cultures, backgrounds and intelligences and to assist students to demonstrate a diversity of skills, aptitudes and achievements.
- Thirdly, they can have a clear policy for the regular assessment of pupils with a view to identifying at the earliest possible point, those pupils in need of extra help.
- Finally, they can work closely with parents to develop a real partnership and so enhance each student's potential for success.

## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS UPON ENTRY TO SCHOOL

In order to gain sufficient information to support the student's learning, it may be appropriate to assess some students upon entry into the school. For example, students who have recently arrived from another country, or students for whom English is not a first language, may benefit from the tailoring of education experiences that might stem from such assessment. In deciding which students to assess on entry to school, it is important that teacher judgement be used in consultation with the parents, and having regard to:

- the inappropriateness and potential labelling of students that might result from assessing all children from minority ethnic groups who attend the school;

## THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN PROMOTING POSITIVE ASSESSMENT METHODS

Schools have a role to play in reducing inequality and bias in assessment and promoting the use of more inclusive models of assessment.

- the manageability of assessing numbers of students upon entry.

The purpose of such an assessment is often to develop a positive profile of the student, that is, a profile that outlines the range of the student's capabilities. Given its holistic nature, the process of building a positive profile may be more intrusive than more limited styles of initial assessment. It is essential that the relationship between the assessment and the student's education is made clear to both the student and their parents or guardians. At the same time, such an assessment has the potential to build a positive relationship between the student and the school, and can build the student's self-esteem and enhance their capacity to engage in a constructive way with the life of the school.

Positive profiles are distinguished from other forms of assessment by three features.

- Positive profiles are holistic, exploring the full range of the student's capacities and behaviours. Positive profiles may include, among other things, a person's academic attainments, their learning styles, their communication skills, their interests and talents, their perceptual and motor skills, their social skills and their inter-personal and intra-personal awareness.
- Positive profiles are built up through a range of different forms of data-gathering including observation, standardised and teacher-designed testing, and consultation with other people who know the student such as parents or guardians.

Such profiles have a positive focus insofar as they record only what a student can do. This enables the development of a learning programme, which identifies what can be taught next. The student's knowledge, strengths and interests can be drawn upon in the development of such a programme.



## STANDARDISED TESTS

These tests may be used in post-primary schools to either give an idea of the student's performance when compared to a broader population (norm-referenced tests), or to provide data on a student's mastery of a body of material (criterion-referenced tests). Such tests have usually been developed by assessment specialists or by subject-area specialists and have often been developed through large-scale studies of populations. Tests may assume a level of culturally specific knowledge or capacity, and may therefore give a basis for false judgements for those whose culture differs from the population used in designing the test.

It is important that teachers and school management consider the student's cultural and linguistic background when interpreting the results of such tests. Students for whom the language of assessment is not their first language are likely to be disadvantaged by such tests. It is advisable to consider the results of standardised tests for culturally or linguistically diverse students in conjunction with other assessment methods that help to build up a positive profile of the student.

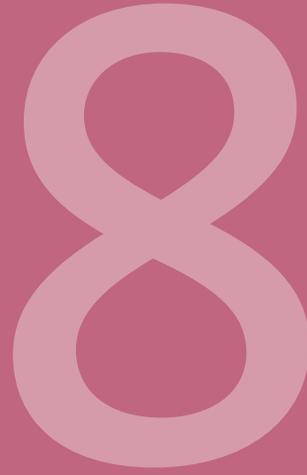




## **Language and Interculturalism**



8



## LANGUAGE AND INTERCULTURALISM

**Language is the principal means of human communication. It is the vehicle through which information, ideas, aspirations, attitudes and emotions are articulated and imaginative possibilities are predicted. Ireland has long been a linguistically diverse society.**

Ireland has two official languages, Irish and English, and is also the home of a number of other native languages, including Ulster Scots, Irish Sign language and Gammon or Cant (a language historically known to and used by Irish Travellers). Both English and Irish play an important role in Irish identity and society. It is a particular feature of the Irish education system that children and teachers have an experience of learning and teaching in two languages, from the beginning of school.

Most children acquire a first language as part of their natural development. In homes where two language are used in daily communication children usually

acquire both as first language. Language learning that takes place after a first language has been acquired tends to be a conscious and intentional process; that is, learners are aware of their learning and have (or are given) specific learning goals. This is the normal condition of learning languages other than the mother tongue at school, though for very young children in immersion situations learning a second language is likely to be more intuitive and unconscious than analytical and conscious. One of the main challenges facing teachers and schools supporting learners from a wide range of diverse backgrounds is how to support those learners whose first language is not the language of instruction (Irish or English).

## LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

Most children learn to speak their first language, the language of their environment, as part of a natural process that combines their language learning with their general cognitive development and their gradual socialisation. Depending on the environment in which they live, children will differ from one another in their early experiences and this will affect their language acquisition, for example in relation to the words they know, how they form sentences and how they use grammar. Second language acquisition on the other hand, is quite different.

- Unless it begins in early childhood, second language acquisition is not part of the learner's primary cognitive development.
- In most cases learners have much less time for second language acquisition than they had for first language acquisition.
- The later second language acquisition begins the more it is necessarily a conscious and intentional process.
- The later second language acquisition begins the more it is influenced by conscious motivational factors.
- All learners of second languages subconsciously transfer grammatical (lexical, syntactical, phonological) properties of their first language to their second language.
- Compared with native speakers, second language learners' internalised grammatical knowledge is incomplete, particularly at the early stages of language learning. (Adapted from Integrate Ireland Language and Training, *Language Training Manual*.)

Experience of a second language is thought to have a number of benefits for pupils, including enhancing cognitive development and increasing the capacity for learning

subsequent languages (Baker, C. and Prys Jones, S. 1998).

In post-primary schools in Ireland, Irish is taught both as a first and as a second language. There are many similarities between the teaching of English and Irish as second languages. The key features outlined for the teaching of Irish as a second language can also be applied to the teaching of English as a second language. These include

- ensuring that learners are sufficiently competent to participate in the bilingual society
- developing self-confidence through a guided understanding of Irish culture and heritage and developing cultural awareness to inspire creativity, enterprise and innovation
- enhancing cognitive development with growing bilingual competence
- developing understanding of the nature of language and language learning
- furthering learners' personal and social development;
- imbuing learners with an understanding of the nature of communication
- developing learners' abilities of imagination and creativity through responding to a variety of literary and cultural texts, materials and activities
- developing learners' understanding of culture and native songs.

(Translated from Junior Certificate Gaeilge syllabus 66-67.)

## Gaeilge

Through the interaction of language and experience students learn how to name events and ideas, and in doing so, learn how to make sense of the world around them. The recognition of the normality and value of diversity will be dependent on the language the student learns to apply to

situations through his/her learning of Irish. This becomes particularly important in the context of Gaelcholáistí or Gaeltacht schools. Students in such schools will develop intercultural perspectives and capacities through their learning of language and other aspects of the curriculum. In this context, care can be taken in the selection of poems, stories, literature, case studies, role-plays and conversation topics in order to reflect the themes and concerns of intercultural education.

In schools where English is the medium of instruction, students learn Irish as a second language. A knowledge and experience in Irish as well as a positive attitude to the Irish language are important in enabling the student to define and express her or his cultural identity. It is crucial, therefore, that the learning of Irish be a positive and

rewarding experience for all students in Irish schools. Developing a positive sense of his or her own cultural identity is an integral part of the process of coming to respect and engage positively with other cultures and, as such, has a central role in intercultural education. This, in turn, is a key component in enabling the student to engage positively and in an intercultural way with other cultures.

Learning Irish also provides an opportunity for the student to recognise the value of, gain an understanding of, and engage in the practice of multilingualism, a practice that is common in many countries and cultures throughout the world. As students work to develop their language capacity in Irish, they are also given an opportunity to understand and empathise with the difficulties and challenge faced by those who find themselves working through a



language that is not their first language. As such, students experience of learning Irish provides a basis for developing empathy with and an appreciation for, those students who are required to learn through a language that is not their first language. Learning another language can also contribute to the recognition and value of diversity.

Some students may be exempt from learning Irish in accordance with the Department of Education and Science's circular 10/94. At the same time, it is the right of every student within the Irish education system to learn Irish. As the Irish language is a key feature of Irish identity and culture, it can provide an enriching insight into and experience of Irish identity. Combined with this the student may be required in later life to have a qualification or attain a particular standard in Irish. As a result the student's parents or guardians should be supported in undertaking a full and careful consideration of all of the issues involved before a decision on whether or not to apply for such an exemption is availed of.

### English as a second language

Students from a range of different backgrounds are learning English as a second language in Irish schools, including

- students for whom Irish is a first language and who have grown up in a Gaeltacht area
- students whose family's first language is not English but who have grown up in an area in which English is the first language
- students who have recently arrived from a non-English speaking country.

The student's level of proficiency in English upon entering post-primary school may

vary considerably, depending on the context. Care must be taken to gauge accurately the student's capacity in English as a second language, recognising that although a student may appear reasonably fluent in a second language in everyday interaction this does not necessarily mean that they will have the capacity to work fluently through that language in technical contexts, (for example in subjects such as Science or in the technology subjects,) or in attempting complex tasks, unless appropriately supported.

When students enter post-primary school with little or no proficiency in the English language, they are at a disadvantage for a number of reasons. Newly arrived students are faced with a very new situation where not only the language is a challenge, but the school's structures, policies and practices may be very different to what they have been used to. As well as the language obstacles with which they are faced there are also many cultural nuances that provide new challenges. The challenge of learning a new language in an environment where everything is different may lead to difficulties with motivation.

The most critical stage of language learning for these students coincides with their arrival in school. They need support in developing confidence in the school environment and the language support they are given must allow them opportunities to evaluate their own progress and develop a sense of achievement in their learning.

While newly arrived students may have very little English, and even though their education may have been interrupted due to the circumstances surrounding their immigration, it is important that they are placed with students of their own age when they arrive in school. In general, students are more motivated to learn the

new language when they want and need to communicate, when they are learning with their peers, when they are engaged in age-appropriate activities and when learning new information and new skills stimulates them. In some instances placing a new student with his/her peers may not suit the student's needs at this time, for example when his/her peers are in an examination class.

## **SUPPORTING SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM**

### **Introducing the newcomer student on entry into the class**

It is important when the student enters the class for the first time that reference is made to her or his language ability in a positive way. For example, he/she might be introduced as Thierry who speaks French fluently, has a little English and is learning Irish, rather than saying this that is Thierry and he doesn't speak English or Irish. Many students who don't speak the language of instruction (i.e. Irish or English) may speak a number of languages fluently, and it is important that the fact that they do not speak the language of instruction is not seen as having language difficulties. Empathy for the student's situation can be developed through making reference to the fact that most students are learning either Irish or English as a second language and that it is not always easy to participate in a class that is not conducted through our first language. Other students should be encouraged to be supportive of language learners and to allow them time to develop their second language skills, without making fun of them when they make mistakes.

Students can also be encouraged to actively support language learners, by being made aware that they can help language learners understand the language of the classroom.

Students themselves may come up with some great ideas as to how they can support their language-learning classmates, particularly if it is put in the context of what would help them if they had to take part in a geography class or maths class through a second language (for example, either English or Irish, as appropriate).

### **The classroom as a language classroom**

Teachers are not only teachers of geography or maths, but they are also language teachers and their classrooms are language classrooms.

The most important thing the classroom teacher can do for the learner of a second language is to demonstrate a positive attitude towards language and linguistic diversity and communicate this to the other students in their class. Teachers who find themselves in this situation for the first time, may find it very daunting and a little overwhelming, but there are some simple steps that the classroom teacher can take to create a classroom environment that is supportive of the second language learner.

### **Planned programme of support**

Students learning through a second language need a planned programme of support on entry into the post-primary school. This will involve co-operative planning between subject teachers, the language support teacher and the parents. The effectiveness of this language support can be maximised by giving priority to language that will allow learners to access the curriculum. It is also important to note that newly-arrived students for whom the language of instruction is not their first language may go through a silent period while they are adjusting to the new environment.

## Opportunities for greater engagement with the curriculum

As language support teachers have limited time with their pupils, students need to be engaged with the spontaneous use of their target language in realistic situations.

Learners of a second language may be able to function very well in some areas of the curriculum if teachers are aware of their needs and provide an appropriate learning environment in which they can learn new content and skills while developing their knowledge of the language of instruction at the same time. Consequently, it is important that teachers would present material that is not only cognitively demanding but also context embedded. This includes ensuring that lessons and instructions are accompanied by actions and visual aids that provide a context for understanding what is taught.

## Recognition of the importance of the students' first languages

Students' first languages continue to be important in their linguistic, social and cognitive development. Therefore it is important that the school would use every opportunity to respect the students' native languages and encourage continued development of these languages, where possible.

This can be done in a number of ways:

- Parents should be encouraged to continue conversing with their children in their first language at home. Sometimes parents may try to negate the native language in their anxiety to immerse their children in the language of instruction.
- Every effort should be made to include the languages of the school community in signs and notices around the school. For example, a welcome sign and signs for the school office/reception could be displayed in all the languages of the school community. Special effort could be made at major events like parent/teacher meetings, open evenings, prizegivings, etc.
- The school should involve students, parents and other community members in helping with translations, where appropriate.
- In cultural events such as school concerts, graduations, etc. the use of all languages should be encouraged.
- Students should be encouraged to take pride in using words from their own language, for example, asking a student to share with the class how a particular phrase might be expressed in the student's own language. (Note: Some students may not be comfortable to do this. The teacher will be able to ascertain if and when the student is happy to become involved in this way.)

### Some simple guidelines for establishing a multilingual climate in the classroom

- It is important that the teacher is very aware of his or her own use of language:
  - Use fewer words than you might normally use.
  - Repeat and rephrase.
  - Use hand and face expressions.
  - Emphasise key words.
  - Model or demonstrate.
- Make sure instructions are clear and logical.
- Use pictorial or multilingual signs (as opposed to those written in one language) in the classroom.
- Communicate positive attitudes towards second language learning.
- Encourage students to share some words and phrases from their native language, and if possible learn and use some simple expressions in that language.
- Liaise with the language support teacher to collaborate on activities that the second language learner may engage in to access the curriculum. It is also useful to discuss what is due to come up in your class with the language support teacher, so that the student can be prepared for the new areas.
- Make a point of making regular direct contact with the student.
- Be flexible in your grouping arrangements. Sometimes it may be useful to group students to work in mixed groups in order to reflect the diversity of the classroom, while at other times it may be more useful to group students peers who speak the same language.
- Make sure the student is always actively engaged. While this may be difficult in the early stages, it is very important for the new student to feel she or he is participating in the class.
- Provide multilingual reading materials.
- Involve all students in actively supporting second language learning.
- Encourage students in the use of internet sites which will support second language learning.

### Supports available

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs provides language support for students in Gaeltacht schools, whose first language is not Irish, through Scéim na gCúntóiri Teanga. The Department of Education and Science operates a system of language support in primary and post-primary schools for non-English speaking students. Training is provided to English language support teachers through Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT).

The supports available from IILT are aimed at Principals and Language Support Teachers and include

- English Language Proficiency Benchmarks - primary and post-primary
- European Language Portfolio – primary and post-primary

- In-service seminars for language support teachers - primary and post-primary
- Teacher support materials (mediated through the in-service programme), including:
  - English language teaching materials which can be photocopied
  - subject-based materials
  - information sheets on a variety of topics related to teaching English as a second language in Irish schools
  - special guides, for example on using mainstream school texts for English language support in primary and post-primary schools
  - assessment and record-keeping tools.



A black and white photograph of a smiling woman in a business suit, with a man in a suit blurred in the background. The woman is in the foreground, looking towards the camera with a bright smile. She is wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored collared shirt. Her hands are clasped in front of her, and she is wearing a watch on her left wrist. The man in the background is seen from the back, wearing a dark suit jacket and a light-colored shirt. The overall mood is professional and positive.

## **Glossary and Resources**



# GLOSSARY

## **Anti-racist education**

Education that questions and opposes any opinions and/or actions that serve to disadvantage groups on the grounds of perceived difference, within which there is an assumption of inferiority.

## **Asylum seekers**

A person awaiting the processing of their application to seek asylum, having fled a situation of persecution and/or war.

## **Culture**

The beliefs, behaviour, language, and entire way of life of a particular group of people at a particular time.

## **Diagnostic tests**

Tests that enable the teacher and the school to identify specific areas of learning difficulty for a child and to use this information in planning for the child's learning.

## **Discrimination**

Exercising judgement or choice.

## **Unfair discrimination**

Treating an individual or group unfavourably.

## **Ethnic minority/ethnicity**

A system of defining people who consider themselves or are considered by others as sharing a set of common characteristics that are different from other people living in a society.

## **Hidden curriculum**

As opposed to formal curriculum.

## **Immigration**

The migration of people into a country.

## **Integrated thematic planning**

Integrating various themes, intercultural themes in the context of this document, into all of the subject areas being taught in school.

## **Intercultural competence**

The ability to put the values of intercultural education into practice in our daily lives.

## **Intercultural education**

Education that respects, celebrates, and recognises the normality of diversity in all aspects of human life, promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination, and provides the values upon which equality is built.

## **Migrant workers**

People who travel to other countries with the intention of taking up employment.

## **Multicultural education**

In the context of this document, education that acknowledges and celebrates the cultural diversity of contemporary society, based on an assumption that, by exposing all children to the social and cultural customs of ethnic minority communities, they will have a greater understanding and tolerance of people from different backgrounds.

## **Newcomer students**

Students who arrive into a classroom from a country or background that is different from that of the majority of children in the classroom.

## Positive profiling

A form of assessment that

- explores the full range of the child's capacities and behaviours
- includes a range of different forms of data gathering
- records what a child can do.

## Pluralism

The celebration of difference in society, allowing all ethnic and other minority groups to proclaim their identities without coming into conflict with the majority population.

## Prejudice

Unsubstantiated, unfavourable treatment of an individual or group, which is designed to marginalize or disadvantage that individual or group (often based on their membership of another social or ethnic group but also often on sex, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, age, and disability).

## Race

A word widely used to describe groups of people who are thought of as biologically separate, without any genetic or biological basis.

## Racism/Racial discrimination

Any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or other dimension of public life.

## Institutional racism

The application of general rules and/or practices that do not make allowances for cultural differences, including indirect discrimination, a lack of proactive measures to prevent discrimination, a lack of professional expertise or training in dealing with diversity, and a lack of workable facilities for consulting and listening to minority groups.

## Indirect racism

Practices and/or policies that do not on the surface appear to disadvantage any group more than another but actually have a discriminatory impact.

## Individual racism

Treating another less favourably on the grounds of their cultural origin.

## Refugee

A person who has fled from his/her country of origin often as a result of natural disasters, war, military occupation, or fear of religious, racial, or political persecution.

## Standardised tests

Tests (predominantly in the areas of English and mathematics) that are normed across a particular population and are used most regularly to determine children's attainment in the context of the attainment levels of the wider population.

## Stereotyping

Presenting an image of a person, a group, or a culture based on an assumed range of activities, characteristics, or behaviours.

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<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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[http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_prejud.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_prejud.htm)

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New Hampshire, Heinemann, 1996

# CLASSROOM RESOURCES FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

## CSPE

### CSPE on the web

A special site for teachers and students of CSPE [www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org)  
Education materials from the Council of Europe [www.coe.int/](http://www.coe.int/)  
Education materials linking local and global issues [www.globaldimension.org.uk/](http://www.globaldimension.org.uk/)

### Counted Out - Poverty Awareness Resource for Civic, Social and Political Education

(2001) CDVEC CDU/  
Combat Poverty Agency  
This pack includes useful classroom activities on stereotyping and bias, human rights and issues of poverty today.  
Available from the Curriculum Development Unit, Sundrive Rd. Crumlin, D 12. Email: [info@cdu.cdvec.ie](mailto:info@cdu.cdvec.ie)

### Changing Perspectives – Cultural Values, Diversity and Equality in Ireland and the Wider World

(2002) CDVEC CDU  
Through a range of activities students examine their images and vision of Irish identity, society, stereotypes, and worldviews.  
Available from the Curriculum Development Unit, Sundrive Rd. Crumlin, D 12. Email: [info@cdu.cdvec.ie](mailto:info@cdu.cdvec.ie)

### The Pavee Pack – Ireland, Cultural Diversity and Travellers

(2001) Pavee Publications  
A useful resource for exploring issues of identity, labelling, stereotyping and human rights with particular reference to the situation of Travellers in Ireland today.  
Available from Trócaire Resource Centres or email: [resources@trocaire.ie](mailto:resources@trocaire.ie)

### Wananchi

(2001) NCDE/Ireland Aid  
A key focus of the pack is the links between Ireland and the developing world. The themes of interdependence and human development are explored through a variety of activities and student worksheets.  
Available from 80:20 Email: [info@8020.ie](mailto:info@8020.ie)

### What? Me a Racist

(1998) European Commission.  
A humorous cartoon book for young people to help explore issues of racism and prejudice  
Available from the European Commission office in Dublin ([www.euireland.ie](http://www.euireland.ie))

### A Journey Through Europe – A Citizenship Education Pack

(2005) European Studies and CSPE Support Service.  
The pack invites students to explore questions such as what does it mean to be Irish and what does it mean to be European?  
Available from CSPE support service.

## GEOGRAPHY

### 80:20 Development in an Unequal World (2002)

A useful resource full of facts and information on the world we live in.  
Available from 80:20 Email: [info@8020.ie](mailto:info@8020.ie)

### Exploring our World - An active learning geography resource

(2001) One World Centre, Northern Ireland.  
An activity based resource exploring topics of inequality, interdependence, trade, aid, women, refugees and asylum seekers.  
Available from One World Centre, Belfast. Email: [info@owcni.org.uk](mailto:info@owcni.org.uk)

### The World Guide 2005/2006.

New Internationalist  
This annual guide provides up-to-date information on 217 countries with supporting charts, maps and statistics.  
Available from Oxfam. Email: [oxfam@bebc.co.uk](mailto:oxfam@bebc.co.uk)

### Geography: The Global Dimension (2004)

Development Education Association (DEA), London. Can be downloaded from [www.geography.org.uk/global](http://www.geography.org.uk/global)

# CLASSROOM RESOURCES FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

## LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED AND TRANSITION YEAR

### **Compass – A manual on human rights education with young people (2002)**

Council of Europe Publishing.

This comprehensive resource contains activities for young people on a broad range of themes including, gender equality, the media, health and sport. Available from Amnesty International, Irish Section. Email: info@amnesty.ie

### **The Rights Stuff – an educational resource on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1998)** DEFY/Trócaire/Amnesty International

An active learning resource, which explores the rights of children in different parts of the world.

Available from Trócaire Resource Centres or email: resources@trocaire.ie

### **Rising to the Challenge – A resource file for teaching contemporary issues**

(2002) CDVEC/LCA Support Service

This file contains a wealth of materials to help teachers bring LCA students to a deeper understanding of human rights and responsibilities and how they can act on issues of social justice.

Available from the Curriculum Development Unit, Sundrive Rd. Crumlin, D 12. Email: info@cdu.cdvec.ie

### **Peace by Piece**

(2003) National Youth Council of Ireland

This pack uses games, role-play and stories to explore issues of conflict, conflict resolution and peace building at local and global level.

Available from NYCI. Email: oow@nyci.ie

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### **Faith and Commitment Series**

Religious and Moral Education Press, UK  
Each book offers facts and information on different world religions through the lived experience of different individuals.

Available from Religious and Moral Education Press.

Email: orders@scm-canterburypress.co.uk

### **In Words and Pictures**

Religious and Moral Education Press, UK

A colourful introduction to major world faiths written in simple language

Available from Religious and Moral Education Press. Email: orders@scm-canterburypress.co.uk

### **Painting Life, Painting Hope**

A teachers booklet and set of beautiful posters designed by young people in Nicaragua on the themes of disability, human rights, a better world, interdependence and the environment.

Available from Trócaire Resource Centres or email: resources@trocaire.ie

## SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

### **Global Perspectives in Science (1999)**

Oxfam UK

The activities in this pack are designed to show how science and technology has developed from a variety of sources around the world e.g Chinese biogas technology, the value of the Need and Beech trees, etc.

Available from Oxfam via email - oxfam@bebc.co.uk

### **Maths and Human Rights Resource Book**

(1999) Amnesty International, UK

The activities in this book encourage students to explore human rights issues whilst at the same time developing problem-solving and investigative skills in mathematics.

Available from Oxfam via email - oxfam@bebc.co.uk

### **Summing up the World – Mathematics activities with a global perspective (1994)**

Dorset DEC

Contains a wide range of classroom activities which show how mathematics can be used to explore issues such as the environment, economic development, cultural diversity and equality.

Available from Oxfam via email - oxfam@bebc.co.uk

### **Science: The Global Dimension (2003)**

Development Education Association (DEA), London www.dea.org.uk

# CLASSROOM RESOURCES FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

## SPHE

**All different – all equal –  
An anti-racism and equality education pack.**  
National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)  
Contains worksheets and activities to help young people explore issues of belonging and difference, racism and prejudice, and how to young people can bring about greater acceptance of difference in Ireland.  
Available from NYCI, 3 Montague St, Dublin 2, 01-4784122, [www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)

## **Life Stories – Exploring Identity with Young People.**

National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)  
Contains stories of young people from around the world and activities to help young people explore issues of identity, difference and belonging.  
Available from NYCI, 3 Montague St, Dublin 2, 01-4784122, [www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)

### **The Steering Committee for Interculturalism and the Curriculum**

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The following bodies are represented on the Steering Committee:

African Women's Network

Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools

Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland

Catholic Primary School Managers' Association

Church of Ireland Board of Education

Department of Education and Science

Development Education Unit of Development Co-operation Ireland

Integrate Ireland Language and Training

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Irish Federation of University Teachers

Irish National Teachers' Organisation

Irish Vocational Education Association

Joint Managerial Body

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

National Parents Council-Primary

National Parents Council-Post-Primary

Pavee Point

Reception and Integration Agency, Department of Justice and Law Reform

State Examinations Commission

Teachers' Union of Ireland

### **Consultation**

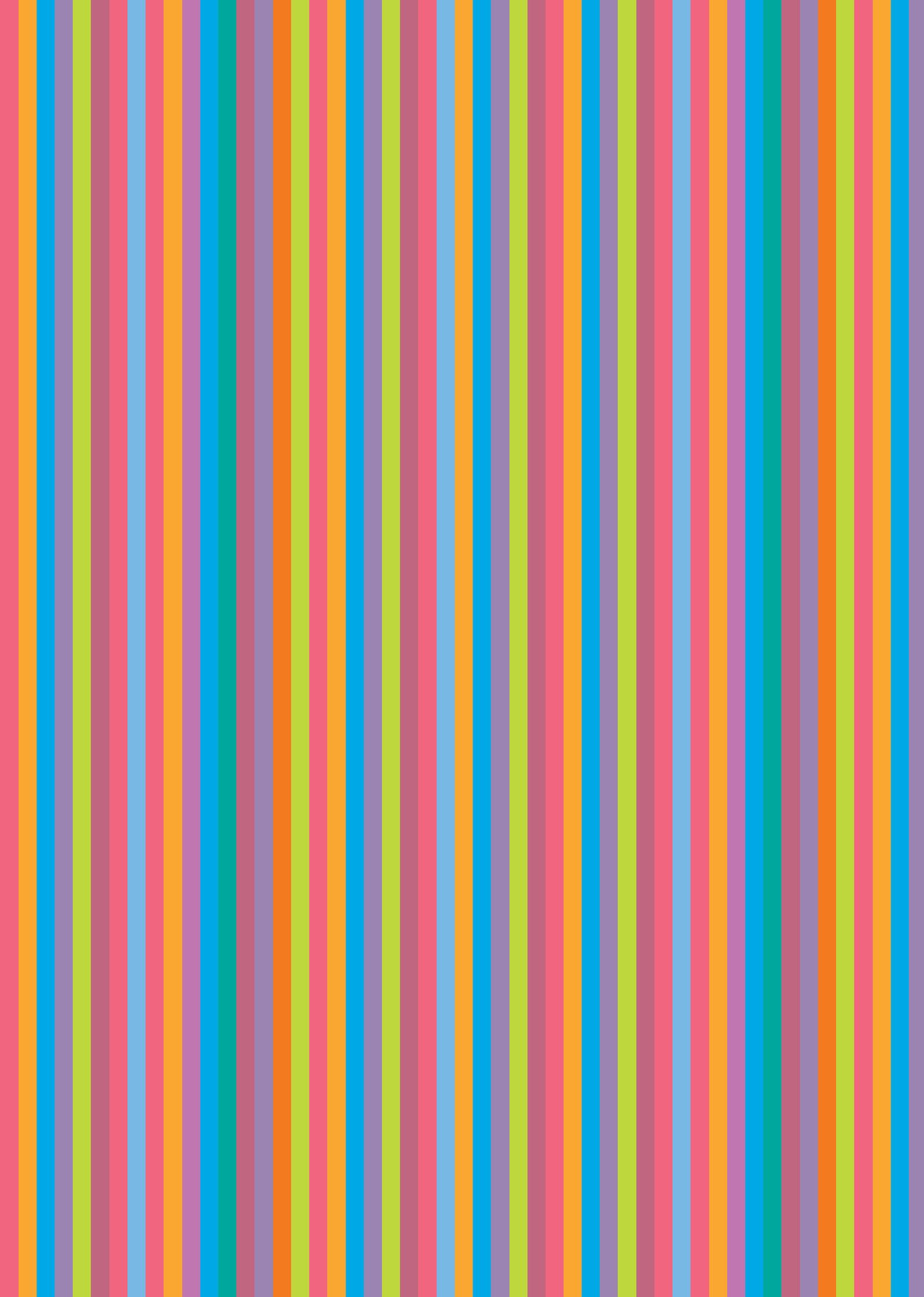
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Photography by Paul Kelly.



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