

Chinese Welfare
Association NI



The Classroom + Project



A Project funded by the Executive Office



enriching
classroom learning
with the help of the
community
voluntary sector

March 2018

DOUBLE
WORD
SCORE

DOUBLE
LETTER
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TRIPLE
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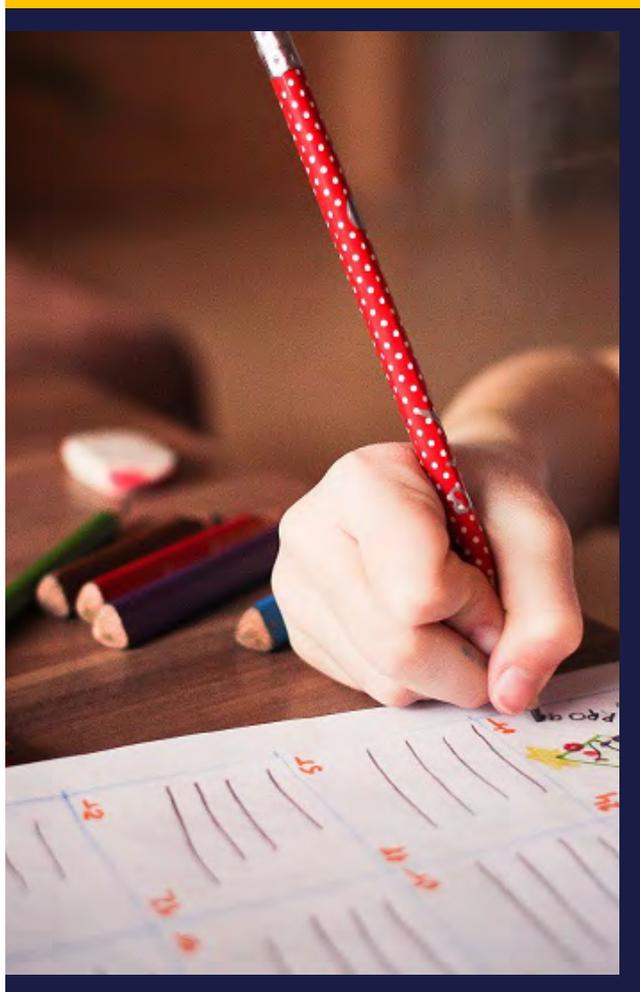
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Appreciation

The Chinese Welfare Association NI (CWA) would like to thank The Executive Office (TEO) for supporting and funding the Classroom+ project. CWA would also like to thank Stranmillis University College (SUC) for its collaboration with this project and providing the lecturers and student teachers involved.

Thanks must also be given to the InterEthnic Forum (Mid and East Antrim); Global Learning Programme; the Belfast Roundtable; Omagh Ethnic Communities Support Group (OECSG); Building Communities Resource Centre (Ballymoney); Mandarin Speakers Association (L/Derry); Sai Pak Chinese Community Association (L/Derry); Polish Language Culture and Affairs (POLCA) and the Social Justice Trust (L/Derry).



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1. Introduction to the Chinese Welfare Association

The Chinese community is one of the largest and oldest ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland, beginning with the first individuals and some families arriving in the 60s. Most of these Chinese were economic migrants from rural Hong Kong who came to set up work in the restaurant industry. [1]

The Northern Ireland-Chinese community is now into its 4th generation. In 1986, in recognition of the need for the Chinese community to have better access to services and to create a bridge between the community and government departments and statutory bodies, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce (CCC) set up the Chinese Welfare Association NI (CWA). Over the past 32 years, CWA has excelled in its efforts to support the Chinese community and has grown to become, as its motto states, 'the voice and ears of the community'.

CWA has also helped to improve relations between the local Chinese and the indigenous communities in Northern Ireland. In doing so, it has assisted many Chinese people to become active citizens and integral members of the wider community in Northern Ireland.

In 2011, the formal launch of the Chinese Resource Centre, managed by Chinese Welfare Association, was a great achievement for the Chinese community. Significantly, CWA works with other organisations that represent and work with minority ethnic groups and immigrants to share experience and information.

CWA Mission Statement

To secure the future of the Chinese community in Northern Ireland within a framework of racial equality and to enable all sections of the community to fully participate in both the development of the community and the wider society.

在提供种族平等的前提下
确保北爱华人社区的前途促使
社区中各组成部份能全面参兴
社区的发展并融入主流社区

The Core Aims of CWA are the following:

- Enabling and supporting community development and developing the community infrastructure within the Chinese community
- Providing or securing services which meet the health and social needs arising out of the disadvantaged position of the Chinese community
- Enabling children and young people to realise their full potential as active citizens within both the Chinese and wider community
- Developing greater cultural awareness within both the Chinese and wider community and working towards elimination of racism and discrimination
- Securing the resources and facilities needed to achieve the core aims of the organisation

1. The majority of these first arrivals set up trade in the catering industry: the first recorded Chinese restaurant, The Peacock, opened in Belfast in 1962. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 and the implementation of the employment voucher system limited further immigration into the UK to certain professions and to those workers whose jobs were already secured. This provided for 'chain migration', where those who had set up catering businesses in Northern Ireland were able to provide jobs for families and friends. As a result, the Chinese community became further embedded within the catering industry. [The Chinese Community in Northern Ireland The province's largest minority ethnic group, January 2006. CultureNorthernIreland.org](#) accessed 28/3/2018.



2. Rationale behind the Classroom+ Project

CWA has become more than just an organisation representing the Chinese community in Northern Ireland and has developed a strong relationship with a large number of Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) community groups, notably through providing resource space and health and mental health services to these groups.

The groups involved in Classroom+ work to support the integration of migrants; challenge racism; promote inclusion and diversity, enhance good relations or work directly with specific ethnic minorities. Many deliver social, cultural and educational programmes to schools, youth groups and at special community events.

The Classroom+ groups are often asked to deliver cultural diversity sessions all over Northern Ireland. It is a real privilege for CWA and other groups to be able to share the rich tapestry of languages and culture, and to positively influence a new generation of young people, by extolling the benefits of diversity, multiculturalism and mutual respect. Nevertheless, each classroom lesson (or 'session', 'workshop' or 'intervention'), etc. can be seen as 'ad hoc' or 'extra-curricular' and are often treated as a 'happy distraction' because they are not necessarily or specifically linked to the education process or school curriculum.

Through Classroom+ CWA, with the support of Stranmillis University College (SUC), set out to up-skill and increase the capacity of BME trainers and others within the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) that present diversity and cultural sessions (referred collectively as 'BME and diversity trainers' throughout this document) in schools, etc. so that when these workshops are delivered, the contribution is not merely seen as a diversion, but as a valuable asset and integral part of the delivery of the curriculum.

Classroom+ has worked to ensure that the contribution of BME and diversity trainers to schools is enhanced so that it can support the school's requirements set by the curriculum and is therefore viewed as essential by schools and teachers. Box-ticking is normally defined as the process of satisfying bureaucratic administrative requirements rather than assessing the actual merit of something. 'Boxes will be duly ticked' but Classroom+ has aimed to do more than that.

The Classroom+ project assisted BME and diversity trainers to engage with the education sector at a higher level and thus increase their confidence within the classroom and promote a greater sense of belonging to the life of a school.

There are obvious linkages of the work that BME community groups do with the Northern Ireland curriculum 'areas of learning' such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), the World Around Us, and the Arts, but there are also less obvious links which can enhance the learning of mathematics, language and literacy.

One emblematic group involved with Classroom+ recently said, 'As an organisation we are only too aware of how important it is to work with schools and youth groups in order to educate young people on diversity & hate crime. What can begin as a 'minor' incident such as hate graffiti can lead to severe race hate crimes and by looking at examples of where this kind of hatred can lead, such as the Holocaust and subsequent Genocides, we can teach young people the importance of acceptance, respect and empathy for others from different cultures and backgrounds.' - Inter Ethnic Forum (Mid & East Antrim)

Simultaneously, Classroom+ sought to provide the collaborating student teachers, as well as the participating schools, with a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of BME and diversity partners and of a multicultural Northern Ireland. Whereas school children are the foundation stone in seeking to create a more progressive society in NI that understands, welcomes and celebrates racial and cultural diversity, much hangs on the skills training of the teacher to implement this. In order to affect change and increase the awareness of cultural diversity that will, in due course, flow into each classroom intervention and beyond, the Classroom+ also involved the education of future teachers.

Classroom+ sought not only impact on their work placements in schools during the life of the project, but also later on in their work and lives after graduation. Student teachers were given the opportunity to experience the richness of cultural diversity first hand through working with BME trainers.

Student teachers may already have experienced cultural diversity in the classroom, but the Classroom+ project offered hands-on experience to work with BME individuals and organisations. This cooperation enabled them to recognise that difference is a positive aspect to be embraced; multilingualism is a skill to be sought and that schools can be agents for change in Northern Ireland through having a welcoming and curious attitude and by incarnating the content of the curriculum aided by trained, skilled BME and diversity trainers.

Research produced by National Children's Bureau NI indicate that BME young people are 'significantly' more like to personally experience and witness racist harassment and bullying than their non-BME peers.[2] Furthermore, research undertaken on behalf of the NI Department of Education found that more than one third of Year 6 pupils (primary school) thought that a pupil's race or skin colour could make them 'more likely' to be bullied, whereas almost two thirds of Year 9 (secondary level) pupils thought this to be true.[3] These figures not only reveal victims but also imply perpetrators among children and youths. It is therefore necessary to convey important messages about diversity to children early in their educational development. Difference can't be ignored, but does sometimes need to be explained in a skilled, sensitive manner.

Allport's seminal contact theory proposes that prejudice can be reduced when members of different groups interact with each other under optimal conditions.[4] Classroom+ provides partnership between student teacher, schools and BME groups in a clearly structured, cooperative manner. It was hoped that the Classroom+ lessons would help children to view diversity and cultural differences in a positive light and that the presence of any BME children in these classrooms would be 'normalised'. Indeed, was hoped that BME classmates would feel a sense of belonging and of being welcomed into the school life. This should in turn break down barriers in general and build up friendships in the classroom.

There are obvious linkages of the work that BME community groups do with the Northern Ireland curriculum 'areas of learning' such as Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), the World Around Us, and the Arts, but there are also less obvious links which can enhance the learning of mathematics, language and literacy.

Finally, it was felt that participating schools could get to better know the BME community groups involved in the Classroom+ project and thus have a pool of resources to promote cultural awareness and to offer signposting opportunities for further support and cultural expertise. The objective has not been to challenge the standard teacher-led classroom model. The '+' factor alludes to the additional support teachers can and should receive from the CVS, notably BME facilitators (who will, through the project, be cognisant of the NI Primary School curriculum) hence the project title- 'Classroom+'. Classroom+ has been a pilot project and a proof of concept, a small step towards mainstreaming teaching and appreciating cultural diversity in the classroom. CWA hopes Classroom+ will be a step towards creating a long-lasting collaboration between teacher training, the education sector and the BME groups, that will excite, enrich and enhance classroom interventions around cultural diversity in the immediate future.

2. [Attitudes to Difference: Young people's attitudes to, and experiences of contact with people from different minority ethnic and migrant communities in Northern Ireland, p7 and, p. 55 National Children's Bureau NI and ARK, 2010. Accessed 20/3/2018](#)

3. [Research into the Nature and Extent of Pupil Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland, Final Report, section 5.3.2, Department of Education, Northern Ireland, October 2011. Accessed 20/3/2018](#)

4. For more information search, [Gordon Allport's Contact Hypothesis](#)



3. Outline of how the Classroom+ Project worked

'Classroom+' is an education project that sought to up-skill BME and diversity trainers who routinely deliver classroom lessons around diversity and culture by bringing BME community groups, student teachers and schools together in a creative, collaborative process.

Through Classroom+, CWA set out to work with SUC and BME partners to lay the groundwork for interesting and enriching classroom interventions which link culture, diversity and related topics with aspects of the curriculum, thus ensuring that minority communities in Northern Ireland have their identities affirmed and celebrated.

In order to achieve the goal of up-skilling and increase the capacity of individuals who deliver diversity and cultural sessions within schools, the Classroom+ project aimed to increase the awareness of BME and diversity trainers about the critical stages in children's education. Moreover the project facilitated a mechanism for BME and diversity trainers to interact with student teachers and potentially influence the first stage of the educative process, namely in the training/education of teachers.



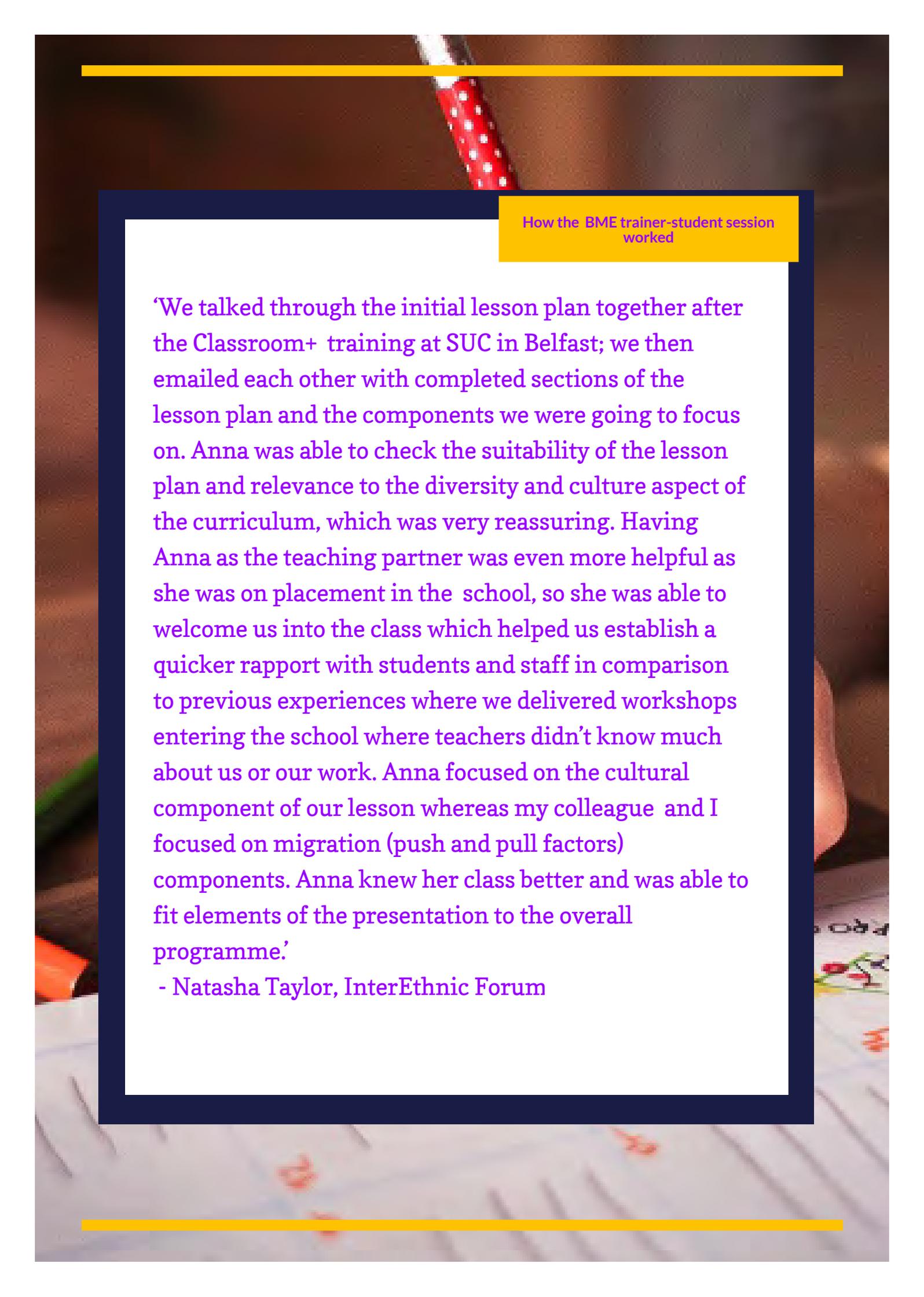
To do this, Stranmillis University College, one of the two teacher training colleges here in Northern Ireland, provided professional guidance and two SUC lecturers delivered two two-part training sessions about education in general and the Northern Ireland curriculum more specifically. The content of these trainings is outlined below. One set of training sessions was in Belfast and the other was in L/Derry.

Two workshops were facilitated by Dr Barbara McDade, Senior Lecturer in Education Studies and International Development, who introduced the current curriculum, the aims and objectives of the curriculum and gave guidance on lesson planning in order to ensure a well-rounded method of teaching which includes play and activities for young children. Two workshops were delivered by Dr Norman Richardson, Lecturer in Religious Studies & Diversity Education, who spoke on cultural diversity in schools in Northern Ireland, which are ever changing. He spoke on the relevant policies and the importance of developing positive awareness of cultural diversity in children from an early age.

Subsequent to these training sessions, student teachers were then partnered with a BME and diversity trainer to design and/or deliver one of the 10 pilot classroom lessons to demonstrate the results of collaborative learning and integrated interventions. Through these pilot lessons, which were delivered to ten different primary schools, over 300 children directly benefited from the Classroom+ project.



Finally, Classroom+ held a mini conference at SUC to present the learning gleaned at the training sessions. In addition to a presentation by Dr McDade from Stranmillis University College - one of the two lecturers who delivered the trainings to the BME and diversity trainers; conference speakers included Orla Devine from the Global Learning Programme; and Natasha Taylor, who represents one of the groups involved with Classroom+, the Interethnic Forum (Mid and East Antrim). The conference offered the opportunity to share experience and facilitated an open discussion about the relevance of diversity and culture to the curriculum and the potential and benefits of involving BME community groups in the delivery of aspects of the curriculum. This event was open to those who have engaged in the programme, and also to other interested parties that could benefit from the learning i.e. arts groups, cross-community associations, rights-based groups etc.



How the BME trainer-student session worked

‘We talked through the initial lesson plan together after the Classroom+ training at SUC in Belfast; we then emailed each other with completed sections of the lesson plan and the components we were going to focus on. Anna was able to check the suitability of the lesson plan and relevance to the diversity and culture aspect of the curriculum, which was very reassuring. Having Anna as the teaching partner was even more helpful as she was on placement in the school, so she was able to welcome us into the class which helped us establish a quicker rapport with students and staff in comparison to previous experiences where we delivered workshops entering the school where teachers didn’t know much about us or our work. Anna focused on the cultural component of our lesson whereas my colleague and I focused on migration (push and pull factors) components. Anna knew her class better and was able to fit elements of the presentation to the overall programme.’

- Natasha Taylor, InterEthnic Forum



4. Learning from the Project: summaries of the trainings given by Stranmillis University Lecturers and from the Conference

This section summarises the training sessions delivered by Dr Barbara McDade and Dr Norman Richardson to the BME and diversity trainers and student teachers. Also included is further information delivered at the conference held at Stranmillis University College towards the end of the project by Dr McDade, as well as by Orla Devine of the Global Learning Programme.

Cultural Diversity in Northern Ireland's Schools ^[5]

The purpose of education

It is not simply about developing intellect and cerebral abilities. 'Education is not just about learning cognitive skills. It is also about helping children to learn about themselves, to be able to live peaceably with themselves and with others and to help them to develop into competent, mature, self-motivated adults.'

'Education is not just about learning cognitive skills. It is also about helping children to learn about themselves, to be able to live peaceably with themselves and with others and to help them to develop into competent, mature, self-motivated adults.'

According to the Task Force on Education in the 21st Century, which was commissioned by UNESCO, there are four pillars of education, which are:

- **LEARNING TO KNOW**
- **LEARNING TO DO**
- **LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER**
- **LEARNING TO BE**

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989) states that:

- education should teach children to respect their parents, their own and others' cultures;
- education should prepare children to live responsibly and peacefully in a free society, 'in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin'

Education in Northern Ireland

There have been several documents published specifically in relation to education in Northern Ireland: In 2005 the government published the policy and strategic framework *A SHARED FUTURE*, which stated that, schools should ensure 'through their policies, structures and curriculae, that pupils are consciously prepared for life in a diverse and inter-cultural society and world' (section 2.4).

In 2011, the Department for Education developed the *Community Relations, Equality & Diversity* (CRED) policy, which states that, 'as a society emerging from conflict, education must continue to promote and support the development of strong, healthy community relations among current and future generations' (4.1).

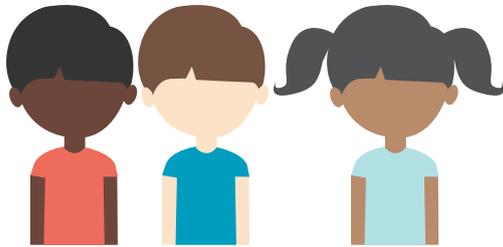
[5] This section is taken from 2 talks given by Dr Norman Richardson in L/Derry (24 November 2017) at Sao Pak and in Belfast (30 November at Stranmillis University College Dr Richardson's PowerPoint presentation is included at the end of this report.



Learning from the project, continued...

Language and word choice

It is important to think about the language used in classrooms. Even things that are not intended to be negative can be said in a more positive way. For example, 'mixed race' is perhaps better expressed by saying 'shared heritage'. Some teachers do not challenge stereotyping or labelling of individuals and groups of people simply because they themselves do not know enough about the other culture or diversity in general.



The Northern Ireland Curriculum. How can or should education respond?

Curriculum should foster:

- Personal Responsibility
- Concern for others
- Commitment
- Determination
- Resourcefulness
- Openness

Dr Paul Connolly from Queen's University Belfast has undertaken research on racism and sectarianism among children in Northern Ireland. Some people claim that discussing these issues in general is provocative and make things worse or that it isn't appropriate to speak about these issues with young children, yet research demonstrates that young children are not 'too young to notice' as they do recognise difference and can have sectarian prejudice from the age of three.

Rather than framing things in an opposing or negative way ie *anti-racism* or *anti-sectarianism*, perhaps it is helpful to think in a positive manner: *Intercultural*.

LESSONS IN CLASSROOMS SHOULD:

- Give teachers and learners permissions to speak about difference
 - Some teachers practice 'circle time' which is used as a time to discuss issues and raise questions, for example, about issues that are particularly topical and on the news
- Celebrate difference
 - Diversity visuals
- Promote local and global awareness
 - Keep a calendar of cultural and religious special occasions
- Be enjoyable
 - Resources can include stories, picture, statistics, discussion, drama, role playing, music, sport, food, visits & visitors, the natural world, games, toys and items that children can touch
- Be inclusive
 - use inclusive language about gender, ability & disability, religion, ethnicity
 - use inclusive visuals such as posters, books & maps to reflect diversity
- Connected Learning
 - It is recognised that almost all learning can be done in a thematic and connected way (i.e. water, geography, RE)



Learning from the project, continued...

In planning classroom lessons, it is good to refer to these values, even if just to remind teachers. There are 6 areas primary of learning. Language, literacy and mathematics are often taught in the morning when children are more attentive and other topics are regularly taught in the afternoon and may be seen as less important.

History, geography, science and technology are now referred to collectively as 'The World Around Us' and this is generally where diversity is addressed and where input by BME and diversity trainers feeds in.

In addition to The World Around Us, children are taught Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) and Religious Education (RE) which are often overlooked by teachers and schools as a significant mechanism to explore other cultures and identities.

It is a good idea to offer the teacher an idea or flag a resource for follow-up work subsequent to a visit from BME and diversity trainer. Each school in Northern Ireland should have a copy of the PDMU support resources *Living, Learning. Together.* which is also available online. (See details in the resource section at the end of this report.)

A Whole School Approach

Demonstrate an ethos of respect for diversity even when there appears to be little diversity within the school. Note:

- assume diversity – not monoculture
- school policies related to these issues
- whole school assemblies are a tremendous opportunity to address issues

Key Lesson: Children are never too young to be taught to appreciate difference



Learning from the project, continued...

Creating Class Lessons: values and characters ^[6]

School types Integrated (7% in Northern Ireland) Catholic-maintained Controlled Private Montessori/Waldorf Irish Medium Special (degree of needs: moderate, severe, profound; physical or cognitive) MLD, SLD, PLD Primary v Secondary level

Pretext Often BME and diversity trainers are invited in a fire-fighting situation because a negative situation or incident has occurred. So it is important to ask the pretext for any cultural diversity workshop, when invited in. **Be clear:** Is this session a taster, an introduction or part of a bigger picture? Will there be anything leading up to the session?

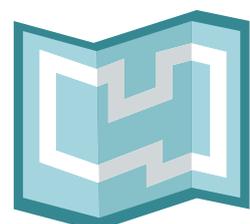
Visual Cues Look for any visual cues on what the school is like and what its values are. Usually it is possible to tell within 15 minutes of being in the front hall if the day will be positive or negative!

It is important to note If there are only 1 or 2 children of the identity of the topic (Chinese, Traveller, etc.) in the classroom, who may be bombarded with a sense of difference because of the classroom session, it may be necessary to adjust presentation so as to avoid this.

Knowledge & competence If addressing topics which may be controversial, or when invited in to address a recent negative incident, it may be a good idea to open with a neutral question or aspect. For example, if discussing migration or racism, it might be helpful to ask children who has a family member or a friend who moved to work in another country...Role play and scenarios are also very good ways to address controversial or emotive topics.

- Again, on what basis is the BME diversity trainer being invited in?
- Being reflective to make lessons better, not only after a workshop/lesson, but during...
- Ability to move away from planned lesson when needed
 - are things going as planned or chaotic
 - planned 15 minutes but took 40; planned 30 and only took 10
- Outcomes: Pupil centre - respond to students
- Mind opening or raising doubts in a positive way about something they thought they knew or understood
- Fun & memorable
- Applicable to life
 - scenarios grounded in real world learning examples and illustrations that are negative are important and give an opportunity of real world learning

KEY LESSON: Ideally looking for a change in attitude or a change in behaviour



[6] This section is based on the presentations by Dr Barbara McDade in L'Derry (27 November 2017 at Sai Pak) and in Belfast (4 December at Stranmillis College University). Dr McDade's PowerPoint presentation is included at the end of this report.

Lesson Planning

- Do not underestimate the value of speaking to the teacher before the lesson. Find out:
 - what works well
 - what is challenging for the class (or the teacher!)
 - what is the teacher's classroom management technique? a special word; snapping; remaining silent until children are calm and quiet? If there isn't one, then create one.
 - about different ability levels within the class so that you can set activities applicable to children with difficulties or special learning requirements so ideally everyone can participate
 - Ask if teacher will be present - Ideally teacher will remain present - not only to deal with unruly children but also to be able to do any follow on teaching.
- Have an extension activity for those children who fly through the main activity so they do not disengage from learning
- It's not helpful when teacher says, 'oh, you can just do what you want' !
- If 100% reliant on electric-based visuals, how engaging will the lesson be? AND what if something goes wrong with the technology
- Quick sharp, short activities for young kids
 - 3-5 minutes speaking at kids, discussion or activity
 - 5-8 minutes for post primary (YouTube is where vast amount of children's knowledge comes from and many videos are less than 2 minutes!

Implementation - pedagogy

- **Be able to adapt the lesson to different age groups**
- **PLAY IS VITAL** (particularly nursery - P3) & can be effectively incorporated into any lesson
- art
- music
- working in pairs
- good idea to have visual cues when explaining an activity, especially for those under 8 years old ... 'here, is an example of one I made earlier...'
- pace of lesson - too fast; too slow
- best teachers move around the classroom - either physically or focus of attention
- Bear in mind timing and attention span - enough stimulation?
- Incorporate different activities - do not just talk and have props
- Learning styles - VARK visual, aural, read/write/kinesthetic
- various resources - do not give out scissors before having explained an activity !



Evaluate - during and after

- Primary students (especially KS1) like repetition and routine; the younger the group the more need for structure is needed
- If too disruptive from the norm, then learning is less effective
- So be mindful of length of lesson, or each activity and follow teachers normal structure if possible. Otherwise children, particularly with autistic tendencies may find too different from 'normal' and then be disruptive and be taken out of the class by the classroom assistant

Assessment for Learning

- keep monitoring and checking in with the children after each little activity (continuous assessment)
- difficult if group not engaging - although it is necessary to bear in mind that those who appear to perhaps not be engaging because of movement might actually be paying the most attention...

Aim of the lesson:

- increase knowledge of Chinese culture or more specific (ie the Mandarin language characters)
- detail of the aim: learning outcomes in bullet point
- number of activities does not necessarily equate to the number of learning activities; can have 2-3 learning activities based around 5 activities: do not set too many intentions

What are the learning outcomes? Ideally link to the NI curriculum

Teachers do daily notes or weekly plan and they can/should be able to pass on to the BME and diversity trainer the school's template for delivering so that the lesson meets the school expectations (each school has a different approach)[7] ; this also demonstrates the professionalism of the BME trainers
Teacher creates safe, interactive and challenging (learning) - not passive learning

Teacher (and Trainer) Assessment Normal assessment of teacher or anyone delivering a lesson is based on the above.



CWA CONFERENCE 9th March 2018

Classroom | Curriculum | Culture: Enriching Classroom learning with the help of the Community and Voluntary Sector

Dr McDade, Stranmillis University College

Often the inclusion of cultural or diversity workshops by are seen as or delivered as 'stand alone' lessons as an 'add on' to the normal classroom planning.

Some schools simply couldn't deliver intercultural learning without partnerships with organisations like CWA and all of the Classroom+ collaborating organisations.

This is perhaps even more important considering how schools are changing - Not only has the external appearances of schools changed remarkably, but also in pedagogy and policy. Here in Northern Ireland, we see changing faces and changing languages which reflect the bigger changing world. For example, after English and Irish, the largest first languages of students in Northern Ireland are Polish and Lithuanian.

Issues, including funding

Many people may undervalue the importance of diversity and multiculturalism to life-learning. The Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) need to shout about what they can deliver and the significance of it. On the flip side, there are needs within the Community and Voluntary Sector. For example, many individuals who deliver diversity and cultural workshops need to better understand the specific curriculum within Northern Ireland and the best practice techniques for working with different age groups. It is vital that relevant organisations build and develop better relationships with schools, and the education system, perhaps particularly in the post-primary setting where often the CVS is only valued when invited in the aftermath of a negative event. Moreover, and unfortunately, funders often focus on quantity rather than quality.

KEY LESSON: DO NOT underestimate the importance and significance of collaboration!

Orla Devine, Global Learning Project

Through the course of the Classroom+ project, CWA became aware of the Global Learning Programme (GLP), a fabulous initiative managed by the Centre for Global Education in Belfast.

The Global Learning Programme began in 2015 and since then brought the idea of global learning in the classrooms of primary, post-primary and special schools in Northern Ireland. These schools have been provided with teacher training, and resources rooted in the NI curriculum.

'Global learning is essentially education for a fair and sustainable world. In other words, a world free of poverty where all human beings are treated with respect and dignity and where individuals, communities, businesses and countries behave in a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations. Key global learning concepts include poverty, global inequality, social justice, sustainable development and global interdependence.'

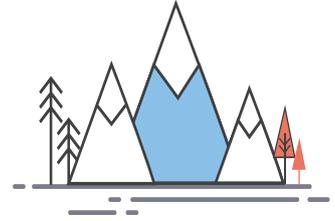
GLP works towards delivering on the Global Goals^[8] and noted world-wide applicability of goal 4 on quality education and relevance of target 4.7 to Northern Ireland: 'education for sustainable development and global citizenship'.

Significantly, GLP is trying to go beyond having 'champions' who push these ideas from within the schools, but rather helping to embed the values of global learning into schools. There are a number of related initiatives such as Eco-schools, GLP, Fairtrade Schools and the Trócaire Lenten Campaign. But despite the cross-over, they are often dealt with in isolation and there may be different teachers who deal with them despite the crossover of topics. 'Global learning can be incorporated into any subject/topic taught within the classroom. For example, in maths lessons pupils can examine statistics on global inequality, while in music they can explore songs about injustice from around the world'.

8. In 2015, world leaders agreed to 17 goals which aim to make the world a better place by ending poverty, fighting inequality and stop climate change. Goal 4 is 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning and opportunities for all'. See globalgoals.org.



5 Obstacles



This section briefly outlines the obstacles which the Classroom+ project faced.

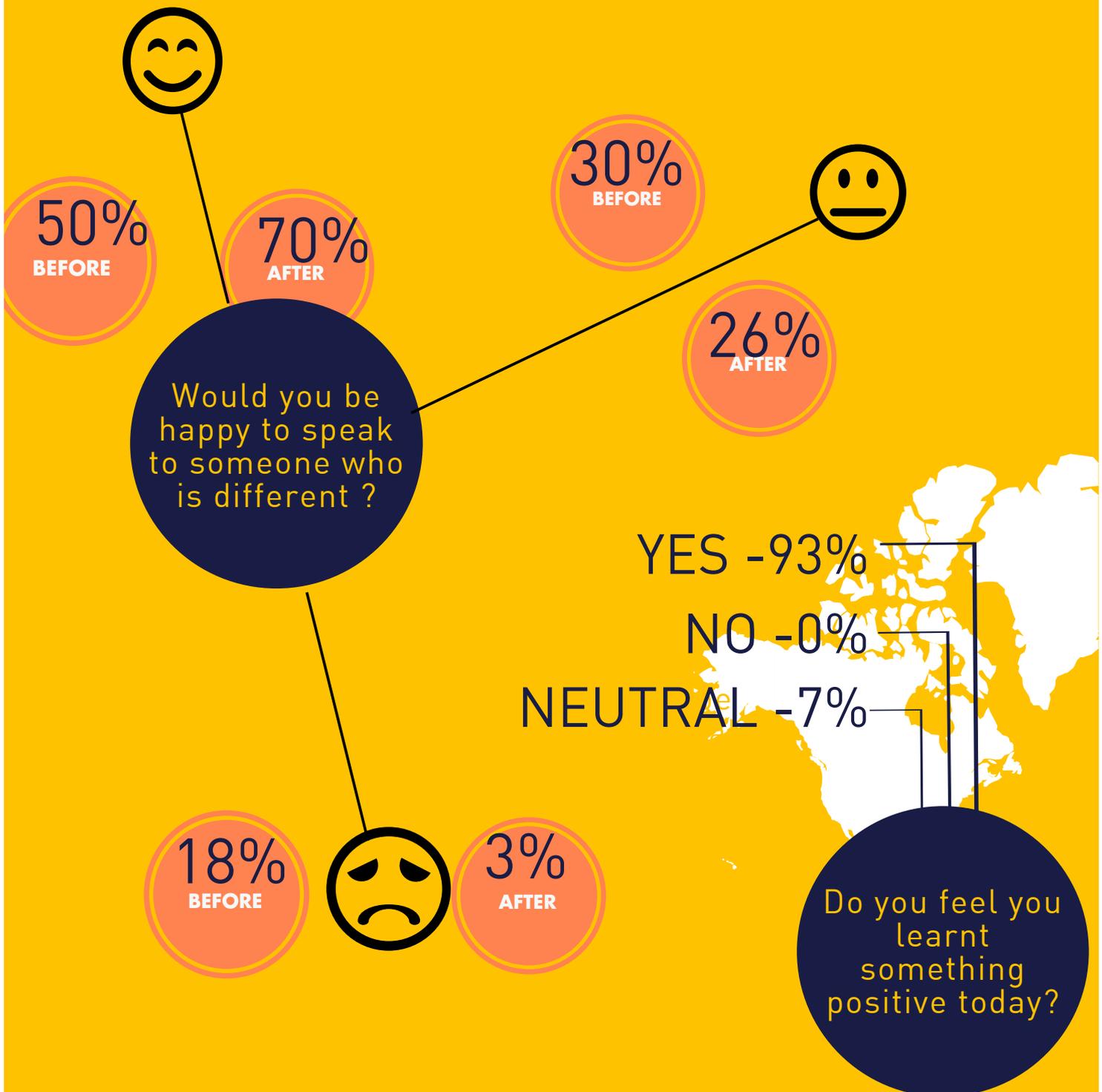
There can be no mistaking the pressures that schools and teachers are under to meet parental expectations and to deliver the set curriculum in a way that is interesting and engaging for the children. Schools, teachers and parents might not always understand the relevance of BME and diversity trainers to formal education, for example, there may be a lack of value placed on cultural input or there may be obstacles regarding timing as teachers may have trouble 'fitting it all in'.

Although most of the schools were approached were very supportive in theory of permitting a Classroom+ trained BME and diversity trainer to deliver a lesson to a class, in reality it proved a bit more challenging to actually get all ten classroom sessions completed. It was harder to 'sell' the Classroom+ project to post-primary schools, unless a specific and direct link to curriculum is highlighted. In one instance, the teachers of a post-primary school were keen to have someone in to speak about the refugee crisis as they could see direct links to the GCSE and A level syllabus. However, they were less accommodating to have someone in representing a specific ethnic minority as they didn't feel there was enough 'overlap' with the syllabus and the specific community, particularly as the school was 'very tight for time'. It might be helpful to try to engage with schools, particularly post-primary, at the beginning of the school year or term, at a time when exams are not at the fore of teacher and students' minds.

The time pressure that schools face was evident, particularly after many schools unexpectedly lost days due to bad weather. Moreover, it became apparent, and this was later confirmed through our later interaction with the Global Learning Programme, that relationships are key and that it takes time to develop relationships.



Children's Feedback





6. Feedback and evaluation - teachers/students/BME trainers and conference participants

- Classroom+ attempted to evaluate the project through the course of the project life and collected feedback about specific aspects:

- An evaluation was done by the BME trainers subsequent to the training they received from the Dr Barbara McDade and Dr Norman Richardson, the lecturers from Stranmillis University College

- A teacher feedback form was collected after the delivery of a classroom session; and

- A simple survey was distributed after the mini conference.

- Although the 'student voice' was not a major aspect of the Classroom+ project, after each of the 10 classroom lessons the trainers attempted to gather the opinions from the children. A simple show of hands was used to ascertain the general impact of the workshop. As a measurement of the intervention, three questions were asked of the children:

1. Before today how happy would you be to speak to someone who is [fill in] if you met them at school or with your parents?
2. Do you feel like you learned something positive today about people who may be different to you?
3. Do you now feel better able to speak to someone who may be different to you after today's lesson?

Feedback results



The learning from the training sessions presented by the SUC lecturers sought to up skill and educate those who deliver diversity and cultural classroom lessons. Overall the feedback after the trainings with the SUC lecturers was positive. Clearly the training sessions provided the BME and diversity trainers with a better understanding of the curriculum, but also affirmed the importance of lesson planning ensuring a well-rounded method of teaching which includes play and activities for young children.



One BME and diversity trainer stated that the training 'gave me greater confidence in delivering diversity sessions in classrooms in comparison to my previous experiences.' One simple practical application of the learning was demonstrated in that several BME and diversity trainers noted that subsequent to the training with the SUC lecturers, they bring more ideas and activities with them to a class and are now prepared to expect the unexpected (i.e. finish sooner than anticipated).



Another BME and diversity trainer said, 'the sessions with Norman and Barbara were helpful in the sense they made us more aware of the importance of involving the teachers of classes in which we are planning to have a presentation, and even to ask for input in the preparation of the session so it would fit into the curriculum'



One diversity trainer said that until the sessions with the SUC lecturers, "I previously completely avoided delivering lessons to primary school age children. With the additional training through Classroom+ about the curriculum, etc. I felt happy to give this a go and it seemed to work out well".



The general consensus was that each of the teachers was pleased with the classroom lesson delivered by the Classroom+ BME and diversity trainer and that their workshops were informative and had a 'very good' or 'excellent' influence and positive impact on the children. Several teachers noted that the topics discussed was very relevant and noted how the lesson 'fit well into the World Around Us and PDMU' areas of the curriculum. One school principal said that the 'opportunity for the pupils to experience these workshops is very worthwhile and helps staff and pupils alike to understand diversity and how even their own school is diversifying'.



→ Although small, the mini conference was generally seen as interesting and inspiring. People were pleased to meet others working on similar objectives. The view that many aspects of education is changing and that the education sector and the Community and Voluntary Sector, notably the BME community groups, should work together more closely and more regularly was repeated. There was a general understanding and acknowledgement that there is an 'appetite' for greater collaboration that should be fostered. The significant question that remained was how to do this?

→ There were a large discrepancy in the answers to the first question relating to children's initial feelings about speaking with someone who is 'different', but it was invariable that children all felt that they learnt something positive from the lesson with significantly more children subsequently feeling better able to speak to someone who is 'different'.

→ These are only simple statements and reflections of teachers' opinions and children's views and attitudes, rather than methodological quantitative measures of effectiveness and impact of the Classroom+ project, yet they do suggest that interventions by BME and diversity trainers can contribute to delivering aspects of the curriculum and positively influence attitudes of children, thus helping to make Northern Ireland a more inclusive and welcoming place. In most of the sessions, the children were very engaged and asked lots of question and showed keen interest in the topics presented. The BME and diversity trainers have the ability to reinforce topics learned in school and even to embed learning. A number of the trainers were asked, by teachers and students, to come back in the near future.

One child said to a BME trainer that his teacher teaches his head, but that school visitors 'teach me in my heart'.

'Our session was part of the programme for Integrated Education Month. We spoke about Polish Easter traditions and food and had a Powerpoint presentation with some pictures which included decorated eggs, and the children were encouraged to get some inspiration from the Polish patterns shown for the later task of decorating prepared sheets with contours of an egg. The children enjoyed the opportunity to touch some Polish artefacts - Easter palm (made of grass, flowers and wheat) and coloured eggs (boiled in brown onion skins).



7. What can be done to keep up the momentum and move forward? - Conclusions and Recommendations



The lessons from Classroom+ are many. There is undoubtedly a role which the members of BME community groups and those who deliver diversity and cultural workshops, can play in the effective delivery of aspects of the Northern Ireland curriculum in order to enhance classroom learning.

Classroom+ turns the definition of 'box-ticking' on its head by taking the vibrancy of a diversity or culture workshop from 'ad hoc' to a planned intervention aligned with obvious linkages with the school curriculum. It is a small first step towards creating long-lasting collaboration between schools, student teachers and BME and diversity trainers that can excite, enrich and enhance classrooms.

Additionally, it is a further small step towards mainstreaming such an approach to the issues of culture and diversity in education. Through the training by SUC lecturers, collaboration with student teachers and delivery of a classroom lesson, the BME and diversity trainers gained confidence and an understanding of the curriculum and a more planned approach when liaising with a school. Having the BME and diversity trainers work alongside student teachers was mutually beneficial and this aspect could be developed in any future follow-on work.

Additional funding should also be sought to further develop Classroom+ and make the learning from the project part of the teacher-training education process and extended to include continuing professional development for teachers. It is hoped that the small achievements of this pilot project can influence future work in this area and there are a number of lessons to incorporate for better, joined-up, connected teaching and learning.

CWA has already contributed much to similar projects in the education sector and has a strong track record of successful schools interventions and partnership work around these issues. The Classroom+ project is defined as a pilot project, but it is built on the experience gleaned from the highly impacting B.Me workshops.[9]

There are many opportunities, should the project gain traction, to both conduct further research and to extend the collaborative aspect: there is a broad spectrum of local and international organisations working in this field; CWA could explore the possibility of greater collaboration in order to pool knowledge and resources to deliver a more cohesive and joined up approach to diversity and appreciation for multiculturalism within schools.

Bearing in mind group links and related initiatives, CWA could further explore group and organisational linkages, as well as any related initiatives, and potentially act as a convener for a coalition of interested parties. With successful outcomes being achieved, this project could diversify to discuss issues relating to community relations and wider social justice issues, thus incorporating more potential partners and joined-up teaching and learning.



In the words of one diversity trainer, the Classroom+ project 'aimed to allow cultural diversity work to become a more integral part of the existing classroom curriculum in Northern Ireland'.

'The school has currently been looking at Migration in Ireland, specifically following the Potato famine, and that fitted in well with the work that we had been doing on migration into Northern Ireland. So whereas the student teacher was able to work on the lesson plan to fit in with the school curriculum covering the potato famine, I was able to address inward migration and do a comparative analysis of emigration and immigration. The P7 classes were very willing to engage, and enjoyed the opportunity to take part in the more interactive areas of the session, and this approach was welcomed by the teachers. The student teacher felt that it was immensely useful for her to get an understanding of the work we do as well as an understanding of inward migration.

I think that the Classroom+ project was extremely useful and would recommend it to any student teachers so that they have a better understanding of diversity in the classroom.'

One BME diversity trainer and student teacher teamed up to deliver a primary school workshop in Ballymena:





Bibliography & Recommended Reading



[Review of Current Primary Languages in Northern Ireland](#), Stranmillis University College, March 2017. Available on the Stranmillis website, see: stran.ac.uk

[Languages for the Future: Northern Ireland Languages Strategy](#) Department of Education, September 2012. Available on the DOE website, see: education-ni.gov.uk/publications

[Fair Play](#) A publication by Barnardos and Save the Children to guide for parents and carers about how to talk with children about prejudice and discrimination. Available on the Barnardos website, see barnardos.org.uk

[Global Learning Programme](#) Please visit globallearningni.com for further information and online resources, including [An Introduction to Global Learning: Guidance for Schools](#)
VARK: a guide to learning preferences vark-learn.com

The Puppet Woman resources for community relations, youth work and 'dealing with differences'.

Puppetwoman.org 'The Rainbow Song' a song to celebrate differences by Dr Norman Richardson is available under 'songs' in the 'Stepping out' section.

[Living.Learning.Together: Personal Development and Mutual Understanding](#) (PDMU) Learning activities to support PDMU learning within the Northern Ireland Curriculum. See nicurriculum.org.uk

[Too Young to Notice? - The Cultural and Political Awareness of 3-6 year olds in Northern Ireland](#), Paul Connolly, Alan Smith & Berni Kelly, Belfast: Community Relations Council, 2002. Available at: paulconnolly.net

[All different - All Equal: Ideas, Resources, Methods and Activities for non-formal intercultural education with young people and adults](#), Council of Europe, 2016. Available at: eycb.coe.int/edupack/

Thinking of Me, Thinking of You (an anti-discrimination training resource for young people, by young people) Katy Radford (ed), Belfast: Save the Children, 2004.

[Lesson Plans ideas](#) dealing with human rights and equality issues, See the Equality and Human Rights Commission, equalityhumanrights.com

Oxfam Education offers a large number of downloadable resources, including '[Education for Global Citizenship: a guide for schools](#)', as well as strategies to help teach about controversial issues, See oxfam.org.uk/education

[Save the Children](#) has fabulous ideas and resources online to help children become 'active citizens' and support all children's rights. Although these downloadable ideas and lesson plans are geared toward Key Stage 3 and 4, they can be adapted for younger children. Search 'school resources' on savethechildren.org.uk

Appendices



1 Lesson Plan Template

2 Sample Lesson Plan

**3 Training Session
Powerpoint - Dr Norman
Richardson**

**4 Training Session
Powerpoints - Dr Barbara
McDade**

**5 Mini Conference
Presentation - Dr Barbara
Mc Dade**



1 Lesson Plan Template

School Lesson Plan

Date:	Time:	Class:	Curriculum Area:
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Learning Objectives:	Key Vocabulary:
Success Criteria: NI Curriculum Links Writing Reading Talking and Listening	
Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities	
Use of ICT	

Resources:	Differentiation and Group Details: SEN Underachievers Overachievers Extension
-------------------	--

Time:	Structure of the lesson	Role of adults:
	State lesson objectives and success criteria for the lesson.	
	Introduction:	
	Development and Independent Tasks:	
	Plenary:	

Assessment:	Implications for future planning:
--------------------	--

Points about particular children:
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2 Sample Lesson Plan

Primary School Lesson Plan Example MIGRATION AND REFUGEE AWARENESS SESSION

Aim

To support pupils with knowledge and understanding around migration and asylum.
To promote a culture of welcome

Key learning points

Pupils will understand

- The extent of migration in the world today
- How migration impacts them and their families
- Reasons why people migrate and how they can contribute to their new communities
- Why people come to seek asylum in NI
- The vulnerability of pupils who arrive as migrants and how they can be welcomed and supported

INTRODUCTION

EXERCISE 1

World map

Where in the world do your family live? Put dots on the map

Where do people come from – where do you come from? Different coloured dots.

Why do we think people move to other countries from NI?

Do people choose to come and live in NI?

Use laminated pictures – WAR, STUDY, TO BE WITH FAMILY, WORK, LOVE, TO LEARN LANGUAGE, TO SEE THE WORLD

EXERCISE 2a

Orange exercise

6 pupils at the front get an orange – looks closely - remembers it – put it back in bag.

Oranges emptied out of bag children need to find their own – most can

Like oranges human beings have a great deal of diversity, although our basic body is the same, eg. head / body / arms / legs there is so much diversity in our looks / skin / hair and eyes, size and shape even finger tips are unique (explain word). Diversity can be seen in families you probably share things like the shape of your nose or hair. But each person is still different. Even identical twins are unique. Ask will you still know your orange at the end?

EXERCISE 3

Refugees - Don't choose to come – current news re Syria - we get very few asylum seekers here - about 400 a year for all of NI plus about 400 Syrian Refugees under VPRS.

Picture of camp

Story of a family fleeing

What would you take? Picture of a school bag – draw or write the 5 things you would take

How would you feel? Name emotions

EXERCISE 4

Imagine you have just arrived to a school in Japan

What should/could people do help you fit in and feel like you belong?

What should/could people do which would make things harder for you?

EXERCISE 2b

Potatoes given back peeled – can't tell which is which. Most all the same on the inside.

We all experience the same feelings of sadness, happiness and fear. Wherever you are and whatever you look like, you have the same needs such as food, clothes, shelter, families and love. We should treat other people the way we want to be treated – respect, kindness, friendship.

CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

3 Norman Richardson Training Workshop

**CULTURAL DIVERSITY
IN NORTHERN IRELAND'S SCHOOLS
- A RATIONALE**

Norman Richardson
Stranmillis University
College, Belfast

What is education for?

“Education is not just about learning cognitive skills. It is also about helping children to learn about themselves, to be able to live peaceably with themselves and with others and to help them to develop into competent, mature, self-motivated adults.”

- Denis Lawrence: Enhancing Self-Esteem in the Classroom (1996)

Terminology

• **Minority**

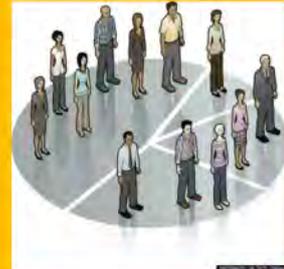
- a very fluid concept
- changes according to location, company ...

• **Ethnic Groups**

- everyone belongs to an ethnic group!

• **'Mixed'**

- Shared heritage – may be very positive!



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Over-simplifying diversity

- “They’re all the same!” - they’re **not!**
- “All blacks are ...”
- “All Catholics/Protestants/Jews/Muslims are ...”
- Labelling - stereotyping - prejudice
- Racism - sectarianism - antisemitism - Islamophobia - homophobia ...
- Anti-Muslim slogans on the Sikh Gurdwara in Glasgow
- The Brazilian “Asian terrorist” – July 2005
- The case of the ‘Muslim terrorist Sikh’!! – 9/11



13

A plural Society

- Cultures and sub-cultures
- Faiths and traditions within faiths
(denominations, sects, etc.)
- Identities and multiple identities
e.g. Multiple/Shared Heritage Backgrounds
- Racial - ethnic - national - regional ...



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Other levels of diversity

- Many other encounters with diversity in our classrooms and staffrooms and in children's experience



Ability/Disability

Travellers

Family style

Sexual Orientation

etc. ...

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Why is this important?

- Northern Ireland is a diverse society
- Children need to develop positive awareness of **cultural diversity** from an early age
- See Paul Connolly's work on racism and sectarianism among young children in Northern Ireland!



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Connolly's Research

- Studies on racism & sectarianism among young children in Northern Ireland
- Children can develop negative attitudes towards others in the early years
- Children can learn prejudice from a very early age – sectarian; racial; gender-related, etc.
- It can be checked before it becomes more serious destructive behaviour

See "**Fair Play**" booklet (Barnardos):
http://www.barnardos.org.uk/fair_play_booklet-2.pdf



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Negative responses to Diversity

- **Racism**
- **Sectarianism**

} traditionally avoided in some (many?) schools



- ❖ Turning a blind eye!
- ❖ “There’s no problem here!”
- ❖ “I was only teasing!”
- ❖ “They’ve got to learn to stand up for themselves!”



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- Separate – segregate
 - keep them apart – ‘benign racism’
- Ignore it – children are “colour-blind”!
 - hope they won’t notice
- Assimilation – the “melting pot”
 - change them – make them the same: “like us”
 - create “a new culture” that includes everyone
- ‘Neutralism’ – the bland society
 - avoid offence – “Don’t mention Christmas!”

Attitudes to diversity

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Approaches to diversity

- Pluralism/Multiculturalism – the “salad bowl”
 - accept, enjoy, celebrate!
 - much misunderstanding – does not preclude integration
- Anti-Racism – challenging prejudices & stereotypes
- **Interculturalism**
 - Different cultures *interacting* & working together for a shared society and against racism & sectarianism



20

HOW CAN/SHOULD EDUCATION RESPOND?

So

21



DIVERSITY IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM

Structures, Subjects and Strategies

How NI Education is Structured

- Compulsory attendance at school: **ages 4-16**

- *Many attend pre-school/nursery groups*
- *Many stay on until age 18*

- Stages of Education:

- FOUNDATION STAGE – P1 & P2 (ages 4-6)
- KEY STAGE 1 – P3 & P4 (ages 6-8)
- KEY STAGE 2 – P5, P6, P7 (ages 8-11)
- KEY STAGE 3 – Years 8, 9 & 10 (ages 11-14)
- KEY STAGE 4 – Years 11 & 12 (ages 14-16)
- SIXTH FORM – Years 13 & 14 (ages 16-18)

Primary

Post-Primary /
Secondary

The Northern Ireland Curriculum

(as revised in 2007)

is based on “underpinning values”

(according to CCEA documentation)



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The NI Curriculum should foster...

❖ Personal Responsibility

❖ self-confidence - curiosity

❖ Concern for Others

❖ community spirit - flexibility - tolerance

❖ Commitment – determination – resourcefulness

❖ integrity - moral courage

❖ Openness to new ideas

❖ respect

- **UNDERPINNING VALUES**

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The Primary Curriculum



6 Areas of Learning, plus Religious Education:

- **LANGUAGE & LITERACY**
- **MATHEMATICS & NUMERACY**
- **THE ARTS** (Music, Drama, Art)
- **THE WORLD AROUND US** (History, Geography, Science & Technology)
- **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**
- **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING (PDMU)**
- **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

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The Post-Primary Curriculum



Individual Subjects plus

- **LEARNING FOR LIFE AND WORK**
including
 - **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**
 - **LOCAL AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**

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Of particular significance ...

- **EVERYTHING!**

- all curriculum areas can contribute in some ways to understanding cultural background and cultural diversity

E.g. stories ... pictures ... statistics ... discussion ... drama ... play ... music ... sport ... the natural world ... visits/visitors

- **But especially in Primary Schools ...**

- THE WORLD AROUND US
- PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
- LOCAL & GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

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What is PDMU?

“PDMU focuses on encouraging each child to become personally, emotionally and socially effective, to lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives and to become confident, independent and responsible citizens, making informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.”

CCEA, 2007

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How should we understand RE?

- **In Catholic Schools:** “Faith formation” – confessional teaching
- **In Controlled (State) Schools:** must be “non-denominational”
- **In Integrated Schools:** a mixture of both

But Ideally:

- Inclusive
- Open-ended
- Reflective
- Exploratory
- An opportunity to learn about, and learn from, religions and beliefs



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For discussion and reflection:

- How did your own education help to shape your awareness and understanding of your own culture?
- How did your own education help you to become aware of the different cultures of other people?
- Were any subjects or teachers or experiences particularly significant?

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HOW CAN WE RESPOND CREATIVELY TO DIVERSITY IN OUR SCHOOLS?

... by **INCLUSION** and **CELEBRATION**



Being inclusive

- Using inclusive language
 - gender
 - ability/disability
 - religion
 - Ethnicity
- Giving teachers and learners permission to speak about difference



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Celebrate and enjoy

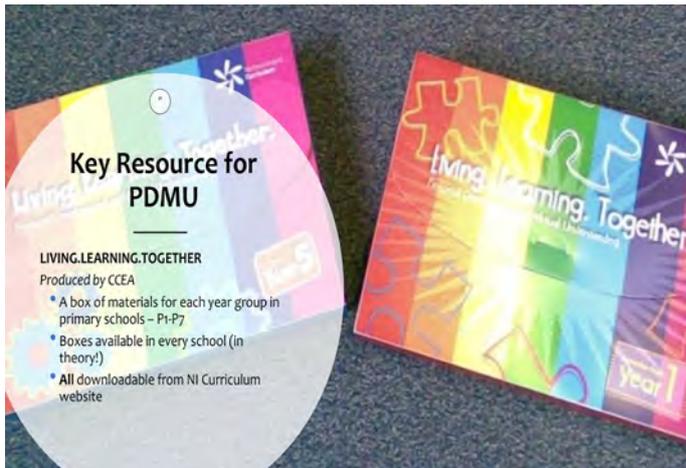
- Inclusive visuals in the classroom – posters, books, maps, etc. to reflect diversity
- Keeping a calendar of cultural/religious special occasions
- An ethos of local/global awareness
- Inter-cultural visits
- Inter-cultural visitors
- Exchanges



A Whole-School Approach

- Modelling an ethos of respect for diversity in the classroom
- Assume diversity – not monoculture
- Whole-school policy
- Special care with R.E. policy and practice
 - avoiding exclusion or “odd one out”
- Creative use of Assemblies
 - positive inclusion of difference





LIVING.LEARNING.TOGETHER

– a comprehensive PDMU programme for Years 1 to 7 (CCEA)

2 Strands:

- **Personal Understanding & Health**
- **Mutual Understanding in the Local & Wider Community**
- Each box covers the 9 statements of minimum requirement in 7 units: rainbow colours



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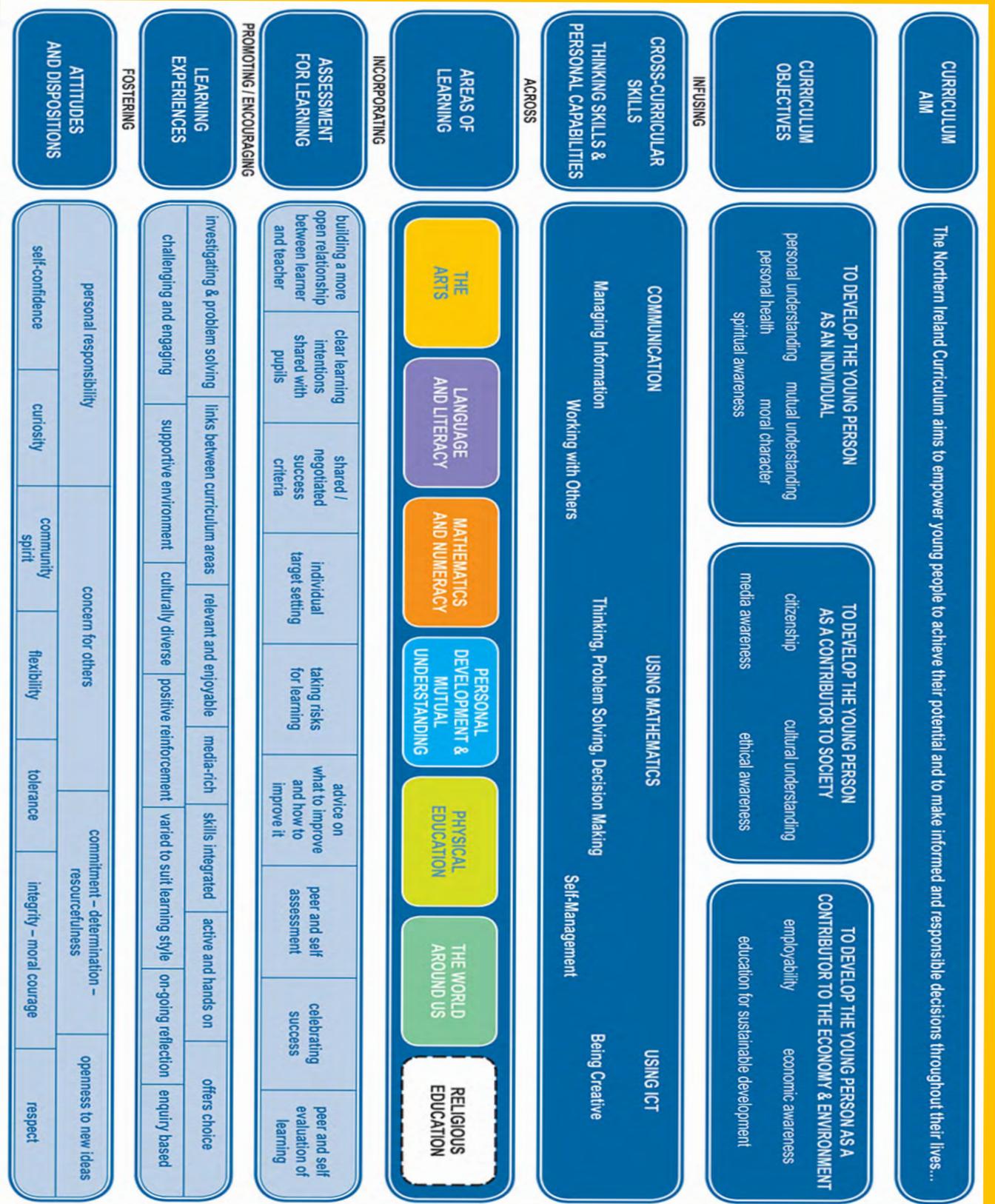
Other Key Resources

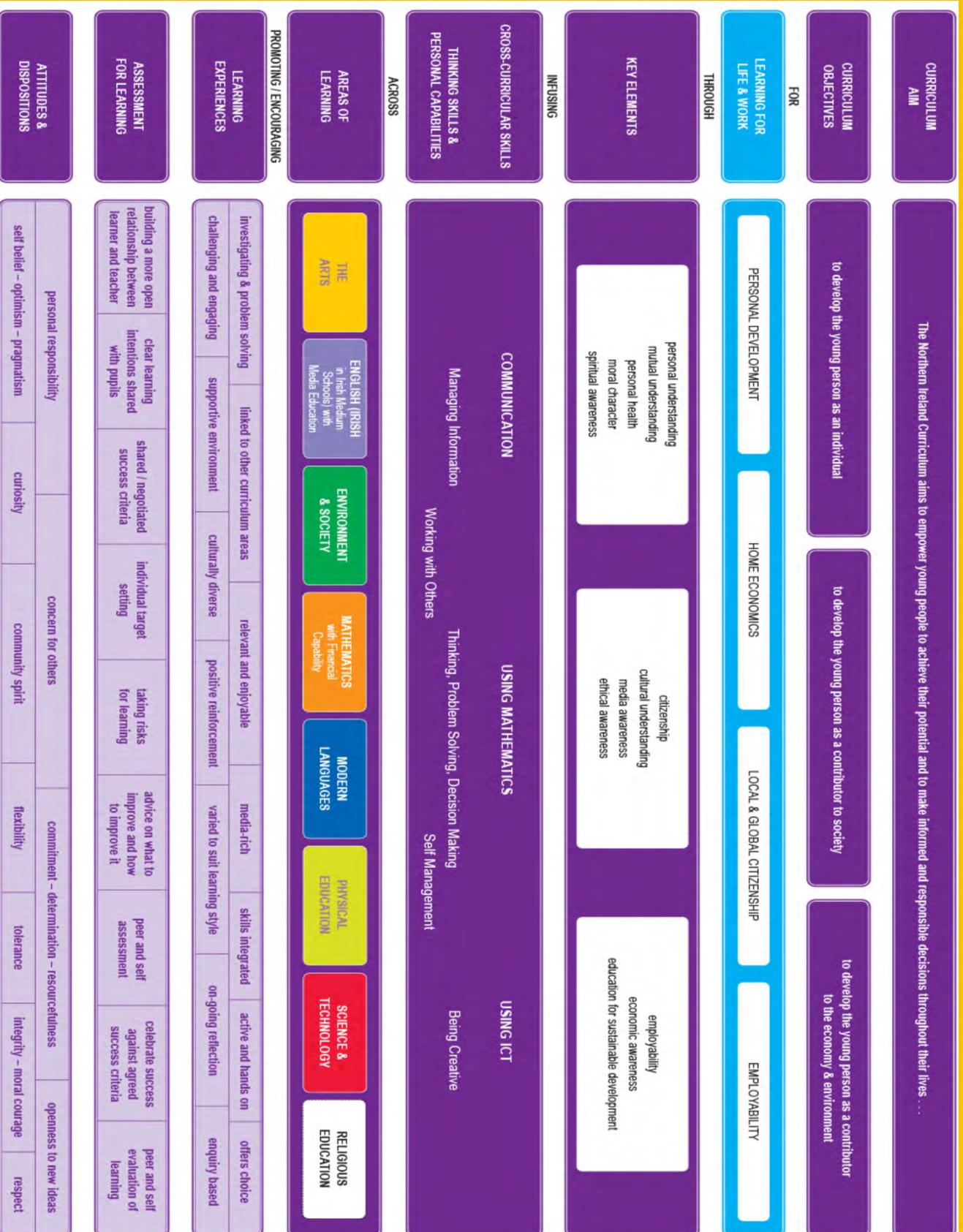
On the NI Curriculum (CCEA) website:

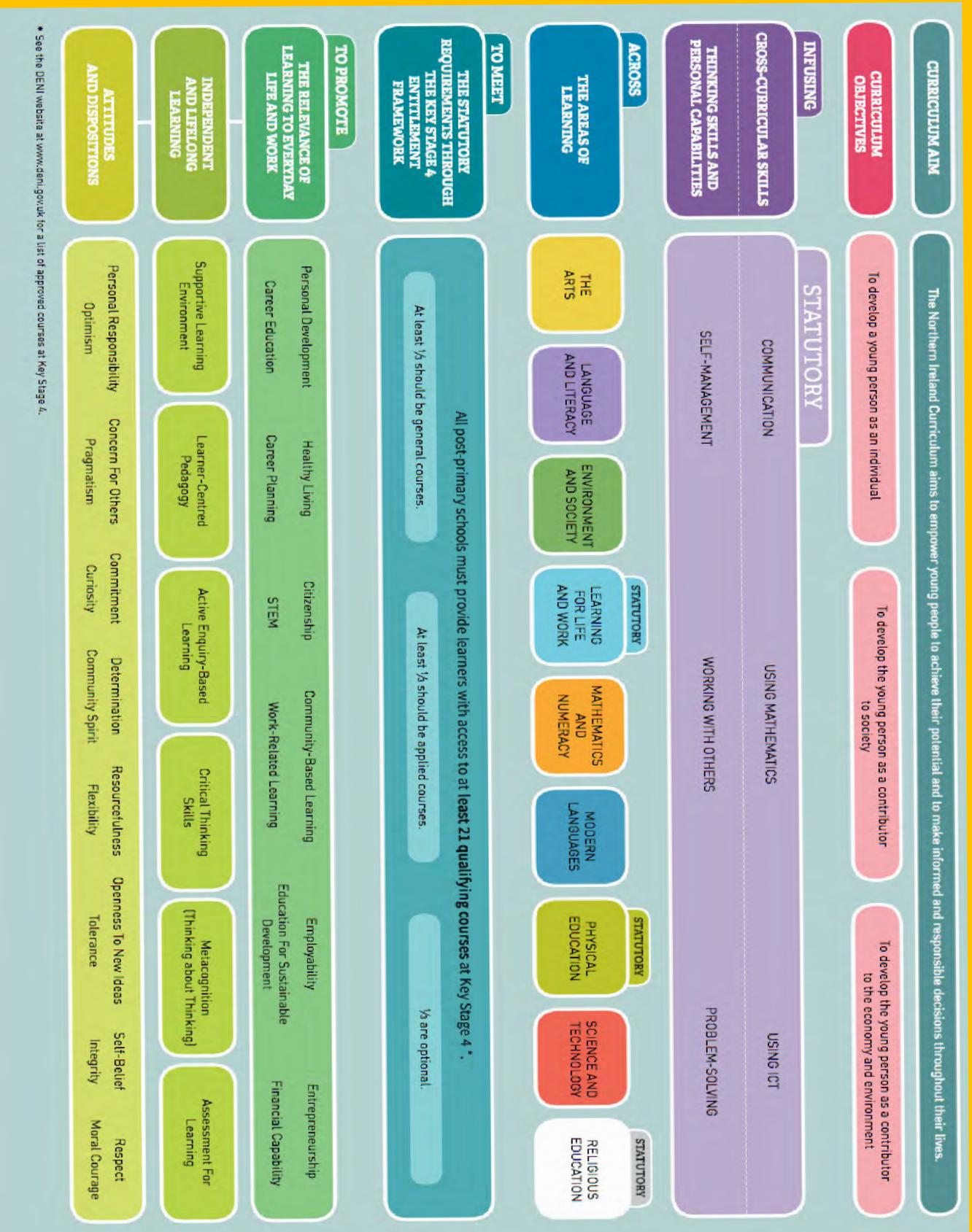
- **STEPPING OUT** (Yvonne Naylor)
- **SARAH AND THE WHAMMI** interactive
- **VISITING CHURCHES** video
- *List of additional resources to be provided*

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4 Barbara McDade Training Session Workshop







Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

The ability to think both critically and creatively and to develop personal and interpersonal skills and dispositions is essential for functioning effectively in a changing world. Therefore, the development of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TS & PC) is at the heart of the revised curriculum from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4.

Learning Through Dramatic Play	11
Learning Through Sand Play	25
Learning Through Water Play	55
Learning Through Dough and Clay Play	81
Learning Through Table Top Play	93
Learning Through Small World Play	105
Learning Through Construction Play	123
Learning Through Creative Play	153



10 COMMON PRINCIPLES OF EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

1. The best way to prepare children for their adult life is to give them what they need as children
2. Children are whole people who have feelings, ideas and relationships with others, and who need to be physically, mentally, morally and spiritually healthy.
3. Subjects such as mathematics and art cannot be separated; young children learn in an integrated way and not in neat, tidy compartments.
4. Children learn best when they are given appropriate responsibility, allowed to make errors, decisions and choices, and respected as autonomous learners.
5. Self-discipline is emphasised. Indeed, this is the only kind of discipline worth having. Reward systems are very short-term and do not work in the long-term. Children need their efforts to be valued.
6. There are times when children are especially able to learn particular things.
7. What children can do (rather than what they cannot do) is the starting point of a child's education.
8. Imagination, creativity and all kinds of symbolic behaviour (reading, writing, drawing, dancing, music, mathematical numbers, algebra, role play and talking) develop and emerge when conditions are favourable.
9. Relationships with other people (both adults and children) are of central importance in a child's life.
10. Quality education is about three things: the child, the context in which learning takes place, and the knowledge and understanding which the child develops and learns.

Tina Bruce

These principles underpin our Early Years curriculum and guide our planning. Well-planned and well-resourced play activities which allow for progression in a child's thinking and understanding can provide the context in which these principles become the reality for all our children.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Dramatic Play gives children the opportunity to

- Express themselves
- Explore language freely
- Explore feelings and find out about themselves and others
- Develop co-operation, care, consideration and control
- Exercise choice and make decisions
- Use mathematical language and develop mathematical concepts
- Develop a range of motor skills
- Use their skills to make the things needed for their play and adapt as necessary
- Explore a fantasy world of their own creation



DOUGH

Children love dough. Playing with dough is relaxing and creative and there is no right answer. It encourages the development of fine motor skills, concentration, creativity and offers opportunities for the development of language and social skills.

General Guidelines

Notes for use of dough

- Give children a large piece of dough, plenty of space and time.
- Check if children are allergic to additives used.
- Make material accessible so they can choose what they want to explore and add to the dough.
- Give parents information so they understand the benefits and learning experiences associated with dough.
- Introduce tools sensitively following careful observation.
- Remove accessories at times and allow the dough to be 'natural'.
- If colour is added after the dough is mixed there will be a marbled effect.
- A small quantity of colour produces a pastel effect.
- Strong colours or oil can make marks on clothes.
- Making uncooked dough is a perfect job for children.
- Encourage the children to join in with the 'clearing up'.
- Share materials in a friendly, fair and relaxed way.
- Understand that some children will not initially like the texture and 'mess' of dough.



CLAY

Clay can be used to provide similar learning experiences as dough. It also promotes

- Sensory experiences
- Imagination
- Gross motor control, manual dexterity and manipulative skills
- Emotional development
- Language development
- Understanding possibilities and limitations of clay

Allow children to handle clay and explore its properties and compare and contrast it with dough. Talk about properties – how it sticks to your hands, how it dries out and leaves a covering on your hands.

Make marks on the clay using tools, rolling pins, heavily textured materials, sponges, finger prints.

Create 3D images by rolling balls and coils of clay. Push clay through sieves, garlic presses and wire mesh. Join these to slabs of clay using liquid clay.

Create clay pots – thumb pots – using fingers and thumbs to widen and shape pot.

Create and use coils to make snakes of different lengths and thicknesses.

Make letters, spirals with coils.

Notes for use of clay

The warmth of the hands can dry clay quickly. Encourage children to dampen hands by using a damp sponge. When working with clay do not let clay go down the sink. Rinse hands first in a basin of water to wash off excess clay.



TABLE TOP ACTIVITIES

Equipment and Resources

- Variety of jigsaws – inset puzzles, lift and look puzzles, sequence puzzles, giant puzzles, colour, shape puzzles, seasonal and topic related jigsaws etc.
- Lotto
- Snap games e.g. baby animals snap cards
- Memory games e.g. memorix, memolud, Me two etc.
- Self correcting puzzle cards
- Sequencing games e.g. logico
- Threading and lacing
- Threading shapes – thready bears
- Mosaics
- Sorting sets e.g. linking elephants, compare bears etc
- Domino sets e.g. number, colour, shapes etc.
- Pegboards
- Hammer and nails pack
- Magnetic shapes and boards
- Coloredo
- Compendicube
- Colorama
- Pyramaxi Cocoon
- Ordima Puzzles
- Tell-a-story
- Geometrix
- Place a shape
- Magnetic fish game
- Fuzzy felts
- Discovery Box Attribute blocks
- Pattern block tiles
- Pick and mix People game
- Tap tap school set



Personal, Social & Emotional Development

- learn to work independently i.e. completing a puzzle on their own
- learn to work as part of a group e.g. playing a shop or lotto game
- learn to work collaboratively – take turns, share and co-operate
- develop concentration and perseverance
- enjoy the satisfaction of completing a puzzle or winning a game

Early Mathematical Experiences

- explore mathematical concepts e.g. pattern, number, time, position
- understand and use language related to ordinal number e.g. first, second, third
- describe the position of people and objects e.g. in jigsaws

Knowledge and appreciation of the Environment

- developing understanding of jobs people do, seasonal change, local environment through use of appropriate puzzles and games

Early Experiences in Science & Technology

- learn how things join e.g. hammer and nails
- explore materials
- explore physical processes e.g. magnets

Creative/Aesthetic Development

- create designs using peg-boards, pattern block tiles, geometrix etc.

Physical Development

- develop fine motor skills and co-ordination through manipulating a range of materials e.g. pegs, threading, jigsaws etc.
- develop hand/eye co-ordination e.g. threading, beads

Language Development

- extend vocabulary as they engage in table top play
- develop visual discrimination e.g. matching jig-saw pieces to picture
- describe the rules of a game



SMALL WORLD PLAY

Definition

Small world play is a type of imaginative/role play, which enables children to be creative and spontaneous in dramatic as well as mundane life situations which interest them. It is closely related to puppet play and story telling.

Importance of small world play to children's learning

- It encourages talking (all kinds of language use) and listening (when children play together).
- It allows children to create stories around things they know e.g. people and animals. It also allows children to fantasise about experiences that they haven't had.
- It promotes improvisation and the appropriate use of language including fantasy language.
- It allows children to communicate feelings in a safe way.
- Children can communicate their observations, findings and knowledge about life, books and television ...
- It gives children control, allowing them to enter and leave a fictional world at will.
- It encourages children to play together, to self regulate and to exchange ideas.
- It develops an awareness of the feelings and needs of others, as well as the consequences of their actions, leading to natural healthy group relationships.



Importance of small world play to practitioner's teaching

It enables the teacher to discover:

- Children's level of knowledge and understanding
- Children's ways of thinking
- Children's attitudes
- Children's language and communication skills
- Children's abilities to play in a group

It allows the adult and child to interact in a shared environment based on the children's ideas. Teachers can then use these experiences to promote learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Processes involved in small world play

- **Active learning** – using objects and toys such as a dolls' house, a garage, small figures, a floor mat, vehicles, hand puppets, junk materials.
- **Imitation** – this is not simply copying other children but learning from what they do, and then experimenting with similar roles, behaviour and language.
- **Making images** – this can be sounds, words or facial expressions all leading to a story or make-believe situation.
- **Making symbols** – This involves an object representing something else eg. a box for a hill, a water tray for a swimming pool ... These initially will be highly individual to the child, but gradually the children will use shared symbols agreed by the group.



These processes belong to all forms of representation play, including painting, clay work, domestic play, music and small world toys. They each offer special, unique and worthwhile experiences, allowing the children to express their ideas and feelings, while at the same time developing their relationships with others.

Types of small world play

- **Play with animals and other creatures** e.g. farm, zoo and domestic animals, prehistoric animals, sea creatures
- **Play with buildings** e.g. houses, farm, zoo, garage, castle, airport, space station, railway station, bus or fire station, school, shop, hospital, garage
- **Play with a setting** e.g. pond, beach, swimming pool, snow scene, swamp, forest, hills, mountains, valleys, space, car park, street, railway line, road layout, field
- **Play with people** e.g. all kinds of family figures; a variety of occupations e.g. farmer, soldier, fireman, spaceman or driver, fantasy figures e.g. robot, monster, giant
- **Play with vehicles** e.g. cars, lorries, trains, rockets, space ships, fire engines, tractors, buses
- **Play with improvised materials/equipment** e.g. blocks, bricks, boxes, tins, pebbles, cones, shells, pieces of fabric, carpet, polystyrene, paper

Children are introduced gradually to each of the above. As their experience and competence improves children should be free to mix and match as well as improvise themselves to create their own imaginary, symbolic scenarios.



PROGRESSION IN SCISSOR SKILLS

Tearing paper

Understands use of scissors

Maintains grip once positioned

Holds scissors correctly

Begins to open and close

Controlled open and close action

Holds paper, random cuts

Repeats forward cuts

Cuts in a straight line

Cuts with 1 change of direction

Cuts with 1+ change of direction

Cuts curved lines

Cuts circles



CREATIVE PLAY

Art & Design

In creating, designing and making, opportunities should be provided for children to investigate and use a variety of materials and techniques and to explore colour, line, shape, space, form, texture and pattern in two and three dimensions. This leads to the development of visual, spatial and tactile awareness. They should be encouraged to use marks, picture drawings, paintings and constructions to create their personal view in response to what they see and experience.

Music

Through music children experience pleasure, joy and creative expression. Music is one of the acceptable avenues for the release and expression of feelings and moods and emotions.

Children should have opportunities to enjoy music in all its forms, participating in playing instruments, singing, moving rhythmically and expressively to music, listening to music creating their own music. Opportunities should be provided for them to listen to sounds, rhythms, nursery rhymes and a wide variety of music, to respond through movement, singing, clapping and creating their own music using percussion instruments and everyday objects.

Movement, Dance, Drama

Drama gives children opportunities to express themselves imaginatively and to recreate roles and experiences in which they can gain insight into personal and social development.



Creative use of Language in Story Telling/Role Play

Children should be given the opportunity to express their imagination freely by

- creative resources (art & design materials, musical instruments, role play settings, props) made freely available and accessible to the children at all times
- providing a good balance of activities that develop fundamental skills (writing, using paint, beating out a rhythm) and open ended activities.

ASPECTS OF GOOD PRACTICE

(1) **A rich learning environment** containing stimulating influences:

- Many different media are available e.g. clay, paper, paints, natural materials, delicate beads, textiles, threads, transparencies, shadow puppets
- The rich array of art materials should be attractively displayed on low, open shelves for ease of access to the children
- Children should have the opportunity to select and choose from a wide and varied choice of material and resources at hand, and develop their own creations, uses and ideas. Giving the children the opportunity to select material encourages more interesting and individual work.

(2) **Outdoor Environment**

Children should be given many opportunities to go outside – close observation and environmental visits add to experiences. The outdoor environment is an obvious source of colour and texture, facilitating children to think creatively about the world around them.



(3) Displays

- think of innovative ways of displaying children's work, not just the pieces that the adult feels are good
- use of mirrors, pictures, models, photographs
- place work at child's level and rotate the work around the room so that it can all be seen
- don't use only wall space; use windows, doors, ceilings and shelving
- use original framing techniques – boxes, polystyrene trays, lids, cardboard tubes, light wood
- record descriptions from the children of their work
- hold exhibitions of the children's work in local shopping centre, community centre, doctor's surgery

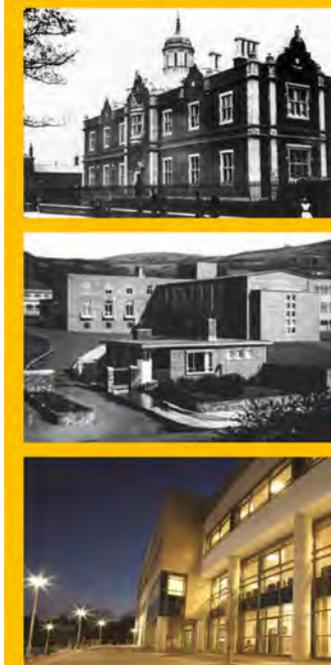


(4) Children are encouraged to:

- ask questions
- discuss their work
- share their work with other children and adults
- get involved in group discussions and respond to pieces of work
- come up with solutions to a problem together in small groups and illustrate the solutions using a medium the group has agreed on.



5 Barbara McDade Mini Conference Presentation



Changing Schools



Changing Faces

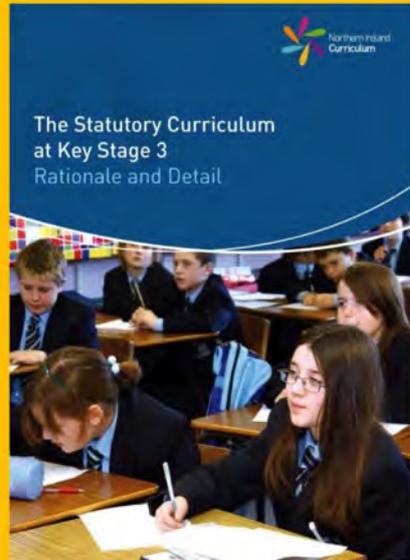


Changing Languages



Changing World







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