

The Education for Reconciliation Project

A Model for Cross–Border Teacher Professional Development

Dr Mary Gannon, CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit



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Outline

- Brief overview of EfR
- EfR responding to challenges of teaching citizenship and needs of teachers
- Key features and strengths of the EfR model



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EfR - Securing the Future Through Active Citizenship 2009- 2011

- A project of the CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit and the Centre for Cross Border Studies
- In association with the CSPE Support Service and the Citizenship Education Advisors of the Education and Library Boards



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Background

- Funded by EU Peace and Reconciliation programme, currently Peace III
- Now in its 11th year
- Has worked to date with teachers in over 85 schools – including current group
- Estimated to have impacted on approximately 700 teachers and more than 20,000 students



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Aims

- To contribute to the development of peaceful and democratic societies in both jurisdictions
- To encourage and facilitate active participation by students/pupils in their communities, wider society and global context
- To do this through provision of cross border professional development for teachers



Challenges for Citizenship Education in 2009

- Difficulties of time, teacher turnover, access to professional development, school leadership, status NCCA (2003), Jeffers (2008) Murphy (2008) O'Connor (2008) Gleeson (2008) etc
- Lack of time for reflection and sharing of good practice
- Need for teachers to develop:
 - Their own and their students' critical and reflective thinking skills
 - Skills in engaging students through active learning methodologies and a democratic classroom (Harrison, 2008)
- Democratic teaching of controversial issues in context of divided society, growing diversity, scarce resources O'Connor, 2008 etc

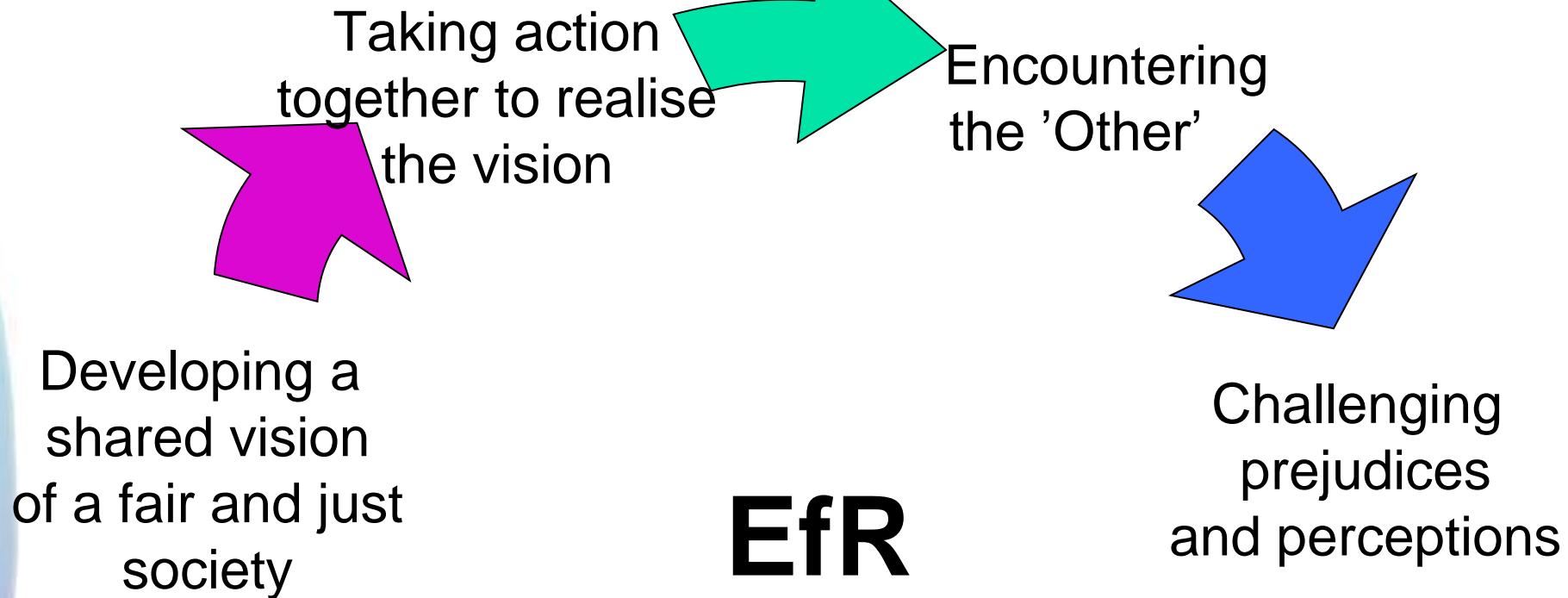


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What the Project Offers

- A programme of continuous professional development for citizenship education teachers from NI and border counties schools over a 2-3 year period
- Unique in being cross border, cross community, cross school type
- Combines:
 - residential and small cluster group in-service
 - In-school CE team workshops
 - Participation in resources development
 - Student input through feedback and action research





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Strengths of EfR Model

‘Citizenship education is a journey, not a destination’



‘Where currents meet there fog, but there is also the best fishing.’

Ruth Campbell (1988)



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Personal as well Professional Development



- Provides time for reflection on perceptions, prejudices, attitudes, values
- Facilitates a personal journey towards more inclusive thinking and approaches



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Relationships of trust are central to ensure teachers work well together and allow for working out of issues arising from conflicting viewpoints, worldviews or experiences.

Travelling the journey together models how students and communities can work together.

Residential and creation of a safe space key elements.



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Curriculum development has at its core the belief that teachers can develop their educational practice within the classroom, and that they can benefit hugely from a reflective and shared space to do this work.

(O'Shea, 2008)

The majority of these educators used limited conceptual and perceptual frameworks... These frameworks were the key influences on how principals and teachers responded to ...cultural diversity.., and the educational approach they took to diversity in their schools.



(Gannon, 2004)



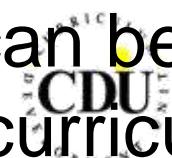
Integrated Support Structures



In-school workshops for CE
overcomes common weakness in
CPD

that teachers have no conduit
for sharing new ideas with colleagues

- Whole staff workshops support idea that reconciliation and democracy concern whole school not merely explicit citizenship education
- Provides a support network for isolated teachers
- Networks built up can be relied on for support in other areas of the curriculum



Breath Combined with Clear Focus

- Broad range of skills, methodologies, concepts and approaches relevant across the curriculum
- Develops key competencies and skills
- Clear focus and link with the classroom provided by work on developing resources.
- Supports sharing and professional development between teachers and schools over considerable period of time



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Cross Border CPD



What are the benefits?



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Benefits of Cross Border Model

- Challenges narrow ideas of what works in education
- Provides multiple ideas
- Development of resources enriched by different perspectives and approaches
- Cross border facilitation models approach for teachers



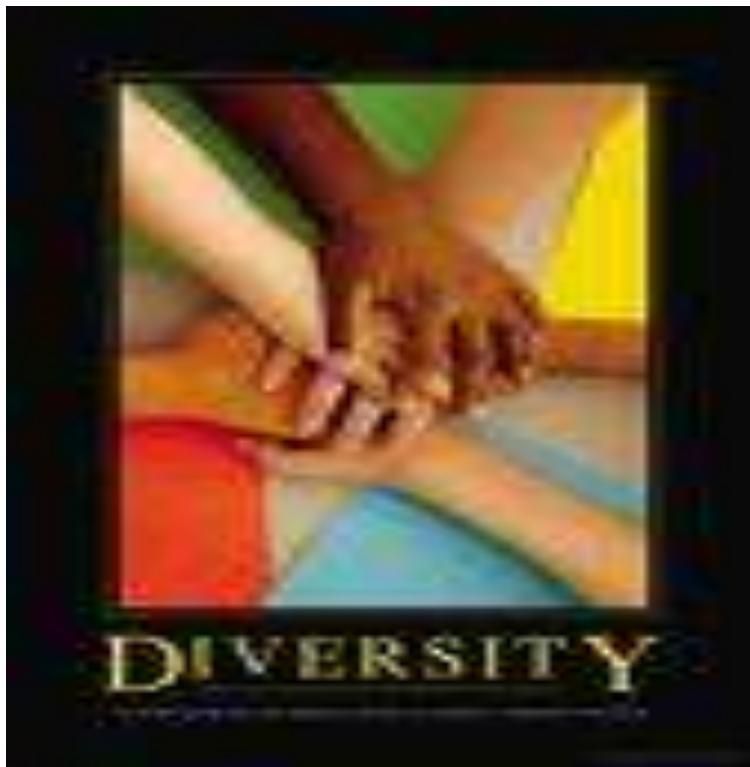
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Teaching Controversial Issues

- Teachers often lack confidence and skills to deal with certain issues e.g. racism, anti-Traveller prejudice...
- Creating conducive classroom climate
- Methodologies and teaching resources



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Working in Partnership



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Partnership Central to Approach

- Partnership with teachers
- Promotes collegiality in schools
- Partnership in project management
- Benefits of and to North/South support services
- Police forces – unique participation in development of *Policing Matters* and joint cross border educational work



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'I've been opened up' to difference, realisation that I might have had a simplistic attitude, 'I'm not racist', but of course I am tainted with prejudice/sectarianism, - none of us are virginal white, we're all contaminated- by our ideas of people. Not as simplistic as before, aware of complexity.'

'It reminded me to keep balanced and un-biased in our approach. In relation to peace and reconciliation structure of resources was fantastic, approaches and the layout....broadened my initial thoughts on the area of peace and reconciliation, widened to include peace and reconciliation within our country but also outside of the country.'



(Teachers,



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Challenges and Hopes for the Future

- Sustainability
- Change takes time
- Teachers willing to make the journey
- Our young people



"I'm in a chat room with one of the guys in the castle ... he's really quite nice."



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'Yes because before I done the film like I had a totally different attitude but now like I realise that there isn't any real difference to be fighting about so there isn't'

(Student, St Mary's High School, Lurgan)



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