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“He who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his
definition of reality.”

Assimilation and Integration: International Students in a Second Level
School.

by

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*To my dear wife, Stephaine,
you are my rock of strength,
my pearl of wisdom,
my best friend.*

Abstract

No builder of the seven great pyramids in the fourth Egyptian dynasty would have been more frustrated than the educationalist who attempted to construct a solid structure on a weak foundation. This metaphor succinctly captures the chagrin surrounding the present study. A number of works on the integration of international students in Irish education are completed but most of the important study has, to a large extent, concerned itself solely with third level. Others have been primarily theoretically driven, with little desire for ethnographic detail. There are one or two exceptions to the rule, but still there exists wide chasms in the research. Consequently, in broaching this subject, educators have either to by-pass certain complex issues or else admit dissimilar levels of ignorance.

Various generalised texts on multiculturalism prevail although these are principally British or American in focus. Therefore, despite the presence of a large number of general texts a considerable volume remains to be undertaken.

The "*Introduction*" to this study is structured in a three-fold way. The initial section will contextualise the issue of increased numbers of international students entering the Republic of Ireland. Currently we are identified as a major immigrant host culture. Socio-political and economic reasons will be proffered here in an attempt to sharpen our understanding of this relatively new status. Following this all relevant concepts and key language pertinent to the study will be tendered in an effort to make the work more accessible. The concluding section of this chapter will elucidate the aims which will be treated in chapter four of this project.

Chapter Two, the "*Literature Review*" undertakes a careful examination of the pertinent literature. Through reference to a form of Venn diagram the chapter is firmly structured, with a style that is topic based as opposed to being chronological. Multiculturalism, as the central theme, informs all sections of the chapter, and is a useful aperture in which to adjudge the relevancy of Irish and international research banks. The primary constituents of students, parents, and teachers are explored individually, before the chapter moves inside-out, from school to society. A brief policy analysis of relevant state legislation is undertaken before the chapter concludes

with a conceptual survey of writings on contemporary racist tendencies in Irish society.

The third chapter, "*Research Design, Instrumentation and Methodology*" traces the technical development of the dissertation from proposal stage to written report. It proceeds by framing the locus of the present research between quantitative and qualitative models. Practicalities are detailed such as site selection, informed consent, terminology and semantics, in addition to the colloquially referred to "*interviewer effect*." Further methodological practise is outlined particularly with reference to the gathering and analysing of data. The processes of questionnaires and interviews is examined with key emphasis on the validity of the research and the applicability of the findings.

Chapter 4, "*Research Findings and Analysis*" examines the limit to which a second level school is actively recognising the diverse nature of its community. The chapter will concentrate on the views and perceptions of the various community members and take a reading of how changes in the school structures are affecting them. Questions relating to participation of international students and their parents are addressed as is the presence of an informal school policy of assimilation. To this end the presence of a cultural insularity among student peer groups is examined with copious referencing to interviews and surveys. The chapter will conclude with a study of resources and professional support among the teaching community.

In the final chapter, "*Conclusions and Recommendations*" the research will be summarised with judgements reached and appropriate interventions suggested. Recommendations will be structured in a two-fold manner, with reference to both local and national strategies, both long and short term, succinctly elucidated.

In conclusion, it is adequate to state that a brief insight into interculturalism in second level education is perhaps all that any person can expect to gain until much more general research is undertaken. Notwithstanding, if the present research should have stimulated others to question further, then the study will have fulfilled its primary objective. That being that those areas which were somewhat neglected in the recent

past would be brought to the surface and allowed form part of the canon of multicultural educational research.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The Issues in Context

The recent aggregation of economic boom correlated with increased immigration has fast-tracked Ireland to the status of a major immigrant host culture. Labour shortages and the need to fill skills shortages has brought Ireland more in line with our post-imperialist European partners. This is a position that we have sat uncomfortably with since the genesis of the “*Celtic Tiger*” in the early 1990s. While the current threat of economic recession may mean a tapering on the numbers of immigrants, Ireland has, in recent years, equalled Austria, Belgium, and the UK, per head of population, in terms of numbers received.¹ Indeed, figures from the European Commission, for 2001, show Ireland having one of the largest increases in immigrant numbers per head of population. Ranked third behind Luxembourg and Spain, Ireland took in 5.2 immigrants per thousand inhabitants.² In addition to these migrants Ireland, since World War Two, has also attracted increasing numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees. These migrations have consequences for our traditionally homogeneous society³ and schools. Notwithstanding the demographic, economic and social changes this entails, it also brings with it a cultural diversity, and modification, which challenges the “*orthodoxies of how Ireland is read and what is read as ‘Ireland’*.”⁴

Definitions of these diverse, complex groups tend to be limited; parcelling whole sections of peoples together into unrealistic, racialised clusterings. Castles and Miller define this group as:

*“Often distinct from the receiving populations in various ways: they may come from different types of societies with different traditions, religions and political institutions. They often speak a different language and follow different cultural practises. They may be visibly different, through physical appearance or style of dress”*⁵

While the definition is convenient, its’ salient weakness lies in the failure to reference those individuals who come to Ireland for economic reasons, such as job relocation. Moreover, such definitions can proffer illusions of a homogeneous ethnic minority. That is, a unified cultural entity. Conversely, it is more pertinent to view the ethnic communities as changing, complex and contradictory networks. A student from Wales will have greater access and participation capabilities than a student from Somalia,

whose first language is not English. However, these groups of students will display some similarity in terms of their experiences within the framework of our school civic culture.

The ethnic community comprise many differing categories, each with individual and unique circumstances for entering Ireland. Each category have differing entitlements in relation to education. These classifications are:

(A) ***Quota or Programme Refugee:*** These comprise individuals who have formally been invited to Ireland by the government in response to a humanitarian request. These people are entitled to apply for naturalisation three years after arrival and they have full rights with regard to health, education, social welfare and housing.

(B) ***Asylum Seeker:*** These can be defined as “*a person who seeks to be recognised as a refugee in accordance with the terms of Section 2 of the Refugee Act, 1996.*”⁶ They do not have formal rights to State-funded language classes, education or training, although they do have free access to Primary and Secondary education. Unlike Programme refugees, Asylum seekers are considered to remain in Ireland on a temporary basis only.

(C) ***Humanitarian Leave to Remain:*** These comprise individuals who fail to meet the requirements under Section 2 of the Refugee Act (1996) but who have been granted formal permission to remain in the State for humanitarian reasons. Unlike Programme Refugees, these individuals do not have the right to educational grants but they are entitled to apply for a Vocational Training Course.⁷

(D) ***Economic Migrant:*** These individuals are classified into two categories by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The first category includes nationals of EU or European Economic Area who are entitled to reside in Ireland based on their EU Treaty rights. The second category of economic migrant comprises individuals who enter Ireland for the purpose of seeking employment. These generally have work permits and comply with Irish admission and residence laws as they apply to non-nationals.⁸

(E) **Residency:** This group comprises those asylum seekers who become parents of an Irish born child or who marry an Irish citizen. Once they have gained the status they have full entitlements to be educated in Ireland.

Notwithstanding, for a variety of reasons Irish schools have seen significant increases in the numbers of international students they have enrolled.⁹ With this swiftness in change there is a need to embrace and celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity and to reflect these principles in the approach we adapt to the type of education services we provide. Presently, there is general antipathy among the education partners with the provision of support for the education of international students. In a survey conducted by the IVEA (spring 2001) 30% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with standards of State support. Of the 88% of VECs who are currently involved in the provision of education to international students, there was “*widespread dissatisfaction*”¹⁰ with issues such as: lack of funding, personnel and resources. Schooling does not singularly meet an educational need but also an important social need. In failing to properly resource international students the State is treating them as “*others*” which is a “*denial of dialogue, interaction and change.*”¹¹ Equally, it fails to acknowledge that the educational needs of international students cannot be dealt with in isolation from their overall social needs. Such a philosophy only serves to work as an obstacle to change and impedes the integration of these students within our schools.

The Department of Education and Science (hereafter cited as the DES) would staunchly refute these claims. In their statement of “*Educational Initiatives to Combat Disadvantage - 2000*” they outline a 1.52 million Euro investment in the *Refugee Language Support Unit*. An overall need assessment is difficult here because of uncertainty of target numbers. Lynch and Lodge tell us “*in the period 1994 to 1998, only 596 people have been given the right to stay in Ireland.*”¹² If all these were in need of language support it would average out at about 2,500 Euros per person. Of course this is hypothetical and is not the complete picture. Additional teaching posts are allocated to primary and secondary schools depending on needs. Primary schools with 15 or more “*non-national*” pupils with significant English language deficits are automatically entitled to an additional temporary teacher for a maximum of two years.

For those primary schools with between four and fourteen non-English speaking non-nationals grant aid is paid to enable them to employ a suitably qualified person to teach them English. In second level additional resources are allocated based on a pupil/teacher ratio of 15:1. The resources are paltry despite figures showing that "around 1.5% of the Irish population is from a minority ethnic background."¹³ At a local level the system is experiencing difficulties. The stress on written work poses many difficulties for those students who have already experienced extensive disruption to their education. Many may feel the emotional strain of being tangled between the inertia for their home country and the need to belong to a new one. Language difficulties, in addition to new middle-class, white Irish curriculum, can mean that many feel trapped between words. A form of cultural racism is evident whereby international students are judged against our Irish standards as exemplified by such things as standardised entrance examinations. Gross injustices can occur when the standards used to judge international students are built on an assumption that other cultures are no different to our own. This is particularly evident in our Leaving certificate where international students are not entitled to "*special consideration*." A former Bosnian student of mine is a case in point. The DES allocated her an additional five hours per week on the basis of her language needs. The school, despite great efforts, could not acquire the services of a suitably qualified TEFL tutor and so an Art teacher was employed. When the student came to sit her Leaving Certificate she was refused "*special consideration*" on the grounds that the DES do not distinguish between Irish students and international students.

Other difficulties confronting international students can be summarised as follows:

- A) There are stresses involved in living in a foreign culture, such as: discrimination, loneliness, dietary restrictions,¹⁴ separation from other family members, as well as misunderstandings.
- B) There are stresses for all adolescents at this vulnerable time as they seek to achieve emotional and personal independence. With the added strain of studying away from their home country this must be a considerably insecure time for international students.
- C) There are academic stresses associated with having to work with complex material under poor conditions.¹⁵

While the DES have made some genuine efforts to overcome these obstacles further changes will have to be made.¹⁶ The IVEA and JMB, among others have called for a recognition that intercultural education should become an essential element in all schools. For this to take place additional resources need to be provided, namely the establishment of a National Co-ordination Committee charged with responsibility for support service provision. Key personnel need to be trained, with greater emphasis on psychological, translation and counselling services.¹⁷

1.2 Conceptual Understandings

The American model of the “*melting pot*” functioned under the premise that all immigrants could be absorbed and would eventually contribute to an emerging national character. In a democratic order of things a society of equals was envisaged where the concept of equality of participation was prioritised. This ideal of cultural pluralism has now largely been discredited because, for some, true American culture was a kind of British off-shoot to which new groups would have to assimilate. Such theories proceed on the basis that we are all equal but at the expense of losing our inherent differences. This creates a society where individuals are assimilated into one homogeneous entity. Assimilation may be defined as:

“The policy of incorporating migrants into society through a one-sided process of adaptation: immigrants are expected to give up their distinctive linguistic, cultural or social characteristics and become indistinguishable from the majority population.”¹⁸

Assimilation aims to fully acculturate minority ethnic groups to the civic culture, values, and practises of the “*majority*” group in the national society. An intolerant attitude may be expressed towards the minority group who seek to preserve their culture alongside the dominant one. For the purposes of this research an ethnic group

“Is a group of people sharing a collective identity based on a sense of common history and ancestry. Ethnic groups possess their own culture, customs, norms, beliefs and traditions. Other relevant characteristics shared in common could be language, geographical origin, literature, or religion.”¹⁹

The Irish education system is conspicuously monocultural and Eurocentric. Section 9 of the *Education Act (1998)* states a function of schools is to

“Promote the development of the Irish language and traditions, Irish literature, the arts and other cultural matters.”²⁰

While the “*Short Title*” to the Act does provide some reference to teaching diversity, it merely does so by pronouncing that “*all*” students’ needs will be provided for. No where in the preamble is the word “*all*” specified, while the absence of tangible measures to provide this education, leaves the whole issue ambiguous. Under Sections 40 and 42 of our Constitution²¹ the rights of the child are outlined. A child born outside Ireland has the same rights as a child born inside the country. While, on paper,²² international students may be catered for there are wide inequities in terms of accessibility and participation in our civic culture. Hence the need to assimilate. Banks explains these complexities:

*“If they are to function successfully in their nation-states, ethnic minority students must develop competency in the national language or languages and acquire the skills needed to participate in the national civic culture. Acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to participate in their nation-states and in the global community means that all students, including majority group students, will often find it necessary to assimilate cultural components that are not part of their first culture.”*²³

Farrington tells us such behaviour is widespread as:

*“Researcher after researcher have found that the Irish education system has a definite policy of assimilation towards non-dominant groups.”*²⁴

Section 9 of the *Education Act (1998)* sustains this assertion as does Boucher who states the more international students publicly assimilate to Irish values, beliefs and norms the more included they feel.²⁵ This may, in part, be elucidated on considering the relative homogeneity of Irish school staff, due mainly to the difficulty of getting international qualifications recognised. The more uniform the school staff the more efficiently students embrace the view that this uniformity represents the way the world is meant to be. It is a form of subtle ideological indoctrination which Starratt succinctly defines:

*“Thus an ideology of class, gender, race, and religion creeps in and defines as inferior anyone who is not ‘Like us.’ In such a school, personal formation takes on a compulsion to embrace the ideology and punish deviance.”*²⁶

In this frame of reference, the majority culture is validated to the expense of the minority culture. Those ethnic groupings who sustain their cultural identity and language are viewed as alien and outside the majority’s way of life and so they are marginalised while the majority group adopts the language of superiority. They are referred to as non-nationals, aliens, foreigners, and “*others*” with all the racial stereotypes that are attributed to these. This is seen in the frequent references in

schools to students from other countries as being “*non-nationals*.” In some way, such a reference suggests a deficiency or lack on their part. Something that ensures they remain as “*others*” in our school systems. This concept of the “*other*” is interesting and it has preoccupied philosophers from earliest times. As Paula Meehan says:

*“In the second zone
You must know their language
Or they’ll finger you as other.”*²⁷

To define this “*other*” is as complex as the interface itself that emerges between the varying cultures. Is it that which is not of ourselves, distinct in kind, different, alien, untouchable and unknowable or is it simply a variation on the theme of our individuality? While the term “*race*” is now largely discredited in favour of ethnicity²⁸ there is factual evidence that “*many ordinary people continue to think and act as if it were a scientific fact.*”²⁹ Where minority groups act individually and outside the majority the dominant culture draws on a pre-existing repertoire of prejudicial beliefs about these minority groups. Labels such as lazy, stupid, or criminal are all employed in an effort to re-establish superiority. The media contributes to this by reporting sensationalist and frequently unbalanced and careless headlines. In February 2000, *The Sunday World* ran with the headline “*Refugee Tried to Bite me to Death.*” In 1997 *The Star* ran with the story “*Refugee Rapists on the Rampage*”³⁰ while in July 1998 *The Wexford People* went further by suggesting that a recent arrival of forty-seven Romanian refugees would deliberately attempt to impregnate local girls in an attempt to acquire residency visas.³¹ All such articles have a profound effect on our efforts to integrate international students within our schools. They create barriers across efforts at social interaction therein containing the “*others*” in their place at the periphery. As Boucher says:

*“The point here is that inherited cultural beliefs about social reality can become real for members of the majority group, and turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy which justifies prejudicial beliefs and discrimination based on those beliefs.”*³²

Ireland, more than many, should display an acute awareness of the degradation associated with being labelled an “*other*.” As McVeigh states:

*“Ireland has also been disempowered - by its colonial history, by its location on the periphery of Europe, by its emigration, by its dependency. These experiences have seen Irish people racialised and disempowered by anti-Irish racism.”*³³

English media, in the nineteenth century, with vested interests in maintaining the Act of Union (1800) kept the rebellious Irish in their place through racialised cartoon depictions. The island of Ireland was depicted as a beautiful, delicate female figure known as "*Hibernia*." In contrast with this Irish people (which were almost exclusively male) were illustrated as sub-human, ape-like figures who were incapable of the self-government they sought. Britain, viewed as a strong, God-like female, protects Ireland from the ape-like Fenians. Such depictions reference back, in a dangerous way, to the social Darwinistic beliefs of the Imperialist age. It was on this basis that the English constructed our sense of the "*other*." Research shows that something quite similar is taking place in the Irish majority's interface with the minority ethnic groups. Notwithstanding, to avoid this label of "*otherness*" the minorities are coerced to assimilate to the majority Irish position. In this respect Hegel was proved correct when he stated, "*each consciousness seeks the death of the other*." In the assimilationist mode of behaviour other consciousness must "*die*", or be annulled, for the majority's sense of order to prevail. As Pickering says:

*"But the Other is always constructed as an object for the benefit of the subject who stands in need of an objectified Other in order to achieve a masterly self-definition."*³⁴

The events of 11 September 2001 point to the failure of such a policy, as do the riots in Bradford, England, of the same year. McVeigh calls for a more flexible approach towards minorities wherein he advocates an "*equal but different*" stance.³⁵ Unlike the former imperialists, who sought to proselytise and assimilate various peoples so they could control them, here the emphasis is on interculturalism, accommodation and inclusion. Adopting an intercultural approach indicates a shift in attitude to one where there are no dominant ideologies but rather myriad ideologies in co-existence. Hence we are all members of an ethnic group and therein have a right to cultural inclusion.³⁶ Here we speak of a "*world community*"³⁷ with an ethos that genuinely values each child, regardless of their values, ethos and cultural perspectives. In this frame of reference the school becomes a synthesised cultural system with an intercultural ethos that reflects the cultures of all its participants. O'Loingsigh defines this mode of intercultural education as:

"An education for both the minorities and the majority community in Irish society. It is about realising that in society there is a culture and set of values that belong to the majority, but other minority groups have a different culture

and set of values; while they are not the same as the values of the majority they are equally important and valid. Intercultural education must aim to ensure the integration of ethnic minority children, while at the same time ensuring that these children do not lose their ethnic identity and cultural values."³⁸

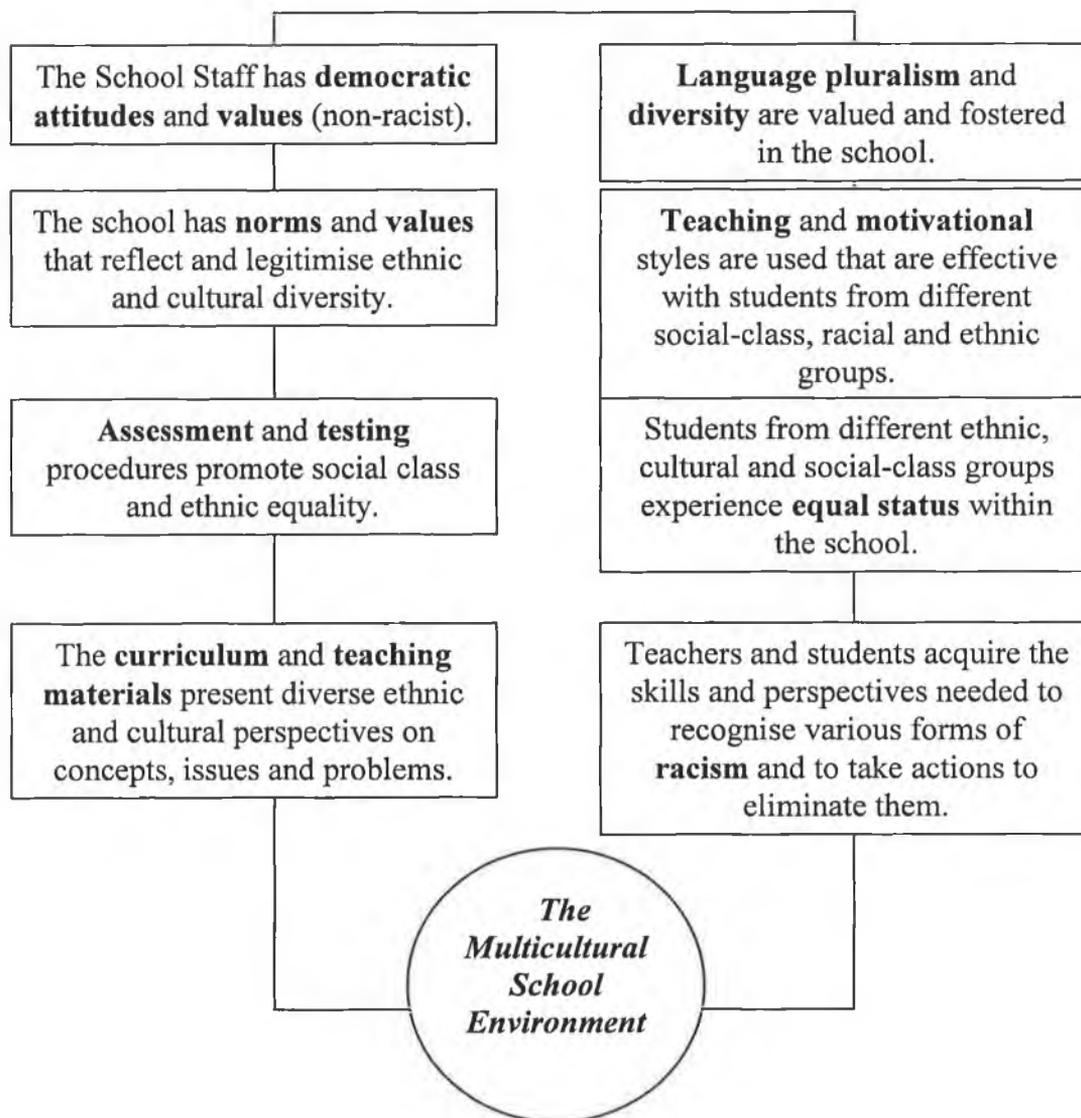
Negative social conditioning makes achieving this a painful process of "*self-examination and self-criticism*."³⁹ Cultural biases and prejudices, that are often expressed spontaneously and without knowing, continuously check efforts at real change. Initiating a favourable milieu in which an intercultural ethos can thrive means overcoming these and other specific barriers. Educators need to realise:

1. That we all have biases that threaten our self-belief that we are moral, democratic, decent people.
2. That our biases require accepting responsibility for any action or inaction that we may take.
3. That overcoming our biased cultural conditioning is more than an intellectual exercise. We must be constantly vigilant of manifestations of bias in ourselves and in those around us.⁴⁰

To effect real change towards an intercultural ethos the whole school community must visualise itself as a distinctive microculture with identifiable norms, roles, staff attitudes, values, assessment and testing procedures. Reforming any one of these variables, while necessary, is not sufficient in itself. Creating and sustaining a school environment where all students from experience equality means effecting changes in each of the variables.

The challenge, for educators, is to guide holistic reform at a whole school level. Figure 1.1 succinctly captures this framework.

*Figure 1.1: School Reform in a Multi-Factor, Holistic Paradigm.*⁴¹



1.3 Aspects of the Study

This study will aim to elucidate the changing and complex nature of the ethnic communities within the context of two distinctive school environments. Some students may have received some primary schooling in Ireland while others may not. Others may speak English as their first language while many may not. Hence, it is acknowledged that certain students will have greater access and participation capabilities than others will. This study aims to highlight these differences but equally to probe the similarities of experience, which all these students display.

Equally, the study will attempt to take a barometer reading of how changes in their school environments are influencing them. Curricular suitability will be examined with reference to cultural bias, as will participation rates in out of school and extra-

function from the viewpoint that ethnic diversity is divisive and unmanageable? Hence are minorities absorbed into the dominant school culture on the basis that a shared value system is the only way forward? Such a finding would point up a gross injustice in our education system.

These aims will inform the structure of this work. Notwithstanding the prescribed brevity of this project it is intended that this dissertation will contribute to a moderately growing volume of Irish studies on this topic. Public debate needs to be urged and it is hoped that this production will inform an unknowing public and provide a basis for strengthened efforts towards achieving a practised intercultural ethos within our schools. While the approach may read critically, at times, the purpose will be constructive and proactive.

1.4 Conclusion

Myriad complex factors have impacted on the Irish psyche today. Experiences of colonialism have cast us *“between two worlds - both perpetrator and survivor of racism”*⁴³ Moreover, our history of emigration, and now immigration, has contrived, for us, a complex multi-ethnic society with a symbiotic relationship of cultural borrowing and exchange. The crux, for education, relates to it accepting that schooling must become a place that promotes interaction, understanding and integration among and between different cultures and ethnic groups. It must begin to affirm what we have become as opposed to lamenting what we have lost. We all have responsibilities here. I leave the final words to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism:

*“Race, culture and ethnicity are functions of every person’s development and not limited to ‘just minorities.’ We need to recognise that culture is central to everything which we do, and that we are all carriers of our own culture. Producing a multicultural society and world, which values diversity, is our greatest challenge.”*⁴⁴

Footnotes

¹ *The Irish Independent Weekend*, 17 November 2001, p.5.

² *The Irish Independent*, 12 January 2002, p.15.

³ With the exception of the Traveller community which is an indigenous ethnic group.

⁴ Graham, C. and Kirkland, R. (eds.) *Ireland and Cultural Theory: The Mechanics of Authenticity* (Macmillan, London, 1999), p.1.

⁵ Castles, S. and Miller, M. *The Age of Migration* (Macmillan, London, 1998), p.12.

⁶ INTO *The Challenge of Diversity: Education Support for Ethnic Minority Children* (INTO, Dublin, 1998), p.2.

⁷ Noznic, D. "Educational Needs and Possibilities for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Ireland" in Egan, O. (ed.) *Minority Ethnic Groups In Higher Education in Ireland*, Proceedings of Conference held in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 27 September 1996, p.41.

⁸ INTO *The Challenge of Diversity: Education Support for Ethnic Minority Children* (INTO, Dublin, 1998), p.3.

⁹ Mac Éinrí tells us of this sizeable increase. He states: "What is not in dispute is the scale of the overall inward migratory flows. In the period 1995-2000, approximately a quarter of a million persons migrated to Ireland The aggregate figure for immigrants in this five-year period is an astonishing 7 per cent approximately of the 1996 population. There are no parallels to these figures in other EU countries. This figure of 7 per cent for in-migration in 1995-2000 would be the equivalent of close to 4 million persons in France." Quoted from Mac Éinrí, P. "Immigration Policy in Ireland" in Farrell, F. and Watt, P. (eds.) *Responding to Racism in Ireland* (Veritas Publications, Dublin, 2001), p.53.

¹⁰ *The Irish Times*, 11 May 2001.

¹¹ Pickering, M. *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation* (Palgrave Publishing Ltd., New York, 2001), p.49.

¹² Lodge and A. Lynch, K., (eds.) *Equality Audit of Education: First Draft* (May, 2001), p.43.

¹³ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), pp.22-3.

¹⁴ One Muslim student who was surveyed spoke about the difficulties surrounding Ramadan where he had to observe strict fasting from sunrise to sunset. He and his parents ate at 4 o'clock each morning. However, during this month this student was involved in a number of incidents. He was suspended twice within a three-week period. Only when his parents explained their cultural observances did our school finally understand where the lack of concentration and the involvement in misdemeanours come from.

¹⁵ Glennon, S. and MacLachlan, M. "Stress, Coping and Acculturation of International Medical Students in Ireland" in MacLachlan, M. and Micheal O'Connell (eds.) *Cultivating Pluralism: Psychological, Social and Cultural Perspectives on a Changing Ireland* (Oak Tree Press, Dublin, 2000), pp.263.

¹⁶ This issue of insufficient response is not solely an educational responsibility. Rather it is a systemic issue which goes far beyond the terms of education. In relation to the State's treatment of international people, there are wide, and transparent, inequities especially in reference to welfare availability, access

to support, and so on. While the State may in principle prefer the more magnanimous term, "international", in practice they treat people as "non-nationals."

¹⁷ *The Irish Times*, 23 November 2001.

¹⁸ Castles, S. and Miller, M. *The Age of Migration* (Macmillan, London, 1998), p.245.

¹⁹ Farrell, F. and Watt, P. *Responding to Racism in Ireland* (Veritas Publications, Dublin, 2001), p.25.

²⁰ Government of Ireland, *Education Act, 1998* (Government Publications Office, Dublin).

²¹ Government of Ireland, *Bunreacht na hEireann, 1937* (Government Publications Office, Dublin).

²² Despite a reference that "all" students will be catered for, these rights do not extend after the person's 18th birthday. So while it may appear that these students are treated equally, the contrary is very much the reality. After the age of 18, international students can not access the benefits of Irish students, particularly in relation to payment of college fees. This is an example of serious exclusion enacted by the government. Indeed, it is also a reason why many universities and colleges encourage international students to attend their courses.

²³ Banks, J.A. "Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals" in Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986).

²⁴ Farrington, J. *Fortress Ireland? Racism, Immigration Policy and the Denial of Equality* (Unpublished Thesis, UCD, 1993), p.62.

²⁵ Boucher, G.W. *The Irish are Friendly, but....* (Irish Council for International Students, Dublin, 1998).

²⁶ Starratt, R.J. *Leaders with Vision: The Quest for School Renewal* (Corwin Press, California, 1995), p.83.

²⁷ Meehan, P. "No Go Area" in *The Man who was Marked by Winter* (The Gallery Press, Meath 1991).

²⁸ Although some writers, like Cicourel, would argue that ethnicity is also an unsatisfactory word because it fails to capture the scope of power in the ethnic interface.

²⁹ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), pp.6-7.

³⁰ *The Star*, 13 June 1997.

³¹ *The Wexford People*, 29 July 1998.

³² Boucher, G.W. *The Irish are Friendly, but....* (Irish Council for International Students, Dublin, 1998), p.13.

³³ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), p.45.

³⁴ Pickering, M. *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation* (Palgrave Publishing Ltd., New York, 2001), p.70.

³⁵ McVeigh, R. *Racism and Travelling People in Ireland*, 17th Report of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights, H.M.S.O., London, 1992.

³⁶ The White paper on Adult Education goes some way towards this, saying there is a need "to frame educational policy and practise in the context of serving a diverse population as opposed to a uniform one." Quoted from Government of Ireland, *Learning for Life: White paper on Adult Education, 2000* (Government Publications Office, Dublin), p.72.

³⁷ Castles, S. and Miller, M. *The Age of Migration* (Macmillan, London, 1998), p.271.

³⁸ O'Loingsigh, D. "Intercultural Education and the School Ethos" in Farrell, F. and Watt, P. (eds.) *Responding to Racism in Ireland* (Veritas Publications, Dublin, 2001), p.119.

³⁹ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), p.48.

⁴⁰ National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism *Information Leaflet* (2000), pp.4-5.

⁴¹ Banks, J.A. "Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals" in Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986), p.23.

⁴² Boucher, G.W. *The Irish are Friendly, but....* (Irish Council for International Students, Dublin, 1998), p.9.

⁴³ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), p.45.

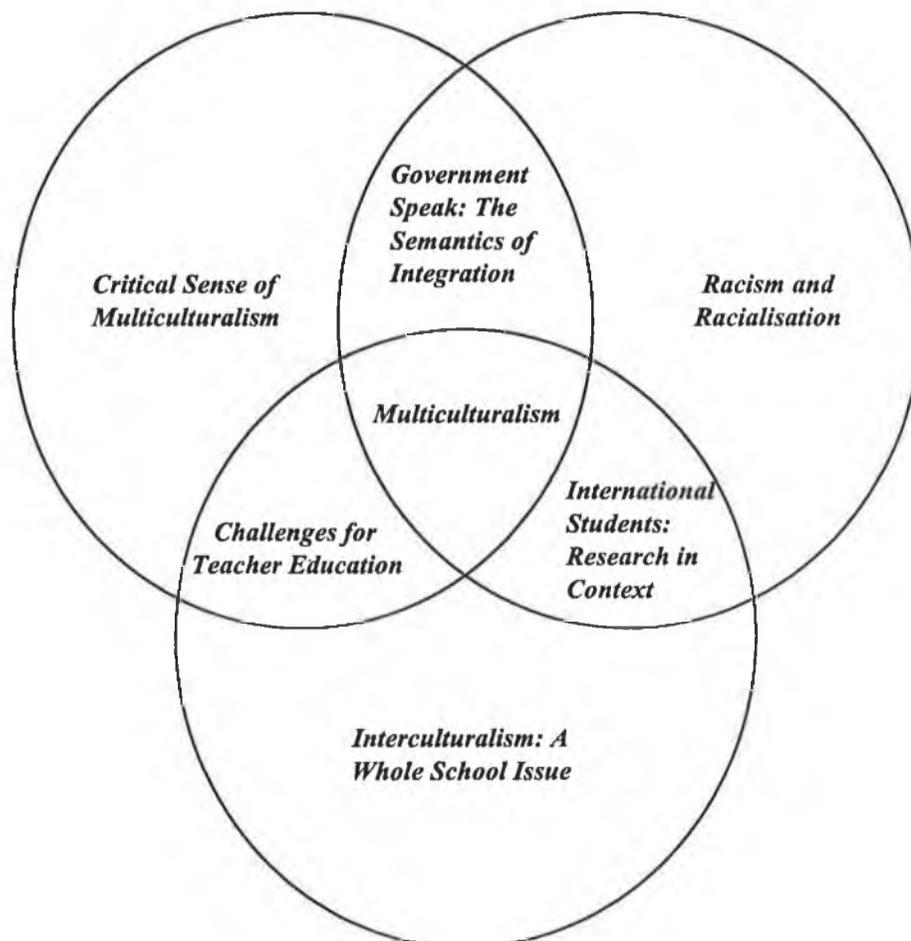
⁴⁴ National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism *Information Leaflet* (2000), p.5.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As a means for investigating interculturalism within an Irish second level school, a careful examination of the pertinent literature is undertaken. Structuring the exercise will occur through referencing to a form of Venn diagram of three intersecting circles (see Figure 2.1). Those themes which require broad referencing are represented by the portions of the three primary variables that are independent of the other two. These include: "*Racism and Racialisation*," "*Interculturalism: A Whole School Issue*," and a "*Critical Sense of Multiculturalism*." Those works which require more careful examination are detailed by the intersection of any two variables, while the central variable (that is, "*Multiculturalism*") is framed as the issue of central significance to the research question. This issue will inform all sections of the chapter.

Figure 2.1: Structure of Literature Review



While this structuring may appear analytically reductive and myopic, on the contrary it embodies an openness, flexibility, and dynamism through which considerable literature can be referenced without attending to the unnecessary minutiae of detail within each study. Hence, the structure acts like a lens through which important background material and theoretical foundations can be examined.

2.2 A Critical Sense of Multiculturalism

There exists a substantial range of texts on multiculturalism, each with varying emphases on individual sub-themes within the concept. Notwithstanding, many share common aspects, particularly in referencing the basic assumptions of a multicultural education and the complex issues surrounding integration. Bennett, offers the more comprehensive analysis of all and he posits four possible ways in which schools can respond to incoming international students: pluralistic co-existence, integrated pluralism, business-as-usual or assimilation.¹ Although, many researchers reference these topics individually, it is Bennett who deals with them holistically. Pluralistic co-existence espouses a learning milieu which segregates ethnic groupings, yet allows them to maintain different styles, values and cultural practises. This is the system of “*Verzeiulling*” or “*Pillarisation*” which is advocated in Dutch society. It testifies to an equal yet individually segregated political framework. In direct variance to this, integrated pluralism² pursues a more affirmative, equitable philosophy. The school is no longer viewed as merely an objective institution engaged in the transmission of an unproblematic cultural heritage. Rather, they function as cultural sites actively engaged in the production of social identities as well as knowledge. Ethnic segregation is positively avoided as students are exposed to a system of learning that promotes diversity and positive inter-group identifications and allegiances. It suggests the importance of understanding cultural backgrounds and experiences and remonstrates against judging others by our own experiences. For purposes of clarity, Farrington rightly argues that this is not synonymous with the concept of tolerance. For “*tolerance is just another word for repression, as it assumes the power of one group to tolerate.*”³ Behaviour here, aims to “*promote the maintenance of groups; to promote the liberation of ethnic groups; to educate ethnic students in a way that will not alienate them from their home cultures.*”⁴

The business-as-usual approach is typified by a “*sink-or-swim*” *ad-hocism*.” A milieu where the school aims to limit institutional erosion through policies that are culturally insular and uncompromising. Conservatism is the order of the day with the institution resisting all efforts to reflect upon and change culturally irrelevant rules, practises or systems of learning. In this instance schools function more as sites of containment as distinct from liberalised, emancipatory centres. Sagar and Schofield argue:

*“These interracial schools tried to maintain the same basic curriculum, the same academic standards, and the same teaching methods that prevailed under segregation ... furthermore, they strove to enforce the same behavioural standards, to espouse the same values, and to apply the same sanctions to student offences. In short, the schools did not perceive themselves as having to adjust their traditional practises in order to handle the new student body.”*⁵

Contemporary Irish research postulates that the Irish education system typifies this response. Glennon and MacLachlan⁶ argue that while myriad policy statements espouse the ideal of multiculturalism, the State, in practise, does not differentiate between various ethnic groups. Providing for international students to attend school does not, as it would be believed, attend to the mechanisms through which minorities are culturally, and curricularly, marginalised. Research (Noznic, 1997; INTO, 1998; O’Loingsigh, 2001) shows that in requiring them to assimilate a curriculum which is ethnocentric denigrates them culturally and subjects them to an unjustified system of racialised, cultural control. This concept of cultural control is a neglected area of international research to date. Davis, to some extent, takes up the study of this in his research on the “*Hidden*”, or as he prefers, the “*Unadmitted*” curriculum. While his comments are specific to a British context, they are nonetheless relevant to the Irish situation. He states:

*“Through a white ethnocentric curriculum, teachers are actively teaching a racial superiority and a racial prejudice to their white pupils. This is mainly done through a process of omitting any significant knowledge about black people (African, Asian, Caribbean) from the normal curriculum. It is through this omission that the historical racial myths, prejudices, half-truths and disadvantages are sustained and the hypocritical form of British racism perpetuated.”*⁷

Shau-Phoen Chan⁸ argues that our system’s inability to view other cultures as equally viable alternatives for organising our reality, creates a schooling society where cultural differences are eliminated. This is an act of assimilation which Bennett describes as a “*one-way process through which members of an ethnic group give up their original*

culture and are absorbed into the core culture, which predominates in the host society."⁹ This notion of assimilation has been wholly considered in Chapter One of this work and there is no real necessity here to retrace old steps. Notwithstanding, for reasons of clarity, all writers on the topic see assimilation as differing from the business-as-usual approach in terms of their outcomes. While the latter proceeds in a state of almost blissful ignorance the former operates on an inclusionary-exclusionary basis. Boucher elucidates it most clearly.

*"Assimilation expects non-nationals and ethnic minorities to fully acculturate to the values, beliefs and practises of the majority national group in the society, expressing an intolerant attitude towards cultural diversity or the preservation of minority cultures alongside the majority culture in the national society."*¹⁰

Researcher after researcher (McVeigh, 1992; Egan, 1997; INTO, 1998; Boucher, 2000; O'Loingsigh, 2001) argue that while international students may be catered for on paper, there still exists wide social and educational inequalities. Frequently, to bridge these inequities international students will often find it necessary to assimilate cultural components that are not part of their first culture.¹¹ Consequentially, the majority culture is affirmed as superior at the expense of the minority ethnic cultures. Those ethnic groupings or individuals, who persist in maintaining facets of their cultural identity are viewed as alien and therefore marginalised. Keogh's article *"Talking about the Other: A View of how Secondary School Pupils Construct Opinions about Refugees and Asylum-Seekers"* (2000) is an excellent treatise of the subject. Through sayings and jokes the dominant student culture employs racial stereotypes in an effort to manage the ethnic minorities and enforce cultural compliance and control. They construct ideologies where:

*"In one way, there is an image of the 'other' as being passive, not self-sufficient. At the same time, the 'other' is perceived as active, something that takes our resources and hinders our independent progression. It takes control of our territory, both geographically and socially. It threatens our identity."*¹²

While the majority of researchers are apt to elucidate these complexities few venture into any further theoretical reasoning of this desire to assimilate and control. Castles and Miller in their work, *The Age of Migration* (1998) postulated that a capitalist process of modernisation created conditions, both voluntary and coerced, for assimilation of ethnic groups into western macrocultures. It stated:

*"Millions of people are seeking work, a new home ... in many underdeveloped countries of origin, emigration is one aspect of the social crisis which accompanies integration into the world market and modernisation."*¹³

Growing international mobility of capital, improved transport, the electronic revolution, the decline of old industrial areas and the rise of new ones, are all factors which have coincided with this movement towards assimilation. In a form of cultural deprivation and denial this is western capitalism at its worst.

However, this research by Castles and Miller did not produce clear-cut, unambiguous results to support this. Inconsistencies prevailed as the authors, in a somewhat confusing fashion, concluded that this process of modernisation did not necessarily decrease levels of ethnic cohesion. Despite this disparity the text was useful in its confirmation that formal education contributed significantly to assimilation: the more educated members of ethnic groups were the more assimilated to the surrounding culture they tended to be.

In variance to this economic model, Pickering viewed the forces of assimilation from a nationalistic perspective. His work, *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation* (2001) proceeded on the basis of the Bertrand Russell quotation that *"Every nation would be richer if every nation abandoned nationalism."* This nationalism, Pickering argues, *"draws parasitically on other forms of identity and belonging"*¹⁴ and therein has a capacity both to unify and divide. Through a process of distinguishing a nationally defined "us", as distinct from an internationally defined "other", nationalism seeks to subsume other more particularistic identities in an illusion that assimilation to the macroculture matters above all else. In a convincing, partially Hegelian manner, Pickering evinces the contradictory processes of group formation. That being, individuals are ontologically interrelated yet interdependent. This two-sided nature of nationalism will be elucidated in more detail in the immediate section below.

2.3 International Students: Irish Research in Context

At present there is a dearth of Irish research into second level international students. Boucher's publication, *The Irish are Friendly, but....* (1998) is the more comprehensive of all studies to date, although its focus is singularly on third level

students. *Minority Ethnic Groups In Higher Education in Ireland*, Proceedings of Conference held in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth (1996) is similar in its focus. Notwithstanding, both texts prove readily adaptable and provide a lucid bearing for the present research. Boucher's work with forty-eight international students, in three Irish universities, surveyed the experiences of international students and analysed the role of Irish acculturation ideologies. Much of the research is concerned with the prominent acculturation ideology which was based on friendliness and insularity. Boucher's analysis of these findings are clinically considered in a two-fold way. Firstly, the majority of those interviewed identified a characteristically friendly trait in Irish people which "*served to inoculate them from some of the impact of discrimination experienced, or to increase their willingness to explain it away.*"¹⁵ Secondly, Boucher argues that a process of assimilation was in evidence which aimed to fully acculturate minority ethnic groups to the civic culture, values, and practises of the "*majority*" group in the national society. The more international students publicly assimilated to Irish values, beliefs and norms the more included they felt. Conversely, intolerant attitudes or forms of discrimination were expressed towards the minority groups who sought to preserve their culture alongside the dominant one.¹⁶

Boucher aptly probes these behaviours and he, like others (McGréil, 1977; Chiwangu, 1997; INTO, 1998; Fanning et al., 2001) rightly locate a reasoning for this cultural insularity in our socio-historic traditions. Notwithstanding, these works display varying degrees of myopia in surmising this as a relatively recent phenomenon. In a more complex fashion, Walter¹⁷ traces the present civic behaviour to the period of cultural nationalism of the later nineteenth century. The separatist nationalism, which flourished at this time in the shape of associations, mobilised and integrated social groupings around a homogeneous "*Irish*" identity. An identity that was autonomous from and distinct to all "*others.*" These sentiments, which Walter investigates, were evident in the words of many prominent figures at the time, none more so than Douglas Hyde. In an address to the Irish National Literary Society in 1892 he stated:

"We must create a strong feeling against West-Britonism, for it - if we give it the least chance, or show it the smallest quarter - will overwhelm us like a flood, and we shall find ourselves toiling painfully behind the English at each step following the same fashions reading the same books following them in our dress, literature, music, games, and ideas We will become,

what, I fear, we are largely at present, a nation of imitators Lost to the power of native initiative and alive only to second-hand assimilation."¹⁸

In a cruel irony, in an effort to resist assimilation Ireland itself became assimilationist. It followed a view that whatever divided the people was less significant than what united them (history, language, land). Equally, what united them was held to be more significant than whatever divided them from other nations. This complex hypothesis requires more profound investigation which the majority of research texts are not eager to do.

Notwithstanding, in relation to international student research, most authors accept the assimilationist aspect of Irish education. Farrington tells us such behaviour is widespread as:

*"Researcher after researcher have found that the Irish education system has a definite policy of assimilation towards non-dominant groups."*¹⁹

The papers presented as part of the *Minority Ethnic Groups in Higher Education in Ireland* conference support this view. In an honest account, which is indicative of the entire conference, Shau-Phoen Chan acknowledges:

*"I am angry that minorities are expected to totally assimilate into mainstream society. We are expected to ignore or suppress our culture. Non-European minorities are expected to suppress their identity, to become 'more Irish than the Irish themselves' and become part of the homogeneous Eurocentric experience."*²⁰

Unlike other texts, which are written primarily from a culturally dominant viewpoint (that is "white"), this conference brought together representatives from many cultural groups, both indigenous and international. It aimed, in an candid and practical way, to question ways in which diversity is represented in Ireland and suggested a means in which supports in the education sector can be built upon. Many of these suggestions were later echoed in the INTO paper *The Challenge of Diversity: Education Support for Ethnic Minority Children* (1998) and Fanning et al's paper: *Beyond the Pale: Asylum-Seeking Children and Social Exclusion in Ireland* (2001). Where the INTO's paper is more guided by the interests of its union members, *Beyond the Pale* is innately child centred. Through extensive field work with various ethnic minorities the research sternly critiqued government social policy and suggested immediate remedies. Quotation from members of ethnic minorities punctuate the piece,

conferring on it an indomitable sense of realism and urgency. This paper is of direct relevance to the present study, although its sole focus on Asylum-seekers and refugees makes it somewhat limiting to the present research.

As a subtext to the above there exists a paucity of research concerning international parents' perceptions of, access to and participation in second level school structures. Cicourel, in his article "*Living in Two Cultures: The Everyday World of Migrant Workers*" confirms this. He states:

*"A neglected area of research is the parental perception of the school setting and their influence over the child's continuance in school. We do not know the extent to which parents (one or both) view the school experience as essential or as a luxury: nor the extent to which parents prefer their children to leave school as soon as possible to begin working."*²¹

Tomlinson too supports Cicourel's criticism of the "*limited research evidence which might help such an understanding along.*"²² The research that does exist reveals high expectations among these international parents with many perceiving school as a place where their child can acquire the skills and qualifications necessary for full participation in economic life. Notwithstanding this, educationalists were found to stereotype certain nationalities through using negative family characteristics. Parents of African origin reported that "*white*" or Asian parents were treated more favourably than they were while others spoke of a mismatch in behaviours of differing cultural groups. Fanning et al. elucidate an appropriate example here in their quotation from an African mother:

*"Parents in Ireland are more worried about their children. They always need to be in control of them. In Somalia children play outside and the mother is not worried. An eight year old can look after a four year old. Sometimes people look at me like I'm crazy because I let my children outside."*²³

This work is distinctively comprehensive in its survey of parents. It remains the only Irish study, to date, to have sought the views of parent's overall satisfaction with their child's education, and probed the nature and quality of school-parent interaction. Few international studies have got this far and there still remains large sections of uncharted research. Cicourel catalogues nine of these neglected areas. Most notably these include; who assumes responsibility for dealing with the school? To what extent is the level of parental contact correlated to language factors and how successful are the school channels of communication? Are parents aware of classroom activities and

do parents discuss with the school the kind of education they wish for their child?²⁴ Similar to most other commentators, Cicourel offers no answers to these significant questions. Nevertheless, Tomlinson does respond to the issue of parental knowledge but even then he only scripts a meagre eleven lines in reference to it. He states:

“Minority parents have always had to rely more on schools and teachers to inform them about school processes.... In the absence of adequate information, many parents, perforce may have to be ‘satisfied.’ There is some evidence that minority parents have been reluctant to admit their lack of knowledge to schools.”²⁵

In terms of who assumes responsibility for dealing with the school, Tomlinson is silent. Not so with Fanning et al. They found that in consequence of the Irish governments’ policy of “*Direct Provision*”, which widely disperses asylum seekers and refugees, greater onus was placed on the individual student. While these children demonstrated considerable resilience in negotiating with their school it resulted in the “*infantalisation*” of their parents. Considering their younger children often acted as translators or mediators for them many parents felt undermined by their lack of influence over their child’s education. Similar to Tomlinson’s findings, international parents viewed schooling as significant in terms of integration, although, “*at the same time respondents also identified education as a site of exclusion.*”²⁶ For insights such as these *Beyond the Pale: Asylum-Seeking Children and Social Exclusion in Ireland* is a seminal text for this study, although much work still remains to be done.

2.4 The Challenges for Teacher Education

Considerable volumes of literature have been scripted on the subject of teacher education. Many offer generalised strategies on best practises for educators and although most stress the need for consultation with those of other ethnic origins, many of the researcher’s fail to do this. Arora and Duncan’s work *Multicultural Education: Towards Good Practise* (1986) is a broad exception with seven of its ten contributors born in countries outside of England. Many of these criticise the “*white*” perspective which dominates writings on multicultural teaching, suggesting them as deficient and skewed. Tuka Mukherjee, is one such contributor who argues:

“We need to wrench ourselves free from the ‘golliwoggish’ definition of multicultural education dominated by the white orthodox view of education, teaching and schooling, and enter the arena of discourse with a black perspective to formulate a ‘revolutionary definition’, not just as a theory, but

as an active approach rooted in our experience of oppression, to challenge every fact of white society, 'white speech, white schooling, white law', and above all the white teaching profession."²⁷

Mukherjee's point is clear. In crude terms "whiteness" in education has deep-seated limitations. It lacks the sensitivity and sense of identification needed to critically question and self-evaluate conventional practises. Kanpol and McLaren (1995) agree by questioning:

*"How are teachers and students going to be able to unfix the history of racialised expression through the construction of economies of affect and forms of political commitment and mobilisation within new spaces and places of democratic struggle?"*²⁸

Addressing these shortcomings is further complicated on considering the relative homogeneity of Irish school staff, due principally to the Irish language requirement. Research, like that of Drudy and Lynch, show the more uniform the school staff the more likely it is that students will embrace the view that this uniformity represents the way the world is meant to be.²⁹ Effectively this power is a form of subtle ideological indoctrination which Starratt succinctly defines:

*"Thus an ideology of class, gender, race, and religion creeps in and defines as inferior anyone who is not 'Like us.' In such a school, personal formation takes on a compulsion to embrace the ideology and punish deviance."*³⁰

Researchers (Bennett, 1986; Cohen and Cohen, 1986; Cashmore and Troyna, 1986) argue that achieving cross-cultural competencies and understandings based on these difficulties provides a challenge to us all. Banks warns that affecting change, such as reforming the curriculum, while necessary, may be futile in the "hands of teachers who have negative attitudes to different ethnic and cultural groups."³¹ To counteract this he argues that teachers need to know themselves. That entails, as Lynch would argue, teachers evaluating and rationalising their curriculum and their chosen methodologies employed in its delivery. Equally, educators must come to know their pupils and learn ways to motivate in a pluralist classroom. Inclusion of particular topics on the curriculum should be justified alongside a critical appraisal of the correlated attitudes, values and beliefs inherent in this choice. Teachers must:

*"Transform everything, and we must look at the very cultural ground we stand on and recognise its constructed nature. Teachers must be trained to realise that the body of knowledge we teach is not normal or natural; it is a cultural construct."*³²

On reading Lynch there is no doubt that his work is widely regarded. However, it is, at times, too generalised and unassuming. In cataloguing the requisite teaching skills for creating a multicultural school environment the author resolves that the teacher must simply “*know his/her job, that is, how to teach.*”³³ While, the *bona fides* of this assertion are without question it fails to address the innate complexities which Mukherjee, Kanpol and McLaren, and Banks evince. Equally it fails to address issues of time. Time needs to be provided in order for teachers to learn. After all as Eisner would say “*it is difficult to be pedagogically graceful when you are lost in unfamiliar territory.*”³⁴ There needs to be an appreciation shown to the complex nature of teacher’s work and this is somewhat lacking in Lynch’s study.

Although these research texts are very significant, they are primarily written from an American or British context. Irish educators might argue their limitations when correlated to an Irish school setting. Some, indeed, may argue that British and American research findings are incompatible to the Irish setting because teachers here are not so privileged in terms of deciding their curriculum. However, when subjected to close scrutiny this argument holds little validity. Principal Irish research (Egan, 1997; Boucher, 1998; Lynch and Lodge, 2001) in this area would argue that within each subject, both at Junior and Leaving Certificate, considerable degrees of choice are permitted, but often not taken up at individual teacher level.³⁵ Even at Transition Year Level, where teachers themselves design the programmes, “*there is no compulsion on schools to introduce any material relating to racial minority groups.*”³⁶ Research would suggest that few teachers have taken up this challenge. So while the IVEA and the JMB, among others, have called for additional resources to be provided for teacher training³⁷ it is clear that expenditure here will be a futile exercise without reference to aspects of teacher motivation and confidence.

In developing this, pertinent questions remain as to teacher expectations for their international students. Cicourel tells us:

*“Many times these difficulties in following the language of instruction in the classroom were seen by teachers as a lack of motivation, retardation, or low intelligence because of the appearance of a good command of American English.”*³⁸

This sub-theme has been severely neglected by researchers, with only one other text from Fanning et al, of all the texts surveyed, referring to it. These two texts, warn teachers of the pitfalls in placing students from minority ethnic groups automatically into lower stream classes. Very often a student may appear to function well in the English language, although they may in fact only function effectively with task orientated language as opposed to language tasks which require intellectual elaboration. *Beyond the Pale: Asylum-Seeking Children and Social Exclusion in Ireland* (2001) argues that this does not, despite appearances, automatically classify students as low ability, it merely signifies a language deficit.

*"One 16 year-old adolescent in secondary school could speak colloquial English but his written English was very poor. He was extremely marginalised at school."*³⁹

The young student in question spoke of their alienation within the classroom saying that the teacher never asked them for homework on the presumption that they could not do it. In counteracting the possibility of a self-fulfilling prophesy taking a foothold here Fanning et al. lack suggestions. Answers are more readily found in Gollnick and Chinn who suggest six characteristics⁴⁰ of teacher behaviour in resisting this negativity. They postulate that teachers must:

- (A) Enjoy teaching.
- (B) View their main responsibility as teaching.
- (C) Know the critical aspects of teaching are task presentation, diagnosis, remediation, and enrichment.
- (D) Expect all students to meet at least the minimum specified objectives.
- (E) Expect students to enjoy learning.
- (F) Expect to deal with individuals, not groups or stereotypes.

Most research shows that successful demonstration of these characteristics have the net result of creating a learning environment:

*"In which pupils would be motivated towards successful learning of skills, information, values, attitudes and beliefs which will enable them to participate effectively within a multicultural democracy."*⁴¹

However, these studies rightly recognise that altering the mindset of some teachers towards this may be an extremely difficult and revolutionary task.

2.5 Interculturalism: A Whole School Issue

Commitment to diversity is unequivocally recognised, in research, as critical to guiding whole school educational reform. To this end Banks proffers a view of educational reform as one that takes place in a "*holistic paradigm, which conceptualises the school as an interrelated whole.*"⁴² Effectively, the school functions as an objective system in which all its variables (staff, students, attitudes, curriculum, values, etc.) are highly interrelated. Individual reform of any one variable, while no doubt important, is philosophically untenable. While many researchers (Cicourel, 1982; Arora and Duncan, 1986; Bennett, 1986; Rex, 1986) find agreement here it is Kanpol and McLaren who successfully elucidate this. These cite a more productive variation to the model of integrated pluralism outlined above. They argue that through an evolving process of "*incorporation*" a symbiotic transformation occurs where aspects of the ethnic minorities' culture are incorporated more completely into the school macroculture, and vice-versa. In this view cultural space:

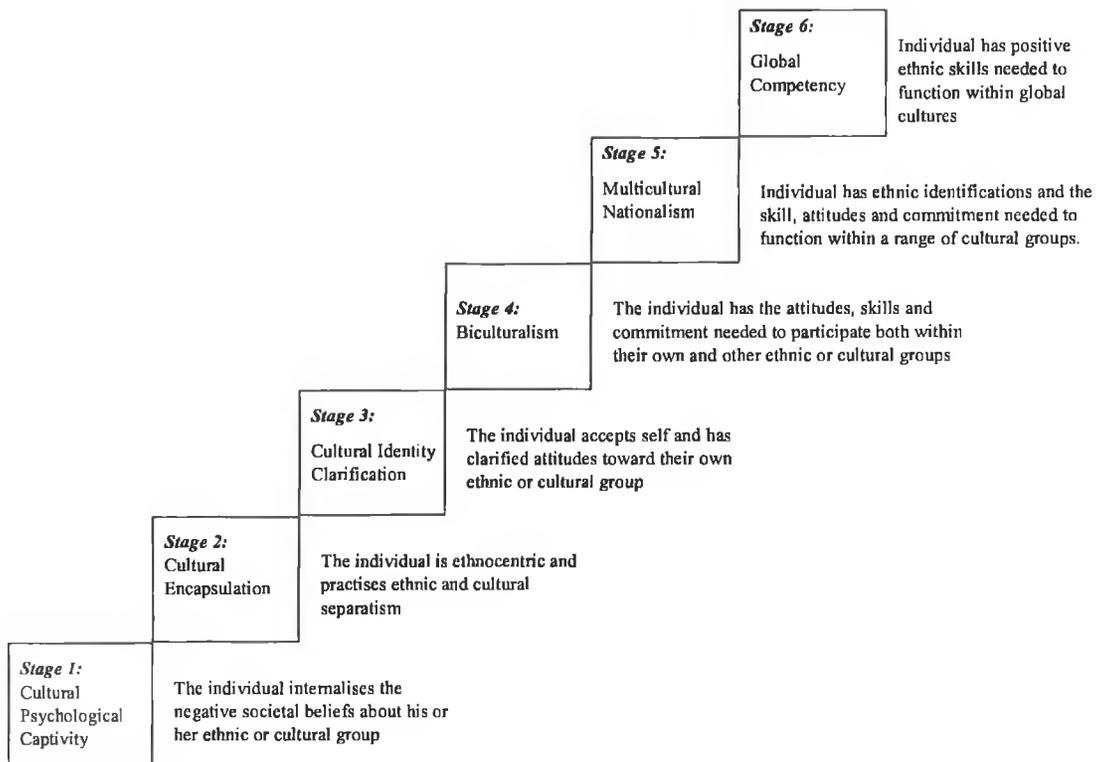
*"Is continually renegotiated. Cultural sites such as schools become an arena for cultural negotiation, translation, and contestation through forms of 'transformative incorporation' in which imposed identities and racist cultural practises and policies are resisted."*⁴³

Studies show that implementation on this level is not easy. Eisner argues that schools are "*robust*" institutions that have a history which frequently militates against change.⁴⁴ Consequently, for change to be institutionalised schools must accept that such change is "*messy.*"⁴⁵

Despite this impediment educational literature postulates numerous models for effecting school reform. Banks' article "*Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals*" offers the more comprehensive analysis of the varying school models. Figure 2.2⁴⁶ outlines one such model on the varying development stages in achieving school cultural reform.

While this model functions on an individual, personal level it can easily be adapted to accommodate the whole school viewpoint. It postulates that through questioning its dominant cultural ethos, the school macroculture achieves a higher level of self-understanding which is a pre-requisite for accepting the varying microcultures.

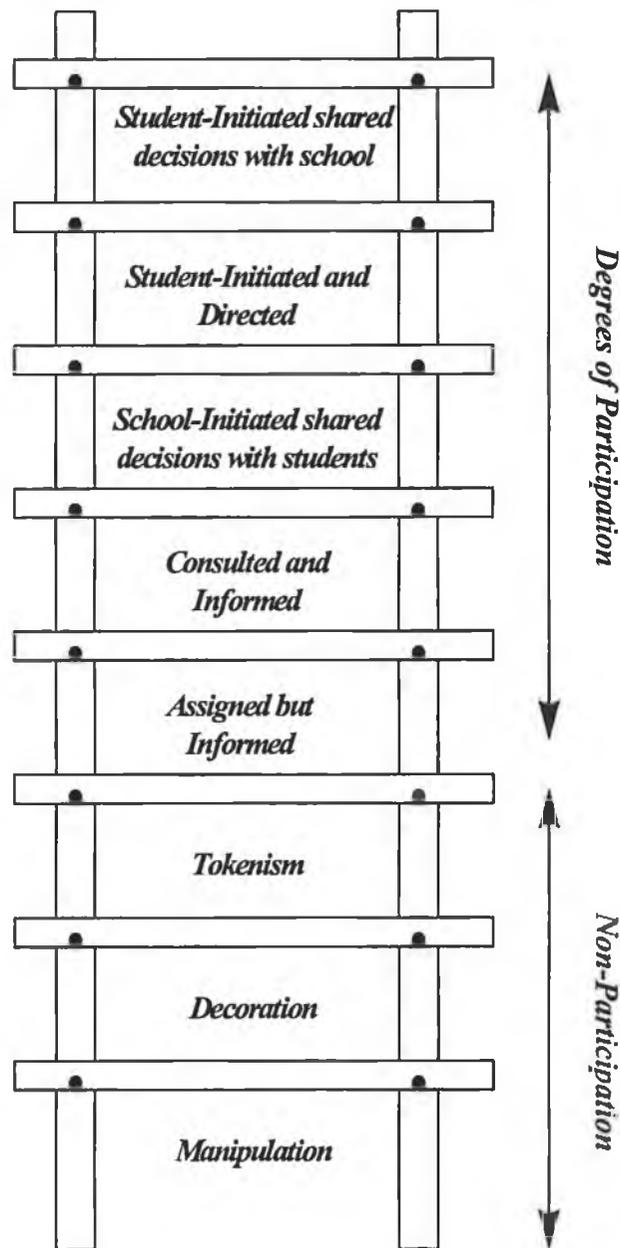
Figure 2.2: Stages of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity



Hart's "Ladder of Participation" (Figure 2.3) is equally relevant, and somewhat less challenging to understand. It postulates a system whereby international students learn skills of participation when they are provided with suitable opportunities to do so. Levels of participation range from "Manipulation" at the lower level to a high level of "Child Initiated Participation." Where this proves most useful is in shifting the focus for reform from school management and staff to one that specifically invites input from the international students themselves. Research tells us that

*"Most principals and class teachers are well-intentioned and welcoming to the refugee children but are not always aware of the children's specific needs and the impact of their presence on school policy in relation to issues such as racism and ethnic minorities."*⁴⁷

Figure 2.3: Hart's Ladder of Participation⁴⁸



Considerable work remains to be undertaken on the kinds of training strategies that work most effectively with different kinds of students and teachers. Indeed, studies on implementing any form of strategy change of this nature points up that devising such a universally applicable system may not be feasible, nor desirable. Research since the seventies articulate one distinguishable fact: it is much easier to change educational policy than to change the ways in which schools function. Where problems arise is when structural change is presumed to correlate to cultural change. All research on creating a multicultural school environment show a deep sensitivity to this

complexity. The same programme can often be successful in one school system and a disaster in another. There are no rules governing this. Fullan, like Sarason, presses this point on a consistent basis. He states that

“It might be more useful to accept the non-rational quality of social systems and move on from there.”⁴⁹

Notwithstanding, numerous texts provide useful starting points for this reform. The *Anti-Racism in the Workplace Pack* (2000) provides many active practises for whole school multicultural reform. Although it is specifically intended for business usage many measures can be adapted to the whole school environment. Similar to concerns outlined above, the authors rightly stress that all initiatives *“need to be tailored to the particular type of organisation.”⁵⁰* While this is an appropriate approach the pack fails to mention the key issue of cross-party consultation. This is an important omission because without individual consultation all changes run the risk of failing to meet needs because they are scripted from culturally specific, white, Irish notions. Lynch and Lodge stress the necessity of open consultation with all parties when designing and implementing policies for whole school reform. They state:

“The further development of curricular materials and anti-racist initiatives needs to be done in consultation with members of racial minority communities. Any decision regarding the nature and development of curriculum can only be achieved successfully when the views of all stakeholders are acknowledged. Programmes that are grounded in the social and cultural realities of the targeted population can expect better results than those that are not.”⁵¹

Notwithstanding this, the IBEC, CIF and ICTU resource pack details significant equality initiatives under the five sub-headings of: Policy and Planning; Recruitment and Selection; Culture and Ethos; Support for Black and Minority Ethnic Employees, and Links with the Community. Again, these initiatives aimed at industry can be adapted for whole school usage. Strategies include:

- (A) A clearly articulated and open commitment to challenge all forms of racism.
- (B) A monitoring and evaluation process to ensure that results are achievable and achieved.
- (C) Eliminating forms of cultural racism such as those culturally-specific words that often on selection tests.

(D) Customised training courses where required, as for example, language training.

Activities relating to “*Exploring Racism*” and “*Celebrating Diversity*” are also detailed. Measures include:

(A) Anti-racism training for staff and students.

(B) Develop an intercultural ethos where individuals congregate, for example posters, newsletters circulated in staff or student areas.

(C) Celebrate festivals to coincide with important events for various ethnic cultures.

(D) Develop and launch an anti-racist policy statement.⁵²

Introducing measures of this nature will mean individuals, not just the planners or the teachers, but also the parents, students, and other partners in education need to be drawn into a cross hierarchical structure that works towards this priority need.

2.6 Government Speak: The Semantics of Integration

Rooted in the vision of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), the *National Children’s Strategy: Our Children - Their Lives* (2000) provides a commitment, by government, to educate all children towards valuing cultural diversity within society. It “*specifically emphasises the promotion of equality and social inclusion amongst groups such as refugees and immigrants.*”⁵³ In realising this, government policy was notably influenced by two key articles stipulated in the UN convention. Article 8 recognised the right of the child to preserve their identity with the appropriate protection from the state, while article 29(c) directed the state’s education policy towards:

*“The development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his or her own.”*⁵⁴

The urgency with which the government treated this issue of multicultural education was outlined in Objective K of the National Children’s Strategy paper. Despite progress being prior to this there was a general acceptance in the paper that “*considerable barriers*”⁵⁵ remain. Instances of racism, verbal and physical, are cited, in addition to the challenges of altering the inimical mindset of the majority Irish

grouping. Notwithstanding, the nine-point strategy, aimed at promoting this culturally inclusive society, is strong on substance but a little weak on specifics. School plans will now incorporate intercultural strategies while initiatives will be developed to promote a more participative society. Strategies towards achieving these objectives, particularly in reference to reforming school cultures, are not readily clarified.

This issue of school culture and ethos is pertinent. The Education Act (1998) had advocated educational provision for all students regardless of their “*diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions.*”⁵⁶ However, under the more recent Equal Status Act (2000) schools are within their legal entitlements to refuse “*to admit a student who is not of that denomination if it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.*”⁵⁷ Such an exception is incompatible with the integration measures outlined in the more recent government publications. O’Loingsigh argues that:

*“Providing an intercultural education that incorporates equal recognition to other religions appears to be incompatible with the ethos of a denominational school. Thus, I believe that the creation of a truly intercultural education system in Ireland demands far reaching structural changes in how schools are both established and managed.”*⁵⁸

Certainly, more recent government policy papers have shown an appropriate concern for the intercultural issue. The *White Paper on Adult Education (2000)* views, for the first time, the intercultural issue as one of its’ three core principles. It states:

*“The need to frame educational policy and practise in the context of serving a diverse population as opposed to a uniform one, and the development of curricula, materials, training and inservice, modes of assessment and delivery methods which accept such diversity as the norm. This refers not only to combating racism and encouraging participation of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in education, but also a recognition that many minority groups Have distinct needs and cultural patterns which must be respected and reflected in an educational context.”*⁵⁹

The intercultural issue had largely been omitted from government policy speak prior to this. Despite best intentions, *Charting Our Education Future: White Paper on Education* (1995) read as little more than a Eurocentric rationale for education policy. Undoubtedly it had uttered sentiments that “*The formulation of a national education policy in a Western democracy, as the twenty-first century approaches, must be firmly set in an international context.*”⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the paper detailed no specific

strategies in addressing the central issue of cultural pluralism. Among its educational principles, the ideals of “*Pluralism*”, and “*Equality*”, are actively espoused although the paper’s definition of these is somewhat skewed. In terms of the former, it states that “*individuals differ in the way they learn. Their learning is influenced by physical, mental, economic and social factors.*”⁶¹ Cultural factors have been omitted despite being initially included in the more appropriately titled Green Paper: *Education For A Changing World* (1992). It states:

*“In a relatively homogeneous society such as Ireland’s, a reasonable consensus might be anticipated on the broad educational aims that would inspire Fostering an understanding and critical appreciation of the values - moral, spiritual, social and cultural.”*⁶²

Both government papers sought to create tolerant, more caring, politically aware members of society. Consequently, equality issues were addressed but only in reference to gender, social and political factors. Children of the Travelling Community are mentioned with policies aimed to “*promote the continuation of their full inclusive participation in education, while retaining respect and value for their distinctive culture.*”⁶³ There are no similar privileges enlisted for those students from international, ethnic microcultures. Indeed, these pieces of legislation did nothing to affirm the identity of international students and to resource them in exploring their cultures or even using their own languages.

Notwithstanding, much has been done since the publication of the White Paper in 1995. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism has been successfully established in addition to the Equality Authority and the Office of Director for Equality Investigations which have sizeable powers under the Equal Status Act (2000). Although government policies have often fallen short of the requisite benchmarks, the legislative enactment’s since 2000 have proved a critical investment towards a new multicultural Ireland. The government’s sincerity is best encapsulated in the words of the National Children’s Strategy which speaks of:

*“The need for education so that we can develop an inclusive society, whose citizens are receptive to and value social and cultural diversity in all its forms... and promoting respect for socially and culturally diverse communities will therefore continue to be a key social policy issue.”*⁶⁴

2.7 Racism and Racialisation

It seems that no study of multiculturalism is complete without reference to racism and racialisation tendencies. Most researchers on the topic (McGréil, 1977; McVeigh, 1996; Egan, 1996) view the two as inevitably correlated with notions of racism having deep-seated pseudo-scientific etymologies. They argue the racist philosophy that was espoused in the early to mid decades of the twentieth century was not a new phenomenon but one which had buried roots in later nineteenth century social Darwinism. Cashmore and Troyna define racism as:

“The doctrine that the world’s population is divisible into categories based on physical differences which can be transmitted genetically. Invariably, this leads to the conception that the categories are ordered hierarchically so that some elements of the world’s population are superior to others.”⁶⁵

McVeigh (1996), like others, discredits this theory of racism and instead opts for the more flexible term: *“racialisation.”* The unequal and exploitative similarities between racism and racialism is not disputed although the author argues that the nature and extent of the interface between the two vary considerably. Racism requires physical interface whereas *“racialised encounters happen whether or not the groups in question ever meet physically.”⁶⁶* In a similar vein to social prejudice, racialism adopts the form of a *“negative, hostile, rigid and emotional attitude towards a person simply because he or she is perceived to belong to a group, and is presumed to possess the negative qualities ascribed to the group as a result of selective, obsolete or faulty evidence.”⁶⁷*

To date, there exists no major ethnographic studies of racism or racialisation in Ireland. Many have dabbled around the margins and some have confined their detailed studies to specific geographic areas. MacGréil (1977), using the highly reliable Bogardus Scale, measured social distance attitudes among adult residents in Dublin in the early 1970s. Others (Boucher, 1998) limited their work to specific social groupings, such as higher education students. No definitive work with second level students exists to date, although many research pieces (Faughnan and Woods, 2000; Casey and O’Connell, 2000; O’Loingsigh, 2001) have commented either directly or indirectly on racist attitudes in second level. Analysing this racialism is difficult,⁶⁸ and a number of writers are cautious when ascribing Ireland with a racist label.

*"When one asks me to outline the position of minority ethnic groups in Ireland, to me it is the same as asking whether racism exists in Ireland or not! ... Most often the answer given is 'no'."*⁶⁹

McVeigh would beg to differ. His publication is the more comprehensive of all theoretical studies in Ireland to date. He is in "no doubt that racist ideas and racist language exist in Ireland."⁷⁰ Recent evidence over the last decade would support this view that Ireland has experienced a growth in racialism. Sean Love, Director of Amnesty International (Ireland) recently stated in a survey of last year, that 80% of ethnic minorities said they have been subjected to some form of racism.⁷¹ The print media reports have actively highlighted this perceived increase in racism. An extract from an Irish Times article: "She comes from a place where she's spat at and discriminated against - Ireland", states:

*"This week, while the Irish government's delegation returns from the UN World Conference Against Racism, all over Ireland men, women and children are being insulted, spat at, discriminated against and some physically attacked. From time to time Mary (not her real name) has to pass the flats near her. People sometimes spit on her and call her a 'fucking nigger' and shout at her to 'go home to where you came from.' This is not sensational exaggeration. This is a fact."*⁷²

Other reports support this.⁷³ In January of 2002 Cork Fianna Fáil TD, Noel O'Flynn stated publicly in the Dáil that "Illegal immigrants are spongers, wasters and conmen who have chosen a life of crime and drugs."⁷⁴ Aine Ní Chonail (Immigration Platform Control) supported this view stating that parts of major Irish cities are "now suffering a 'white flight' and 'ghettoisation' by non-nationals."⁷⁵ Callers to late night radio talk shows, such as Adrian Kennedy, reveal considerable support for these views. All these examples are pertinent to a literature review because as Keogh says "pupils base their knowledge on what they see on the television and from newspapers, but especially on radio."⁷⁶

Racialised tendencies, such as these, are not a new phenomenon in Ireland. MacGréil in his study *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland* (1977) found that "a relatively severe degree of racial prejudice exists in Dublin."⁷⁷ Upwards of 77% of the sample refused welcome of ethnic minorities in kinship relationships.

Indeed, in his later revisiting of the topic the author detected a cultural lag in attitudes where respondents had become intolerant after being initially tolerant.

Notwithstanding, MacGréil reported a slight decrease in the intensity and specificity of Irish racialism although significant levels still remained.⁷⁸ In modifying this, most research would argue that significant change is only brought about through the dissemination of accurate information and the taking of collective responsibility for all such racist behaviour. Until that happens wholesale disruption will continue to impede efforts at embracing an intercultural ethos within our schools. Once again, the research points to reform taking place within a holistic paradigm where all interrelated variables are tackled all at once, as opposed to individual piecemeal reform. Fanning et. al. elucidate this point effectively.

“The goals of interculturalism can only be achieved through measures which acknowledge and address racism and inequalities within society. such measures begin, by definition, with rights to equal treatment but also include measures designed to contest the racism and inequalities experienced by minorities.”⁷⁹

2.8 Conclusion

The above chapter has elucidated the varying literature used in conducting the research. Through reference to a form of Venn diagram the exercise was tenaciously structured with a style that was purposely topic based as distinct from being chronologically, book-based. The central theme of “*Multiculturalism*” provided a useful aperture in which to tackle key theoretical concerns regarding multicultural schooling. Irish and international research banks were consulted in reference to conceptualising reform within second level school structures. The primary constituents of students, parents and teachers, were explored individually before the knowledge gained was applied in the section: “*Interculturalism: A Whole School Issue.*” Succeeding this the focus of the study moved inside-out; from school to society, wherein a brief policy analysis of relevant state legislation was conducted. The chapter concluded with a conceptual survey of racism and racialisation tendencies in Irish society.

Footnotes

- ¹ Bennett, C.I. *Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practise* (Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1986), p.62.
- ² Various authors on the subject use differing terminology in explaining this concept. Gollnick and Chinn refer to it as a "cultural relativism" while banks and Lynch call it "cultural pluralism." All are coterminous with each other.
- ³ Farrington, J. *Fortress Ireland? Racism, Immigration Policy and the Denial of Equality* (Unpublished Thesis, UCD, 1993), p.18.
- ⁴ Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986), p.11.
- ⁵ Sagar, H. A. and Schofield, J.W. "Integrating the Desegregated School: Problems and Possibilities" in Bartz, D.E. and Maehr, M.L. (eds.) *Advances in Motivation and Achievement: The Effects of School Desegregation on Motivation and Achievement* (JAI Press, Conneticut, 1984), p.208.
- ⁶ Glennon, S. and MacLachlan, M. "Stress, Coping and Acculturation of International Medical Students in Ireland" in MacLachlan, M. and O'Connell, M. (eds.) *Cultivating Pluralism: Psychological, Social and Cultural Perspectives on a Changing Ireland* (Oak Tree Press, Dublin, 2000), pp.259-77.
- ⁷ Davis, G. "Strategies for Change" in Arora, R.K. and Duncan, C.G. (eds.) *Multicultural Education: Towards Good Practise* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston and Henley, 1986), p.16.
- ⁸ Shau-Phoen Chan, V. "Student Perspectives" in Egan, O. (ed.) *Minority Ethnic Groups In Higher Education in Ireland*, Proceedings of Conference held in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 27 September 1996, pp.109-11.
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- ¹³ Castles, S. and Miller, M. *The Age of Migration* (Macmillan, London, 1998), p.3.
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- ¹⁵ Boucher, G.W. *The Irish are Friendly, but....* (Irish Council for International Students, Dublin, 1998), p.68.

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- ¹⁷ Walter, B. "Gendered Irishness in Britain; Changing Constructions" in Graham, C. and Kirkland, R. (eds.) *Ireland and Cultural Theory: The Mechanics of Authenticity* (Macmillan Press, New York, 1999), pp.77-98.
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- ¹⁹ Farrington, J. *Fortress Ireland? Racism, Immigration Policy and the Denial of Equality* (Unpublished Thesis, UCD, 1993), p.62.
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- ²² Tomlinson, S. "Minority Parents' Views on Education" in Cohen, L. and Cohen, A. (eds.) *Multicultural Education: A Sourcebook for Teachers* (Harper and Row Publishers, London, 1986), p.274.
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- ²⁶ Fanning, B., Veale, A. and O'Connor, D. *Beyond the Pale: Asylum-Seeking Children and Social Exclusion in Ireland* (Irish Refugee Council, Dublin, 2001), p.57.
- ²⁷ Mukherjee, T. "Black Response to White Definitions" in Arora, R.K. and Duncan, C.G. (eds.) *Multicultural Education: Towards Good Practise* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston and Henley, 1986), p.25.
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- ²⁹ These argue "that the teacher's most potent resource is her or his possession of, access to and control over knowledge. The teacher has knowledge and defines what should and should not be learnt." Quoted in Drudy, S. and Lynch, K. *Schools and Society in Ireland* (Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1993), p.102.
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³⁵ Taking English as an example, at Junior certificate level teachers can choose their own texts. The Syllabus states "Teachers are free to choose from the Guide (or from elsewhere) the material they consider most suitable for their student's programme." An Roinn Oideachais, *The Junior Certificate English Syllabus* (Government Publications Office, Dublin, 1994), p.5.

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⁴⁶ Banks, J.A. "Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals" in Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986), p.18.

⁴⁷ INTO *The Challenge of Diversity: Education Support for Ethnic Minority Children* (INTO, Dublin, 1998), pp.15-6.

⁴⁸ Adapted from Government of Ireland, *The National Children's Strategy: Our Children - Their Lives*, (Government Publications Office, Dublin, 2000), p.31.

⁴⁹ Fullan, M. G. *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (Cassell Educational Ltd., London, 1991), p.97.

⁵⁰ IBEC, ICTU & CIF, *Anti-Racism in the Workplace Resource Pack* (2000).

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- ⁵¹ Lynch, K. and Lodge, A. (eds.) *Equality Audit of Education: First Draft* (May, 2001), p.57.
- ⁵² Adapted from IBEC, ICTU & CIF, *Anti-Racism in the Workplace Resource Pack* (2000).
- ⁵³ Fanning, B., Veale, A. and O'Connor, D. *Beyond the Pale: Asylum-Seeking Children and Social Exclusion in Ireland* (Irish Refugee Council, Dublin, 2001), p17.
- ⁵⁴ *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, 1990), p.11.
- ⁵⁵ Government of Ireland, *The National Children's Strategy: Our Children - Their Lives, 2000* (Government Publications Office, Dublin), p.70.
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- ⁵⁸ O'Loingsigh, D. "Intercultural Education and the School Ethos" in Farrell, F. and Watt, P. (eds.) *Responding to Racism in Ireland* (Veritas Publications, Dublin, 2001), p.122.
- ⁵⁹ Government of Ireland, *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education, 2000* (Government Publications Office, Dublin), p.13.
- ⁶⁰ Government of Ireland, *Charting Our Education Future: White Paper on Education* (Government Publications Office, Dublin, 1995), p.203.
- ⁶¹ *ibid*, p.6.
- ⁶² Government of Ireland, *Education For A Changing World: Green Paper* (Government Publications Office, Dublin, 1992), p.33.
- ⁶³ Government of Ireland, *Charting Our Education Future: White Paper on Education* (Government Publications Office, Dublin, 1995), p.57.
- ⁶⁴ Government of Ireland, *The National Children's Strategy: Our Children - Their Lives, 2000* (Government Publications Office, Dublin), p.70.
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- ⁶⁶ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), p.11.
- ⁶⁷ MacGréil, M. *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland* (College of Industrial Relations, Dublin, 1977), p.9.
- ⁶⁸ Research from McVeigh (1996) argues that most migrants (which would include international students) are in Ireland on a temporary basis. Hence few Irish people see them as a permanent threat. Equally the myth that Irish people are innately friendly overshadows any impression of fear in the presence of ethnic microcultures.
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- ⁷⁰ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), p.24.

⁷¹ Referenced from an interview with Six-One News, RTE, 25 January 2002.

⁷² *The Irish Times*, 8 September 2001, p.5.

⁷³ See Faughnan, P. and Woods, M. *Lives on Hold: Seeking Asylum in Ireland* (Social Science Research Centre, UCD, 2000), p.67, for numerous accounts of racist experiences in Ireland.

⁷⁴ *The Mirror*, 1 February 2002, p.10.

⁷⁵ *The Sunday Independent*, 27 January 2002, p.7.

⁷⁶ Keogh, A. "Talking about the Other: A View of how Secondary School Pupils Construct Opinions about Refugees and Asylum-Seekers" in (2000) in MacLachlan, M. and O'Connell, M. (eds.) *Cultivating Pluralism: Psychological, Social and Cultural Perspectives on a Changing Ireland* (Oak Tree Press, Dublin, 2000), p.128.

⁷⁷ MacGréil, M. *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland* (College of Industrial Relations, Dublin, 1977), p.310.

⁷⁸ MacGréil, *Prejudice in Ireland Revisited* (Survey and Research Unit, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1996), p.132.

⁷⁹ Fanning, B., Veale, A. and O'Connor, D. *Beyond the Pale: Asylum-Seeking Children and Social Exclusion in Ireland* (Irish Refugee Council, Dublin, 2001), p.71.

Chapter Three: Research Design, Instrumentation and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research process began with an initial period of surveying data and publications in the area of study, which assisted in the generation of potential research hypotheses and especially in the formulation of the research proposal. These research questions were deleted, edited and refocused as the work progressed.

The study shared common elements with the concepts of both qualitative and quantitative research, with particular emphasis on the latter. This researcher notes:

“There is nothing mysterious about combining quantitative and qualitative measures. This is, in fact, a form of triangulation that enhances the validity and reliability of one’s study.”¹

The majority of the data is descriptive with some emphasis on the numerical as gained through the closed structure adopted in much of the questionnaires. Initial documentary readings informed the surveys while the follow up focus groups encouraged respondents *“to express their views fully in a way that accounts for any sophistication, intricacy or even inconsistencies in their views.”²* This integrated use of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups in addition to limited ethnographic observation, formed a triangulation process, which enriched the validity and reliability of the study. It closely adhered to present developments in educational research, which emphasise inductive analysis, description and the study of people’s perceptions as opposed to former approaches dominated by measurement and empirical fact.³

The constraints of time available for completion of this dissertation precludes the work from deserving the status of definitive qualitative research. While many emerging themes were pursued, and narrowed down to the more specific, at no point could it be said the research achieved the *“saturation of data”⁴* which a more longitudinal study would afford.

3.2 Site Selection

Due to the sensitive character of the research and the emergent difficulties in accessing the minority ethnic school population, the study was restricted to one school

rather than seeking to compare data from a plurality of schools. Additional factors influencing this decision were:

1. The researcher's prior knowledge of the school context and culture was advantageous, particularly in the validation of the data. Confining study to a single site improved ease of access, especially to the international student body, 47% of whom displayed varying degrees of difficulty operating through the medium of English. Administering the questionnaires to this population sample alone expended over nine hours in time. This excludes the time spent with the remaining twenty international students whose first language was English.
2. The majority of studies to date, for similar reasons to other researchers, have focused on one site, as for example, Boucher. Perhaps with greater time allowances opportunities might be presented for a further, more in-depth study.
3. The single site will be used as a microcosm of a wider, social system. While the study runs the danger of assuming all the significance of a generalised study, many of the procedures adopted are universal in their application. A notion of it being a case study does not preclude the researcher's ability to reach conclusions and recommendations for our educational system. Moreover, the curriculum is broadly identical in second level schools. Confining the study to a singular site does not detract from the aims of the study as elucidated in Chapter One. Curricular suitability will be examined with reference to cultural bias, as will participation rates in out of school and extra-curricular activities. Equally, the study will take a barometer reading of how changes in their school environments are influencing the school population at large. It will explore the presence of an assimilation policy at institutional and civic/social level analysing whether it is one of constructive integration or one characterised by "*sink-or swim, ad-hocism?*" Despite its narrow focus, the study will accurately test the presence of a cultural insularity in an Irish school setting. Such insularity would exclude those who do not assimilate and assume the cultural trappings of the Irish grouping. In this regard, the single school can justifiably epitomise the wider educational system, for in addressing a school issue it undeniably focuses attention on the state's response. Hence, the study gains a universal appeal.

4. The site chosen for the research is currently experiencing an unprecedented number of applications from international students. In the two-year period since 1999 the numbers of international students has increased ten-fold from three to thirty-eight. Therefore the topic was particularly salient for the school at this time. Consequently the population were more likely to co-operate with the researcher's attempts to gather data.
5. Postal questionnaires to other sites are a known troublesome methodology. Generally they produce a poor response rates while surveys returned can tend to be incomplete and offer little opportunity for the researcher to check the validity of answers given. Limiting the focus of study to a single site precluded opportunities for these deficits to reveal themselves.

The school principal granted access to the research site on condition that students, especially international students, would not feel like "*objects of curiosity*." Considering the student participants are potentially vulnerable, and therefore protected by responsible others, recognised ethical standards was of primary concern to the researcher. These criterion are clarified below.

3.3 *Informed Consent*

Obtaining informed consent from responsible others, that is parents or guardians, was of paramount importance in conducting ethical research with all students. Through letters of contact,⁵ permission was sought from these authorities, who are legally responsible for the welfare and care of the students. Rudestam and Newton furnished some diligent advice here:

*"One way to think through the potential impact of your research procedures is to reverse roles and imagine what it would be like to be a participant in your study. What concerns would you have regarding confidentiality? What information about the study would be important for you to know? Would you feel free to decline to participate if others in your selected group did participate?"*⁶

Participants were informed of a range of issues, which served to persuade them that the researcher was trustworthy and capable. To this end "*research which can call on suitable referees or which will be conducted under the auspices of a suitable organisation (e.g. a university) is at an advantage for these.*"⁷ The researcher, their

institutional affiliation and two referees, the school principal and the thesis supervisor, were identified along with contact addresses and phone numbers. The school principal provided a written reference as an endorsement to the research.

The study was briefly explained in a language that was intentionally easily understood. For purposes of brevity and to maintain some degree of integrity for the study full details were withheld. Participants were informed as to what they were expected to do and were given an approximate time scale for their involvement in completing the questionnaire.⁸ They were informed why they were selected to participate and were reminded that, while their involvement would be especially welcome it is ultimately voluntary. Moreover, they had a right to withdraw at any stage, without bias, and were given guarantees of confidentiality surrounding their involvement and/or their subsequent withdrawal. All information given during the course of the work would not be divulged to others without permission and no where on the survey would the students disclose their identity. Participants were invited to participate in the focus group discussion, which would follow the questionnaires. At this point the participants would yield their anonymity but their right to confidentiality would be preserved. Both questionnaire and focus group discussion would take place during school time. Parents and guardians were offered the possibility of being sent a summary of the survey results and were encouraged to contact the researcher should they have any questions concerning the survey.

3.4 Terminology

For the purposes of this study foreign students will be referred to as "*international*" as distinct from the commonly cited "*non-national*" which tends to be reductivist and assimilationist in viewpoint. Research (Boucher, 1998; Cicourel, 1982; Katz, 1950; Mc Veigh, 1996, O'Loingsigh, 2001) demonstrates that those ethnic groupings that sustain their cultural identity and language are viewed as alien and outside the majority's way of life. Henceforward the majority group, who adopts a language of superiority, marginalises them. They are colloquially referred to as "*non-nationals*," a reference, which in some way suggests a deficiency on their part. Something that ensures they remain as "*others*" in our school systems. Consequently, a more positive and inclusive phraseology will be employed in reference to these students.

3.5 *The Interviewer Effect*

A sweeping review of methodological literature conclusively demonstrates that researchers can influence the data that is collected. In the present field of research respondents can show sub-conscious sensitivities to the characteristics of the interviewer such as gender, age, and ethnic origins. As Denscombe says:

*“On sensitive issues or on matters regarded as rather personal, the interviewer’s identity assumes particular importance. the sex, age and ethnicity of the interviewer in relation to the sex, age and ethnicity of the interviewee is very likely to influence the nature of the data that emerges - their fullness and their honesty.”*⁹

Realistically, it is not possible for the researcher to alter their self, from a male, white, middle class adult teacher, of ethnic Irish origin. While the researcher was acutely cognisant that such biasing factors can not be easily overcome, precautionary steps were taken to minimise the possibility that respondents would give socially desirable answers. Such efforts were particularly onerous considering the complexity and sensitivity of the topic at hand. Almost half (47%) of the international student body displayed varying degrees of difficulty operating through the medium of English. This entailed administering the questionnaires to this population sample on an individual basis creating a further danger of influencing data.

The manner and conduct in which the student interviews took place and questionnaires administered, was of consummate importance to the researcher. Efforts were made to be polite, punctual, friendly, and open.¹⁰ Students were reminded of their right to anonymity and encouraged to provide honest answers. Moreover, they were informed that the research was not intended for the school management or staff.

The researcher dressed casually and *“kept firmly hidden beneath a cloak of cordiality and receptiveness.”*¹¹ Specific attention was paid to the design and piloting of the student questionnaires to ensure that questions were clear and unambiguous. This initial diligence minimised the number of occasions when questions would have to be fully explained. On these occasions, neutral examples were drawn upon. For example, question five on the Irish-born student questionnaire is a Likert style question. When explaining the manner in which to answer this, students were given a chart music example. That is:

“Steps are a better band than S Club 7. Do you strongly agree, strongly disagree, agree or disagree. Or do you not know?”

This neutral example reflects accurately the approach the researcher took in minimising the interviewer effect.

3.6 Questionnaires

(A) Rationale

Questionnaires were considered an appropriate research instrument in the initial stages of this dissertation. Their economical nature produced easily coded standardised answers with little unnecessary expenditure of time or money. Each respondent was posed exactly the same set of questions with no scope for the digression that can accompany the interview process. Data can readily be compared across the survey population, while respondents can be guaranteed anonymity. Woods further states:

“It gives time for thought, reflection, memory, and composition, and this suggests that for certain purposes and in certain instances the questionnaire is intrinsically a better instrument than interviews.”¹²

Despite this general usefulness questionnaires these, in a similar manner to all self-reporting instruments, pose their own inherent weaknesses. Notwithstanding, the possibility of error in the reporting of facts, questionnaires are subjectively based and therefore reliant on the individual respondents. Some may not take the time to honestly complete the questionnaire while others may succumb to random answering. Equally, commentators agree that, for a variety of reasons, accurately surveying attitudes, through questionnaires, is especially complex in comparison to others modes. Psychologists stress the multidimensional and fluid nature of attitudes, which makes them difficult to capture. Attitudes, Silverman tells us:

“Do not simply attach to the inside of people’s heads and researching them depends on making a whole series of analytical assumptions.”¹³

Judd et al. further elaborate these difficulties, stressing that measuring attitudes accurately is dependent on aspects of appropriate wording and sequencing, in addition to interviewer effects.¹⁴ Mindful of these complexities four sets of questionnaires were distributed to a total of eighty-four individuals. Responses from these guided the researcher in preparing for the interview process.

(B) Population Selection.

As this study was phenomenological in basis, participants were located who have experienced or are experiencing the issue being explored. Bailey states:

“Phenomenological research uses sampling which is idiographic, focusing on the individual or case study in order to understand the full complexity of the individual’s experience. From this perspective, there is no attempt to claim an ability to generalise to a specific population, but instead, the findings are relevant from the perspective of the user of the findings.”¹⁵

The sampling process was complex, due principally to the variety of groups, which were targeted. All thirty-eight international students in the school were surveyed as one specific category of clearly defined, yet equally diverse people. These represent twenty different nationalities from Australia, Bosnia, Canada, China, England, Ethiopia, India, Italy, Japan, Malawi, New Zealand, Nigeria, North America, Poland, Romania, Scotland, Somalia, South Africa, Uganda, and Wales. For reasons of ensuring the questionnaire remained user-friendly, nationalities were classified according to World regions. This minimised the possibility of confusion and avoided superfluous detail, which can dissuade individuals from completing the questionnaire.

As Denscombe says:

“When designing a questionnaire, then, the researcher has to walk a tightrope between ensuring coverage of all vital issues and ensuring the questionnaire is brief enough to encourage people to bother answering it.”¹⁶

Figure 3.1 below catalogues this sample group.

Twenty-four Irish-born students were selected on systematic, random grounds; four from each school year, with an even gender balance of two males, two females. The sample was obtained from computer generated listings of all students, divided along year group and gender lines. Each student was assigned a number based on their position on the list; number one being those students whose surname began with an “A.” Every 34th person¹⁷ was selected such that an initial group of twenty-four students were obtained. A sample of this size was deemed appropriate due to considerations regarding time constraints, and minimising the overall disruption to school activity. The total sample was not too small as to preclude the researcher from drawing meaningful conclusions. Nonetheless, while the students were selected on a

random, systematic fashion, the overall decision on sample size was not an arbitrary one.

Figure 3.1: Analysis of International Student Group

<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age Range</u>
1. <i>EU National</i>	9 Males	4 @ 11-13 yrs. 4 @ 14-15 yrs. 1 @ 16-17 yrs.
	6 Females	2 @ 11-13 yrs. 3 @ 14-15 yrs. 1 @ 16-17 yrs.
2. <i>Other European</i>	0 Males	
	4 Females	1 @ 14-15 yrs. 1 @ 16-17 yrs. 2 @ 18-19 yrs.
3. <i>African</i>	6 Males	2 @ 11-13 yrs. 1 @ 14-15 yrs. 2 @ 16-17 yrs. 1 @ 18-19 yrs.
	3 Female	3 @ 14-15 yrs.
4. <i>Asian</i>	2 Male	1 @ 11- 13 yrs. 1 @ 16-17 yrs.
	2 Female	1 @ 14-15 yrs. 1 @ 16-17 yrs.
5. <i>North American</i>	1 Male	1 @ 11-13 yrs.
	2 Female	1 @ 14-15 yrs. 1 @ 16-17 yrs.
6. <i>Oceanic</i> ¹⁸	2 Male	2 @ 11-13 yrs.
	1 Female	1 @ 18-19 yrs.

Fourteen teachers were surveyed based on diverse and representational criteria, which were arbitrarily applied. A small number of teachers indicated their preference not to be surveyed, due principally to time commitments elsewhere and a perceived lack of knowledge on the subject under research. All school subjects were catalogued into

seven dominant subject areas. These comprised divisions according to the Humanities, Sciences, Languages, Practical, Business, Religious and the Miscellaneous subjects, such as those modules taught as part of the LCVP, LCA and Transition year programmes. Sub-sets of these groups were then produced based on criteria relating to gender and number of years teaching. In this frame of reference, both inclusionary and exclusionary criteria selected the teacher sample. This model of “*criterion sampling*” was adapted from Katz (1950).

The final sample group, the parents of international students, were intended to be surveyed as one specific category of clearly defined, yet equally diverse people. This grouping proved the more difficult of all. Of the thirty-eight students surveyed, only twelve of their parents responded. While no parent refused consent for their child to participate, many declined to participate themselves. Noting the research ethic principle guiding coercion, the researcher was anxious not to endanger the positive enthusiasm these parents had for their children to participate. Each parent was contacted twice, the second time a copy of the survey (which was purposefully kept brief) was enclosed for the parents’ perusal. Only five more responses were completed and returned, making a total of twelve responses. Myriad factors can be postulated for the poor response rate such as feelings of alienation, language difficulties, lack of time, lack of trust and/or lack of interest. These are only conjectures and may bear no resemblance to the reality. Notwithstanding, studies show that despite its many advantages, postal questionnaires, in general, show a “*poor response rate.*”¹⁹ With more time this area might usefully be probed further.

(C) Questionnaire Design and Content

All questionnaires employed varied question types from rank order formats and agree/disagree/don’t know options to the more complex “*open*” questions. Attitudinal items were measured using Likert scale and semantic differential options, although these were used to a lesser extent than the agree/disagree format.

The teacher’s questionnaire was structured in a three-fold way. Section A, “*Teacher’s Attitudes*” examined teachers’ professional awareness of inter-cultural issues. Question content, here, centred on present multicultural provisions with an emphasis

on teacher training, support and use of resources. The question format was principally Likert scale with responses providing a basis for more detailed follow-up, open ended questions. This format elicited the richness and complexity of respondent's views. Section B, "*Classroom Challenges*", relied more on subjective statements to which respondents answered "yes/no/unsure." Several of these questions encouraged elaboration, and space was provided underneath each question for the unstructured responses. In a similar vein to the open-ended questions in Section A, these responses were less efficient in terms of collection and analysis. Notwithstanding, these questions varied the stimulus for respondents and allowed them to fully elucidate the intricacies of their views. Question content, in probing further into the classroom, was influenced by Banks. He warned:

*"Reforming any one variable, such as curriculum materials and the formal curriculum, is necessary but not sufficient. Multiethnic and sensitive teaching materials are ineffective in the hands of teachers who have negative attitudes to different ethnic and cultural groups."*²⁰

Questions examined the extent to which teachers' methodologies and/or consciousness have changed in keeping with a more diversified student clientele.

Section C, "*Societal Effects*", comprised rank order questions which encouraged respondents to prioritise their feelings towards three key multicultural issues. These are:

- (A) The important aspects of teaching in a multicultural society.
- (B) A description of the Department's response to multicultural provision.
- (C) The challenges of teaching in a multicultural society.

The students' surveys were similarly designed so that responses could easily be cross-referenced. Closed-ended questions were figured appropriate so as to minimise the amount of writing that students would be asked to undertake. Ticking the boxes made coding easier because information was of a uniform length and of a pre-determined format. While open-ended questions would have been less restrictive, in terms variety of answers received, it might have provided answers that were "*self-contradictory, incomprehensible, or irrelevant.*"²¹ Question type varied from "*agree/disagree*" to the more attitudinally based Likert scales. Content focused on key areas of Irish school civic culture, most notably on the themes of belonging, friendship, perceptions

of school and each other, conversations with peers, and modes of inclusion or exclusion. Boucher's findings in his work with Third level international students provided a basis for much of the questioning. He stated:

*"In general, the international students perceived that Irish people were more likely to be friendly the more the students adapted themselves to Irish culture."*²²

The content of certain questions, therefore, was directed towards confirming or repudiating this finding at a second level setting.

The parents' survey was purposely kept brief,²³ asking only six questions. Design focused on *"the neglected area of parental perception of the school setting"*²⁴ with responses limited to a standardised *"Yes/No/Unsure "* structure. Content explored topics such as:

- (A) Who assumes responsibility for dealing with the school?
- (B) What awareness do parents have of their child's schoolwork?
- (C) Level of participation in the school structure?
- (D) Level of communication with the school?

In all four surveys, the wording of questions was especially significant considering the sensitive nature of the research. Judd et al. warns that *"improperly worded questions can only result in biased or otherwise meaningless responses"* especially in reference to attitudes which *"are particularly subject to biases caused by wording."*²⁵ Question style was sensitive to the language abilities of the target groups with efforts made to keep wording exact and unambiguous. Sentences were kept short and of a type that respondents would be willing to answer. With the exception of the Teachers' questionnaire, no technical jargon was introduced so as to make it comprehensible to all participants, regardless of ability.

Correlated to this, visual appearance was of equal importance to the design of questionnaires. Good layout and attention to user-friendly features minimised the scope for confusion, therein contributing to the overall validity of the questionnaire process. Piloting had suggested various design improvements. Font size was standardised at 14, with greater spacing within and between questions. Appropriate emphasis was drawn to instructions, which were designed to be easily followed.

(D) Piloting the Questionnaires

Questionnaires were piloted in November and December 2001 to various representative groups, akin to the targeted audiences. Twelve Irish born students (one-half the size of the intended survey population) were divided evenly along gender and year group lines for the purposes of the piloting process.

The piloting of the international student survey was conducted with five former students (approximately one-eighth the size of the survey population) of the school in question. This pilot population varied in gender (three males, two females), in nationality (one African, one Bosnian, One Asian, one American, one English) and in age ranges (from 14-15 and 18-19).

Seven teachers (one-half the size of the intended population), three males and four females were selected based on criteria relating to gender, number of years teaching and subject specification. One respondent from each of the seven prescribed subject areas participated in the piloting process.

Piloting international students' parents was conducted with the parents of three former students. The population represented three nationalities, African, Bosnian and English, and all were female.

All respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire and subsequently complete a short evaluation form critiquing the questionnaire.²⁶ With the exception of the parents, all participants were briefly interviewed to ascertain their reactions to question wording, sequence, and comprehension. Judd et al. provided the framework here.

*"Ask the respondents for their overall reactions: what difficulties they had, how the questions were interpreted, what further topic-related ideas were not tapped by the questions, and what the respondents' thoughts were when they responded 'don't know.' The interviewers as well as the pretest respondents should critique the questionnaire, pointing out difficulties they had in following the sequence, explaining particular questions, holding the respondent's interest, or maintaining rapport."*²⁷

Irish born students raised issues concerning the ambiguous nature of certain questions, in particular questions five, seven, eight and nine.²⁸ Some respondents spoke of their inability to verbalise their attitudes to certain topics, for reasons that they had not fully

formulated thoughts on the subject. Consequently, “*don’t know*” and “*no opinion*” answers were included, not only to provide sufficient options in the answers, but more significantly, to prevent random answering. The inclusion of this option contributed greatly to the overall validity of the questionnaire process. Five Irish-born students critiqued the vagueness, which accompanied the use of the phrase “*international students*.” Students felt the commonly cited “*non-national*” term may have been more appropriate. For reasons outlined above the researcher wished to use more positive and inclusive phraseology in reference to these foreign students. Compromise was reached through accompanying a definition of an “*international student*” at the beginning of the questionnaire.

This correction pointed up a further gap relating to measuring the intensity and specificity of the respondent’s attitudes. Constructing valid questions here was particularly demanding considering the complexity and sensitivity of the topic at hand. Accordingly, one additional question was included concerning the specificity with which Irish-born students view international students. Question number six states:²⁹

“*When I think of international students, I think of them as:*”

<i>All the same</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Mostly the same</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>A little the same</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Very different groups of people.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Based on responses here questions regarding intensity of respondents’ attitudes were addressed in the semi-structured focus groups.

International students were generally satisfied although two students questioned the presence of an “*unsure*” option in certain questions and its absence in others. Questions ranging from twelve to seventeen and nineteen to twenty had no “*unsure*” option with the consequence that the questionnaire was making unwarranted assumptions about the targeted students. These questions related to whether students had met certain school staff, whether they had difficulties with learning English and whether they had attended a homework club. Not only was there a need to provide sufficient options in the answers, but more significantly, these questions made cultural presumptions that students would know of these matters.

Teachers suggested various design improvements, particularly in reference to the layout of the questionnaire. Font size was increased from 12 to 14 for easier legibility and additional space was created for answering the “open-ended” questions. Three teachers critiqued the open-end format initially adopted for questions four, fifteen, sixteen and seventeen. One respondent felt these questions were “irritating” and time consuming, while one other felt they made unwarranted assumptions about teacher’s levels of knowledge. Consequently, these questions were phrased as closed-ended response alternatives in the final questionnaire. The selection of responses was formulated from initial open-ended responses and from a survey of publications in the area of study.

One further critique concerning layout was question 14 with the quote from Mary O’Rourke, TD. The initial questionnaire, for reasons of space, had questions A and B on separate pages. Respondents agreed that this made the questionnaire less clear and user-friendly. This was rectified in the final questionnaire.

Parents wanted a shorter survey, pointing up the language difficulties which some parents may have. Parents encouraged questions to be kept as straightforward as possible with only those questions, which were vital for the research, included. The layout was critiqued as too cumbersome and complex. Hence, question style was limited to background queries and statements which respondents would agree or disagree to. A “don’t know” option was also included here. Likert scale questions were redrafted to an agree/disagree format or else omitted altogether. Respondents suggested editing the number of questions to six. Questions of the following nature³⁰ were considered to be too open to influence and therefore open to charges of invalidity.

- *Are you happy with your child’s education?*
Yes No Don’t Know

- *My child is happy at this school.*
Agree Disagree Don’t Know

These questions were deleted on the suspicion that most parents would answer in the positive, therein negating the possibility of acquiring honest answers.

(E) Data Analysis

Data from questionnaires was analysed using a computer software package (SPSS). Closed-ended answers were pre-coded on the right-hand margin of the pages. SPSS allows for large volumes of data to be computed, mathematically analysed and tabulated efficiently. While the parents' surveys were easily coded, due to their brevity, the other three had a combined total of just under two hundred mathematical possibilities.³¹ Significant findings were sourced through a cross-referencing of results.

Data obtained through open-ended questions on the teachers' survey was coded differently due to its qualitative nature. This data was collated under the four headings: resources, challenges, understandings and subject information.

3.7 Interviews

(A) Rationale

Our reliance on individual's accounts of their experiences, beliefs or behaviours underlies a general usefulness of questionnaires, although the researcher is conscious that the respondents' answers may, in differing contexts, be imprecise. Notwithstanding factual errors in the respondent's knowledge and their motivational biases, the predominance of closed-ended questions, particularly with reference to the students' surveys, provides less scope for respondents to supply answers reflecting the intensity or specificity of their true feelings. Sources of information, as well as checks for reliability and validity of the information were of greatest importance to the researcher. Considering the predominance of attitude specific questions, interviews proved an efficient methodology in probing factors contributing to intensely held beliefs.

*"In an interview An idea or comment can be explored. This makes it possible to gauge how people are interpreting a question. People are generally better able to express their views orally than in writing."*³²

The interviews, similar to the questionnaires were a self-reporting instrument and therefore presented comparable weaknesses. They relied on co-operation from the respondents to give of their time and views. This was particularly onerous considering the complexity and sensitivity of the topic at hand. Additionally, with deep-seated

concerns regarding the interviewer-effect, there was an ever-present danger that respondents may “give invalid, socially desirable answers to suit the interviewer’s expectations or desires.”³³ The manner and conduct in which the interviews took place was of consummate importance to the researcher. The precautionary steps taken to minimise the interviewer effect have been outlined above.

(B) Technique

Three interviews were held; one on a one-to-one basis,³⁴ the others through the relatively informal focus group method. A semi-structured interview format was adopted as the more suitable of data collection methods.

*“In semi-structured interviews, certain information is desired from all the respondents. These interviews are guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored., but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging world view of the respondent, and of new ideas on the topic.”*³⁵

As part of the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked a series of specific, structured questions about particular areas of experience inside the school environment: first impressions, daily life, relationships, and so on. More complete data was obtained through the use of open-ended, “funnel”³⁶ questions. This format of questioning allowed for a narrowing down of broader issues to the more focused and specific.

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject under research an informal, democratic, open style of interaction was encouraged. Studies (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Woods, 1986) warn against controlling the content too rigidly. Interviewees felt listened to in a natural, emphatic environment that showed interest and encouragement for what was being said. The researcher was guided by accepted qualities of good interviewing.

*“Good interviews are ones in which the subjects are at ease and talk freely about their points of view. Good interviews produce rich data filled with words that reveal the respondent’s perspectives.”*³⁷

Body language assisted here, notably through nodding gestures, smiles, and encouraging grunts. Other strategies employed in effective questioning were those espoused in literature. This researcher took on much of the advice. Prompt cards were prepared in advance of each interview with possible avenues of inquiry, which might

be pursued. Woods'³⁸ advise formed the basis for the style of questions asked. For example:

1. Offering summaries - "Are you saying that....?"
2. Seeking corroboration - "So you are saying"
3. Searching for opinions - "Why do you think?"
4. Requesting clarification - "What did you mean when you said?"
5. Searching for connections - "Is that linked to?"
6. Asking hypothetical questions - "What if?"
7. Seeking a response - "In the survey some people said.....would you agree with that?"

Additionally, field notes were taken during all interviews. These field notes were written up immediately following the interviews with annotated notes on behaviour included alongside transcripts of the interviews. In these field notes examples of the following were noted:

1. Intentions underlying interviewee comments.
2. Relevant aspects of non-verbal communication.
3. Main points stated by interviewees.
4. Inconsistencies in positions.
5. Answers that may include elements of boasting.
6. Responses that may be intended to please. That is, aspects influenced by interviewer effect.

Denscombe advised the researcher in relation to point four above:

*"If such inconsistencies exist, this does not invalidate the position. Most people have inconsistencies in their opinions and feelings on many topics."*³⁹

Inconsistencies, where they arose, were usefully probed.

(C) Population Selection

The international student focus group comprised eight students, divided along year group and gender lines. All eight were of varying nationalities⁴⁰ and were selected based on criteria of nationality and responses given during the initial questionnaire

process. There were four males and four females, with two representatives each from first and sixth year, the remaining school years represented by one student.

The Irish-born student focus group also comprised eight randomly selected individuals. Again, students were divided along year group and gender lines. There were four females and four males, with two representatives each from first and Transition year, the remaining school years represented by one student.

Eight was adjudged to be a pragmatic number, for reasons of manageability and gender representation. Denscombe tells us:

*“Focus groups consist of a small group of people, usually between six and nine in number, who are brought together to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a topic.”*⁴¹

An odd number may distort efforts at gender balance, while six may not have been appropriately representative, especially in relation to the international student focus group. Hence eight was an appropriate number.

Two individual interviews were held. One with the school principal, and one with a former student, from Bosnia, who was the school's first international student.

(D) Tape-Recording and Analysing the Interviews

Tape recordings were made for all interviews, both individual and focus group. This researcher followed Yin's advice closely that the subject of tape-recording must be broached with caution. Recordings, he argues, should be not be used when:

- (a) An interviewee refuses permission or appears uncomfortable in its presence.
- (b) The researcher is clumsy, making the recording of proceedings a distraction.
- (c) The researcher uses the recorder as a substitute for close listening.⁴²

At the beginning of each interview participants were asked for permission to record the proceedings. Copies of transcripts were offered for perusal with an option to amend or delete any section of their part. This guarantee served a dual purpose of giving democratic control of proceedings to the participants while also ensuring that the proceedings were accurately recorded. These transcripts were written up in the

immediate days following each interview. No interviewee refused permission. Field notes were taken during all interviews. These field notes were written up immediately following the interviews with annotated notes on behaviour included alongside transcripts of the interviews. These notes, alongside quotes extracted from the transcripts, were later used in the writing up of the research findings.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

Reliability, by definition, demands replication of research findings under differing time scales and conditions. The recorded data should describe, Bogdan and Biklen argue, “*what actually occurs in the setting under study.*”⁴³ For results to attain this level of validity, researchers postulate “*triangulation*” as an effective instrument. This prescribes the use of multiple methods in a form of cross-referencing check for reliability. In essence, it advises the gathering of data from a number of sources and by a number of methods; qualitative and quantitative. Leader and Boldt tells us it means:

*“That different views of the same situation are taken, to allow a more complete picture to emerge. Relying on one method of research may distort the reality of a situation and inhibit an adequate portrayal.”*⁴⁴

Conducting four distinctive surveys with a population of eighty-four individuals enhanced the validity of this research. The researcher’s prior knowledge of the school context and culture was advantageous, particularly in the validation of the data. Additionally, four interviews were held; two on a one-to-one basis, and two through the informal focus group method. The researcher could follow up inconsistencies in positions from initial surveys, in addition to requesting clarification on answers which were suspected of including elements of boasting or answers which may have been influenced by interviewer effect. Interviewees were given opportunities to expand on their questionnaire answers and explain the intensity of their positions. Data was therefore triangulated through means of the questionnaires, limited ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews. Consequently, this researcher can confidently testify to the authenticity of the data. That is, similar research results would have been replicated under differing time scales and conditions.

3.9 Conclusion

The above chapter has elucidated the varying methodologies used in conducting the research. Detailed rationales for using questionnaires and interviews provided a relevant prologue to the section outlining the researcher's choice, design and content of the research models. Ethical considerations were addressed at this juncture with the views of Bogdan and Biklen kept firmly in mind. They stated:

*"You are not here to change views, but to learn what the subjects' views are and why they are that way."*⁴⁵

The influence of the interviewer effect and the necessity of obtaining informed consent were isolated for particular mention here. Terminology was briefly discussed before matters of site selection and population selection. Additionally the complexities of the piloting processes were outlined. The chapter concluded with procedures used for data analysis and a brief commentary on the validity and reliability of this research.

Footnotes

- ¹ Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1982), p.27.
- ² Denscombe, M. *The Good Research Guide* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1998), p.101.
- ³ Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1982), p.xiii.
- ⁴ Woods, P. *Inside Schools: Ethnography in Educational Research* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and New York, 1986), p.88.
- ⁵ See Appendices 1 and 2.
- ⁶ Rudestam, K.E., and Newton, R.R. *Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process* (Sage Publications, California, London & New Delhi, 2001) p. 270.
- ⁷ Denscombe, M. *The Good Research Guide* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1998), p.119.
- ⁸ This time was based on the results of piloting. See Appendix 3 for the evaluation form, which was completed following all piloted surveys.
- ⁹ Denscombe, M. *The Good Research Guide* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1998), p.116.
- ¹⁰ Judd, C.M., Smith, E.R. and Kidder, L.H. *Research Methods in Social Relations* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, Fort Worth, 1959), p.259.
- ¹¹ Denscombe, M. *The Good Research Guide* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1998), p.117.
- ¹² Woods, P. *Inside Schools: Ethnography in Educational Research* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and New York, 1986), p.119.
- ¹³ Silverman, D. *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (Sage Publications, London, 1997), p.21.
- ¹⁴ Judd, C.M., Smith, E.R. and Kidder, L.H. *Research Methods in Social Relations* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, Fort Worth, 1959), p.231.
- ¹⁵ Quoted in Rudestam, K.E. and Newton, R.R. *Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process* (Sage Publications, California, 2001), p.92.
- ¹⁶ Denscombe, M. *The Good Research Guide* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1998), p.96.
- ¹⁷ This number was selected based on it being the first number drawn in a national lotto draw in November 2001.
- ¹⁸ Oceanic, by definition, are those people from Australia and New Zealand.
- ¹⁹ Denscombe, M. *The Good Research Guide* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1998), p.107.
- ²⁰ Banks, J.A. "Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigm and Goals" in Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986). p.22.
- ²¹ Judd, C.M., Smith, E.R. and Kidder, L.H. *Research Methods in Social Relations* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, Fort Worth, 1959), pp.239.

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- ²² Boucher, G.W. "Irish Acculturation Ideologies: Mixing Multiculturalism, Assimilation and Discrimination" in MacLachlan, M. and Micheal O'Connell (eds.) *Cultivating Pluralism: Psychological, Social and Cultural Perspectives on a Changing Ireland* (Oak Tree Press, Dublin, 2000), p.253.
- ²³ Please refer to the piloting section of this paper: 3.6 (D).
- ²⁴ Cicourel, A.V. "Living in Two Cultures: The Everyday World of Migrant Workers" in Parris, R.G. *Living in Two Cultures* (The Unesco Press, England, 1982), p.46.
- ²⁵ Judd, C.M., Smith, E.R. and Kidder, L.H. *Research Methods in Social Relations* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, Fort Worth, 1959), pp.234-5.
- ²⁶ See Appendix 3.
- ²⁷ Judd, C.M., Smith, E.R. and Kidder, L.H. *Research Methods in Social Relations* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, Fort Worth, 1959), p.225.
- ²⁸ See Appendix 4.
- ²⁹ See Appendix 4.
- ³⁰ See Appendix 6.
- ³¹ There were 52 variables in the Irish student survey, 57 in the teachers' survey and 90 in the international student survey.
- ³² Henerson, M., Lyons-Morris, L. and Taylor Fitz-Gibbon, C. *How to Measure Attitudes* (Sage Publications, London, 1987), p.29.
- ³³ Judd, C.M., Smith, E.R. and Kidder, L.H. *Research Methods in Social Relations* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, Fort Worth, 1959), p.219.
- ³⁴ The individual interview was held with the school principal.
- ³⁵ Merriam, S.B. *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1988), p.72.
- ³⁶ Cohen, L. and Manion, L. *Research Methods in Education* (Croom Helman, London, 1980), p.247.
- ³⁷ Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1982), p.136.
- ³⁸ Woods, P. *Inside Schools: Ethnography in Educational Research* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and New York, 1986), pp.78-9.
- ³⁹ Denscombe, M. *The Good Research Guide* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1998), p.127.
- ⁴⁰ There were students from England, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand, Nigeria, Romania, Scotland and Somalia.
- ⁴¹ Denscombe, M. *The Good Research Guide* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1998), p.115.
- ⁴² Yin, R.C. *Case Study Research: Design and Method* (Sage Publications, London, 1997), p.86.
- ⁴³ Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1982), p.44.

⁴⁴ Leader, D. and Boldt, S. *Principals and Principalship* (Marino Institute of Education, Dublin, 1994), p.17.

⁴⁵ Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1982), p.137.

Chapter Four: Research Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction: The School in Context

The selected site is a co-educational, multi-denominational Community College administered under the auspices of County Dublin V.E.C. Enrolment is open to all students of feeder primary schools within a limited geographic area, with special consideration for those of minority denominational beliefs. Classes are structured on a loose hybrid of banding and streaming, with places in these determined by a series of pre-entry tests. In the previous decade student numbers have expanded by 46% to a current population of 825. The sweeping development of the surrounding townland has created intractably fluid conditions of movement leaving overall school figures subject to fluctuation and change. The school council comprises 52 teachers with one principal and one deputy principal. Educational programmes of the Junior Certificate, Transition year, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied Programme are provided. A sizeable number of pupils derive from socially disadvantaged backgrounds,¹ although the school is not officially defined as disadvantaged. Despite this, latest figures suggest that 10-20% of student intake have a minimum two year deficit in chronological reading age.² At present there are thirty-eight international students, although this is expected to increase to forty-seven by September 2002; a sixty-four percentage increase over the previous three years.

4.2 International Students: Assimilated Microcultures?

(A) International Student Relationships with School Staff

International students perceived the school's acculturation ideology as contradictory, with the teachers and senior management expounding internal equality yet often excluding those who cannot, or will not, conform to the majority. Despite a positive cumulative figure of 74% of international students feeling they fit into Irish school life all or most of the time, 23% only sometimes fit in, with 3% not fitting in at all. For some, things had improved compared with an initial two in every five stating that they felt excluded on first arriving into the school. Only one-third had met with the principal, while a certain small, though significant, figure (3%) had been shown to

their first class by the caretaker. Notwithstanding this, a majority ratio of six out of every ten felt welcome on arriving into the school.

Teachers were highly criticised by the international students, and although this is not any form of new behaviour for students,³ the criticism here was focused, directed and circumspect. For many the school's acculturation ideology was a contradiction in terms, with many teachers proclaiming internal equality while often practising discrimination towards them. The survey showed approximately half of all international students feeling sometimes excluded from classroom activities with many feeling they were cast as a hindrance to the teacher's work. One East European student stated an example where she was humiliated into gradually withdrawing from classroom activities:

"I have a problem in class when I was doing a question. I understood the question but I just didn't know how to do the question. So I asked the teacher and she said, 'Well why don't you start to learn to speak English then if you don't understand it. Just do whatever if you don't understand it.' Now I just don't bother and neither does she."

Other students spoke how teachers "*don't seem to care*", operating from the false, but yet official state assumption⁴ that these students will eventually return to their home country, "*so they don't need to teach you what you won't need.*" Consequently, for these and other reasons, a large number (92%) felt their school work did not relate to their background. A cross tabulation with the teacher survey supported the students, as only one in five teachers admitted to having taken steps to include a multicultural element in their classroom. Many of these who did,⁵ did so in an ad hoc fashion. Indeed few teachers had even taken steps to familiarise themselves with their students' backgrounds. For some this caused significant upset. One student stated:

*"There are some teachers that I hate in the school. They ask me too much questions. Questions, questions, all the time. 'Where are you from? What's your mothers name? What's your father's name? Why are you here?' I don't like all these questions They scare me. Some teachers go too far. It's like soldiers asking me. They are like soldiers."*⁶

Another student spoke of an experience where the school staged a Transition Year project, titled "*And the Wall Came Down.*" In paraphrase, a large wall was erected in the middle of the school grounds and this wall was protected by students, dressed in German army uniforms. The drama culminated with civilians breaking through the

wall. The moral of the drama was clear, although in their breaking through the wall, certain guards acted tyrannically, and started to attack the civilians. The student, in question, stated:

*"I was terrified, terrified. I kept seeing my brother's face."*⁷

Unknown to the teachers involved this student's brother had been paralysed in the Bosnian conflict, and unlike the other family members, who came to Ireland as Programme Refugees, he had to remain in Bosnia.⁸

These examples elucidate an insensitivity on the part of teachers and while some teachers acted simply out of ignorance⁹ a number were blatantly insensitive. Two examples highlight this. In the former, one black student stated:

"One day my brother came in late and went in the back way to school. One of my teachers thought it was me and he said: 'Was it you?' and I said 'No' and the teacher said 'Oh yea, but it was one of your kind'."

Another student quoted an example where the teacher intentionally ridiculed his English origin.

"When I ask one of my teachers a question, she takes off my accent and goes, 'Wha? Wha?' many times. The whole class laughed."

Consequently, certain international students viewed teacher behaviour as aiming to subtly influence them to assimilate to the majority culture. Numerous international students felt they were too much trouble, and that certain teachers could not accommodate difference. For some, it was easier to try to fully acculturate to the majority civic culture as opposed to risking persistent denigration of their cultural origin. This assimilationist behaviour reflected itself in a strongly interventionist, yet subtle indoctrination, which is frequently defined as *"sink or swim."*

No where was this more conspicuous in the survey where nearly one-third of students (32%) found English difficult to learn. A cross tabulation of this with the nationality variable reveals five African, three Asian and four Other European students having difficulty. All twelve of these are categorised as asylum seekers, and so they do not have formal rights to state funded language classes. Even so, none of these students have attended, nor been encouraged to attend the school Homework Club which is specifically aimed to tackle issues of educational disadvantage. Correlated with this, none of these students felt comfortable approaching their teachers with a problem.

Hence, the more marginalised and vulnerable of our students are further marginalised in a system that fails to accommodate their needs. Owing to their status as asylum seekers, the school formally neglects them, much like State policy which presumes they are only in Ireland on a temporary basis, and so not meriting full teacher time.

A significantly high percentage of all international students (45%) did not feel comfortable approaching their teachers with a problem despite nearly six in every ten feeling sometimes excluded from classroom activities. Only a few (5%) felt their schoolwork reflected their cultural background, as opposed to a large majority (92%) who disagreed.

(B) The Interface of Relationships: International Student views on their Irish Peers

International students enunciated a definitively positive perception of their Irish peers with many (68%) affirming they were happy at the school. A high proportion (82%) felt Irish students were welcoming to them and that their Irish peers were very well educated. On the main Irish students were friendly¹⁰, relaxed¹¹ and tolerant of them.¹² So much so that seven out of every ten students felt they could be themselves around Irish students. Notwithstanding, a sizeable two in every ten students expressed deep dissatisfaction with the school or felt that Irish students were quite unfriendly towards them. A disturbing number of international students (61%) had been verbally abused, with close on one-fifth (18%) of these being bullied. A cross tabulation of those nationalities who were verbally abused is represented in figure 4.1.

Despite these negativities a high percentage of International student respondents (84%) felt they could be honest to Irish students about what they dislike about the school. However, there was no similar confidence when it came to criticising Ireland. Less than one in four agreed that these students could be honest to the school about what they dislike about Ireland. These findings point up a perceived territorialism among the Irish student cohort and it is this factor which international students believe contributes significantly to the conspicuous levels of racism and cultural insularity within the school.

Figure 4.1: Nationalities who have been Verbally Abused (N = 38)

What nationality are you?	Some students have said or done things to upset me			Total N = 38
	Agree %	Disagree %	Don't Know %	
EU National	54%	33%	13%	15
Other European	75%	25%		4
African	78%	22%		9
Asian	50%	50%		4
North American	67%		33%	3
Oceanic	33%	67%		3

International students spoke emotionally about the trenchant views which Irish students express to them. Many comments were ill-formed, unsubstantiated and lacking any consideration of their emotional effects. International students were told publicly and directly *“that you are invading their country”* while others were ordered to *“get out of the country.”* One student stated that:

“All this is unbearable sometimes and terrifying. I’ve never felt at home since I’ve come here.”

An African student has repeatedly been called *“Bin Laden”*, while a British student is called an *“English bastard”* or *“Proddie.”* For some, racist remarks are innocently, and often unknowingly, stated as one African student illustrates:

“One day I was playing basketball and a guy said to me ‘Oh, you shoot like a nigger’ and stuff like that, and he was my friend... He said, ‘you play a black game.’ Like how could your friend call you a nigger?”

Other racist comments were more blatantly and deliberately aimed to hurt. Another African student believed that the Irish have not learned to heal their hurt following colonisation.

“Everywhere you go you are treated badly. People call me nigger and they don’t see that it hurts me. Some say they hate me, but they don’t know me. I don’t hate them, yet they hate me. It’s the same with the English. Like they ruled us, but our hate is gone. The hate hasn’t gone here.”

This cultural insularity clearly aims to demarcate those who are part of the in-group, and those who are part of the out-group. Terms of inclusion are explicitly clarified as one student put it:

“When they are talking about stuff, and I’m just going through and I stop, they just exclude me. They don’t want you, and it’s clear.”

No where is this demarcation of group boundaries more evident than in the culture of the racist joke. The technological advancement of the text message has meant greater dissemination of attitude specific material, most notably the *“text joke.”* These readily demarcate in-group and out-group identity. A cross reference of the Irish and international student interviews reveals intensely racist, xenophobic material. A lot of this material is communicated specifically between Irish students although some is also sent to their international peers. An African student said:

“One day I was sent a message, it had a cross that was burning, and when you pressed down it said something like, ‘Burn nigger burn.’ And then the whole thing went on fire”

An English student, spoke of the considerable volume of Anglophobic material that he has been subjected to:

“It’s a gun. It said ‘Live like the Irish’ and then it showed a bullet going off when you pressed down, and it said ‘Die like the English.’”

Irish students, in their interview, quoted similar examples of Anglophobic material.

“There’s another one, it has a picture of the Union Jack burning. Then it has an IRA man standing there making a Brit burn it.”

Other text messages were specifically and geographically aimed at African people.

“An earthquake hit Nigeria. France are sending food, America are sending money, Ireland are sending replacement niggers.”

Or:

“What would you do if you saw an African with half a head? Stop laughing and reload.”

These messages are deliberate efforts designed to demarcate out-group status to particular national and ethnic groups. This research found that for these groups, assimilation to the in-group was neither encouraged nor permitted by a sizeable quota of majority Irish students. For them, the Irish were friendly, although there was a large *“but”* qualifying this.

An illustration of this concerns certain Irish people who directed their hurt against other groups in society. One student spoke of an incident with his disabled sister. He said:

"I was walking in town with my sister. She's handicapped and she made a couple of noises in her pram. She does silly stuff sometimes, but it annoys me when people are pointing at her and laughing at her. I was pushing her one day and they were saying, 'look who got stuck with the capper'.¹³ I lost it and I shouted at them and they realised that I was English and they laughed at me and said 'look a capper looking after a capper'."

Hence, an interesting perspective is that certain Irish individuals not only view international minorities as their subordinates but equally an example such as this denotes a perception of international students as disabled people.¹⁴

In conclusion, the majority international students felt the school, and in particular the principal, provided weak leadership on the issue. Teachers were identified as in need of training with additional need of an Anti-racism programme for students. Only then did international students feel things could change. As one student succinctly put it:

"One day Ireland will change, but not soon."

4.3 Irish Students: Expressions of Cultural Insularity

Whatever the national ethnicity of international students, Irish student's evinced little distinction between them. One quarter of those surveyed viewed them as *"all the same"* with only a small percentage (12%) perceiving them as *"very different groups of people."* A sizeable 46% treated international students as *"mostly the same."* Albeit that one in six believed international students to be *"happy in the school"*¹⁵, one in four felt that they were not *"welcome to our school."*¹⁶ Significant levels of enmity were in evidence with 38% positively agreeing that international students were given more attention than they were. Conversely, 46% disagreed that they were treated the same as all other Irish born students. A similar figure deemed that international students did not need our help. Statistics of this nature are exceptionally ambiguous. Questions emerge as to whether students believe that international students are not deserving of our sympathy or simply that they are not in need of our assistance. The distinction is clear. Cross referencing the Irish student survey with the interview shows a cumulative total of half either strongly agreeing or agreeing that international students are not deserving of our sympathy, as against a cumulative figure of one-third

disagreeing. Similar patterns of thought permeated the student focus group with one student remarking

“I’m tired of hearing that they’ve nothing and that they need everything.”

External factors contributed significantly to student views on ethnic microcultures. International students were perceived as “free-loaders”¹⁷ who deliberately seek to manipulate the system. In a skewed sense of social responsibility one student insisted that:

“ There’s millions of homeless people all over Dublin, sleeping on the streets; and they’re Irish..... The government should look out for their own. They all get jobs. There’s loads of people all over Dublin that are unemployed as well, and there’s hardly any jobs left over.”

The use of superfluous terminology was a prevalent feature throughout the group discussion. Despite a ratio of four in every five accepting a lack of knowledge about the culture and background of international students, Irish students espoused trenchant views about them. Many were ill-formed, unsubstantiated and lacking any guise of higher level sophistication. Research findings indicated serious levels of cultural insularity, expressed in racist or ill-informed prejudicism. Irish born students collectively saw them as devious, skilfully manipulative, and trouble-makers. One student even remarked on their disagreeable smell. They stated:

“I was in one of their houses one day, cause me ma made me be friends with them. My ma said she didn’t want me to be a racist. So I go into them and they’re house smelled really bad. Then me sister hangs around with another Bosnian and when they open the door it’s horrible. It’s like someone died. They just said it was their Bosnian granny.”¹⁸

Many students saw the international students as an obstruction to their education, with a lot of teacher time taken up with addressing their needs, particularly their deficits in language. Survey results revealed a combined total of almost half of Irish students (46%) believing them to be poorly educated. One student succinctly captured the attitude to this.

“It’s the people coming over from abroad like France¹⁹, or Asia, and they’re coming over and they haven’t the best of English. Getting into the school straight away, and they haven’t a clue what’s going on.”

Other examples of key social distance were openly averted to in the examples of serious levels of racism within the school. Survey findings revealed three-quarters of respondents admitting to having seen another student say or do things to upset an

international student. Of these, three out of every five witnessed a student being physically bullied because they are different. One student firmly stated that *“people don't want them here.”* Two, rather crude examples, exhibit the ostensible difficulties that international students face within the school setting.

Student: “Three coloured lads that came into the toilet and they're going to the toilet and they're looking at each other. And this fella said ‘yous are all Billy watchers.’ The whole school slagged them.”

Student: “Yea, that was deadly.”

Another student told how when the teachers' backs are turned trouble arises.

“You hear comments, say when you're walking down the courtyard and someone bumps into someone and if they're different coloured, you hear like ‘fucking nigger’ or ‘fucking Paki.’”

Correlated with this, their was a perceptible degree of Anglophobia among the general student populace. Students told how *“everyone slags them”* and that:

“If you look around everyone always says burn the Queen and up the IRA. If you look around the school there's loads of things written about the IRA. Everywhere everyone has on their bags, ‘IRA’ or they have their journal painted green, white and orange.”

Much of this prejudice is absorbed from the external school environment. Survey results showed many parents (63%) discouraging their children from making friends with international students. In these terms international students were discerned as figures to be publicly shunned and marginalised. While the school was seen to be tough on incidents of racism a number of students noted that *“some”* of the teachers are even racist. In a subconscious way students read the behaviour of these teachers as a validation of their racialised expressions. This behaviour, if found to exist, testifies to the inherent dangers of subtle ideological indoctrination which issues from a monocultural teaching body.

Returning to the Irish student sample, when questioned in a similar manner to the Bogardus Scale employed by MacGréil (1977), social distance was measured between Irish and international students. One female student viewed all international students as untrustworthy, sexual predators who:

“Not with a barge pole would I go out with them It’s different for girls. Most of the men have aids and all that. And like they’re all after one thing. They’re just pervs.”

Two male students admitted to dating a Romanian and Bosnian girl, respectively. The integrity of these statements is questionable, although at the same time, impossible to ascertain. Notwithstanding, when questioned if there was a limit to their diversity of girls which they would date, one replied:

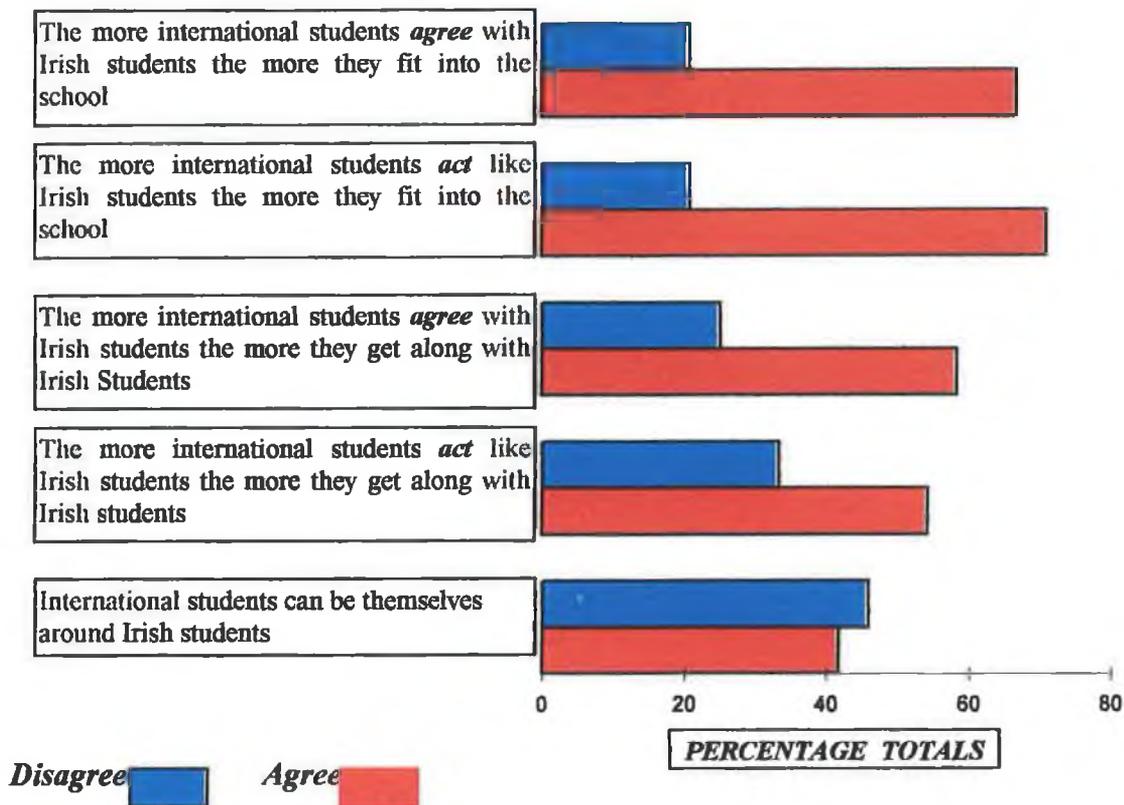
“Pakistan or Chinese. I wouldn’t go near a Chinese”

The other student agreed.

Both survey and interview unveiled considerable degrees of cultural insularity. One student confirmed *“I don’t mind the one that’s trying to get a life”*, that is, provided that they make efforts to *“get along”* and *“agree”* with Irish students. In total, 71% of respondents believed the more international students act like Irish students the more they fit in, while 67% believed they fit in the more they agree with Irish students. This validates Boucher’s findings (1998) that those students who expressed Irish values, beliefs and attitudes were socially acceptable by their Irish peers. However, those students who did not express these values or beliefs tended to be socially excluded. Figure 4.2 charts Irish student attitudes to their international peers.

Despite these negativity’s a significant number of Irish student respondents (63%) felt that international students could be honest to them about what they dislike about the school. However, similar privileges were not extended when it came to criticising Ireland. Less than one-third (29%) agreed that these students could be honest to the school about what they dislike about Ireland. These findings point up a prevalent territorialism among the student cohort and it is this factor which contributes significantly to the conspicuous levels of racism and cultural insularity within the school.

Figure 4.2: Irish Student Perceptions of International Peers (N=38)²⁰



Two-thirds of all respondents charged international students with taking up the place of another Irish student.²¹ At present the school is over-subscribed with a minimum of 86²² students on a waiting list for a place to become available. The friends of a number of Irish students have been unable, for one reason or another, to obtain a place in the school. Many students criticised this and one even suggested that these students should go to the “special” school in the area, that “was especially for them.” No such school exists, yet this is a clear example of how certain Irish students view international students. Not only are they viewed as their subordinates but equally the notions of a “special school” denotes a perception of international students as disabled people. One student stated:

“My best friend couldn’t get in because a black person got his place.”

This ill-informed line of argument does not stand up to close scrutiny. Despite probing this further, the student refused to accept that it might not have been a “black person” that got their place. The student, like others, displayed widely ill-informed notions, but yet trenchantly formed prejudices. This is territorialism at its worst.

Another Irish student agreed with this student, saying:

“Well I know loads of my friends from²³ that had to go to the Brothers²⁴ because loads of Blacks got in.”

In a somewhat blatantly intolerant manner one student summarised the overall depth of feeling and frustration among the general student body. They felt that

“There’s just nothing but blacks, Paki’s and Chinks.”²⁵

Hence, the most vulnerable members of the student body are *“treated like outcasts”* and not given the opportunity, even if they wished to take it, to assimilate to the broader student civic culture. So, while there is a pronounced level of cultural insularity in evidence, it is geographically specific with those of EU, North American, and Oceanic extraction being part of the in-group, and all others, the out-group.

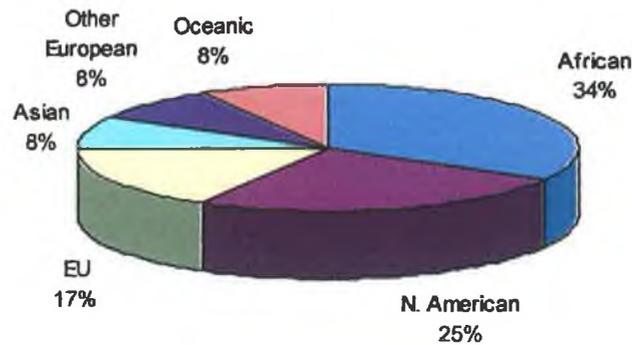
No where is this demarcation of group boundaries more evident than in the culture of the racist joke. The technological advancement of the text message has meant greater dissemination of attitude specific material, most notably the *“text joke.”* These readily demarcate in-group and out-group identity. Text messages have been treated above and there is no real necessity to retrace old steps. Needless to say, they are another method through which Irish students exert cultural control over minority ethnic peers.

4.4 International Parent Perceptions

The father completed over half of the parent responses (58%), although only twelve (32%) of the sample returned the survey. Initial expectations might have anticipated a greater flow of return from the English speaking regions although this expectation did not materialise. African parents accounted for the majority with four sets of questionnaires completed and returned. Three North American parents and two sets of European Union parents responded to the survey with only one survey from each of the Asian, Other European and Oceanic populations (see Figure 4.3).

In the division along gender lines interesting variances and patterns emerged. Those respondents who stated they were the *“mother”* were varied across all continents with the exception of North America. Representatives of this continent were strictly the father. Each of these stated they were the individual who took most responsibility for dealing with the school.

Figure 4.3: Responses by Nationality



This North American male predominance, in reference to school contact, was not atypical of the overall situation. Over one in five of all fathers claimed they dealt most with the school with only 28% of these delegating this responsibility to another family member. This was compared to 40% of all mothers who entrusted another family member with this task. In all, only one father (an EU national) claimed responsibility for dealing most with the school lay with his partner. A triangulation of this finding was supported both in interviews with the international students and the school principal. The African respondents were most interesting in terms of their dealings with the school. Three out of the four parents claimed that responsibility for dealing most with the school was conducted via another family member. The same was true of one Asian student whose uncle was said to deal with the school. Although the mother of one Other European student claimed she dealt most with the school, the reality was somewhat different. In an interview with the relevant student, she revealed that her sister negotiated with the school in place of her parents. Many factors contributed to this inaccuracy. In this instance, a complex set of variables interacted which mitigated against active parental involvement. Namely, certain language difficulties, and the resistance of these parents, through embarrassment or otherwise, of the dependent culture which is forced upon them. These parents, in the words of their daughter, "lack hope." As asylum seekers they lack control over their daily lives and they are coerced into an existence which enforces dependency and refuses opportunity to participate or contribute to Irish society.²⁶ For these parents, and others, their reality is

"To be imprisoned in an identity that harms you. You are both silenced and spoken for. You are seen but not recognised. You are identified but denied an

*identity you can call your own. Your identity is split, broken, dispersed into its abjected images, its alienated representations.*²⁷

Contact with the school through meeting teachers and the principal showed that although a large number (92%) of all respondents claimed to have met with the school principal, less than three in every five (58%) affirmed they have met with their child's teachers. In terms of the latter, of the four parents (two African, one Asian and one Other European) who replied in the negative, three of these were the parents who earlier had stated their abdication of responsibility for dealing with school to another family member. Probing these three further, school records show that these parents have never attended a parent teacher meeting for one reason or another. One of these three were also the only claimants not to have met with the school principal. Although, this parent accounts for only 8% of the total survey population, it points to a conspicuous marginalisation of certain parents.

These feelings are further reinforced in the finding²⁸ that no international parents are involved in any of the school boards. To all intents and purposes the school lacks an openness which is needed to advance perceptions of accessibility among the parents. The disappointing response to the survey (32%) is closely correlated to this perception as is the admission that only one-third of these parents have spoken to the school about their child's education despite three-quarters wanting their child to learn more about their own culture in school. This figure acknowledges two things. Firstly that international parents wish to see an intercultural education within the school and secondly, it is an indirect admission that the school is not meeting the cultural needs of its' minority populations.

Curricular difficulty and perceptions of exclusion are shown in a general inability, by parents, to assist their child in their homework. Overall, a split emerges with 42% stating their genuine inability to assist their child in their homework. A geographic and gender analysis of these figures, show 40% of mothers assisting their child here, with 71% of all fathers saying likewise. The majority of those who could assist derived from the EU, Oceanic and North American zones. Only one African male parent stated his ability to assist his child in their work. Again, a conspicuous schism emerges with those marginalised parents of Asian, African and Other European origin

not being able to assist their child. For reasons of simplicity there were no closed questions aimed at measuring the degree to which these parents could or could not help their child with their school work.²⁹

In conclusion, although somewhat brief the survey of international parents reveals a conspicuous geographic schism in access to and control over their child's education. While, in general terms, most EU, North American and Oceanic parents felt more access and control over their child's education, the opposite was true for the other regions. By way of illustration, all North American respondents had met with their child's teachers and the school principal. All had spoken to the school about their child's education and all had expressed an ability to assist their child in their homework. In contrast, no parent of an African, Asian, or Other European background could answer yes to all of these questions. While a certain few were able to respond positively to some of these questions, there were clear signs of an enforced dependence, by some of these, on others and on the school in general. This dependence has meant a greater marginalisation and considerable cultural exclusion of these parents from the existing school structures. The relatively high dependency of some of these parents on other family members, has meant an "*infantalisation*"³⁰ of these parents. Their authority has been undermined as they lack the control and influence over what happens inside the school. Notwithstanding, formal access to an official voice within the school is a prevalent concern for all, with no international parents represented on formal school committees. Understandable, therefore that while most view education as a means to social inclusion, equally, it is a site of explicit institutional exclusion.

4.5 Teacher Perceptions: The Intricacies of Implementation

Research, from Dewey to Huberman, and Sarason supports the view that implementation is very much a social process. It is about people. Unless teachers feel some commitment to this change, their attitudes are unlikely to change. Sociological readings tell how the attitudes of the individual are shaped by the information to which they are exposed. Yet, when questioned, only 20% of teachers related that they always familiarised themselves with the background details of their students, 71% only sometimes did while 9% never familiarised themselves with their international

students. Those teachers who professed to always familiarise themselves with their students had a mean teaching experience of 11 years, with those who never familiarised themselves teaching for four years. A gender differentiation highlighted a greater percentage of female teachers (29%) always familiarising themselves with their students compared to only 14% of their male colleagues. This distinction between the genders was a conspicuous theme running throughout the findings.

There was no clear understanding at staff level as to what defined an intercultural education. A clear majority of teachers (57%) correctly identified intercultural education as:

“Incorporating minority students into our school through policies of adaptation. The state has a key role here for creating favourable conditions for this.”³¹

No male teacher thought it as: *“the education of minorities for their integration and assimilation into our cultural and social way of life”* although two female teachers thought this so. A tabulated illustration of the figures details, in percentage terms, teachers’ understanding of the concept of interculturalism:

Figure 4.4: Understanding Interculturalism (N=14)

<i>Definition</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
The culture of the minority group is important and requires recognition and acceptance.	14%	
Emphasises the need for toleration and better community relations in our schools.	14%	
The education of minorities for their integration and assimilation into the cultural and social way of life.		28%
Teaching students from different countries.	14%	14%
Incorporating minority students into our school through policies of adaptation. The state has a key role here for creating favourable conditions for this.	58%	58%

Not surprisingly, only a few teachers (21%) had taken steps to include a multicultural element in their classrooms. No male teacher admitted to have taken steps while almost half of the female sample did. Even so, these remain a minority.³² Those who did tended to do so in an ad hoc fashion. One teacher commented:

“I do make references to other lands and cultures in the process of explaining and introducing the students to the culture and language I am teaching.”

Beyond these comparisons, however, I have not explored these themes further."

Another teacher wrote:

"To broaden the curriculum in my English classes to incorporate Asian, African and American writers that don't appear on "traditional" course contents. To use my own knowledge of other cultures to come to explain certain facets of our own culture and society here."

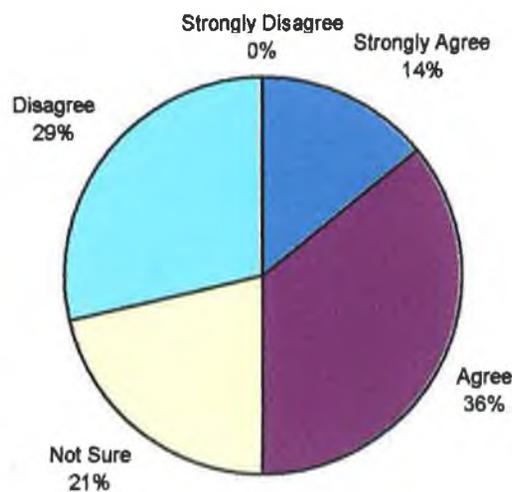
While efforts such as these are honest, they appear disjointed and lacking the necessary consultation with international parents and students. Hence, there is a prevalent danger of instilling a curriculum that is flawed and based on what people think will address the issues, as opposed to ones that are grounded in enduring, meaningful change. Notwithstanding, these efforts are noteworthy, although perhaps somewhat lost among the general apathy for curricular inclusion.

Despite this, half of the teachers responded that their teaching style was altered because of the presence of international students. Female teachers appeared more positive with a small majority (57%), on the Likert scale, either strongly agreeing or agreeing. In contrast, a disappointing 43% of males agreed it had made an impact. No male teacher strongly agreed with this. Many teachers spoke of their heightened self-awareness, including one teacher who stated:

"Phrasing questions, consciousness of level, of either comprehension or degree of confidence in their level of speaking English. I would be watchful of intimidation from other students when correcting tests or homework. I would take their situation into account. I would be aware that there is an initial period of adjustment called for when enforcing school rules, laboratory rules, written reports, etc..."

Others referenced providing simpler texts, summarising information and putting material on tape for students to listen to. Figure 4.5 represents the extent to which teachers felt their teaching styles were impacted upon.

Figure 4.5: The Impact of Multiculturalism on Teaching Styles



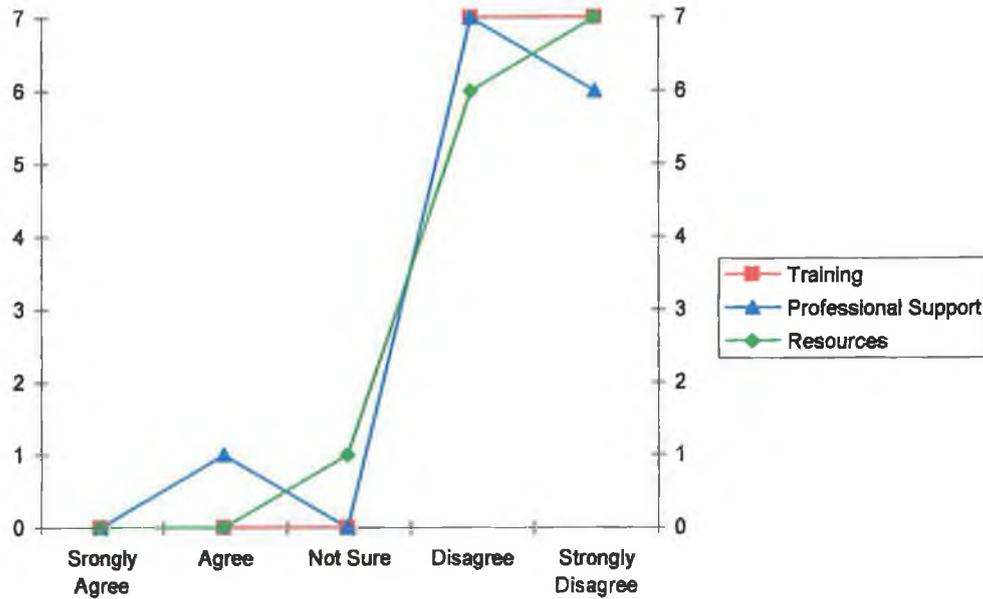
Aside from the many good examples of work a significant number of the sample (29%) disagreed that changes have been made to the teaching style. One teacher here stated that although they were *“aware of other cultures in the classroom”* she tended *“to teach the same.”* Another teacher confirmed that *“as of yet no change because as a professional I treat all students the same.”* In a somewhat honest manner the teacher proceeded on the commonplace basis that we are all equal but not different. Such an approach is assimilationist in focus and

“Gross injustices can occur when whites assume that there are no differences between members of the different minorities and white people - that is, when Whites say, “People are people,” or, “When I see someone who’s Black colour is not an issue.”³³

Most teachers were well-intentioned in their work although serious deficits in training, resources and supports created feelings of frustration and ineptitude. One teacher commented:

“I have been aware of their difficulty with course work, but time constraints and the need to focus on the main body of students in the class means that this has to be overlooked. There is no support, that is extra support, for the difficulties these students have to deal with in this respect.”

Figure 4.6: Teacher Attitudes to Levels of Professional Assistance



No male teacher felt adequately assisted in his work, with only one female teacher agreeing that she was professionally supported in her work. This teacher was an exception. A large number (95%) of all teachers either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they were adequately resourced trained and supported in their work with international students. One teacher's views epitomised the deep-seated criticisms which permeated the responses. In terms of resource assistance they commented:

"It hasn't - the only resources available are those which have been available before we became 'multi-cultural.' There isn't anything 'new' available in my subjects, which especially relate to our 'newly multicultural society.'"

Male teachers accounted for a majority of all those who strongly disagreed on all three areas (57%). It was none too surprising that no male teacher had taken steps to include a multicultural element in their classroom teaching. After all *"it is difficult to be pedagogically graceful when you are lost in unfamiliar territory."*³⁴

Although a significant number (71%) of teachers had considered the intercultural aspect of their teaching prior to completing the questionnaire, there was a wide divergence between the genders. Almost all female teachers (86%) had considered it previously compared to only a little over half (57%) of all male teachers. For many this deliberation arose out of challenges from and encounters with international students as opposed to receiving any form of in-service training. No respondent had attended staff development sessions on the theme.

One teacher referenced an interesting example where an understanding of cultural differences helped resolve a behaviour issue.

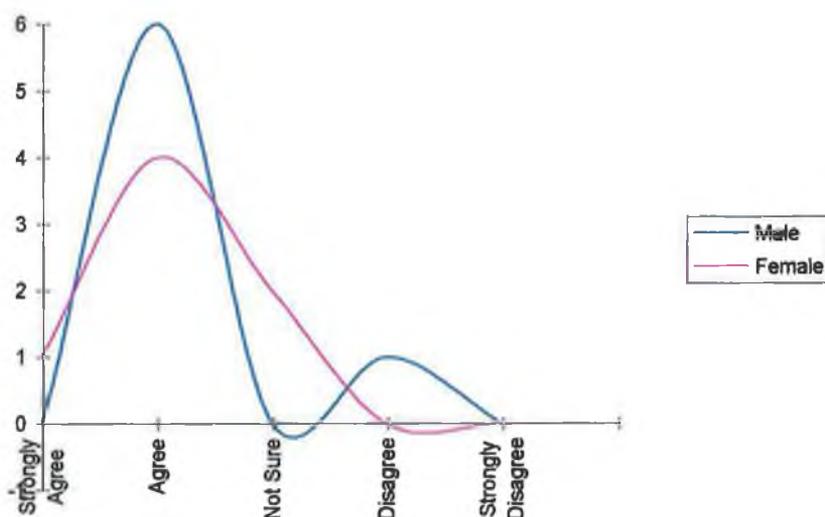
“I met a mother of a student recently on misbehaviour issues relating to her son. The family are Muslims.... The son (a first year) was fasting as it was Ramadan and he could only eat at sunset. No allowances were made for him, even though he had not eaten all day. I knew it was affecting his concentration and ultimately his behaviour as he was tired, hungry and narky, especially at the end of the day.”

Many teachers elicited instances of racism both inside and outside the school. One teacher spoke of a case where certain students made derogatory comments to an international student. The teacher was amazed to discover on reprimanding them, they *“did not seem to care.”* Another teacher cited three examples which forced them to consider how international students are treated. These can be summarised as follows:

1. Two African students who were excellent at Hockey, were ridiculed and excluded by their team-mates. One Irish student was the instigator of the trouble. The two African students gave up playing the game.
2. On a school trip into Dublin one Transition year Asian girl was *“groped blatantly”* by a middle aged male passer-by. The student told the teacher that such an episode was commonplace.
3. When the teacher was organising the Debs Ball they realised that they had received no deposit from a certain African student. On questioning the student they replied they were not going because they never felt that they fitted in to the school. Despite pleas, the student refused to go.

Aside from these encounters, many of which were negative, teachers in general felt the change towards a multicultural classroom was a good change for them. There was a high satisfaction rating (79%) in this category with only one male teacher disagreeing. This was an exception with the remainder all other male teachers viewing it as something positive. Figure 4.7 clearly illustrates teachers' attitudes to these changes.

Figure 4.7: Positive Attitudes to a Multicultural Classroom



Results for female teachers were more varied with many agreeing (57%) that it was a good change, although two out of the seven teachers expressed doubts over this. Both felt that it placed another burden on an already over-loaded system.

“Given the time constraints to get a syllabus covered it is an extra responsibility or added factor in order to ensure that these students have full comprehension of concepts. This takes time which is never taken into account.”

Few were as negative and many articulated the benefits of *“accepting people who are different.”* In a form of symbiosis, teachers felt both international and Irish students would benefit in the formal interface of cultures. However, some pointed up the challenges of achieving this, particularly with a deficit in available resources. One teacher stated:

“It is a good change in the sense that my international students would be better catered for. However without resources or training these students are basically left to sink or swim.”

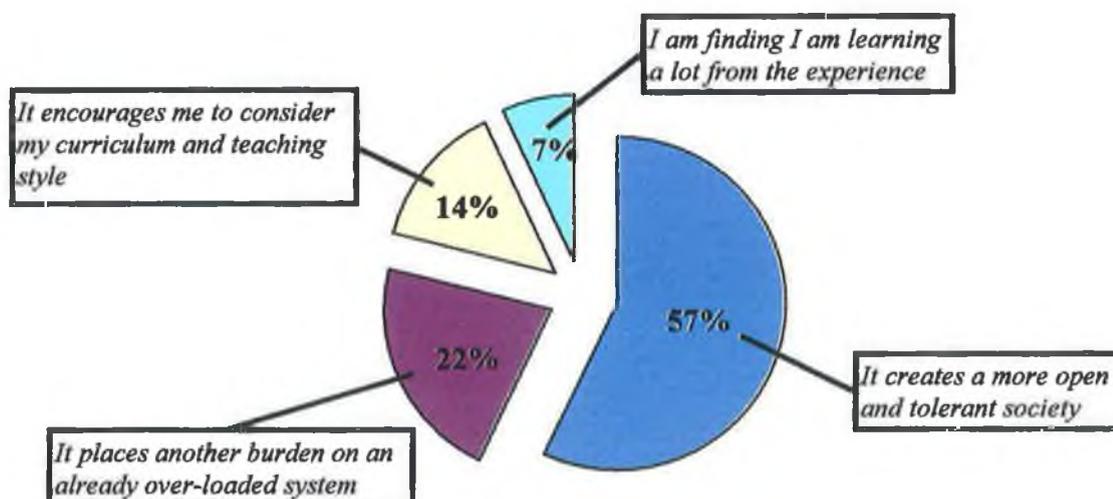
Many agreed with this analogy. In a rank order question half of respondents adjudged the Irish education system to have adopted a *“sink or swim”*, or assimilationist policy in its dealings with international students. A majority of teachers (67%) disagreed that the current system was successful with very few (28%) believing the system was meeting needs despite a lack of resources. This lack of resources dominated a catalogue of challenges for teaching in a multicultural society. Although results were varied among respondents, over one-third (37%) identified lack of time to provide

individual support as the principle challenge. Similar numbers (39%) thought a lack of training as their greatest challenge with lack of in-service support holding a close third priority at 22%. In contrast, almost all teachers (86%) felt well supported by parents. The following is a catalogue of challenges in order of their priority for teachers.

1. Lack of time to provide individual support.
2. Lack of training.
3. Lack of in-service support.
4. Lack of resources.
5. Lack of understanding of different cultures.
6. Lack of time in dealing with inter-cultural issues.
7. Lack of skills in dealing with inter-cultural issues.
8. Lack of technical skills.
9. Lack of parental support.

This perceived lack of support eclipsed many of the responses. While a majority (57%) of teachers argued that teaching in a multicultural society creates a more open and tolerant community, very few (7%) believed they learned a lot from the experience. Figure 4.8 details, in percentage terms, what teachers considered to be some of the more important aspects of teaching in a multi-cultural society.

Figure 4.8: Important Aspects of Teaching in a Multi-Cultural Society (N=14)



Consequently, the majority of teachers feel challenged and isolated in the work. In response to a quotation from Mary O'Rourke, a high percentage (79%) of teachers

disagreed that they were in a position to provide the inter-cultural education that she suggests. A gender analysis reveals interesting distinctions with all female teachers answering in the negative. Significantly less than half of male respondents (43%) agreed that teachers were in position to provide this education. Many of these qualified their answers. One teacher stated:

"My answer is yes only if we can get sufficient training and support from the government, which is not there at the minute."

Another stated:

"Yes, with genuine support - in-service, resources. Teachers' own ignorance, fear, insecurity would first have to be addressed. Some may have deep-seated fears and therefore may never be in a position to participate. This must be accepted or tackled genuinely."

On the issue of teachers' own fears and prejudices one teacher vehemently disagreed that *"teachers generally are sensitive to the need to cultivate and foster in pupils the concept of equality of people and the necessity to understand and accommodate different views on a wide range of issues."*³⁵ She stated:

"Some teachers (as in all walks of life) foster difference as a form of control. Some are obviously xenophobic / uncomfortable with non-nationals. Some schools are designed to maintain advantage for the better off in society, to the disadvantage of non-nationals. Few teachers make any effort to recognise and celebrate different cultures among students."

In support of this view, two respondents stated that although many teachers make an honest attempt at cultivating equality and understanding in their classrooms, there are a number who don't. Altering this mindset will provide challenges which the alteration of the curriculum will not address. Indeed, if Banks is to be believed, affecting change, such as reforming the curriculum, while necessary, is futile in the *"hands of teachers who have negative attitudes to different ethnic and cultural groups."*³⁶ I leave the final words to a teacher who summed up the challenges which other teachers of this survey ascribed to.

"We all bring with us to every situation our own predisposition's and perceptions. Without adequate training, we are simply products of our society. many of today's teachers grew up in and were educated in an Ireland which was primarily Catholic and white. Of course, the key is to try and bring about a more tolerant society and I feel that is a huge responsibility to place on teachers who are already stretched in many areas of education. There is a need to provide adequate time in the curriculum to deal with and discuss properly the concept of equality in Ireland."

4.6 Resistance in Action: Employing the Race Card

A perceptible number of Irish students and one teacher highlighted the employment of the “Race Card” in their interaction with international students and some Irish students even testified that international people were racist themselves. In an out of school incident one student quoted an example of this.³⁷

“My da was getting a McDonald’s and the black fella behind the counter goes, ‘Do you want any chips with that,’ and me da says ‘yea’ back to him. your man behind the counter goes and tells the manager that me da called him a ‘fucking nigger.’ And he didn’t. Me da went mad. The next time me da went in your man starts calling me da ‘white trash’ and a ‘wigger.’”³⁸

Teachers and principal were seen as weak-willed in addressing these issues, as one student outlined:

“The teachers are too afraid to say anything to someone in case they’re accused of being racist.”

The “Race Card” was perceived as particularly potent, with certain international students employing it in a somewhat Machiavellian effort to bring about a desired result.

Researcher: *“Have you ever come across an international student saying to a teacher that they were racist?”*

Student: *“Yea I have. He (the international student) went over and gave a young one a nipple cripple and she went down and told on him. and he turns around to his year head and goes they’re all being racist. They don’t like me. They want me kicked out of the school. He got away with it.”*

From the teacher’s perspective this use of the “Race Card” came as a serious shock. They state:

“One student who was misbehaving in class tried to use the ‘Race Card’ as explanation as to why I had a complaint about his behaviour. The behaviour in question was a regular classroom disciplinary matter, and the treatment was the same for each student. The ‘Race Card’ excuse came as a shock.”

The “Race Card”, in these contexts, functions in a twofold way. Primarily it is a form of resistance towards the dominate Irish culture, which media reports, would show as significantly racist in its interface with international peoples.³⁹ Secondly, it is a colloquialism effectively employed by the dominant culture to reflect notions of racism away from itself and back onto the micro culture. In so doing it assists the macro culture in asserting their status over international students, while also

maintaining their illusions that they are a fair and decent people. Consequentially, it creates a schism in the interface of cultures and therein acts as a resilient barrier to integration. While the scope of this study does not permit a longitudinal treatise of the subject it nonetheless is important to point it up as a critical area of further investigation.

4.7 “Priorities, Priorities” - Ad hoc Assimilation

The school principal had a good theoretical, if not working, concept of interculturalism although as of yet, no whole school policy had been formalised. For reasons of time and also “*because in fact we don’t want to reach it*” interculturalism is viewed as just “*another thing in the big basket of things to be done.*” With no approved training, the issue has been managed, by both state and school, on an ad hoc basis with the principal working from his “*own knowledge, experience and gut feelings.*”

The sizeable raft of legislative and curricular changes, in addition to adjustments in school personnel has obviated against the school tapping into the complexities of the issue. Equally it has also stifled the desire to obtain an intensive analyses of the whole school programme in this area. Consequentially, the interview showed informed decisions being seldom made, with solutions often principally of the “*sticking plaster*” form. The principal did feel “*confident that there is a positive consciousness there*” although the teacher survey revealed a sizeable number of staff feeling overloaded and isolated.⁴⁰ For them little attention was focused on the quality implementation of providing an equitable education for these students with perceptible problems of integration. As Eisner states:

“If we want to understand why we get what we get from our schools, we need to pay attention not simply to the score, but to the ways in which the game is played.”⁴¹

Notwithstanding, while the principal showed little awareness here, they were acutely aware of the difficulties facing these students. They stated:

“The challenges for all of them in relation to all of them fitting into the classroom must be huge, and it appears to be huge.”

Effectively communicating with peers and teachers was prioritised as particularly complex although these problems are not just difficulty with language. The principal

identified communication difficulties for English speaking international students whose language fails to adequately detail their educational history to date. North American and Australian students, were particularly identified here, although these students did tend to have a higher status on entry to school.

*“The white kid from America, from Australia, is much more readily adopted and may even have higher status because they’re talking a language that may even come out of **Clueless**, of whatever the latest film is. They may even be able to talk about the high school scene from which our kids can relate to TV.”⁴²*

Media reproductions or interpretations of their home school milieu tended to advantage these students. No such privileges were extended to students of other nationalities. With these

“You can find latent forms of extreme republicanism being aimed at students with strong English accents, just as much slurs in relation to racial origin such as being black and being Chinese.”

No proactive strategy is in place for educating against and correcting incidences of this order. Student in-discipline would be monitored by the school, via the tutor system, although much of the onus for reporting behaviour of this nature was placed on the individual student. Although there were a number of racist incidences over the years, these were the exception rather than the norm, and the principal had little knowledge of recent prejudice behaviour.

In addition to this international students faced difficulties of integration and being accepted by their peers. Many were homesick, although this was more acute for those who were in Ireland without one or both of their parents. Coterminously, many had to adapt to a new type of education system which was felt to be innately “*sink or swim*” and blatantly assimilationist in its philosophy. These students form a cohort of those which the Department of Education and Science least fund and appear to least want. The principal accepted from this, that

“The challenges from me is attempting to recognise their differences. Helping them to integrate into the Irish situation, and at the same time recognising that this requires time and support; perhaps in relation to language, perhaps in recognition of their religious beliefs, etc. and our creating an adaptive type of situation in terms of time-tabling when we come to recognising their individual cultures.”

All parents, not unlike Irish parents, wanted the very best for their child's education although there were wide disparities in expectations for their children and in communicating those expectations to the school. North American parents, particularly fathers, created considerable difficulties for the principal. These operated from a culture which demands more accountability and transparency from the school and one which frequently *"infringes upon the professional rights and lower the status of the teacher."* More often than not they demanded better quality of service for their child, and focused less concern for pastoral care and more on standards of achievement. In the principal's opinion, many held unrealistic expectations of their child and a number failed to accept the Irish standards of assessment which are criterion based, as opposed to norm based.

"Again, a challenge there for parents is to understand the difference there is in terms of grading. Non-achievement of an 'A' in the Irish education system would still be regarded as good, say for example if the child got a 'B.' We would be inclined to give out few enough A's, but in the American system, where they would be basing it on a different system, anything below a C is a disastrous result."

In contrast with this, White South African parents would feel the Irish system to be a little more demanding and that their child *"will have to stretch themselves in coming into a similar age cohort."*

With other cultures there were widely divergent attitudes and levels of appreciation of the school and the teacher. Chinese parents tended to have a high respect for the school and for teachers in general, whereas parents from the United Kingdom, tended to view the school in much the same light as the American parents. Notwithstanding, these parents tended to complain in writing, as opposed to face to face contact. Nigerian parents, because many of them were well-educated, tended to be most supportive of the school's work, although many had *"unrealistic"* expectations for their children. These differed to the North American parents in that:

"In Nigeria it would be more easy to achieve.... He might be as demanding but it is easier to explain to him."

The greatest challenge for the principal was in communicating to African parents, that the school was unable to provide a place for their child. A number of parents, who have only moved into the area, approach the school too late. The school is over-

subscribed with a considerable waiting list, although these parents often refuse to accept this reasoning

“And they cannot understand why they are not being accepted. They may indeed, although they’re not expressing it to me, they may indeed be assuming that it’s the equivalent of a ‘No Irish need apply’ policy.”

Equally, the principal identified a potential problem which is emerging among Irish students and parents that there is an exceptional number of coloured students being admitted to the school, at the expense of Irish students. This is an issue which has not yet been tackled, but yet one which has grave consequences for the integration of international students.

In conclusion, despite the principal’s accurate definition of an intercultural education, no formal policies or actions have been taken. Staff have not received training, and an ever widening disparity has emerged between the staff and the principal as to the positive spirit which exists for international students. This research has found teachers to be inadequately resourced and trained for their work with these students. While the principal acknowledges some of these challenges, he understates many of them. Equally, the absence of an information campaign, via the Board of Management and the Parent’s Association, has allowed creeping levels of prejudice and misinformation to surface. The principal needs to be proactive and accurately state the school’s enrolment policy, which, under both the Education Act (1998) and the Equal Status Act (2000), is non-discriminatory.⁴³ In accurate terms, the principal, with the assistance of teachers, parents, pupils, and other community agencies, needs to initiate a school development process which will promote self-accountability in addition to securing equal access and opportunity for all international pupils and parents. The school, under their guidance, needs to become the *“learning organisation”* that Fullan speaks of and become *“dynamically plugged into its environment if it is to have any chance at all of surviving.”*⁴⁴

Footnotes

¹ 17% of students are estimated by the school to derive from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. On their point of entry into the school, each child's parents are asked for details concerning their permanent place of residence and their occupations. The school then uses this information to determine the student's social background; hence the figure of 17%. However, it is a weak framework from which to operate considering that it is a fixed definition. No recognition is taken of changing circumstances in the student's life over the next six years. As a matter of good practise this methodology for determining social class must be reviewed by the school.

² This is separately assessed from the above measurement of social class. The students' chronological reading age is examined in the GAP Reading Test before Christmas of the students' first term in the school. The 10-20% figure is the range of variability taken from the previous four years.

³ Local, national and international research supports this view. At a local school level, as part of a planning committee, we undertook a survey. The results revealed a dominant criticism from students that many teachers were not doing their job properly. That is, homework was not properly explained and often poorly corrected. Many students (63%) felt teachers did not plan their classes, and some teachers frequently arrived late for class. These results showed an acute awareness, by students, of their teachers' abilities.

International research supports these findings. Cooper and McIntyre (1996) tell us that students are discerning observers, and frequently critics of the teaching process. They quote, "*Pupils' craft knowledge was concerned with a wide range of issues in which effective teaching and learning were nested.*" Frequently, students use criticisms of their teachers as an effective strategy in which to "manage" their teachers. Quoted from Cooper, P. and McIntyre, D. *Effective Teaching and Learning: Teachers' and Students' Perspectives* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1996), p.93. See also Brophy, J.E. and Good, T.L. *Teacher-Student Relationships: Causes and Consequences* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1974). Particularly chapter one, which is especially useful.

⁴ A significant example of state exclusion is found in the CAO application form. EU citizens pay €30 and have until the 1 February 2002 to submit their application form whereas international students must pay double, that is €60, and they must submit their application by the 15th December 2002. When this researcher contacted the CAO about this they stated that they need a certain amount of time to confirm the educational status of international students. However, "off the record" the person told me that this was a "rubbish" excuse.

⁵ It is important to note that no male teacher had taken steps to include a multicultural aspect to their teaching.

⁶ This student was from a war torn African nation. He told how some members of his family were brutally maimed, and one even killed by army officials. Hence, his reference to teachers acting like "soldiers" is particularly pressing considering his past history.

⁷ The student had to be sent home for the day after this incident. She was inconsolable. What was surprising was that her parents never contacted the school, nor did the school contact them. This incident not only reveals a serious lack of understanding and compassion on the school's part, but also a lack of parent power within the school.

⁸ This example illustrates the barriers which a number of international students can face even though they may wish to assimilate to the dominant culture. It is clear that the education system is not equipped to cope with individuals who have suffered trauma in their lives. While the school obviously lacked an initial sensitivity to the needs of this student, it also failed to diagnose the student's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. This is one such example of where the system can ultimately fail these students. Equally, it illustrates one of the potent barriers to integration which these students can face.

⁹ Examples of this order show the necessity of teachers familiarising themselves with their students' backgrounds. Only then will true sensitivity and understanding be possible.

¹⁰ 79% agreed that Irish students were friendly.

¹¹ 68% believed Irish students to be relaxed.

¹² 66% of international students felt their Irish peers were tolerant of them.

¹³ A colloquial term for someone who is handicapped.

¹⁴ This quotation succinctly illustrates the various levels on which stigma operates. Here stupidity (i.e. "Look who got stuck with the capper") was equated with disability. Coterminously, disability, or mental deficiency, was determined by the individual's foreign accent. In this instance the international student was stigmatised with the notion of being in some way disabled because of his nationality.

¹⁵ 9% strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 33% didn't know and 8% disagreed.

¹⁶ Based on these findings, McVeigh's study, *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996) is proved outdated. In this research he argued that most migrants are only in Ireland on a temporary basis. Hence few Irish people see them as a permanent threat. Equally, he argued, the myth that Irish people are innately friendly overshadows any impression of fear in its presence of ethnic minorities. This research found no presence of these findings. Consequently, McVeigh's findings are re-written.

¹⁷ To borrow a term from Mr. Noel O'Flynn, TD. This researcher noted that his remarks to the media, in January 2002, have directly influenced Irish student views.

¹⁸ It is interesting at this juncture to note the impact of diet on peoples' natural smell. While Irish people may find a Chinese person unusual in their smell, because of the use of spices, a Tibetan would find the Irish unusual because we eat dairy products.

¹⁹ Note the reference to France. This further reinforces the finding that a lot of Irish born students view international students as one and the same group.

²⁰ 69% agreed that the more international students *agreed* with Irish students the more they fit into school life. 73% accepted they fit in more to school the more they *act* like Irish students. 58% agreed the more they *agree* with Irish students the more they get along with Irish students, while 54% agreed that the more they *act* like Irish students the more they get along with Irish students. Only 42% accepted that they could be themselves around Irish students.

²¹ A cross tabulation of gender with this variable showed 80% of all those who strongly agreed that international students were taking the place of an Irish student were female. Similar gender differences were found in the cross tabulation of gender with the variable that "international students are not welcome to this school." Here, 67% of those who agreed with this statement were female. Media may well play a role here, considering that international males tend to receive a bad press.

²² This is the more up-to-date figure available.

²³ Name of the primary school is withheld for reasons of confidentiality.

²⁴ A Christian Brothers school.

²⁵ It is interesting to note the specific reference to these three groups. Out of a total of thirty-eight international students these three nationalities only accounted for 34.2% of the overall international student body. The fact that their colour and physical appearance makes them more conspicuous, means they are more prone to becoming scapegoats for all Irish problems.

²⁶ Since the completion of this work this student and her family have all been deported back to poverty stricken circumstances in Romania. Despite petitions by myself and others, this student was refused permission to stay and complete her education.

²⁷ Pickering, M. *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation* (Palgrave Publishers Ltd., New York, 2001), p.78.

²⁸ A cross reference of school records supports this view.

²⁹ A brief discussion with the class teachers of these students highlighted an interesting behaviour. One of these students has been reprimanded on several occasions for copying homework from certain students. While it is difficult to judge reasons for this it may indicate the presence of a coping mechanism by the student, due to an inability to complete the homework. The class teacher told me that letters were written in the student's homework journal to inform the parents of this, and that "*they've always been signed.*" Of course, signature on a note does not ensure understanding on the parent's part. Hence, school systems, while they may work for the majority, they may be failing certain other students. Despite the presence of a homework club in the school none of these students have attended. Again a failure of school communication systems.

³⁰ Fanning, B., Veale, A. and O'Connor, D. *Beyond the Pale: Asylum-Seeking Children and Social Exclusion in Ireland* (Irish Refugee Council, Dublin, 2001), p.45.

³¹ See Teachers' Survey, Appendix 7.

³² 43% of female teachers admitted to having taken steps to include a multicultural element in their classrooms.

³³ Katz, J. H. *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training* (University of Oklahoma Press, USA, 1950), p.110.

³⁴ Eisner, E. W. *The Kind of Schools we Need* (Heinemann, Portsmouth, 1998), p.159.

³⁵ Mary O'Rourke, speaking on 31 October 1991. See Teacher's Survey, Appendix 6, Question 14.

³⁶ Banks, J.A. "*Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals*" in Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986), p.22.

³⁷ Out of school incidents are particularly relevant to this case study and in no way should they be seen as digressive. Many of these incidents colour the viewpoint of the students, often leaving an indelible imprint of the attitudes of the students. These attitudes are frequently brought into the school setting.

³⁸ It is important to note that in the interface of cultures, often there may be a misunderstanding in communication. One group may well hear something quite different from what was said. While this may not be the case in the instance that was quoted, it is nonetheless worthy of note.

³⁹ Refer to page 7 and Section 2.7 of this work for a brief treatise of this topic.

⁴⁰ Fullan succinctly captures the complexity of staff emotion here. He states that: "*The overall effect was the proliferation of weakly implemented and unaligned progress that might make a school look good to the casual observer, but often left staff frustrated and discouraged by the failure to realise significant improvements in student learning.*" Fullan, M. *Change Forces: The Sequel* (Falmer Press, London & Philadelphia, 1999), p.39.

⁴¹ Eisner, E. W. *The Art of Educational Evaluation* (Falmer Press, East Sussex, 1985), pp.5-6.

⁴² A triangulation of both the students surveys and interviews found this perception to be quite accurate.

⁴³ In fact, under Section 15 of the Education Act (1998), the school is legally obliged to have a published enrolment policy. The absence of this policy has clear consequences here, for many international students are wrongly being blamed for taking up the place of another Irish student. A

published, and effectively communicated, policy would obviate against these forms of prejudice. The school, under the leadership of the principal, needs to fulfill its legal obligations immediately.

⁴⁴ Fullan, M. *Change Forces* (Falmer Press, London & Philadelphia, 1993), p.12.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1: The Changing Faces of Ireland

Classifying contemporary Irish society is exceedingly complex and subject to widely divergent analyses. Changeable social, political and economic conditions have meant Ireland is currently embroiled in a clarification of its own identity. Many commentators have spoken of the loss of homogeneity in the dawn of ethnic pluralism. They argue that our efforts at cultural nationalism in the last century, emphasised a unique, national homogeneity that was always there. In a vague primordial sense, this Irish nationalism was empowered through a common language, religion, birth, literature, and so on. In contrast, others postulate that Ireland was never ethnically homogenous. Rather, this identity was constructed out of a false consciousness, dreamed up in a desire to make Irish culture dominant at the exclusion of all others. Whatever the view, the genesis of inward migration has ensured that Irish society is now far more culturally diverse than even a generation ago.

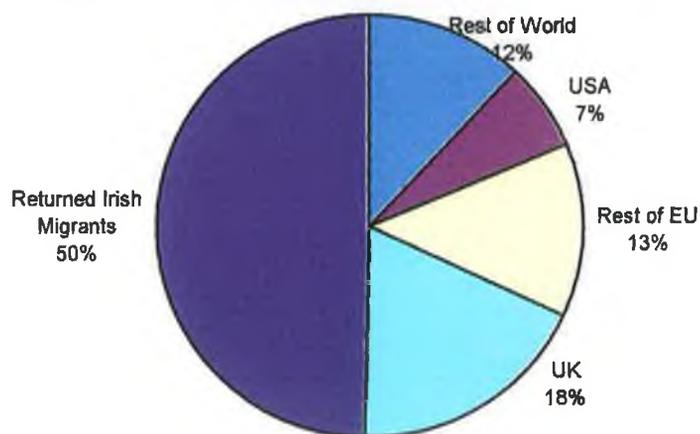
Thousands of people, from over 140 countries, are actively seeking work, a new home or merely seeking refuge from politically corrupt regimes or war torn regions. In the early 1990s Ireland equalled Austria, Belgium and the United Kingdom, per head of population, in terms of migrants received.¹ Figures from 2001 show Ireland surpassing these with only Luxembourg and Spain outnumbering us on a per head of population basis.² Some individuals have sat uncomfortably with this new Ireland, hinting at the perceived dangers of an “*open door*” policy.³ Media reports and government actions have failed to abate anxieties with the consequence that many ethnic communities, both inside and outside schools, are now seriously marginalised. Initiatives such as housing refugees and asylum seekers in “*places of detention*” such as Cherry Orchard Hospital and Mosney, County Meath, have done little to improve common perceptions that these people are “*spongers*” with criminal tendencies.⁴ Additionally, the current Fianna Fáil/PD led government, in sanctioning the accommodation of 1,000 refugees on “*flotels*”, in March 2000, further reinforced this sense of marginalisation. As MacLachlan and O’Connell state:

“Flotels, are perhaps, so controversial because they both metaphorically and literally embody marginalisation, imply a ‘work camp’ ethic, and keep immigrants ‘offshore’ at a safe distance.”⁵

Coterminously, Ireland as a committed member of the European Union for the last twenty years, has put its name to one of the more exclusionary pieces of European legislation. The Dublin Convention (1992) was a “fortress” policy aimed at restricting access to the EU zone. This entailed the EU functioning as a single asylum unit with the consequence that an application declined in one country is automatically rejected in all other EU countries. There is no appeals procedure. In extraordinary circumstances applicants may be granted “*Exceptional leave to remain*” although this affords them minimal protection and privileges can be withdrawn at any time. Such initiatives have further removed certain migrants to the margins of society, with the greater likelihood of increased paranoia among the host Irish society.

While there is no disputing the overall migratory flows into Ireland, there exist no factual evidence which accounts for the perception that Ireland is “overrun” with asylum seekers and refugees. Of the approximate quarter of a million persons who migrated to Ireland from 1995-2000, only 29,400 (12%) originated in countries outside the EU and USA. Returned Irish emigrants accounted for upwards of 50% (123,100) of the census total.⁶ The following pie chart illustrates this:

Figure 5.1: Immigrants to Ireland, 1995-2000 (CSO)



Naturally these are official figures only and do not factor for undercounting, omission, nor ethnic births within Ireland. McVeigh, with more clarity, tells us there are “*some 75,000 minority ethnic people in Ireland - thus around 1.5% of the Irish population is from a minority ethnic background.*”⁷ 45,000 of these are coloured which makes them more conspicuous within a predominantly “white” society, and therein more prone to

racialised encounters.⁸ With further increases in these numbers likely, further negative labelling is envisaged.

In answering this negative social conditioning, there is an increasing national recognition that pluralism can only be cultivated through adept measures of social inclusion. In a speech in February 2000, President Mary McAleese defined the basic elements of this social inclusion as a:

“Respect for every human being, not just those you like, not just those who share our views and identity, but for everyone who shares this island with us.”⁹

At local school level, an intercultural approach needs to be formally inculcated. Through policies that promote understanding, interaction and integration among and between differing cultures, the school organisation can be enriched. This study found little formalised provision is made for minority ethnic groups within education.¹⁰ Hence the international students feelings of alienation and their need to assimilate.

Altering the Irish psyche, in acceptance of this view is complex and not easily achieved. As educators there is an onus to promote tolerance for difference. Through identifiable goals of social inclusion, intellectual freedom can be achieved. Efforts need not be futile. Roy Foster, in his analysis of contemporary Irish society succinctly captures the benefits, and challenges, of engaging in this evolving process. His quotation of Yeats is particularly appropriate in describing the many faces of Ireland today.

“Intellectual freedom is a possession conferring the ability to face up to uncomfortable truths - for nations as for individuals. W.B. Yeats, in a speech of 1926, made a vital distinction between national vanity and national pride. ‘When a nation is immature it is exceedingly vain, and does not believe in itself, and as long as it does not believe in itself it wants other people to think well of it in order that it might get a little reflected confidence. With success comes pride, and with pride comes indifference as to whether people are shown in a good or bad light on the stage. As a nation comes to intellectual maturity it realises the only thing that does it any credit is its intellect.’ Here, I think that ‘intellect’ means culture. With maturity comes the recognition of cultural diversity. If we give up exclusive vanity (based on insecurity), we can achieve inclusive pride. Nor need cultural diversity imply political confrontation. People can learn to reconcile more than one cultural identity within themselves.”¹¹

5.2 Changing Times - Changing Schools

In McVeigh's terms, education needs to adopt an "equal but different" stance in reference to working with international students. This will require widespread structural changes. Some of these are already underfoot. The NCCA is currently reviewing the entire school curriculum at primary and post-primary level in an attempt to ensure it reflects our expanding multicultural society. Guidelines are expected in December of 2002 although many of their findings are already known. The NCCA has stressed that the curriculum itself will not be changed but rather they will look at ways to make what is already there more relevant to the classroom. English, for example, may include more texts from Africa, while Mathematics, may include more references to the early mathematicians from Egypt and the Middle East. The report is also expected to call for radical changes to the way the curriculum is delivered in the classroom, especially in terms of the utilisation of alternative resources. Course material and textbooks will be examined with a view to discouraging the over-use of "Eurocentric" examples. Geography, in particular, will be called on to use "Peter's Projection" map which accurately represents the surface area proportions of continents to each other.¹² It is hoped that the two-person team conducting this work will have done so in consultation with members of the minority communities. As Lodge and Lynch state:

*"Programmes that are grounded in the social and cultural realities of the targeted population can expect better results than those that are not."*¹³

Other structural issues significantly remain, namely the lack of cultural diversity among school staff populations. The Irish requirement for teaching remains a formidable impediment towards achieving greater multi-cultural representation on school staffs. Studies since the seventies have pointed indisputably to the powerful influence teachers have in the personal formation of their students. As McLaren states:

*"Teaching always takes place in relation to a particular regime of truth or dominating logic linked to capitalist social relations and the social division of labour. Acquiring knowledge does not provide students with a reflection of the world; it creates a specific rendering of the world that is only intelligible within particular ideological configurations, social formations, or systems of mediation.... Teaching itself functions to produce students... as social and cultural subjects."*¹⁴

The more uniform the school staff the more efficiently students embrace the view that this uniformity represents the way the world is meant to be. To thwart the formulation of this skewed ideological influence schools need to foster an acceptance of diversity, not only among students but more particularly among staff. Where everyone holds different ideological perspectives it is easier to be different. Otherwise, ethnic minorities may feel the compulsion towards assimilating to the dominant culture.

Adopting an intercultural approach indicates a shift in attitude to one where there are no dominant ideologies but rather myriad ideologies in co-existence. Hence we are all members of ethnic groups and therein have a right to cultural inclusion.¹⁵ Here we speak of a “*world community*”¹⁶ with an ethos that genuinely values each child, regardless of their values, ethos and cultural perspectives. The school has a moral responsibility to teach their students how to live in a culturally pluralistic society. This entails teaching, as Banks argues:

- (a) *That ethnicity is socially and personally pervasive and persistent.*
- (b) *That ethnic understanding enhances one's capability to be human.*
- (c) *That individuals and groups should be encouraged to praise and promote their ethnicity.*
- (d) *That ethnic pride and loyalty are not mutually exclusive.*
- (e) *That multicultural competence is not an automatically acquired skill; it has to be learned.*¹⁷

Negative social conditioning makes achieving this a painful process of “*self-examination and self-criticism.*”¹⁸ Efforts at real change are continuously checked by cultural biases and prejudices that are often expressed spontaneously and without knowing. Initiating a favourable milieu in which interculturalism can thrive means overcoming these and other specific barriers. Barriers that include: overcome

1. *Realising that we have biases threatens our self-belief that we are moral, democratic, decent people.*
2. *Realising our biases requires accepting responsibility for any action or inaction which we may take.*
3. *Overcoming our biased cultural conditioning is more than an intellectual exercise. We must be constantly vigilant of manifestations of bias in ourselves and in those around us.*¹⁹

To effect real change towards an intercultural ethos the whole school community must evaluate the validity of their cultural assumptions and beliefs. For this to happen, it will require educators to make an effort to interact with parents and students who are

culturally different from themselves. Encouraging participation on parent committees and student involvement in extra curricular activities is one way of achieving this. Although educators must continually note that there exists widespread diversity within single groups. It is not possible, nor advised, to globally transfer the traits of a few parents and students to the total group. As Gollnick and Chinn state:

“In direct cross-cultural contacts, one must learn to be open to the traditions and perspectives of the other culture in order to learn from the experiences. Otherwise ones’ own traditions, habits, and perspectives are likely to be projected as better rather than just different. If individuals can learn to understand and empathise with a second culture, they will have had a valuable experience. If they learn to live multiculturally, they are indeed fortunate.”²⁰

Achieving this as a school community is challenging, but an effective school knows that it is only in pursuing this that meaningful change can be effected.

5.3 Teacher Behaviour - Fostering Self-Reflection

For change of this order to be implemented the Department of Education and Science will have to inject considerable resources to in-service training. To date, as found in this and other research there is no comprehensive pre-service or in-service teacher training system in place. If, by teaching, we mean a translation of knowledge into a meaningful delivery system, then teaching in a multicultural society requires teachers to synthesise and apply their knowledge in a different way from which they learned it. Implementing change of this order is not easy and its complexities should not be underestimated. Banks highlights four operative aspects of re-educating teachers:

- 1. Teachers should have some supervised practise in developing multicultural plans for use with students.*
- 2. Skills training should involve teachers practising, analysing and evaluating different instructional strategies and teaching styles.*
- 3. Teachers should learn how to better diagnose ethnic students’ educational needs and assess their academic performance.*
- 4. Learning how to evaluate textbooks and other instructional materials. It is not enough to merely encourage teachers to be sensitive to ethnic bias in instructional materials. They must be taught how to identify and correct these biases.²¹*

Eisner would tell us that schools are “robust” institutions that have a history which frequently militates against this form of change.²² No where is this more palpable than in teacher behaviour and in their reaction to innovative measures. While the majority

research (McLaren, 1948; Fullan, 1993; Starratt, 1995; MacBeath, 1999) accepts that a teacher's behaviour in the classroom is a key factor in helping all students reach their potential, this research showed certain teachers who were sceptical about the benefits of change. Some reflected that international students were another burden in an already over-burdened system. This reaction is not unique as Bennett, Crawford and Riches tell us:

*"One of the great problems in educational reform is that there is too much well-intentioned 'ad hoc-ism' - the use of single, segmented solutions unconnected or unintegrated with their systemic realities."*²³

To alter this mindset, the Department will have to accept that time needs to be provided in order for teachers to learn. After all *"it is difficult to be pedagogically graceful when you are lost in unfamiliar territory."*²⁴ A culture of collaboration and power-sharing should be inculcated with those who are charged with coping with the change on the ground. One of the problems in adopting change is that the sources of change tend to be scholars and not the practitioners themselves. The process, therefore, is not in their hands. This creates significant consequences such as what Apple calls *deskilling*. Equally it:

*"Discourages teachers' abilities to set goals, develop skills, respond to feedback, and become engaged in improving their practise; instead, it encourages teachers to become dependent on the latest innovation, driving them further from a sense of their own expertise and professionalism."*²⁵

Research, from Dewey to Huberman, Sarason and Callan supports this view that unless teachers feel some commitment to change, they are unlikely to change.

Yet, teachers need to positively embrace this change, although there is a considerable amount of anger surrounding this issue due to the lack of training and importance that the Department has ascribed to this. Many teachers feel that not only the students but they too were left to *"sink or swim."* Transcription of the student interviews show that this negativity is readily being transferred from certain teachers to the international students. As Kenny says:

*"To put it flippantly, the older the pupils we teach, the more important the job is deemed to be (per capita funding testifies to this) and the less training we get to do it."*²⁶

This research does not set out to attribute blame, especially not to teachers considering the inadequacies of the system. It must be noted that:

“Teachers are human beings who bring their cultural perspectives, values, hopes and dreams to the classroom. They also bring their prejudices, stereotypes and misconceptions. Teachers’ values and perspectives mediate and interact with what they teach, and influence the way that messages are communicated and perceived by their students.”²⁷

Teachers need to clarify their own cultural values and identities before they can begin to work positively with diverse ethnic groupings. Training is key here. Aside from individual teacher efforts²⁸ there has been no effort, either at school management or Department level to address this. International students and their teachers are definitively left to sink or swim.

5.4 “Who has the Bigger Stick?” - Findings and Recommendations

This case study found that at an individual level our education system is assimilationist in practise with little or no diversity among its ranks. Racist and prejudice behaviour revealed itself among many school sections with little formalised endeavour to initiate remedial actions. The following catalogue elucidates comprehensive initiatives which are specifically practical and immediate in their focus. The recommendations take varying forms. Initial recommendations are tailored to the individual school although these dovetail to incorporate wider, more national, initiatives.

At local, Individual Whole-School Level:

1. As evidenced, particularly in teacher, principal and Irish born student responses, single factor paradigm models are not sufficient in their focus. Altering single variables within a school context²⁹ leads to ill-defined, ad hoc strategies which ultimately fail to radically influence standards and increase levels of access. While compensatory education programs are welcome, they are insufficient when measured against the benefits of preventative and complimentary programmes. Consequently, partners in change must accept and formulate a change strategy that seeks to reform the whole school environment. Banks rightly states:

“In order to effectively design school programs that will help ethnic minority youths to increase their academic achievement and to help all students to develop ethnic literacy and cross cultural competency, we must conceptualise

the school as a system in which all of its major variables and components are highly interrelated."³⁰

Introducing measures of this nature will mean individuals, not just management or teachers, but also the parents, students, and other partners in education need to be drawn into a cross hierarchical structure that works towards this priority need. Research (Banks, 1986; Arora and Duncan, 1986; Cohen and Cohen, 1986) shows that without individual consultation with relevant parties, all changes run the risk of failure because they are scripted from culturally specific, white Irish notions.

2. Statements of school policy require a cogent emphasis which expressly aims to value and accommodate cultural diversity. There needs to be a clearly articulated and open commitment to challenge all forms of racism, with time-tabled anti-racism training programmes for both staff and students.³¹
3. Teachers need, as a matter of urgency, to be provided with on-going in-service related to their needs. At individual school level, a briefing session should be organised, with a speaker brought in for all or part of a staff council meeting.
4. Conspicuous deficits in teacher training should not militate against, nor excuse, teacher accepting responsibility for acquiring knowledge for themselves in addition to attending courses. Reading community newspapers, listening to radio documentaries in addition to watching television programmes, are effective ways to keep *au fait* with current developments.
5. Findings from students' surveys and interviews reveal distinctive negative attitudes to international students by a certain percentage of the school teaching staff. These attitudes were expressed in both verbal³² and non-verbal³³ ways. With the aid of anti-racist training, teachers and management alike will develop a genuine regard and acceptance of these students. The principal has a duty to oversee this work.
6. A strong indicator of the values endorsed by the school and its teachers is not solely evidenced in the school curriculum, but often more forcibly in the "*unadmitted*"³⁴ curriculum. No where is this more evident than in images which the teacher chooses to display in their classroom. A survey of the school revealed

only two classrooms with visual images of international people. Notwithstanding, two of these images presented stereotyped images of a undeveloped, ignorant, hopeless people. Images of this nature, echo the “*Black Baby*” collections which perpetuated images of African people “*as passive victims who could only be saved by the good offices of the Catholic Church.*”³⁵ More appropriate images can be found in magazines, in information leaflets disseminated by embassies and in brochures from travel agents. Displaying of such images can lead to the cultural enrichment of both the classroom and the school in general.

7. Although selection tests serve to allocate students to classes according to their ability levels, this research found serious deficits in its operation. Culturally specific questions, and language, does little more than create an illusion of impartiality in a system that fails to recognise its inherent flaws. As Cicourel states:

*“In more familiar terms, ignorance masquerades as stupidity....If culture influences the way we reason and make inferences, then we cannot assume that the products of standardised intelligence tests give us some kind of direct access to higher and lower levels of ability.”*³⁶

Equally the insistence that each student sit the Irish component of the entrance examination is a practise that seriously misrepresents student ability. A minimum of three international students claim to have been improperly placed in a lower stream class based their result in the Irish test. With this in mind a whole-school review of the entrance test procedures must begin immediately.

8. Correlated with this, research supports the belief that school institutions tend to deteriorate unless they are continuously rejuvenated. MacBeath tells us:

*“It is an index of a nation’s educational health when its school communities have a high level of intelligence and know how to use the tools of self-evaluation and self-improvement.”*³⁷

To this end, staff need to locate difficulties, observe and analyse where the process of pre-existing changes are not yielding expected results and where individual students, or whole groups are not benefiting from current school initiatives. Targets need to be set and key personnel nominated with responsibility for ensuring that progress is made. Time frames need to be agreed upon with structures specified for evaluating the extent to which results are achieved.

9. Policies need to be developed which define key strategies for animating parental involvement on school committees. Clear channels of communication are important here for creating greater accessibility to and transparency of school structures.
10. The school needs to engage in a systemic analysis of its immediate environment and reappraise its practises in reference to international students. To examine the extent to which it successfully integrates these students or the limit to which it seeks to publicly assimilate them. To question in what ways can the cultural diversity of the pupils be meaningfully represented in the school and what policy of staff development is needed to introduce a culturally fair inter-cultural education. Are the textbooks and teaching materials impartial and accurate or do they espouse racist or discriminatory stereotypes? As Davis says:

“(a) The teacher must be able to justify educationally why a particular topic or theme is included in the curriculum.

(b) The teacher must detail the information, skills, attitudes, values or beliefs which are inherent to the chosen topic or theme. This would involve a description of the methods to be used to teach that topic.”³⁸

In essence, following appraisal school policies and practises should not require students to become alienated from their family or community beliefs in order to receive this education. Naturally, reaching this point involves a painful process of self-examination and frequently, self-criticism. However, conducted in a mutually supportive context this process will affirm *“what we have become rather than regretting what we have lost.”³⁹*

11. Teachers must make greater efforts to know all their students. Research (Craft, 1981; Cohen & Cohen, 1986; Gollnick & Chinn, 1986; Kanpol & McLaren, 1995) agrees that in a multicultural classroom, teachers can no longer teach all students the same knowledge in the same way. Lessons must be individualised so as to help students reach their full potential. Knowing the cultural background of students helps to determine how to structure the classroom in order to provide the more effective instruction. Bennett succinctly describes the importance of this:

“Educators have the responsibility for knowing the cultural backgrounds of their students to help them reach their full potential. Teachers who enter a

classroom of 30 students will find that students have individual differences even though they may look alike. These differences extend far beyond intellectual and physical abilities. Students bring to class different historical backgrounds, religious experiences, and day-to-day living experiences. These experiences direct the way the student behaves in school."⁴⁰

12. A considerable degree of racist and prejudice behaviour was found among Irish students. This was directly attributed to a widely held false assumption that the school had a special quota system in place for international students. Because the school had a waiting list, due to excessive numbers, a number of students' friends were not accepted into the school. One student remarked:

"Well I know loads of my friends from⁴¹ that had to go to the Brothers because loads of blacks got in."

School management need to draw up a communiqué, with the assistance of the Board of Management, the Parents' Association and the Students' Council, which presents the true and accurate picture.⁴²

13. With the aid of translation services, the school authorities should publish a booklet in the various native languages containing such items as are relevant to the various ethnic minorities. Statements of school policies, admission policies and procedures, school rules, among others, would be included here. A number of primary schools in Dublin and Cork already working this system successfully.

At National Level:

1. Guidelines, in consultation with all relevant parties, be developed by the Department of Education and Science, on devising policy and procedures for meeting the needs of minority ethnic students. There are leadership issues involved here and challenges remain as to the correct procedure for fusing the rights of powerful majority groups with those of minorities. Notwithstanding, there is a possibility of an Education Officer with the Equality Authority assuming a position wherein they could attempt to bridge the gaps between recognised powerful educational partners and relatively powerless minorities.
2. This researcher notes the Department of Education and Science's nonchalant attitude to changing the system of recruitment⁴³ which is especially monocultural in

philosophy. Change is necessary to encourage the involvement of minority ethnic cultures in the teaching profession. In the interim, schools can lead the way by encouraging involvement of varying cultures in school structures and activities, up to and including involvement in extra-curricular activities.

3. Customised preparatory and supportive training programmes need to be furnished by the Department of Education and Science for principals and teachers integrating international students into the wider school context. This should include the acquisition of a TEFL qualification⁴⁴ for the resource teacher as a minimum, and for each subject teacher as the maximum. Time needs to be provided for this.
4. State funded English language classes must be provided for Asylum seekers. This is not solely the responsibility of the DES. Rather, it requires close collaboration between the state departments that include: DES, the Department of Justice and Law Reform and the Department of Finance.
5. Teachers and members of school management have access, as a requisite, to interpretation facilities. The current ad hoc practise of using students to translate is unprofessional and contravenes the international family's rights to privacy. Students are not guided by the same professional code of ethics which school managers and teachers are.
6. That additional hours are provided for counselling services within the school. The School Psychological Services need to be enlarged to ensure that the special needs of minority ethnic students are identified and addressed.⁴⁵
7. That subject teachers receive pre-service and in-service training to assist them in satisfying the educational needs of varying cultures within the classroom. As Banks says:

*"Teachers who feel inadequate about their knowledge of ethnic pluralism are not likely to be very effective in their efforts to teach diverse students and multicultural content. And, while we know that knowledge competence alone is neither sufficient for, nor a guarantee of, effective teaching, the lack of it most certainly ensures the inability to teach. The simple fact is that teachers cannot teach what they do not know."*⁴⁶

The NCCA guidelines are insufficient in and of themselves and much work needs to be done here to clarify them.

8. State funded pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes should assist teachers in exploring and clarifying their own cultural identity, and foster in them more positive attitude towards other racial, ethnic and cultural groups.
9. That every student, regardless of age or nationality be treated equitably. The current practise where non-EU students pay double application fees to CAO is discriminating, as is the difference in application date. This practise needs to be challenged, perhaps under the recent equality legislation.
10. While education has been identified, by parents, as a site for cultural inclusion, it also was identified as a site for deep-seated cultural exclusion. Despite arguments to the contrary, the state does not treat ethnic minority students the same. At age 18 students cease to have rights granted heretofore. If a student wishes to pursue third level education they must pay full fees, which often amounts to upwards of €7,000. In many respects, the term "*non-national*" or "*alien*", as opposed to "*international*" is closer to how the state think of these people. The right to education after a certain time period in the State should be recognised, although achieving this is somewhat unrealistic considering it is unofficial State policy to treat these people inequitably in the hope that they leave.
11. That the needs of individual learners be resourced as a right, and be resourced on demand. The current bureaucratic system fails to attend to needs as they arise. A more flexible, but nonetheless accountable, administrative system needs to be developed to reflect the more fluid nature of society today.⁴⁷
12. The review of the entire school curriculum at post-primary level should include materials, activities and assessment procedures which promote an intercultural ethos. This intercultural education should closely adhere to McVeigh's teachings of the equal but different approach and should provide an education for all communities within the school.

13. Finally, there must be a commitment by the state to proactively provide for on-going support for staff development. Research (Fullan, 1991; Bennett, Crawford and Riches, 1992; Eisner, 1998; Bailey, 2000) shows that successful models of change are those which successfully interweave innovation with accountability. Educators must consistently learn and re-learn what is needed and this has major resource implications for both time and money. No longer can educators teach all students the same knowledge in the same way. Fresh ideas must constantly be volunteered in the express ambition of challenging the differences and inequalities which pervade society. Sivanandan succinctly captures the nuances of this point and we leave the final words to them:

*“But we live in a changing world, and we might cast aside yesterday’s ideas, yesterday’s analysis, yesterday’s dogmas if we are to understand and withstand what is happening in our societies today. We may learn from the past, but we can not use the perspectives of the past. We may have the same vision of the future, but we cannot work towards it on the basis of past strategies and past tactics - or with the aid of the same social forces, the same agents of change.”*⁴⁸

Footnotes

¹ *The Irish Independent Weekend*, 17 November 2001, p.5.

² *The Irish Independent*, 12 January 2002, p.15.

³ For many, Ireland is already over-run with international people. Many Irish students spoke of this in their interview, and some remarked that there was "millions of blacks." Another students spoke of "40,000 Chinks in Ireland." Much of their information has come from late night radio talk shows where often the line between fact and opinion is blurred.

⁴ The remarks of Noel O'Flynn (TD), January 2002 are noted here.

⁵ MacLachlan, M. and O'Connell, M. "A State of Diversity?" in MacLachlan, M. and O'Connell, M. (eds.) *Cultivating Pluralism: Psychological, Social and Cultural Perspectives on a Changing Ireland* (Oak Tree Press, Dublin, 2000), p.3.

⁶ Central Statistics Office *Population and Migration Estimates April 2000*, (CSO, Dublin, 2000), p.8.

⁷ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), p.22.

⁸ In the Irish student survey many students felt that there "is nothing but blacks, Chinks, and Pakis." From the reaction this student received from the group it is clear it is a widely held view. Strategies need to be urgently adopted to clarify the situation and promote what we, as a nation, have become instead of mourning what we have lost.

⁹ MacLachlan, M. and O'Connell, M. "A State of Diversity?" in MacLachlan, M. and O'Connell, M. (eds.) *Cultivating Pluralism: Psychological, Social and Cultural Perspectives on a Changing Ireland* (Oak Tree Press, Dublin, 2000), p.3.

¹⁰ Asylum seekers are the worst off, in the sense that many are here illegally, and none of them provided for by the state. There are no additional language classes for these.

¹¹ Foster, R. quoted in *The Whoseday Book: A Unique Diary for the Millennium* (The Irish Hospice Foundation, Dublin, 1999), 14 June.

¹² The "Peter's Projection" map is different to many others in that it shows North America and western Europe correctly apportioned to the other continents. The standard school maps prior to this do not. Hence western Europe and North America often appear as big as, if not bigger, than Africa or Asia. The "Peter's Projection" map is a movement away from this Eurocentricism.

¹³ Lodge, A. and Lynch, K. (eds.) *Equality Audit of Education: First Draft* (May, 2001), p.57.

¹⁴ McLaren, P. *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education* (Longman, New York, 1948), pp.233-4.

¹⁵ The White Paper on Adult Education goes some way towards this, saying there is a need "to frame educational policy and practise in the context of serving a diverse population as opposed to a uniform one." Quoted from Government of Ireland, *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education, 2000* (Government Publications Office, Dublin), p.72.

¹⁶ Castles, S. and Miller, M. *The Age of Migration* (Macmillan, London, 1998), p.271.

¹⁷ Banks, J.A. "Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals" in Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986), p.168.

¹⁸ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), p.48.

¹⁹ National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism *Information Leaflet* (2000), pp.4-5

²⁰ Gollnick, D.M. and Chinn, P.C. *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society* (Charles E. Merrill Publishing, Columbus, 1986), p.278.

²¹ Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986), p.170-71.

²² Eisner, E. W. *The Kind of Schools we Need* (Heinemann, Portsmouth, 1998), p.158.

²³ Bennett, N. Crawford, M. & Riches, C. *Managing Change in Education: Individual and Organisational Perspectives* (The Open University Press, London, 1992), p.122.

²⁴ Eisner, E. W. *The Kind of Schools we Need* (Heinemann, Portsmouth, 1998), p.159.

²⁵ Bailey, B. "The Impact of mandated Change on Teachers" in Bascia, N. & Hargreaves, A. (eds.), *The Sharp Edge of Educational Change: Teaching, Leading and the Realities of Reform* (RoutledgeFalmer, London, 2000), p.120.

²⁶ Kenny, M. "Educating the Educators" in Egan, O. (ed.) *Minority Ethnic Groups In Higher Education in Ireland*, Proceedings of Conference held in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 27 September 1996, p.61.

²⁷ Banks, J.A. "Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals" in Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986) pp.16-7.

²⁸ Many of these individual efforts were noted in Chapter Four.

²⁹ Proponents of the single variable model might argue that altering one item will resolve many difficult issues. For the teachers of the study site, resources need to be improved, for Irish born students, making the international students go elsewhere will resolve the issue for them. The principal needs more time out from administrative duties to refocus his energies here. Tackling issues on a single paradigm level only tackles issues on a superficial, tangential basis which proposes radical approaches yet fails to give them serious analysis or consideration.

³⁰ Banks, J.A. "Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals" in Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986), p.22.

³¹ Already, this researcher has arranged that the findings of this research will be presented to school staff at a half day seminar to be conducted in September 2002. Taking the advise offered by Katz (1950) and Starratt (1995) the seminar will work from the viewpoint of where people are at. It is envisaged that Philip Watt of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism will speak to the staff as part of this evolving initiative.

³² Such as telling the student or else showing annoyance at having to assist an international student with classwork.

³³ Such as prescribing different degrees of punishment for similar misdemeanours.

³⁴ A more useful term which is put to use in Davis, G. "Strategies for Change" in Arora, R.K. and Duncan, C.G. (eds.) *Multicultural Education: Towards Good Practise* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston and Henley, 1986), p.16.

³⁵ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), pp.31-2.

³⁶ Cicourel, A.V. "Living in Two Cultures: The Everyday World of Migrant Workers" in Parris, R.G. *Living in Two Cultures* (The Unesco Press, England, 1982), p.40.

³⁷ MacBeath, J. *Schools Must Speak for Themselves* (Routledge, London, 1999), p.1.

³⁸ Davis, G. "Strategies for Change" in Arora, R.K. and Duncan, C.G. (eds.) *Multicultural Education: Towards Good Practise* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston and Henley, 1986), p.18.

³⁹ McVeigh, R. *The Racialization of Irishness: Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* (CRD, Belfast, 1996), p.48.

⁴⁰ Bennett, C.I. *Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practise* (Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1986), p.5.

⁴¹ The name of the primary school is withheld for reasons of confidentiality.

⁴² Here, the school needs to meet their legal obligations under the terms of the Education Act (1998) and publish their enrolment policy. This would demonstrate clearly what the admissions criteria actually are.

⁴³ Apart from anecdotal evidence, this researcher contacted the Teacher Registration Council. While they argue that things are changing, especially with the removal of the oral examination for the Ceard Teastas as a precondition for service, they still considered it especially "difficult" for international teachers to gain permanent employment. Challenges remain in terms of getting qualifications recognized, especially qualifications from African or Asian universities. This is the considered the greatest impediment to change.

⁴⁴ This researcher notes, that while TEFL qualifications provide useful skills for dealing with students with language difficulties, they are not necessarily culturally inclusive or focused on the recognition of difference. Indeed, the English that is taught tends to be of a middle class type. However, with this limitation in mind, TEFL qualifications are useful for approaching difficulties in language acquisition.

⁴⁵ Such as dealing, among others, with Post Traumatic Stress and feelings of alienation.

⁴⁶ Banks, J.A. "Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals" in Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (eds.) *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing, London, 1986), p.172.

⁴⁷ This is not solely an issue for minority ethnic students but also others students who may have special physical or learning disabilities. The state has a responsibility here, as is evidenced by recent court cases: (A) O'Donoghue V Ireland (1993) which focused on the rights of a child with severe disabilities; (B) Comerford V Minister for Education (1995) which called on the State to provide education for a boy with Attention Deficit Disorder, and (C) Sinnott V Minister for Education (2001) which focused on the right to education for a child with severe disabilities. Despite these court rulings the state's attempt at educational provision for children with special needs has some way to go. The recently published "Disability Bill" also falls short in this provision in that it defines a child as someone who is three years or older. Certainly, this falls far short of total inclusiveness.

⁴⁸ Quoted from Farrington, J. *Fortress Ireland? Racism, Immigration Policy and the Denial of Equality* (Unpublished Thesis, UCD, 1993), p.43.

Glossary of Terms

Acculturation:

The process that occurs when people from one culture encounter and react to another culture. Acculturation may occur at group level and at an individual level, where encountering a different culture changes the psychology of the individual. The degree and type of group and individual acculturation many differ significantly.

Assimilation:

The policy of incorporating migrants into society through a one-sided process of adaptation: immigrants are expected to give up their distinctive linguistic, cultural or social characteristics and become indistinguishable from the majority population.

Asylum Seeker:

These can be defined as a person who seeks to be recognised as a refugee in accordance with the terms of Section 2 of the Refugee Act, 1996. They do not have formal rights to State-funded language classes, education or training, although they do have free access to Primary and Secondary education. Unlike Programme refugees, Asylum seekers are considered to remain in Ireland on a temporary basis only.

Culture:

A way of perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving. Culture provides the blueprint that determines the way an individual thinks, feels, and behaves in society.

Economic Migrant:

These individuals are classified into two categories, by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The first category includes nationals of EU or European Economic Area who are entitled to reside in Ireland based on their EU Treaty rights. The second category of economic migrant comprises individuals who enter Ireland for the purpose of seeking employment. These generally have work permits and comply with Irish admission and residence laws as they apply to non-nationals.

Ethnic Group:

Is a group of people sharing a collective identity based on a sense of common history and ancestry. Ethnic groups possess their own culture, customs, norms, beliefs and traditions. Other relevant characteristics shared in common could be language, geographical origin, literature, or religion.

Ethnocentrism:

An inability to view other cultures as equally viable alternatives for organising reality. It is a universal characteristic of cultures in which one's cultural traits are viewed as natural, correct and superior to those of another culture, whose traits are perceived as inferior or even immoral.

Humanitarian Leave to Remain:

These comprise individuals who fail to meet the requirements under Section 2 of the Refugee Act (1996) but who have been granted formal permission to remain in the State for humanitarian reasons. Unlike Programme Refugees, these individuals do not have the right to educational grants but they are entitled to apply for a Vocational Training Course.

Integration:

Integration occurs when it is considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics derived from the culture of origin, but it is also considered to be of value to establish and maintain relationships with the culture that characterises mainstream society.

Intercultural Education:

An education for both the minorities and the majority community in Irish society. It is about realising that in society there is a culture and set of values that belong to the majority, but other minority groups have a different culture and set of values; while they are not the same as the values of the majority they are equally important and valid. Intercultural education must aim to ensure the integration of ethnic minority children, while at the same time ensuring that these children do not lose their ethnic identity and cultural values.

Migrants:

Often distinct from the receiving populations in various ways. They may come from different types of societies with different traditions, religions and political institutions. They often speak a different language and follow different cultural practises. They may be visibly different, through physical appearance or style of dress.

Multicultural:

The situation where a society is portrayed as having a diverse and heterogeneous set of cultural practises, as a result of the existence in that society of differential social and cultural traits.

Prejudice:

An inflexible judgement or opinion towards specific groups of others that is based on unreliable, often distorted, stereotyped images of them.

Programme Refugee:

These comprise individuals who have formally been invited to Ireland by the government in response to a humanitarian request. These people are entitled to apply for naturalisation three years after arrival and they have full rights with regard to health, education, social welfare and housing.

Racialism:

A negative, hostile, rigid and emotional attitude towards a person simply because he or she is perceived to belong to a group, and is presumed to possess the negative qualities ascribed to the group as a result of selective, obsolete or faulty evidence.

Racism:

The doctrine, founded on inaccurate linkages, that the world's population is divisible into categories based on personality, cultural traits and hereditary characteristics. Invariably this leads to the conception that the categories are ordered hierarchically so that one group of people is defined as inherently superior or inferior to another.

Residency: This group comprises those asylum seekers who become parents of an Irish born child or who marry an Irish citizen. Once they have gained the status they have full entitlements to be educated in Ireland. However, this definition will soon be subject to change due principally to a landmark High Court ruling that “*such children’s parents are no longer automatically entitled to remain in Ireland by virtue of their child’s birth.*” (*Irish Independent*, 9 April 2002). The Department of Justice estimate that 5,900 minority people could be affected by this decision. Notwithstanding, the above definition of “*Residency*” remains intact pending an appeal to the Supreme Court.

Stereotype:

A mental image held about particular groups of people constructed on the basis of simplified, distorted or incomplete knowledge of them.

Appendix 1: Letter of Consent to Parents of International Students.

School Address

12 December, 2001.

Dear Parents,

I am currently studying for a Masters' degree in NUI, Maynooth. As part of my work, I am doing a study of all our international students and their experience of being in our school. Our records show that your son/daughter has arrived to us from abroad.

I would ask that you would allow your son/daughter to help me in my work by completing a short questionnaire. It should take no longer than 20 minutes and will take place during school time. Please know that your child's involvement is voluntary and at all times their answers will be strictly confidential. Their name will not appear anywhere on the questionnaire. Of course, in the unlikely event that they feel uncomfortable with the survey, they are free to leave at any time, no questions asked.

Depending on the results from this I may ask your son/daughter to a group interview with about 7 or 8 others.

The school principal fully supports this work. Please read his letter, which is enclosed. The principal can be contacted at the school number above. Dr. Anne Lodge, NUI, Maynooth, is supervising this work. She can be contacted at the Education Department on 01-*****.

If you agree to allow your son/daughter to participate in this study please sign the consent form below and return it to me no later than Friday. If you would like to complete a survey yourself please tick the box. Of course, if you like I can send you a copy of the survey results. Again tick the box below.

If you have any questions about this please contact me at the school number above.

I thank you for your help.

Anthony Malone

Student's name: _____

Class group: _____

(A) I agree to allow my son/daughter to fill out a questionnaire.

Yes

No

(B) I agree to allow my son/daughter to be interviewed about the questionnaire.

Yes

No

(C) I would like to fill out a questionnaire myself.

Yes

No

(D) I would like a copy of the survey results sent to me.

Yes

No

Signed: _____ (*Parent/Guardian*)

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Letter of Consent to Parents of Irish-Born Students.

School Address

12 December, 2001.

Dear Parents,

I am currently studying for a Masters' degree in NUI, Maynooth. As part of my work, I am doing a study of all our international students and their experience of being in our school. As part of this work I am surveying 24 Irish students. Your son/daughter has been randomly selected to be surveyed.

I would ask that you would allow your son/daughter to help me in my work by completing a short questionnaire. It should take no longer than 20 minutes and will take place during school time. Please know that your child's involvement is voluntary and at all times their answers will be strictly confidential. Their name will not appear anywhere on the questionnaire. Of course, in the unlikely event that they feel uncomfortable with the survey, they are free to leave at any time, no questions asked.

Depending on the results from this I may ask your son/daughter to a group interview with about 7 or 8 others.

The school principal fully supports this work. Please read his letter, which is enclosed. The principal can be contacted at the school number above. Dr. Anne Lodge, NUI, Maynooth, is supervising this work. She can be contacted at the Education Department on 01-*****.

If you agree to allow your son/daughter to participate in this study please sign the consent form below and return it to me no later than Friday. Of course, if you like I can send you a copy of the survey results. Just tick the relevant box below and I will arrange this.

If you have any questions about this please contact me at the school number above.

I thank you for your help.

Anthony Malone

Student's name: _____

Class group: _____

(A) I agree to allow my son/daughter to fill out a questionnaire.

Yes

No

(B) I agree to allow my son/daughter to be interviewed about the questionnaire.

Yes

No

(C) I would like a copy of the survey results sent to me.

Yes

No

Signed: _____ **(Parent/Guardian)**

Date: _____

Appendix 3: Evaluation of Piloted Surveys.

Many thanks for all your great work in completing this questionnaire. Please help me to improve this work by answering the following questions as honestly and as accurately as you can.

1. "I could understand the questions."

All of them Some of them None of them

2. "My initial thoughts on this survey were...."

(Please tick the box that best describes your initial thoughts).

	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Very Poor</i>
<i>The question content</i>					
<i>The language</i>					
<i>The layout</i>					
<i>The question order</i>					

3. What questions did you not answer? (Please list them below).

4. Why did you not answer these? (Please tick the box and say what questions)

I didn't know enough to answer the questions. Questions No. _____

I had different answers to the ones listed. Questions No. _____

5. What questions would you remove from the survey?

(Please list them below).

6. Why would you remove them? (Please tick only one box).

Not relevant They are too difficult

They are too personal They appear elsewhere on the paper.

Appendix 4: Irish Born Student Survey

Strictly Confidential

Questionnaire Number: _____

Please Read before answering any questions:

For the purpose of this questionnaire "international students" refers to all students who have come to live in Ireland, for whatever reasons. These students were not born in Ireland.

Code
For Office Use

1. Are you: Male Female

2. What age group are you? (Tick the right box to suit your answer)

11 – 13 years 14 – 15 years

16 – 17 years 18 – 19 years

3. Are your friends in school?

(Tick the box that best describes your school friends)

All Irish

Mostly Irish

Some Irish / Some International

Mostly International

All International

I have no Friends

4. Are your friends outside school?

(Tick the box that best describes your friends)

All Irish

Mostly Irish

Some Irish / Some International

Mostly International

All International

I have no Friends

5. Tick the box that most shows how you feel about international students.

Code

Say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree to the following statements about international students. If you don't know or haven't thought about it up to now tick the "Don't know" box.

<i>International Students are:</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
Not given enough attention					
Given more attention than Irish Students					
Treated the same as everyone else					
Need our Help					
Welcome to our school.					
Fit in well in this country.					
Taking up the place of other Irish students.					
Well educated					
Happy at this school					
Fit in well in this school					
Treated better than Irish students.					
Don't need our sympathy.					
Poorly educated					
Not very welcome to this school.					

6. "When I think of international students, I think of them as:"

All the same Mostly the Same

A Little the same Very different groups of people

7. "I know a lot about the culture and background of the international students."

Agree No Opinion Disagree

Code

8. "I feel my schoolwork relates to other cultures/backgrounds."

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

9. "My parents encourage me to make International friends."

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

10. "I have seen some students say or do things to upset International students."

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

11. "I have seen International students being bullied in this school because they are different"

Agree

No Opinion

Disagree

12. "International students are:"

(Tick the box that is closest to how you think)

	<i>Mostly</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>Mostly</i>	
<i>Friendly</i>						<i>Unfriendly</i>
<i>Relaxed</i>						<i>Serious</i>
<i>Understanding of Irish Students</i>						<i>Know nothing of Irish of Irish Students</i>
<i>Welcoming</i>						<i>Unwelcoming</i>
<i>Respectful</i>						<i>Disrespectful</i>
<i>Well Educated</i>						<i>Uneducated</i>
<i>Tolerant of Irish Students</i>						<i>Intolerant of Irish Students</i>

13. "When I talk to International students:"

Please say whether you talk about these topics a lot of the time sometimes, or never. Note, this grid deals with when you talk to international students.

<i>We talk about</i>	<i>A lot of the time</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>The weather</i>			
<i>What's in the news</i>			
<i>My social life</i>			
<i>My family</i>			
<i>Myself</i>			
<i>My background</i>			
<i>Girlfriends / Boyfriends</i>			
<i>School</i>			
<i>My Country: Ireland</i>			
<i>Music</i>			
<i>TV</i>			

Code

14. "When I talk to my own friends:"

Please say whether you talk about these topics a lot of the time, sometimes, or never. Note, this grid deals with when you talk to your own friends.

<i>We talk about</i>	<i>A lot of the time</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>The weather</i>			
<i>What's in the news</i>			
<i>My social life</i>			
<i>My family</i>			
<i>Myself</i>			
<i>My background</i>			
<i>Girlfriends / Boyfriends</i>			
<i>School</i>			
<i>My Country: Ireland</i>			
<i>Music</i>			
<i>TV</i>			

15. Please say whether you agree, disagree or don't know to all of these statements.

Code

Section A: These questions relate to your school.

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	
(a) The more international students act like an Irish students the more they fit into the school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) The more international students agree with Irish students the more they fit into the school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) International students can be honest to my school about what they dislike about the school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) International students can be honest to my school about what they dislike about Ireland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section B: These questions relate to students.

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	
(a) The more international students agree with Irish students the more they get along with Irish students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) The more international students act like Irish students the more they get along with Irish students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) International students can be themselves around Irish students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) International students can be honest to Irish students about what they dislike about the school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(e) International students can be honest to Irish students about what they dislike about Ireland.

Agree

Disagree

Don't Know

Code

Many thanks for filling out the questions. I really appreciate it.

Appendix 5: International Student Survey

Strictly Confidential

Questionnaire Number: _____

Code
For Office Use

1. **Are you:** Male Female

2. **What age are you?** (Tick the right box to suit your answer)

11 – 13 years 14 – 15 years

16 – 17 years 18 – 19 years

3. **What nationality are you?**

(Tick the box that best describes your nationality)

EU National

Other European

African

Asian

North American

South American

Oceanic

4. **How long are you in Ireland?**

(Tick the box that shows how long you have been in Ireland)

0 – 1 years

2 – 5 years

Over 5 years

5. **“I feel I fit into Irish school life”**

(Tick the box that best describes how you feel)

Always

Mostly

Sometimes

None of the Time

6.

(A) Have you friends in school?

Yes No

Code

(B) If so, are your friends in school?

Mostly Irish Some Irish No Irish

7.

(A) Have you friends outside school?

Yes No

(B) If "yes" are these friends different to your friends inside school?

All Are Some Are None Are

8. Tick any of the following words that show how you felt on first arriving into this school.

(A)

	<i>Very</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>Very</i>	
<i>Happy</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Sad</i>				
<i>Calm</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Worried</i>				
<i>Included</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Lost</i>				
<i>Welcome</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Unwelcome</i>				
<i>Respected</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Ignored</i>				
<i>Taken care of</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Not taken care of</i>				

(B) If you felt any different to the list above please say how you felt:

9. What member of staff first met with you?

Code

- Principal*
- Deputy-Principal*
- Teacher*
- Secretary*
- Other (please state) _____*

10. Tick the subjects that you are studying. Say if you like or dislike them.

<i>Subjects</i>	<i>I Study</i>	<i>I like</i>	<i>I don't like</i>
English			
Irish			
Maths			
History			
Geography			
Science			
Business			
Art			
Woodwork / Metalwork			
Home Economics			
French / German			
Religion			
PE			

11. How would you compare this school to your school in your home country?

- They're the same*
- They're a little different*
- They're very different*

12. *Have you met your principal?*

Yes No Unsure

Code

13. *Have you met your deputy-principal?*

Yes No Unsure

14. *Have you met your year-head?*

Yes No Unsure

15. *Have you met your tutor?*

Yes No Unsure

16. *Have you found English difficult?*

Yes No Unsure

17. *If you had difficulties with Learning English has your school put on extra classes for you?*

Yes No Unsure

18. *If you had difficulties with language do you feel your teachers are:*

	<i>Very Helpful</i>	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Not Helpful</i>	<i>They Ignore It</i>
<i>All Teachers</i>				
<i>Some Teachers</i>				
<i>No Teachers</i>				

19. Does your school have a Homework Club?

Yes No Unsure

Code

20. If they have a Homework Club have you attended it?

Yes No Unsure

21. Please Say if you felt anyone of these either all the time, sometimes or never.

	<i>All the Time</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>Have you ever felt left out of classroom activities?</i>			
<i>Do you think your teachers treat you different to other students?</i>			
<i>Do you participate in extra-curricular activities?</i>			
<i>Have you been encouraged to get involved in these activities?</i>			

22. "When I talk to Irish students:"

Please say whether you talk about these topics a lot of the time, sometimes, or never. Note, this grid deals with when you talk to Irish students.

Code

<i>We talk about</i>	<i>A lot of the time</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>The weather</i>			
<i>What's in the news</i>			
<i>My social life</i>			
<i>My family</i>			
<i>Myself</i>			
<i>My background</i>			
<i>Girlfriends / Boyfriends</i>			
<i>School</i>			
<i>The Country I come from</i>			
<i>Music</i>			
<i>TV</i>			

23. "When I talk to my own friends:"

Please say whether you talk about these topics a lot of the time, sometimes or never. Note, this grid deals with when you talk to your own friends.

<i>We talk about</i>	<i>A lot of the time</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>The weather</i>			
<i>What's in the news</i>			
<i>My social life</i>			
<i>My family</i>			
<i>Myself</i>			
<i>My background</i>			
<i>Girlfriends / Boyfriends</i>			
<i>School</i>			
<i>The Country I come from</i>			
<i>Music</i>			
<i>TV</i>			

24. "Irish students are

Please tick the box that is closest to how you think.

Code

	<i>Very</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>Very</i>	
<i>Friendly</i>						<i>Unfriendly</i>
<i>Relaxed</i>						<i>Serious</i>
<i>Understanding of Me</i>						<i>Know nothing about Me</i>
<i>Welcoming</i>						<i>Unwelcoming</i>
<i>Respectful</i>						<i>Disrespectful</i>
<i>Well Educated</i>						<i>Uneducated</i>
<i>Tolerant of Me</i>						<i>Intolerant of Me</i>

25. Please say whether you agree, disagree or don't know to all of these.

Section A: These questions relate to your school

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	
a) The more I act like an Irish student the more I feel I belong in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The more I agree with Irish students the more I feel I belong in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) I feel I can be honest to my school about what I dislike about the school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) I feel I can be honest to my school about what I dislike about Ireland.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) I feel the schoolwork relates to my culture/background.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) I feel comfortable approaching my teachers with any problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) I feel happy at this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section B: These questions relate to you and other students

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	
h) The more I act like an Irish student the more I feel I belong to the other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) The more I agree with Irish students the more I feel I belong to my fellow students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) I can be myself around Irish students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) I feel I can be honest to my fellow students about what I dislike about the school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) I feel I can be honest to my fellow Students about what I dislike about Ireland.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) I feel comfortable speaking to Irish students about my background.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n) I feel comfortable speaking to Irish students about my private life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o) My parents encourage me to make Irish friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p) My parents take an interest in my schooling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q) Irish students are friendly towards me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r) Some students have said or done things to upset me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<u>Code</u>
s) I have been bullied in this school because some people think that I'm different.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for filling out these questions. I really appreciate all your efforts.

Appendix 6: International Parent's Survey

Strictly Confidential

Please Note: If you have any questions please contact me at 01-***** between 9 am to 5pm.

Code
For Office Use

Background Details:

(A) Are you the: *(please put a mark in the box)*

Mother Father

(B) Who deals mostly with the school?

I do My partner Another family member

(C) What nationality are you?

African

Asian

EU National

Other European

Oceanic

North American

South American

The School

These questions ask about your contact with the school. Read the statements and answer either yes, no or unsure if you don't know.

1. "I have met my child's teachers."

Yes No Unsure

2. "I have met the school principal."

Yes No Unsure

Code

3. "I am on a School Board."
(For example, the Parent's Association.)

Yes No Unsure

4. "I have spoken to the school about my child's education."

Yes No Unsure

5. "I am able to help my child with their homework."

Yes No Unsure

6. "I would like my child to learn more about their own culture in school."

Yes No Unsure

Many thanks for filling out these questions. I really appreciate all your efforts.

Appendix 7: Teacher Survey

Strictly Confidential

Questionnaire Number: _____

**Code
For Office Use**

Background Details:

1. Are you: Male Female

2. Approx. No. of Years Teaching: (Please tick the appropriate box)

0 – 5 years 6 – 10 years

11 – 15 years 16+ years

3. Teaching Subjects

(Please tick which subjects you now teach or have taught in the past.)

Subjects	<i>I Teach</i>
English	
Irish	
Maths	
History	
Geography	
Science	
Business	
Art	
Metalwork	
Technology	
Woodwork	
Home Economics	
French / German	
Religion	
PE	
CSPE	
PSHE	

Section A: Teacher Attitudes

Code

4. What do you understand by the term “intercultural education?”
(Please tick the definition which you think most accurate. Tick F if you are unsure what the term means).

(A) The culture of the minority group is important and requires recognition and acceptance.	
(B) Emphasises the need for toleration and better community relations in our schools.	
(C) The education of minorities for their integration and assimilation into our cultural and social way of life.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(D) Teaching students from different countries.	
(E) Incorporating minority students into our school through policies of adaptation. The state has a key role here for creating favourable conditions for this.	
(F) I do not understand the term at all.	

5. Do you familiarise yourself with background information on all students that you teach?

Always Sometimes Never

6. Have you taken steps to include a multi-cultural element in your classroom (e.g. in subject matter, resources, etc.)?

Yes No Unsure

If so, please outline what steps you have taken.

7. "I feel adequately assisted in my work with the various cultural groups I teach?"

Please answer in terms of your training, your professional support and your Resources.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
<i>Training?</i>					
<i>Professional Support</i>					
<i>Resources</i>					

8. "The changes towards a multi-cultural society have impacted on my teaching style."

Tick the box that most suits your thoughts on this statement.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **Not Sure** **Disagree** **Strongly Disagree**

Please describe to what extent it has impacted on your teaching style.

Section B: Classroom Challenges

Code

10. Have you considered the inter-cultural aspect of your teaching prior to completing this questionnaire?

Yes No Unsure

11. Have you had a staff development session on the theme of inter-culturalism?

Yes No Unsure

If you answered "yes" please specify:

Full Day or More

Half Day

Brief Mention at Staff Meeting

No Mention at Staff Meeting

12. "The change to a multi-cultural classroom is a good change for me."

Tick the box that most suits your thoughts on this statement.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **Not Sure** **Disagree** **Strongly Disagree**

Briefly explain your answer

14. "I am satisfied that teachers generally are sensitive to the need to cultivate and foster in pupils the concept of equality of people and the necessity to understand and accommodate different views on a wide range of issues."

Mary O'Rourke speaking on 31 October 1991.

Code

(A) Ten years on would you agree with this statement?

Yes

No

Unsure

Explain your answer.

(B) Do you think teachers are in a position to provide an inter-cultural education as Mary O'Rourke suggests?

Yes

No

Unsure

Explain your answer.

Section C: Societal Effects

Code

15. What would you consider to be some of the more important aspects in your teaching in a multi-cultural society?

Please rank all answers in the order that they are most relevant to you. Rank 1 represents the most relevant for you while rank 4 is least relevant.

(A) It encourages me to consider my curriculum and teaching styles	
(B) It places another burden on an already over-loaded system	
(C) It creates a more open and tolerant society.	
(D) I find I am learning a lot from the experience.	

16. How would you describe the Irish education system in relation to dealing with international students?

Please rank all answers in the order that they are most relevant to you. Rank 1 represents the most relevant for you while rank 5 is least relevant.

1. The education system is very culturally inclusive.	
2. The education system has traditionally made little or no provision for the culture of other minority groups.	
3. The system is meeting needs despite a lack of resources.	
4. The system has shown itself to be very successful.	
5. The system has adopted a "sink or swim" policy in relation to both teachers and minority students.	

17. What would you consider to be the challenges teaching in a multi-cultural society?

Code

Please rank all answers in the order that they are most relevant to you. Rank 1 represents the most relevant for you while rank 9 is least relevant.

(A) Lack of Resources	
(B) Lack of Understanding of Different Cultures	
(C) Lack of In-Service Support	
(D) Lack of skills in dealing with Inter-Cultural Issues	
(E) Lack of time in dealing with Inter-Cultural Issues	
(F) Lack of technical skills.	
(G) Lack of parental support	
(H) Lack of time to provide individual support.	
(I) Lack of training	

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. I really appreciate it. Please return it directly to me.

Thanks,

Anthony.

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