

Towards a Framework for positioning Development Education within a reconceptualised PDE – a working paper

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Deirdre Hogan, Ubuntu Network

In June 2012, teacher educators and associates involved in the Ubuntu Network commenced work on a draft framework to support the positioning of Development Education into a reconceptualised model of the Professional Diploma in Education (PDE).

Development Education has the potential to bring a unique perspective to the PDE, allowing students to consider the transformational role that education can have on society. With a focus on critical thinking, problem solving and dialogue, it challenges the learner to reflect upon their place in the world, their contribution to the way the world is and the power they have to be part of change for justice and sustainability.

Notwithstanding the contribution that Development Education can make to the PDE, the committee was also cognisant of the demands placed upon teacher educators to provide a broad and comprehensive foundation for professional development of teachers in this the initial phase of their teacher education.

With this in mind, the framework serves to build upon core and mandatory components for initial teacher education as represented in the Teaching Council criteria and guidelines, and to position Development Education in a way that adds a valuable and unique dimension to emerging programmes.

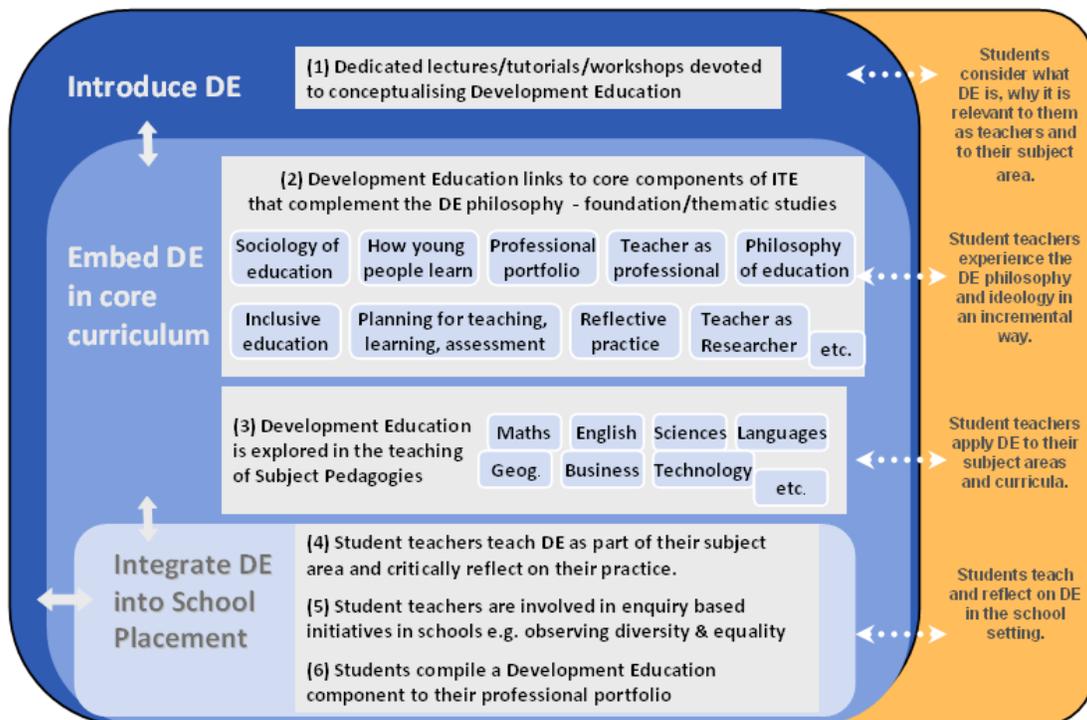


Figure 1: A (draft) framework to position Development Education in a reconceptualised PD

It comprises three inter-related elements. The first is an introduction to Development Education. This provides a space for students to think about development and the issues that it raises. Such an introductory experience may draw upon literature and perspectives relating to issues such as inequality, exploitation, poverty, aid and debt, models of development, under-development, and global financial systems. The emphasis is on invoking a desire to learn more about these issues and reflect upon how change can be achieved.

The second element links Development Education to complementary components of teacher education that share a common philosophy or ideology with Development Education or that have overlapping content. For example Sociology of Education may refer to the diversity of Irish society, gender difference local and global, social class, inequality, education to achieve equality, Education for All (EfA) initiative, Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary education for all to overcome poverty, the roles of education – socialisation, vocational or transformational.

In parallel with this, modules on subject pedagogies/methods provide an opportunity to consider development issues as they relate to specific subject areas, and the pedagogical approaches that are appropriate for varying disciplines.

Finally, the framework advocates that student teachers are supported to include a Development Education perspective in their teaching practice placement. This may be reflected both in their lesson plans and reflections/portfolio entries. In line with the emerging role of teacher as reflective practitioner/researcher, student teachers should also be encouraged to collect data relating to development topics e.g. attitudes to diversity, the charity model of development, schools are cultural organisations.

Teaching Principles underpinning the framework

The framework is underpinned by 5 key principles,

1. Development Education is about teaching differently, rather than teaching more

It is an educational process that supports students to critically examine the world, its development and its interdependencies and to act, both locally and globally, to make it a more just, equitable and sustainable place.

The challenge to teachers is to identify the relevance to their subject area, to recognise the cross curricular links and to work with colleagues to provide students with multiple perspectives through their schooling experience.

There is a need to support teacher educators and student teachers in this process.

2. Good Development Education is that which promotes critical thinking about development and underdevelopment

- ✓ engages participants in dialogue/discourse on development and relating issues
- ✓ addresses the complex issues of the causes of underdevelopment and not merely the symptoms of underdevelopment
- ✓ considers multiple perspectives (northern and southern perspectives, contesting sides in debates)
- ✓ critiques sources of information, biases, ideologies
- ✓ challenges negative stereotypes. Attempts to break down the dominant 'Us' (developed)/ 'Them' (underdeveloped) dichotomy
- ✓ looks beyond the 'quick and easy' actions as an overall solution, and challenges the 'development as charity' model.
- ✓ is cognisant of potential conflicting ideologies (that of the student V that of DE)
- ✓ draws on expertise of partner NGOs and minority groups (in coherent manner)

3. Development Education results in transformation on a number of levels including personal, perspectival, professional and programmatic

- ✓ It contributes to **the professional formation** (& transformation) of the student teacher, nurturing a disposition of action for change. It fosters the development of **informed viewpoints** on issues relating to social justice and equity (a transformational journey), encouraging student teachers to articulate their views and take action to substantiate them.
- ✓ At **programmatic** level it draws upon a variety of cross curricular components that relate to DE

4. Development Education is effective when it is integrated across the programme, with multiple entry points over 2 years

An integration model may include

- ✓ an introduction to the concept of Development Education (e.g. what it is, why it is important, pedagogical approaches, relevance to subject areas), providing students with an adequate 'starting point'
- ✓ links to DE-related topics within existing curricula,
 - e.g. student teachers' perspectives on the role of the teacher
 - e.g. what is your philosophy on education – what does teaching mean to you?
 - e.g. psychology – mindset of 'Us' and 'the other', stereotyping
 - e.g. critical pedagogy,
 - e.g. problematising disciplines/subjects as sole framing of curriculum or ways of seeing the world.
- ✓ Opportunities for student teachers to led research and inquiry projects relating to DE. They are encouraged to view DE as a learning process for themselves as much

as for their pupils, thus freeing themselves of unrealistic expectations of instant success. (Bracken and Bryan, 2010)

- ✓ Links to reflective practice and portfolio, and provision for DE is made in the assessment criteria for School Placement
- ✓ A focus on subject pedagogies/methods with an understanding that every subject has a role to play in educating about development issues.

Becoming confident and competent to deliver effective and critical Development Education in the classroom requires gradual exposure to DE over time; the opportunity to explore issues, perspectives, preconceived ideas; to reflect upon personal beliefs and values and global responsibilities. With this in mind, teaching and learning strategies adopt an incremental and multi layered approach, acknowledging the complex nature of many development issues and the challenges that adopting a DE approach can pose for teachers in the classroom, and allowing the student teacher space and time to construct their understanding and approach.

5. Evaluation of the impact of Development Education is central to improving teaching and learning strategies

Development Education is a complex and far reaching concept and it is only through engagement over time that student teachers become confident to tackle issues in the classroom. For the teacher educator too, consideration must be given to the effectiveness of the teaching-learning strategies employed and how well the equip student teachers to engage with and teach Development Education.

Learning in this area should feed into the Ubuntu Network evaluation/impact framework.