

OIDEAS 54

Geimhreadh/ Winter 2009

Iris na
ROINNE OIDEACHAIS agus EOLAÍOCHTA

Journal of the
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION and SCIENCE

**Teacher Education in Ireland:
Facing challenge and recognising opportunity**



AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS
AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA | DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

OIDEAS 54

Geimhreadh/ Winter 2009

	Lth/Page
<i>NÓTA ÓN EAGARTHÓIR</i>	4
<i>EDITORIAL COMMENT</i>	7
The Teaching Council and Teacher Education Aine Lawlor	10
The Future of the Teacher Education Continuum in Ireland: opportunities and challenges Thomas Kellaghan	14
The BEd Degree: still under review Andy Burke	30
Teacher Competences: a core challenge for teacher educators Teresa O'Doherty	68
Learning to Teach in Collaboration with Schools Bernadette Ní Áingléis	82
Scríobh, Machnamh agus Forbairt Mhúinteora: léargas ó shaothar liteartha Cathal de Paor	102
<i>REVIEWS</i>	115
<i>EDITORIAL BOARD</i>	123

INVITATION

The Editor invites teachers and educationists to contribute papers for publication in *Oideas*. Papers should be at least 1,500 words in length and should not exceed 5,000 words, and they should deal with aspects of education of current, practical, or historical interest.

Book reviews and shorter notices may be published also and publication will be subject to the approval of the Editorial Board.

Papers and reviews should be typed in black, in 1.5 spacing, and preferably should be transmitted to the Editor electronically. A short note on the writer's background should accompany every paper submitted and an abstract of the paper also should be provided.

Preferably, reference to authorities should be made in the text by use of the Harvard (or Authordate) system, but the British Standard (the Numeric system) also is acceptable.

Some examples:

Book

MacBeath, J. and McGlynn, A. (2004) *Self-evaluation: what's in it for schools?* London and New York, RoutledgeFalmer

Book chapter in an edited volume

Gleeson, J. (2004) 'Cultural and Political Contexts of Irish Post-Primary Curriculum: influences, interests and issues', in Sugrue, C. (ed) *Curriculum and Ideology: Irish experiences, international perspectives*, Dublin, The Liffey Press Ltd.

Journal article

Hayes, D. (1996) 'Aspiration, Perspiration and Reputation: idealism and self-preservation in small school primary headship', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, vol.26, no.2, pp.379-390.

Electronic source

Department of Education and Science, Ireland (2006) *A Guide to Whole School Evaluation in Primary Schools* [online], http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/insp_p_wse_intro.htm (accessed 26 October 2006).

AN GHAELGE

Cuirfear fáilte ar leith roimh ailt i nGaeilge. Mura gcuirtear ar fáil dúinn iad ní féidir linn iad a fhoilsiú.

Aon tuairimí a nochtar sna hailt in *Oideas* is iad tuairimí na n-údar féin iad. Ní gá go leireoidís, ná go réiteoidís le, beartas na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta.

Opinions expressed in papers in *Oideas* are those of the authors. They need not necessarily express, or be in accord with, the policy of the Department of Education and Science.

Foilsítear *Oideas* faoi stiúradh Boird Eagarthóireachta.

Editor: Dr Pádraig Ó Conchubhair

e-mail: Oideas@education.ie

Nóta ón Eagarthóir

Leis an síor-athrú eacnamaíochta agus sóisialta atá ag tarlú sa lá atá inniu, aithnítear ar chlár oibre náisiúnta an tábhacht nach beag a ghabhann le forbairt oideachas an oide. Áirítear oidí mar an acmhainn is luachmhaire inár scoileanna agus tuigtear ón taighde gurb iad is mó a imríonn tionchar ar dhul chun cinn an fhoghlaimeora. Tá cúrsaí ag athrú chomh tapa sin go bhfuilimid anois ag ullmhú do thodhchaí nach bhfuil ar ár gcumas a thuar go héasca. Tá oidí lárnach in iarrachtaí chun scoileanna a fheabhsú agus dúshlán rí-thábhachtach atá romhainn ná oideachas a chur orthu agus tacú leo sa chaoi go nglacfaidh siad páirt ghníomhach i gcur i bhfeidhm na n-athruithe, seachas glacadh leo go lom, díreach.

Cuireann an tasc seo roinnt dúshlán romhainn, go sonrach an gá atá ann le daoine den scoth a earcú agus a choinneáil i ngairm na múinteoireachta agus le comhleanúnachas a chinntiú idir oideachas tosaigh an oide, ionduchtú agus forbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach. Soláthraíonn cáipéis Choimisiún an Aontais Eorpaigh, *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education* (2007), anailís ar na dúshláin atá romhainn i bhforbairt oideachas an oide sa lá atá inniu ann. Moltar inti na príomhchéimeanna polasaí atá le tógáil ar bhonn náisiúnta agus ar bhonn an Aontais Eorpaigh. Meastar go bhfuil foghlaim ar feadh an tsaoil d'oidí mar ghné rí-bhunúsach agus cuireann sé seo san áireamh oiliúint tosaigh oide den scoth, luath-thacaíocht ionghairme chuí agus deiseanna oiriúnacha d'fhorbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach d'oidí agus do cheannairí scoile. Ba chóir go mbeadh na cláir seo uilig bunaithe ar dhian-taighde acadúil agus ar thaithí phraiticiúil fhorleathan. Leagtar béim ar scilfhoghlaim na n-oidí chun freastal ar riachtanais daltaí aonair ionas gur féidir leo a bheith ina bhfoghlaimeoirí neamhspleácha. Fairis sin, luaitear an gá atá ann le teacht i gcabhair ar mhicléinn i slánú na bpríomh-inniúlachtaí atá i mbéal an phobail na laethanta seo. Is díol spéise é freisin dóibhsean gur den ardtábhacht dóibh 'oideachas' thar 'oiliúint' a chur ar oidí, an bhéim a leagtar ar oidí a spreagadh chun machnamh a dhéanamh ar a gcuid cleachtas ar bhealach sistéimeach, chun obair go comhoibritheach le hoidí eile agus chun páirt a ghlacadh i dtaighde sa seomra ranga. Molann an cháipéis gur cheart go mbeadh cláir oideachais d'oidí ar fáil ionas gur féidir leo, san am atá le teacht, dul i mbun chlár Mháistreachta agus Dhochtúrachta. Moltar do dhearthóirí na gclár úd dul i bpáirtíocht le scoileanna ar bhonn éifeachtúil.

Tá na téamaí uile seo ina gcuid de na comhráite atá ag dul ar aghaidh faoi láthair faoi choimirce na Comhairle Múinteoireachta, de réir mar a théann sí i mbun moltaí a chur le chéile d'oideachas an oide in Éirinn. Ag cur san áireamh an téama rí-thábhachtach seo, níor mhiste go gcuirfeadh *Oideas* leis an díospóireacht ar mhaithe leosan a bhfuil páirt lárnach acu sa chóradh agus leosan freisin atá i suímh éagsúla oideachais agus atá gafa níos lú, b'fhéidir, le machnamh a dhéanamh ar cén soláthar is fearr a dhéanamh dár n-oidí sna dúshláin atá romhainn amach.

Is féidir féachaint ar an gcéad pháipéar mar dhoiciméad cúlra úsáideach i gcomhair na ndrachaí a leanann. Léiríonn stiúrthóir na Comhairle Múinteoireachta, **Áine Lawlor**, feidhmeanna na Comhairle maidir le hoideachas an oide in Éirinn agus cuireann sí sinn san airdeall faoin bpáipéar polasaí atá le teacht ina leagfar amach an fhís atá ag an Chomhairle d'oideachas oidí. Rianaíonn sí ról na Comhairle in athbhreithniú agus i gcreidiúnú clár, próiseas a thabharfaidh deis do choláistí agus d'ollscoileanna ardfhiúntas a ngnó a léiriú. Bunófar painéal de shaineolaithe, déanfar na hionchuir, an próiseas agus na haschuir a mheá agus tiocfar ar bhreithmheas ar oiriúnacht chlár do chreidiúnú. Sa chaoi seo, cuirfear le bunchloch oideachas tosaigh an oide agus réiteofar an pháirc i gcomhair tuilleadh forbartha ar pholasaí na Comhairle, ar a n-áireofar ionduchtú agus forbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach.

Sa dara páipéar, díríonn an **Dr Tom Kellaghan** ar thodhchaí chontanam oideachas an oide in Éirinn. Déanann sé an léiriú seo i gcomhthéacs leasaithe a eascraíonn as mí-shástacht le roinnt gnéithe d'oideachas an oide thar lear, go sonrach sa Bhreatain agus i Meiriceá. Cé go n-aithníonn sé nach léir go bhfuil an léibhéal céanna inní in Éirinn, rianaíonn sé réimse dúshlán agus deiseanna atá ag teacht chun solais anseo. Mar phríomh-inní, áitíonn sé go bhfuil gá le hoidí a ullmhú do shaol atá ag athrú de shíor ar bhonn sóisialta, eacnamaíoch, cultúrtha agus teicneolaíoch nach bhfuil intuairthe. Cé go maíonn sé go gcaithfidh an dul chun cinn sa tír seo go nuige seo, ó thaobh leasaithe de, a bheith ina ábhar inní dúinn, tugann sé foláireamh faoi cheist pholaitíochta a dhéanamh den ghnó, cur chuige ar theip air in áiteanna eile.

Is maith atá aithne ag léitheoirí *Oideas* ar an **Dr Andy Burke**: i 1992 d'fhoilsíomar *'Teaching: retrospect and prospect'* mar eagrán aon-téama - an chéad eagrán mar seo le cúig bliana déag ó foilsíodh an t-eagrán mór le rá *'The Way the Money Goes'* le Kevin McDonagh; agus toisc an fháilte a fearadh roimhe, d'fhoilsíomar *'The Devil's Bargain Revisited: the BED degree under review'*, eagrán aon-téama arís, i 2000. Ba iad nádúr na múinteoireachta agus oideachas an oide mar ullmhúchán gairmiúil a bhí mar fhócas lárnach acu araon, agus filleann sé ar an téama céanna sa pháipéar seo. Ag bunú dó a chuid fianaise ar an dá choláiste oideachais is mó, lorgaíonn sé leasú suntasach ar an BOid, agus maíonn sé nach dócha go mbeidh an rath ar an leasú seo mura gcomhordaítear ar bhealach ard an plean gníomhaíochta in achair aitheanta. Ag tacú dó lena bhfuil á rá aige, tagraíonn sé don bhearna, a mheastar atá ann, idir an teoiric agus an cleachtas, don easpa nascaidh idir cláir sa ghné phroifisiúnta den BOid, don scaradh seanbhunaithe agus don easpa den chomhtháthú idir foranna acadúla den chlár. Ag éirí as seo, molann sé go ligfí do mhicléinn na príomhábhair a roghnú uatha siúd atá lonnaithe in achar an oideachais phroifisiúnta. Ní foláir go spreagfaidh a chuid smaointe díospóireacht ar céard is fiú leanúint ar aghaidh mar atá déanta go dtí seo.

Tá an **Dr Teresa O'Doherty** ina Déan ar an Oideachas i gColáiste Mhuire gan Smál, rud a fhágann go bhfuil údarás nach beag ag roinnt lena hionchair sa díospóireacht maidir le hinniúlachtaí an oide. Bíodh go n-admhaíonn sí go pras gur deacair sainmhíniú a thabhairt ar céard is brí le hoide 'inniúlach', maíonn sí go bhfuil sé den riachtanas díospóireacht a bhunú ar na luacha, ar an eolas, ar na scileanna agus an dearcadh nár mhiste a bheith ag an oide amach anseo. Molann sí modh imeachta na Comhairle Múinteoireachta agus go sonrach mar a théann sí i gcomhairle leis an saol, agus dar léi is den ardtábhacht iad na *Cóid Iompair Ghairmiúil do Mhúinteoirí* i gcíoradh cumais agus 'inniúlachtaí' an oide. Agus díospóireacht á lorg aici ar an modh imeachta bunaithe ar na hinniúlachtaí, tá sí cúramach an inní atá ar roinnt mhaith oiliúnóirí oidí a lua go cuí, tomhaiste, sé sin go n-imreodh a leithéid drochthionchar ar oideachas an oide, go sonrach tionchar chun laghdaithe. Deireann sí gur mian léi go mbeadh díospóireacht ann i measc na ndaoine go léir gur chúis inní dóibh ardchaighdeán teagaisc agus foghlama.

Léiríonn an taighde ar eagrais atá ag feidhmiú le hardéifeacht gur fearr an fhoghlaim a tharlaíonn iontu ar bhealach neamhfhoirmiúil, agus is fearr ar fad é nuair a théann daoine machnamhacha i bpáirtíocht lena chéile i suíomh nádúrtha. Ag cur san áireamh an tábhacht a bhaineann le maicléinn a lonnú i suíomh nádúrtha, d'fheidhmigh na coláistí oideachais i bpáirtíocht le scoileanna ón am ar bunaíodh an córas náisiúnta sa bhliain 1831. Laistigh de na scoileanna sa lá atá inniu ann tá micléinn imithe i bpáirtíocht le hoide-mheantóirí báíúla agus tá cleachtais luachmhara, idir fhoirmiúil agus neamhfhoirmiúil, suite isteach acu dá shon sa seomra ranga. Ach is ea is mó an t-ádh a bhíonn ar mhicléinn áirithe ná roinnt dá gcomhleacaithe, agus cloistear nach ngabhann an rath céanna ar an eispéireas a fhaigheann gach duine acu. Séard is cúis leis seo go minic ná go nglactar le micléinn sna scoileanna ar bhonn deonach, rud a fhágann go mbíonn drogall ar oidí áirithe glacadh le dualgas cuí i leith fhorbairt inniúlacht an mhicléinn. Tá cuid mhaith scríofa faoin bpáirtíocht ar oideachas tosaigh an oide idir scoileanna agus ollscoileanna, agus tá na díospóireachtaí ag dul siar go dtí na Stáit Aontaithe sna hochtóidí agus, chomh maith, go dtí an Bhreatain sna blianta tosaigh de na nóchaidí. Sa doiciméad, *Learning to Teach in Collaboration with Schools*, cuireann an **Dr**

Bernadette Ní Áingléis leis an saothar atá ag fás de shíor, lena díriú ar thionscnamh faoi stiúradh a coláiste, Coláiste Phádraig, Droim Conrach. Ag tagairt di don easpa struchtúir sa chomhoibriú idir scoil agus coláiste, de thoradh na ceannaireachta a bheith ag síolrú ón gcoláiste agus don fheachtas a bheith ag brath go mór ar dhea-thoil, déanann sí cur síos ar na modhanna imeachta praiticiúla atá bunaithe aici siúd agus a chomhleacaithe d'fhonn páirtíocht thoilteanach agus comhoibriú le scoileanna a fhorbairt ar bhonn córasach. Is cosúil go mbeidh an-rath ar an obair seo, agus tá an dea-thoradh fréamhaithe, ag léibhéal suntasach, níos lú i nádúr inmheánach an chaidrimh ná sa leagan amach a ghabhann leis. Fágann sin gur den ardtábhacht di gaoil d'ardcháilíocht a thugann an t-aitheantas cuí d'idirbheartaíocht na seasaimh phroifisiúnta éagsúla.

Sa pháipéar deiridh, díríonn **Cathal de Paor** ar an scríbhneoireacht mhachnamhach agus an fheidhm atá aici i bhforbairt an oide. Cuireann a scríobhann sé i gcuimhne dúinn rud a dúirt an tOllamh Donald Graves in *Oideas 35* (1990): *'nuair a scríobhaim, scríobhaim chun a fháil amach céard is eol dom, mar ní fios dom ina iomláine céard is brí lena bhfuil im aigne go dtí go gcuirim ord ar na focail sa pháipéar'*. Ag tacú leis an ráiteas seo, tarraingíonn Cathal ar Sheán Ó Ríordáin agus ar Vygotsky. Aithníonn sé an tábhacht a ghabhann leis an dialann mhachnamhach agus molann sé go ndéanfaí taighde a thionscain ar bhealaí ina bhféadfadh oidí nua-cháilithe a gcuid scileanna anailíse a fhorbairt agus iad i mbun ullmhúcháin dá saoil phroifisiúnta.

Ag an deireadh, cuirimid dhá léirmheas ar leabhair a bhfuil dlúth-bhaint acu le hoidí agus le hoideachas an oide faoi bhráid an léitheora. Sa chéad cheann, tugann **Séamas Ó hÉilí** faoi shaothar Valerie Jones ar na coláistí ullmhúcháin (1926-1961), agus sa dara ceann díríonn an **tOllamh Áine Hyland** ar shaothar Coolahan (le O'Donovan) ar stair na cigireachta a foilsíodh le déanaí. Is innholta iad an dá shaothar.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

In this era of far-reaching economic and social change, teacher policy is placed high on national agendas. Teachers are the most significant resource in our schools and the research tells us that they are the most important within-school factor affecting student learning. The pace of change has become so rapid that in fact we are now preparing pupils for a future that cannot be easily imagined. Teachers are central to school improvement efforts and a crucial task confronting us today is to educate and support teachers to become agents rather than recipients of change.

This task presents a number of challenges, in particular, the need to recruit and retain people of the highest calibre in the teaching profession and to ensure coherence between initial education, induction and continuing professional development. The EU Commission's Communication *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education* (2007) presents an analysis of the challenges facing teacher education today and identifies key policy concerns to be addressed at national and EU level. Lifelong learning for teachers is considered to be vital, involving quality programmes of initial teacher education, appropriate early career support and relevant continuing professional development opportunities for teachers and school leaders: all of these programmes should be rooted in rigorous academic research and extensive practical experience. Emphasis is placed on equipping teachers with the skills to address the needs of individuals so that they become autonomous learners. Also mentioned is the need to help students acquire the well publicised key competences. Of particular interest to those who put a premium on educated teachers, as opposed to teachers who are merely 'trained', is the emphasis placed on encouraging teachers to reflect on their own practice in a systematic way, to work in collaboration with other teachers, and to engage in classroom-based research. The Communication recommends that teacher education programmes should be readily available so that teachers might, in due course, be facilitated in proceeding to Master and Doctorate programmes. For their part, the programme providers are exhorted to develop effective partnerships with schools.

All these factors form part of the discussions taking place today under the auspices of the Teaching Council as it formulates its policy on teacher education in Ireland. Given the crucial importance of the topic, it seems appropriate that *Oideas* should make a contribution to further inform not only those who have a central role in the debate but also all those in a variety of education settings who are perhaps less engaged in considering how best we might equip our teachers for the challenges ahead.

Our first paper can be viewed as a useful background document to the contributions that follow. Here, the Director of the Teaching Council, **Áine Lawlor**, sets out the function of the Council in relation to teacher education and alerts us to its forthcoming policy paper that will set out its vision for teacher education in Ireland. She outlines the Council's role in the review and accreditation of programmes, a process that will provide an opportunity for colleges and universities to demonstrate the quality of their programmes. A panel of experts will review programmes from the perspectives of inputs, processes and outcomes and this will lead to a judgement on the suitability of programmes for the purpose of accreditation. In this way, the bedrock of initial teacher education will be enhanced and the scene set for the further development of Council policy that will embrace induction and continuing professional development.

In the second paper, **Dr Tom Kellaghan** deals with the future of the teacher education continuum in Ireland. He sets this against a background of reform driven by dissatisfaction with some aspects of initial teacher education abroad, particularly in the UK and USA. While acknowledging that the same level of concern is not evident in Ireland, he outlines a spectrum

of challenges and opportunities that is emerging. Primarily, he asserts the need to prepare teachers for a world that is changing socially, economically, culturally, and technologically in an inexorable and unpredictable fashion. While suggesting that progress in reform to date in this country must be a matter of concern, he also warns against politicising the issue, a course that has failed elsewhere.

Dr Andy Burke is well known to *Oideas* readers: in 1992 we published his 'Teaching: retrospect and prospect' as a single-theme volume, our first since Kevin McDonagh's acclaimed 'The Way the Money Goes' fifteen-years previously; and its reception was such that we published his 'The Devil's Bargain Revisited: the BEd degree under review', also as a single-theme volume, in 2000. Both had, as a central focus, the nature of teaching and teacher education as professional preparation and it is to this theme that he returns in the current paper. Drawing evidence from the two larger colleges of education in Ireland, he calls for a major reform of the BEd and argues that such reform is unlikely to be effective unless there is a high measure of coordinated action in identified areas. In support of his argument, he refers to a perceived gap between theory and practice, to a lack of articulation between courses within the professional component of the BEd, to an institutionalised separation and lack of integration of the academic components of the programme and to a proposal to give students the option of choosing their majors from subjects within the professional education area. His opinions are sure to provide an impetus to question the value of continuing as heretofore.

Professor Teresa O'Doherty is Dean of Education at Mary Immaculate College and, as such, is uniquely placed to speak with authority on the notion of teacher competences. While acknowledging the difficulty in defining the 'competent' teacher, she highlights a need to assert and debate the values, knowledge, skills and attitudes that the teacher of the future must acquire. She commends the collaborative and consultative approach taken by the Teaching Council in its work to date and views the published Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers as a significant contribution to the debate on teacher competence and 'competencies'. Calling for dialogue on the issue of the competency-based approach to teacher education, she is appropriately measured in articulating the concerns of many teacher educators, that competencies might have a reductionist effect on programmes of teacher education, and she expresses a desire for a dialogue among all who have a concern for high quality teaching and learning.

Research on high-performance organisations demonstrates that most learning occurs informally where, ideally, reflective practitioners enter into a partnership and collaborate willingly in a natural setting. Mindful of the importance of locating the student teacher in a natural setting, colleges of education have promoted partnerships with schools almost from the foundation of our national system of education in 1831. Within the schools, the students themselves have established partnerships with kind and sympathetic mentor-teachers and in this way have imbibed much that is valuable both formally in class and informally. But some students have been luckier than others in their placements and one sometimes hears of a less than useful experience. This is often due to the volunteerist model of partnership between college and school that is sometimes characterised by reluctance on the part of individual teachers to assume an appropriate measure of responsibility for developing the students' competence. Much has been written about schools-university partnerships in initial teacher education and debate on the subject extends as far back as the 1980s in the USA and to the early 1990s in England. In 'Learning to Teach in Collaboration with Schools', **Dr Bernadette Ní Áingléis** adds to the growing literature by focusing on a project undertaken by her college, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra. Noting that up to now collaboration has tended to be largely unstructured, college-led and heavily reliant on a spirit of goodwill, she reports on how she and her colleagues have instituted practical ways of involving schools more systematically in a willing and enthusiastic partnership. The results are indeed promising and to a significant degree are rooted not so much in the content of the relationships but in the

form they take. This leads her to put a premium on high quality relationships that have due regard for the negotiation of professional identities.

Our final paper, by **Cathal de Paor**, has as its theme the role that reflective writing plays in the development of the teacher. Echoing the renowned Professor Donald Graves who declared in *Oideas 35* (1990) that ‘when I write, I write to learn what I know because I don’t know fully what I mean until I order the words on paper’, Cathal draws from Seán Ó Riordáin and Vygotsky in developing this fundamental message. Underlining the value of reflective journals he calls for a study on how newly qualified teachers can enhance their analytic skills as they prepare for their professional lives.

Finally we present two reviews that can be closely linked to teachers and teacher education. One, by **Séamas Ó hÉilí**, centres on Valerie Jones’ study of the preparatory system 1926 - 1961 and the other, by **Professor Áine Hyland**, deals with Coolahan with O’Donovan’s recently published history of the inspectorate. We can confidently commend both works to our readers.

Áine Lawlor

THE TEACHING COUNCIL AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Áine Lawlor is the Chief Executive/Director of the Teaching Council established in 2006 under the Teaching Council Act, 2001. She graduated from Mary Immaculate College in 1969 and teacher education has been at the heart of a career that spans the role of class teacher, school principal and national co-ordinator of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme from 1998-2004 before her appointment to the Council. Currently, she is undertaking PhD research at NUI Maynooth on continuing professional development for teachers.

ABSTRACT: In this paper, the CEO/Director of the Teaching Council outlines the functions of the Council in relation to teacher education. She also signals the forthcoming 'Policy Paper on the Continuum of Teacher Education' which will set out the Council's vision for teacher education from initial teacher education through to induction and continuing professional development. Finally, she turns her attention on the Council's evolving role in reviewing and accrediting programmes of initial teacher education.

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of the Teaching Council on a statutory basis in 2006 marked a milestone in the development of teaching as a profession in Ireland. The Council's vision is to be at the heart of teaching and learning, promoting, supporting and regulating the teaching profession. In everything it does, the Teaching Council works within the framework of the Teaching Council Act, 2001. The Teaching Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this edition of *Oideas* which complements the Council's work in relation to teacher education.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE TEACHING COUNCIL RELATING TO TEACHER EDUCATION

In accordance with the Teaching Council Act, 2001, the Council acts as the guardian of teaching standards, establishing best practice at all stages on the continuum of teacher education. It is charged with reviewing and accrediting programmes of initial teacher education, including the standards for entry to those programmes. It is also empowered to establish procedures for induction and to establish procedures, criteria and a timeframe for probation. Its role in continuing professional development (CPD) is to carry out research in this area and to promote it and raise awareness of the value of CPD. Of even greater significance will be its role in reviewing and accrediting CPD programmes. It will also have

an important role in advising the Minister in relation to initial teacher education and continuing professional development.

TEACHING COUNCIL POLICY

All of these functions will be implemented by the Teaching Council within the context of its Policy Paper on the Continuum of Teacher Education which is currently being drafted. The Policy Paper will set out the Council's vision for teacher education, together with statements of intent as to how this vision should be realised. It should be noted, however, that the Teaching Council's powers relating to Induction, Probation and Continuing Professional Development have not yet been commenced by the Minister. Consequently, the Teaching Council's priority at this point is Section 38 of the Act, which relates to initial teacher education and the review and accreditation of same.

REVIEW AND ACCREDITATION OF PROGRAMMES OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001 states that the Council shall:

- Review and accredit the programmes of teacher education and training provided by institutions of higher education and training in the State
- Review the standards of education and training appropriate to a person entering a programme of teacher education and training, and
- Review the standards of knowledge, skill and competence required for the practice of teaching,

and shall advise the Minister and, as it considers appropriate, the institutions concerned.

The Council's role in relation to the review and accreditation of programmes of initial teacher education will be distinct from the academic accreditation which programmes already undergo. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a degree/diploma whereas professional accreditation for any profession is a judgement as to whether a programme prepares one for entry into that profession. The latter is distinguished by the existence of criteria that are specific to the profession, these having been defined in consultation with members of that profession and other relevant parties.

The Teaching Council's review and accreditation of programmes of initial teacher education will provide an opportunity for colleges and universities to demonstrate that they offer high quality programmes of teacher education where graduates achieve programme aims and learning outcomes which are aligned with the values and professional dispositions and the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence which are central to the practice of teaching.

All teacher education programmes in Ireland must have current accreditation in order to be recognised by the Teaching Council for registration purposes. The Council has deemed that existing programmes in Ireland which are recognised for registration purposes have current accreditation pending being reviewed.

THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGY FOR REVIEW AND ACCREDITATION

The Council has begun work on the development of its strategy for review and accreditation. As a first step, representatives of all of the partners in education were invited to one of three consultation fora which were held in Maynooth in February 2008. All three fora were well attended and a wealth of feedback was received as a result. A further 11 consultation meetings took place in October 2008 and a third phase of consultation with the Minister and programme providers commenced in May 2009.

In parallel with this consultation process, the Teaching Council undertook a review of relevant research on teacher education in Ireland and internationally, spanning the continuum of initial teacher education, induction and lifelong in-career development. The review was undertaken in two parts, the first of which was a background paper prepared by Professor John Coolahan, Emeritus Professor of Education at NUI Maynooth. This was followed by a detailed study undertaken on the Council's behalf by Dr. Paul Conway, Dr. Rosaleen Murphy, Dr. Anne Rath and Professor Kathy Hall from UCC. This research, together with the earlier reviews of initial teacher education in Ireland, the Kellaghan Report, *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century* (2002) and the Byrne Report, *Advisory Group on Post-Primary Teacher Education* (2002) and the OECD Report *Teachers Matter* (2005) informed the Council's deliberations as it drafted the strategy for review and accreditation. The research documents commissioned by the Teaching Council are available for download from the Council's website.

The draft strategy sets out in detail the process for review and accreditation, together with the inputs, processes and outcomes framework which will guide it when conducting a review.

OVERVIEW OF THE REVIEW AND ACCREDITATION PROCESS

In accordance with its draft strategy, the Teaching Council will establish a Review Panel to carry out the review and make a recommendation to the Teaching Council in relation to accreditation or re-accreditation of a programme. Review Panels will seek evidence in relation to the inputs, processes and outcomes associated with the programme under review. This evidence may be presented in documentary format and/or through observation and dialogue as part of a Review Panel visit. Based on the evidence, the Review Panel will identify areas of particular strength as well as areas for further development, if necessary, and will make a judgement as to the suitability of the programme for professional accreditation purposes.

Where, in the opinion of the Review Panel, a programme provider has not satisfactorily demonstrated that the programme meets the required standards, the Review Panel may make recommendations and suggestions in relation to areas for development and these will be a specific area of focus in subsequent reviews. Where the shortfalls are considered to be significant, the Review Panel will recommend to the Council that the provider be required to remedy the shortfalls, and will specify a timeframe within which the provider must do so. In such circumstances, short-term accreditation may be granted or accreditation may be deferred. It will be open to providers to appeal such a decision.

REVIEW AND ACCREDITATION CYCLE

Accreditation is given for a specified time period after which a further review will be undertaken. At this point, it is expected that the timeframe will be in the region of five to seven years. If, during the period between reviews, a significant change to a programme is proposed, a college or university must notify the Teaching Council of same. Where the Teaching Council considers such a change to be material to the programme's accreditation status, an interim review will be arranged.

NEXT STEPS

Since the conclusion of the third phase of consultation in relation to the draft strategy in October 2009, the Council has taken account of all feedback received and revised the strategy as appropriate. The process of reviewing and accrediting programmes has now commenced on a pilot basis. Four providers, who formally expressed their interest in participating in the pilot, have been selected as being representative of the consecutive and concurrent models at primary and post-primary levels. They are: St. Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; University College Dublin and the University of Limerick. Once the pilot phase has been completed, a fourth and final phase of consultation will be commenced prior to finalisation of the Council's strategy.

The Council's draft Policy Paper will be reviewed and revised based on the outcomes of the Council's first reviews and on further research to be carried out on the continuum of teacher education.

CONCLUSION

The Council's role in reviewing and accrediting programmes of initial teacher education will allow it to ensure that high standards of entry to the profession in Ireland are maintained. It is important for our young people, and society as a whole, that these standards be upheld and it is also important for the purpose of maintaining the reputation of the profession. The review of four programmes in 2009/2010 marks a significant first step for the Council and for all the partners in education who have contributed to the development of the Council's Review and Accreditation Strategy.

Teacher education, however, does not end after initial teacher education and the Council's policy on teacher education will cover the continuum of teacher education beginning with initial teacher education and entry to the profession, followed by induction, early and continuing professional development. Once drafted, the policy will provide the framework which will guide the Council as it implements its statutory responsibilities in each of these areas.

Thomas Kellaghan

THE FUTURE OF THE TEACHER EDUCATION CONTINUUM IN IRELAND: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Dr Thomas Kellaghan was director of the Educational Research Centre until his retirement in March 2009. He a graduate of the Queen's University of Belfast and an honorary graduate of the National University of Ireland. He is a fellow of the International Academy of Education and a member of Academia Europaea. He chaired the Working Group on Primary Preservice Teacher Education which reported in 2002.

ABSTRACT: Five factors which provide opportunities to support the reform of teacher education are identified: an appreciation that learning is life-long; the need to prepare pupils for a 'knowledge economy'; the availability of Information and Communications Technologies to support learning; the availability of research findings; and the availability of resources. Teacher education is conceptualized as a developmental continuum which, following selection, can be described as a series of stages: preservice education (including field experience), induction, and continuing professional development. Issues that arise in the implementation of reform, and associated challenges, at each stage are identified.

INTRODUCTION

Several developments in recent years point to the need to focus more closely on teacher education in reforms designed to prepare pupils for life in the 21st century. These often reflect dissatisfaction, particularly in the United States and Great Britain, with the perceived ability of teacher preparation programmes to produce teachers who can deliver high quality education in schools. The reasons for dissatisfaction are complex, and not always well-grounded, and relate to a variety of factors, including the performance of students in international comparative studies of achievement, high rates of attrition from the teaching service, and the continuing failure of the education system to ensure that all students living in disadvantaged circumstances benefit from education. While the Holmes Group (1986) in the United States called for fundamental reform in the preparation of teachers two decades ago, the U.S. Department of Education (in 2002), concluded that colleges of education were still not producing the types of highly qualified teachers that were needed.

The same level of concern is not evident in Ireland. The OECD (1991) review of national policies for education had only minor recommendations to make about the initial phase of teacher education [noting that 'the quality of the teacher educators' is high (p. 97) and referring to 'talented and well-educated young teachers' (p. 98)]. It identified as the key area in need of reform 'ensuring sound working relationships and interactions among the

hundreds of schools and the institutions training and educating teachers, as well as a number of other institutions and agencies participating directly in in-service programmes' (p. 93).

The views about teaching of the general public obtained in a national survey carried out in conjunction with the Your Education System (YES) process in 2004 are less positive. Half the respondents were of the opinion that schools had difficulty in recruiting good teachers, while approximately 9 out of 10 thought that the training of teachers needed to be improved, both before they begin to teach and during their professional lives (Kellaghan, McGee, Millar, and Perkins, 2004).

The report of the Inspectorate on newly qualified teachers in primary schools (Department of Education and Science Inspectorate, 2005) speaks more directly to the adequacy of primary preservice education. Considerable percentages of teachers during their probationary period said that they had been 'poorly prepared' to teach music (45%), drama (32%), mathematics (28%), and the visual arts (27%). Inspectors' evaluations of probationers' teaching led to the conclusion that teacher education courses needed to do more to familiarize students with the principles of the curriculum and to develop their ability to employ a variety of teaching approaches and to manage a range of individual differences in the pupils they teach. To what extent the required competencies should, or could, be developed in preservice or at a later stage is a moot point, given that it may take up to five years to progress from novice to competent teacher (Berliner, 2000). Or it may be that the survey findings reflect the shortcomings of all professional training programmes in preparing students for the multiple realities they will encounter later (Veenman, 1984).

Among those current realities for teaching are the continual review of curricula to reflect developments in knowledge and understanding; the changing character of the school-going population, as retention rates rise in post-primary school and the number of pupils from non-Irish backgrounds, whose first language is not English, increases; and the mainstreaming of pupils with special needs. The challenges posed by these factors, however, may pale in significance when one looks to the future, revealing the need to prepare teachers for a world that is changing socially, economically, culturally, and technologically in an inexorable and unpredictable fashion.

In considering the opportunities and challenges to which this situation gives rise, I will first identify a number of developments that indicate that the circumstances for reform are favourable. I will then consider teacher education as a developmental process, comprising three stages, identified as preservice, induction, and continuing professional development. Issues relating to the selection of students for teacher education and to students' teaching practice will also be addressed. While the main focus of the paper is on teacher education in Ireland, I shall, in the absence of literature relating to Ireland, draw on studies carried out elsewhere, particularly in the United States.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ARE FAVOURABLE FOR REFORM

It is possible to identify at least five factors that can be interpreted as indicating the presence of circumstances favourable for the reform of teacher education: an appreciation that learning is life-long; that we live in, and pupils have to be prepared for, a 'knowledge economy'; that Information and Communication Technologies have a contribution to make in developing the kind of knowledge and skills that will be required in the future; that the range of research findings that can be drawn on to improve learning and teaching is increasing; and that, over the past decade, considerable additional resources have been provided for teacher education.

Learning is Life-long

Today, learning is seen to be a feature of human experience from the cradle to the grave (Coolahan, 2002) and it is now axiomatic that the effectiveness of business and industrial

organizations is determined in a significant way by the extent to which they support learning to nourish and develop the competence of their personnel (Bush, 1987). Thus, learning, which is the main focus of teaching and teacher education, is accorded central importance. A further implication for teacher education is that it does not end when students graduate from college. It is now generally accepted that preservice education cannot equip students with the knowledge and skills they will require over their careers since it is necessary to be in the 'real-life' situation of teaching over a period of time to fully understand its demands and to develop strategies to meet them. Furthermore, teachers can only be prepared in the broadest sense for many of the demands that are inevitably going to affect education during the course of their careers.

Recent reviews of teacher education in Ireland, at primary (Working Group on Primary Preservice Education, 2002) and post-primary (Advisory Group on Post-Primary Teacher Education, 2002) levels, support the idea of teacher education as a continuum, a process that extends through the whole of a teacher's career, and which can be divided into three phases: initial teacher education, induction, and continuing professional development. The post-primary review accords considerably more attention than the primary review to the post-preservice education experiences of teachers, recommending that the time for preservice should not be extended, and that additional funds for teacher education should be invested in the post-preservice phases. The primary review, on the other hand, recommended that the BEd programme be extended from three to four years. This difference in emphasis (and in recommendations) may, in part at least, be due to the fact that the terms of reference for the post-primary review specified 'programmes in teacher education', while those for the primary review specified 'preservice teacher education programmes', though reference was made to incareer development.

The Centrality of 'Knowledge'

A further development likely to support the idea of reforming teacher education is that we now live in what is called a 'knowledge society' or 'knowledge economy', in which knowledge is a key strategic resource, replacing raw materials and labour, and that the availability of 'human capital' is critical in determining economic development. There is plenty of evidence from a variety of countries that education and training are viewed as being of critical importance for economic advance, increased productivity, and competitive advantage, and in contributing to a reduction in poverty and the maintenance of standards of living. While such views enhance the status of the school, according it a central role in economic and social development, they also carry with them serious challenges since the kind of knowledge that is being talked about may differ a good deal from the kind that schools, up to now at any rate, had become proficient in imparting (Hargreaves, 2003).

Just how challenging this scenario is becomes clear when we consider the range of coveted achievements that have been posited. These relate to 'high value knowledge' and are variously described as higher-order thinking skills; reasoning and explanatory skills; the ability to identify, solve and broker problems; the ability to learn quickly and to perform non-routine tasks; strategies to locate, gather, manipulate, and manage information; transferable generic skills, rather than job-specific ones; versatility; flexibility; the ability to take decisions, to work in a team, to assume responsibility, and to work without supervision (Kellaghan and Greaney, 2001; Miller, 2004). How schools are to foster these skills, or how teachers are to be prepared for the task, is not readily obvious. Neither is it clear how the possible negative aspects of a knowledge economy, including the promotion of self-interest, consumption, short-term commitments, and the pursuit of profit are to be addressed (Hargreaves, 2003).

Despite these challenges, perhaps because of them, teaching and teacher education occupy a central position in many reform proposals. An OECD (1998) *Education Policy Analysis* pointed out that it will not be possible to meet the challenges posed by the expectation that schools help societies adapt to social and economic change if teachers are not

at the centre of the process, something, it says, 'is not always properly recognized, especially at the political level, when the case is made for reform' (p. 27). In the same vein, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) concluded that since what teachers know and can do is one of the most important influences on what students learn, recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers should be the central strategy for improving schools. The critical role assigned teachers is supported by recent empirical evidence on the contribution of classroom teaching practices to student achievement, which was found to be at least as strong as that of student background (Wenglinsky 2002).

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The emergence of the world-wide web and of e-learning provides new sources for learning, and makes new approaches to it possible (Bolam and McMahon, 2004). In particular, Information and Communication Technologies, which already occupy a significant place in Irish schools, hold the promise of moving teaching from didactic methods to supported learning and tutoring, thus, according to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, contributing 'to the broad aim of preparing our young people for the future' (NCCA, 1998, p. 8). The use of these technologies will involve a change in the role of the teacher, as she/he becomes less a provider of knowledge and more a facilitator and tutor. Clearly, the preparation of student teachers, as well as the provision of training to existing ones, will need to take account of this if teachers are to develop the skills required to function in the constructivist and technology-rich environments that the presence of ICT promises.

The Availability of Research Findings

A further source of optimism in addressing teacher education reform is the growing knowledge base on which teachers can draw in their teaching (Burke, 1992). There now exist 'powerful findings, concepts, principles, technology, and theories about classroom teaching and learning' (Berliner, 2000, p. 365) that can inform teacher education. Basic and applied research that ought to serve as the foundation of the teacher education curriculum is available about the knowledge and skills all new teachers need relating to learning, child development, language, social contexts, subject-content knowledge, pedagogy, teaching diverse learners, assessment, and classroom management (see Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2004; Murray, 1996; Reynolds, 1989; Richardson, 2001).

The Availability of Resources

A final source of optimism relating to teacher education, and the opportunities that it presents, is the commitment of considerable resources to all its phases over the past decade. For example, there is now a range of providers during the continuing professional development phase, including the Department of Education and Science, colleges/universities, education centres, teacher unions, management bodies, and curriculum development centres, offering a variety of inservice courses at both primary and post-primary levels, many of which are related to innovations in schools (e.g., revision of the primary school curriculum, initiatives to address disadvantage, curriculum change in post-primary schools) (Hanafin and Hyland, 1995; Sugrue *et al.* 2001; Sugrue and Uí Thuama, 1997). These, however, seem to focus for the most part on issues arising from the curriculum rather than on the developmental needs of teachers.

DEVELOPMENT

Professional development, which begins with preservice education following selection, and continues through induction and later inservice provision, has become central to discourse on teacher education and educational reform in recent years. Development, which is basically a biological term, denotes a more or less continuous process which usually involves progressive

changes over a period of time from a more simple to a more complex structure or organizational pattern.

Acceptance of this definition has profound implications for the objectives of, and the activities that will be proposed for, teacher development programmes, at whatever stage of a teacher's career they occur. The point may be illustrated by a consideration of two approaches to inservice. In one, the purpose is to acquaint teachers with the principles of a revised curriculum or to show them how to teach reading or mathematics using a particular method (the 'good practice' or 'what works' approach). While such experience may contribute to a teacher's professional development, it can also restrict both it and educational improvement (Dewey, 1904; Sandison, 2003). When teachers only know that a practice works, they may be limited to implementing it, and adapting the practice or instituting a similar one in a new context may prove difficult. This approach may be contrasted with one in which activities have a more developmental focus designed to contribute to self-sustaining generative change and the promotion of teachers' capacity for self-regulation and independence. Professional development activities of this kind should help teachers reflect on their teaching and on pupils' learning as they strive to understand why some pupils are successful and others are not, the strategies pupils use in attempting to solve problems, how their thinking develops, and how instruction might help them build on their existing skills and knowledge (Franke *et al.* 1998).

A professional person in this context is one who can view issues and problems within the parameters of the broader context of factors known or thought to be related to them, has learned to cope with inherent uncertainties, has the expertise and courage to take critical decisions on the basis of available knowledge, and the skills to implement them (Burke, 2000; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Jackson, 1992).

THE TEACHER EDUCATION CONTINUUM

In this section, I consider stages in the teacher education continuum (and associated issues): selection, preservice teacher education, field experience, induction, and continuing professional development.¹

Selection

The process of teacher education begins with the selection of students. Unlike other countries, the availability of high-achieving students is not a problem in Ireland. Interviews are conducted for selection to some teacher education programmes, though not for BEd or Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) – formerly the Higher Diploma in Education. For the former, which accommodates the largest number of students, applicants are selected on the basis of their Leaving Certificate Examination performance. For PDE programmes, primary degree performance, post-graduate qualifications, teaching experience, and additional relevant qualifications are taken into account in a points system. Interviews were held for programmes in the past, but practical problems relating to the large number of applicants to be interviewed in a short period of time, together with issues of validity and reliability, led to their discontinuation.

The question inevitably arises: do candidates for teacher education differ in their capacity to develop the skills involved in teaching, such as representing complex knowledge in accessible ways, forming relationships with pupils and parents, collaborating with other professionals, interpreting multiple data sources, and meeting the needs of pupils with widely

¹ Professional development may also refer to principals (see Sugrue, 2003), but is not dealt with here.

varying abilities and backgrounds (Cochran-Smith, 2002)? Or can all, or most, candidates develop these skills during the course of a teacher education programme? If one were to accept the view that what students learn about teaching is based largely on individual personalities rather than on 'pedagogical principles' (Lortie, 1975), the case for a selection procedure that took account of a variety of applicant characteristics would seem compelling.

The report on primary-school teacher education, but not the report on post-primary school teacher education, recommended that consideration be given to the reintroduction of interviews 'to increase the probability that selected candidates have the required competence to embark on a programme that includes the practice of teaching' (Working Group on Primary Preservice Teacher Education, 2002, p. 162). If interviews were to be reintroduced, it may be that more efficient and reliable procedures than were used in the past could be employed.² However, if the absence of an interview was a major factor in making inappropriate selections, one would have expected the number of students found to be unsuitable for teaching during the course of their preservice studies to have increased considerably after the abolition of interviews, but this has not been the case. This may, of course, tell us more about the validity of the interview procedure than about the need for improved selection procedures. Furthermore, the number of teachers (5.7%) who had their probationary period extended in 2003-2004 (Department of Education and Science Inspectorate, 2005) would seem to point to the possibility of identifying, either in selection or in preservice, students who are unlikely to be successful teachers.

Preservice Teacher Education

There is great variation in the nature of preservice teacher education programmes, though the scale of variety existing in other countries is not found here. Both the primary (Working Group on Primary Preservice Teacher Education, 2002) and post-primary (Advisory Group on Post-Primary Education, 2002) reviews, in the absence of conclusive evidence that would point to the superiority of either one (see Allen, 2003; Burke, 2000; Cochran-Smith, 2004), favoured continuation of existing concurrent and consecutive programmes. Indeed, there would seem to be fairly general consensus that the variety that exists in modes of teacher preparation is a positive feature of the system. It does seem reasonable to say that the availability of choice can serve the needs of aspiring teachers, in particular by providing the options of undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. However, variations within programmes would seem more difficult to justify. It is difficult to see, for example, how variations such as studying an academic subject other than education or not studying one, or studying three rather than two non-education academic subjects in the first year of the BED programme, are desirable features of teacher preparation. Whether an individual studies two or three academic subjects in first year is not based on a consideration of its contribution to a preparation for teaching, but is solely a function of the college in which a student finds herself or himself, and reflects regulations for Arts degrees of the university to which colleges of education were affiliated in the 1970s. Since the appropriateness of the regulation for the preparation of teachers was not a consideration in its adoption, it might seem surprising that it has not been reviewed since the university affiliation changed.

The question whether or not BEd students should have a wider choice available to them in the 'non-education' academic subjects (basically Arts degree subjects) evokes strong views. First, choosing two (or three) subjects from current options, it is argued, provides students with a depth of subject-matter knowledge that will stand to them in their teaching, an

² For example, Byrnes, Kiger and Shechtman (2003) describe a group assessment procedure in which teams of two assessors (trained to establish consistency and to familiarize themselves with criteria for evaluation) assessed eight applicants in a 90-minute group procedure. Applicants were required to engage in discussion on the basis of which they were assessed for verbal, interpersonal, and leadership skills. Ratings based on the assessments were positively associated with student-teacher evaluation ratings.

important consideration in recommended reforms for teacher education in the United States in the 1980s (Ashton and Crocker, 1987; Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy 1986; Holmes Group, 1986; National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education, 1985). However, the evidence of a strong link between college study of an 'academic' subject and teacher effectiveness is by no means compelling (Greaney, Burke, and McCann, 1999; Wilson, Floden, and Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). Anyhow, any benefits that might be derived from such study would be relevant to only a limited portion of the primary school curriculum. Secondly, the study of an academic subject is considered to contribute to the 'personal development' of students. However, it could be argued (and many student teachers would concur, though they might not be judged sufficiently knowledgeable or respectful of tradition to have their views taken seriously) that an academic subject more related to teaching (such as psychology) should be available since it could serve the function of contributing to students' personal development, while at the same time providing students with access to knowledge that is relevant to many aspects of teaching, including child development, cognition, socialization, learning, and assessment.

We know little about the effects of different structural models of preservice teacher education on the learning of prospective teachers (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005; Darling Hammond, Chung, and Frelon, 2002). The limited available evidence would suggest that what students are offered during programmes and how they spend their time is more important than structure or length of programme. Indeed, a core issue for teacher education is how to create a framework with a set of organizing themes, shared standards, and clear goals for student learning that will provide participants with the knowledge and skills needed to begin teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The primary review group took the view that this would involve assisting students in interpreting and integrating their experiences in the various elements of their programme, as well as those acquired prior to entering the programme, and in constructing new understandings to guide them in making the practical day-to-day decisions of teaching. In a somewhat similar vein, the post-primary review suggested a range of 'core generic components' including 'reflective and research literacies' to enable students develop and support their own teaching and learning and that of their pupils; a recognition that teaching involves critical learning on the part of the teacher in an ongoing quest for what is best; a robust tolerance of, and amenability to, change; and a disposition to engage in team work that capitalizes on the professional expertise of teachers to develop a positive learning environment for pupils.

Field Experience

Field experience, or the practice of teaching, merits consideration as a separate topic, partly because of its centrality in preservice, but also because of views that would seem to indicate that nothing else matters. Indeed, for some, time spent in the practice of teaching has achieved a status in which it is regarded as almost synonymous with teacher education, a view reflected in proposals in Britain and the United States to increase the amount of time students spend 'in the field'. Classroom experience does provide students with important opportunities: to practice teaching skills, to explore teaching as a profession, to begin the process of socialization into the teacher role, and to communicate with pupils, parents, and other teachers. However, time is also needed for other activities, including course work, to provide the conceptual framework for practice as well as opportunities for students to reflect critically on their experience (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

A number of problems can be anticipated in field experience. First, if supervisors perform summative as well as formative functions, this may result in the potential to use teaching practice to improve students' skills not being fully exploited. Secondly, novice teachers, faced with the task of controlling 20 to 30 pupils, may concentrate on management and the maintenance of order, possibly at the expense of pupil learning. This tendency will be reinforced if evaluation of a student's performance is based on the extent to which performance is considered to be an effective enactment of the ritualized routines

of the busy classroom (Paris and Gespass, 2001; Stodolsky, 1984). Thirdly, field experience can support a view of teacher education as an apprenticeship, in which novice teachers focus on the acquisition of the practical skills needed to conduct a smooth-running class, often based on the teaching practices they themselves had experienced in their school days.³ Fourthly, student teachers may find that limiting themselves to mechanical routine work with pupils is the easiest way to keep things moving smoothly and may never learn how to involve pupils in higher-order cognitive activities (Lanier and Little, 1986; Livingston and Borko, 1989; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon, 1998). Fifthly, requiring students to assume immediate responsibility for a class would seem to represent an unreasonable burden (Breatnach, 2006). Finally, problems can be anticipated when supervision is carried out by part-time personnel who may not be familiar with the content of college-based courses and, in particular, with efforts to integrate it with the practice of teaching.

Identification of the conditions under which field experience makes an optimal contribution to teachers' professional development will require experimentation with different types, during preservice and induction. Such experimentation should be guided by the need to ensure that practice is situated in an intellectually rigorous context of reflection, feedback, and collaboration, in which novice teachers engage in careful examination of their experience (Dewey, 1904). This aspiration may be inhibited by the fact that, to date, loose coupling (lack of co-ordination, influence, and interaction) has been a feature of the relationship between colleges and schools, and between preservice and beginning and later teaching.

Lack of a locus of control *within* teacher education institutions that prepare students for primary-school teaching may also be a problem, as it may make it difficult to ensure that the components of a programme (general education, specialisation in subject matter, pedagogical theory and methods, and the practice of teaching) are related closely to each other, and that each contributes to students' competence in teaching. To address this problem, field practice should be supported by, and be closely related to, all the programme experiences of students, which together should provide the principles necessary to understand how children learn, how curriculum decisions might be guided, how pupils' cognitions might affect teaching, as well as the ethical issues involved in teaching (Lanier and Little, 1986).

Induction

Induction is 'a distinct and discrete phase in the development of the teacher, linking the preparatory guided phase of preservice education with the fully professional and largely self-directed role of the teacher, with its own clear objectives, procedures, role definitions, and resource allocation' (OECD, 1991, p. 101). Programmes of induction are a feature of teachers' professional development in many countries, providing support for newly qualified teachers in a range of practices, including mentoring, supervision by college or university staff, structured peer coaching, classroom observation with feedback, workshops, and the use of portfolios. Mentors, who play a key role in most induction programmes, are chosen for their demonstrated teaching excellence, disposition towards collaboration and enquiry, commitment to academic growth, and expertise in such areas as literacy, mathematics, or classroom assessment (Kelley,

³ Students when they enter a teacher education programme are likely to have a well-developed set of personal beliefs about learning and teaching based on personal experience, which are powerful predictors of what they learn in education courses (Wilson, Floden, and Ferrini-Mundy, 2002), and are difficult to change (Calderhead, 1991; Grossman, 1992; Kagan, 1992; Lonka, Joram, and Bryson, 1996; Nettle, 1998; Tillema, 1994; Zeichner and Gore, 1990). Even when teacher education programmes focus on teaching in less traditional ways, the effects may disappear when students enter the real world of the school where they become socialized to prevailing norms (Bush, 1987; Veenman, 1984). Following inservice also, teachers tend to gravitate back toward their former practice (Spillane, 2000).

2004). They provide support over a range of areas, including the professional (helping teachers clarify their thinking about complex education issues and make informed decisions about educational practice), the emotional (dealing with feelings of isolation, lack of confidence), the social, and the practical. Despite its widespread use, conclusive evidence is not available about the impact of mentoring (Lopez *et al.* 2004).

The Committee on Inservice Education (1984) identified ‘a need for a more structured, though not necessarily uniform, system of induction’ (p. 45) for both primary and post-primary teachers in this country. Some seven years later, however, the OECD (1991) review noted the absence of a formal induction phase for teachers. Some years later, the white paper, *Charting Our Education Future* (1995), responded, stating that ‘a well-developed and carefully managed induction programme, coinciding with the teacher’s probationary year, will be introduced for first- and second-level teachers’ (p. 125). A number of induction programmes associated with teacher education institutions were under way before the initiation in 2002 of a national pilot project for the induction of newly qualified teachers at primary and post-primary levels (*National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction*, 2006). The response of participants was largely positive, and the scheme was extended to over 400 teachers in 2008-09.

Experience elsewhere would indicate that a number of challenges remain: deciding on what is appropriate in preservice and what is appropriate in inservice education; creating a context of support for the teacher while maintaining a focus on teaching pupils; the length of induction (is one year sufficient?); finance; the role of Information and Communication Technologies; how all newly qualified teachers, spread throughout the country, are to be provided with support; and assessing the impact of the knowledge and skills acquired by participants during their induction on their practice and, ultimately, on pupil learning outcomes (Bullough and Draper, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Mitchell, Scott, and Boyns, 1999; Muijs *et al.* 2004). Issues relating to the selection, training, and role of mentors require particular attention. It cannot be assumed that ‘good’ teachers automatically make ‘good’ mentors, while there is always the danger that monitoring will reinforce traditional norms and practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Clearly, the Teaching Council will need to address these issues in its role of reviewing and accrediting programmes of teacher education; in establishing procedures for the induction and probation of teachers; and in promoting the continuing education and professional development of teachers.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

While there is a long history of inservice courses for teachers in Ireland, the OECD (1991) review remarked on their optional, voluntary, and haphazard nature. To address this situation, it pointed to the need to develop new policies and strategies, as well as to extend provision. The National Education Convention (1994) and the white paper, *Charting Our Education Future* (1995), also expressed the need to provide adequately for teachers’ personal and professional developmental needs. The response has been considerable. During the 1990s, growth in the number and variety of courses offered in the context of continuing professional development (CPD) was unprecedented (see Sugrue *et al.* 2001).

Today, the Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and Science provides support to schools in a number of areas, such as curriculum reform, improving principals’ skills as leaders and managers, and increasing parental involvement in education. A nationwide network of education centres provides a variety of programmes relating to professional development and school management. The Second-Level Support Service focuses on subject-specific curricular support, as well as general support for teaching, in post-primary schools. The Special Education Support Service addresses the needs of school personnel working with pupils with special educational needs. Compared to inservice twenty years ago, there is an increased emphasis today on school-focused continuing professional development that takes account of school culture and planning, work-based learning, and

professional learning communities. Teacher learning is the core process, and self-directed learning the main goal (Bolam and McMahon, 2004).

Many issues relating to the provision of CPD merit further debate (Bolam and McMahon, 2004; Earley and Bubb, 2004). Should CPD be designed primarily to meet the needs of individuals, of organizational cultures and conditions, or of national policy? Should it be primarily vocational and instrumental or more attuned to the personal development of teachers? Who should pay for CPD? When and how should it be provided and accessed? Who should provide it? Sugrue *et al.* (2001), for example, in their review noted a heavy reliance on seconded teachers (teachers talking to teachers) and concluded that there was a need for greater variety in providers. They also observed that strategic thinking to guide activities and to determine priorities had lagged behind provision.

A search for guidance in the international literature on the development of CPD is not particularly helpful. While vast, providing many examples of practice and a discussion of relevant issues, it is also rather haphazard, reflecting a variety of assumptions, approaches, and theories. Research is rarely focused on long-term or indirect benefits (Muijs *et al.*, 2004), and there is little evidence of the impact of CPD (on participants' reactions, participants' learning, institutional support and change, participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and ultimately pupil learning outcomes) (Guskey, 2000). While further research is needed to provide clear guidance on the specific features that make for effective CPD (Wayne *et al.* 2008), in general it would seem that CPD will be more effective if it is related to teachers' identified needs, is linked to the concrete tasks of teaching, is oriented towards problem solving, and is sustained over time by regular contacts and inputs (Burke, 2000). Development may also be facilitated by improving the conditions under which teachers work (e.g., reduced teaching load to provide more time for planning and reflection) and by helping teachers come to terms with the demands of their work, especially psychological stress (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Jackson, 1992). In the future, one might expect increased use of Information and Communication Technologies and a tighter coupling between colleges, schools, and other providers, and between preservice, beginning, and later teaching.

CONCLUSION

While the need for reform in teacher education and its general direction might be clear, and several conditions for reform are favourable, progress cannot be regarded as entirely satisfactory. Even when recommendations are available, as in the review of the preparation of primary school teachers (Working Group on Primary Preservice Teacher Education, 2002), the limited response to date must be a matter of concern. Whether this indicates non-acceptance of the recommendations, inertia, or an inability to address the challenges involved is not clear. What is clear, based on experience here and elsewhere, is that those challenges are formidable.

First, it is not a trivial task to design programmes at all stages of teacher education in which priority is accorded the linking of coursework and practice with a focus on teaching, and in which experiences between stages are co-ordinated and all teachers have access to sustained learning opportunities at every stage of their careers.

Second, resistance can be anticipated in these tasks from those involved in teacher education who may be driven more by tradition and the maintenance of current processes and patterns than by professional knowledge or changes in society (Bush, 1987; Griffin, 1999).

Third, the fact that individualism and the isolation of teachers are traditional features of school organization may mean that the environment may be less than hospitable to some of the changes that are required.

Fourth, it is not immediately obvious how schools and teacher education are to prepare students for a future that may be very different from the present, though how different, and in what ways, we cannot really say. Since we cannot assume linear continuity, or anticipate exogenous events (such as a collapse in government finances), the capacity to predict with accuracy what might happen in the future is always limited (Miller, 2004). Even if we were clear about what teachers need to know to facilitate pupils in acquiring knowledge, skills, and dispositions for life today, this might not be of much value in preparing teachers for a future in which social, economic, political, and cultural changes have reshaped the material and cultural conditions in ways that are uncertain, unpredictable, and challengeable (Barnett, 2000). That reshaping might require radical changes in the function of schools, as they retain, change, or shed their traditional custodial, behavioural, cognitive, screening, and socialization functions (Miller, 2004).

Fifth, on the basis that single-focus isolated reform efforts usually fail to fulfil their promise, other major instructional guidance systems will need to be aligned with teacher education reform. Thus, for example, public examinations would have to be reformed to reflect goals of education at all levels relating to the generation of new perspectives and understandings, problem solving, and higher-order thinking, all goals which, incidentally, were endorsed in the YES process (Kellaghan and McGee, 2005).

Finally, care will need to be taken to avoid the politicization of teacher education in the way it has been politicized in some countries. Teacher education is, of course, a political issue, and it should be a matter of public concern how teachers are prepared, that teachers are competent, and that they are accountable for their performance. What is to be avoided is the kind of political spectacle evident elsewhere, the 'pure theatre ... with no other purpose than to look like something positive is happening, whereas it is not' (Berliner, 2005, p. 205), based on prescription and regulation, and substituting doubtful accreditation procedures for the programmes and experience that are required to develop good and effective teachers (Allington, 2005; Berliner, 2005; Calderhead, 2001).

REFERENCES

Allen, M. (2003) *Eight questions on teacher preparation: What does the research say?*, Denver CO: Education Commission of the States.

Allington, R.L. (2005) 'Ignoring the policy makers to improve teacher preparation', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56, 199-204.

Advisory Group on Post-Primary Teacher Education (2002) *Report*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ashton, P., and Crocker, L. (1987) Systematic study of planned variations: The essential focus of teacher education reform. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(3), 2-8.

Barnett, R. (2000) *Realizing the university in an age of supercomplexity*, Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press.

Berliner, D.C. (2000) 'A personal response to those who bash teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51, 358-371.

Berliner, D.C. (2005) 'The near impossibility of testing for teacher quality', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56, 205-213.

Bolam, R., and McMahon, A. (2004) 'Literature, definitions and models: towards a conceptual map' in C. Day and J. Sachs (Eds.), *International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers* (pp. 33-63), Maidenhead Berks: Open University Press.

Breatnach, D. (2006) 'Reflections on teaching practice: Exploring the perspectives of student teachers', *Oideas* 52, 56-74.

Bullough, R.V., and Draper, R.J. (2004) 'Making sense of a failed triad. Mentors, university supervisors, and positioning theory', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55, 407-420.

Burke, A. (1992) 'Teaching: retrospect and prospect', *Oideas*, 39, 5-254.

Burke, A. (2000) 'The devil's bargain revisited: the BEd degree under review', *Oideas*, 48, pp. 7-58.

Bush, R.N. (1987) 'Teacher education reform: lessons from the past half century', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(3), pp. 13-19.

Byrnes, D.A., Kiger, G., and Shechtman, Z. (2003) 'Evaluating the use of group interviews to select students into teacher-education programs', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54, pp. 163-172.

Calderhead, J. (1991) 'Images of teaching: Student teachers' early conceptions of classroom practice', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 7(1), pp. 1-8.

Calderhead, J. (2001) 'International experiences of teaching reform' in V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (4th ed.; pp. 777-800), Washington DC: American Educational Research Association.

Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) *A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century*, Washington DC: Author.

Charting Our Education Future (1995), White paper on education, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2002) 'Reporting on teacher quality. The politics of politics', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53, pp. 379-382.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2004) 'Ask a different question, get a different answer. The research base for teacher education', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55, pp. 111-113.

Cochran-Smith, M., and Zeichner, K. (2005) *Studying teacher education: the report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education*, Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Committee on Inservice Education (1984) *Report*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Coolahan, J. (Ed.) (1994) *The Report of the National Education Convention*, Dublin: The National Education Convention Secretariat.

Coolahan, J. (2002). *Teacher education and the teaching career in an era of lifelong learning*. OECD Working Paper No. 2. Maynooth: NUI Maynooth.

Darling-Hammond, L., and Bransford, J. (Eds.) (2004) *Preparing teachers for a changing world. Report of the Committee on Teacher Education of the National Academy of Education*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L., Chung, R., and Frelon, F. (2002) Variation in teacher preparation. How well do different pathways prepare teachers to teach?', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53, pp. 286-302.

Department of Education and Science Inspectorate (2005) *Beginning to teach. Newly qualified teachers in Irish primary schools*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Dewey, J. (1904) 'The relation of theory to practice in education' in J. Dewey, S.C. Brooks, F. M. McMurray *et al.*, *The relation of theory to practice in the education of teachers. Second Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I* (pp. 9-30), Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education.

Earley, P., and Bubb, S. (2004) *Leading and managing continuing professional development: developing people, developing schools*, London: Paul Chapman.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001) 'From preparation to practice: Designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching', *Teachers College Record*, 103, pp. 1013-1055.

Franke, M.L., Carpenter, T., Fennema, E., Ansell, E., and Behrend, J. (1998) 'Understanding teachers' self-sustaining, generative change in the context of professional development', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 14, pp. 67-80.

Greaney, V., Burke, A., and McCann, J. (1999) 'Predictors of performance in primary-school teaching', *Irish Journal of Education*, 30, pp. 22-37.

Griffin, G.A. (1999) 'Changes in teacher education: looking to the future' in G.A. Griffin (Ed.) *The education of teachers. Ninety-eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I* (pp. 1-28), Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education.

- Grossman, P.L. (1992), 'Why models matter: An alternative view of professional growth in teaching. *Review of Educational Research*, 62, pp. 171-179.
- Guskey, T.R. (2000) *Evaluating professional development*, New York: Corwin Press.
- Hanafin, J., and Hyland, A. (1995) *In-career development needs of the Irish education system*, Cork: University College Cork.
- Hargreaves, A. (2003) *Teaching in the knowledge society*, Maidenhead Berks: Open University Press.
- Hargreaves, A, and Fullan, M.G. (1992) 'Introduction' in A. Hargreaves and M.G. Fullan (Eds.) *Understanding teacher development* (pp. 1-19), London: Cassell.
- Holmes Group. (1986) *Tomorrow's teachers*. East Lansing MI: Author.
- Jackson, P.H. (1992) 'Helping teachers develop' in A. Hargreaves and M.G. Fullan (Eds.), *Understanding teacher development* (pp. 62-74), London: Cassell.
- Kagan, D.M. (1992), Implications of research on teacher belief, *Educational Psychologist*, 27, pp. 65-90.
- Kellaghan, T., and Greaney, V. (2001) 'The globalization of assessment in the 20th century', *Assessment in Education*, 8, pp. 87-102.
- Kellaghan, T., and McGee, P. (2005) *Your Education System. A report on the response to the invitation to participate in creating a shared vision for Irish education into the future*, Dublin: Educational Research Centre.
- Kellaghan, T., McGee, P., Millar, D., and Perkins, R. (2004) *Views of the Irish public on education: 2004 survey*, Dublin: Educational Research Centre.
- Kelley, L.M. (2004) 'Why induction matters', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55, 438-448.
- Lanier, J.E., and Little, J.W. (1986), Research on teacher education' in M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed.; pp. 527-569), New York: Macmillan.
- Livingston, C., and Borko, H. (1989) 'Expert-novice differences in teaching: A cognitive analysis and implications for teacher education', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 40 (4), pp. 36-42.
- Lonka, K., Joram, E., and Bryson, M. (1996) 'Conceptions of learning and knowledge: Does training make a difference?' *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 21, pp. 240-260.
- Lopez, A. Lash, A., Schaffner, M., Shields, P., and Wagner, M. (2004) *Review of research on the impact of beginning teacher induction on teacher quality and retention*, Menlo Park CA: SRI International.
- Lortie, D. (1975) *Schoolteacher. A sociological study*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miller, R. (2004) 'Imagining a learning intensive society' in *Learning in the 21st century. Towards personalisation* (pp. 27-74), Proceedings of Policy Workshop hosted by the Information Society Commission, Dublin, November 5.

Mitchell, D.E., Scott, L.D., and Boyns, D.E. (1999) *The California beginning teacher support and assessment program: 1999 statewide evaluation study*, Riverside CA: California Educational Research Cooperative.

Muijs, D., Day, C., Harris, A., and Lindsay, G. (2004) 'Evaluating CPD: an overview' in C. Day and J. Sachs (Eds.), *International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers* (pp. 291-310), Maidenhead Berks: Open University Press.

Murray, F. (Ed.). (1996) *The teacher educator's handbook: building a knowledge base for the preparation of teachers*, Washington DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education (1985), *A call for change in teacher education*, Washington DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996), *What matters most: teaching for America's future*, New York: Author.

National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction (2006) *Report on Phase 1 and 2 2002-2004*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Nettle, E.B. (1998) 'Stability and change in the beliefs of student teachers during practice teaching', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 14, 193-204.

NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) (1998) *Primary curriculum preview*, Dublin: Author.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) (1991) *Reviews of national policies for education – Ireland*, Paris: Author.

OECD (1998) *Education policy analysis 1998*, Paris: Author.

Paris, C., and Gespass, S. (2001) 'Examining the mismatch between learner-centered teaching and teacher-centered supervision', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52, pp.398-412.

Reynolds, M. (Ed.) (1989) *Knowledge base for the beginning teacher*, Oxford: Pergamon.

Richardson, V. (2001) *Handbook of research on teaching* (4th ed.), Washington DC: American Educational Research Association.

Sandison, J. (2003) Is it 'what works' that matters? Evaluation and evidence-based policy making', *Research Papers in Education*, 18, pp.331-345.

Spillane, J.P. (2000) 'Cognition and policy implementation. District policymakers and the reform of mathematics education', *Cognition and Instruction*, 18, pp.141-179.

Stodolsky, S. (1984) 'Teacher evaluation: The limits of looking', *Educational Researcher*, 13(9), 11-18.

Sugrue, C. (2003) 'Principals' professional development: realities, perspectives and possibilities', *Oideas*, 50, pp.8-39.

Sugrue, C., Devine, D., Morgan, M., and Raftery, D. (2001) *Policy and practice of professional development for primary and post-primary teachers in Ireland: A critical analysis*, Report to the Research and Development Committee, Department of Education and Science.

Sugrue, C., and Uí Thuama, C. (1997) Lifelong learning for teachers in Ireland: policy, provision and vision', *British Journal of In-Service Education*, 23, pp.55-70.

Tillema, H.H. (1994) 'Training and professional expertise: bridging the gap between new information and pre-existing beliefs of teachers', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10, pp.601-615.

U.S. Department of Education. Office of Postsecondary Education. Office of Policy Planning and Innovation (2002) *Meeting the highly qualified teacher challenge. The Secretary's annual report on teacher quality*, Washington DC: Author.

Veenman, S. (1984) 'Perceived problems of beginning teachers', *Review of Educational Research*, 54, pp.143-178.

Wayne, A.J., Yoon, K.S., Zhu, P., Cronen, S., and Garet, M.S. (2008) 'Experimenting with teacher professional development: motives and methods', *Educational Researcher*, 37(8), pp.469-479.

Wenglinsky, H. (2002) 'How schools matter: the link between teacher classroom practices and student academic performances', *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 10 (12).

Wideen, M., Mayer-Smith, J., and Moon, B. (1998) 'A critical analysis of research on learning to teach: making the case for an ecological perspective on inquiry', *Review of Educational Research*, 68, 130-178.

Wilson, S.M., Floden, R.E., and Ferrini-Mundy, J. (2002) 'Teacher preparation research. An insider's view from the outside', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53, 190-204.

Working Group on Primary Preservice Teacher Education (2002) *Report. Preparing teachers for the 21st century*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Zeichner, K.M., and Gore, J.M. (1990) 'Teacher socialization' in W.R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 329-348), New York: Macmillan.

Andy Burke

THE BEd DEGREE: STILL UNDER REVIEW

Dr Andy Burke was a senior lecturer in Philosophy and History of Education at St. Patrick's College, Dublin and is currently based at the Educational Research Centre in the College. Teacher education and teacher professionalism have been central concerns in his research and writing. He has had a long-term involvement in consultancy work for the World Bank, the European Commission, and Irish Aid in many African and Asian countries. He is currently working on teacher education issues for the Bank in Palestine, Egypt and Kuwait.

ABSTRACT: Teacher education is a contested area worldwide. This paper attempts to synthesise the views of some of the major figures involved in the international debate on teacher preparation and provides some new data relevant to primary teacher education in Ireland. The evidence suggests that there is need to revisit and re-evaluate the model of BEd put in place in the mid-1970s in the two larger colleges of education. In its reassessment of the BEd, the paper focuses in particular on: (1) the disjunction between theory and practice and the extent to which existing teaching practice arrangements are unhelpful in this regard; (2) the need for integration of courses within the professional component of the BEd programme; (3) the institutionalized separation (and lack of integration) ab initio of the academic and professional components of the programme; (4) the proposal of the Working Group on Primary Preservice Teacher Education (2002) to give students the option of choosing their Majors from subjects within the professional education area. The evidence suggests that a major reform of the BEd is needed. It is also argued that such reform is unlikely to be effective without coordinated action in each of the identified areas (1-4). While the model of BEd in the smaller colleges is not discussed, much of the evidence presented is relevant thereto.

BACKGROUND

BEd degree programmes for primary teachers in Ireland were initiated in the mid-1970s. They replaced two-year training courses that had operated since the latter decades of the nineteenth century. While constant debates have taken place within and outside the colleges of education regarding the merits, or otherwise, of the new programmes (cf. Burke, 2000), it was not until 1999 that a Working Group established by the Minister for Education undertook a major national review of primary teacher education – 25 years after the introduction of BEd degrees¹. The report of the Working Group was presented to the Minister in 2001 and published in 2002 (Working Group, 2002).

This paper will concentrate on the model of BEd operating in the two largest colleges of education which, between them, cater for over three-quarters of undergraduate primary

¹ The working group comprising twenty members was chaired by Dr. Thomas Kellaghan, Director, Educational Research Centre, Drumcondra, Dublin.

teacher education students in the country². The structure of the BEd in both institutions is similar and will be referred to hereafter as ‘the BEd programme’. In addition to their professional studies³ in education, all students in this programme study one academic subject to degree level (referred to hereafter as their ‘Major’) and either one or two additional academic subjects in first year (referred to hereunder as their ‘Minor’ subjects). The breakdown in contact time between professional and academic studies is roughly 66:34. Time allocated to teaching practice (broken down across years) is seventeen weeks (including preparation time) (Working Group, 2002).

The issues addressed by the Working Group (2002) included: the relevance of the models of BEd initiated in the mid-1970s for the 21st century, taking into account the changes that had taken place in the intervening years in curriculum, teaching, teacher education, and in society. While some action has been taken on a minority of the Working Group’s recommendations, the majority are still awaiting implementation. The focus herein will be on the three recommendations which, if acted on, would require the most radical overhaul of the current BEd programme: (1) better integration of theory and practice in the programme; (2) the extension of the three-year programme by one year (ring-fenced for professional studies and school-based work); (3) the addition of new subjects from within the professional area to the list of academic subjects from which students currently choose their Major and Minor subjects. The existing academic subjects on offer in both institutions include: Irish, English, French, History, Geography, Mathematics, Music and Theology/Religious Studies⁴. Additional Majors might include: psychology, sociology or philosophy of education; early childhood, literacy, mathematics, music or science education; special education; Drama Studies; ICT. The following are among the arguments in favour of the proposed changes. They are culled from the Working Group (2002) report and from other sources (cf. Burke, 2000):

1. With the expansion in the knowledge base of teaching (foundation disciplines, research on teaching and learning, developments in and increased emphasis on assessment and evaluation), developments in curricular areas since the early 1970s, and the imposition of new responsibilities on teachers, BEd programmes in Ireland, like similar programmes elsewhere, have become seriously overloaded, are over-pressurising students, and are, in effect, preventing the kind of developmental experiences that should characterise all professional programmes (cf. Burke, 2000 and Working Group, 2002 for detailed analyses of the Irish BEd programme⁵).

² The two largest colleges are: St. Patrick’s College, Dublin City University and Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. Both offer three-year honours BEd and BA degrees. In addition, Mary Immaculate College also offers a four-year honours BEd degree in education and psychology. Three smaller teacher education institutions, associated with Trinity College, have a different model of BEd. Theirs is a three-year pass degree programme with a fourth year part-time option for an honours qualification. Students in these colleges study a number of academic subjects but do not take any to degree level. All the colleges of education offer full-time (one-and-a half year) diploma courses to qualify university graduates for primary teaching. In recent years Hibernia College has initiated a part-time, largely on-line, course for such students. This latter is accredited by HETAC. DES sources indicate that the number of English-trained teachers (mostly of Irish origin) in Irish classrooms has increased in recent years.

³ ‘Professional studies’, as used herein, refers to courses taken by all BEd students. They include: foundation disciplines (Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology and History of education); teaching methodology; all curriculum courses; research on primary teaching; assessment and evaluation; ICT. Courses such as ‘Professional Irish’, taken only by students not majoring in Academic Irish, and the certificate course in Religious Studies which is optional, are not included.

⁴ Philosophy and German are on offer as academic Majors in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick while Biology can be taken as an academic Minor in St. Patrick’s College, Dublin.

⁵ Contact time varies from about 20-26 hours per week across years.

Buckberger and Byrne, 1995, provided similar information on over-packed programmes in other countries).

2. In teaching, as in other professions, the levels of service expected and demanded have increased significantly and what was once considered sufficiently effective is no longer acceptable. A higher level of learning for all students is now the dominant expectation for the teaching profession, along with more efficient services to meet the specific needs of individual students (cf. Bransford *et al.* 2005; Glazer, 2008). Students' rights to expanded services are sometimes enshrined in law (e.g. the *Education Act, 1998*, in Ireland; the *No Child Left Behind Act, 2002*, in the USA). While the teaching profession can take pride in society's expectations in its regard, it will have serious difficulties in effectively meeting those expectations without changes in PRESET⁶ programmes, the provision of additional time to facilitate student mastery of the current knowledge base of the profession, and the development of the requisite diagnostic and practical skills in extended, well-mentored, on-the-job placements.
3. If effective steps are not taken to remediate the shortcomings of PRESET, then Induction and INSET will, of necessity, be remedial in nature. Their major task will be compensating for the shortcomings of PRESET rather than fostering continuing professional development which, ideally, should be the central focus of INSET for practicing teachers.
4. A major concern is that the professional potential of the extraordinary high calibre of student entering primary teacher education in Ireland (cf. Greaney, Burke and McCann, 1999) is not being fully tapped due, among other things, to the structure, brevity and overloaded nature of the current BEd programme.
5. While total contact time (lectures, seminars, workshops) allocated to professional studies, as against academic Majors, in the BEd programme is roughly 66:34, the evidence suggests that students spend a disproportionate amount of their time studying their academic subjects. Mairtin (1999) found that "between 60-70% of students⁷ in both colleges indicated that most of their time was spent studying the academic subjects" (p.5). While 34% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their academic subjects supported and enhanced their teaching, 44% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A more recent survey of third-year BEd students in one of the two larger colleges found that, on average, students devote 55% of their time to Education Studies and 45% to their Academic Subjects (Burke, 2008c)⁸.
6. Insufficient on-the-job experience, and the artificial nature of the short teaching practice periods that have been part of the BEd since the beginning, are now seen to be out of keeping with current thinking on the education of professionals. Teaching practice periods in their present form are high-tension times for student teachers with pressure on them to always 'get it right', especially when being supervised. Because of the brevity of the placements, the nature of the supervision, and the limited time supervisors can spend with each student teacher, the focus tends to be on preparation and performance and fails to pay sufficient attention to developing the student's

⁶ PRESET = Preservice education of teachers. INSET = Inservice education of teachers.

⁷ The respondents here were in fact BEd graduates of the two larger colleges in their first year of teaching.

⁸ While the two sets of data are not directly comparable, it may be that the imbalance that appears to have existed (and still exists) in the allocation of student time to professional and academic subjects may have decreased somewhat over the past decade as demands within the education area have increased.

capacity to “think like a teacher” (Dewey, 1904; Darling-Hammond *et al.* 2005). While this type of teaching practice and mode of supervision undoubtedly has value, there is limited scope for supervisors and little inclination on the part of student teachers to engage in the kind of extended reflection and dialogue that should be part-and-parcel of all professional training programmes⁹. As a result, opportunities are missed to develop the full potential of the student teachers and, consequently, they are not as well prepared as they might be for fulltime teaching. While generations of primary teachers have survived and mastered the basic skills of teaching from this type of teaching practice experience, the current approach is far from ideal from a professional perspective and is out of keeping with recent thinking on and research in teacher education¹⁰.

7. Finally, if provision were made for a long-term, whole-school, placement during the proposed additional BEd year (as recommended by the Working Group, 2002), many of the objectives of induction into teaching could be met during that period drawing on the resources of college personnel, classroom teachers, school administrators, and schools’ inspectors. In such a context, good quality mentoring and supervision could be ensured for all students – a reality that will be difficult or impossible to reach if or when the *National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction*, which in 2007-08 catered effectively for the needs of about 400 teaching graduates, goes to national scale and attempts to accommodate between 1500 and 2,000 widely-scattered newly qualified teachers annually (Killeavy and Murphy, 2006).

It would appear that the changes required in PRESET are more radical than most people realise. For Feiman-Nemser (2001) “Conventional programs of teacher education and professional development are not designed to promote complex learning by teachers or students. ...The typical preservice program is a collection of unrelated courses and field experiences. ... [It] is a weak intervention compared with the influence of teachers’ own schooling and their on-the-job experience”. She continues: “If we want schools to produce more powerful learning on the part of students, we have to offer more powerful learning opportunities to teachers.” (pp. 1013-1014, 1049). She warns, however, that placing serious and sustained professional learning at the centre of PRESET and INSET is a radical idea and a serious challenge to traditional approaches to teacher preparation. In this regard Fullan *et al.* (1998) state: “We are dealing with a reform proposal so profound that the teaching profession itself, along with the culture of schools and schools of education, will have to undergo total transformation in order for substantial progress to be made” (p. 68). It seems clear that in Ireland, as elsewhere, there are serious policy issues to be faced and critical questions to be asked about teacher education at this stage of its development (cf. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995).

⁹ Other factors have aggravated this situation in recent years. Increased numbers of trainee teachers have made it difficult to find adequate numbers of supervisors *au fait* with college programmes, and with the requisite experience and up-to-date knowledge of current thinking on teacher education, to professionally mentor student teachers, as distinct from simply supervising them teaching individual lessons and checking their teaching practice folders. In addition, several college staff lecture BA students during teaching practice periods and are not available for supervision. As a result, half (or more) of teaching practice supervisors in the two largest colleges are now recruited from outside the institutions, mainly from the ranks of retired and/or non-teaching teachers. In addition, students have multiple supervisors over the course of their programme which is not conducive to sustained and consistent monitoring and mentoring. Finally, because of the brevity of teaching practice placements, student teachers are provided with ‘single-class’ rather than ‘whole-school’ experiences.

¹⁰ Currently innovative attempts are being made in the colleges to create closer and more fruitful collaboration between classroom teachers, teaching practice supervisors, and student teachers with a view to providing better professional support for the latter during their teaching practice periods (cf. Ní Áingléis, 2009 and *Oideas 54*).

THE QUESTIONS

In view of the Working Group's (2002) comments on the overloaded nature of the present BEd programme and the negative impact of this on the quality of the professional preparation being provided, and in response to its call for a restructuring of primary teacher education, those responsible within and outside the teacher education institutions, must ask themselves the following questions:

- What are the central tasks of preservice primary teacher education in the early 21st century? How well does the BEd programme address those tasks? What are the major obstacles to the implementation of what is currently accepted as good, research-based, practice in the initial preparation of primary school teachers?
- How can the integration of theory and practice, which is a major challenge in all professional education, be handled in the context of the current BEd programme where the 'connective tissue' needed to form all its components into an integral whole seems weak (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Shulman, 1998; Working Group, 2002).
- What kind of teaching practice experiences and supervision/mentoring arrangements are most likely to facilitate the development of reasoned practical judgement and appropriate teaching skills on the part of student teachers?
- Can programme integration be achieved in the absence of long-term, whole-school, placements to replace the current short, single-class, artificial, high-tension, teaching practice experiences that are inimical to the kind of reflection that should characterise all professional programmes?
- Is the separation of Academic Faculties, subjects and staff from Education Faculties, subjects and staff in the colleges good for teacher education?
- Is it appropriate that BEd students spend a disproportionate amount of their time studying their academic subjects, which constitute one-third of total programme contact time and marks, with the remainder devoted to the professional education component that constitutes two-thirds of the total programme?
- In addition to their major and minor academic subjects, trainees in the two largest colleges also take substantive courses in Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology and History of Education. These latter, it could be argued, contribute (like the traditional academic Majors and Minors) to the education/personal development of future educators, as well as being directly targeted at primary school teaching (Evertson, Hawley and Zlotnik, 1998; Liston and Borko, 2009). It must now be asked whether, in the context of a seriously overcrowded programme, this level of concentration on academic subjects [N6 in all] is either advisable or necessary. It must also be asked if academic subjects should be integrated into and taught differently on a BEd program for primary teachers than on a BA program for non-teachers, as many authors claim (Ball *et al.* 2008; Hallet, 1987; Kennedy, 1991; Raywed, 1987; Schwille and Dembélé, 2007; Shulman, 1986. 1987b, 1998; Weiland, 2008).

RELEVANT RESEARCH EVIDENCE

In attempting to respond to the foregoing questions, the following research-based evidence should be kept in mind:

- Successful teacher education programmes operate on the basis of a coherent rationale, integrate coursework and clinical work well, build towards a deeper understanding of teaching and learning, use common standards to guide practice and evaluate coursework, have a shared vision of what constitutes good teaching, are based on a set of educational ideals that are constantly revisited and reinforced, and have a shared set of beliefs with cooperating schools (Darling-Hammond, 1999).
- The most competent teachers are those who have a good mastery of the content knowledge to be taught and have also studied education (Ashton and Crocker, 1987; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Erikson and Barr, 1985; Evertson, Howley and Zlotnik, 1985; Greenberg, 1983; National Commission, 1996;).
- Teachers with greater training in teaching methodology have been found to be more effective than those with less (Guyton and Forokhi, 1987; Kennedy, 1991).
- Teachers who have spent more time studying teaching are better teachers, especially when it comes to fostering higher-order thinking skills and catering for individual needs (Darling-Hammond, 1998; National Commission, 1996). Furthermore, according to Wenglinsky (2002), teachers who receive professional development in higher-order thinking skills are more likely to have students engage in hands-on, rather than routine, learning and students who so engage score higher in achievement tests. In addition, students whose teachers received professional development in learning how to teach different groups of students substantially outperformed other students.
- From a study of seven exemplary teacher education programmes Darling-Hammond (2006) concluded: “These programs typically require at least a full year of student teaching under the direct supervision of one or more teachers who model expert practice with students who have a wide range of learning needs, with the candidates gradually assuming more independent responsibility for teaching” (p. 1321)¹¹.
- The research evidence for the value of additional pedagogical training is at least as strong as for additional time devoted to subject matter mastery (Darling-Hammond, 2008).
- Certified teachers consistently produced stronger student achievement gains in reading and mathematics over a six-year period than uncertified teachers of similar experience working in similar schools (Darling-Hammond, 2008).
- Graduates of extended (4-5 year) teacher education programmes are more likely to enter teaching, stay longer in the profession, and be more highly rated by school principals and teaching colleagues (Andrew, 1990; Andrew and Schwab, 1995; National Commission, 1996). Lack of preparation has been found to contribute to high attrition rates (Darling-Hammond and Sykes, 2003).
- Research with BEd students in one of the two largest colleges of education in Ireland found no significant difference in the teaching of Irish, English and Mathematics between those who had and had not majored in these subjects in the BEd (Greaney, Burke and McCann, 1999). This conclusion was based on data supplied by schools’ inspectors who assessed the teaching competence of the study participants on two

¹¹ While recent reform proposals advocate extended teaching practice placements, additional time will not, of itself, generate the required improvements. The real challenge is to ensure that trainee teachers learn desirable lessons from such experiences and begin to practice the kind of teaching they are learning about in their college courses (cf. Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

separate occasions in the first six years of their teaching careers. The inspectors had not been informed of the academic areas of specialisation of the participants. Research in other countries has reached similar conclusions (Burke, 2000; 2002; Kennedy, 1991; Working Group, 2002). With the exception of secondary school mathematics teaching (and in some cases, science), the evidence to date of a positive impact of teacher academic qualifications on student achievement levels is weak (Floden and Miniketti, 2008; Weiland, 2008; Wenglinsky, 2002)¹².

- *Student Survey 1.* The present author has surveyed final-year BEd students in one of the largest colleges of education over a five-year period (2003-04 to 2007-08) with regard to their preferences in the matter of Academic Majors (Burke, 2008a). The question posed was:

If you had been given the opportunity of taking your **Academic Subject** from within Education (e.g. Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy of Education, Early Childhood Education, SESE, SPHE, Arts in Education, or A.N. Other), as the Review of Primary Teacher Education has proposed, do you think that you would have taken that option and done an **Education Only** degree?

The response options were: 'Yes', 'No', 'Not Sure'. The overall response rates varied between 61% and 69%. The findings are summarised in Table 2.

¹² In a separate study Kennedy et al. (2008) set out to compare the 'value added' to student achievement levels from different kinds of teacher knowledge (i.e. content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of pedagogy) and concluded that all three have positive effects. However, methodological difficulties with this research have been alluded to by the authors themselves and have been highlighted by Darling-Hammond, (2008).

Table 2 Academic subject preferences among BEd students.

YEAR	New Education Major	Traditional Academic Major	Not Sure	% Response Rate
2003-04	185 66.5%	38 13.7%	55 19.8%	278 / 402 69 %
2004-05	197 72.7%	30 11%	44 16.2%	271 / 412 66%
2005-06	200 81%	21 8.5%	26 10.5%	247 / 411 61 %
2006-07	175 69.4%	27 10.7%	50 19.8%	252/387 65%
2007-08	207 73.9%	32 11.4%	41 14.6%	280/412 68%
2008-09				
Averages	75.5%	11.6%	16.9%	66.4%

On average, less than one in every nine respondents (11.6%) indicated a preference for retaining one of the traditional Academic Majors. The proportions varied from a high of 13.5% to a low of 8.5%. On the other hand, three out of every four respondents (75.5%), on average, indicated a definite preference for majoring in a subject from within the professional education area. These figures varied from a low of 66.5% to a high of 81%. Furthermore, during the five-year period of the survey the proportion of students opting for traditional Academic Majors decreased while those in favour of an Education Major increased. Over the same period, an average of 16.9% ticked the 'Not Sure' box. The proportion doing so decreased over the survey period.

Students were invited to give reasons for their preferences. Those who opted for the traditional Academic Majors pointed to the value of such specialisation and to possible avenues that might be open to them by way of postgraduate studies or work opportunities as a result (e.g. change of career; possibility of teaching at a level other than primary). A large majority of those opting for an Education Major pointed to the lack of relevance (as they perceived it) of the traditional Academic Majors to primary school teaching (an issue to which we will return later). Many regretted the amount of total time they had to spend at their academic subjects, viewing it as 'time lost' to their professional studies. A significant number also complained that academic subjects taken in the BEd do not enjoy the same status in the world of academia as the same subjects taken by their class colleagues in B.A. programmes. Several pointed out that, unlike BA students, BEd graduates do not get a degree in their academic subjects but, rather, in Education.

Overall, the findings of the survey seem to reflect a lack of conviction on the part of BEd students as to the relevance of the traditional academic subjects, as constituted and taught, for first-level teaching, the severe pressure students are currently operating under and their readiness to take any option that might ease that burden. While one must be cautious in interpreting these results and wary of assuming that, in academic affairs, the 'customer' is always right (Palmer, 1998), such stark findings from any group of consumers are significant and merit serious consideration in the future planning/reform of the BEd programme.

- *Student Survey 2.* Final year BEd students in the largest Dublin-based college of education were surveyed during the academic year 2007-08 on the extent to which they undertook paid employment during their studies and their reasons for so doing (Burke, 2008b). They were asked to indicate the number of hours worked per week during term time in each year of the programme. The response rate was 68%.

The proportion of respondents reporting that they worked at some stage during college time was 71.4%. Sixty percent of these worked across all three years of the programme while 22% worked for two years and 12.5% for one year. The average number of hours worked per week during term time ranged from 13 hours in first year to 14.4 hours in second year and just over eleven hours in third year. While 11% said they worked to meet essential expenses and 22% to pay for social events, 41% indicated that they worked for both of these reasons. Sixteen percent of respondents gave a range of other reasons.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that significant numbers of Irish third-level students (including trainee teachers) are engaged in part-time employment during their academic studies and that the proportions working have increased in recent decades. In Britain, where term-time employment is also a growing phenomenon among undergraduates, research on 1,000 students in six universities found that such work had a detrimental effect on their final year marks and overall degree results (Callender, 2008). While similar research has not yet been reported in Ireland, there is little doubt that in the case of BEd students, employment during term time adds further pressure to an already overloaded programme and is likely to diminish the benefits that might otherwise accrue from their studies. While recommending a reduction in overall contact hours for BEd students to facilitate private study and research, the Working Group (2002) stressed the need to ensure that the resulting freed-up time would be used for the purposes intended. If this is not done, there may be a temptation to use the additional 'free time' to undertake further paid employment.

VERDICT ON CURRENT BEd PROGRAMME?

While further evidence will be presented later, we can at this stage begin to address the core question: how well is the model of BEd negotiated in the mid-1970s in keeping with current thinking on teacher preparation and to what extent is it meeting the professional needs of education students thirty five years after its inception?

It can be said that, in contrast to many other teacher education programmes in developed countries, those involved in establishing and delivering the BEd programme in Ireland have rightly refused to take it down a narrow competencies/‘teacher training’ road or to overemphasise technique at the expense of foundation studies and the theoretical underpinnings of teaching and learning. For the colleges involved, the ‘education’ of future educators, along with their development as professionals, continues to be a professed objective. In Ireland (as distinct from England) BEd graduates are expected to be *thinkers as well as doers, scholars as well as managers, intellectuals as well as technicians* (Reid, 2001). Furthermore, the staffing of the colleges and, in particular, of the curriculum areas, has improved significantly in recent years. Changes in the primary school curriculum are being catered for in courses and ICT is now an important part of the BEd programme. By international standards, the calibre of students entering and the expertise of graduates leaving Irish primary PRESET programmes is high.

Why, then, it might be asked, did the Working Group (2002) conclude that “nothing less than a reconceptualization of teacher education and a restructuring of programmes in colleges would be required if the demands on teacher education in the coming years are to be met” (p.3). In responding to this question, we will again focus on the three Working Group recommendations which, if acted on, would require the most radical changes to the current BEd programme – the integration of theory and practice; the addition of subjects from within the professional education area which students could choose as their Majors and study to degree level; and the extension of the BEd programme by one year (ring-fenced for professional studies and school-based experience).

Integration of theory and practice

“The recurrent challenge of all professional learning”, according to Shulman (1998), “is negotiating the inescapable tension between theory and practice” (p.517). The traditional notion that learning to teach is a matter of acquiring theoretical or ‘actionless’ knowledge about teaching in college/university and applying it subsequently in classrooms, has been superseded by a research-based belief that effective professional learning needs to be context-based and mastered in situations similar to those in which it will subsequently be exercised (Burke, 2002; Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Fisher, 1992; Wideen *et al.* 1998). According to Percival Symonds “in order to learn to think one must practice thinking in the situation in which it is to be used and on material on which it is to be exercised” (In Kuhn, 1986, p.502). Hirst (1983) explains: “In education, as in any other area of activity, we come to understand the activity, its problems and their answers, from engagement in the activity. We have to penetrate the idiom of the activity by practicing it. Then, gradually, we can improve and extend our knowledge of how to pursue it...” (p.12). William James, in his *Talks to Teachers* in 1892 warned against the assumption that knowledge, on its own, of psychology (and we might add, of any other foundation discipline or content area) will ensure successful teaching. He wrote:

To know psychology... is absolutely no guarantee that we shall be good teachers. [For that] we must have an additional endowment altogether... a happy tact and ingenuity to tell us what definite things to say and do when the pupil is before us. That ingenuity..., that tack for the concrete situation, though they are the alpha and omega of the teacher’s art, are things to which psychology cannot help us in the least (James, 1920, p. 9).

In more recent times, but in the same vein, Van Manen (1995) identifies “pedagogical tact” and Eisner speaks of “educational connoisseurship” (1983) and “artistry” (2002) as being at the heart of teaching. In the context of medical education, Hilton and Southgate (2007) call this “mindfulness”. All are referring to a type of understanding of and ‘feel for’ the concrete situation

that cannot be taught effectively in college but must be developed through prolonged placements in contexts similar to those in which they will be exercised in real life.

What is being advocated here is, in effect, a return to the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis* or ‘practical wisdom/reasoning’, which is a prerequisite for the development of the ability (artistry) to apply judgment to and take action in complex situations where simple answers or universal solutions are not available. *Phronesis* for Aristotle is deliberative, takes local circumstances into account, deals with particulars, is characterised by uncertainty, depends upon judgment, and issues in ‘best fit’ solutions that are open to revision if/when new and/or better information becomes available (cf. Eisner, 2002; Moran, 2007). Thus understood, *Phronesis* is at the heart of all professional education but can only be developed through prolonged study, extended experience, reflection on experience, and development of the artistry relevant to a particular profession. Hilton and Southgate (2007) argue for “a definition of medical professionalism that is predicated on the acquisition of *phronesis* as a defining feature” (p, 277) and regard medical personnel as ‘proto-professionals’ until such time as they have acquired it. The same argument, I suggest, would apply to the education of teachers.

Another way of stating this case involves making the distinction, as Gage (1985) does, between *nomothetic* and *ideographic* knowledge, the former consisting of universal patterns/theories/laws that emerge out of science/research and apply to all individuals or cases while being an exact account of none of them. *Ideographic* knowledge, on the other hand, is a detailed account or diagnosis of one specific case (client, patient or pupil). The artistry of the professional person consists precisely in his/her ability to deal with individual, unique, cases within the context of overall patterns/theories i.e. applying nomothetic knowledge to ideographic situations. This, according to Gage (1985) constitutes the core of all professional practice and should be the central focus of professional education. Such artistry is grounded in *phronesis*.

For Darling-Hammond (2008), becoming a teacher entails not only learning to ‘think like a teacher’ but also to ‘act as a teacher’. This will require the integration of the theoretically-based knowledge, normally taught in college/university in the form of coursework, with experience-based knowledge located in the practice of teachers and the realities of schools. Establishing and maintaining the ‘connective tissue’ between coursework and clinical work in teacher preparation programmes is, according to Feiman-Nemser (2001), a perennial challenge for teacher educators. This challenge became more acute with the absorption of teacher education into the university sector where the tendency has been to concentrate on and frontload coursework and pay insufficient attention to clinical experience. A growing body of research confirms that where coursework and fieldwork are undertaken simultaneously, it supports student learning more effectively and student teachers understand both theory and practice differently (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005). Failure to maintain this connection is likely to “render the coursework much less powerful and productive than might otherwise be the case” (Darling-Hammond, 2008, p.1321).

Developing the kind of understanding implied in *phronesis* and the artistry that is necessary to apply it in practice, is a major challenge in the development of a restructured and integrated BEd programme whose central focus is the provision of a professional service to individuals. It will require considerable one-to-one mentoring of professional students, more private study/research on their part, more small-group tutoring, and more realistic long-term on-the-job experience in supportive school environments. Restructuring the BEd along these lines, according to the Working Group (2002) report, “will have to take cognisance of the fact that several aspects of teacher education require a degree of individualisation and an intensity of resources that are much closer to a clinical model than to one drawn from a traditional arts/humanities programme” (p.11). If this is to happen, the Higher Education Authority’s funding formula, which currently calculates per capita costs for trainee teachers as slightly higher than Arts students, will have to be revisited and revised.

The foregoing arguments, I fear, will carry little weight with those who still regard teaching as a technical and relatively simple operation lacking the knowledge base, level of complexity, and intensity of challenge that characterise other professional areas. This narrow interpretation of teachers and teaching has been rejected by the Working Group (2002) report and by many prominent educationalists. It is argued that the knowledge base of teaching, and our understanding of the complexity of teaching and learning, have reached a stage of development that puts the teacher, potentially at least, within the professional arena (Berliner, 2000; Burke, 2000, 2002; Crowe, 2008; Good, Biddle and Goodson, 1997; Shulman, 1998). Teacher decisions can now be knowledge-informed and theory-directed to an extent that was not possible up to recent times. Clarke (1988) claims that research on teacher thinking has "documented the heretofore unappreciated ways in which the practice of teaching can be as complex and cognitively demanding as the practice of medicine, law, or architecture" (p.8). Shulman (1984) goes further when he argues that the teacher dealing with one of the reading groups in her class, while keeping a number of other groups gainfully engaged, is simultaneously performing a more complex set of tasks than most doctors would face in a lifetime of practice. In a later article he concludes: "The only time a physician [doctor] could possibly encounter a situation of comparable complexity [to that of a teacher] would be in the emergency room of a hospital during or after a natural disaster" (Shulman, 1987a, p.376).

In support of the foregoing contentions, Howey and Zimpler (1999) claim that, at its best, teaching is highly clinical in nature and rooted in an intellectual exercise that has distinctive properties of teacher reasoning. Teachers, according to Griffin (1999, p.8), need to be able to make "multiple, often simultaneous, decisions, related to content, pedagogy, student relationships, praise and censure, materials of instruction, interactions with colleagues and others ...". In his review of the relevant research, Berliner (1987) concluded that teachers make up to thirty non-trivial work-related decisions every hour in a classroom context where an estimated 1,500 interactions may take place daily between a teacher and his/her pupils. Such decisions, like any other clinical decision about children, are critically important to the pupils who are directly affected by them, and to their parents. If there is any doubt in this regard, one has simply to reflect on the impact of an unfair, unjust or wrong decision that a teacher made about oneself or simply observe the effects of even the most 'insignificant' teacher decisions on one's own children. Failure to recognise the professional nature of teaching lies behind the narrow view of teachers as technicians (*doers* not *thinkers*, [Reid, 2001]) and of teacher preparation as technical training with little need for a grounding in professional knowledge to inform the many decisions teachers make each hour of every day. The funding of teacher education - at or near the level of Arts programmes - also reflects this same interpretation/understanding of teaching.

The foregoing would seem to indicate a need for a radical re-thinking of the BED programme and a restructuring of its component parts to provide students with an integrated experience of coursework and classwork that are critically and transparently connected with each other. Integration of the academic and professional components of the programme needs to be addressed as well as the integration of the theoretical and practical courses that constitute the professional part of the programme. Other professions (e.g. Medicine) also face the challenge of integrating multiple courses taught independently by different individuals in the same programmes (cf. Burke, 2002). It is unrealistic to expect inexperienced student teachers to successfully accomplish such integration if those providing the programme have not themselves addressed the issue and have not transparently organised the courses to fit in with a clearly articulated conceptual framework for the initial preparations of teachers. What most students can accomplish on their own (and they will cobble courses together in some fashion in their minds and identify some connections) is likely to be inadequate, ill-informed and, ultimately, less effective from a professional perspective. The high-calibre students entering primary teacher education in Ireland are capable of much more than this and should be challenged more intensively to meet their full potential.

Academic subjects in the BEd

The reasons for the inclusion of academic subjects in the BEd programme, as originally conceived, included the following (Burke, 2000; Coolahan, 1984; Educational Research Centre, 1982): first, to give the BEd degree academic respectability at a time when educational studies and research were not well developed and did not command much respect, especially in the university sector, on which recognition and validation of the new degree depended; second, to put primary teachers on a par with their second-level colleagues and to provide a legitimating base for their claim to professional recognition; third, to provide a broad base of expertise in a range of academic subjects relevant to the primary school curriculum (the unquestioned assumption being that students who major in those subjects would teach them better in primary schools); fourth, to foster the education/personal development of the student teachers themselves.

In the context of the 1970s, the inclusion of academic subjects, along with professional studies, in the proposed BEd programme was politically wise and helped to convince National University of Ireland colleges to concede a three-year primary (honours) degree to first-level teachers. The academic subjects also enhanced the status of the BEd vis-à-vis other primary degrees and, undoubtedly, impacted positively on the personal development of the future educators. Today, the academic departments of the colleges of education command considerable respect in the world of academia and have impressive publication records. In addition, several former faculty members from the Colleges now occupy chairs in the university sector. However, the academic and professional education strands of the BEd have, from the beginning, developed along parallel and largely separate lines with very little evidence of any awareness of the need to integrate academic subjects and education studies into coherent professional preparation programmes. In this regard, developments in Ireland's teacher education sector were similar to those of other countries where, according to Schwille and Dembélé (2007),

teachers of subject matter content were not responsible for pedagogical aspects of how this content should be taught [in schools] and teachers of educational coursework were at most marginally responsible for the acquisition of the subject-matter content itself. ... [While] this separation has been challenged at various points in the history of teacher education... reform in this respect is difficult, because the separation of content and pedagogy is institutionalised (pp. 84-85)

This separation was referred to as a 'schism' in the early twentieth century by Learned and Bagley (1920b/2008). They regarded it as "positively disastrous" for teacher education (p.1281). Their description of what obtained then is an accurate reflection of the level of separation between academic and professional staff and subjects that is still widespread today in teacher education programmes, including the Irish Bed. In this regard Feiman-Nemser (2001) says:

Knowledge for teaching cannot remain in separate domains if it is going to be usable in practice. An important part of learning to teach involves transforming different kinds of knowledge into a flexible, evolving set of commitments, understandings, and skills (p. 1,048).

As knowledge from various courses and sources must come together in teaching, so it must be brought together (i.e. integrated) in teacher education.

The assumption of cross-fertilization and transfer between the study of academic subjects, professional education, and actual teaching was so strong that, until recent years, there seemed no need for evidence to verify its existence or gauge its impact on student achievement (cf. Floden and Miniketti, 2005; Menard, 1997; 2001; Weiland, 2008). In one of the two largest colleges whose programmes are being reviewed in this paper, some academic

staff do provide courses in curricular areas (e.g. music, professional Irish, English [especially, childrens' literature], science) and do participate in the supervision of teaching practice. In the other, there is well nigh total operational and functional separation between the academic and education faculties and academic lecturers do not participate in teaching practice supervision. In neither institution is there evidence to suggest that serious consideration has been given (or needed to be given) to tailoring academic subjects in the BEd to the needs of future primary teachers. The fact that BEd and BA students now share lectures in these two institutions, and that a higher proportion of recently appointed faculty in academic departments than heretofore have not taught at either first or second levels, makes such adaptation and integration more difficult in current circumstances. Finally, as noted already, research in Ireland and elsewhere has largely failed to establish that academic Majors teach their subjects better in primary schools than non-Majors (Greaney, Burke and McCann, 1999; Kennedy, 1991; Kennedy *et al.* 2008; Weiland, 2008). These realities have led several educationalists (e.g. Shulman, 1986, 1987b; Ball *et al.* 2008) and many student teachers to question the value of the traditional academic subjects from a primary-teaching perspective and to wonder if the disproportionate amount of total student time devoted to them is warranted or wise (Máirtín, 1999). It does not follow from the foregoing that academic subjects are irrelevant to primary teaching and teachers but, rather, that as traditionally constituted and taught within the BEd programme, their relevance to classroom practice has not been apparent to a majority of student teachers and their impact on teaching effectiveness has not been established by research.

The assumption that mastery of content is *the* major prerequisite for successful teaching is still fairly widespread (cf. Adler, 1982; Ball *et al.* 2008; Education Next, 2002). While teachers cannot teach what they do not know, and are in danger of misrepresenting material to students if they do not understand how scholars in different fields think differently about their subject areas, research indicates that content knowledge on its own is no guarantee of effective teaching (Ball and McDiarmid, 1990; Murray, 2008; Weiland, 2008). Success in teaching requires, not just a knowledge of particular subjects but, rather, an understanding of their central conceptual and organising principles in sufficient depth to take students to the heart of them in a manner appropriate to their age and context. For this reason, Bennett and Carré (1993) argue that “subject-matter knowledge is a necessary but not sufficient ingredient for competent teaching performance” (p.215). Goodlad (1990a) explains that “teachers learn the necessary subject matter twice - the first time in order that it be part of their being, the second time in order to teach it” (p.52). Pedagogy is not, therefore, something appended to subject matter. What is taught and how it is taught are two sides of the same coin. They become one in the teaching situation and for this reason, should also be integrated in teacher education programmes.¹³ As Goodlad puts it, “both sets of learning are best acquired simultaneously or in juxtaposition” (p. 52)¹⁴.

The most notable attempt to address the issue of the relevance of academic subjects to teaching has been made by Shulman (1986, 1987b, 1998) with his development of the concept of *pedagogical content knowledge* (PCK) whereby the gap between liberal arts subjects and pedagogy is bridged. For him, PCK is a specialised kind of knowledge that

¹³ The modern technicist approach which separates theory from practice is a subversion of the original Greek notion of *praxis* which saw no basis for distinguishing the cognitive from the practical or for privileging one over the other (Dunne, 1995). Dewey (1938) also rails against this type of dualistic distinction and false dichotomy which is still evident in teacher education today e.g. the separation of so called ‘theoretical’ courses from ‘practical/methods’ courses/workshops. It is also very evident in the arrangement whereby student teachers learn academic ‘content’ in one set of lectures and attend other sessions to be coached by different lecturers in the teaching of that content to students.

¹⁴ This reflects a tradition in the medieval universities where a student’s mastery of a subject was judged, not just by performance in an examination, but by his/her ability to ‘dispute it’/‘teach it’ in a public arena (Shulman, 1986).

distinguishes teachers from others who study the same subject areas but not with a view to teaching them (e.g. BEd versus BA students). PCK includes not only mastery of the content to be taught, but also of a range of skills for teaching that content to students by means of illustrations, demonstrations, examples, analogies and other proven teaching techniques that make the subject comprehensible to others. PCK enables teachers to build bridges between their sophisticated understanding of subject matter and the students' developing understanding and to adapt their instruction to the varying ability levels and other characteristics of students. From the perspective of becoming an effective teacher, Shulman (1998) appears to see as much value accruing from 'situated practice' and research related thereto as from the study of the academic subjects themselves (Weiland, 2008). Kennedy (1991) suggests that one of the reasons for her finding that students who have majored in certain areas do not teach their subjects better than non-Majors, is a lack of emphasis on subject-related PCK in their training.

While later developments have elaborated on, and in some respects changed, Shulman's concept of PCK, there is agreement that developing some form of PCK (however it is construed and however it is achieved) is an important element of learning to teach and that further research in this regard is needed (Ball et al. 2001; Gess-Newsome and Lederman, 1999; Schwille and Dembele, 2007).¹⁵ Ball *et al.* (2001) and Murray (2008) provide vivid examples of what teachers need to know beyond subject matter knowledge if they are to teach successfully. Murray compares the 'born teacher' who could survive with little or no training with the professionally educated teacher. The latter, he says, has a deeper understanding of how students learn and what their mistakes mean (e.g. using wrong methods in mathematical subtraction or applying the standard rule for plurals e.g. mice/mouses). For Darling-Hammond (2008), "if teaching were to be regarded as a profession, ... the question would shift from whether prospective teachers should study content or pedagogy ... to how they should be enabled to study both and the intersections between them" (p. 1316). "Mere content knowledge", said Shulman (1986), "is as likely to be as useless pedagogically as content-free skill" (p.8).

In light of the foregoing, it can be concluded that clarity is emerging on a number of issues related to the treatment of academic subjects in preservice teacher education. First, the manner in which academic subjects have been taught to date in most teacher education programmes (including the Irish BEd) appears to be out of keeping with what is now known about the professional preparation of primary teachers. Second, the institutionalised segregation of the academic from the professional components of teacher education programmes (as is the case in the Irish BEd) seems to be at odds with current thinking on what an integrated professional programme should be (cf. Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005, chapters 11 and 12.). This lack of integration, along with the disproportionate amount of time allocated by BEd students to their academic subjects, constitutes a double challenge for teacher educators. Third, the reform of the BEd has to involve all components (professional and academic) of the programme. Academic staff should not be excluded (or exclude themselves) from such an undertaking. Fourth, it can be cogently argued that the way academic subjects are taught to future primary teachers should be different from the teaching of those same subjects to non-teachers in other programmes (Ball *et al.* 2008; Hallet, 1987; Kennedy, 1991; Raywed, 1987; Schwille and Dembélé, 2007; Shulman, 1986. 1987b, 1998; Weiland, 2008).¹⁶ Unfortunately, tradition in modern universities and colleges of education has

¹⁵ Recent publications have identified *Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge* (TPACK) as "the unique knowledge teachers need to develop to embed technology in their instructional practice so that it fosters student learning". TPACK is described as "the domain of teacher knowledge that lies at the intersection of three major components of learning environments: content, pedagogy, and technology" (Borko et al. 2009, p.6).

¹⁶ Viewed in this light, it could be argued that questions on the pedagogy of subjects might be included in BEd academic examination papers.

not favoured such differentiated approaches in the teaching of academic subjects because the rules and reward system by which teacher education has generally operated has been adopted from, or strongly influenced by, the Arts and Humanities tradition which, according to Soder and Sirotnik (1990), is “not the stuff for emulation by professional schools” (p.404). Finally, the fact that BEd and BA students now share lectures makes the adaptation and integration of academic subjects to fit a coherent teacher education programme a good deal more difficult (though not impossible). In addition, academic lecturers who have had no first- or second-level teaching experience and/or have not been involved in or studied teacher education, might not consider themselves qualified to undertake such tasks. Herein lies a major challenge for primary teacher education.

The foregoing suggests the need to re-evaluate the model of BEd put in place in the 1970s, to revisit the arguments for the inclusion of the traditional academic subjects in their present form in the programme, to re-evaluate the manner in which they have been taught, to re-assess the separation of academic and professional studies, and to discuss the possibility of adding new Majors from within the professional education area (as recommended by the Working Group, 2002, report). This latter would provide all students with the option of concentrating largely on professional education in the BEd without preventing any students from majoring in one of the traditional academic subjects if they so wished. This, however, would be a worrying development for academic departments in the two larger colleges and a major policy issue for all concerned since, as already reported, survey data indicate that, given a choice, less than one in nine BEd students would be likely to opt for one of the traditional academic subjects (Burke, 2008a). If this were to occur, it might require increased intake of undergraduate and postgraduate Arts students to ensure full utilization of existing capacity in academic departments.

In view of the broadly representative nature of the Working Group (2002) membership, its recommendation for the addition of new Majors from within the professional area to the BEd programme merits serious consideration both within and outside the teacher education institutions. As reported already, BEd students and recently graduated teachers strongly support such a move¹⁷. While few would dispute the valuable contribution of the traditional academic subjects to the personal development of future teachers, research findings cast serious doubts on the assumed beneficial impact of those Majors on primary school teaching – a view reiterated by many students in survey questionnaires (Burke, 2008a). If new professional Majors are to be introduced, time and, perhaps, some extra staffing will be needed to raise them to the level of three-year degree subjects and to ensure that students reach the same high standards of achievement in the new Majors that they currently reach in the traditional academic subjects. If this were achieved, however, it would be likely to result in a significant boost to the level of pedagogical expertise within the primary teaching profession and would help in the development of a self-sustaining teaching force¹⁸. Contrary to what some might argue, the addition of Majors from within the professional area need not entail a lowering of academic standards or a lessening of emphasis on the education/personal development of future educators in favour of more technical training. Being more professionally oriented does not mean that a reformed BEd will be less academic. In this regard Evertson, Hawley and Zlotnik (1998) state: “We see no reason why courses classified

¹⁷ A survey of BEd graduates with varying lengths of teaching experience would provide a broader perspective on the issue of academic subjects in the BEd

¹⁸ Within a 10-15 year period hundreds of Majors with considerable expertise in individual areas relevant to primary-school teaching would have been produced and located in schools throughout the country.

as *professional* could not be as intellectually rigorous and theoretically rich as courses described as *liberal arts*” (p.6).¹⁹

Finally, it could be argued that the fact that both BEd graduates and BEd students report spending a disproportionate amount of their time studying their academic subjects can scarcely be justified in a relatively short and overloaded professional programme (Burke, 2008c; Mairtín, 1999). This might not be as serious if their Majors were subjects selected from within the professional area but, even then, the emphasis would seem unbalanced and other professional areas (apart from those majored in) would inevitably suffer. It is suggested that, as a guiding principle, the proportion of overall study time required by a student’s Major and Minor subjects (be they traditional academic or professional Majors) should not exceed the proportion of marks allotted to them in the BEd programme as a whole. This should be monitored on an ongoing basis to prevent a recurrence of the kind of imbalance that currently obtains. That said, the major challenge is to engineer an integrated professional teacher education programme from components that currently tend to run along parallel and largely separate lines. To this end, an extension to the programme, if properly conceived and implemented, could constitute a significant step forward.

Extension of the BEd Programme

In light of our earlier discussion of the nature and needs of professional development, it would seem that the effectiveness of the current BEd is seriously limited by the lack of adequate and realistic school-based experience against which the relevance of professional courses can be adjudicated, the usefulness of practical courses can be gauged and, in the context of which, individual students can begin to develop their own vision of education and construct their own version of ‘teacher’. In the current BEd the ‘cart’ of theory is firmly before the ‘horse’ of practical experience. Even in the case of methodology and curricular courses, college-based presentations/demonstrations inevitably take on the air of ‘theory’ unless and until trainees gain sufficient on-the-job experience against which to judge the relevance of such courses and realise that each one of them has to develop their own versions of what they hear for application in their particular teaching situations (cf. Schwille and Dembélé, 2007). The brevity and overloaded nature of the BEd programme, coupled with inadequate integration of its component parts, are inimical to such professional assimilation and development on the part of student teachers.

School placements should be planned to provide a strategic pedagogical experience in a range of class grades and school types²⁰. It should include both single-class and whole-school experiences. Goodlad (1990a) argues that student teachers should be treated as junior staff members, participate in and be exposed to the full range of events that occur in schools – actual teaching, staff meetings, curriculum planning sessions, parent-teacher consultations, and other school-community events. While the tradition in the BEd and other programmes of placing trainees in individual classes with individual teachers for short periods of time does meet some of the critical needs of future teachers (i.e. lesson preparation, presentation, class control etc.), it insulates them from the larger context of the school as a complex and going concern. It also helps to perpetuate the notion that teachers only have responsibility for their own classes and can generally operate as if the rest of the school did not exist (Lortie, 1975). Whole-school experiences, however, are not feasible during the current brief teaching practice placements. While principals and teachers are more than generous in facilitating class-based placements, it would be unreasonable and unrealistic to expect them to provide whole-school

¹⁹ In reaction to the curtailment of Foundations Disciplines in many teacher education programmes, Liston and Borko (2009) argue for their re-installation as part of a liberal arts foundation for teacher education.

²⁰ The fact that teaching practice in the BEd depends on the voluntary cooperation of both schools and teachers makes strategic planning in its regard very difficult. Because of the pressure to place large numbers of students in classes, finding willing schools and teachers tends to become an end in itself rather than the beginning of a well-planned professional experience for student teachers.

experiences during the few weeks that students are with them. In such short periods student teachers do not get to know staff, pupils or parents well enough to engage in such.

If the integration of theory and practice in the BEd programme is to be effective, and if the ‘connective tissue’ between the component parts of the programme is to be established and maintained, it would seem that the Working Group’s (2002) proposals for the extension of the BEd by one school-focused year, and the development of additional Majors from within the professional education area which students could study to degree level, should be implemented in tandem since they are interconnected and interdependent²¹. Furthermore, an extended, properly mentored, whole-school experience should take place in the third year of a four-year B.Ed (or, at least, well in advance of programme completion) to facilitate involvement in higher-level professional courses in the final segment of the programme against a background of extended experience of actual teaching in whole-school, rather than single-class, settings. Until this is done, the ‘cart’ of theory will remain before the ‘horse’ of practical experience and will greatly curtail the effectiveness of other changes that might be made to the BEd programme. A study (already mentioned) of seven exemplary teacher education programmes that produce graduates who are reported to be very well prepared to begin teaching, lends support to the foregoing proposals (Darling-Hammond, 2006). All of these programmes include at least one full year of well-mentored classroom work with the candidates gradually moving towards full-responsibility teaching²².

Finally, as long as the current ‘cart-before-the-horse’ situation continues in PRESET, induction education will, of necessity, have to remediate the shortcomings of preservice training and compensate for the opportunities that were missed at that stage to integrate theory and practice. While there will always be a need for some induction, much of the work of inducting teachers could be accomplished during extended, properly structured and well-mentored school placements in preservice programmes. If this were done, the reality shock of ‘theory meeting practice’ experienced by beginning teachers (Veenman, 1984) could be mitigated significantly. If the BEd were restructured along the lines suggested, newly qualified teachers should experience few *surprises* when making the transition into their first fulltime teaching positions.

Guiding principles for reform of the BEd

The following principles reflect changes in the knowledge base of teaching and new thinking on the training of professionals. Each has implications for the reform of primary teacher education in Ireland.

1. The Working Group (2002) argues that the structure and content of teacher education programmes should reflect the complex nature of teaching as it is now understood and focus on providing student teachers with the resources (knowledge, skills and dispositions) for carrying out this activity. This will involve “strategic understanding”, “the careful confrontation of principles with cases, of general rules with concrete documented events... a dialectic of the general with the particular in which the limits of the former and the boundaries of the latter are explored” (Shulman, 1986, p.13).

²¹ For instance, extending the BEd by one year without radical changes in programme format and rationale will not achieve the desired results. Likewise, making provision for Majors from within the professional area without a radical re-thinking of the BEd programme, including extended school placements, is unlikely to be effective. Action on both fronts will be required if the integration of theory and practice is to be achieved, as required, in the professional preparation of teachers.

²² A period, such as the present, when there is an oversupply of primary teachers, is an opportune time to extend the training period by one year since it would entail a reduction in the output of qualified graduates during the changeover period.

2. Since the transition from coursework to classroom (from theory to practice) is no longer considered a linear process that trainee teachers can themselves handle, competent mentoring is now considered a prerequisite to the effective education of all professionals. However, if mentors are to assist student teachers in seeing the interconnections between the various components of a professional programme and their implications for school functioning and actual classroom practice, they themselves must have a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of overall programme content and rationale. This is problematic in most professional programmes since individual faculty members tend to concentrate largely on their own areas of expertise. Teacher education is no exception (Burke, 2002). In addition, its difficulties have been aggravated in recent years with the hiring of large numbers (50% or more) of teaching practice supervisors (many of whom have already retired from teaching) from outside the teacher education institutions. The quality of mentoring will be less than satisfactory as long as this situation continues and/or until extended training is provided for mentors from both inside and outside the colleges of education²³. In this regard Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2005) state: “It is extraordinarily difficult to create a coherent program if much of the teaching [including supervision] is conducted by part-timers with different notions of what good teaching is... and who have little opportunity to connect with what else is happening in the program” (p.394).

3. According to Griffin (1999), the ultimate goal should be to build a teacher education programme that is context sensitive (i.e. related to real-life teaching and learning situations), one in which components are inter-related and cumulative, and that is reflective. The Working Group (2002) argues that classroom practice should be the focal point and fulcrum around which entire programmes revolve and provide a point of reference for connecting and integrating all the elements (theoretical and practical) of individual courses into a coherent whole. In similar vein, Shulman (2005) argues that, to ensure relevance and coherence in a teacher education curriculum, it should be *backwardly* designed from the needs of the pupils to be taught to the content of courses their teachers undertake²⁴. If teacher educators do not accomplish this task of integrated planning, there is little prospect of student teachers being exposed to or knowingly experiencing a coherent programme of preparation.

4. Since uncertainty, complexity and change are core characteristics of all professions (including teaching), professional programmes must equip students to cope with these realities by developing them into “students of teaching” and not merely classroom technicians (Dewey, 1904). In this regard the Working Group (2002) states: “One thing in the uncertain future that we can be certain about is that ‘theories’ of learning in ten years will be very different from those of today” (p.48). If we regard teachers as professionals and educate them as such, says Kellaghan, (1971), “we can be reasonably assured that [they] will be capable of dealing with the enormous changes in knowledge and conditions that are going to happen in the next fifty years” (p.25). If we treat and train them as technicians, their limited knowledge and expertise will, at most, ensure the preservation of the *status quo*. For this reason, he argues, “the decision regarding the future role of the teacher as technician or professional is perhaps the most important to be made today” (p.25).

5. Since entering a profession entails a commitment to becoming a student of one’s chosen area (Dewey, 1904), initial training must be regarded as the first phase in a

²³ If we were dealing with medical, rather than teacher, education here, we would scarcely be happy if the practice of medical students were mentored in large part by doctors who have ceased practising or who have retired from the profession.

²⁴ This principle should also guide research on teacher education (Gardner, 1991; Murray, 2008).

lifelong pursuit of well-informed, up-to-date, and competent service in that area. PRESET, therefore, should be thought of and planned as the first phase of a professional development continuum that will span the entire working lives of teachers. In a very informative discussion of what a professional learning continuum for teacher education should look like, Feiman-Nemser (2001) points out that, to date, it has suffered from fragmentation and conceptual impoverishment and has lacked the *connective tissue* to hold things together within and across the different phases of learning to teach. For Howey and Zimpler (1989), “no point in the continuum has more potential to bring the worlds of the school and the academy together into a true symbiotic partnership than the induction stage” since, during that transition period, schools need teacher educators and teacher educators need schools. They add, however, that “nowhere is the absence of a seamless continuum in teacher education more evident ...” (p.297). This notion of teacher education as a continuum poses a major challenge for teacher educators. Until it is satisfactorily dealt with in Ireland, teacher educators here will feel constrained to ‘pack’ more into preservice programmes than is advisable or would be necessary if other measures were in place e.g. longer school placement in an extended BEd programme, induction for all new teaching graduates, adequate provision for ongoing professional development for all teachers..

The approach to planning the initial preparation of primary teachers implied in the foregoing broadly-based principles contrasts with attempts in some countries to regulate teacher education through the imposition of narrowly-defined teacher competencies. This development merits some attention, if for no other reason but, to avoid potential pitfalls in charting the future development of primary teacher education in Ireland.

COMPETENCIES-BASED APPROACHES TO TEACHER EDUCATION

In the interests of facilitating the mutual recognition of teaching qualifications across state boundaries (e.g. in the E.U.), attempts have been under way for some time to establish international norms for teacher education and to identify competencies-based standards²⁵ on which to ground them. In some respects, this is a welcome development since, unlike more established professions, preservice teacher education lacks an agreed curriculum grounded in shared understanding of the core elements of its operation, as well as consistent standards for programme accreditation, entry requirements, induction and inservice training. Shulman (2005) states that, while the overall format of PRESET looks remarkably similar across countries, course content differs so much that one could argue that “teacher education does not exist”. It is plagued by a plethora of programmes and different definitions of pedagogical preparation (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Glazer, 2008; Wilson *et al.* 2001). There is not a general consensus on what constitutes good practice in teaching/teacher preparation or even what can be designated as malpractice in those areas (Collins, 1990; Murray, 2008). So while the process of establishing competencies-based norms for teaching/teacher education must be entered into, the complexity of the issues involved should be recognized, simplistic approaches avoided, and care taken not to constrict the breadth and depth of the education

²⁵ For Hager (1993) “what a good set of competency standards does do is to provide a clear statement of what is considered to be important in competent performance in [a] profession [and] distinguishes professional from non-professional performance” (in Loughrey, 2007, p.52). For Eisner (1995) standards defined as “units of measure that make it possible to quantify the performance of students, teachers and schools” (759) best describes their use in education today. For a critique of such approaches, see Burke (2007b). In this article a different meaning is not assigned to ‘competencies’ and ‘competences’. Both are taken as connoting the characteristics of competent performance.

process by the imposition of unduly narrow, technical, definitions of competencies. Important lessons can be learned in this regard from the experiences of other countries.

Goodson (1995), Maguire (1995) and Reynolds (1999) state that recent English policies have charged teacher educators with delivering competency-driven, heavily school-based, teacher training. These, they argue, have served to de-professionalise teaching and re-construct the teacher as *the doer, not the thinker; the manager, not the scholar; the technician, not the intellectual*. The *Universities Council for the Education of Teachers* (UCET) in the UK is even more caustic in its comments on this approach. It states:

The teacher of the late 1990s will be remembered as a well-trained and competent technician, delivering a National Curriculum to a set of standards established elsewhere, regularly inspected to ensure compliance, policed through a system of pupil testing and through initiatives like Literacy and Numeracy Hours, increasingly required to teach in certain ways.

It is small wonder many people of initiative and creativity turn elsewhere in their search for a 'proper' profession – one that will fully call on their talents and qualities... (Reid, 2001 p.37)²⁶.

Defining the basic competencies required for effective teaching has proved to be problematic. Efforts to do so in the USA were examined by the Working Group (2002) report. It found that attempts to define the competencies - based largely on an input-output behavioural objectives approach - were unsuccessful for a number of reasons. First, lists of competencies represent only part of what is involved in teaching and may defy description and/or measurement. Second, the competencies that have been identified often involve trivial performances. There are no clear criteria as to when a candidate can be declared competent or to determine whether some competencies are more important than others. Third, competencies for teaching can vary a lot from one context to another. Fourth, the approach does not take account of how individual teachers appropriate and give meaning to those competencies. In her comments on the implementation of competencies-based teacher education in Northern Ireland, Loughrey (2007) reflects the foregoing remarks. She says:

Vast assumptions were made that we know and can identify the specific competences necessary to produce effective teachers. In effect one can only speculate about these competences and because of the uncertainties we end up with a 'shopping list' approach. ... More research and evaluation is needed to substantiate our assumptions (p.57).

Other notable educationalists are also wary of the approach, especially when competencies are defined too narrowly. For Shuman (1987) the competencies movement can result in a trivialization of teaching while Sosniak (1999) argues that over-specification would appear to be "inconsistent with what is possible and desirable in teaching and teacher education" (p.197). In a more recent article Allington (2005) expresses serious concerns about the impact of competencies-based accreditation procedures on teacher education in the USA. "The whole point to accreditation, as now conceived by NCATE and state education agencies", he says, "is to homogenize teacher preparation, usually in the direction of the lowest common denominator" (p.199). Hitz (2008), on the other hand, makes the argument that teaching needs agreed standards and a single accrediting agency to justify its claim to professional status. Vergari and Hess (2002) question "whether any form of accreditation is

²⁶ The serious shortage of teachers in England and Wales in recent decades, and the recognition of multiple suppliers and supply routes as emergency measures to counteract it, may well reflect this approach to the teaching profession (Burke, 2007a).

useful or appropriate in a context of widespread disagreement about what skills, dispositions, and methods are essential to good teaching” (p.57).

Deegan (2007) discusses what he considers to be the vulnerable aspects of the competencies/learning outcomes approach. Using ‘education for diversity’ as a case study in teacher education, he shows that “competences/learning outcomes is the wrong starting place” since much broader issues to do with cultural diversity, justice, equality etc. are involved and need to be understood by teachers if they are to handle this area effectively (p.21). He also cites a number of leading teacher educators who have raised ‘red flags’ regarding the competencies/learning outcomes approach. For Hargreaves *et al.* (2001) “one of the greatest difficulties with standards and the associated assessment of them is that, although they make sense subject by subject, collectively they can become overwhelming and confusing” (p.21). Furlong *et al.* (2000) have warned that in the UK, where “the most important influence on the content of [teacher] training... is practice in schools”, issues of values, attitudes and personal qualities are extremely vulnerable in official discourses on standards and competencies (p.149). In the USA, Sergiovanni (2000) has expressed concern about a ‘standards stampede’ which could squeeze the lifeblood out of education through “an excessive preoccupation on the technical world of standards” (p.75). He also argues that standards and accountability systems have effectively disenfranchised teachers, parents and pupils by failing to acknowledge their specific needs, values and beliefs.

A characteristic of countries that have moved towards a narrowly-defined, competencies-based, approach to teacher education is their lack of emphasis on the need for teachers to ground their pedagogical skills in a broad professional knowledge base. This is usually reflected in a very significant reduction in the amount of time devoted to foundation disciplines in many PRESET programmes and in some cases the virtual elimination of some of these disciplines altogether (cf. Liston and Borko, 2009). Any reform of PRESET will have to address this issue.

The dangers identified above are being addressed in Ireland and elsewhere. *The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland* (2005), in its review of teacher competencies, acknowledges the degree of controversy surrounding this approach to teaching/teacher education and accepts that “the development and assimilation of professional knowledge are complex and simply cannot be readily reduced to a series of statements” (p.10). It accepts “the centrality of personal values in the processes of schooling” and places “the issue of values at the core of its concept of professionalism” (p.11). Its review recommends the reduction of the number of competencies from 92 to 27 and, in an effort to ensure that a broader vision of education is maintained, it suggests that the Council’s ethical code be incorporated into the new statement of competencies (Annex 1 and 4).

In the USA, according to Darling-Hammond (1999), a greater recognition of the complexity of teaching and learning to teach is evolving. As a result, efforts to develop lists of discrete teaching behaviours/competencies have been tempered by a more holistic approach to the determination of standards for teacher assessment and certification.

A similar trend can be detected in the OECD (2005) report *Teachers Matter* which acknowledges that there are broader dimensions to teaching that are not easily amenable to measurement (cf. Coolahan, 2007). It states:

There are many important aspects of teacher quality that ... are harder to measure, [and] are not captured by the commonly used indicators such as qualifications, experience and tests of academic ability. ... but which can be vital to student learning, ... [They] include the ability to convey ideas in clear and convincing ways; to create effective learning environments for different types of students; to foster

productive teacher-student relationships; to be enthusiastic and creative; and to work effectively with colleagues and parents (p.27).

The report recognises the complexity and difficulty of measuring such teacher traits. It acknowledges, for instance, the “need to take into account the substantial variation in effectiveness that exists among teachers with similar, readily measured, characteristics” and recognizes that “alternative indicators of teacher quality are crucial” (p.27). In the determination of ‘fitness for practice’, the report states that “the more measurable characteristics provide fundamental information on the quality of teaching workforces” (p.27) and argues that

Countries need to have clear and concise statements of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. ... The profile of teacher competencies needs to derive from objectives for student learning, and provide profession-wide standards and a shared understanding of what counts as accomplished teaching. ... The profile could express different levels of performance appropriate to beginning teachers, experienced teachers, and those with higher responsibilities (p.13).

While one cannot argue against the value of doing this, it is legitimate to point out the danger involved, i.e., that the more narrowly competencies are defined, the easier it is to measure them and the greater the temptation there is to confine the exercise to this level of evaluation and mode of assessment. On the other hand, the fact that teaching competencies are defined broadly does not necessarily mean that that breadth of vision will be reflected in the manner in which they are implemented and measured. Coolahan (2007) acknowledges that, while “the competencies approach can be professionally positive and benign... it can be of a narrow, check-list character and professionally malign” and goes on to recommend an approach whereby Irish teacher educators might counteract its potential negative effects. He points out that, while an EU working group on “Improving the Education of Teachers and Trainers” (set up by the European Council, meeting at Barcelona, in 2002) recognises that “teaching should be seen less and less as a bureaucratic and technical and increasingly as a professional activity” (original emphasis), “the intent is quite clear that in establishing teacher profiles and associated competences the concern is for outcome-based criteria of teachers’ performance” (pp. 12-13). He points out that the Council of Ministers has agreed that a competencies approach should be developed and implemented at national level in EU states. In line with the Bologna Process, teacher education institutions are expected to develop descriptors of the learning outcomes of their teacher education programmes incorporating ECTS credits. This in effect, says Coolahan (2007), is an invitation to teacher educators to participate proactively in the definition of teaching competencies and the design of qualification profiles and a not-to-be-missed opportunity to ensure “that the best competency model possible is available for adoption in Ireland” (p.14)²⁷. The present author would endorse this approach which, in effect, is currently being adopted by the DES, by teacher educators, and by the Teaching Council (2007) in its Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers where the standards of teaching, knowledge, skills and competence that teachers are expected to meet are outlined.

The best way, perhaps, of ensuring that the complexity, breadth and depth of teaching and learning are recognized and reinforced is an awareness of its constantly developing and evolving knowledge base. To this we now turn our attention.

²⁷ The Higher Education Authority has requested the Colleges of Education to define the expected outcomes of their programmes within the context of the EU qualifications framework and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland framework. The Teaching Council has also requested this information to enable it to fulfil its statutory role in the validation of teacher education programmes.

NEED FOR A KNOWLEDGE BASE

The need for all professions to be grounded in a broad knowledge base and attached to knowledge-producing/research-oriented institutions has been stressed by many commentators since Flexner's seminal report in 1910 that steered medical education in the USA and Canada away from its traditional apprenticeship model (cf. Burke, 2002; Flexner, 1910)²⁸. Ten years later the so-called 'Learned Report', commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation, tried to do the same for teacher education, that is, to professionalise it (Learned and Bagley, 1920a; Learned and Bagley 1920b/2008)²⁹. Dewey (1904) had already advocated a professional approach to teacher education and warned against a narrow technical type of training for teachers. While becoming an effective teacher evidently requires the development of relevant classroom competencies, knowledge of curriculum content, and mastery of specific teaching skills and assessment techniques, teaching is much more than a mere technical operation. In this regard Dewey said:³⁰

To place the emphasis on the securing of proficiency in teaching and discipline puts the attention of the student teacher in the wrong place and tends to fix it in the wrong direction. ... for immediate skill may be got at the cost of the power to go on growing. ... Such persons seem to know how to teach but they are not students of teaching. ... Unless a teacher is such a student, he may continue to improve in the mechanics of school management, but he cannot grow as a teacher, an inspirer and director of soul life (pp.13, 15).

Broudy (1972) saw mastery of theory as an informant of action as incompatible with a technical/apprenticeship approach to teacher preparation. He wrote:

If performance of specified tasks in a predetermined form is the criterion of success in teaching, then current programs in teacher preparation not only are unnecessarily abstract and theoretical, but perhaps otiose altogether. A program of apprenticeship training seems to be the only warranted investment of resources for the training of teachers. But once we arrive at this conclusion, it makes no sense to speak of 'professional' teachers as distinct from craftsmen, if professional means theory-directed practice with the practitioner possessing both the *how* and the *why* of the practice (pp.11-12).

It is interesting to note that the logic of Broudy's statement has been widely applied in programmes that have adopted a narrowly defined competencies and/or apprenticeship approach to the training of teachers and is evident (as stated already) in their curtailment or elimination of foundation disciplines from their programmes. Where this is the case, the logic of Broudy's conclusion also applies: graduates of such programmes scarcely merit the title 'professional'.

In his response to those who adopt such narrow technical approaches to teacher preparation, who ignore teaching's knowledge base, and who criticise initial teacher education programmes, Berliner (2000) has this to say:

²⁸ Within ten years of the publication of the Flexner Report, half of America's mostly small and independent medical schools had closed.

²⁹ Teacher education never became what Learned and Bagley had envisaged for it. It was marginalized partly for reasons of its own making and partly due to circumstances. It failed to develop a research-based, scientific, approach to its work. In addition, the periodic need for large numbers of teachers, regardless of qualifications, to service the demands of mass education, militated against it. The professionalisation of teaching and teacher education became a "vision delayed" (Imig and Imig, 2005).

³⁰ For a commentary on and critique of Dewey's article see Shulman (1998).

There is more reason than ever before to defend preservice teacher education. That is because the research community has developed powerful findings, concepts, principles, technology, and theories of learning that need to be learned. Teaching is not a craft to be learned through apprenticeship. It has a scientific base as well, and thus, similar to other scientific fields, its fundamental findings, concepts, principles, technology, and theories need to be communicated. University coursework is the usual mechanism through which such important information is communicated. ...

It is both silly and degrading to take seriously the notion that teacher education is unnecessary, unless one is also willing to say that education in all professions is unnecessary (pp.365, 366).

It must be stated, however, that while an academic knowledge base is necessary for professional work, it is not sufficient (Shulman, 1998). In the final analysis, professions are 'about' practice because that is where professionals do their work and, as the saying goes, where 'the rubber meets the road'. A process of judgment has to intervene between knowledge and practice since this is the only way of making the transition from theoretical prototypes to the particularities of actual practice. This is why it was argued earlier that the core of professional education entails the development of practical wisdom (*phronesis*) to make decisions and of the artistry/skills (*techné*) to implement them in individual cases³¹.

Viewed in this broader light, the complexity and challenge of preparing teachers becomes more apparent. Teacher educators are charged with educating adult students and, at the same time, inducting them into the complex professional world of teaching and learning where the personality of each trainee is a critical, though imponderable, determinant of what kind of teacher he or she will become. In effect, a teacher is an intermediary between the child and the complex world of culture, knowledge and values and one cannot *legislate* for how an individual trainee will *construct* his/her version of that mediating role. In reality, we all create our own unique versions of 'teacher' within the broad parameters of the current knowledge base of the profession and what is considered good practice at this point in time. As a consequence, "different teachers will be good at different things in different ways" (Eisner, 2002, p. 384).

Reflecting the complexity of what is involved in the education and training of teachers, Wideen *et al.* (1998) say that "learning to teach is an inherently complex and messy business" and Kagan (1992) explains why: "It is rooted in personality and experience and requires a journey into the deepest recesses of one's soul where failure, fear and hopes are hidden" (pp. 163-164). Furthermore, no professional training programme can be adequate in the sense of matching the personality needs of each and every student teacher and/or preparing them for every possible eventuality that they will encounter in their professional lives (Veenman, 1984). Preservice training in all professions, including teaching, is simply the first phase of a lifelong professional learning process whose central aim, according to Dewey (1904), is to initiate candidates into becoming lifelong "students of" medicine, engineering, architecture, teaching etc. It is for this reason that a narrowly defined, technical, approach to preservice training is both inadequate and inappropriate and, as Dewey (1904) argues, sets professional students off in the wrong direction. It also fails to take sufficient cognisance of the interpersonal and moral dimensions of teaching – what Martin Buber (1965) calls "the other half of education" whereby, through the encounter of the teacher as person with the pupil as

³¹ In this context it is interesting to note that Shulman *et al.* (2006) decry the lack of clearcut demarcation between research-oriented education PhDs and practice-oriented EdDs and the treatment of the latter as a lower-level PhD. The end result is, they say, "chronic and crippling" (p.26) since neither serves its true purpose well. Education and teacher education, they argue, would benefit greatly if the two degrees were re-thought and re-instituted to serve distinct purposes with different curricula and assessments - analogous to the biomedical PhD and the MD.

person, the former initiates the latter into the human conversation, a culture, and a way of life (on this see Burke, 2002; Goodlad *et al.* 1990; Kerr, 1987; Oakshott, 1989; Palmer, 1998).

DISCUSSION

Teacher education is a contested area worldwide. While there is widespread agreement on its importance, there is considerable debate as to what form it should take and how it might best be delivered. In light of what is now known about the education of professionals, and about teaching and learning (some of which is documented in this paper), it can legitimately be concluded that most, if not all, teacher preparation programmes are dysfunctional in some respects (Schwille and Dembele, 2007). What is required now are 'best-fit', research-supported, solutions based on accurate identification of what *needs* to be done and realistic evaluations of what *can* be done given the circumstances and resources of each college and country.

It is clear that primary teacher education in Ireland is still under review and in need of further reform. The recommendations of the Working Group (2002) remain under active consideration while the *Teaching Council* is well on its way to determining its policy on, and the nature of its statutory role in, the accreditation of teacher education programmes. This article attempts to synthesise the views of some of the major figures involved in the international debate on teacher education, to provide new data relevant to primary teacher education in Ireland, and to indicate what the implications of both might be for its future development³². The discussion has focused in particular on the disjunction between theory and practice in the major preservice primary teacher education programme in Ireland and the extent to which existing teaching practice arrangements are unhelpful in this regard, the need for integration of courses within the professional component of the BEd programme, the institutionalized separation *ab initio* of the academic and professional components of the programme, and the Working Group's (2002) proposal to give students the option of choosing their Majors from subjects within the professional education area. It has been argued that reform of the BEd will not be effective without coordinated action in each of these areas.

Three remaining issues merit discussion: (1) the need for professions to continually re-invent themselves or face a decline in public recognition and respect; (2) the roles of different stakeholders in the reform and regulation of teacher education in Ireland; (3) the way forward: the search for a middle ground between a narrow competencies-based/technician and a broad professional approach to the preparation of primary teachers.

Re-inventing teaching and teacher education

In a recent article Glazer (2008) argues that "all professions, if they are to remain viable, must monitor and attend to the relationship between practice and evolving client needs and social context" (pp.185-6). If both teaching and teacher education do not respond appropriately to current day needs and changed circumstances, they will be vulnerable to what Glazer calls "jurisdictional decline" i.e. reduction in public recognition and respect. It is likely that the deregulation of teacher education in the U.K, the increase of Charter Schools in the USA, the recognition of a part-time, on-line, teacher training course for primary teachers in Ireland, the admission of non-certified personnel into teaching in some countries, and the acceptance of home schooling in others, are all symptoms of an erosion of confidence in both teaching and teacher education. To counteract this, Glazer argues, the teaching profession needs to re-invent itself as Psychiatry did in the beginning of the twentieth century when it moved beyond

³² While the focus of this paper has been the model of BEd operating in the two largest colleges, much of the data presented and some of the conclusions reached are relevant to and have implications for other teacher education program for both first- and second-level teachers.

the mental institutions to deal with more mainstream problems in the larger society. Librarians did likewise when they became specialists in the use of the new technologies in their work.

Grossman (2008) agrees with Glazer's diagnosis and argues that if teacher educators are to successfully counteract their declining influence they must "aggressively investigate the practice of teacher education and offer professional education that reflects the needs of our students and the needs of our schools" (p.22). She concludes that while "our field is in crisis ... in crisis lies opportunity to strengthen our field significantly" (p.22). However, if/when practice in any profession changes to meet new needs, so must the training of practitioners. This is one of the major reasons why the Working Group (2002) undertook a re-evaluation of the models of BEd operating in Ireland since the 1970s and issued major recommendations in their regard.

Regulation of Primary Teacher Education in Ireland

Prior to the introduction of the BEd degree, PRESET was short (two years), narrow in focus, concentrated on technical training for teaching, and was under the direct control of the Government Department of Education. Since the initiation of the degree for primary teachers in the mid-1970s, BEd programmes are validated by the host universities and vetted through the normal system of university-approved Extern Examiners³³. There are about a dozen departments in each of the two larger colleges of education. About fourteen Extern Examiners are required by each institution to cover the academic and professional areas of the BEd programme. Individual Extern Examiners have responsibility only for their own areas. Apart from the Externs for the education departments, most of the others would not have experience or expertise in teacher education. The end result is that the annual vetting of BEd programmes can best be described as 'piecemeal' since no one independent person or body evaluates the programmes in their entirety or gauges the professional relevance of the whole BEd 'package' to primary-school teaching. As already pointed out, the Working Group on Preservice Primary Teacher Education was the first body to undertake a national evaluation of BEd programmes in their entirety. Such infrequent whole-programme evaluation is not conducive to the kind of evolution and updating that all professional training programmes constantly require and helps to explain why so little has changed in the BEd since its initiation thirty five years ago.

The *Teaching Council*, established on a statutory basis in March 2006, has been given authority "from time to time [to] review and accredit the programmes of teacher education". It is also the designated authority for the recognition of teacher qualifications in the country (*Teaching Council Act, 2001*, No.38). How it will exercise these roles vis-à-vis other bodies (the universities, the colleges, and the DES) is still being worked out and tested in a pilot accreditation exercise with the colleges of education. The fact that the Irish *Teaching Council* (like its counterpart in Scotland) is entitled to set down requirements which BEd and other education graduates must satisfy if they are to qualify for registration as teachers, gives the Council a very direct 'say' in and effective influence over teacher education in the country. It is expected that this will be exercised in full consultation with the institutions concerned (DES, 1998).

In planning the reform, future development, and control of primary teacher education, the considerable expertise of college-of-education faculties (built up significantly in recent years with DES sanction and support), must be recognized and respected. Constant internal debates on teacher education have been taking place within these institutions and many of the Working Group's (2002) recommendations reflect proposals first put forward by teacher

³³ Also, for many years school inspectors have accepted invitations from the colleges of education to participate in the supervision of final teaching practice and have made significant contributions in its regard. They visit up to 10% of these students.

education personnel in the Colleges. It must also be recognized that these institutions have been constrained in what they could accomplish by way of reform by the model of BEd that was put in place in the 1970s, by the piecemeal nature of the extern examiner system (already alluded to), by the overloaded nature of programmes, and by the brevity and artificiality of the teaching practice experience. For these reasons, the type and level of reform needed (and that has now been recommended by the Working Group, 2002), was and, in my view still is, beyond the ability of the Colleges to agree and implement on their own. It is hoped, however, that whatever reforms are considered necessary will not be skewed by the trend in some countries towards a narrowly-defined, competencies-based, approach and that the Colleges' resolve to educate (as well as train) future primary teachers will not be diluted. It is important also that reforms be implemented sensitively to reduce the risk of damage to the good working relationships within the Colleges, the high level of staff commitment to quality education, and the dedication to student welfare that has characterized these institutions and made them models for students to emulate in their own working lives and relationships with colleagues, pupils and parents.

The way forward

Different approaches to teacher preparation and alternative routes into the profession have always existed. In recent decades, however, they have become a pervasive feature of the education landscape, especially in the UK and USA (including a part-time, largely on-line, course for postgraduate students in Ireland) (cf. Alexander, 2000; Great Britain, 1992; Grossman and Loeb, 2009). Detailed discussions of these developments are for another day. Suffice it, herein, to identify some guiding principles whereby the strengths and weaknesses of different models of teacher education may be adjudicated and the way forward may be charted with greater assurance.

Teaching/learning and teacher education, as we have seen, are complex and do not operate to simple formulae or lend themselves to simplistic approaches. For Goodlad (1990a), "educating educators better and differently means that we must abandon the commonsense clichés for reform that inevitably prevail when we lack an understanding of what is wrong" (p.25). Polarised and clichéd thinking has, at times, prevented planners from seeing that, in truth, neither schools/teachers or colleges/universities can adequately train and educate teachers on their own because neither has access to the full range of knowledge, expertise, up-to-date experience, and practical wisdom that is necessary to do the job unaided. In this regard Theodore Sizer (1984) said:

Teacher educators can ... only save their souls by joining with their colleague professionals in the schools in an effort to redesign the ways that students and teachers spend their time in order that effective teaching, and thus learning, can take place (p.8).

Schools that attempt to train teachers largely on their own resources and without the aid of knowledge-producing institutions (universities or colleges of education) are seriously hampered e.g. School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programmes in England and Wales (Burke, 2007a). As I see it, the real issue for teacher education is not when or where it should take place but, rather, how it is to be accomplished without doing injustice to the notion of teaching as a profession and teacher preparation as a form of professional education and the extent to which the involvement of the appropriate education partners (knowledge-producing institutions, teacher educators, Teaching Council, school administrators, cooperating teachers, and schools' inspectors) in the process is facilitated. In this regard Feiman-Nemser (2001) says:

Some knowledge can best be gained at the university, but much of what teachers need to know can only be learned in the context of practice. This does not mean that good professional education and development only take place

“in” schools and classrooms. It does mean that a powerful curriculum for learning to teach has to be oriented around the intellectual and practical tasks of teaching and the contexts of teachers’ work (p.1048).

When the foregoing criteria are applied to current teacher preparation programmes (college-based, school-based or distance education models), their professional strengths and shortcomings will become more apparent.

It has been argued by the present author that the problem with many teacher preparation programmes is that they are still *training* teachers rather than *educating* future professionals (Burke, 2000; 2002). The problem is not that the professional model of training is not working. In truth, its core elements have not generally been agreed or tried in any consistent fashion in college- or school-based teacher preparation programmes while approaches based on narrowly-defined technical teaching competencies constitute, in effect, a movement backwards to pre-professional/*teacher training* days (Darling-Hammond, 2008; Goodlad, 1990a; Imig and Imig, 2005; Learned and Bagley, 1920a). Though significant progress has been made, in some respects, teaching and teacher education are still in somewhat of a quandary at the technician/professional crossroads of which Kellaghan (1971) spoke, suffering from an occupational identity crisis, and lacking the kind of self-confidence one associates with other professions (Burke, 2002). The Working Group (2002) report makes a strong case for a research-informed and more professional approach to the preparation of primary teachers in Ireland.

The foregoing notwithstanding, the attitude is not uncommon even today that, because teaching (especially at first level) deals with children, it is therefore ‘childish’ and that teacher decisions at that stage are not really important – a claim that would never be countenanced in the case of pediatricians who also deal with and make decisions about children. What is needed, therefore, is a fundamental paradigm shift to a view of the teacher as a professional person and teacher preparation as a form of professional education (Burke, 2000; 2002). This change is necessary on the part of teachers, teacher representative bodies, teacher educators, ministry of education personnel, and the general public. The professional paradigm appears to be the most appropriate and true-to-life way of understanding teacher education and the teacher's role today and of challenging teachers and teacher educators to invent their own future, believe in it, pursue it, and be proud of it (cf. Burke, 2000, 2002; Berliner 1987; 2000; Crowe, 2008). If Irish teacher educators have the courage and conviction to take on this challenge, there is no reason why, in this as in other areas, Ireland could not act as a *Leac a’ Ré*³⁴ or guiding light for other countries to follow.

³⁴ Where lighthouses did not exist, south-of-Ireland fishermen used moonlit rocks to guide them on their way. They referred to this as *Leac a’ Ré*.

REFERENCES

- Adler, M.J. (1982) *Paideia proposal: An educational manifesto*, NY: Macmillan.
- Alexander, R. (2000) *Culture and pedagogy: International comparisons in primary education*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Allington, R. (2005) 'Ignoring the policy makers to improve teacher preparation', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(3), pp. 199-213.
- Andrew, M. (1990) 'The difference between graduates of four-year and five-year teacher preparation programs', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(2), pp. 45-51.
- Andrew, M. and Schwab, R.L. (1995) 'Has reform in teacher education influenced performance? An outcome assessment of graduates of eleven teacher education programs,' *Action in Teacher Education*, 17, pp. 43-53.
- Ashton, P. and Crocker, L. (1987) Systematic study of planned variations: The essential focus of teacher education reform, *Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(3), pp.2-8.
- Ball, D.L. and McDairmid (1990) 'The subject matter preparation of teachers', in W.R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (pp. 437-499). NY: Macmillan.
- Ball, D.L., Lubienski, S.T. and Mewborn, D.S. (2001) 'Research on teaching mathematics: the unsolved problem of teachers' mathematical knowledge' in V. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of research on teaching* (4th Ed.) (pp. 433-456), Washington DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Ball, D.L., Thames, M.H. and Phelps, G. (2008) 'Content knowledge for teaching: What makes it special?' *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59 (5), pp.389-407.
- Bennett, N. and Carré, C. (Eds.) (1993) *Learning to teach*, London: Routledge.
- Berliner, D.C. (1987) 'Knowledge is power: A talk to teachers about a revolution in the teaching profession', in D.C. Berliner and R. V. Rosenshine (Eds.), *Talks to teachers: A festschrift for N.L. Gag.*, NY: Random House
- Berliner, D.C. (2000) 'A personal response to those who bash teacher education', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51 (5), pp. 358-371).
- Borko, H., Whitcomb, J., and Liston, D. 'Wicked problems and other thoughts on issues of technology and teacher learning', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60 (1), 2009, pp.3-8 (Editorial).
- Bransford, J.D., Darling-Hammond, L., and LePage, P. (2005). Introduction, in L. Darling-Hammond and J.D. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Broudy, H. (1972) 'A critique of performance-based teacher education', Washington DC: American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. Ed. 063 274).
- Buber, M. (1965). 'Education', in M. Buber, *Between man and man*, NY: Macmillan.

- Buchberger, J. S., and Byrne, K. (1995) 'Quality in teacher education: A suppressed theme', *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 18 (1), pp.9-23.
- Burke, A. (2000) 'The devil's bargain: The BEd degree under review', *Oideas*, 48. (single-author issue).
- Burke, A. (1992/2002), 'Teaching: *Retrospect and prospect*', (*Oideas*, 39, 2nd edition, 1992).
- Burke, A. (2007a), Report to Department of Education and Science on School-Centred Initial Teacher Training programmes in England and Wales. Unpublished.
- Burke, A. (2007b), 'Crosscurrents in the competencies/standards debate in teaching and teacher education' in R. Dolan and J. Gleeson (Eds.) *The competencies approach to teacher professional development: Current practice and future prospects*, Armagh: SCoTENS: The Centre for Cross-Border Studies, pp.67-96.
- Burke, A. (2008a) Survey of BEd student preferences in the matter of academic majors. Unpublished.
- Burke, A. (2008b) Survey of BEd student employment during the academic year. Unpublished.
- Burke, A. (2008c). BEd student survey: *Proportion of time devoted to Academic Subjects Versus Education Studies*. Unpublished.
- Buchberger, J. S., and Byrne, K. (1995) 'Quality in teacher education: A suppressed theme', *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 18 (1), pp. 9-23.
- Callender, C. (2008) 'The impact of term-time employment on higher education students' academic attainment and achievement', *Journal of Education Policy*, 23(4), 359-377.
- Clarke, C. M. (1988) 'Asking the right questions about teacher preparation: Contributions of research to teacher thinking', *Educational Researcher*, 17(2), pp. 5-12.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2005) 'Studying teacher education: What we know and need to know', (Editorial). *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(4), 301-306.
- Coolahan, J. (1984) 'The fortunes of education as a subject of study and research in Ireland', *Irish Educational Studies*, 4 (1), pp. 1-34.
- Coolahan, J. (2007) 'The operational environment for future planning in teacher education: OECD and EU initiatives' in R. Dolan and J. Gleeson (Eds.), *The competencies approach to teacher professional development: Current practice and future prospects*, Armagh: SCoTENS: The Centre for Cross-Border Studies, pp. 7-14.
- Collins, J. (1990) *Educational malpractice*, Charlottesville, VA: The Michie Co.
- Crosier, D., Purser, L., and Smidt, H. (May, 2007) *Trends V: Universities shaping the European higher education area*, European University Association.

Crowe, E. (2008) 'Teaching as a profession: A bridge too far?' in Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman-Nemser, S., and McIntyre, D.J. (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts* (3rd Ed.). London: Routledge, pp.889-999.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1998) 'Teachers and teaching: Testing policy hypotheses from a National Commission Report', *Educational Researcher*, 27(1), 5-15.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1999) 'Educating teachers for the next century: Rethinking practice and policy' in G.A. Griffin (Ed.) *The education of teachers. The Ninety-eight Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I* (pp. 221-256), Chicago IL: National Society for the Study of Education.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006) *Powerful teacher education lessons from exemplary schools*, San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2008) 'Knowledge for teaching: What do we know?' in Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman-Nemser, S., and McIntyre, D.J. (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts* (3rd Ed.), London: Routledge, pp.1316-1323.

Darling-Hammond, L. and Bransford, J. (2005), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hammerness, K., Grossman, P., Rust, F., and Shulman, L. (2005) 'The design of teacher education programs' in L. Darling-Hammond, and J. Bransford, *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 392-441.

Darling-Hammond, L. and Sykes, G. (2003) 'Wanted: A national teacher supply policy for education: The right way to meet the 'highly qualified teacher' challenge' *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 11 (33). <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n33/>

Darling-Hammond, L., and McLaughlin, W. (1995) 'Policies that support professional development in an era of reform', *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76 (8), 597-604.

Deegan, J. (2007) 'Challenging, confronting and choosing "New Appraisal" in initial teacher education in the primary sector in the Republic of Ireland', in R. Dolan and J. Gleeson (Eds.) *The competencies approach to teacher professional development: Current practice and future prospects*, Armagh: SCoTENS: The Centre for Cross-Border Studies, pp. 15-24.

Department of Education and Science (1998) *Report of the steering committee on the establishment of a teaching council*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Dewey, J. (1904) 'The relation of theory to practice in education' in M.J. Holmes, J.A. Keith, and L. Seely (Eds.) *The relation of theory to practice in education*, (Second Yearbook of the National Society for the study of education, part 2), Chicago: University Press.

Dewey, J. (1938, 1963) *Experience and education*, London: Collier-Macmillan.

Dunne, J. (1995) 'What's the good of education?' in P. Hogan (Ed.) *Partnership and the benefits of learning*, Maynooth College, Co. Kildare: Educational Studies Association of Ireland, pp. 60-82.

Education Next (2002) 'New paths to teaching', *Education Next: A journal of Opinion and Research*, 2(1), special issue.

- Educational Research Centre (1982) *Evaluation of the three-year course leading to the Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree in St. Patrick's College, Dublin*. Dublin: Author.
- Eisner, E.W. (1983, January) 'The art and craft of teaching', *Educational Leadership*, 5-13.
- Eisner, E.W. (1995) 'Standards for American schools: Help or hindrance', *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(10), pp. 758-764.
- Eisner, E.W. (2002) 'From episteme to phronesis to artistry in the study and improvement of teaching', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18, pp.375-385.
- Erekson, T.L., and Barr, L.(1985) 'Alternative credentialling: Lessons from vocational education', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(3), 16-19.
- Evertson, C.M., Hawley, W.D., and Zlotnik, M. (1985) 'Making a difference in educational quality through teacher education', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(3), pp. 2-10.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001) 'From preparation to practice; designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching', *Teachers College Record*, 103 (6), pp. 1013-1055.
- Fisher, C.W. (1992) 'Making a difference and differences worth making: An essay review based on Goodlad's Teachers for our Nation's Schools', *Teachers and Teacher Education*, 8 (2), 219-224
- Flexner, A. (1910) *Medical education in the United States and Canada*, NY: Carnegie Foundation for Advanced Teaching.
- Floden, R.E. and Miniketti, M. (2008) 'Research on the effects of coursework in the Arts and Sciences and in the Foundations of Education' in Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman-Nemser, S., and McIntyre, D.J. (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts* (3rd Ed.), London: Routledge, pp.261-308.
- Fullan, M., Galluzzo, G., Morris, P., and Watson, N. (1998) *The rise and stall of teacher education reform*, Washington DC: American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education.
- Furling, J., Barton, L, Miles, S., Whiting, C. and Whitty, G. (2000) *Teacher education in transition: Re-forming professionalism?* Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Gage, N.L. (1985) *Hard gains in the soft sciences: The case of pedagogy*, Bloomington, IND: Phi Delta Kappan Center on Evaluation and Research.
- Gardner, H. (1991) *The unschooled mind: How children think and how schools should teach*, NY: Basic Books.
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (2005) *Reviews of teacher competences and continuing professional development*, Belfast: Author.
- Gess-Newsome, J. and Lederman, N.G. (1999) *Examining pedagogical content knowledge: The construct in its implications for science education*, Boston: Kluber.
- Glazer, J.M. (2008, February) 'Educational professionalism: An inside-out view', *American Journal of Education*, 114, pp. 169-189.

- Good, T.L., Biddle, B.J. and Goodson, I.F. 1997) 'The study of teaching: Modern and emerging conceptions' in B.J. Biddle, T.L. Good, and I.F. Goodson (Eds.), *International handbook of teachers and teaching* (vol. I), pp. 1-10.
- Goodlad, J.I. (1984) *A place called school: Prospects for the future*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Goodlad, J.I. (1990a) *Teachers for our nation's schools*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Goodlad, J.I. (1990b) 'Better teachers for our nation's schools', *Phi, Delta, Kappan* 73(3), 105-111.
- Goodlad, J.I., Soder, E. and Sirotnik (1990) *The moral dimensions of teaching*, San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Goodson, I. (1995) 'Education as practical matter: Some issues and concerns', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 25 (2), 137-148.
- Greaney, V., Burke, A., and McCann, J. (1999) 'Predictors of performance in primary-school teaching', *Irish Journal of Education*, 30, 22-37.
- Great Britain: Department of Education and Science (1992) *Reform of initial teacher education: A consultation document*, London: Author.
- Greenberg, J.D. (1983) 'The case for teacher education: Open and shut', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(4), 2-5.
- Griffin, G.A. (1999) 'Changes in teacher education: Looking to the future' in G.A. Griffin (Ed.), *The education of teachers. Ninety-eight Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1* (pp. 1-28), Chicago IL: National Society for the Study of Education.
- Grossman, P. (2008) 'Responding to our critics: From crisis to opportunity in research on teacher education', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(1), 10-23.
- Grossman, P. and Loeb, S. (2009) 'Conclusion: Taking Stock - Future directions for practice and research' in P. Grossman and S. Loeb, *Alternative routes to teaching: Mapping the new landscape of teacher education*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Guyton, E. and Farokhi, E. (1987) 'Relationships among academic performance, basic skills, subject matter knowledge, and teaching skills of teacher education graduates', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(5), 37-42.
- Hargreaves, A. (2003) *Teaching in the knowledge society: Education in an age of insecurity*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Hargreaves, A., Earl, L., Moore, S., and Manning, S. (2001) *Learning to change teaching beyond subjects and standards*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hallet, J. (1987) 'Teacher training under pressure', *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 10(1), 43-52.
- Hilton, S., and Southgate, L. (2007) 'Professionalism in medical education', *Teachng and Teacher Education*, 23(3), 265-279.
- Hirst, P.H. (1983, November) 'Philosophy and educational theory', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 12, 51-64.

- Hitz, R. (2008) 'Can the teaching profession be trusted?' *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(10), 746-750.
- Holmes Group (1986) *Tomorrow's teachers*, East Lansing, MI: Author.
- Howey, K.R. and Zimpler, N.L. (1989) *Profiles of preservice teacher education: Inquiry into the nature of programs*, Albany NY: State University of New York Press.
- Imig, D. and Imig, S. (2005) 'The learned report on teacher education: A vision delayed', *Change Magazine*, Sept. / October.
- Ireland: Oireachtas (1998) *Education Act*, Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Ireland: Oireachtas (2001) *Teaching Council Act*, Dublin: Stationery Office.
- James, W. (1920) *Talks to teachers on psychology: And to students on some of life's ideals*, London: Longmans, Green and Co.
- Kagan, D.M. (1992) 'Professional growth among preservice and beginning teachers', *Review of Educational Research*, 62 (2), 129-169.
- Kellaghan, T. (1971) 'The university and education' in Academic Staff Association, University College Dublin (Ed.) *Contemporary developments in university education*, Dublin: University Staff Association, University College, Dublin.
- Kennedy, M.M. (1991) 'Some surprising findings on how teachers learn to teach', *Educational Leadership*, 49(3), 14-17.
- Kennedy, M.M., Soyeon, A. and Choi, J. (2008) in Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman-Nemser, S., and McIntyre, D.J. (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts* (3rd Ed.). London: Routledge, pp.1247-1271.
- Killeavy, M., and Murphy, R. (2006) *National pilot project on teacher induction: Report on phases I and II, 2002-2004*, Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Kuhn, D.C. (1986) 'Education for thinking', *Teachers College Record*, 87 (4), pp. 495-512.
- Learned, W.S. and Bagley, W.C. (1920a) *The professional preparation of teachers for American public schools* (Vol. 14). New York, NY: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Learned, W.S., Bagley, W.C. (1920b/2008). Purposes of a Normal School. In Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman-Nemser, S., and McIntyre, D.J. (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts* (3rd Ed.), London: Routledge, pp. 1275-1285.
- Liston, D., and Borko, H. (2009) 'The end of education in teacher education: Thoughts on reclaiming the role of social foundations in teacher education', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60 (2), 107-111.
- Lortie, D.C. (1975) *Schoolteacher*, Chicago Ill: University of Chicago Press.
- Loughrey, D. (2007) 'Experience of competence-based teacher education in Northern Ireland within a partnership approach' in R. Dolan and J. Gleeson (Eds.) *The competencies approach to teacher professional development: Current practice and future prospects*, Armagh: SCoTENS: The Centre for Cross-Border Studies, pp.49-59.

- Maguire, M. (1995) 'Dilemmas in teaching teachers: The tutor's perspective', *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*. 1(1), pp. 119-131.
- Máirtín, C. (1999) 'Student perceptions of BEd programme', unpublished manuscript.
- Menand, L. (1997) 'Re-imagining liberal education' in R. Orill (Ed.) *Education and democracy: Re-imagining liberal learning in America*, NY: The College Board.
- Menand, L. (2001) 'College: The end of the golden age', *New York Review of Books*, Oct. 18th, pp. 18-23.
- Moran, S. (2007) 'An alternative view: The teacher as phronimos' in R. Dolan and J. Gleeson (Eds.) *The competencies approach to teacher professional development: Current practice and future prospects*, SCoTENS, The Centre for Cross-Border Studies, Armagh, pp.60-66.
- Murray, F.W. (2008) 'The role of teacher education courses in teaching by second nature' in Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman-Nemser, S., and McIntyre, D.J. (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts* (3rd Ed.), London: Routledge, pp.1228-1246.
- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) *What matters most: Teaching for America's Future*, New York: Author.
- Ní Áingléis, B. (2009). 'Creative collaboration between teachers, student teachers and college supervisors: New spaces in teacher professional development'. Paper delivered at International Professional Development Association (Irish Branch) conference on The Creative Professional at St. Patrick's College, Dublin 9, March 21st 2009.
- OECD (May, 2005) '*Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers*', Paris: Author.
- Oakshott, M. (1989) *The voice of liberal learning*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Palmer, P.J. (1998) *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Raywed, M.A. (1987) 'Tomorrow's teachers and today's schools', *Teachers College Record*, 88(3), 411-418.
- Reid, I. (Ed.). (2001) *Improving schools: The contribution of teacher education and training*, London: University Council for the Educating of Teachers.
- Reynolds, M. (1999) 'Standards and professional practice: The TTA and initial teacher training', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 47(3), pp. 247-260.
- Roszak, T. (1981) *Person/planet*, London: Granada.
- Schon, D.A. (1983) *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in practice*, London: Temple Smith.
- Sergiovanni, T. (2000) *The lifeworld of leadership*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Shulman, L. S. (1984, Autumn) 'It's harder to teach in class than be a physician', *Stanford School of Education News*, 3.

- Shulman, L.S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4-14.
- Shulman, L. S. (1987a) 'The wisdom of practice: Managing complexity in medicine and teaching', in D. C. Berliner and B. V. Rosenshine (Eds.) *Talks to teachers: A festschrift for NL Gage*, New York: Random House.
- Shulman, L.S. (1987b) 'Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform', *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), pp. 1-22.
- Shulman, L.S. (1998) 'Theory and practice and the education of professionals', *Elementary School Journal*, 98 (5), 511-527.
- Shulman, L.S. (2005) 'Teacher Education does not exist', *The Stanford Educator* (Stanford University School of Education Alumni Newsletter), Fall, 2005 (available at <http://ed.stanford.edu/suse/news-bureau/educator-newsletter.html>).
- Sizer, T.R. (1984) 'High school reform and the reform of teacher education', Ninth annual DeGarmo lecture, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Soder, R., and Sirotnik, K.A. (1990) 'Beyond re-inventing the past: The politics of teacher education', in J. I. Goodlad and K. A. Sirotnik, *Places where teachers are taught*, Oxford: Jossey-Bass.
- Sosniak, L.S. (1999) Professional and subject matter knowledge for teacher education. In G.A. Griffin (Ed.) *The education of teachers: Ninety-eight Yearbook of the National Association for the Study of Education, Part 1*, Chicago, ILL: National Association for the Study of Education.
- Schwille, J. and Dembélé, M. (2007) *Global perspectives on teaching and learning: Improving policy and practice*, Paris: UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Teaching Council/An Chomhairle Mhuinteoireactha (2007) *Codes of professional conduct for teachers*, Dublin: Author.
- Van Manen, M. (1995) 'On the epistemology of effective practice', *Teachers and Teaching*, 1(1), 33-49.
- Veenman, S. (1984) 'Perceived problems of beginning teachers', *Review of Educational Research*, 18(1), pp. 123-132.
- Vegari, S. and Hess, F.M. (Fall, 2002) 'The accreditation game', *Education Next*, 55-60.
- Weiland, S. (2008) 'Teacher education towards liberal education' in Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman-Nemser, S., and McIntyre, D.J. (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts* (3rd Ed.), London: Routledge, pp.1204-1227.
- Wenglinsky, H. (2002) 'The link between classroom teaching practices and student academic performance', *Education Policy Analysis*, 10(12), 1-64. Retrieved Sept. 1st 2009, from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n12/>.
- Wideen, M., Mayer-Smith, J. and Moon, B. (1998) 'A critical analysis of the research on learning to teach: Making the case for an ecological perspective on inquiry', *Review of Educational Research*, 68 (2), pp. 130-178.

Wilson, S.M., Floden, E., Ferrini-Mundi, J. (2001) 'Teacher preparation research: Current knowledge, gaps, and recommendations', Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, Seattle.

Working Group on Primary Preservice Teacher Education (2002) *Preparing teachers for the 21st. century: Report of the working group on primary preservice teacher education*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Teresa O'Doherty

TEACHER COMPETENCES – A CORE CHALLENGE FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS

*Professor Teresa O'Doherty is Dean of Education at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Limerick. She is a member of a wide range of academic and professional committees on a national level and is Southern Chair of the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South. She is an active member of a number of international projects on teacher education and induction. Her personal research interests are in the area of the History of Irish Education.*¹

ABSTRACT: *This paper recognises that Irish educationalists need to assert and debate the values, knowledge, skills and attitudes that our teachers should acquire, while recognising the limitations of any rubric to describe the essence of a 'competent' teacher'. The process of naming our beliefs and values in education has been initiated with the establishment of the Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers by the Teaching Council. The collaborative and consultative approach taken by the Council in devising these codes has contributed significantly to the recent debate on the issue of teacher competence and 'competencies'. Within this context the author suggests that it is important for the Irish education community to reconceptualise the term 'competencies' and to develop an alternative lexicon that might capture the nature and quality of teaching in Ireland.*

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental tensions that drive teacher education emerge and re-emerge periodically. Each time they do, they are threaded into and wound around the current intersections of educational and other kinds of research, practice, and policy. Thus, the tensions are both old and new. They are new in that they are woven into the tapestry of changed and changing political, social, and economic times and thus have a different set of implications each time they re-emerge in prominence. But they are also old in that they represent enduring and deep disagreements in society about the purposes of schooling, the value of teaching, and the preparation of teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 278).

The Irish education community² is currently facing tensions that are both old and new. We are, as has always been the case, concerned that teachers are well-prepared, competent, and that they are accountable for their performance. We consider it a positive development that the issue of teacher education, teachers' competence and teaching quality is being addressed by international and national reports and associated legislation. This debate and focus provides us with an opportunity to contribute to the emerging consensus of the factors that

¹ I wish to acknowledge that this paper stemmed from conversations with Rose Dolan, NUI Maynooth.

² The Irish education community includes the many stakeholders for whom teacher quality is a major concern; the list below is not exhaustive but includes sectors such as policy makers, teachers, principals, mentors and those involved in induction processes, the inspectorate, and teacher educators.

define a 'competent' teacher within the rich political, social, cultural and economic tapestry of Irish society. However, the consequent challenge is to ensure that teacher educators as a professional community, together with central policy makers, engage in the broader political debate as to what is valuable in teacher education and teaching. As we engage in the discourse of defining what we value, it is important that we achieve an agreed understanding of teacher 'competence' that reflects the wealth of our Irish teaching heritage.

THE RECENT EMERGENCE OF 'COMPETENCIES'

In the 1960s and 1970s, performance or competency-based teacher education (P/CBTE) dominated the literature in the United States, and where programmes applied a competency-based approach, prospective teachers had to demonstrate their mastery of the essential tasks of teaching. The list of competencies proliferated and Michigan State University, for example, devised more than 1,500 teacher competencies (Zeichner, 2008, p.10). Since the 1990s competency-based education has re-emerged in the US in the form of a more limited number of 'standards' which are elaborated through the articulation of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that define those standards. Similarly in England, during the 1980s and 1990s, successive governments promoted a competency-based approach to teacher education. The government assumed greater control over initial teacher education and placed greater emphasis on school-oriented and practical training (Furlong *et al.* 1995; Hobson, 2003). The Department for Education identified specific skills teachers needed to attain, most notably in its Circular 9/92 (DfE, 1992) which outlined various competencies of teaching (relating to subject knowledge and application, class management and assessment etc.) on which initial training courses should focus. The Department also announced that trainees should spend a minimum of two-thirds of their training in schools (Hobson, 2003). The long lists of competencies or standards, as they were renamed in 1997, enumerated by the Teacher Training Authority have been issued without rationale or indication of their philosophical underpinning. The language of teacher education has changed where student teachers are 'trainees' and the curriculum is expressed in a set of standards to be attained to qualify for teacher status. Recognising the influence of our near neighbour on educational policy here, O'Donoghue has warned, 'It may only be a matter of time before this trend becomes a powerful one on the Irish scene' (1993, p. 98).

This instrumentalist and reductionist approach equates teaching with a collection of skills that can be analysed, described and mastered; where 'teachers are viewed as technicians who will simply apply what educational research has discovered' (Fish 1989 cited in Turner-Bissett, 1999, p. 40). The result in England has been to narrow and reduce the nature of teacher education, creating an instrumental, apprenticeship model of teacher training, with limited or no university engagement for aspiring teachers. Even where there is engagement with universities, the policy to de-theorise and de-professionalise teaching and teacher education in the interest of pursuing technical interests has resulted in programmes which, without foundation disciplines, do not support, encourage and enable student teachers to ask questions about the nature of education, or to challenge and analyse the current system and curriculum. In his critique of the system Michael Apple (2005, p. x) has stated that the drive to competencies and an instrumental view of education has resulted in the 'collapse in confidence of individual professionalism'.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Within an Irish context, there is a long tradition of debate concerning the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes required of a good teacher. Patrick Weston Joyce, one of the first providers

of school-based teacher development programmes in 1856 and thereafter head of the State Training College in Marlborough Street, identified in his *Handbook of School Management and Methods of Teaching* (1863) the core knowledge and pedagogies which the teacher ought to master, outlined the essential practical skills required by the teacher in the fulfilment of his/her duties, and described the prerequisite personal values and dispositions teachers required to be successful within the national school system. Joyce clearly advised users of his *Handbook* that he had included only the most essential aspects, and in the first editions of his text he incorporated sections relating to the 'Mechanical arrangements of the school' which detailed the site and physical dimensions of a school house, the organisation of classroom furniture and advised on school cleanliness, timetables and discipline matters. His *Handbook* also included sections on the personal values and morals of teachers, as well as the best approach to organising classes and pedagogy of simultaneous instruction. However, Joyce's understanding of what was essential knowledge, skills and attitudes for Irish teachers evolved during his career, which spanned three decades, and he kept abreast of developments internationally. The amendments to the 18 editions of his *Handbook* illustrate his own progression as a teacher educator and an educationist, but they also reflect what he perceived to be essential, core knowledge for teachers. In subsequent editions of his *Handbook* (1887, 1897) he included for example, sections on the psychology of teaching, manual instruction (a programme of design, construction and crafts), and 'kindergarten', an approach to early childhood education reflecting Froebel's concept of kindergarten. Joyce's revised views of the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes of what comprised a 'good teacher' were informed by extensive reading and reflection, as well as the study of education systems in other jurisdictions. It is evident from the evolution of his *Handbook*, that the limits/standards established in the 1860s were inadequate and out-dated by the 1890s. It is clear that one of the requirements of stating what is 'essential' for teachers and teaching is an awareness of the fluidity of appropriate teacher knowledge, a willingness to amend and develop such statements of knowledge, but also an underlying awareness of the essence of change; change in educational values, change in methods, change in the social, cultural, economic, and emotional landscape of a country.

In contrast to the willingness of one educationist to review and revise what he deemed essential teacher knowledge in the nineteenth century, the system of Payment by Results was applied in Ireland during the same period, in a static and unchanging manner. During the first thirty years of the National School System the cost of education in Ireland had increased exponentially. There was a belief that money expended on education was uneconomically and inefficiently employed and that the existing school system was not producing results to justify the growing expenditure. Following the practice already established in England in 1862, payment by results was introduced in Ireland in 1872 (Coolahan, 1981, p. 29). Within this process the National Board of Education set out the specific content within each subject area to be taught at each level of the school system and teachers' competence was assessed through the proficiency of their students' performance which was measured by annual examinations (Minutes of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland (CNEI), 30 June 1872, and thereafter the annual reports of the CNEI provided details of the various programmes). Teachers' remuneration was computed on the basis of their students' ability to achieve a 'pass' within the examination process. Although this system is accredited with reducing illiteracy levels and improving school attendance, by 1900 it was abandoned at primary level because of its negative impact on education. In his evidence to the Belmore Commission, PW Joyce, who had assisted Sir Patrick Keenan in writing and devising the programme stated:

...after it had been in operation for a little while, it did produce great benefits ... After twenty-five years we find it has banished the power of thinking amongst pupils. For instance in reading, children read over the lessons, the simplest lessons, and they do not know, or care, or want or know the meaning...the results system has rendered children incapable of thinking. (PW Joyce, *Evidence to the Royal Commission of*

Inquiry on Manual and Practical Instruction in Primary School under the Board of National Education, HC 1897, First Report, pp. 85-86).

WJM Starkie, the Resident Commissioner of National Education, was clear in his criticism of the narrow and prescriptive nature of the curriculum and examination process and its effects on teachers and teaching. He stated that children and teachers laboured under the payment-by-results system, an “elaborate mosaic of sixpences and shillings ... [that] made half a million children in each year the drudges of the teachers, the teachers the drudges of the inspectors, and the inspectors of the office” (Starkie, 1900, p.3). Starkie recognised that the prescribed programme imposed iron limitations on teachers and pupils, and the ensuing unavoidable monotony and uniformity “paralysed the intellects of a whole generation”. He condemned the results’ system which inflicted an artificial standard on all Irish schools, irrespective of their location, requiring “the same high efficiency in reading ... from Gaelic speakers of Aran as from the children of Dublin.” Starkie continued:

Freedom and elasticity are vital to good teaching and it is worthwhile sacrificing a great deal of accuracy exacted by an examination-test in exchange for the alertness of intellect, the spirit of initiative and independence, the slow but continuous development which a less rigid training fosters (1900, p.2).

Despite the general dissatisfaction with the payment by results system and the optimism associated with the introduction of the Revised Programme in 1900, some twenty years later, the concern to once again provide proof of academic standards within schools provided the impetus for the establishment of the Primary School Certificate Examination. Introduced in 1929 in a voluntary capacity, approx 25% of children sat the examination in the early years which assessed their proficiency in a broad range of subjects. However, by 1941 participation in the examination became a compulsory requirement and the range of subjects assessed was reduced to Gaelige, English and Arithmetic. In May 1941, Eamonn deValera, then Minister for Education and himself a product of the Payment by Results system both as a second level student and subsequently as an examiner of the Intermediate Board, advocated:

I am for cutting off every frill so as to make certain that the essentials are properly done. I do not care what teachers are offended by it. I am less interested in a teacher’s method of teaching than I am in the results...and the test I would apply is the examination (Dáil Éireann, 27 May, 1941).

The Primary Certificate was abolished in 1967, but in the interim what was valued in primary education reflected that which was assessed in the terminal examination in sixth class. With the publication of the Investment in Education Report (1965) and the awareness that Irish education was out of step with international norms, the abolition of the examination paved the way for the introduction of a broader and child-centred education.

During each of these periods it became clear that the limitations and constraints imposed by highly defined processes of assessment, benchmarks, and accountability did not contribute to the real education of the children involved. It failed to enrich the teaching styles or approaches implemented by teachers and it imposed narrow definitions of attainment expected at each level and limited the curriculum significantly as teachers taught to those standards. Past events within Irish education illustrate that the introduction of ‘competencies’, which reduce teaching to a prescribed number of easily and clearly defined skills drawn from a narrow base of knowledge, has a severely limiting and negative impact on teaching and teacher education. Fortunately, the retention of the history of Irish education as one of the foundation disciplines within teacher education has contributed to teachers’ ‘cognitive map’, enabling us to locate issues within a set of meanings (Stanley, 1968, p. 235 cited by O’Donoghue, 1993, p. 105) and consequently has significantly reduced the threat of collective amnesia that has engulfed other education systems (Cochran-Smith, 2003).

THE TEACHING CAREER

Traditionally, the role of teachers has been respected by the Irish public and this regard is deeply rooted in historical circumstances. Even when teachers did not benefit from good salaries there was regard for their scholarship, the nature of their work and their roles in the community (Coolahan, 2003, p. vi). Teachers and teaching continue to have high status in Irish society and there is widespread acceptance of the value of education and awareness of the quality of Irish teachers. The OECD examiners in 1991 noted, 'Ireland has been fortunate in the quality of its teaching force' (1991, p. 100). Teaching continues to attract students who are high academic performers and who are interested in job satisfaction, fulfilment and creativity, and who place a high value on caring and 'making a difference' to others. Drudy's (2006) research illustrates that candidates who select teacher education programmes are of the opinion that primary teachers enjoy their jobs and that, while less interested in pay and prestige, these candidates express egalitarian views more frequently than did their peers (pp. 259-273).

The introduction of the 1971 Curriculum and the establishment of degree-awarding teacher education programmes heralded a new era in Irish education. During this period there was a transition from a process of teacher training to one of teacher education, and since the 1970s teaching has become an all-graduate profession; curriculum at all levels of the system was renewed and revised; there have been enhanced opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development programmes, and teachers have had greater opportunities to exercise their professionalism within their classrooms, schools, and in collaboration with the design and implementation of the Primary School Curriculum 1999. Teaching in schools has become more flexible, and teachers have been enabled to adapt the curriculum to suit the individual needs of their students, cognisant of their geographical location and particular school ethos. Teachers engage annually in continuing professional development programmes, some of which are accredited at graduate diploma, master's and doctoral levels. In parallel the teacher representative bodies have negotiated increased salaries and promoted and defined more secure career phases, contributing in no small way to the professionalisation of the teaching career.

There has been a high level of public trust and confidence in the schooling system. In official policy documents, the Government has repeatedly acknowledged and affirmed the work of teachers and acknowledged their generous contribution to community life (Green Paper, 1992; White Paper, 1995). There is a public acceptance that the work of teachers, within a holistic approach to education, extends well beyond the direct business of teaching school subjects. The caring dimension of the teacher's role with regard to the welfare of young people is well recognised (Coolahan, 2003, p. 63). While recent legislation has created a tighter context of accountability and the rights of students and parents have been more clearly defined, teacher morale and motivation remains high. In addition, it was noted at the National Education Convention that 'The approach taken to educational change in Ireland is very different from that prevailing in some other countries. Here the keynote is consultation and partnership, as distinct from rule or dictat or prescriptive imposition (Coolahan, 1994, p.9). This approach has been built on mutual respect for all partners in education and has also contributed to the increased professionalism of teachers.

The positive status and image of teaching enjoyed in Ireland is not the norm in many other countries. The recent OECD report *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005) examined the characteristics of the workforce in 25 countries. This report documented that half of the countries have serious concerns about maintaining an adequate supply of good quality teachers, it asserts that fewer high achievers are becoming teachers and that in most countries teachers' relative salaries are declining with consequently negative impact on the image and status of teaching. Some countries also have

high levels of teacher attrition with one-third of America's teachers leaving the field during the first three years of teaching, and almost half leaving after five years (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2002, p. 3). England also reports that up to 50% of all entrants to teaching leave the profession within the first five years of their careers (Jones, 2009, pp 4-21).

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS THAT PROMOTE A COMPETENCY AGENDA

The last two decades have been a particularly rich period for the publication of educational reports, discussion papers and legislation. The review of education by the OECD in 1991 provided the impetus for a surge in statutory and policy documents generated during the 1990s and 2000s. While some of these documents may appear to support radical change in Irish education and teacher preparation, on closer scrutiny, they frequently reveal a technicist and instrumental view of teaching. The publication of the *Green Paper: Education for a Changing World* in 1992 presented an agenda for change, and the document delineated the role of education as 'preparing students for life and for work and should equip them with the skills for this purpose'. It continued:

It should foster a spirit of self-reliance and enterprise among students...While adhering to its philosophy of contributing to the development of the whole person, the education system must seek to interact with the world of work to promote the employability of its students and in playing its part in the country's economic development (p.35).

The Green Paper introduced language and terminology appropriate within a commercial climate with reference to the principal of a school as 'the Chief Executive' (p.19) and the persistent use of the term 'teacher training' (p. 23). The National Education Convention (1994) recorded that the Green Paper had lacked 'an adequate philosophy of education' and this omission had given 'an over-emphasis to utilitarian and commercial concerns' (p.7). The National Education Convention was ground-breaking in that it facilitated a consultative, collaborative approach to educational change; it underlined the importance of initial, induction and in-career teacher education.

Nonetheless the subsequent White Paper *Charting our Education Future* supports a restricted view of teaching, stating that the 'teacher has the onerous responsibilities of imparting knowledge' (Ireland, 1995, p. 119) and favours an approach whereby the pre-service development of teachers should be 'decentralised, school-focused and conducive to high levels of teacher participation in all aspects of the process' (Ireland, 1995, p.128). Leonard and Gleeson (1999, p.61) note that the terms 'teacher education' and 'teacher training' are used interchangeably within the Paper and that the discourse of training, which promotes a technical rather than a professional concern, permeates the approach taken to in-career development. These papers helped shape the Education Act in 1998, the first comprehensive piece of legislation published since the establishment of the Irish national school system in 1831.

Although Ireland has not adopted such an obviously technicised, competency-based approach, since the 1990s, many policy documents published by central government reflect a pervasive technical interest. Additionally, various policy decisions by the Department of Education and Science are underpinned by the technicised and narrow approach to teacher education. In particular, in 2003, a Higher Diploma in Arts in Primary Education, delivered by a private provider, Hibernia College, was accredited by the Higher Education Training Awards Council (HETAC) and recognised by the Department of Education and Science. This

marks a significant 'benchmark' in the Irish context, and has many of the hallmarks of a privatisation agenda, though it is frequently presented by the DES as a necessity due to the inability of existing providers to meet demands (Sugrue and Dupont 2005, p. 82).

The Teaching Council Act 2001 and the subsequent establishment of the Teaching Council on 1 March 2006, provides further national impetus towards the establishment of a 'competency' agenda. The Teaching Council has taken over the function of registration of teachers and has, under the Act, responsibility for establishing and maintaining 'standards of ... teaching, knowledge, skill and competence of teachers...' (Government of Ireland, 2001, Section 6.b, p.8). In addition the Council also must 'review the standards of knowledge, skill and competence required for the practice of teaching' (Government of Ireland, 2001, Section 38, 1.c. p. 26). The language and expectations of the Teaching Council reflect strongly the principles enshrined in international agreements to which Ireland is a signatory.

During the last decade Irish society has changed radically and the far-reaching economic and social changes which were heralded by the 'Celtic Tiger' placed greater importance on the provision of high-quality schooling than ever before. The demands on schools and teachers are becoming more complex. In addition education policy has become much more central to EU deliberations since the middle 1990s than had traditionally been the case (Coolahan, 2007, p. 10). OECD Education Ministers have committed their countries to the goal of raising the quality of learning for all. This ambitious goal will not be achieved unless all students receive high quality teaching (OECD, 2005, p.7). To this end the OECD noted:

The overarching priority is for countries to have in place a clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do ... A statement of teacher competences and professional standards at different stages of their career will provide a framework for the teacher development continuum (OECD 2005, pp. 131 - 132).

At the annual SCoTENS conference in 2004, Irish educationists analysed the most significant developments within the European political context, including the Bologna Agreement, and the European Council (Lisbon 2000) where it was agreed that Europe should aim to become by 2010 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'. One consequence of this objective was the agreement to develop a European framework for the quality of teachers' and trainers' competences and qualifications and to establish a single metric to ensure the transparency of qualifications and competences called a Europass (Feerick, 2004, p. 17).

Subsequently the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme was initiated and eight working groups were established. Group A (the first of these groups) was devoted to 'Improving the Education of Teachers and Trainers'. At the European Summit in Spring 2002, the Ministers for Education highlighted a number of key issues on which the work group should focus; the first two key areas were:

1. Identifying the skills that teachers and trainers need given their changing roles in society
2. Supporting teachers and trainers as they respond to challenges of the knowledge society (Feerick, 2004, p. 19)

Irish teacher educators are conscious of the impact of the introduction of the Bologna Declaration and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), where the mobility of teachers and their qualifications is an international right. To comply with these requirements teacher educators are expected to develop descriptors of the learning outcomes of their programmes.

This has resulted in processes whereby the ECTS weighting of each module and programme has been identified, as well as the specific learning outcomes for each unit. Documents such as the *Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications* and *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education* (Commission of the European Communities 08/2007) are now part of the lexicon of initial and continuing teacher education. Engagement with European legislation and requirements is an essential activity for teacher educators within the current climate. There is little ambiguity in the national or international legislation; both require that those who are involved in education address issues of teacher competence and qualifications. John Coolahan, in his recent article on 'The operational environment for future planning in teacher education: OECD and EU initiatives' concludes 'recent policy approaches by the OECD and the EU towards teacher education... are of considerable importance to teacher education in Ireland'. He asserts:

Different models of competence criteria are in existence, and some countries have considerable experience of them. Depending on the mode devised, the competency approach can be professionally positive and benign, or it can, alternatively, be of a narrow, check-list character and be professionally malign. Both the OECD and EU emphasise the desirability of pro-active engagement by teacher educators in the design of the competences. It would be remiss if Irish teacher educators do not take the initiative in exploring aspects of the competency approach, with a view to ensuring if, as seems likely, this policy is politically favoured, that the best competency model possible is available for adoption in Ireland (2007, p. 14).

Similarly Drudy (2004, p.32) has suggested 'as the higher education system moves towards a competences model ... it will be important to avoid the administrative seductions of systems which are overly prescriptive and reductionist'. It may be deemed pragmatic to state that teacher educators must engage in designing and defining a competence model that best fits with Irish cultural and systemic needs. However, the impact of political decisions which were made some years ago, are now becoming a reality and if teacher educators and the professional community fail to address the issue of teacher competences, then it is inevitable that others will fill the vacuum. Whatever the outcome of the process, the description as to what constitutes 'good teaching' will in turn define teacher education for the next number of decades, shaping the experiences of a generation of teachers and the children in their care. The potential, Cochran-Smith (2004) warns, is that education will be removed from initial teacher education to be replaced by 'training' programmes which are narrow and technical in nature. In this context 'teaching (is) seen as something for which you can train by learning particular skills, and once you have acquired these skills or competencies, you are amply equipped to teach' (2004:3).

The move towards the development of teacher 'competencies' within our own system is one that generates considerable argument and resistance. Irish educators generally associate the term with a technicist and reductionist view of teaching where the performance or achievement of teachers can be observed, measured and evaluated against identified standards or benchmarks. Some of our leading educationists, such as Andy Burke, argue cogently that the introduction of a competency model to Irish education may lead to the commodification of education and a utilitarian approach to teaching and consequently teacher education (Burke, 2007. p. 67). However, the dilemma for teacher educators and the education community is that within an international domain the competency/standards approach to teaching and teacher education is pervasive and has become central to the operational environment for future planning (Coolahan, 2007). We cannot ignore the existence of this movement; Drudy (2004, p. 31) cited by Deegan (2007, p.15) states 'we are only now beginning to realise the impact of educational change initiated at European level'. We have to engage with the 'competency' debate but in a manner that remains loyal to our culture and

values, while avoiding the international movement to reduce what it means to teach to a limited number of statements of ‘competencies’.

This is a significant challenge. Nonetheless recent developments provide optimism for our ability to create a framework that articulates what we value in Irish teaching. Each teacher education programme has designed and developed assessment processes not just for written assignments, projects and portfolios, but also for the grading of teaching practice. Within this process, each college or department of education has an established rubric where personal and professional competences on teaching practice are identified, and where grade descriptors have been developed as an objective measure of the competence of a student teacher during teaching practice. Each programme has appointed external examiners who evaluate the content and assessment of modules as well as the teaching practice component. All colleges have processes whereby the transparency of the awarding of grades on Teaching Practice can be tested and where students have the right to appeal a grade. While the emphasis on certain criteria or aspects may differ between colleges, there is a broad consensus as to what should be included in an appraisal of teaching practice and as Gleeson and Moody (2007, p. 32) acknowledge, all institutions have adopted a holistic rather than a technical/numerical approach to grading.

The recent work of the Teaching Council has also contributed positively to the development of such a framework. While the legislation establishing the Council refers to ‘standards’ and ‘competence’, the Council has interpreted and implemented the Act in an inclusive and holistic manner. One of the first achievements of the Teaching Council was the publication of the ‘Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers’. In the design and development of the Codes, the Teaching Council engaged in a comprehensive consultative process, inviting all partners to participate in the discourse and debate. The result has been the development of a set of Codes, which are agreed by a broad community, and which endeavour to state clearly the complex range of values, capacities and responsibilities which professional teachers bring to their work. The Codes capture the essence of a multi-faceted model of teacher professionalism, which ‘includes teachers’ commitment to the care of students, their personal well-being and educational development, their commitment to promoting equity and justice, to engaging their students in active learning, to being creative, imaginative, and innovative in their teaching, to collaborate with colleagues, parents and the wider educational community, and to engage in their own continuous professional development’ (Teaching Council, 2007). These statements allow for the individuality of teachers and recognise that teaching is not a neutral activity; while cognisant of international developments, and informed by research literature, they also accord with the unique tradition of teaching in Ireland.

CLARIFYING OUR LANGUAGE: ‘COMPETENCIES’ VERSUS ‘COMPETENCES’

In his keynote address to the SCoTENS conference in 2008 Ciaran Sugrue, while referring to the recent OECD publication *Improving School Leadership*, made a number of relevant and challenging comments in relation to the use of language, which are particularly pertinent to this discussion. Sugrue asked participants to pay attention to the language of reform, and advised, ‘if you want to change the mindset, change the language, and so if you use a particular kind of language which is very evident in this report then you actually get people using that language and in a way that changes the conversation over time’. While Sugrue was specifically referring to the use of the terms ‘distributed leadership’, ‘distributive leadership’ and ‘collaboration’ which are used interchangeably in the OECD document, he argues that these terms not only have different meanings from one another, but that each is also defined differently by different people. He argued that this lack of precision on the part of the OECD

authors is not simply an academic quibble but that each term refers to different leadership styles and each presents differing challenges. He argued that ambiguity is a major stumbling block to logical discussion as well as application.

In the context of teacher competency terms such as competence, competences, competency, and competencies have been used synonymously and it is appropriate that we establish clarity in how we use the terms, particularly '*competencies*' and '*competences*'. While the change in language may seem minute, whether or not to include an 'i' in the plural of the noun, yet both concepts are anatomically different and are premised on opposing sets of values and expectations. "Competencies" are the list of skills, knowledge, attitudes which have been developed in other jurisdictions where concern for the quality of teaching and teachers has resulted in the development of prescriptive, narrow, rigid criteria and which are premised on an impoverished perception of teaching and learning.

However, 'competences' need not be limited, instrumental or behaviourist in nature. If we engage in a process where we identify what we consider valuable in education, then statements of competence, or 'competences' can be flexible, expansive, culturally rich, and challenging. Creating such wider, broader, more complex, visionary statements will challenge us to name the values which should permeate all aspects of teaching and learning. This process should envision the professional teacher as one 'who learns from teaching' and the job of teacher education as empowering teachers to 'develop the capacity to inquire sensitively and systematically into the nature of learning and the effects of teaching' (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 170). O' Donoghue and Whitehead (2008, p.198) stress that unless this inquiry and reflection is at a level where teachers critically reflect on the systematic and ideological forces that shape their work in schools, then reflection might be meaningless and serve to perpetuate 'technical rationality' (2008, p. 198). Statements of competence should incorporate the professional knowledge, judgement, and autonomy of the teacher, be premised on the teacher's involvement in critical inquiry, and recognise the ethical, individualised, personal and 'non-routine' nature of teaching. These statements eschew the concept of tool-kit teaching and 'reject simplistic formulas or cookie-cutter routines' (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 170).

CONCLUSION

Many developed countries have embraced the 'competency/standards' process, and the expansion of competency-based education is one aspect of global educational reform. Levin (1998) characterises this reform movement in terms of a 'policy epidemic' which unleashes a flood of closely inter-related reform ideas into diverse education systems which have different histories and social and political locations. Frequently this reform agenda is championed by powerful change agents such as the World Bank and the OECD. Despite the widespread adoption of the competency agenda and the development of precise statements which are designed to measure teacher performance, and therefore promote and assure excellence, many countries are experiencing difficulties in attracting high calibre entrants to teaching and in retaining qualified teachers in their systems. The context in Ireland is radically different to that experienced in American and British education systems. The competency-based approach to teaching should reflect and be refracted by the particular context in which it is enacted. For that reason, the extant 'solutions' to international concerns in education which are devised in education systems that have successfully reduced teachers to the status of 'technicians' and which deprecate the role of teacher as 'intellectual' (Giroux, 1988) are inappropriate within Irish education. Nonetheless the pervasiveness of the competency-based approach to teaching cannot be ignored. Engagement in a process of generating statements of teacher 'competence' and the process of negotiating agreement around those statements could be beneficial for the educational community. On a national level it would encourage professional

dialogue and debate on issues which are frequently intuitive or taken for granted. This dialogue will result in a greater ability among all in the professional community to articulate our objectives, share our values, and recognise the complexity and uncertainty of the teaching life. Such a debate would open up the nature and approach to teaching within an Irish context to an international audience and hopefully contribute to the reconceptualisation of the competency debate.

REFERENCES

- Apple, M. (2005) Foreword in Johnson, D., Johnson, B., Farenga, S., and Ness, D. *Trivializing Teacher Education: The Accreditation Squeeze*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Burke, A. (2007) 'Crosscurrents in the Competencies/Standards Debate in Teaching and Teacher Education' in R. Dolan and J. Gleeson, (Eds) *The Competences Approach to Teacher Professional Development: Current Practice and Future Prospects*, Armagh: SCoTENS, Centre for Cross Border Studies, pp. 67- 96.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2003) 'Teacher Education's Bermuda Triangle: Dichotomy, Mythology, and Amnesia', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54(4).
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2004) 'Taking Stock in 2004: Teacher Education in Dangerous Times', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55 (1), pp. 3-7.
- Commission of the European Communities to the Council and the European Parliament *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education*. Communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council and the European Parliament COM (2007) 392. 3.8.2007.
- Coolahan, J. (1981) *Irish Education: history and structure*, Dublin, IPA.
- Coolahan, J. (Ed.) (1994) *The Report of the National Education Convention*, Dublin: The National Education Convention Secretariat.
- Coolahan, J. (2003) *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Teachers: Country Background Report for Ireland*. Retrieved from the OECD website at www.oecd.org.
- Coolahan, J. (2007) 'The Operational Environment for Future Planning in Teacher Education: OECD and EU Initiatives' in R. Dolan and J. Gleeson, (Eds) *The Competences Approach to Teacher Professional Development: Current Practice and Future Prospects*, Armagh, SCoTENS, Centre for Cross Border Studies, pp. 7-14.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000) 'How Teacher Education Matters', *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51, (3) p. 170.
- Deegan, J. (2007) 'Challenging, Confronting and Choosing "New Appraisal" in Initial Teacher Education in the Primary Sector in the Republic of Ireland', in R. Dolan and J. Gleeson, (Eds) *The Competences Approach to Teacher Professional Development: Current Practice and Future Prospects*, SCoTENS Annual Report, Armagh: Centre for Cross Border Studies, pp. 15-24.
- DfE (1992) *Initial Teacher Training*, Circular 9/92, London: Department for Education.
- DfEE (1997) *Requirements for Course of Initial Teacher Training Circular 10/97*. London: Department for Education and Employment
- Drudy, S. (2006) 'Gender differences in entrance patterns and awards in initial teacher education', *Irish Educational Studies*, 25 (3) pp. 259 – 273.

- Feerick, S. (2004) 'Education and Training 2010 – Implications for Teacher Education', *SCoTENS Annual Report (2004)*. Armagh: Centre for Cross Border Studies, pp. 16-24.
- Furlong, J. and T. Maynard (1995) *Mentoring Student Teachers: the Growth of Professional Knowledge*, London: Routledge.
- Giroux, H. A. (1988) *Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning*, Granby, MA: Bergin and Garvey.
- Gleeson, J and Moody, J. 'The Appraisal of Post-Primary Student Teachers – Current Practice and Related Issues' in R.Dolan and J. Gleeson, (Eds) *The Competences Approach to Teacher Professional Development: Current Practice and Future Prospects*, SCoTENS, Armagh: Centre for Cross Border Studies, pp. 25-36.
- Government of Ireland (1965), *Investment in Education*, Dublin: The Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland (1992), *Education for a Changing World: Green Paper on Education*, Dublin: The Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland (1995), *Charting our Education Future: White Paper on Education*, Dublin: the Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland (2001) *Teaching Council Act*. Retrieved from www.teachingcouncil.ie.
- Hobson, A.J. (2003) 'Student Teachers' Conceptions and Evaluations of "Theory", *Initial Teacher Training, Mentoring and Tutoring*, 11 (3), pp. 246-261.
- Joyce, P.W. (1863) *Handbook of School Management and Methods of Teaching*, Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son (subsequent editions 1867, 1879, 1881, 1897).
- Jones, M. (2009) 'Supporting the Supporters of Novice Teachers: an analysis of mentors' needs from twelve European countries presented from an English perspective', *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 4 (1), pp. 4-21.
- Leonard, D and Gleeson, J. (1999) 'Context and Coherence in Initial Teacher Education in Ireland: The Place of Reflective Inquiry', *Teacher Development*, 3 (1), pp. 49-63.
- Levin, B. (1998) 'An epidemic of education policy: (what) can we learn from each other?' *Comparative Education*, 34 (2), pp. 131-141.
- Minutes of the *Commissioners of National Education in Ireland (CNEI)*, 30 June 1872.
- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2002) *Unravelling the 'Teacher Shortage' Problem: Teacher Retention is the Key*. Retrieved from www.nctaf.org/resources/research.
- O'Donoghue, T.A. (1993), 'Teacher Professional Development and the Promotion of Reflectivity', *Oideas*, 40, 93-108.
- O'Donoghue, T. and Whitehead, C. (Eds.) (2008) *Teacher Education in the English-Speaking World: Past, Present, and Future* New York: Information Age Publishing.
- OECD (1991) *Reviews of National Policies of Education*. Paris: OECD.

OECD (2005) *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Effective Teachers*. Paris: OECD.

Royal Commission of Inquiry on Manual and Practical Instruction in Primary School under the Board of National Education, HC 1897, C.8383, xliii, First Report, p. 85.

Starkie, W.J.M. (1900) 'Address by WJM Starkie Esq., MA, Litt.D., Resident Commissioner of National Education, delivered on the occasion of the distribution of prizes at the Albert Model Farm, Glasnevin on 19th February, 1900' in Starkie Papers 9210a./5.

Sugrue, C. (2008) Academic Response to the OECD Report, *Improving School Leadership*. Paper presented at the SCoTENS Annual Conference, Belfast, 10 October.

Sugrue, C. and Dupont, M. (2005) 'National cases of restructuring work life and professions in education and health in Ireland', in Beach, D. (ed) *Professional Knowledge in Education and Health: Restructuring work and life between the State and the citizens in Europe*, The ProfKnow Consortium, November 2005, EU Sixth Framework Programme Priority[Citizens] Contract no: 506493 from the Profknow project, retrieved from www.profknow.net

Teaching Council (2007) *Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers*. Retrieved from www.teachingcouncil.ie

Turner-Bisset, R. (1999) 'The Knowledge Bases of the Expert Teachers', *British Educational Research Journal*, 25 (1), pp. 39-55.

Zeichner, K. 'The United States' in O'Donoghue, T and Whitehead, C. (Eds) (2008) *Teacher Education in the English-Speaking World: Past, Present, and Future*, New York: Information Age Publishing.

Bernadette Ní Áingléis

LEARNING TO TEACH IN COLLABORATION WITH SCHOOLS

Bernadette Ní Áingléis is Director of Teaching Practice in St. Patrick's College (A College of Dublin City University), Drumcondra, Dublin. Her professional experiences include primary teaching, principalship, curriculum innovation, and a number of years in the Inspectorate as an Inspector of Schools and in the Evaluation Support Research Unit. Her PhD research explored the constitution and dynamics of partnership in learning to teach in Ireland.

Abstract: There is significant research to indicate that learning to teach is a highly complex process. The complexities are heightened even further when one explores the roles which two key stakeholders – schools and colleges – play or ought to play in the teacher education process. At initial teacher education level, arguments for involving schools more systematically in school-based work (teaching practice) give rise to conversations around teacher professional development, pedagogy and professional knowledge. Critically, the debate casts a spotlight on where various kinds of professional knowledge and expertise reside, whether in schools or colleges or in more collaborative conceptualisations of learning to teach. This paper describes a research project in teaching practice in which primary schools are systematically involved in all aspects of school-based experiences for student teachers including mentoring and evaluation. A number of key findings are documented. Firstly, schools want to be involved in structured ways in teaching practice and supported at all stages of the process. Secondly, for student teachers, observation of teachers at work and observation by teachers of student teachers are the most valued aspects of mentoring. Thirdly, informal school-based learning contexts beyond one's assigned classroom provide significant learning opportunities for students. Fourthly, fears around involvement in summative evaluation exist for schools and for students where the emotionality of learning to teach features strongly. Finally, working more collaboratively with schools in teaching practice enables the development of a common language around pedagogy and practice within which meaningful collaboration and dialogue can take place at a number of levels. The process is not without its tensions.

INTRODUCTION

Research into schools-university partnerships in initial teacher education (ITE) is not new. Debate on the subject extends as far back as the 1980s in the US (Sirotnik and Goodlad, 1988) and the early 1990s in England (Booth *et al.* 1990; Alexander, 1990). The debate has been heated by arguments raised in favour of or against involving schools more systematically in ITE with radically different ideologies about professional knowledge and pedagogy underpinning the discourse on both sides. Whilst the broad concept of partnership is probably 'one of those vanilla-flavored ideas to which we commonly nod our heads in unthinking approval' (Goodlad and McMannon, 2004, p.37), its natural appeal tends to belie the complexities inherent in schools-university partnerships.

In Ireland¹, one example of schools-university partnerships is the collaboration that takes place between colleges of education and schools in the context of teaching practice. To date, collaboration has tended to be largely unstructured, college-led, and heavily reliant on a spirit of goodwill and volunteerism within schools. Whilst the merits of involving schools more systematically in teaching practice have long been extolled, the topic has gained increased momentum in Ireland in more recent years (Government of Ireland, 2002; Coolahan, 2003; DES, 2006). What are the issues involved in schools-college partnerships in teaching practice? What do participants value in a structured collaborative context? And finally, what are the implications for policy and practice in working towards a curriculum of partnership in teaching practice?

The paper will address these questions in the context of some key findings that have emerged to date in a five-year qualitative research project in teaching practice involving final year student teachers, a cluster of primary schools, and a university college. The research context for the project is learning to teach (primary) within a whole school framework conducive to building professional capacity. The geographical context is the greater Dublin area. The project set out to explore ways of involving schools more systematically in teaching practice in partnership with student teachers and supervisors² from the college. The research was strongly influenced by the socio-cultural work of Vygotsky (1978), by critical constructivism (Wang and Odell, 2002) and by the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) on communities of practice where 'learning is a process that takes place in a participative framework, not in an individual mind' (*Ibid*, p.14). For the purposes of this paper, 'partnership' is interpreted as both the arrangements and the processes involved in a systematic 'working-with' conceptualisation of collaboration in teaching practice. This interpretation is close to that used by Brisard *et al.* (2005) in their international review of partnership research in teacher education. An overview of some of the literature on schools-university partnerships provides a broad backdrop to the paper.

SCHOOLS-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS: SOME OF THE LITERATURE

Hagger and McIntyre (2006, p.16) describe the historical relationship between schools and ITE universities in England from the nineteenth century through to the present day as 'a kind of political ping-pong, with moves back and forward between predominantly school-based and higher education-based ITE, each with its characteristic strengths and weaknesses'. Efforts to increase schools' involvement in ITE have been perceived as a centralist attempt to deregulate teacher education and in the process to devalue the core theoretical base of teacher professional development (Gilroy, 1992). Others contend that advocacy for partnerships with schools is a harbinger for the return of an apprenticeship model of teacher education (Edwards *et al.* 2002; Elmore, 2006).

Research into various configurations of collaborations has helped focus attention on the need to explore conceptualisations underpinning schools-university partnerships. For example, Furlong *et al.* (2000) outline a range of ideal typologies of partnerships along a continuum; from the 'complementary' model to the 'Higher Education Institution (HEI)-led' model, and somewhere in between lies the more desirable 'collaborative' model. In the latter, 'teachers are seen as having an equally legitimate but perhaps a different body of professional knowledge from those in higher education' (*Ibid*, p.80). Significantly, in the collaborative model, there is a dialectic between the craft knowledge and expertise of teachers and the more theoretical knowledge generally perceived as the domain of college lecturers. The dialectic is

¹ Ireland should be understood as the 26 counties (Éire) unless otherwise stated.

² Supervisors comprised a team of college lecturers and one external supervisor with expertise in teacher professional development. Supervisors undertake a dual role of support and evaluation during teaching practice.

enabled when planned opportunities are created for teachers and lecturers to dialogue, critique and share understandings of pedagogy and practice as they collaborate. It is in the shared articulation process that 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1993) - those unthinking forms of teaching and learning - can be analysed, reframed and reshaped in light of a critical stance by participants in the process. A critical stance and a commitment to inquiry are defining features of a professional learning community (Feiman-Nemser, 1998, 2001). A critical reflective stance helps to reduce the possibility of confusing 'interactional congeniality' (Grossman and Wineburg, 2001, p.56) or pseudo partnerships with a professional learning community.

In Ireland, systematic research opportunities for schools and ITE colleges to work closely together as a learning community in the area of teaching practice have been few. Consequently, preservice has lost out considerably on opportunities to discuss professional knowledge and learning which would in turn help codify expectations and professional standards related to teaching practice. The absence of a holistic set of professional competences at ITE level that respects the contestability of professional knowledge has made the task of developing schools-ITE partnerships difficult. It does not help that a theory of the learner teacher has somehow eluded us also (Desforges, 1995). The dominant model of partnership in teaching practice in Ireland therefore has tended to be more of a 'HEI-led' model where the role of schools has been largely confined to facilitating the logistical arrangements for teaching practice placements on a non-contractual basis. In their comparative analysis of aspects of teacher education, North and South, McWilliams *et al.* (2006) draw attention to the differences in the nature of curriculum and assessment practices North and South which impact significantly the kinds of roles which schools and colleges play in teaching practice in both jurisdictions. The authors argue that the heavily prescribed Northern Ireland curriculum coupled with the pressures on schools *vis-à-vis* assessment at Key Stages 1 and 2 has resulted in schools requiring student teachers to follow the content-driven 6-week blocks of curriculum outlined in the schools' whole school plans and class plans. In Northern Ireland, supervisors exert a somewhat subordinate role to schools in tending to 'impress upon students the need to satisfy their class teachers' (Ibid, p. 75). It would seem also that the development of the Curriculum and Assessment Support Service and the Curriculum Council for Examination and Assessment in Northern Ireland has resulted in an increased role for schools in teacher education and 'a shift in the locus of expertise away from higher education institution tutors' (Ibid, p. 76). In direct contrast, students on teaching practice in the South have significant opportunities to make decisions around curriculum and pedagogy and to display flexibility and autonomy in classroom practice. Schools are not under the same assessment-driven pressures as their Northern Ireland counterparts. Accordingly, teacher education colleges in the South are in a position to exert a strong influence on all aspects of teaching practice including expectations of students in classrooms. Arguably, the challenge to develop more collaborative approaches with schools in teacher education is therefore greater for teacher education colleges in the South. Moving from a college-led model to a more collaborative model of teacher education is, however, a slow journey along the continuum described earlier by Furlong *et al.* (2000). States of 'readiness-for-partnership' should also form part of this debate around partnerships with schools alongside the more obvious pedagogical and accountability considerations.

It is striking to note that most ITE courses in England have doubled the amount of teaching practice from around 60 days in the late 1970s to in excess of 120 days by 2009. What is even more striking is that this swing towards increased school-based work in ITE was centrally imposed with serious consequences for morale and the funding of ITEs. Monies transferred from ITEs to the partnership schools involved in teaching practice. In England and in Wales, the increased emphasis on school-based work in ITE has led in Wilkin's (1999, p.2) view to 'the marginalisation of independent thought, and indeed decision-making, and therefore the separation of teacher training from the critical tradition of the university'. Questions have also been raised internationally about the downgrading of the philosophical

base and relational aspects of teaching to sets of competences and standards (Tickle, 2000; Burke, 2007).

The development of a competence approach to teacher professional development in Ireland is likely to be less problematic given that informed debate has already commenced (Dolan and Gleeson, 2007) alongside the timely articulation of core professional values for the profession (Teaching Council, 2007). It is in the area of partnerships with schools that much valuable debate has taken place in Northern Ireland in the context of an integrated spine of competences at initial, induction and early professional development stages (Moran, 1998; Caul and McWilliams, 2002). Significantly and for various reasons, schools in Northern Ireland have rejected moves that would require teachers to take on contractual roles and responsibilities in teaching practice, for example, in the mentoring and assessment of student teachers. A similar situation has developed in Scotland following the seminal McCrone Agreement (Scottish Government, 2001). It would seem, therefore, that in some jurisdictions, discourse around partnerships with schools has centred, to a large extent, on the roles and responsibilities of schools and ITE colleges vis-à-vis teaching practice, and therefore on the sharing of accountability in teacher professional development.

The accountability orientation in ITE partnerships with schools is far more discernible in the US in the professional development schools movement, which was fuelled by the Holmes Group reports (1986, 1990). Shifting responsibility for ITE onto professional development schools has been seen as the curative strategy for the simultaneous renewal of falling standards in both public schools and in teacher education (Goodlad, 1990; Bullough *et al.* 1997). However, research also shows that systematic involvement of schools in teaching practice holds benefits for schools, colleges, and student teachers most significantly in the areas of relationship-building, networks of support, and professional learning (OECD, 2005; Cochran-Smith, 2006). There is also evidence to show that an increased role for schools in teacher education greatly enhances pedagogy and research-informed practice (McLaughlin *et al.* 2006; Totterdell, 2003).

Closer to home, the Kellaghan Report (Government of Ireland, 2002, p.163) recommended that 'schools and teachers should have greater and more formal involvement in teaching practice'. In addition, a radical rethink of school-based experiences for student teachers was called for 'in which students' conceptions of teaching are explored' (*Ibid*, p.161). Mindful of these recommendations, a team at an ITE college in Dublin set about developing a partnership with schools research project in teaching practice entitled *The Teacher Professional Development Partnership with Schools Project*. The project is, at the time of writing, in its fourth year, its penultimate year. Three members of the project team are on the staff of the college with experience of working with schools in the area of teaching practice and in the arts. The fourth member of the project team is a retired primary school principal and an experienced supervisor on teaching practice with expertise in change management.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The research sample each year involves 6 - 10 primary schools representative of the various types, sizes and locations of primary schools in the country. Students assigned to these schools for teaching practice have been final year BEd students (approx. 20 each year), randomly selected from the student cohort. Participation in the project is voluntary with an ongoing opt-out provision available to the schools and students involved. The aims of the research are three fold:

- (i) To explore ways of involving schools more systematically in teaching practice;

- (ii) To develop school-based mentoring approaches with student teachers conducive to developing competent, reflective, learning teachers;
- (iii) To frame a curriculum of partnership with schools around learning to teach.

A mixed methodological approach was adopted in a constructivist grounded theory framework (Charmaz, 2005). An action research orientation enabled improvements in the partnership processes from year to year. Primary data collection techniques were participant research diaries, focus groups, and a researcher observational diary. Data analysis was undertaken by the constant comparative method (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) using NVivo7.

The partnership project comprised the following elements:

- A series of thematic professional development seminars for principals, class teachers and student teachers on conceptualisations of teacher professional development, relationships and communication, observation, feedback and reporting skills, evaluation skills, and a whole school approach to teaching practice;
- The development of a code of professional practice for supervisors;
- A partnership handbook for schools and students, compiled and fine-tuned by participants from year to year, and a partnership newsletter;
- The development of a set of evaluation templates and materials for class teachers;
- School visits by the project team to work with the staff of each school;
- A college-school partnership link person (each school was assigned a project team member to ensure an immediate and direct link with the college);
- The ‘Wednesday Experience’ (a range of school-based learning experiences for students beyond the student’s assigned classroom for teaching practice);
- A peer support group for students (facilitated by a project team member);
- An annual celebratory seminar for participants as a public forum for the articulation and dissemination of partnership experiences and outcomes.

The school-based ‘Wednesday Experience’, as it became known, took place one afternoon each week during teaching practice, generally on a Wednesday. It comprised opportunities for the student to experience teaching and learning beyond their assigned classroom for example, opportunities for the student to observe teachers at work in the school and to engage in dialogue with them following observation. Opportunities for students to observe teachers with particular expertise within the school at work were encouraged alongside opportunities to experience working with parents and to learn about the role of the community and external agencies involved in the lives of children e.g. the role of the National Education Welfare Board. There was an emphasis also on students contributing to and participating in professional activities at school level which were taking place during teaching practice in the school e.g. curricular enrichment programmes (DEIS schools), preparations for the award of the Green Flag. In this way, student teachers were helped to develop a sense of collective responsibility in learning to be a teacher. The ‘Wednesday Experience’ was organised at school level and intended to be largely responsive to student teacher needs in line with the professional development stage of the student. School-based opportunities for student teacher learning were therefore customised, situated, structured and personal.

The role of the class teacher comprised the following dimensions:

- Planned observation of his/her student’s teaching at least three times each week;
- Feedback to and dialogue with the student following lesson observation and at the end of each day with an emphasis on developing a student’s reflective capacities;
- Report-writing on the student’s progress each week (a weekly formative report) based on evidence gathered during lesson observations;

- Report-writing on the student's progress at the end of teaching practice with areas of development to carry into induction year (along the lines of a career-development entry profile to serve also as a summative teaching practice report from the teacher);
- Opportunities for the student to work alongside the class teacher and to observe;
- Dialogue with supervisors following each supervision visit to the student;
- Facilitating the 'Wednesday Experience' for the student in consultation with the principal and staff.

The principal teacher's key role lay in systematically facilitating the conditions necessary for the partnership processes to thrive at school level and between the school and the college, most notably in the area of trust and belief in the process of partnership and the building of relationships. The principal's role therefore lay in leading school-based ways of 'lifting-up' (MacBeath, 2007) conversations and processes around student teacher learning and collaborative endeavour.

Within the context of developing students' professional competence in the classroom, a key focus of mentoring was the development of students' capacities to think critically and to display flexibility and adaptability in learning to be a teacher. The students in the project were expected to be proactive in their own learning during teaching practice, to ask for help and to share ideas, thinking and methodologies with each other and with teachers in their respective schools. Expectations of students were drawn from some of the key recommendations of the AERA Panel researchers (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005) and from a body of substantial research into how people learn (Bransford *et al.* 1999).

Findings in the partnership with schools project straddle a mix of the personal, the professional and the political. Whilst roles and responsibilities were formulated and agreed at the outset with participants, the emphasis in the project on learning (by all participants) and on process ensured that both the content and the form of the partnership were tweaked/amended and improved from year to year. A more organic and responsive model of partnership with schools therefore evolved. At an overall level, a number of findings warrant mention.

THE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS PROJECT: SOME OVERALL FINDINGS

Schools welcomed, wanted and valued more formal and systematic involvement in teaching practice on the understanding that they would be supported in a variety of ways and at various levels in doing so. School-based (as opposed to college-based) seminars, the partnership handbook (in its most concise format), and the availability of a schools-college link person were deemed to be the most valuable supports for principals and class teachers in the project. Principals and teachers believed that more structured and formal involvement in teaching practice enabled them to experience benefits in terms of staff professional development, enriched relationships with the college, and a heightened sense of awareness of student teacher professional development needs. Skills that teachers developed as part of the project, for example in mentoring, were also used to support newly qualified teachers in their own schools. Significantly, the experience of mentoring helped class teachers to become more reflective in their own classroom practice, in line with findings elsewhere (OECD, 2005; Bartell, 2005). Schools experienced formal involvement in teaching practice as an intrinsically rewarding process that helped to build and sustain the various elements of the partnership over the course of each year. There were no calls for monetary reward. Rather, schools recommended the development of accreditation pathways for teachers involved in supporting student teacher professional development during teaching practice.

Whilst most schools found the experience of systematic collaboration in teaching practice to be positive, there were some fears and hesitations around the process.

FEARS AND CONCERNS

At the outset, whilst there were understandable teacher fears related to observation, feedback and report writing, the actual experience of the processes, for example, observing a student teaching followed by oral and written feedback to the student, helped to dissipate the fears. Mentoring student teachers turned out to be much less daunting for teachers than originally anticipated. Whilst class teachers were willing to discuss their own students' competence and progress with supervisors, they did not wish to be the sole arbiters of the students' teaching practice grade. Calls for the separation of mentoring and evaluation roles were also made in the report on the national pilot project on teacher induction (Killeavy and Murphy, 2006). Interestingly, many principals in the partnership project believed that class teachers were well placed to evaluate student teachers' work and therefore to 'call the grade'. The overriding concern for class teachers throughout the project was balancing the learning needs of children with the learning needs of students. The predominant concern of students in the project related to how the class teacher reports and class teacher-college supervisor discussions would affect summative evaluation processes and ultimately the students' marks for teaching practice. Levels of resilience and capacities to respond to mentoring varied among the students. The emotionality of learning to teach becomes acutely evident in student perceptions and experiences of collaboration in teaching practice.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES

From the students' perspective, the overall value of the partnership project was four-fold:

- (i) improved relationships and communications with and between students, principals, teachers, and supervisors
- (ii) the constant nature of feedback on their professional competence (from the class teacher on a daily basis coupled with the weekly college supervisory visit)
- (iii) opportunities to be observed while teaching and to observe a range of teachers at work followed by opportunities for dialogue, and finally
- (iv) opportunities to experience and to contribute to a broad range of professional activities beyond their assigned classroom.

It was the latter which enabled students to feel like a 'real' teacher. Collectively, students' perceptions of feeling more supported all round on teaching practice led to students feeling more confident and happy in themselves, less afraid to ask for help, and more open to risk-taking in supervised lessons. We know from research with beginning teachers that self-efficacy - feeling one can make a difference - is a significant predictor of job satisfaction (Morgan and O'Leary, 2004).

Students in the partnership project commented on the key role of the principal teacher in making them feel welcome in the school for example, receiving the 'Welcome Pack', having lunch with staff in the staffroom (as opposed to students having their own lunch room). Feeling welcome and wanted in schools is a hugely important feeling for student teachers. Incidental and informal conversations between students and school staff were significant for students for example, a friendly discussion about a classroom management issue with a principal while waiting to photocopy in the staffroom was an important moment of learning for one student teacher. For students, having permission to use the teacher's chair and table for the duration of teaching practice were important status symbols of becoming a

'real' teacher and a trusted professional. The public 'bestowal' of these teacherdom artefacts to the student when witnessed by pupils in the class was even more important to students.

Equally important to students and for various reasons were their informal relationships with special needs assistants (SNAs) and their learning from SNAs for example, how to work successfully with children with special education needs. The role of SNAs in building models of inclusion in classroom practice has been cited in other studies (Moran and Abbott, 2002). In the partnership project, some students in the project leveraged their relationships with SNAs to manage challenging behaviour in the classroom and to cope with the presence of a supervisor. Students learned a great deal about important aspects of the lives of children in their classrooms from SNAs, which helped students understand the diverse backgrounds of children in their classrooms and subsequently how to relate better to the children and to teach better. This was particularly the case for students who came from relatively affluent backgrounds themselves and who had no previous teaching practice experience in schools located in areas of educational disadvantage.

For students who were experiencing difficulty in adapting to mentoring processes and students who were experiencing difficulty in teaching, it was the skilful management of relationships by the principal coupled with creative school-based responses to supporting these students, which made the greatest difference to these students' confidence and to their overall progress during teaching practice. Whilst students favoured a consultative role for teachers and principals in the evaluation process, the majority recommended that college supervisors retain the final say in the grade to be awarded to students for teaching practice. This finding is therefore in line with the recommendation of class teachers in the project.

A number of other findings in the partnership project merit discussion at this point given the specific goals of the partnership project, namely the exploration of collaborative processes and structures to develop students' professional competence and reflective capacities. Some discernible tensions become evident which are understandable within the context of change. Working collaboratively with schools on a systematic basis in teaching practice is a significant change in ITE, which should not be underestimated.

One tension in the partnership process related to the area of support and challenge in the mentoring of student teachers.

MENTORING: SUPPORT – CHALLENGE

Students' overall experiences of working more collaboratively with principals, teachers and with supervisors in teaching practice were positive. In particular, students related the effectiveness of mentoring with the quality of relationships they had established with their class teachers. The affective dimension of learning to teach was particularly evident in what helped students learn. For students, the personal attributes of mentors most notably in the areas of approachability, empathy and communication skills defined the quality of their professional relationship with mentors. It was also the case that mentors who provided a good mix of support and challenge were deemed more effective by students. Managing the tension between support and challenge is not an easy one given that research into how people learn is still evolving (Bransford *et al.* 1999) and the contribution of mentoring to teacher professional development is not entirely clear (Zanting *et al.* 1998). Furthermore, there is evidence to show that mentoring is interpreted in very different ways and results in very different outcomes for mentees (Feiman-Nemser and Parker, 1993, Colley *et al.* 2007). In the partnership project, the more able students believed that their mentor teachers could have challenged their thinking and teaching more.

The reasons why this may have been the case or perceived to be so merit further research. Cochran-Smith (2006, p.16) proposes that helping student teachers develop a professional identity and an inquiry stance require mentor teachers who teach 'against the grain'. Mentor teachers who teach 'against the grain' have a broad conceptualisation of their role which transcends that of a polite 'local guide' to one of a professional mentor engaged in joint inquiry and critical dialogue around teaching and learning with his/her student.

One of the challenges in school-based work is resisting the temptation to perceive students as 'guests bearing gifts' (Edwards, 1997) from the college or to view supervisors as having a monopoly of wisdom on professional knowledge and pedagogy. These perceptions tend to generate an understandable deferential stance to teaching practice and a view of learning to teach as somehow being the exclusive domain of the college. The perceptions do little to affirm principals and teachers of the depth of their own professional expertise and the richness of classroom and school interactions which student teachers need to experience and witness on an ongoing basis. Systematic opportunities for schools to experience working with students and supervisors in a structured manner, and to experience success in doing so, helps to build and sustain confidence within schools vis-à-vis their key contribution to teacher education. Critically, in the context of teacher professional development, partnership in teaching practice helps to reinstate the centrality of professional craft expertise and a view of schools as sites of learning for adults as well as for children. As Clarke and Erickson (2003, p.5) observe:

Here lies one of the paradoxes for teacher professionalism...as a profession, we are not a learning community. While student [pupil] learning is a goal, often the continuing learning of teachers is overlooked'.

There is a further tension evident in the emphasis placed in teaching practice on time spent on 'teaching' as opposed to 'learning' how to teach. The 'Wednesday Experience' sought to address this.

TEACHING - LEARNING: GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

Broadening student teachers' experiences on teaching practice to 'life beyond the classroom' as happened in the partnership project held a number of benefits for students. It increased students' knowledge about children with different learning needs, about approaches to learning and teaching in other classrooms, and critically helped develop in students an awareness of being part of a collective learning community. Working alongside support teachers in the school helped to dissipate for students the mystique that surrounds what children actually do when they are 'exported' (Gash, 2006) to other classes for additional support. Opportunities to be observed by the class teacher and to observe teachers at work (their own teacher and other teachers in the school) were the two most valued professional development learning experiences for students in the project.

This latter finding resonates with other studies at induction level by Tottedell et al. (2002, 2003). Recognition of others as a resource and self-as-resource is a powerful transformational capacity for student teachers to learn and carry into their professional lives. It is this notion of transformational capacity or what Edwards (2005) calls 'relational agency' that is at the heart of collaborative endeavour. Developing student teachers' relational agency would also help students to develop their role vis-à-vis the collective professional community in children's learning rather than seeing themselves 'as solo practitioners inventing practice out of their personalities, prior experiences and assessments of their own strengths and weaknesses' (Elmore, 2006, p.31). Developing relational agency would also serve to

dissipate the isolation of teaching in one's own cellular classroom and thereby mitigate a feeling of being 'desert-islanded' (Edwards and Collison, 1996, p.6) on teaching practice.

In the project, webs of in-school support combined with students' own weekly peer support meetings provided necessary personal support to students which was particularly valued by students for whom the trajectory of learning to teach was steep. McNally (2006) suggests in his paper on teacher professional development in the Scottish context that the informal learning of beginning teachers exerts a more profound influence on the development of self-as-teacher identity than the more formal, structured learning to teach contexts. As alluded to earlier, it was the informal friendly conversations and meetings with teachers, principals and SNAs during teaching practice that proved to be far more significant for some students in terms of learning about children and pedagogy than the more 'formal' learning that occurred within structured mentoring or evaluation feedback sessions. These informal learning contexts also enabled students to build human bonds with teachers and support staff.

According to Capra (2002, p.111), it is the informal interconnections that give a learning community its sense of 'aliveness':

The aliveness of an organisation – its flexibility, creative potential and learning capability – resides in its informal communities of practice'.

Informal, friendly and spontaneous relational interactions seemed to build the kind of learning-to-teach culture in which student teachers felt at ease, encouraged and supported. 'Informal' learning, however, should not be confused with something tangential or secondary but rather as something integral to professional knowledge and happiness in teaching. In that way, learning to teach becomes a collective and shared school-college endeavour rather than a process that is left up to the student entirely. Eraut's (2004) research on typologies of learning in the workplace moves the area of relationships centre stage in articulations of professional competence. It is interesting to note that the revised professional standards for qualified teacher status and requirements for initial teacher training in England (TDA, 2008) has prioritised the domain of professional attributes (relationships and communicating, and personal professional development) over professional knowledge and understanding and professional skills. Undoubtedly, the Every Child Matters agenda has helped to do so. What has been emphasised in the revised TDA standards in terms of personal professional development is the capacity of the student teacher to reflect on and improve practice. How well did the partnership project address the development of critical thinking capacities in students? It was one of the project goals.

A further tension becomes evident in the emphasis, which is placed during teaching practice on developing students' professional skills and that, which is placed on developing students' reflective capacities. It is not an either-or situation, but rather a question of levels of emphases on both.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS – REFLECTIVE CAPACITIES

Students in the project did not emphasise that they learned how to reflect more about teaching and learning as a result of mentoring. However, this may corroborate the observations of Furlong *et al.* (2000) that student teachers view reflection as more a common sense assessment of their day's work rather than what actually takes place in mentoring interactions. It may also be the case that student teachers are so consumed by the 'unforgiving complexity of teaching' (Cochran-Smith, 2006, p.70) that survival concerns and therefore 'tips for teaching' were valued more by students over learning metacognition. It would seem therefore that building up a repertoire of typical classroom responses accessible through 'tips for

teaching' is stage-related in terms of teacher professional development. In order to feel confident in the classroom, student teachers therefore valued learning about the practical and the pragmatic.

Students valued in particular mentoring approaches which emphasised classroom management strategies, curriculum provision for children with special educational needs, and development of a repertoire of routine organisational skills for example, how to mark the *leabhar rolla*. In the early weeks of teaching practice, student teacher needs lay primarily within the procedural and managerial aspects of teaching similar to findings elsewhere (Veenman, 1984).

Mentoring approaches that dealt with the expressed needs of students and with their changing incremental needs as teaching practice progressed were perceived by students to be more effective. What students seemed to want to learn was the 'professional common sense knowledge' (Hargreaves, 1993) embedded in fluid pedagogical practice and which is second nature to the teachers with whom they were placed. Kounin (1970)'s work highlights the complexities involved in doing so - in articulating the relationship between professional judgments and professional actions in expert practice. It requires the asking of 'why' and 'what if' questions when mentoring student teachers, what Hagger and McIntyre (2006) called 'practical theorizing'.

Students in the project commented on seeing inspirational teachers and principals at work who enthused them about primary teaching. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005, p.386) argue that learner teachers need to witness inspirational practice - images of the possible that inspire and guide practice for students which they carry with them into their teaching careers. The majority of teachers in the project commented that they had never seen another teacher teaching. Consequently, they felt they had missed opportunities to develop and use a language around pedagogy and to build up a conceptualisation of accomplished professional practice that in turn could be drawn upon when mentoring student teachers. For teachers, what militated against time for in-school observation of other teachers' classroom practice was their overriding concern with curriculum coverage and completion of class textbooks and workbooks. Herein lays a key tension in developing the role of schools in teacher education – the tension between ensuring children's learning and ensuring students' learning during teaching practice.

CHILDREN'S LEARNING - STUDENT TEACHERS' LEARNING

As alluded to earlier, a significant tension for the class teacher lay in attending to children's learning needs in the classroom whilst simultaneously attending to his/her student's learning needs. Whilst this tension is understandable given that the *raison d'être* of schools is children's wellbeing and progress, it is a tension that the partnership project helped to bring to a level of consciousness whereby it could be explored and worked through with the participants in the project. The experience of the various partnership processes and outcomes did not dissipate the tension entirely but it did enable schools and the college to acknowledge that both goals (children's learning, student teachers' learning) are not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, in school–university collaboration, there must be mutual satisfaction of both these goals if trust and confidence in the partnership is to be created and sustained.

Gardner *et al.* (2006) in their GoodWork project emphasised the need for alignment of goals and actions by collaborating parties if benefits at one level are not to be wiped out by problems at another level. Schools requested and required support to prepare for and engage in partnership processes in teaching practice. Schools were at different stages of readiness for partnership and therefore required different levels of support, which included a mix of the

practical and the socio-emotional. Most of all, teachers sought practical guidance that would help them to describe professional practice and to develop reflective approaches in mentoring. Stenhouse (1983) argued that teachers need to become 'outsiders' to their own practice. The framework for partnership that therefore evolved in the project comprised a broad set of standards for teaching practice and an ethical code of practice for supervisors compiled and refined by schools, the college and students. A set of standards for teaching practice setting out what a student teacher should know, understand and be able to do on final teaching practice provided both a language and a context for teachers, students and supervisors to talk about pedagogy and practice.

The key role therefore which the college played in the partnership process was two-fold: (i) supporting schools in the development of reflective approaches to teaching and learning and (ii) easing the tension between the emphasis on children's learning and students' learning.

In the context of the latter, mentoring relationships (class teacher/student, supervisor/student) which got the balance right provided greater psychological space for students to risk-take more and ask for help. These relationships were also more concerned with developing students' critical thinking and checking erroneous assumptions about teaching and learning that emerge from an 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975). In this context, the findings of the two Modes of Teaching (MOTE) surveys should not be dismissed lightly (Furlong *et al.* 2000). The researchers found that whilst classroom competence greatly improved with mentoring, beginning teachers fell short on innovative practice and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, reports on the evaluation of training schools in England claimed that student teachers in these schools demonstrated a narrower repertoire of teaching skills that often did not extend beyond the models that predominated in their main school (HMI, 2003, 2005).

In the partnership project, there was evidence of outstanding mentoring approaches in which teachers, principals and supervisors displayed expertise, diplomacy and deeply caring dispositions towards children and students alike. Bumpy moments in relationships, of which there were very few, were largely around teachers, students and supervisors growing into the process of working collaboratively for example, managing expectations of students at the outset of mentoring particularly if the student required additional support. The vulnerabilities of student teachers in a high stakes examination context such as teaching practice did unearth a particular tension in the area of evaluation. Given that evaluation is not an exact science, getting the balance right between formative evaluation and summative evaluation is never easy and even harder for students whose primary concern in the project seemed to be around 'the teaching practice grade'. A further tension therefore becomes evident in this area.

FORMATIVE EVALUATION - SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

The weekly teacher evaluation reports were intended primarily to serve a formative function and to provide weekly feedback to the student in terms of classroom competence and progress on teaching practice. The teacher reports together with supervisors' dialogue with teachers and principals also helped to inform decisions around grades for students. The role of the teacher in the evaluation process therefore served both formative and summative functions. Students prioritised the summative. In order to garner favourable teacher reports or at the very least to 'get by', there was evidence of some students 'playing it safe' in teaching by reducing the complexities of tasks for the children.

Similar findings emerged in Doyle's (1986) research. It is understandable how students were not too perturbed when SNAs completed children's written work particularly when a supervisor was present. There is also research evidence elsewhere to show that

student teachers receive higher marks from mentor teachers when they imitate their mentors' teaching style and approach (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005). That some students felt that they could not take their 'foot off the pedal' at any point during teaching practice brought home to the project team just how significant a change it is for student teachers to work collaboratively with teachers, to engage in the mentoring process, and to feel part of a whole school community. Developing student teacher competences in working with others on teaching practice and capacities to respond in adverse learning situations, what Gu and Day (2007) call 'resilience', are hugely important competences, on many fronts. Claxton (2002, p.121) views 'resilience' as 'the ability to tolerate a degree of strangeness' and must surely be a key professional quality requiring development at all stages of a teacher's career given the rate and intensity of change in education.

Whilst class teachers were willing to have a consultative role in the evaluation process, teacher fears and student fears around summative evaluation of classroom competence merit further research if we are to move towards a model of school-college collaboration which nourishes positive dispositions towards school-based evaluation and shared accountabilities in teacher professional development. Standards and competences for qualifying teacher status need to address this area and in the process help to alleviate the significant tension that exists between formative and summative evaluation.

A final tension that emerged in the partnership project relates to the need to balance stability with change. It was a tension that emerged in the context of the role of the principal teacher in managing the various elements of the partnership process.

STABILITY - CHANGE

Whilst principals strongly favoured structured involvement in teaching practice and welcomed systematic opportunities for their schools to engage collaboratively in the process, they were also understandably concerned with the need to ensure that normal school life continued without significant disruption during teaching practice. Flexibility in partnership processes for example, supervisors working around school timetables, was cited by principals as an important factor in helping to build a culture of in-school openness to collaboration in teaching practice. Flexibility in how the college went about its work therefore helped to maintain a sense of stability in the school during teaching practice. In leading and managing the various elements of the partnership project at school level, perceptions of support available from the college during the partnership project were as important to principals as the actual supports themselves. This was particularly the case in schools where there may have been a hiccup in the student teacher/class teacher mentoring relationship or where the student was not responding adequately to support given.

Sammons *et al.* (2007) also cited perceptions of support available to schools undergoing change in their analysis of the outcomes of the research on Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and their Effects on Pupils (VITAE) in England as having significant positive impact on helping teachers to manage change. In the partnership project, it was the informal communications and networks (intra-school, inter-school, inter school-college), the 'hidden connections' (Capra, 2002) that helped build trust and a commitment to collaboration in teaching practice. The 'aliveness' of partnership in teaching practice therefore lay in the informal. Emotionality and relationality are as much a part of how adults grow into the process of working collaboratively as how student teachers learn how to teach.

As Fullan (1999, p.38) reminds us:

‘the true value of collaborative cultures is that they simultaneously encourage passion and provide emotional support as people work through the rollercoaster of change’.

To conclude, a number of policy implications emerge from the findings.

CONCLUSION: SOME POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It seems that the form of partnership and not the content *per se*, is the key factor in deciding the quality of learning experiences and partnership outcomes. The quality of relationships, the collective, the informal, the affective, communication and goal clarification are significant features of a conceptualisation of partnership in teaching practice. School support staff is also important in this discussion. A concern with who leads the partnership, whether it be the college or the school, tends to divert attention unnecessarily away from one of the most important dimensions in getting to grips with collaborations in teacher professional development - how participants actually interpret ‘partnership’, how it is experienced in their own situated contexts, and how it is supported or hindered as the case may be. Delors (1996) in his UNESCO publication, *‘Learning: The Treasure Within’*, spoke of development in terms of learning to be, to do, to know, and to live together. His conceptualisation goes a long way in capturing the essence of the complexities of collaboration in teaching practice - a non-linear, fragile, complex, relational process in which the negotiation of professional identities and spaces takes place.

There is a pressing need for an articulation of a broad, holistic set of standards for qualifying teacher status that would provide a common language frame to describe pedagogy, practice, process, and expectations of learner teachers. In saying so, one is mindful that the competence debate is contested ground and the potential exists for the emergence of a technicist, reductionist approach to teacher professional development. We know also that meeting standards does not guarantee a thinking, caring teacher (Noddings, 1997). The articulation of core professional values by the Teaching Council should augur well for the development of a seamless suite of professional competences across the continuum of teacher education with learning outcomes for pupils as the guiding principle. Evaluation instruments will need to be sufficiently sensitive to capture the context-specific nuances in professional practice. Of particular importance will be the attention to competence in the area of relationships and relationality alongside professional skill, knowledge and understanding.

Could whole school evaluation processes be refined further to capture the commitment and achievements of schools that contribute in substantial ways to teacher professional development at preservice and across the continuum? We need to move from a model of partnership at preservice which relies heavily on a spirit of volunteerism in schools to one which is resourced, integrated with induction and continuing professional development, and evaluated in a formal manner at agreed intervals. This would help validate the professional expertise, capacities and commitment within schools to work collaboratively with colleges in teacher education and ensure accountability of all parties involved. Most importantly, it would serve to strengthen the position of craft knowledge and life in schools in how student teachers learn to teach. Has the time come for a memorandum of understanding between schools and colleges in teaching practice? Could the role of schools at preservice and at induction level be imagined and developed as a seamless process for learning teachers?

The search for and the development of a curriculum of partnership in ITE have highlighted a central tenet of collaborative endeavour – the need for imagination and open-mindedness. As Zeichner and Liston (1996, p.10) remind us, this necessitates:

an active desire to listen to more ideas than one, to give full attention to alternative possibilities, and to recognise the possibility of error even in beliefs that are dearest to us'. A factor critical to whether or not partnership in teaching practice will remain important in teacher education will be the attitude of ITE to the process. In other words, ongoing open-mindedness will be required.

REFERENCES

- Alexander R. (1990) Partnership in Initial Teacher Education: Confronting the Issues, in M. Booth, J. Furlong and M. Wilkin (Eds), *Partnership in Initial Teacher Education*, pp.57-64, London, Cassell.
- Bartell, C. A. (2005) *Cultivating High-Quality Teaching through Induction and Mentoring*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press.
- Booth, M., Furlong, J. and Wilkin, M. (Eds) (1990) *Partnership in Initial Teacher Training*, London, Cassell.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993) *The field of cultural production*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L. and Cocking, R. R. (Eds) (1999) *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School*, Washington DC, National Academy Press.
- Brisard, E., Menter, I. and Smith, I. (2005) *Models of Partnership in Initial Teacher Education: Full Report of a Systematic Literature Review commissioned by the General Teaching Council for Scotland*, Edinburgh, General Teaching Council Scotland Research Publication No. 2.
- Bullough, R., Kauchak, D., Crow, N., Hobbs, S. and Stokes, D. (1997) 'Professional development schools: catalysts for teacher and school change', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 13, 2, pp. 153-169.
- Burke, A. (2007) 'Crosscurrents in the Competencies/Standards Debate in Teaching and Teacher Education', in R. Dolan and J. Gleeson (Eds) *The Competences Approach to Teacher Professional Development: Current Practice and Future Prospects*, pp. 67-96, Armagh, Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS).
- Capra, F. (2002) *The Hidden Connections: a science for sustainable living*, New York, Anchor Books.
- Caul, L. and McWilliams, S. (2002) 'Accountability in Partnership or Partnership in Accountability: initial teacher education in Northern Ireland', *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 25, 2 and 3.
- Charmaz, K. (2005) 'Grounded Theory in the 21st Century: Applications for Advancing Social Justice Studies', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research (3rd ed.)*, pp. 507-536, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- Clarke, A. and Erickson, G. (2003) *Teaching Inquiry: Living the Research in Everyday Practice*, London, RoutledgeFalmer.
- Claxton, G. (2002) 'Learning and the development of 'resilience' in A. Pollard (Ed.) *Readings for Reflective Teaching*, pp. 121-122, London, Continuum.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2006) *Policy, Practice, and Politics in Teacher Education: Editorials from the Journal of Teacher Education*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press.

- Cochran-Smith, M. and Zeichner, K. (Eds) (2005) *Studying Teacher Education: The Report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education*, Mahwah, New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Colley, H., James, D. and Diment, K. (2007) 'Unbecoming teachers: towards a more dynamic notion of professional participation', *Journal of Education Policy*, 22, 2, 173-193.
- Coolahan, J. (2003) *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers: Country Background Report for Ireland*, Dublin, Stationery Office.
- Darling-Hammond, L. and Bransford, J. (Eds) (2005) *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World. What Teachers should Learn and be Able to Do*, San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass.
- Delors, J. (1996) *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Paris, UNESCO.
- Department of Education and Science (DES) (2006) *Learning to Teach. Students on Teaching Practice in Irish Primary School*, Dublin, The Inspectorate.
- Desforges, C. (1995) 'How does experience affect theoretical knowledge for teaching?', *Learning and Instruction*, 5, 4, pp. 385-400.
- Dolan, R. and Gleeson, J. (Eds) (2007) *The Competences Approach to Teacher Professional Development: Current Practice and Future Prospects*, Armagh, Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS).
- Doyle, W. (1986) Classroom Organisation and Management, in M.C.Wittrock (Ed.) *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, 3rd ed. New York, Macmillan.
- Edwards, A. (1997) 'Guests bearing gifts: The position of student teachers in primary school classrooms', *British Educational Research Journal*, 23, 1.
- Edwards, A. (2005) 'Relational agency: Learning to be a resourceful practitioner', *International Journal of Educational Research*, 43, pp. 168-182.
- Edwards, A. and Collison, J. (1996) *Mentoring and Developing Practice in Primary Schools: Supporting Student Teacher Learning in Schools*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Edwards, A., Gilroy, P. and Hartley, D. (2002) *Rethinking Teacher Education. collaborative responses to uncertainty*, London, RoutledgeFalmer.
- Elmore, R. F. (2006) *School Reform from the Inside Out. Policy, Practice and Performance*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard Education Press.
- Eraut, M. (2004) Informal learning in the workplace, *Studies in Continuing Education*, 26, 2, 247-273.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (1998) 'Teachers as Teacher Educators, 1', *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 21, 1, pp. 63-74.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001) 'From Preparation to Practice: Designing a Continuum to Strengthen and Sustain Teaching', Teachers' College Record.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. and Parker, M. B. (1993) 'Mentoring in context: a comparison of two U.S. programs for beginning teachers', *International Journal of Educational Research*, 19, pp. 699-718.

- Fullan, M. (1999) *Change Forces: The Sequel*, London, Falmer Press.
- Furlong, J., Barton, L., Miles, S., Whiting, C. and Whitty, G. (2000) *Teacher Education in Transition: Re-forming Professionalism?*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Gardner, H., Csikszentmihalyi, M. and Damon, W. (2006) *The GoodWork Project: An Overview*, <http://www.goodworkproject.org>.
- Gash, H. (2006) 'Beginning primary teachers and children with mild learning difficulties', *Irish Educational Studies*, 25, 3, pp. 275-287.
- Gilroy, P. (1992) 'The political rape of initial teacher training in England and Wales: a JET rebuttal', *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 18, pp. 5-22.
- Goodlad, J. (1990) *Teachers for Our Nation's Schools*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Goodlad, J. I. and McMannon, T. J. (Eds) (2004) *The Teaching Career*, New York, Teachers College Press.
- Government of Ireland (2002) *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century: Report of the Working Group on Primary Preservice Teacher Education (The Kellaghan Report)*, Dublin, The Stationery Office.
- Grossman, P. and Wineburg, S. (2001) *In Pursuit of Community*, Teachers' College Record.
- Gu, Q. and Day, C. (2007, September) 'Teacher resilience: a necessary condition for effectiveness', Paper presented at the annual conference of the *British Educational Research Association*, Institute of Education, London.
- Hagger, H. and McIntyre, D. (2006) *Learning Teaching from Teachers: Realising the potential of School-Based Teacher Education*, Berkshire, Open University Press.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (1993) 'A common-sense model of the professional development of teachers', in J. Elliot (Ed.) *Restructuring Teacher Education*, Lewes, Falmer Press.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) (2003) *An evaluation of the Training Schools Programme*, London, HMSO.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) (2005) *Report on the second year of the inspection of the designated recommended bodies for the Graduate Teacher Programme*, London, HMSO.
- Holmes Group (1986) *Tomorrow's Teachers: A report of the Holmes Group*, East Lansing, MI, Author.
- Holmes Group (1990) *Tomorrow's Schools: Principles for the design of Professional Development Schools*, East Lansing, MI, Author.
- Killeavy, M. and Murphy, R. (2006) *National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction: Final Report*, Dublin (Department of Education and Science), Unpublished.
- Kounin, (1970) *Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

- Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press.
- Lortie, D. C. (1975) *Schoolteacher: a sociological study*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- MacBeath, J. (2007) Collaborative Approaches to Preparing and Developing Effective Teaching: Dilemmas and Opportunities, Symposium Paper, Keynote Address 1, in J. Whitehead (Ed.) *Collaborative Approaches to Preparing and Developing Effective Teachers: An account of the Joint UCET/HMI/STEC Symposium*, Glasgow, March 2007, Occasional Paper No. 16, London, UCET.
- McLaughlin, C., Black-Hawkins, K., Brindley, S., McIntyre, D. and Taber, K. S. (2006) *Researching Schools: Stories from a Schools-University Partnership for Educational Research*, Oxon, England, Routledge.
- McNally, J. (2006) 'From informal learning to identity formation: a conceptual journey in early teacher development', *Scottish Educational Review*. Special Edition, *Teacher Education and Professional Development*, 37, 79-90.
- McWilliams, S., Cannon, P., Farrar, M., Tubbert, B., Connolly, C. and McSorley, F. (2006) 'Comparison and evaluation of aspects of teacher education in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland', *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 29, 1, pp. 67-79.
- Moran, A. (1998) 'The Northern Ireland Professional Growth Challenge: Towards an integrated model of Teacher Education', *Teacher Development*, 2, 3, pp. 455-465.
- Moran, A. and Abbott, L. (2002) 'Developing inclusive schools: the pivotal role of teaching assistants in promoting inclusion in special and mainstream schools in Northern Ireland', *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 17, 2, 161-173.
- Morgan, M. and O'Leary, M. (2004) 'A Study of Factors associated with the Job Satisfaction of Beginning Teachers', *The Irish Journal of Education*, 35, pp. 73-86.
- Noddings, N. (1997) A morally defensible mission for the schools in the 21st century, in E. Clinchy (Ed.) *Transforming public education: A new course for America's future*, pp. 82-89, New York, Teachers College Press.
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development) (2005) *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Retaining and Developing Effective Teachers*, Paris, OECD.
- Sammons, P., Day, C., Kington, A., Gu, Q., Stobart, G. and Smees, R. (2007) 'Exploring variations in teachers' work, lives and their effects on pupils; key findings and implications from a longitudinal mixed-method study', *British Educational Research Journal*, 33, 5, pp. 681-701.
- Scottish Government (2001) *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century: Agreement reached following recommendations made in the McCrone Report*, Author.
- Sirotnik, K. A. and Goodlad, J. I. (Eds) (1988) *School-University Partnerships in Action: Concepts, Cases, and Concerns*, New York, Teachers College Press.
- Stenhouse, L. (1983) *Authority, Education, and Emancipation*, London, Heinemann.

- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, London, Sage.
- Teaching Council (Ireland) (2007) *Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers*, Dublin, Author.
- Tickle, L. (2000) *Teacher Induction: The Way Ahead*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Teacher Development Agency, (2007) *Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status*, London, Author.
- Totterdell, M., Heilbronn, R., Bubb, S. and Jones, C. (2002) *Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Statutory Arrangements for the Induction of Newly Qualified Teachers, Research Report No. 338*, London, Institute of Education, Authors.
- Totterdell, M., Woodroffe, L., Bubb, S. and Hanrahan, K. (2003) *The Impact of NQT induction programmes on the enhancement of teacher expertise, professional development, job satisfaction or retention rates: a systematic map of research (EPPI-Centre Review, version 1.)* in *Research Evidence in Education Library*, London, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education.
- Veenman, S. (1984) Perceived problems of beginning teachers, *Review of Educational Research*, 54, pp. 143-178.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of the Higher Psychological Processes*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.
- Wang, J. and Odell, S. J. (2002) 'Mentored learning to teach according to standards-based reform: A critical review', *Review of Educational Research*, 72, 3, pp. 481-546.
- Wilkin, M. (1999) 'The Role of Higher Education in Initial Teacher Education', *Universities Council for the Education of Teachers, Occasional Paper No. 12*, London, Author.
- Zanting, A., Verloop, N., Vermunt, J. D. and Van Driel, J. H. (1998) 'Explicating Practical Knowledge: an extension of the teachers' roles', *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 21, 1, pp.11-28.
- Zeichner, K. M. and Liston, D. P. (1996) *Reflective Teaching: An Introduction*, Mahwah, NJ, Erlbaum.

SCRÍOBH CHUN MACHNAIMH AGUS FORBAIRT MHÚINTEORA: LÉARGAS Ó SHAOTHAR LITEARTHA

Léachtóir sinsearach is ea Cathal de Paor i nDámh an Oideachais i gColáiste Mhuire gan Smál, Luimneach. D'oibrigh sé mar mhúinteoir bunscoile roimhe sin agus chaith sé tamall de bhlianta sa Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta (NCCA) chomh maith. Tá taighde ar siúl aige faoi láthair ar thionlacan múinteoirí nua-cháilithe isteach sa ghairm.

ACHOIMRE: Scrúdaíonn an t-alt seo bua na scríbhneoireachta mar mheán claochlaithe i bhforbairt mhúinteora. Fiosrú liteartha atá ann go príomha a tharraingíonn ar aiste ón bhfile Seán Ó Ríordáin ina bpléann sé an bua a bhaineann le teanga chun cleachtas an duine aonair a chlaochló. Cé gurb iad cúrsaí teanga is mó atá faoi chaibidil ag an Ríordánach, déantar an argóint san alt seo gur féidir an téis atá aige a shuíomh i gcomhthéacs eile ar fad, mar atá, forbairt ghairmiúil an mhúinteora. Tá an argóint bunaithe ar na tuiscintí a thugann Cochran-Smith agus Lytle (1999) ar fhios gairmiúil an mhúinteora. Tarraingíonn sé chomh maith ar theoiric Vygotsky maidir leis an ról atá ag uirlisí síceolaíocha (an scríbhneoireacht go príomha) i bhforbairt aigne agus i gcultúr an duine agus an phobail. Críochnaíonn an t-alt le himpleachtaí d'athnuachan gairmiúil an mhúinteora.

RÉAMHRÁ

Léiríonn taighdeoirí éagsúla an tábhacht a bhaineann le scríbhneoireacht mhachnamhach i bhforbairt mhúinteora. Cuireann an scríbhneoireacht ord ar thaithí an mhúinteora agus doimhníonn sí an machnamh dá bharr (Gudmundsdottir, 1991). Díríonn Cochran-Smith agus Lytle (1999) ar úsáid na scríbhneoireachta i gclaochló chleachtas an mhúinteora agus i ngníomhaireacht (*agency*) an mhúinteora taobh istigh de chóras sóisialta níos leithne. Is ar an gcoincheap seo - claochló an duine aonair taobh istigh de phobal áirithe - agus ar an bpoitinseal a bhaineann le scríbhneoireacht mhachnamhach mar chuid de sin a dhíríonn an t-alt seo. Ach is fiosrú liteartha a bheidh i gceist. Sé sin, saothar liteartha ina bhfuil téama den sórt céanna le sonrú ann a bheidh mar ábhar don anailís. Aiste ón bhfile Seán Ó Ríordáin is ea é seo ina bpléann sé coincheap ar a dtugann sé na 'teangacha príobháideacha.' Conas is féidir leis an duine aonair úsáid a bhaint as scríbhneoireacht ar mhaithe le claochló smaoinimh, teanga, agus saoil? Is príomhcheist don Ríordánach í. Ach an dtugann sé seo aon léargas ar úsáid na scríbhneoireachta i gcomhthéacs fhorbairt ghairmiúil an mhúinteora? Tá an cuma ar an scéal go dtugann, más go héiginnte féin é. Mar chuid den phlé, tarraingíonn an t-alt chomh maith ar theoiric shoch-chultúrtha an tsíceolaithe Lev Vygotsky i dtaobh úsáid na scríbhneoireachta chun brí a bhaint as taithí. Críochnaíonn an t-alt le himpleachtaí d'athnuachan ghairmiúil an mhúinteora agus do chur chun cinn na scríbhneoireachta machnamhaí.

MACHNAMH

Smaoineamh go criticiúil ar mhaithe le foghlaim, sin atá i gceist le machnamh. Taispeánann an litríocht fhairsing ar fhorbairt mhúinteora conas is féidir úsáid a bhaint as machnamh chun ord a chur ar thaithí, ciall a bhaint aisti agus foghlaim uaithi. Sórt ‘seasaimh siar’ atá ann ar mhaithe le cleachtas laethúil an mhúinteora a iniúchadh.

Téann an litríocht ar mhachnamh i bhfad siar. Scoláire amháin a sheasann amach sa litríocht seo is ea Dewey (1933) a rinne idirdhealú idir gnáth-aicsean (*routine action*) agus aicsean machnamhach (*reflective action*). Níos déanaí, thaispeáin Schön go raibh níos mó ag teastáil seachas teoiric eolaíoch amháin chun fadhb a réiteach nó aicsean a stiúru sa suíomh gairmiúil (Schön, 1983). Bhí gá leis an bhfadhb a mheas, aicsean éigin a thriail, agus ansin é a leasú. Mar sin, bhí an machnamh ina dhlúthchuid den aicsean ag an gcleachtóir machnamhach (*reflective practitioner*).

Is ar an scríbhneoireacht mhachnamhach (seachas machnamh trí labhairt nó smaoineamh amháin) agus ar an bpoitinseal a bhaineann léi don chlaochló gairmiúil a dhíríonn an t-alt seo. Is gnách leis an scríbhneoireacht seo a bheith i bhfoirm inste nó scéil. ‘Scéalaíonn’ an múinteoir a thaithí mhúinteoireachta chun na heilimintí difriúla a chomhtháthú ar mhaithe le patrúin a aithint agus brí a bhaint astu. Is féidir an insint dhírbheathaisnéiseach seo a thabhairt i gcuntais ghairide in iris nó go deimhin féin i bhfoirmeacha níos liteartha, mar shampla, filíocht, drámaíocht, úrscéal. Tá mórán foilseachán ó leithéidí Connelly agus Clandinin (1999) a thugann léiriú maith ar an gcur chuige seo. Is féidir é a shuíomh taobh istigh de Arts Based Educational Research nó ABER (Barone agus Eisner, 2006) chomh maith. Taispeánann Bolton (2005) an úsáid a bhaintear aisti san fhorbairt phearsanta agus ghairmiúil araon. Pléann sí chomh maith le scríbhneoireacht beirte, mar shampla an múinteoir nua-cháilithe agus an meantóir (*mentor*) ag scríobh le chéile (Bolton, 2005: 97).

Is í an teoiric inste (*narrative theory*) atá mar bhunchloch don sórt seo taighde mhúinteora a chleachtann múinteoirí. Tugann an teoiric seo le fios go smaoiníonn, áiríonn, agus samhlaíonn an duine de réir struchtúr inste (Sarbin 1986: 8). Creata cuimsitheacha is ea iad seo ina ndéantar comhtháthú ar na heachtraí, daoine, aicsin, mothúcháin, idéanna agus suíomhanna atá mórthimpeall an duine. Tosnaíonn úsáid na hinste agus na struchtúr seo go luath i saol an duine. Mar shampla, tuigeann agus cruthaíonn páistí óga scéalta i bhfad sula dtosaíonn siad ar fhíricí loma a bhreith leo (Lyle, 2000).

MACHNAMH IN OIDEACHAS MÚINTEORA

Ar an gcuma céanna, tá tábhacht nach beag ag insint scéalta in oideachas múinteora. Taispeánann Doyle agus Carter (2003) gur ó eachtraí sa rang a fhoghlaimíonn ábhair oidí cuid mhaith dá bhfios praiticiúil. Tá an fios praiticiúil fréamhaithe sna scéalta a insíonn siad faoi na heachtraí seo. Ach de bharr gur tosnaítheoirí iad, ní bhíonn fáil acu ar na creata saibhre a chuireann ord nó crot ar thaithí. Is ón síor-athdhéanamh ar eipeasóideanna teagaisc sa rang a fhorbraíonn múinteoirí na creata seo. Bíonn teorainn le stór na feasa acadúla a bhíonn acu chomh maith, rud a fhágann go dtéann siad i muinín straitéisí coigneolaíocha atá in úsáid acu go dtí sin. Sé sin, ‘scéalaíonn’ siad a dtaithí mhúinteoireachta.

Is ar an mbonn sin a mholtar cás-staidéir agus insintí pearsanta a úsáid in oideachas múinteora. Úsáidtear cásanna chun fios teibí a shuíomh, chun modhanna múinte a léiriú agus chun machnamh pearsanta a spreagadh (Lundberg *et al.* 1999). Ina theannta sin, iarrtar ar ábhair oidí insintí pearsanta a scríobh chun a dtuiscintí bunúsacha ar mhúineadh a chur i

bhfocail agus chun cuntas a choimeád a scéalaíonn a dturas gairmiúil féin. Mar shampla, úsáidtear an cur chuige inste seo le hábhair oidí agus iad ar chleachtadh múinteoireachta i gColáiste Mhuire gan Smál. Tugtar frámaí scríbhneoireachta dóibh lena leithéid seo de cheisteanna chun na hinsintí a stiúru: Cad a rinne mé? Cad a d'oibrigh? Cad nár oibrigh? Cad is brí leis seo? Cén fáth gur mar seo atáim? An bhfuil athrú tagtha ar mo theoiric mhúinteoireachta féin? An gá mo chur chuige a athrú? (Horgan agus Bonfield, 2000:5).

Sa tslí sin a chuireann an múinteoir crot ar a thaithí ilghnéitheach sa rang. Téann sé/sí i mbun scríbhneoireachta i ndiaidh gach babhta teagaisc agus is féidir í a úsáid ar bhonn rothach chomh maith mar a thaispeánann Burton (2005) i dTábla 1. Áitíonn sí go bhfoghlaímíonn múinteoirí ó na ceisteanna a chuireann siad orthu féin agus iad ag scríobh, mar shampla, 'An dtuigfeadh léitheoir é seo? An bhfuil sé seo cruinn?' Sa tslí sin, is comhrá í an scríbhneoireacht idir an scríbhneoir agus a chuid smaoinemh.

Tábla 1: *Scríbhneoireacht mhachnamhach: seicheamh agus ceisteanna*

Céim	Feidhm	Ceisteanna le cur
1	Cur in iúl, cur i bhfocail	Cad a tharla? Cad é mo bharúil?
2	Machnamh	Arbh é seo a tharla, dáiríre? Cén fáth?
3	Athscríobh	An cuntas níos cirte é seo? Cén fáth?
4	Machnamh thar thréimhse	Cad is dóigh liom anois (ó bhí deis agam machnamh siar)?

Leasaithe ó Burton (2005)

Mar achoimre mar sin, baineann an cur i bhfocail seo le fios praiticiúil an mhúinteora nó an chuid sin den fhios gairmiúil nach minic a chuireann múinteoirí in iúl. Feidhmíonn an insint (agus an teanga) mar ghléas chun machnaimh agus réasúnaithe ar an gcleachtas agus treoraíonn an scríbhneoireacht an múinteoir go dtí ceisteanna atá níos doimhne faoin gcleachtas.

SCRÍBHNEOIREACHT AGUS CLAOCHLÓ

Dar le roinnt údar gur claochló ar chleachtas a leanann an ceistiú doimhin sin. Tá córas de thrí thuiscint dhifriúla ar fhios gairmiúil an mhúinteora curtha ar fáil ag Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) a chaitheann léargas ar an bpoitinseal chun claochlaithe seo.

Knowledge-for-practice is ea an chéad cheann acu. Eolas agus scileanna teagaisc atá i gceist a chuireann an múinteoir i bhfeidhm go dlí. Baineann an tuiscint seo leis an taighde ar éifeacht scoile mar a bhfuil béim ar theicnící chun torthaí foghlama na bpáistí agus éifeacht an mhúinteora a ardú. Is gnách gur fios foirmeálta í seo atá forbartha i suíomh eile seachas an suíomh teagaisc. Dar le Cochran-Smith agus Lytle gur laghdú ar ghairmiúlacht an mhúinteora atá i gceist leis an tuiscint seo.

Sa dara ceann, *knowledge-in-practice* tugtar aitheantas don mhúinteoir mar dhuine gairmiúil a théann i mbun oibre go tuisceanach i gcomhthéacs casta atá ag síor-athrú. Cuireann sé seo san áireamh an tréith 'suite' a bhaineann leis an gceird. Foghlaimíonn múinteoirí an fios praiticiúil trí machnamh ar a gcleachtas féin agus trí bhreathnú agus plé a dhéanamh ar shárchleachtas múinteoirí eile. Tá an tuiscint seo fréamhaithe sa teoiric sin ar a dtugtar *constructivism*. Is féidir le múinteoirí a gceird a fhoghlaim óna chéile sa tslí seo.

Leagan den dara tuiscint is ea an tríú ceann, *knowledge-of-practice* ach go mbaineann diminsean breise leis. Foghlaimíonn múinteoirí nuair a chruthaíonn siad fios dóibh féin trí

obair i gcomhpháirt i bpobail agus i ngréasáin fhiosraithe. Tá an fios seo suite ina gcomhthéacs oibre féin ach ceanglaíonn siad an ‘obair feasa’ seo leis an saol mórthimpeall maidir le ceisteanna sóisialta, cultúrtha agus polaitiúla. Is í seo an tuiscint a mholann Cochran-Smith agus Lytle taobh istigh de sheasamh ceisteach nó *inquiry as stance* mar a thugann siad air. Taighde mhúinteora is ea an ceistiú seo a bhfuil an poitinseal inti cleachtas ranga a chlaochló:

As a way of knowing, then, teacher research has the potential to alter profoundly the cultures of teaching.

(Lytle and Cochran-Smith, 1992: 470)

Tá claochló agus leathnú déanta ar chleachtas an mhúinteora. Mar seo a mhíníonn siad é:

What goes on inside the classroom is profoundly altered and ultimately transformed when teachers' frameworks for practice foreground the intellectual, social, and cultural contexts of teaching.

(Cochran-Smith, M. and Lytle, S. 1999: 276)

Tá sé seo ar aon dul le *knowledge as transformative* de chuid Hargreaves (1996) agus leis an gcoincheap den mhúinteoir mar *transformative intellectual* ó Giroux (1988).

Díríonn Cochran-Smith agus Lytle ar mhisean agus ar thionchar an mhúinteora mar ghníomaire taobh istigh de chomhthéacs áirithe cultúrtha, sóisialta, agus polaitiúil. Mar sin, molann siad go mbeadh deiseanna ag múinteoirí an dearcadh, an idé-eolaíocht, agus an taithí ranga agus scoile a cheistiú mar chuid den mhórfhictiúr sin. Molann siad taighde agus scríbhneoireacht mhúinteora mar mhodh amháin chun an seasamh ceisteach seo a chur i bhfeidhm. Deir siad:

The images of practice we have been describing as part of this third conception of teacher learning - critical, political, and intellectual - are implicit in the writing of student teachers and experienced teachers who work as researchers in their own schools and classrooms.

(Cochran-Smith, M. and Lytle, S. 1999: 277)

Léiríonn an méid seo an tairbhe a bhaineann leis an scríbhneoireacht mar mheán claochlaithe. Ach conas a éascaíonn an scríbhneoireacht an claochló seo? Agus an féidir léargas breise a fháil ar an gceangal idir scríbhneoireacht mhachnamhach agus athnuachan nó claochló gairmiúil?

LÉARGAS Ó FHOINSÍ LITEARTHA

Is minic taighdeoirí dul i muinín foinsí liteartha chun cur lena gcuid dtuiscintí ar cheisteanna oideachais.¹ Fiosrú dá shórt atá ar siúl san alt seo ina scrúdaítear coincheap

¹ Is mar ghné amháin taobh istigh den léann *curriculum* a shuíomhann agus a scríobhann na *Reconceptualists* faoi oideachas múinteora sna Stáit Aontaithe. Dar leo gur réimse fairsing é an léann curaclaim ina bhfuil a lán ‘téacsai’ ag teacht le chéile ann, mar shampla, téacs stairiúil, diagach, institiúideach, polaitiúil, iarstrúctúraíoch (*poststructuralist*) (Pinar *et al.* 1995). Ina measc, tá an curaclam mar théacs beathaisnéiseach, dírbheathaisnéiseach, liteartha, agus eistéitiúil. Ach, lasmuigh de na *Reconceptualists*, tá an múinteoir mar ealaíontóir seanbhunaithe mar shamhail i ngort na forbartha gairmiúla do mhúinteoirí. Tugann Eisner ceithre bhonn chun tacú leis an áiteamh gur ealaín í an mhúinteoireacht. Is féidir leis an teagasc ranga a bheith sciliúil, grástúil, agus eistéitiúil. Bíonn breithiúnas an mhúinteora ag brath go mór ar thréithe nach bhfuil soiléir roimh ré – ar aon dul le hobair

liteartha ó shaothar próis Sheáin Uí Ríordáin. Tarraingíonn an t-alt chomh maith ar theoiric shoch-chultúrtha Vygotsky ar aigne agus teanga.

Is iomaí cosúlachtaí atá le fáil i saoil na beirte údar seo agus is fiú iad seo a chur san áireamh ón tús. Bhí an-dúil acu araon sa litríocht chruthaitheach agus cé gur mhair siad i gcomthéacsanna a bhí éagsúil go maith óna chéile, tagann a dtuiscintí ar chúrsaí teanga go maith le chéile. Tacaíonn a dteoiricí leis an dtuiscint gur trí scríobh na teanga a thagann smaoineamh chun glaineachta agus chun foirfeachta – mar a thasipeánfar ar ball. Ar ndóigh, lasmuigh dá saoil ghairmiúla, bhí sé de chosúlacht eatarthu chomh maith nach raibh an tsláinte ró-mhaith acu agus fuairadar beirt bás ón eitinn.

Ó RÍORDÁIN AGUS NA TEANGACHA PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA

File ó Chontae Chorcaí ab ea Seán Ó Ríordáin a saolaíodh sa bhliain 1916 agus a fuair bás i 1977. Cé gur mar fhile is mó a bhfuil cáil air, d'fhág sé saothar toirtiúil próis ina dhiaidh chomh maith. Bhí cleachtadh seo an phróis aige mar chuid thábhachtach dá chleacht cruthaitheach (Ó Cadhla, 1998).²

Aiste amháin uaidh is ea *Na Teangacha Príobháideacha* a foilsíodh in eagrán speisialta den iris *Scríobh* sna seachtóidí (Ó Ríordáin, 1979).³ Pléann an aiste leis an teannas idir an scríbhneoir aonair agus an pobal i bhforbairt teanga. Cé gurbh í an Ghaeilge an teanga a bhí i gceist aige, argóint ghinearálta a bhí á déanamh agus d'úsáid sé samplaí ó theangacha eile chun tacú lena théis, mar shampla, Pound agus Blake sa Bhéarla, Mallarmé agus Proust sa Fhraincís.

Fórsa coimeádach cosantach is ea an pobal a chuireann srian ar chruthaitheacht teanga an duine aonair. Ach má éiríonn leis an duine aonair éalú ó chuing an phobail, is féidir claochló teacht air. B'shin an téis a bhí aige agus ba iad na 'teangacha príobháideacha' a thug sé ar an sórt teanga a chleachtann an t-ealaíontóir atá á chlaochló.

Beirim teanga phríobháideach nó canúint aigne, mar sin, ar an dteanga phearsanta a chruthaíonn scríbhneoirí áirithe nuair a bhíonn siad ag cumadh litríochta.

(Ó Ríordáin, 1979:14)

Bíonn teangacha príobháideacha faoi thionchar ag nithe taobh amuigh den traidisiún, rud a chuireann le forbairt agus fairsingiú na bunteanga. Mar sin, tá na teangacha príobháideacha uaireanta do-thuigthe do dhaoine eile ach tá siad riachtanach chun freastal ar mhachnamh agus ar cheird an ealaíontóra. Is í an phríomh-dhifriocht idir an teanga seo agus gnáth-theanga ná go bhfuil an scríbhneoir á húsáid go cruthaitheach agus go macánta, saor ó éileamh nó smacht an phobail.

ealaíontóirí eile. Tá an obair casta agus is sort fionnachtana a bhíonn ar siúl ag an múinteoir. Agus go minic ní bhíonn de thoradh ar an teagasc ach an próiseas agus an idirghníomh féin (Eisner, 1994).

² Tá trí chnuasach filíochta foilsithe aige: *Eireaball Spideoige* (1952), *Brosna* (1964) *Línte Liombó* (1971), chomh maith le *Rí na nUile* (1964) i gcomhpháirt leis an Athair Seán Ó Conghaile.

³ Cuireadh i gcló don chéad uair é ina cheithre coda ar cheithre uimhreacha de *Imiu* in 1963. Seán Ó Coileáin a chóirigh ón mbunscríbhinn do *Scríobh* 4 i 1979. Bhí an t-eagrán seo de *Scríobh* tiomnaithe do Dhónall Ó Corcora a bhí ina Ollamh le Béarla i gColáiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh. Mar a mhíníonn Ó Mordha, níor mhinic a bhí an Ríordánach ar aon aigne leis an gCorcorach. Chomhairligh Ó Corcora do scríbhneoirí Éireannacha cuid mhór dá bpearsa agus dá mbraistint féin a mhúchadh agus a umhlú do nósá agus do ghnása an phobail. A mhalairt de theachtairacht a bhí ag an Ríordánach.

I measc na ndaoine a chumann na teangacha príobháideacha ‘is airde’ tá na filí, scríbhneoirí, na naoimh, agus daoine buile. Glacann an dream seo seilbh ar a gcuid saothar, rud a chlaochlaíonn iad. Agus iad tite ‘chun naofachta, chun filíochta, nó chun buile’ claochlaítear an teanga atá in úsáid acu go teanga phríobháideach.

BUA NA dTEANGACHA PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA

Déanann na teangacha príobháideacha seo athnuachan ar dhá leibhéal. Ar an gcéad dul síos, scuabann siad chun siúil na nathanna cailcithe, coraí cainte seanchaite agus *clichés* a chleachtann an pobal. Agus ag leibhéal eile, bíonn tionchar aige seo ar an ‘nathadóireacht’ nó an meon claonta coimeádach a shamhlaíonn Ó Ríordáin leis an bpobal agus atá ina bhac ar fhás agus forbairt.

Mar sin, chabhródh teangacha príobháideacha in dhá shlí. Chabhróidís le forbairt agus saibhriú na Gaeilge, ach chabhróidís chomh maith le hathnuachan aigne agus chultúr an phobail.

Léiríonn sé seo an ról agus an phribhléid a leag an Ríordánach ar an duine aonair i bhfás an phobail. Mar a deir Ó Cadhla:

Ar aon dul leis an tuiscint a bhí ag Ó Ríordáin ar an bhfile chímíd go raibh an uile ní, an tír, an duine agus an urlabhra le cruthú as an nua nó le hathnuachan ag an gcruthaitheoir agus gurbh ar dhaoine aonaránacha a thíteann crann na cruthaitheachta.

(Ó Cadhla, 1998:8)

I bhfocail eile, ba é seasamh an duine aonair an seasamh ba mhacánta, dar leis an Ríordánach i gcúrsaí teanga agus cultúir.

Leag an Ríordánach béim ar an scríbhneoireacht mar uirlis chun na teangacha cruthaitheacha príobháideacha seo a chur in iúl. Deir sé ina dtaobh gur, ‘mó de theangacha scríofa ná de theangacha labhartha iad’ agus go bhfuil príobháideachas ag baint leo dá réir. Tugann an príobháideachas seo deis machnaimh, rud a ghéaraíonn é. Deir sé:

Ní mór an machnamh is féidir a dhéanamh gan do smaointe a bhreacadh síos. Beireann an scríbhneoireacht ar na smaointe agus deineann leanúnach iad. Athraíonn an peann scéimh na teanga ar deireadh mar stiúran sé an teanga isteach i reigiúin uaigneacha an mhachnaimh – reigiúin atá lasmuigh de theoranta na teanga labhartha.

(Ó Ríordáin, 1979:16)

Slí fhileata í seo chun a rá gur doimhne an machnamh sa scríbhneoireacht ná sa chaint amháin. Téann an teanga agus an aigne i bhfeidhm ar a chéile sa phróiseas seo:

Serrann agus síneann an scríbhneoir a aigne agus serrann agus síneann sé an teanga dá réir.

(Ó Ríordáin, 1979:17)

Tarlaíonn an síneadh aigne agus teanga nuair atá sé saor ó smacht daoine eile, sé sin, ‘nuair nach mbíonn iachall air bheith ar aon chomhrian tuairime ná iompair daoine eile.’ Bíonn neart ag an scríbhneoir aonair, ‘nithe a fheiscint ní fé mar a chítear iad de ghnáth, ná fé mar a chomhairlítear iad d’fheiscint, ach fé mar a chíonn sé féin iad (1979:17).’ Mar sin, is

eilimintí tábhachtacha iad an príobháideachas agus an scríbhneoireacht don mhachnamh. Agus is dá bharr seo a chlaochlaítear an duine agus an teanga a labhrann sé/sí.

Tá sé feicthe againn go dtugann Cochran-Smith agus Lytle (1999) cur síos den sórt céanna ar an scríbhneoireacht mar mheán claochlaithe i bhfás gairmiúil an mhúinteora. Tugann teoiric shoch-chultúrtha Vygotsky léargas breise ar bhua seo na scríbhneoireachta agus is uirthisean a dhíríonn an t-alt anois.

VYGOTSKY, SMAOINEAMH AGUS TEANGA

Fad is a dhírigh an Ríordánach ar an tionchar diúltach, dar leis, a bhí ag an bpobal ar an scríbhneoir aonair, thaispeáin Vygotsky gurbh é an pobal is bunús don teanga a chleachtann an duine aonair sa chéad áit. Baineann sé seo leis an teoiric shoch-chultúrtha agus tá an 'chaint inmheánach' (*inner speech*) mar dhlúthchuid den teoiric sin.

Rugadh Vygotsky sa Bhealarúis i 1896 agus thosaigh sé a shaol ollscoile mar mhac léinn leighis i 1913. Thug sé faoin dlí go luath ina dhiaidh sin ach is sa stair agus san fhealsúnacht a bhain sé amach céim ar deireadh. Ag fágáil na hollscoile dó, chaith sé tréimhse ag múineadh litríochta sular thosaigh sé ag múineadh síceolaíochta i gcoláiste oideachais. Fuair sé bás sa bhliain 1934.

Is óna theoiric shoch-chultúrtha a shíolraíonn an cur chuige oideachais sin ar a dtugtar *social constructivism* sa lá atá inniu ann. Leagann an cur chuige seo béim ar an ngné shóisialta san fhoghlaim agus ar scil an duine fásta chun tacú le dul chun cinn an fhoghlaim, nó *scaffolding* a dhéanamh air mar a scríobh Bruner (1966). Bhí tionchar nach beag ag an gcur chuige seo ar oideachas mórtimpeall an domhain ó shin. Go deimhin féin, is féidir an tionchar seo a shonrú i gCuraclam na Bunscoile sa tír seo (Éire, 1999).

Tá a lán de thuiscintí Vygotsky ar theanga agus foghlaim le fáil sa leabhar cáiliúil, *Myshlenie i rech* a céadfoilsíodh sa Rúisis i 1934 agus a foilsíodh sa Bhéarla i 1962 mar *Thought and Language*. Sa leabhar sin, úsáideann Vygotsky a lán sleachta liteartha ó leithéidí Dostoevsky agus Tolstoy mar léiriú ar a theoiricí. De réir dealraimh, bhí tionchar mór ag leabhar Alexander Potebnja a raibh an t-ainm céanna air, sé sin, *Thought and Language* ar fhorbairt intleachtúil Vygotsky (Kozulin, 1986). Teangeolaí Rúiseach ón 19ú haois a bhí i Potebnja a raibh tionchar airsean ag teangeolaí Gearmáineach, von Humboldt. Ba é von Humboldt a chéadchum an coincheap, caint inmheánach sula ndearna Vygotsky é a fhorbairt.

Tugann teoiric shoch-chultúrtha Vygotsky le fios go gcuireann teanga ar chumas an duine dul i mbun smaoinimh agus forbairt choincheapa ag ardleibhéal. Is ón taobh amuigh a fhorbraíonn an duine na hardfheidhmeanna meabhracha seo. Ar dtús, déanann an páiste athstruchtúrú go hinmheánach ar thaithí sheachtrach. Seo an leibhéal idirphearsa. Bogann an próiseas foghlama go dtí leibhéal inphearsanta ina dhiaidh sin agus déantar cultúr an ghrúpa shóisialta a inmheánú sa pháiste. Mar seo a mhínítear san aistriúchán Béarla é:

...every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level.

(Vygotsky, 1986: 57)

Ansín tarlaíonn an tríú leibhéal tar éis tréimhse fhada forbartha. Áitíonn an teoiric shoch-chultúrtha mar sin gur san idirghníomhú daonna atá gach ardfheidhm meabhrach fréamhaithe, sé sin, aird, meabhrú, agus forbairt choincheapa.

GYGOTSKY AGUS CAINT INMHEÁNACH

Tá an teanga mar chuid riachtanach den inmheánú seo a dhéantar ar chultúr an ghrúpa shóisialta. Caint shóisialta chumarsáideach le daoine eile a bhíonn ar siúl ag an bpáiste ar dtús. Ansin, aistrítear í seo go caint fhéinlárnach (*egocentric*), sé sin, smaoineamh os ard mar thionlacan ar a iompar féin. Stopann an chaint seo ag aois a seacht nó a hocht nuair a thosnaíonn caint inmheánach (sé sin, an chaint shóisialta atá inmheánaithe). Is caint easnamhach í an chaint inmheánach seo ó thaobh struchtúir murab ionann agus an teanga ráite nó scríofa.

Míníonn Vygotsky go dtagann smaoineamh chun críche i bhfocail mar claochlaíonn an smaoineamh agus an teanga a chéile sa phróiseas (1986:251). Sé sin, tagann atheagar ar an smaoineamh nuair a chuirtear i bhfocail é agus san am céanna, claochlaíonn an smaoineamh an teanga chun brí an smaoinimh a chur in iúl i gceart. Is ar an mbonn sin a mholann sé: ‘new paths from thought to word leading to new word meanings must be cut’ (1986: 251). Ach is í an scríbhneoireacht an fhoirm is casta den chur i bhfocail seo nó ‘the most elaborate form of speech’ mar a thugann Vygotsky air. Bíonn ar an scríbhneoir níos mó focal a úsáid agus iad a úsáid go cruinn.

Léiríonn sé seo ar fad bua na scríbhneoireacht mar uirlis shíceolaíoch. I measc na n-uirlisí síceolaíocha atá ann tá córais teanga, mapaí, ealaín, córais chomhairimh, stíleann teagaisc, agus comharthaí. I leabhar dá chuid (dar teideal *Voices of the mind: a sociocultural approach to mediated action*) míníonn Wertsch go bhfeidhmíonn na huirlisí seo mar nasc idir aigne an duine aonair agus aigne daoine eile (Wertsch, 1991). Úsáideann an duine iad chun brí a bhaint as comhthéacs cultúrtha, chun foghlama agus chun máistreacht a fháil air/uirthi féin.

ANAILÍS

Taispeánann an méid thuas go bhféachann an bheirt scríbhneoirí ar an scríbhneoireacht mar shlí chun smaoineamh a chur in iúl, a shoiléiriú, agus a bheachtú. Scríobh an Ríordánach faoi chás an ealaíontóra agus tionchar an phobail mórthimpeall. Cuireann teoiricí Vygotsky lenár dtuiscintí faoi seo mar gurb é an pobal is bunús don teanga a chleachtann an duine aonair agus go raibh an ceangal do-sháraithe sin ann riamh.

Maidir le saothar an Ríordánaigh, tá sé le tuiscint uaidhsean gur slí í an scríbhneoireacht chun brí a bhaint as taithí, seilbh a fháil air agus í a chlaochló. Agus cé gur ar an ealaíontóir liteartha atá sé ag díriú, tá an cuma ar an scéal go bhfuil teachtaireacht ann do ról na scríbhneoireachta in athnuachan ghairmiúil an mhúinteora - mar dhuine ann féin a bhfuil cúram speisialta uirthi a cleachtas féin a shealbhú agus a athchruthú. Ba é claochló an fhocail a roghnaigh Ó Ríordáin chun cur síos air seo agus sa mhéid sin, tá sé ar aon fhocal le Cochran-Smith agus Lytle a mholann *transformation* ina saothar siúd ar chleachtas oideachasúil an mhúinteora. Molann na húdair sin go mbeadh deiseanna ag múinteoirí an cultúr, an idé-eolaíocht agus an cleachtas atá mórthimpeall a chíoradh agus a cheistiú mar chuid dá seasamh ceisteach. Tá sé seo cóngarach don idirdhealú a rinne Hoyle (1975) idir an *restricted professional* agus *extended professional*, idirdhealú a bhfuil forbairt déanta ó shin air ag Evans (2008).

Ar an gcuma céanna, déanann Bolton (2005) tagairt d’úsáid na scríbhneoireachta san fhorbairt ghairmiúil agus molann sí an scríbhneoireacht foirne mar chur chuige amháin. Deir sí:

Exposing experiences to critical scrutiny in action learning sets [i. foirne foghlama] can enable individuals to perceive and potentially alter previously taken-for-granted ‘paradigms’ or ‘stories’ which culturally frame aspects of their experience. They can then effect change.

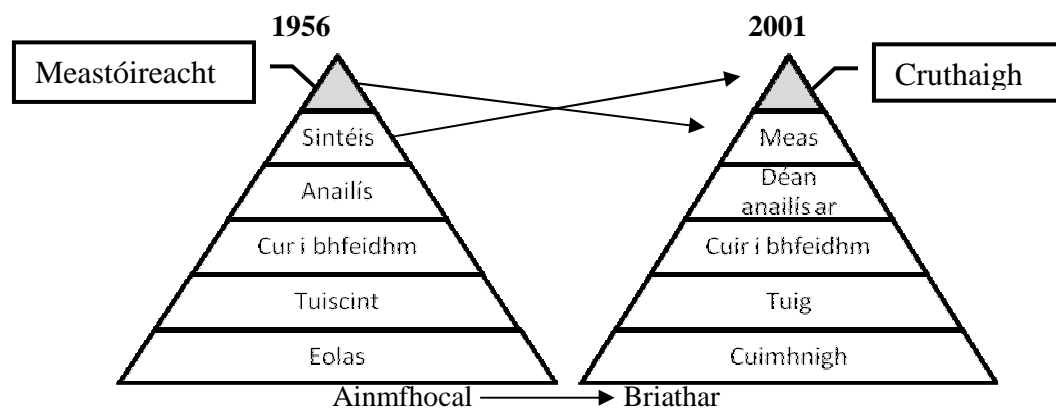
(Bolton, 2005:103)

Is léir gur gníomh cruthaitheach í an scríbhneoireacht seo, cé go mbíonn an poitinseal cruthaitheach sin le sonrú i roinnt frámaí machnaimh níos mó ná a chéile. Is gnách go mbíonn na ceisteanna tagartha bunaithe (a bheag nó a mhór) ar na feidhmeanna coigneolaíocha a d’aimsigh Bloom *et al.* (1956). Ag leibhéal íseal machnaimh, scríobhann an múinteoir cuntas ar ar tharla, ach de réir mar a théann an machnamh i sofaisticiúlacht, bíonn anailís, sintéis, agus meastóireacht ar siúl.

Ach tá míshásamh léirithe ag roinnt údar leis an gcur chuige réasúnta seo a chuireann meastóireacht mar cheannscríbe ar an machnamh agus a laghdaíonn tairbhe an mhachnaimh don mhúinteoir dá bharr. Ní théann an machnamh níos doimhne ná ‘Cad é a d’oibrigh go maith?’ nó ‘Cad é nár oibrigh go maith?’ Cuireann sé sin bac ar an seasamh siar, ar an sintéis agus ar an bhfoghlaim dhoimhin.

Sa chomhthéacs seo, tá sé spéisiúil gur mó an ról atá tugtha don ghníomh sintéiseach nó cruthaitheach sa leasú a rinne Anderson *et al.* (2001) ar thacsanamaí Bloom *et al.* (1956) tamall de bhlianta ó shin ná mar a bhí sa bhunleagan. Sa tacsanamaí leasaithe, tá na sé ainmfhocal a bhí ag Bloom *et al.* athruithe go briathra agus is é ‘cruthaigh’ an briathar atá ar barr ar fad (seachas meastóireacht a bhí ar barr ag foireann Bloom).⁴ Léiríonn an dá saighead sa léaráid thíos an t-athrú oird a d’imigh ar an gcéad dá leibhéal, i. meastóireacht agus sintéis. Mar sin, sa tacsanamaí nua, tá an ceangal idir cruthaitheacht agus sintéis treisithe.

Figiúr 1: Athruithe idir Bloom *et al.* (1956) agus Anderson *et al.* (2001)



Is aitheantas breise é seo don chruthaitheacht a bhaineann leis an scríbhneoireacht mar fhorbairt ghairmiúil. Ní haon ionadh mar sin go dtógann Bolton tréithe seo na cruthaitheachta agus na sintéise le chéile sa scríbhneoireacht mhachnamhach:

Writing a story or poem is organic, synthesizing elements from the muddle of experience, weaving them to create a coherent artifact which communicates a seemingly new strand.

(Bolton, 2005:39)

⁴ Ba le tábla déthoiseach seachas triantán a léirigh Anderson *et al.* (2001) an tacsanamaí leasaithe. Chuir siad na sé bhriathar nua ar an ais chothrománach (mar atá agam sa triantán thuas) ach cuireadh ceithre chatagóir feasa ar an ais ingearach: fios fíriciúil, fios coincheapúil, fios nósmaireachta (*procedural*), agus fios metacoigneolaíoch.

Ciallaíonn sé gur próiseas cruthaitheach é an insint a dhéanann múinteoir ar a chleachtas chun brí a bhaint as agus a misean nó *purpose* a shoiléiriú.

Is féidir an próiseas seo a cheangal chomh maith leis an bpróiseas a mhínigh Vygotsky maidir le smaoineamh, cur i bhfocail agus brí. Dar le Vygotsky nach é an smaoineamh an t-údarás is príomha sa phróiseas seo. Tá plána nó foinse níos túisce ná sin, sé sin, mótaivéisean ina bhfuil toil, gá, suim, agus mothúcháin an duine i gceist:

Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last 'why' in the analysis of thinking.

(Vygotsky, 1986: 252)

Díríonn sé seo ar na mothúcháin agus an dearcadh taobh thiar den smaoineamh. Sampla amháin de mhachnamh a dhíríonn air seo is ea an croímhachnamh (*core reflection*) de chuid Korthagen *et al.* (2005). Díríonn an croímhachnamh, ní hamháin ar an méid a smaoiníonn an duine, ach chomh maith leis sin, ar a mothaíonn sé, a dteastaíonn uaidh, agus a gcuireann sé i ngníomh. Díríonn sé ar cad é lena bhfuil na páistí ag súil agus an teagasc ar siúl (chomh maith lena bhfuil sé/sí féin ag súil). Gineann an cur chuige seo scéal níos iomláine. Sa tslí chéanna, taispeánann Hargreaves (1998) an bunús mothúcháin a bhaineann leis an múinteoireacht mar cheird.

CONCLUÍD

Is mór an difríocht idir obair chasta ilghnéitheach an mhúinteora sa rang agus an cúram a bhíonn ar ealaíontóir liteartha a oibríonn le teanga agus focail. Mar sin féin, dhealródh sé go dtugann saothar Uí Ríordáin léargas breise ar thábhacht na scríbhneoireachta don duine atá ag feidhmiú go gairmiúil, is cuma cén ghairm atá i gceist. Agus tá tacaíocht don téis sin le fáil ó theoiricí Vygotsky maidir le brí a bhaint as taithe trí í a chur i bhfocail.

Chonacthas san alt seo chomh maith an tábhacht a bhaineann leis an bpobal i múnú teanga agus aigne an duine aonair. Thaispeáin sé go mbíonn tionchar ag nósanna agus cultúr an phobail ar dhearcadh ar an saol nó *Weltanschauung* an duine.

Ag éirí as an anailís seo, tacaíonn an t-alt leis an argóint go bhfuil an scríbhneoireacht ina meán nó uirlis thábhachtach do mhachnamh an mhúinteora agus dá athnuachan gairmiúil. Agus ar aon dul le hobair an ealaíontóra agus an pobal dar de é, is féidir glacadh leis go mbeidh gaol idir athnuachan an mhúinteora aonair agus athnuachan an phobail trí chéile (sé sin, an pobal múinteora agus an pobal ar bhonn níos leithne).

Mar chonclúid, tá sé tábhachtach go gcuirfí an scríbhneoireacht chun cinn i measc múinteoirí agus go mbeidís tuisceanach ar í a úsáid chun machnamh ar a gcleachtas féin. Baineann sé seo le hoideachas múinteora ón tús agus le forbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach. Mar thógáil ar an bhfiosrú seo, b'fhiú staidéar a dhéanamh ar phoitinseal na scríbhneoireachta mar chur chuige san fhorbairt ghairmiúil do mhúinteoirí. B'fhiú díriú go speisialta ar bhua na scríbhneoireachta do mhúinteoirí nua-cháilithe chun tacú leo agus iad ag dul isteach sa ghairm mar bhaill nua.

TAGAIRTÍ

- Anderson, L. W. and David R. Krathwohl, D. R. (eag.) (2001) *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Anderson, L. W. (2005) 'Objectives, Evaluation and the Improvement of Education', *Studies in Educational Evaluation*. 31, lgh. 102-113.
- Barone, T. and Eisner, E. (2006) 'Arts-Based Educational Research', in J. Green, G. Camilli, and P. Elmore (eag.) *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research*, Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bloom, B.S. (eag.), Englehard, M.D., Furst, E.J., Hill, W.H., and Krathwohl, D.R. (1956) *Taxonomy Educational Objectives: the Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook, Cognitive Domain*, New York: David McKay.
- Bolton, G. (2005) *Reflective Practice, Writing and Professional Development*, London: Sage.
- Bruner, J. S. (1966) *Toward a Theory of Instruction*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Burton, J. (2005) 'The Importance of Teachers Writing on TESO', *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. 9 (2) [Iris leictreonach aimsithe ag <http://tesl-ej.org> 18/09/09]
- Cochran-Smith, M. and Lytle, S. (1999) 'Relationships of Knowledge and Practice: Teacher Learning in Communities', *Review of Research in Education*, 24, lgh. 249-305.
- Connelly, F.M. and Clandinin, D.J. (1999) (eag.) *Shaping a Professional Identity: Stories of Educational Practice*, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Dewey, J. (1933) *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*, Boston: D.C. Heath.
- Doecke, B., Brown, J., and Loughran, J. (2000) 'Teacher Talk: the Role of Story and Anecdote in Constructing Professional Knowledge for Beginning Teachers', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16, lgh. 335-348.
- Doyle, W. and Carter, K. (2003) 'Narrative and Learning to Teach: Implications for Teacher-Education Curriculum', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 35(2), lgh. 129-137.
- Éire (1999) *Curaclam na Bunscoile*, Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair.
- Eisner, E. (1994) *The Educational Imagination*, NY: McMillan.
- Evans, L. (2008) 'Professionalism, Professionalism and the Development of Education Professionals', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 56 (1), lgh. 20-38.
- Giroux, H. (1988) *Teachers as Intellectual*, New York: Bergin and Garvey.
- Gudmundsdottir, S. (1991) 'Story-maker, Story-teller: Narrative Structures in Curriculum', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1991, 23(3), lgh. 207-218.

- Hargreaves, A. (1996) 'Transforming Knowledge: Blurring the Boundaries between Research, Policy, and Practice', *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 8, lgh. 161-178.
- Hargreaves, A. (1998) 'The Emotional Practice of Teaching', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 14(8), lgh. 835-854.
- Horgan, K. and Bonfield, T. (2000) *Learning to Teach Reflectively*, Limerick: Mary Immaculate College, Curriculum Development Unit.
- Hoyle, E. (1975) 'Professionalism, Professionalism and Control in Teaching' in V. Houghton *et al.* (eag.) *Management in Education: the Management of Organisations and Individual*, London: Ward Lock Educational agus Open University Press.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Korthagen, F. and Vasalos, A. (2005) 'Levels in Reflection: Core Reflection as a Means to enhance Professional Growth', *Teachers and teaching: theory and practice*, 11(1), lgh. 47-71.
- Lundberg, M. A., Levin, B. B. and Harrington, H. L. (1999) *Who Learns What from Cases and How? The Research Base for Teaching and Learning with Cases*, Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Lyle, S. (2000) 'Narrative Understanding: Developing a Theoretical Context for Understanding how Children make Meaning in Classroom Settings', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 32 (1), lgh. 45-63.
- Lytle, S, and Cochran-Smith, M. (1992) 'Teacher Research as a Way of Knowing', *Harvard Educational Review*, 62, lgh. 447-474.
- Moon, J.A. (1999) *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development: Theory and Practice*, London: Kogan Page.
- Ochs, E. and Capps, L. (2001) *Living Narrative: Creating Lives in Everyday Storytelling*, London: Harvard University Press.
- Ó Cadhla, S. (1998) *Cá bhfuil Éire, Guth an Ghaisce i bPrós Sheáin Uí Ríordáin*, BÁC: An Clóchomhar Teo.
- Ó Coileáin, S. (1982) *Seán Ó Ríordáin, Beatha agus Saothar*, BÁC: An Clóchomhar Teo.
- Ó Ríordáin, S. (1979) 'Teangacha Príobhaideacha', *Scríobh*, 4, lch. 13-22.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988) *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Pinar, W., Reynolds, W., Slattery, P. and Taubman, P (1995) *Understanding Curriculum*, NY: Peter Lang.
- Preskill, S. (1998) 'Narratives of Teaching and the Quest for the Second Self', *Journal of Teacher Education*, November-December 1998, 49(5), lgh.334-356.
- Sarbin, T.R. (1986) 'The Narrative as a Root Metaphor for Psychology' in T.R. Sarbin (eag.) *Narrative Psychology*, New York: Praeger.

Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, NY: Basic Books.

Vygotsky, L. (1986) *Thought and Language*, (in eagar ag Alex Kozulin), Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1991) *Voices of the Mind: a Sociocultural Approach to Mediated Action*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

REVIEWS

A Gaelic Experiment: the Preparatory System 1926 - 1961 and Coláiste Moibhí, Valerie Jones, 2006 Dublin, The Woodfield Press (319 pages).

The first major educational policy initiative of Saorstát Éireann from 1920 to 1926 was centred on the gaelicisation of the nation's public institutions. The first steps in the implementation of the policy were entrusted to the newly created Department of Education, its first ministers, its most senior official, then known as a chief executive officer and its inspectors. In the euphoria of newly found independence, the gaelicisation policy had broad Dáil support and there was also broad support for giving the central role to the Department of Education in implementing the policy. The Department was a willing ally and very quickly reached a consensus as to where to begin – it would be necessary to begin with the teachers and in particular, the whole process of recruitment to teaching. The emphasis on recruitment led the Department to embark on a new experiment, the foundation of the preparatory colleges (*na coláistí ullmhúcháin*) which figured prominently in its deliberations from 1926 to 1960.

The Department's early Ministers and its officials formed the view quite early that while Irish courses for primary teachers would go some way to implementing the new policies in schools, the key to sustainable change lay with recruitment to what were then termed training colleges. The training colleges needed to be thoroughly gaelicised in order to ensure that all future teachers could not only teach Irish, but teach through Irish. In order to gaelicise the colleges the intake would have to be fluent Irish speakers and the vehicles for providing the training colleges with intakes of such capability were to be preparatory colleges, in other words, feeder colleges for the teacher training colleges. By embarking on this experiment, the Department created a storm.

The storm was created when the national aspiration came to be translated into reality. There was broad consensus around the cultural nationalistic ideal of a Gaelic Ireland. However, when plans were proposed to move from the ideal to real implementation, suddenly people realised implementation was going to impinge on their lives in a major way. There was conflict between those who wanted to change the nation's language and those who did not want change, there was a feeling that some people were going to gain from this policy and some people were going to lose, there was conflict within the civil service regarding the policy, there was suspicion within the Protestant community that the policy was designed to exclude them even more from the new regime and there was the Catholic hierarchy's position that education was their particular fiefdom and state interference was viewed with suspicion.

The story of how the Department navigated its way through that storm is told in Valerie Jones' book, *A Gaelic Experiment: The Preparatory System 1926 – 1961 and Coláiste Moibhí*. The book recounts in a most accessible manner the story of the gaelicisation of the Irish education system in the early decades of the twentieth century and in particular, it outlines the part played by the preparatory colleges in that process. The book gives an enlightening account of the role played by key political and civil service figures in creating the preparatory college system and its relationship with the development of wider educational policy under the new regime. The value of the author's approach is her first-hand knowledge of the preparatory colleges and, in particular, her knowledge of the part played in events by Coláiste Moibhí, the Church of Ireland preparatory college. The book is divided into two parts: the first section deals with the history of the colleges from their origins in 1926 to their

closure in 1961, and the second section focuses on Coláiste Móibhí, its principals, staff and its students. While all Catholic preparatory colleges were closed in 1961, Coláiste Moibhí remained in existence until 1995.

What were the preparatory colleges? First, they were State founded and funded secondary schools where secondary education was conducted entirely through Irish and where there was an emphasis on imbuing the students with a sense of pride in their Irish culture. Second, students were to be prepared for entry into the training colleges and all students had automatic rights to places if they passed their Leaving Certificate examination. It was determined that in 1926 seven residential colleges, entirely state funded, would be established: three for Catholic boys, Coláiste Chaoimhín (Dublin), Coláiste na Mumhan (Mallow) and Coláiste Éinde (Salthill, Galway), three for Catholic girls Coláiste Mhuire (Tourmakeady, Co. Mayo), Coláiste Bhríde (Falcarragh, Co. Donegal), Coláiste Íde (Ventry, Co. Kerry) and Coláiste Moibhí (Dublin) for Protestant boys and girls.

From the outset, the plan was controversial. The INTO opposed the system from the beginning and continued to oppose it for the almost forty years of its existence. The opposition was based on the perception that following recruitment the young person's development would be severely restricted by the subsequent seminary-like or novitiate approach. Initially, the Department's inspectorate opposed the plan as it doubted whether staffing could be found to provide a secondary education through Irish on such a scale. Department of Finance officials were also sceptical and this was manifested in a consistent questioning of the spending on it. It was also opposed in the Dáil by certain members who disliked the idea of taking boys and girls of fourteen and fifteen and putting them into institutions with the sole view of training them as teachers. The INTO view was put trenchantly by its general secretary, T J O Connell, TD, during his time in the Dáil.

However, the policy was driven by a triumvirate consisting of Earnán de Blaghd, Minister for Finance who consistently ignored his officials' advice on this matter, his colleague John Marcus O Sullivan, Minister for Education and Pádraic Ó Brolcháin, the most senior civil servant for education under the Provisional Government and one of the key players in education throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. The policy was also supported by some leading academics including Rev Dr Timothy Corcoran, Professor of Education in UCD from 1909 to 1943. Professor Corcoran believed in the policy of total immersion for all infant pupils and in the policy of recruiting native speakers as teachers. These views were aligned with the views of de Blaghd, O Sullivan and Ó Brolcháin.

The Department of Education wanted the colleges to open in 1926 but it was 1928 before all had opened. It was notable that this was to be a flagship initiative on a par with the opening of the model schools in the nineteenth century. There were similarities between the two institutions in that both were state foundations and both received lavish attention from the state. The colleges were established by means of Ministerial order and as the Catholic hierarchy would not countenance non-denominational colleges, the Church was given managerial control of them. The Department insisted, however, that it would be the employer of the staff and not the managers. The fact there was not to be a non-denominational college caused difficulties for the Protestant church authorities and at one stage they threatened to withdraw from the scheme. This threat resulted in the establishment of a separate college for Protestant pupils, Coláiste Moibhí. The issues for Protestants around the gaelicisation policy and the founding of the colleges make for very interesting reading in Valerie Jones' book. In particular, she highlights for the general public, the role played by very many leading Protestant Irish language enthusiasts who helped make the gaelicisation policy and the preparatory colleges acceptable to the general Protestant public.

There was a particular reason why the founding fathers of the preparatory colleges wanted to lavish attention on them and it was mainly to do with the perception of the Irish

language commonly held at the time. It was felt that many Irish people associated the Irish language with poverty, remoteness and backwardness. The founding fathers wanted to dispel that image by having the preparatory colleges in former Ascendancy big houses, by ensuring that they were equipped with modern resources and by giving their teachers a special status. The teachers in preparatory colleges were given the designation 'professor' and were paid a higher salary than secondary teachers. While Finance continued to question individual items of expenditure on the colleges, Ó Broilcháin with the help of Earnán de Blaghd pushed the expenditure through. Ó Broilcháin always responded generously to requests from the colleges to the extent that some of the institutions were given full sets of musical instruments to equip full college orchestras. The colleges were also provided with libraries and the students were well cared for. The food was good and healthy and much of it came from the extensive grounds of the colleges. Where possible, Irish-speaking doctors and nurses were assigned to the colleges and the cooks were recruited from Gaeltacht areas. In contrast to the general conditions that existed at the time for thousands of school-going children, these conditions were luxurious. The view that Ó Broilcháin took was that these colleges were to be showpieces, the educational equivalent of the Shannon hydroelectric scheme being undertaken by the government at this time.

Not only were the preparatory colleges provided with the best resources, but they also recruited the best students. The entrance examination to the colleges was conducted by inspectors from the Department of Education and only very able pupils were accepted. A very high standard of Irish was required and the other parts of the examination were based on the seventh class programme for primary school. An analysis of the early intakes into the colleges shows that most students came from outside the Gaeltacht areas. This disappointed Earnán de Blaghd, who in 1931 devised a scheme to facilitate a higher proportion of Gaeltacht students gain entrance. Valerie Jones hints that this form of positive discrimination fuelled resentments against the scheme amongst some teachers who wanted their own children to get places in these colleges.

The change of government in 1932 marked no discontinuity in policy in respect of Irish in the educational system. The new Minister for Education, Tomás Deirg, gave wholehearted support to the preparatory college system. The struggles of the system as it tried to cope with 1930's depression is treated very well in the book and makes for fascinating reading. Valerie Jones gives a very interesting description of the official opening of the new premises for Coláiste Moibhí in May, 1934. At this point it had moved to the Phoenix Park early in the year and here it occupied the west wing of the Royal Hibernian Military School, now St. Mary's Hospital. The Taoiseach, Éamon de Valera, officially opened the college, accompanied by the Minister for Education, Tomás Deirg and Padraic Ó Broilcháin. Also in attendance was John Kyle, one of the Department's inspectors who had been seconded as new principal of Coláiste Moibhí. Archbishop Gregg presided over the opening ceremony. Again, no expense was spared in fitting out the college and Finance covered the cost to the tune of £44,381-8s-3d. The work included tree planting and the building of a new road into the college. Valerie Jones posits that such a high profile opening was undertaken to demonstrate the government's generosity to the Protestant minority. It seemed to have worked as Archbishop Gregg thanked the government "cordially and heartily for agreeing with the greatest goodwill that there should be a Protestant preparatory college...We could not have expected anything more in courtesy and goodwill than we have received from the government of the Irish Free State".

The system remained in place until a decision to close the colleges was taken by Cabinet in 1959 under Jack Lynch's tenure as Minister for Education. Jack Lynch initiated three educational changes in 1958 that made the colleges redundant. In that year, he announced the introduction of an oral examination as part of the Leaving Certificate, to be introduced in 1960, and he announced that suitability tests for all entrants to training colleges would commence in 1959, thus ending the automatic right of entry into training colleges held

by preparatory college students. In the same year, he rescinded the marriage ban thus reducing the turnover of teachers in the system. In addition, there were to be more scholarships for Gaeltacht students to enter secondary schools and the preparatory colleges were to be converted to 'A' schools.

The Church of Ireland sought a derogation from the closure policy for specific reasons pertaining to their circumstances and this derogation was granted allowing Coláiste Moibhí to survive for another twenty-five years.

The second part of Valerie Jones' book deals specifically with the long and illustrious history of Coláiste Moibhí. She gives fascinating accounts of the heads of the College, all of whom were exceptional members of the Church of Ireland community whose contribution to education and the Irish language might not be known to the general public. She also gives fascinating accounts of life within the colleges for the students. Striking differences between Coláiste Moibhí and the Catholic colleges are highlighted - in particular, the fact that Coláiste Moibhí was staffed by lay people in contrast with the Catholic colleges which were staffed by members of religious orders. This meant that there was a more relaxed atmosphere in Coláiste Moibhí, a circumstance that was also helped by the fact that it was a co-educational institution. Indeed, Valerie Jones points out in the book that many of the students married each other in later life! In some of the Catholic girls' colleges, some of the students felt that they were in a convent novitiate. In contrast, in the Catholic boys' colleges, there was a high level of emphasis on Gaelic games which helped generate a more outgoing and positive atmosphere.

Were the colleges a success? Valerie Jones claims that they were very successful if they were to be measured against the aims of the founding fathers. The colleges provided a stream of students for the training colleges who were fluent in Irish and who could teach through Irish. These students were high achievers and attained highest marks regularly in the state in the Leaving Certificate examinations. The colleges developed among the students a love of Irish and respect for their country. By 1931, the Department was able to report that "Irish has become the everyday language of the four Catholic training colleges". While it would be hard to justify their existence in the twenty-first century, it can be argued that they played a valuable role in the education system of the early 1920s when policy dictated a revolutionary change in direction. By the mid twentieth-century policy priorities had changed and consequently their role had to change. As an experiment, the preparatory colleges were as intriguing as the model schools and Valerie Jones' book does them justice.

Séamus Ó hÉilí

Séamus is a Divisional Inspector with the Department of Education and Science. In *Oideas* 28 (1984) he contributed a paper on the preparatory colleges based on his MED research.

A History of Ireland's School Inspectorate, 1831-2008 John Coolahan (with Patrick F. O'Donovan), 2009, Dublin, Four Courts Press (352pp, €50.00.)

This book is a veritable tour de force – a history of the Irish school inspectorate (primary, intermediate/secondary and technical/vocational) over a period of 175 years – both before and after Independence. No history of Irish education on this scale has previously been attempted – and only John Coolahan and his collaborator, Patrick O'Donovan, could have carried it off so successfully. While a reader might expect a book of over 300 pages to be dense and impenetrable, this is not at all the case. It is an eminently readable and very well structured book. As is appropriate to the way the education system was administered until relatively recently, and in particular the way the inspectorate was organised, the three branches of the inspectorate are treated in separate chapters throughout most of the book. With different authors, this could have resulted in a sense of fragmentation and discontinuity. But their easy familiarity with the history of Irish education results in a book in which cross-referencing comes naturally and where links are provided where necessary. It is only in the recent two decades that an integrated inspectorate has finally emerged and the transition is well dealt with in Chapter 16. The more recent re-structuring of the inspectorate is documented in Chapter 17.

There is a wealth of new material throughout the book – the result of original and previously unidentified primary sources analysed by a historian who knows the Irish education scene inside out. This is as true of the chapters relating to the nineteenth century as it is of more recent years – and applies equally to all three branches of the inspectorate. There are parts of the book where the reader would love to engage with a fuller and more detailed treatment of some new material – but this was not possible – given that the book already runs to over 300 pages. Many parts of the book are like a taster menu – the reader goes away wishing for more. In most cases full referencing is provided so that the reader can delve deeper and research the situation in greater detail if he/she so wishes.

Chapters 3, 4 and 8 on the primary school inspectorate, contain a great deal of exciting material, indicating the role played by the inspectorate at times of significant educational change. In chapter 3, the role of the inspectorate in the introduction and implementation of the Payments by Results scheme is charted and discussed and, in Chapter 4, the issues associated with the introduction of the Revised Programme of 1900 are analysed. The tensions between Resident Commissioner Starkie (who drafted the Revised Programme of 1900 without reference to the inspectorate) and his Chief Inspectors, which led to the suspension of both chief inspectors - Edmund Downing and Alfred Purser - in 1900 are referred to in this chapter and the resulting loss of trust between the so-called office staff and the inspectorate were to haunt the system for decades to come. The challenge to the inspectorate in coping with the radical curricular changes introduced by the New Free State government in 1922 is explored in Chapter 8 and the inspectorate was again marginalised – this time by political agenda intent on using the education system to achieve nationalist linguistic and cultural objectives. However, within a short few years, the primary inspectorate itself was thoroughly imbued with a nationalist spirit and was arguably the most zealous group within the Irish public service to pursue the revivalist ideals.

Relationships between the inspectors and teachers were somewhat strained for much of the early years of independence. A quotation from the 1947 INTO Plan for Education summarises this well:

On the inspector's side there is only too often a traditional lack of sympathy, so that even the best teachers dread the inspector's visit.... Under the present system, we regret to say, the inspector gives practically no help to the teacher, and the majority of teachers have never got as

much as one really helpful suggestion from any inspector. The formal reports are vague, stereotyped and unreal, and though the need for improvement is often alleged the diagnosis is rarely accompanied by a prescription.

By the 1960s, however, the situation had improved, and the primary inspectors were acknowledged leaders within the Irish education system. Chapter 12 documents the role played by the inspectorate in modernising and reforming primary education – its curriculum and structure. The first draft of a White Paper on Education which was prepared by the primary inspectors in the late 1960s led to the introduction of the so-called New Curriculum of 1971 – a radically reformed child-centred curriculum which stood the country well for almost thirty years and the philosophy of which still underpins the primary curriculum. While some of the other recommendations of the 1960s White Paper were to languish for some years, the Paper sowed the seeds for a number of subsequent developments in Irish education – including the development of educational facilities and support for children with special needs and for travellers; the introduction of Boards of Management in the mid 1970s, and ultimately, the diversification of the system with the introduction of Gaelscoileanna and multi-denominational schools. During this period the inspectorate was fortunate to have among its ranks some outstanding visionaries and educators and their role in providing leadership in a changing educational world is recognised in Chapter 12.

The pro-active role of the primary inspectorate and of the vocational/technical inspectors is well documented and contrasts with the more passive role of the secondary inspectorate. The secondary inspectorate is the youngest of the three branches, dating back to the early years of the twentieth century. For most of its existence, it concentrated primarily on the Public Examinations – preparing the examination papers, administering them and correcting or monitoring the marking of the scripts. The secondary inspectors do not appear to have had as strong an influence on policy issues as their primary and vocational counterparts, although there were some periods in the late 1960s and early 1970s when they played an important role in the development and re-structuring of second level education. Their relatively limited influence on policy and administration issues was referred to by John Harris, adviser to Minister Gemma Hussey in the 1980s, and he also pointed to a regrettable gulf which sometimes existed between the inspectorate and the administrative staff. While the inspectorate generally might not have been given as much of a voice in educational reform as they might have deserved or wished for, chapters 12 and 14 show that where individual inspectors showed vision and leadership, they succeeded in influencing and effecting change.

Chapters 10, 14 and 15, on the technical/vocational inspectorate and on the psychological service, are particularly valuable – little has been written to date about these branches. The first technical inspectors were appointed shortly after the passing of the 1900 Technical Instruction Act and all the initial appointees were Englishmen – in contrast to the national school inspectorate where the successful candidates were almost invariably Irish. The role of the technical inspectorate was more varied than that of their secondary/intermediate colleagues, with one inspector reporting in 1908 that his work for the year included “inspection duty, test examinations, visits of inquiry, office work, correspondence, and occasional visits as judge at county shows”. Other duties of the technical inspectorate included such roles as advisors on the design of science laboratories, of new programmes, and reporting on developments in technical instruction.

The chapters relating to the period from 1960 onwards draw on some hitherto unavailable primary sources and throw new light on aspects of educational development in the last twenty years. There is much new material for the initiated and a whole new history for the uninitiated in these chapters. There is an element of a “whistle-stop tour” about these chapters, but the wide-ranging nature of this book precluded a fuller engagement with some of the material. Fortunately however, another recent publication will satisfy some of the

reader's curiosity about some issues which are only briefly alluded to in Coolahan's history. John Walsh's book "*The Politics of Expansion: the transformation of educational policy in the Republic of Ireland, 1957-1972*", published in 2009 by Manchester University Press, analyses the fifteen year period in question in considerable depth and provides further insights on some of the issues hinted at in Coolahan and O'Donovan. For example, Walsh documents the setting up in 1958 by Minister for Education Jack Lynch of a review of the system of inspection of national school teachers. This review led to the removal in 1959 of the Merit Mark system whereby teachers had been marked for each subject on a scale of marks ranging from Very Satisfactory to Non-Satisfactory. The correspondence between the Minister and the Catholic Bishops about this issue, some of which is reproduced in Walsh's book, serves as a reminder of the powerful role of the Catholic Church in Irish education throughout the twentieth century.

The authors advert in the later chapters of the book to a lack of debate, discussion or action arising from some key documents which provide the underpinning of this book. They may, however, have underestimated the difficulty faced by some external commentators or researchers in accessing contemporary documents relating to education throughout the twentieth century. The Department of Education is not noted for its alacrity in transferring its records to the National Archive so that in relation to some key documents or background papers it has not been easy to access them, even after the thirty-year moratorium period had passed. It was not until the Freedom of Information Act in 1998 that the Department released much of the contemporary material which had policy implications. The reluctance of the Department to make available relevant internal material – even to committees and advisory groups set up by government such as the Investment in Education team in the 1960s, the Curriculum and Examinaton Board in the 1980s, or the Educational Disadvantage Committee (2002-2005) has often constrained educational researchers. At various times throughout the twentieth century, relevant background materials were either refused to researchers or advisory groups, citing the Official Secrets Act, or selectively drip-fed. Perhaps this reflected a sense of resentment on the part of the officialdom, including the inspectorate, to perceived intrusion by outsiders on their role?

The Appendix includes a list, in alphabetical order, of every inspector ever employed in the primary, secondary, vocational and psychological branch. This list of almost 900 inspectors is indicative of the delving and digging carried out by the authors when carrying out this study. It is interesting to note that slightly less than twenty-per cent of all inspectors were women – and it is not unreasonable to speculate that most of these women are relatively recent appointments. As in other branches of public administration, one notes the shortage of women in senior positions in the inspectorate throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. This is partially explained by the marriage bar which was not lifted for civil servants (including the inspectorate) until 1973. However, there will be no such excuse in the 21st century – when we expect to see women inspectors playing an equal role with their male colleagues in running the educational system. Who knows, Ireland may even have a female Chief Inspector within the next few decades?

This *History of Ireland's School Inspectorate* documents the major role played by the inspectorate in the development of Irish education over a period of 175 years. It pays tribute to and recognises the significant contribution made by many individual inspectors and it is great to see their contribution to Irish education recorded for posterity. We owe a debt of gratitude (yet again) to John Coolahan and Patrick O'Donovan, for the comprehensive coverage and masterly analysis of an aspect of Irish education which has been previously neglected.

Áine Hyland

Áine Hyland was Professor of Education in University College Cork from 1993 to 2006 and Vice-President (Academic) of the University from 1999 to 2006. Her late father was primary inspector Tomás Ó Domhnalláin who founded *Oideas* in 1968 and was our first editor.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Pádraig de Bhál, School of Education, Trinity College Dublin.

An Dr Séamus Ó Canainn, Director, Blackrock Education Centre

Peadar Crowley, Regional Director, NEPS

Pádraig Mac Fhlannchadha, Divisional Inspector, DES

An Dr Treasa Uí Chuir, Divisional Inspector, DES

An Dr Pádraig Ó Conchubhair, Editor, Divisional Inspector, DES.