SCoTENS

THE STANDING CONFERENCE ON TEACHER EDUCATION, NORTH AND SOUTH

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

The Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS)

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | **EDUCATION**
AGUS SCILEANNA | **AND SKILLS**

SCoTENS Steering Committee members and Conference Speakers 2017

Back row: Dr Maria Campbell, Ms Ruth Taillon, Prof Teresa O'Doherty, Dr Conor Galvin, Prof Linda Clarke and Dr Pamela Cowan

Front row: Dr Noel Purdy, Prof Coleen McLaughlin, Prof Viv Ellis and Prof Kathy Hall

Secretariat provided and report published by the CENTRE FOR CROSS BORDER STUDIES

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CHAIRPERSONS' INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2017 annual report of SCoTENS (the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South). This annual report includes details of the successful student teacher exchange, the latest cross-border seed funding research projects and highlights from our annual conference 2017.

The 15th annual SCoTENS conference was held in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk on Friday 13th and Saturday 14th October 2017. The theme for this year's conference was "Educational Innovation: The Challenge of Evidence-Informed Change."
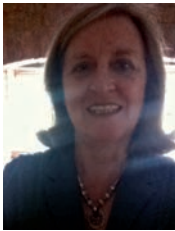
Professor Kathy Hall   **Dr Noel Purdy**

We were delighted to welcome two distinguished keynote speakers to this year's conference: Professor Colleen McLaughlin, Director of Education Innovation and leader of the Educational Reform and Innovation team at the University of Cambridge, and Professor Viv Ellis, Professor of Educational Leadership at King's College, London.

The conference also included three workshops, each co-led by partners from north and south of the Irish border, and addressing the themes of "Developing Confidence in Computational Thinking", "The PLAI Study: Playful Learning Across Ireland" and "Teacher Education: Exploring the Professional Development of School Leaders".

Following its pilot in 2016, the conference also featured a welcome return of the doctoral roundtable which allowed education doctoral students from both sides of the border to present their research plans and/or early findings, to engage in discussion with peers, and to receive some valuable constructive feedback from the two keynote speakers who participated in the session. From the feedback received this year and last, it seems that the doctoral roundtable is set to become a regular feature of the annual SCoTENS conference, offering doctoral students the opportunity to present, to engage in critical debate, and to discover the unique cross-border network of the SCoTENS community.

The final element of the conference, the panel discussion, has also become something of a SCoTENS tradition in recent years. This year the panel was chaired by Dr Conor Galvin (UCD), and comprised Prof Viv Ellis as well as Dr Glenda Walsh (Stranmillis), Ms Michelle Sliney (Principal, Gaelcholáiste Choilm, Ballincollig, Co. Cork) and Ms Shauna McGill (Ulster University). As ever, the initial statements by each panellist led to a wide-ranging discussion prompted by questions from delegates.

In her opening keynote address entitled "Evidence, Innovation and People in Schools – the Issues and Challenges", Professor Colleen McLaughlin (University of Cambridge) began by considering the conditions which stimulate constructive innovation within our current education policy context. These conditions are characterised by a willingness to view our educational context differently and in a way which challenges the *status quo*. There is also a need for leadership which values alternative approaches and ways of thinking. The role of evidence in innovation is key: helping to identify the questions as well as the possible solutions. For major changes, rigorous research evidence is required. However Professor McLaughlin acknowledged that there was a vigorous debate about the nature of evidence, with a current tendency to favour the experimental scientific model (and the randomised control trial) which fails to capture the nuanced complexity of everyday classrooms. Professor McLaughlin finished her keynote by presenting two recent examples of innovation within the English context (The London Challenge and the Cambridge Cluster) which had been successful despite an often risk-averse market-driven educational climate.

In the second keynote address entitled "Innovation, evidence and reform: Interrogating the vocabulary of change in teacher education" Professor Viv Ellis (King's College, London) began by providing a detailed examination of the vocabulary: innovation, reform, evidence, evidence-based. He noted that evidence is a highly contested notion and functions rhetorically. The very term "evidence", he argued, is often used to further particular political agendas, with data used and at times mis-used in the process. He suggested that teacher education needed to develop a clearer understanding of policy-making as a complex political activity, must be aware of the danger of "disruptive innovation", and must become as rhetorically adept as the reformers themselves, ready to innovate and embrace change in non-defensive ways, and committed to the notion that we must get our relationship with the teaching profession right.

SCoTENS is funded by the Department of Education and Skills in the Republic of Ireland, and through the subscriptions of our affiliated institutions and organisations. We are much indebted to the generosity of these funders for their on-going commitment to supporting the work of cross-border conferences, exchanges and research in the teacher education sector. We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the staff of the Centre for Cross Border Studies who provide administrative support for SCoTENS, especially Ruth Taillon, Eimear Donnelly and Tricia Kelly and for their tireless commitment, enthusiasm and expertise.

We would also like to thank the management and staff of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk for their service and McCuskers Pro Audio, who provided recordings of the keynotes which are available on the SCoTENS website.

Finally, we would wish to thank all our fellow members of the SCoTENS steering committee who so willingly give of their time and talents throughout the year to ensure that SCoTENS continues to grow in influence and significance as a valued cross-border space for learning, sharing and exchange. As we look to the future in times of challenging financial strictures, we commend to you this annual report as evidence of the continued value of the educational innovation facilitated by SCoTENS in 2017.

2017 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The 15th Annual SCoTENS Conference on the theme, Educational Innovation: The Challenge of evidence –informed change, took place on 13 and 14 October 2017. Approximately 100 people attended the conference in Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk.

All presentations; photographs, recordings and publications are available to view and download from www.scotens.org

SCoTENS co-Chairs and Keynote speakers
Dr Noel Purdy, Prof Coleen McLaughlin, Prof Viv Ellis and Prof Kathy Hall

OPENING ADDRESS:
Evidence, innovation and care in schools - the issues and challenges

Professor Colleen McLaughlin,
University of Cambridge

Colleen has for the last two years led a team at Cambridge focusing upon educational reform and working in partnership with mainly international governments and organisations to help them to develop aspects of their educational work. She has been a head of Department at the University of Sussex and a Deputy Head of Faculty at Cambridge. She has also worked extensively on issues of care, social and emotional development in schools.
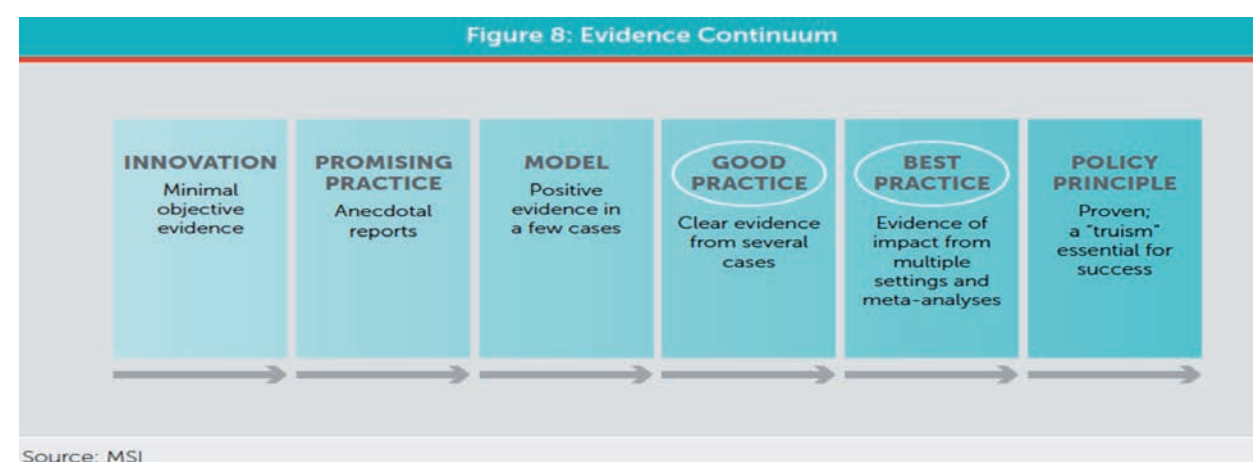
There is much debate today about change, innovation and reform. Colleen began by outlining the format and questions to be addressed in her talk. These included looking at the conditions to stimulate constructive innovation and change. The current context is important and so we need to examine the beliefs underpinning current policy as well as asking if there has been innovation and what the unintended consequences might be. The role of evidence is also a key question.

The conditions which stimulate innovation and change.
She began by commenting on the conditions which stimulate creative and innovative thinking, and which may therefore lead to change. The ability to

reflect upon current thinking and practice is key. One needs to be willing to see things differently and talk about it. There also needs to be leadership that values difference, alternative ways of thinking and challenge. There then needs to be space and opportunity to have these discussions. We know that collaborative spaces and practices are key here. These lead to a willingness to experiment and take risks.

Evidence plays a role at every stage. It helps us formulate the issues we are addressing as well as examine the consequences of changes. All this requires a sophisticated knowledge of people, systems, and change processes, as well as the content of what is being worked on.

Figure 8: Evidence Continuum

Source: MSI

(available at https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/evidence-continuum)

Evidence can be used in different ways and the diagram above illustrates this. It shows that in order to make big policy changes, rigorous evidence should be drawn upon. There are, of course, huge debates to be had here about what counts as evidence. Today there is a tendency to use only a limited model of impact research based on the experimental scientific method i.e. the randomised control trial. This only tells us certain things and does not capture the detail and complexity of classroom practice.

Beliefs underpinning policy changes
The next section of the talk was an exploration of our current policy context in England and Northern Ireland. If we examine the core beliefs that drive current changes in policy, we see the following:

- a belief in *the market model* – it has become known as the neo-Liberal framework. It is based upon the marketisation of schools and a belief in competition and high accountability as ways of bringing about change. Standards are set and competitive mechanisms used to 'drive up' standards. Accountability mechanisms driven by comparison and grading are used widely. In addition, there is deregulation and a rhetoric of choice and autonomy, although these are clearly contained and regulated through accountability.

- *Evidence and measurement*
In this model, outcomes are measured and evidence is used to compare. The international data programmes such as PISA and TIMMS began as ways of providing data to systems for improvement but the introduction of league tables has dominated the purposes and drivers now. We need a range of evidence sources, methods and questions, which include using mixed methods. Accountability and 'What difference did it make?' questions are important. Impact questions, including exploring the impact on people, are also important as is timescale. There is no holy grail.

- *View of people and processes*
People are seen as being motivated to strive through competition and rewards which, it is believed, shape behaviour. Change is perceived as having to be driven and is not seen as a natural process.

These beliefs have driven innovations or policy changes in the last decade, such as the following:

- Autonomous academies based on parental choice
- Competition between schools
- Inspection
- Testing of students at regular interval
- Initiatives to close the attainment gap between poor and more affluent students
- Raising standards
- Large regional initiatives such as the London Challenge – also in Manchester and Wales now
- Curriculum changes

Professor McLaughlin then went on to outline some of the consequences, possibly unintended, that have occurred as a result and have in many ways caused another set of very difficult challenges. The accountability mechanisms have created an overload of a certain sort of bureaucracy and measurement. These have led often to great risk aversion and a drive for survival and a decrease in risk taking. There are tensions between the aims of autonomy and control. The impact on people in the system has not necessarily been positive. We now in England have low rates of teacher retention and low satisfaction of both staff and students. The constant shifts in policy have led to a hype cycle which tends not to bring about real depth of change. In addition, the aims of many of the policies have not been achieved e.g. the reduction in inequalities.
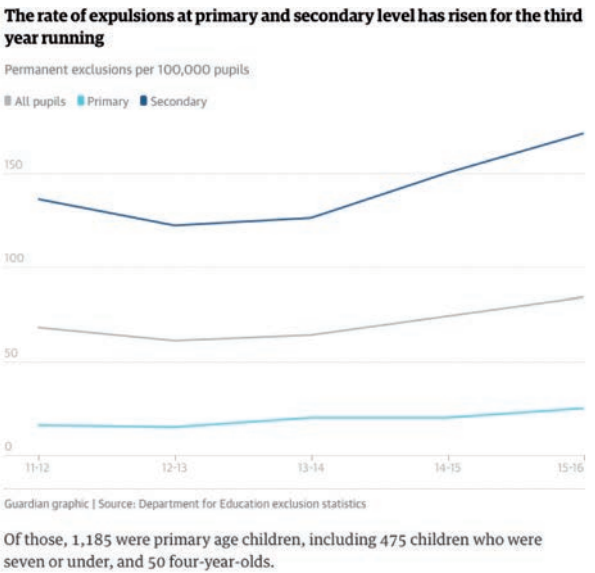
Gartner's Hype Cycle in Ruby and McLaughlin (2014),
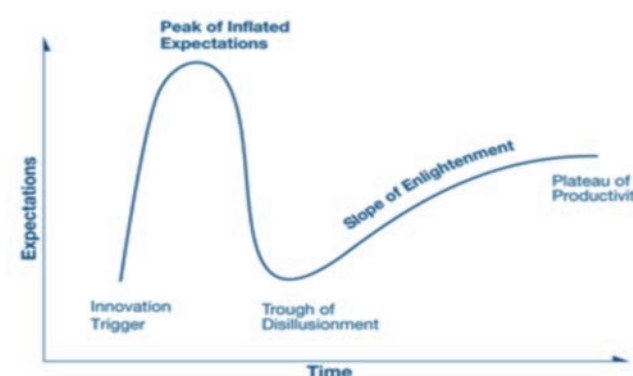
She gave the very concrete example of exclusions from school. There were 6,685 exclusions from school in 2015-16, an increase of 5,785 on the previous year. This is a trend – school exclusions have risen every year since 2012. Since school survival depends on good academic outcomes, students who are vulnerable have become 'undesirable' and it has become more important to exclude than to include.

Exclusions from school 2011 - 2016

The rate of expulsions at primary and secondary level has risen for the third year running

Permanent exclusions per 100,000 pupils

▥ All pupils ▤ Primary ▧ Secondary

Guardian graphic | Source: Department for Education exclusion statistics

Of those, 1,185 were primary age children, including 475 children who were seven or under, and 50 four-year-olds.

Almost a third of primary exclusions for assault against an adult - most common reason was persistently disruptive behaviour.
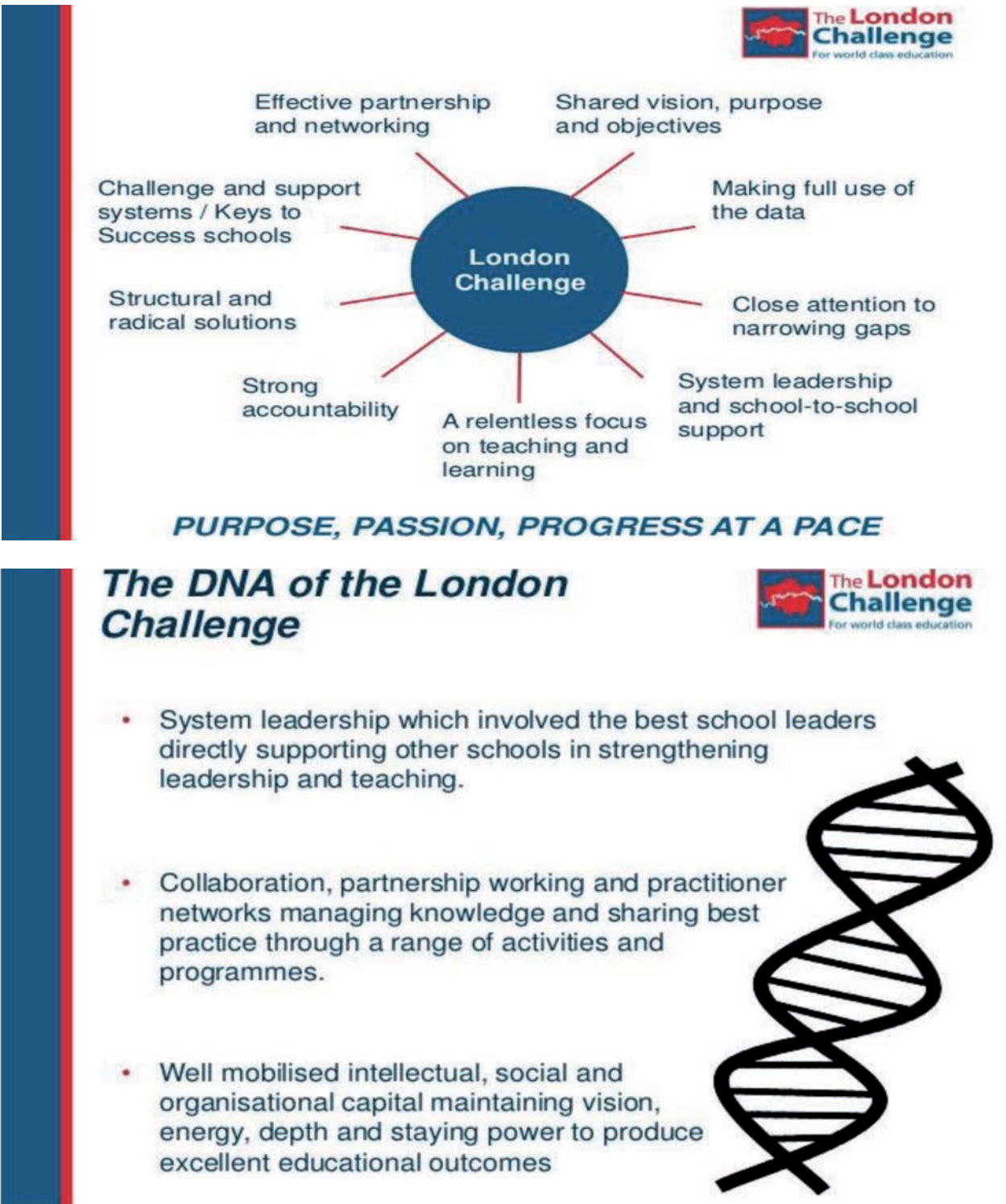
Total number went up by just under 1,000 in 2015-16 compared with the previous year

From 5,795 in 2014/15 to 6,685

Equivalent of **35.2 exclusions a day,** up from an average of 30.5. (DfE)

She argued that we need innovation but we also need a deeper and more far reaching educational response to social change. The gap between children's attainments in school and the lifelong consequences of that are now major issues. We need to be honest about the social consequences of educational policies and become reflective and innovative in response.

The final part of the talk explored *two different models of innovation and change*. First the London Challenge and second the innovation hub in Cambridge. These were used to test some of the earlier points against.

The London Challenge
This was based on Hargreaves' 2012 theory of change which had a partnership dimension (schools should support each other, and partnerships should be with other professionals too), a professional development dimension (teachers are key and need support) and a collaborative capital dimension (build in collaboration at all levels). It had an underlying theory of the transfer of innovative or best practice (Fielding et al, 2005). This stated that social processes are sustained by relationships and trust; personal and inter-personal processes have to engage with our sense of teacher and institutional identity; schools have to provide support for learner engagement in experimenting and it must be understood and planned to be sustained over time for it takes longer than expected. The diagram below demonstrates the approach:

PURPOSE, PASSION, PROGRESS AT A PACE

The DNA of the London Challenge

- System leadership which involved the best school leaders directly supporting other schools in strengthening leadership and teaching.

- Collaboration, partnership working and practitioner networks managing knowledge and sharing best practice through a range of activities and programmes.

- Well mobilised intellectual, social and organisational capital maintaining vision, energy, depth and staying power to produce excellent educational outcomes

The evaluation of the London Challenge in 2012 stated that, 'Perhaps the most effective aspect of City Challenge was that it recognised that people, and schools, tend to thrive when they feel trusted, supported and encouraged. The ethos of the programme, in which successes were celebrated and it was recognised that if teachers are to inspire pupils they themselves need to be motivated and inspired, was a key factor in its success' (p.xi). The London Challenge used a different set of strategies: school-to-school collaboration, a belief that the educational problems facing urban areas should be addressed at area level, for all schools in that area, with an emphasis on leadership and with support from external informed professionals, either local or national.

The Cambridge Cluster

The other example Prof McLaughlin used is one that is about innovation based on 'traditional' underpinnings. What has happened is that around Cambridge a huge innovation ecosystem has arisen and some of the statistics are below.

Much has been said about how and why this has happened. The University has operated on certain key values. The first is that autonomy and lack of restriction are very important. It wants to provide the staff and students with the maximum degree of autonomy and space to innovate in. This is encouraged in dialogue and in close contact between people. The second key value is experimentation and the encouragement of risk taking. Individuals are encouraged and supported to try out new ideas and, if necessary, form businesses. The final values are high standards of content knowledge, as well as teamwork. Science discoveries are made in teams, rarely by individuals.

Conclusions

Professor McLaughlin ended by suggesting that these two powerful examples demonstrated some of the propositions put forward about the importance of the conditions for innovation. She said that if we wanted to innovate appropriately to adapt to the challenges young people face, it was not a question of abandoning some of the traditional pursuits of schools i.e. high aspirations regarding pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. However, the conditions we have created seem to be the antithesis of what is needed. There is little autonomy, experimentation, or safe spaces for dialogue and risk taking. We need to recognise what we have created and the consequences. We need to aim to be inclusive and create environments in school which enable all aspects of development to flourish – social emotion and cognitive.
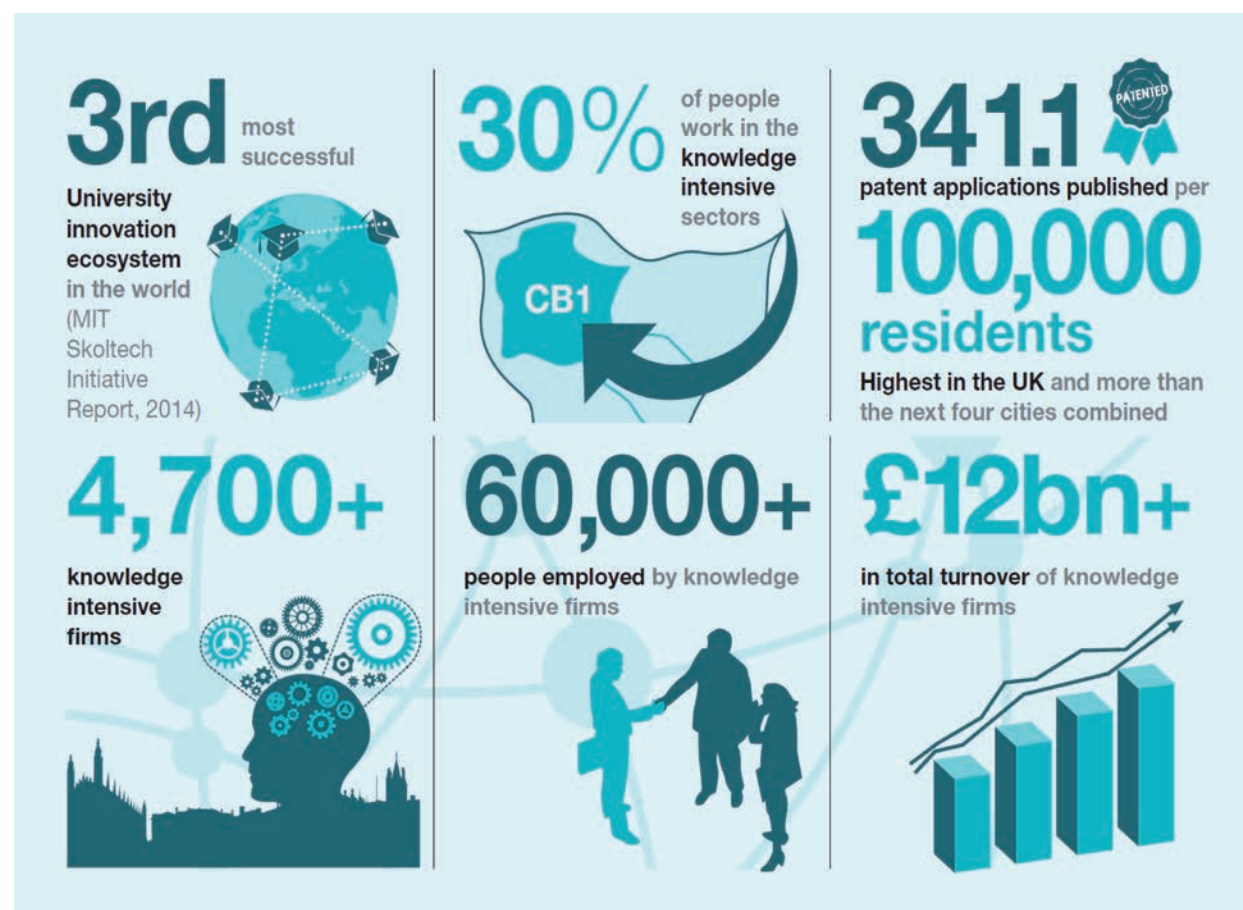
CLOSING ADDRESS:

Innovation, evidence, reform:
Keywords in the vocabulary of change in teacher education

Professor Viv Ellis, King's College London

Some words occur with high frequency in our public discourse about change in education, and change in teacher education, particularly. But their frequency alone does not necessarily tell us much about the speaker's or writer's position on the issues. It is their function as 'keywords' that is significant. 'Keywords' as an idea comes from the work of Welsh cultural studies scholar Raymond Williams who used the term to describe those words that bind us together in conversations at a superficial level but that nonetheless represent significant fractures in our culture and sometimes unexpected and highly consequential divergences in meaning. Philosophers use the term 'essentially contested concepts' to represent a similar phenomenon but Williams's Marxian, cultural perspective placed greater emphasis on the relationships between history, political economy and meaning-making.

You can probably think of a bunch of words that crop up all the time in debates about change in teacher education - in Ireland and internationally. My view is that *innovation, evidence* and *reform* are three especially important keywords in our vocabulary of change in teacher education and that they remind us of the importance of paying attention to language when problematising taken-for-granted assumptions in our professional discourse. Understanding keywords like these not only helps us to understand the different frames of reference and values embedded in other people's arguments about social justice, equity and educational change, for example; developing this understanding also helps us to establish and delineate our own frames of reference more clearly and more effectively design our own actions for change.

Of these three keywords, the only one that Williams dealt with back in the 1970s was *reform*. Williams reminded us that, historically, in English there are two main senses at play: the religious one of a 'return to an ideal state', eliminating heretical and corrupt revisions; and the sense of changing shape and re-making in response to morally-framed imperatives. We see both of these senses in the uses of *reform* in teacher education. As Stephen Ball has pointed out, *reform* plays into commitments to 'cultural restorationism' in modern conservatism and aligns with broader cultural and political trends towards traditionalism

(often contrasted with progressivism). On the other hand, *reform* in teacher education is often presented through an equity frame where urgent and disruptive changes are seen as necessary to increase social mobility, provide fairer access to high quality education and improve 'outcomes' for the economically and culturally 'disadvantaged'. Internationally, some politicians have been extremely good at integrating both of these emphases in the rhetorical promotion of teacher education *reform* policy; Michael Gove in England, from 2010 to 2013, is a good example of a politician in this category.

Similarly, it is often difficult to have a conversation about any aspect of education these days without finding the word *evidence* in your mouth. Evidence-based or evidence-informed practice has migrated from medicine, where it began as a movement in the 1970s, into education and teacher education too. One of the challenges that evidence-based medicine presented to doctors was in requiring an opening-out and democratising of the deliberations and decision-making behind diagnosis and treatment. Fundamentally, it was an assault on quackery. The migrations of evidence-based approaches into education, however, have often relied on oversimplifications of the relationship between research and practice that have long been troubled in medicine. We may have a good understanding of what does or doesn't 'work' for whole populations – what the

probabilities are of following a particular course of action or treatment plan at an epidemiological level. But that doesn't necessarily help us if we are a GP, for example, facing a specific patient who is both disclosing and concealing their history (clinical and otherwise). Like that GP, we probably need teachers who know what the epidemiological arguments are but that are also highly attuned to interpreting complex, specific social situations and making judgements. To that extent, preparing teachers might be more like preparing primary care physicians than it is preparing secondary care specialists (oncologists, orthopaedic surgeons, etc.). As Justin Parkhurst has recently shown in his excellent and open-access (i.e. free) book, *The Politics of Evidence*, there isn't a simple relationship between evidence and policy either. Policy decisions are necessarily mediated through systems of values; they are not mere technical decisions.

Which brings me to *innovation*. For several years now, I've been studying the apparent *innovation* of computer game-like, avatar simulations in teacher education. My interest in this phenomenon was stimulated by colleagues at Teachers College in New York who showed me some of the US teacher ed programmes exploiting computer simulation technologies in pre-service teacher education programmes, particularly for training in classroom and 'behaviour' management. As with most things, it was only a matter of time before these things showed up on this side of the Atlantic and last year I noticed the first serious marketing of computer-based simulation technology to the British initial teacher education market. The marketing plan drew on a pilot at one of the large Faculties of Education in England and included an endorsement from the Dean.

The first thing that would strike you about this 'innovative' and supposedly 'cutting edge' product, as it was shown in the marketing video, was how crude it was technologically. The avatars were poorly rendered in low resolution and heavy pixellation; they reminded me of the 1990s video games that I didn't play. Moreover, the avatars themselves seemed to be operated in real-time by

someone the company called a 'simulation specialist' – a person with a fairly limited range of voice acting skills, on the evidence of the video – who operated the avatars with a joystick and voiced them in response to the live webcam feed of a student teacher teaching (via a connection that looked like it had some bandwidth problems). So we're not talking advanced Artificial Intelligence algorithms here. Indeed, you had to book a time-slot with the company so that the simulation specialist was online and ready and presumably not auditioning for Emmerdale or a Shake 'n' Vac commercial. In many ways, this 'innovative' product, intended as a simulation of classroom teaching for the initial teacher education market, wasn't very innovative at all. Old and somewhat embarrassing technology but used for the first time in this context.

The literacy researcher Ilana Snyder, writing about the use of technology in school classrooms generally, once described this phenomenon as the 'fetishization of novelty'. So often, in education, this is what *innovation* has come to mean: doing something differently with technology just for the heck of it or sometimes under the guise of doing something faster, cheaper or more efficiently. But *innovation,* perhaps especially as the fetishization of novelty, has consequences.

In the US, computer-based simulation packages in teacher education are often associated with research programmes that promote a 'safe to teach' approach to pre-service teacher education. This is an approach that seeks to eliminate all risk from teacher preparation whose advocates talk about not 'letting loose' new teachers on classes until they become 'perfect' through the deliberate practice and rehearsal of key classroom routines. One of the more benign versions of this approach is aligned with the Teaching Works programme led by Deborah Ball at the University of Michigan.

It is in the idea of 'safe to teach' that one of the problems with this general approach is revealed which is that any form of teacher preparation that seeks to have 'perfect' new teachers is doomed to fail. It's an extremely good idea to plan; an extremely good idea to 'practice' and 'rehearse';

but any kind of initial teacher education that believes it's possible to produce 'perfect' new teachers who are guaranteed to be 100% safe (or even proportionately more safe than teachers from programmes that don't use avatar simulations) probably don't understand human beings never mind pre-service teacher education.

That's not to say that seeking to make teachers as 'classroom ready' as possible is a bad thing. However, promoting an *innovation* on the basis that it will allow prospective teachers to 'perfect' their practice before they have entered the practice field of a school pre-supposes that the children, parents and complex situations they will encounter will be as controlled and predictable as, say, flying an aircraft. Indeed, advocates of this approach to teacher development often make the comparison with flight simulator training in the aviation industry where pilots learn how to fly an aircraft in the simulator before taking control in the cockpit of a real aircraft.

Computer simulations using avatars in teacher education have also been criticised for perpetuating crude racial stereotypes. The avatars who have needed 'behaviour management' and 'disciplining' seem to have been drawn disproportionately from African American and Latino backgrounds. To compound this stereotyping, in the low-tech simulation products, young white women often operate these poorly-behaved 'avatars of colour', opening themselves up to allegations of 'performing black-face'. Surely what would be more useful for the young white women who still form the majority of the teaching profession in the US and the UK would be opportunities to learn about the different communities they will teach in schools and some training in racial self-awareness?

So are computer simulation products in teacher education that use avatars an *innovation*?

I would say no. They might claim to be novel but these technologies are more than ten years old in the teacher education setting and much, much older in digital media generally. In any event, too, in a public sector profession such as teaching,

innovation has to mean more than fetishizing novelty or creating a new market for entrepreneurs selling us something we didn't realise we needed. To use the OECD definition of public sector innovation, some new public value has to be created; the way we prepare teachers has to be significantly enhanced for any justifiable extra cost. I would say at this stage, avatar-based computer simulations in teacher education don't meet this test. I would also say that in the way these simulations can perpetuate crude racial stereotyping, they are also socially irresponsible.

Recent shifts in understanding of creativity in science have emphasised the socially responsible dimensions of *innovation* and the importance of the inclusion of all stakeholders for sustainability. Socially responsible and sustainable innovation. What would this form of *innovation* look like in teacher education? Very unlike the fetishizations of novelty that we have become used to, I would venture. It is only through the interrogation of the vocabulary of change in teacher education – carefully examining keywords such as these – that we can begin to work out how to plan for change that doesn't rely on assumed but slippery meanings with socially irresponsible effects. That's why the concept of keywords is useful to us in thinking about change in teacher education and why we need to pay greater attention to language and, particularly, the meanings of concepts such as *innovation*, *evidence* and *reform*.

WORKSHOPS

Three workshops, each jointly facilitated by colleagues from both sides of the border, were run concurrently on both days of the conference – thus allowing all delegates to participate in their choice of two of the workshops.

WORKSHOP 1: Developing confidence in Computational Thinking

Dr Pamela Cowan, PGCE Course Director, Queen's University Belfast and **Dr Richard Millwood**, Assistant Professor, Computer Science and Statistics, Trinity College Dublin

This workshop reported on the CTwins project - a cross-border experience for teachers who are willing but unconfident in computing. Participants were invited to playfully work in pairs to create computer programs and to discuss the place of Computational Thinking across the curriculum.

Delegates participate at conference workshop

Mr Tomás O Ruairc and Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith participate at one of the conference workshops

WORKSHOP 2: THE PLAI Study: Playful Learning Across Ireland

Dr Jacqueline Fallon, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and **Dr Glenda Walsh**, Head of Early Years Education and Principal Lecturer, Stranmillis University College.

In an attempt to resolve some of the lingering tensions involved in implementing play as learning in early years classrooms across the island of Ireland, a shared form of professional development known as 'Playful Learning' was delivered together to a group of student teachers in the final years of their degree programme both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The professional development programme was two-fold: it involved

a shared programme of study on up-to-date research and practices on playful learning and teaching and a playful learning intervention, where students, both North and South, had the opportunity to plan and implement a series of playful learning experiences in an early years classroom/setting of their choice. This workshop reported on the impact of such an intervention on student teachers' beliefs and practices about playful approaches to teaching and learning and attempted to unpick the underpinning features of a high quality playful learning approach in practice.

WORKSHOP 3: Teacher Education: Exploring the Professional Development of School Leaders

Dr Sam McGuinness, Former Head of the School of Education, Ulster University and **Professor Gerry Mac Ruairc**, Centre for School Leadership.

This workshop explored the structure of and rationale for two recent approaches to the professional development of school leaders North and South of the border – the lattice approach to leadership development from Graduate Certificate to Postgraduate Diploma in Headship MEd in Ulster University to the recently devised Postgraduate Diploma in School Leadership (PDSL) in association with the Centre for School Leadership (CSL), the Department of Education and Skills and a consortium of three universities, NUI Galway, University College Dublin and University of Limerick.

LAUNCH OF PUBLICATIONS

At the end of day one, conference delegates gathered at an evening reception at which the 2016 Annual Report and Teacher educator professional learning: Shaping the conversation of teacher education? were launched. Both reports are available to download at:

http://scotens.org/conferences/2017-educational-innovation-the-challenge-of-evidence-informed-change/

Ms Ruth Taillon, Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies and the SCoTENS co-Chairs

Report authors with co-Chairs SCoTENS and Dr Joanne Moles

The 2016 Annual Report was launched by Ruth Taillon, Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies and Ruth used this opportunity to highlight current funding difficulties and the challenges ahead under BREXIT.

Teacher educator professional learning: Shaping the conversation of teacher education? was launched by Dr Joanne MOLES, Co-Director PG Mentoring Programme, University of Limerick.

The purpose of this study was to examine the professional learning of individual teacher educators scaffolded within a developing PLC. The learning focus was the pedagogical area of communication. We were interested in how this professional learning might then influence our individual pedagogical practices with pre-service teachers. Insight into both the aspects of professional learning that teacher educators implement in their teacher education practices (what) and the influence of the professional learning process on individual approaches (how) can contribute to our understanding of features of effective professional learning for teacher educators. Understanding how we as teacher educators develop our practices to enhance student learning in physical education teacher education (PETE) can inform the design of future professional learning programmes for teacher educators.Specific research questions were: What are physical education teacher educator experiences of professional learning within a community focused on communication? And how do physical education teacher educators perceive the influence of this professional learning on their pedagogical approaches with pre-service teachers?

PANEL DISCUSSION

There was a lively panel discussion on the theme *Educational Innovation*. The discussion was chaired by Dr Conor Galvin. Panel members included Ms Michelle Sliney, Gaelchólaiste Choilm; Dr Glenda Walsh, Stranmillis University College and Ms Shauna McGill, Ulster University.

Prof Kathy Hall, Prof Viv Ellis, MS Michelle Sliney, Dr Glenda Walsh, Ms Shauna McGill

DOCTORAL WORKSHOP

The second annual SCoTENS Doctoral Workshop was held at the 2017 conference. SCoTENS invited proposals for participation and selected 8 PhD students to participate. Each student presented on their work in progress and got feedback from speakers who are leaders in the field of Teacher Education and related research in Ireland and beyond.

SCoTENs committee members, Dr Conor Galvin, Dr Noel Purdy, Dr Linda Clarke and Dr Maria Campbell with participants of the second SCoTENS Doctoral Studies Roundtable

Using Professor Etienne Wenger's framework the SCoTENS Committee have been examining the value of SCoTENS. The article below will be published in the Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland in December 2018.

STORIES FROM AN ON-GOING CONVERSATION:
SCoTENS as a Forum for Sustaining Cross-Border Cooperation for Teacher Education

Prof Linda Clarke, Professor of Education, Ulster University

Dr Lesley Abbott, Honorary Fellow, School of Education, Ulster University

Dr Maria Campbell, Director of Graduate Programmes, St Angela's College

Dr Pamela Cowan, PGCE Programme Co-ordinator, Queen's University Belfast

Dr Conor Galvin, Director of Graduate Studies, MA Education Programme, University College Dublin

Prof Kathy Hall, co-Chair, SCoTENS

Dr Geraldine Magennis, Assistant Professor of Education, Valparaiso University

Dr Noel Purdy, co-Chair, SCoTENS

Introduction

Set in the broader global context of increasingly buttressed borders, on course towards Brexit and within the distinctive historic-political crucible of Ireland north and south, this paper examines the value created by a unique network of teacher educators from north and south of the Irish border which was first conceived following the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (GFA) in 1998. Rejoicing in its distinctively unwieldy acronym, SCoTENS (the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South) was set up to create a safe and welcoming space for teacher educators to come together and discuss issues of common interest, and to explore ways of co-operating closely together. It may be the only network of its kind operating across a contested border in the world.

Whilst its deepest *raison d'être* lies in peace building, SCoTENS' objectives are focused primarily on cross-border cooperation for the enhancement of teacher education. SCoTENS operates at a number of levels. It provides seed funding which supports collaboration between groups of teacher educators across two jurisdictions in designing, developing and implementing research projects. SCoTENS also organises an annual conference and a cross-border student teacher exchange. An important additional function of the standing conference is to give a voice to teacher educators on the island and to a means of advocacy for the quality of teaching at all levels.

SCoTENS is funded by the Department of Education and Science (DES) in Ireland and and by members' fees. (Prior to 2016, DES funding was matched by the Department for Education and the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland, however as a result of financial pressures on government, no funding from the Northern Ireland budget has been available in the past two years.) The funding includes a remit for a part-time Secretariat based at the Centre for Cross-Border Studies, a vital organisational support as all other executive roles are carried out by volunteers in academia, as well as other agencies and organisations with an interest in the formation and development of teachers on the island**.** Members of SCOTENS and of its Steering Committee are drawn from the stakeholder institutions for teacher education across the island, including Higher Education Institutions, providers of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), curriculum and professional bodies, and teaching unions. This paper is jointly written by Steering Committee members and seeks to draw together the key ingredients for success. It draws on the voice of the membership which is primarily presented as stakeholder comments from a recent evaluation and also outlines some of the key challenges faced as Brexit approaches.

The Origins and Ongoing Work of SCoTENS

SCOTENS is now in it sixteenth year and composing this paper offers a timely opportunity to speak to the ongoing work and value of the organisation as the twentieth anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement passes by. Its roots are in post-GFA discussions between the late Professor John Coolahan, then Professor of Education at Maynooth**,** and Professor Harry McMahon, then Head of the School of Education at the University of Ulster (now Ulster University). These early plans laid the vision for what SCoTENS is and what it does.

After eight years, an evaluation of SCoTENS (Furlong et al, 2011) examined its continued relevance, image and impact. In addition, the team involved was tasked with investigating its sustainability in terms of its administrative mechanisms, whilst pinpointing potential future priorities. That evaluation was conducted using face-to-face and telephone interviews along with an online survey and documentary analysis. On the whole, the findings of the evaluation were very positive, notwithstanding SCoTENS' limited and sometimes uncertain funding stream as well as high dependence both on its body of volunteers and on a stretched Secretariat. The work of SCoTENS was deemed to be of great value. The reviewers considered that it provided unparalleled opportunities for the development of cross-border teacher educator networks, knowledge exchange and collegial practices. Further, it was thought that these would be at risk if the organisation ceased to exist. Participants also expressed an appreciation of how the existence of SCoTENS had uniquely contributed in a positive way to their personal growth, as well as to supporting and enhancing north-south relations. The report concluded that moving ahead in turbulent and changing times, SCoTENS would have to negotiate issues such as ensuring its continued 'reach' and putting in place mechanisms for succession planning and addressing inevitable financial pressures.

SCoTENS Stories: Voices from an Ongoing Conversation

Since 2016 the SCoTENS committee has initiated and invested heavily in a second evaluation which

is seen as both timely and necessary. This represents a systematic effort to prepare SCoTENS for a less-certain future than we might have hoped. The following sections draw on stakeholder quotes from this recent evaluation and provide a strong sense of the value of the cross-border learning which occurs within each of the three key components of SCoTENS' work. These are: the Annual Conference which has taken place every year since 2003; SCoTENS' North South Student Teacher Exchange, and the annual SCoTENS' Seed Funding Scheme for cross-border, inter-institutional collaborative research projects. During 2016 a considerable number of live-interview recordings were made of 'SCoTENS Stories', extracts from which are used below to give a flavour of these three areas of core activity and their impact on participants.

Annual Conference

The SCoTENS annual conference is a key fixture in the education calendar on the island of Ireland. It provides a forum where teacher educators can engage in open, critical and constructive analysis of current issues in education with a view to promoting a collaborative response to these issues. In the past two years, a Doctoral Education workshop has been added to the programme which allows student researchers to present their work to their peers in informal seminar groups which each include one of the keynote speakers.

SCoTENS Steering Committee members and Conference Speakers 2016

Back row: *Dr Noel Purdy, Mr Tomás Ó Ruairc, Prof Etienne Wenger-Trayner, Dr Geraldine Magennis, Ms Ruth Taillon.* **Front row:** *Dr Conor Galvin, Prof Teresa O'Doherty, Dr Maria Campbell, Prof Kathy Hall, Dr Pamela Cowan, Mr David Duffy and Prof Linda Clarke*

Professor Etienne Wenger who spoke at the 2016 conference joined the discussion only after numerous selfies with somewhat awestruck participants. These individual SCoTENS Stories were collected from both doctoral researchers and individual participants at the 2017 annual conference.

Conference participants saw the emergent community of practice as possibly the programme's most important feature – *an added value in recognising that there's a community of teacher educators out there … (m, s).*[1] Another had worked with SCoTENS colleagues to produce *Learning Communities in Educational Partnerships* (Glen, Roche, McDonagh & Sullivan, 2017) which, as well as establishing a research community north and south, had paved the way for contact with other universities to disseminate their work further.

> *In terms of potential value, the experience of joining SCoTENS has been absolutely fantastic because last year my colleagues, with the research done in a collegiate way … produced 'Learning Communities in Educational Partnerships' (Glen, Roche, McDonagh & Sullivan, 2017) describing research opportunities that were provided for ourselves and for others in schools in initial teacher education … a little learning community and we were fortunate enough to have met Etienne Wenger at the last SCoTENS conference. He actually wrote the Foreword to our book. (f, s)*

One participant said that her practice had been influenced because of the setting up of a network of educators/researchers across two jurisdictions, also referring to the fact that online features were enhanced by face-to-face experiences:

> *It has influenced [my practice] dramatically as co-founders of a network of educational researchers in Ireland and we're looking to use the ideas and the formats that SCoTENS has used in supporting the communications within the network. It's online as well as face-to-face,*

so the practices of face-to-face that happen in SCoTENS were invaluable to us. (f, s)

One respondent said that the realised value of SCoTENS had manifested itself by looking at how technology had been used in conference workshops, then using it in teacher education in respect of thinking, content, research direction and pedagogy. However, it was felt that such changes might be difficult to measure, and that they might sometimes be overlooked.

> *As an example of the changes in practice, I remember last year looking at the use of technology in workshops. I actually went to one [and] started using that technology in teaching, so I think this conference can influence your thinking about teacher education, it can influence your research direction and … it can also influence things that you teach about in teacher education to student teachers and it can change how you teach the student teacher which I think is something that is really, really positive. (m, s)*

Doctoral researchers valued the chance to produce publications through conference attendance – *really important to have this community approach … (f, s).* Professional relationships emerged through national and international networking, *exchanging views and finding commonalities* [with] *other doctoral participants (m, s).*

Participants and speakers at the 1st SCoTENS Doctoral Workshop

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[1] Designations such as (f, s), (m, s) etc are used to indicate the gender and jurisdiction of individual speakers

The immediate value of the doctoral meetings was that participants could meet and engage with other doctoral students at different stages of their research, share feedback, experience collegiality and, hence, a sense of community. In one case, having a deadline to plan and present at the round table events provided a welcome stimulus to structure their study. Thus, these activities and interactions between colleagues in teacher education, north and south, provided an experience of learning together.

I've only been here for a couple of hours, it's my first SCoTENS. I've already contacted two senior people at universities around the island of Ireland, one from [the north] and one in [the south], both of whom want to discuss some interesting research ideas with me, so it has already been valuable, and we're only starting the conference. (m, s)

We're only maybe two or three hours in, but I think what is very interesting is I'm having an opportunity to meet with professionals I would never come across in my day-to-day work. Already I've met with an EU Visiting Professor from Australia who had recently joined the Faculty in [a university in the south] … also some of my colleagues who I'm studying with in [name of university] (f,s)

Referring to having transformed from teacher to researcher after a long interval and how SCoTENS had helped in this regard, one participant commented very positively:

It gave me a sense of confidence, and sort of a kick start to get going. It's very difficult to turn yourself from a practitioner of decades into a researcher and one who's sort of flying above, looking at what's happening. So the SCoTENS experience definitely helped me take that turn or make that transformation. (f, s)

This participant spoke very warmly of the community of practice afforded by SCoTENS, hoping to take further a project on which she had previously worked and exhorting the programme to continue:

The calibre of people that I have met, the cheerleading from the SCoTENS community has been amazing … what I love about my second SCoTENS [is that] just in the first hour I've met somebody from my first SCoTENS who is 'me of last year', and I was the one doing the cheerleading and the confidence building, so keep doing what you are doing SCoTENS. It's definitely helping us ancient or latent researchers coming out of our shells. Thank you for everything! (f, s)

Cross-border Student Teacher Exchange
A second core element of the work of SCoTENS is the annual North South Student Teacher Exchange which has been funded by SCoTENS since its foundation in 2002/2003. Participating student teachers spend three weeks in colleges of education and on school placements in the other jurisdiction, with all travel and accommodation costs paid. Students on teaching practice during the Exchange are assessed by both the host college and their home college.

SCoTENS Stories were collected from students in cross-border pairings, all of whom rejoiced in experiencing different classroom settings that supported professional development. Confidence increased as they worked in a cross-border team, encountering different curricula, and using new teaching skills acquired during the practicum. They found that their participation in the programme positively influenced the application of their practice within different education systems, and were able to visualise how aspects might be replicated in their own teaching environment. They had mixed with, been challenged by, and learned from, another education system, experiencing different teaching methodologies. The students felt that the experience generated greater confidence, self-belief, and openness to making differentiated provision, as one student explained, *You're being pushed out of your boundaries (f, n).*

The student teachers also provided several examples of how SCoTENS had influenced their practice. For instance, contrasts were drawn between their previous educational settings and students were appreciative of the fact that they

had been given the opportunity to experience different regions, pupils, curricula, ethnic origins and languages. Reference was made by two interviewees from Northern Ireland to several significant differences in curricular emphasis across the two jurisdictions:

I feel in terms of planning, whenever we would look at our curriculum [in the north] it is very condensed, in that, there's maybe a certain amount of points you have to choose from and from that you make your own plans, whereas the southern one is very guided, everything is kind of there for you, so you read the various strands and you just go from that. (f, n)

… in the Republic it is very specific, and now the new English language one, or the new language in general for English and Irish hasn't been brought into all schools yet. It's only in the junior end, and we haven't done an awful lot of that, but from what I've read it's actually very similar to [Northern Ireland]. It's varied enough that you can explore without a theme or topics, and there is a chance there for a lot of, like, cross-curricular teaching which is something that isn't … part of everyday teaching back in the Republic, and it's something that I feel I've experienced so much up here, I actually can't wait to go back down … (m, s)

Two of the student teachers were keen to emphasise in their interviews that the programme had contributed greatly to cross-border relations, and that they had been accepted and made

welcome in schools from different education systems. One student teacher from the north, for instance, had been concerned that Irish was spoken in her placement school in the south, but in the end this did not pose a significant problem as a result of the practical support and reception offered by the school. Similarly, a Protestant student from the south was wholeheartedly received in a Catholic school in Northern Ireland, despite initial apprehension.

Definitely a brilliant experience especially with the schools, and the families we were staying with … we couldn't have asked for better. We were so welcomed into their environment; the teachers were completely trusting and welcoming of all that we had to do. They helped us in any way that they could … I was really scared about the Irish language barrier … and the school did speak in Irish throughout the day, the signs around the school were in Irish, but I was so welcomed in. The programme made it really, really easy for me to feel accepted … everybody knew what was going on, everybody was aware of the differences that would lie between us and stuff, but everyone worked together to make learning better. We were allowed to practise different things, and it was just the whole team building from SCoTENS, you know, ourselves, the school, just everybody involved in the programme definitely made it more beneficial and something that I'm so glad that I took part in. (f, n)

Directors of Teaching Practice and participants meeting for Orientation Day at Marino Institute of Education.

The difference SCoTENS has made to north and south ... getting us to the cross-border relations and working along with people we never thought we would have ... an incredible experience to go from something that you're so comfortable in your own environment for me in the Republic of Ireland, and then come up to somewhere where it's completely different. It shows that there [are] great relations there, that we can go and make new experiences. I am a Protestant who [visited] a Northern Ireland Catholic school, something I'd never thought I'd do, but I was completely welcomed throughout the process and was never made to feel any different. (m, s)

The comments of one of the other two student teachers from the south related to their perceived lack of knowledge of the history and culture of Northern Ireland and their lack of understanding of the reality of life during the 'Troubles' as a result of the sectarian divide. The comments also highlight the student's shock at the still visible signs of sectarianism in certain areas of the north, and the help he received from the teacher in his school in explaining what he had seen:

Coming from Dublin ... I had never been up to the North before and I had looked at the history and I wouldn't know an awful lot about it, just general, but I figured everything was pretty fine now and of course it is fine now. I was shocked when I came up and [my] school was in a very nice Church of Ireland area, but to get there you had to drive through a few areas that had a lot of murals ... one day I got the bus home by myself ... my teacher's father was a police officer during the time of all the Troubles and she was filling me in on a lot of stuff ... it really opened my eyes ... all the people from the Republic, a lot of us were the same, and it got us chatting about it ... but it was something you don't realise is such a big part of being up here. (m, s)

Interestingly, this student not only recognised the learning which had taken place as a result of the exchange programme but also intended to pass on his new knowledge of the cultural differences he had experienced once back home:

There's a cultural difference as well. I know that when I go home a lot of my friends wouldn't be in college. They wouldn't ever have an opportunity to do something like this ... I'll tell them about coming up here and the positive experience that I've had ... it will open their eyes. (m, s)

Seed Funding for Research Projects

A third core area of SCoTENS' work relates to supporting small-scale projects that have a cross-border nature, a focus on teacher education, and which offer the opportunity to do joint research that would otherwise very probably not happen. Each year, SCoTENS provides seed funding to support a number of such collaborative research projects in teacher education in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. To date, over 100 projects have been funded. Information about funded projects that are now complete (including downloadable reports) can be found on the SCoTENS website. The website also hosts a 'research dating service' which helps interested researchers on one side of the border to find project partners on the other side. The sums allocated are usually in the region of £3,000 - £6,000 (approx. €3,750 - €7,500). All proposals must be submitted by north-south partnerships. The two lead partners must be from institutions that are fully-paid up members of SCoTENS. The Seed Funding SCoTENS Stories were told in pairs.

Funding recipients saw the impetus to conduct cross-jurisdictional educational research, with immediate and longer-term benefits such as engaging in professional dialogue, learning from more seasoned practitioners, finding common interests, and instigating subsequent funding applications:

... for me as a fledgling researcher ... this was my first external funding application, my first funded project working with anybody. The fact that it was cross-border was a bonus ... the value of that, even in terms of my career has been has been enormous ... (m, n)

This was echoed by the southern partner:

[Our] project ... evolved organically. From that,

we put in an application ... because the opportunity that we had to work closely on material that interested us both ... has been a real lynchpin of this project ... to bring together two perspectives which complement each other and, I think, our very strong pedagogical package. (f, s).

The financial support from SCoTENS allowed recipients to apply more confidently for external funding, to learn about the research process, and to disseminate practice beyond the classroom among the student community:

They're learning the protocols, the parameters, the methodologies and project management that we'd have done with those SCoTENS projects. (m, s)

Five funding recipients spoke of having the chance to work with more experienced researchers or else being able to learn from each other and, moreover, to do so for the greater good and in the longer term in respect of all educational levels. There was also the capacity to influence policy-making in both north and south.

... I could see the visibility of what SCoTENS could actually do in trying to harmonise or influence teacher education frameworks and practice on both sides of the border ... I've really enjoyed that ability to work with colleagues from the north ... reflecting on what we're all trying to do in terms of teacher education, initial teacher education and, ultimately, we're all working with the children for the benefit of them and future society ... I think we always hope that what we do can have an influence on policy, it can better influence practice, but SCoTENS money and research has been definitely a success and a win-win in terms of addressing policy ... definitely it has influenced policy in probably both jurisdictions. (m, s)

This last pair of research recipients recounted that a joint conference workshop they gave was 'the initial spark' for their subsequent funding application. The researcher from the north in this partnership commented further on the value that embraced not only sharing outlook and

experience, but also 're-interpreting' and considering more deeply issues concerning teaching and learning:

When I think about the immediate value for me in all this ... it's been working with you, gaining your perspective and knowledge about support, changes, issues, positiveness ... and then kind of reinterpreting how I view it. For example, I can remember hearing this term 'funds of knowledge' that you brought into the presentation we did ... also carried on through the seminars from the expert speakers and into our final report from SCoTENS. I hadn't really heard this term ... I'd kind of taken on board the notion of recognition of heritage and culture, but I hadn't gone in at such a deep, cognitive level and I hadn't really explored it properly. I was more concerned with the pedagogy of the teaching and the learning and the techniques ... (f, n)

And I would agree with that wholeheartedly, coming at it from the other perspective and this is why I think that our approaches really complemented each other. I recently re-read the SCoTENS report that we submitted and I was reading through the case study ... you'd put in there ... there are such rich, pedagogical gems within that case study ... about the techniques and the pedagogical approaches. I think our different angles on this create a very rich picture for teachers. (f, s)

As another interviewee stressed, there was the additional value inherent in a more knowledgeable and competent researcher collaborating with *a sort of fledgling researcher ... a tremendous benefit (m, n)* with no prior experience, and to do so between Northern Ireland and Ireland with the resultant research outputs.

I mean the value of that, even in terms of my career, has been enormous, let alone the opportunity to work in these two really interesting and growing areas of interest within [our research topic], where we did some of the first research in Ireland on [this] and [another related area] and the law which is so timely as

well. This has had considerable impact, particularly in Northern Ireland, so I think there've been benefits for me, but also obviously in terms of the outputs. (m, n)

All respondents could identify actual or potential outputs from their SCoTENS research. Two were planning papers for peer reviewed journals, two had produced a digital resource *out of us working together (f, n),* one already had an article published, and another had written a report. Another paired respondent spoke of *quite a few publications, outputs, disseminations … contributions to conferences … and we've shared on both sides of the border at special events … college seminars* [and] *radio and TV interviews (m, s)* the research with his partner culminating in a book which had generated widespread interest.

… so being able to get that message out has been brilliant, and I think as you said there, we have sort of cornered quite a bit of that term [relating to the project] … we've sort of made it our own … quite a lot of conferences across Psychology, across Education and … great scope from SCoTENS to publish [the research] as a book format, and to have it publicly launched as well as the conference. That was great in terms of being able to disseminate it at lots of different events we've had in [university in the south] where I've been able to leave two or three copies for people to pick up at each occasion. (m, s)

What also emerged was recognition that the researchers had been given the freedom not only to establish and develop sound professional relationships across different education systems in the two jurisdictions, or in one case to strengthen existing friendships, but their participation in joint projects had also fostered reflective practice in order to improve their teaching, including the sharing of perspectives and insights, generating new ideas, and raising personal profiles. The point was also made that a great deal had been achieved in respect of value for money since a relatively modest amount had been allocated to each project – *'the reach has been tremendous' (m, n),* and that this was an argument of which Government should

be aware.

These are very small pockets of money, but researchers like ourselves have been able to produce an incredible amount of output from that funding. (m, n)

Moreover, the research had *a social return on investment (m, s)* with a large number of students involved across two jurisdictions with differing education systems:

… a nice vignette of what was possible, and even the hundreds of students who took part in the research, what they learned from it, what they're taking into practice, what they're maybe then disseminating and discussing … for a small amount of money that was governance light, we were able to just get on with the job … in terms of what to do for practice and policy and there's not that many places in the world [with] that kind of a border where there's nuances between the education systems and practice. As I always say, geographically close is sometimes culturally different, but with a project like this, it is amazing what can be done. (m, s)

Another interviewee saw seed funding as bringing transformation in the broader context, that is, beyond the practice of participants, pointing to the achievement of his collaborative research reaching the headlines in Northern Ireland, and moreover, making the then-Minister of Education aware of the findings and their implications for policy which, in turn led to the initiation of legislation.

… I remember when the Minister for Education at the time came to the SCoTENS conference, I handed him personally a copy of our report, and it was certainly one of the factors which encouraged him to think about new legislation. I was interviewed on television and claimed that the policies in Northern Ireland [in this area] were often very poor. [The Minister] brought me up to Stormont to meet him in his office, I handed him another copy of the report, and said, "Schools are looking for more guidance, here's work that I've done with [my research partner] through SCoTENS, north and south of the border". Indirectly, and I don't think we can

over-state this, it certainly helped persuade him that there was a need for further guidance. That has led to the legislation that was passed last year, the statutory guidance for which is being written at the moment, and I'm involved in writing that. (m, n)

Conclusion

The voices quoted above from some of the many people involved in this recent study of the value of SCoTENS provide insights into three of the key components of the cross-border learning in teacher education which is at the heart of SCoTENS. In every sense they speak for themselves. Taken together they offer powerful evidence of the reach and impact of the organisation and the range of new connections and relations it has catalysed. The word cloud below provides a visual summary of the 2016 SCoTENS Stories in the key words used by participants to describe the value of SCoTENS. What is clear is that SCoTENS has a unique and irreplaceable role for teacher education across the island and that its value points towards the potential for other professional, cross-border networks.

There is, however, one very real cloud on the SCoTENS' horizon, as concern grows that Brexit will resurrect unwelcome divisions which surround the border boundary and will damage the delicate cross-border partnerships, learning and friendships

which have flourished during its relative absence. Already, the direct impact has been felt of pressures on the Northern Ireland budget and the breakdown of political relationships in the north, of the collapse of Stormont, and of the loss of northern Departmental funding that 'matched' an annual Irish Government allocation. This is unfortunate and somewhat discouraging but there is considerable momentum behind SCoTENS and an impetus to ensure that it continues to thrive, whatever the impediments:

….it's based in positive and collegial relationships across the border and we can't overestimate the power of that, the power of educationalists working together across borders at a time, when, in the greater political environment, there seems to be growing suspicion. SCoTENS is a ray of sunshine in all of that. (f, s)

Our 16th SCoTENs annual conference, this year on the theme of *Education as a Common Good: the Role of Teacher Education*, will take place on Thursday 18 and Friday 19 October in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry. This is an open and friendly event where all are welcome and which affords the opportunity to continue existing conversations and start new ones. We warmly invite you to come along and join in.

http://www.wordle.net

FUNDED RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Each year, SCoTENS provides Seed Funding to support a number of collaborative research projects and professional activities in teacher education in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The sums allocated are **usually in the region of £3,000 – £6,000 (approx. €3,750 – €7,500).**

Five projects were awarded funding in 2017-2018.

PROJECT	PARTNERS
InCLINE: Integrating children's literature in numeracy education. The research questions underpinning this proposal are: (a) What are student teachers' opinions on the use of children's literature in the primary school classroom? Do these opinions differ between Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI)? (d) What can each jurisdiction learn from the other in relation to best practice for integrating children's literature into the primary school mathematics classroom?	Dr. Lorraine Harbison, DCU Shauna McGill, UU
RAP: Readiness and Practice: An investigation of ITE Students' Readiness for Teaching and Learning in a Digital World (RAP) The key research questions are: • To what extent do ITE students feel 'ready' (prepared) to teach through the medium of technology? • What are the models of practice utilised in school placements? • What challenges are faced by ITE students in terms of embedding new and emerging technologies in their lessons? • How digitally prepared are ITE students at the end of their training? • How do ITE students reflect on their use of technology?	Dr Pamela Cowan, QUB Dr Martin Brown, DCU Dr Stephen Roulston, UU
LLITE: Leadership Learning in Initial Teacher Education 1) investigate the extent to which leadership learning is embedded within the initial teacher education curricula in the participating systems (Republic of Ireland; Northern Ireland and Scotland); 2) examine models which have been successfully adopted; 3) review curricula for initial teacher education to identify opportunities to further embed leadership learning; 4) provide a seminar for academic staff, school partners and initial teacher education students in each of the participating systems to engender further debate and innovative practice in relation to leadership learning; and 5) prepare a position paper for the policy, practice and academic communities and a planning and delivery resource for teacher educators.	Dr Fiona King, DCU Dr Sam McGuinness, UU Professor Margery McMahon
KYN: Knowing Your Neighbour: Educating in Multi-belief contexts in Northern and Southern Ireland To facilitate cross-border inter-professional learning for stakeholders in teacher education contexts around recent developments in policy and practice of teaching about religion and beliefs in schools. • To provide an opportunity for teacher educators to develop responses to current challenges in this area. • To investigate the current and potential use of dialogue and collaborative learning opportunities as pedagogical tools for teaching about religion and beliefs specifically in initial teacher education.	Dr Aideen Hunter, UU Dr Jones Irwin, DCU
STARTT: Student Teachers and Retired Teachers Together Project Can STARTT support the professional development of student teachers while simultaneously contributing to the development needs of retired teachers through valuing their expertise? Can STARTT provide a cross institutional and cross north and south knowledge transfer platform to share skills in areas such as digital technology and social media with retired teachers. This is in return for the exchange of the lived experiences, knowledge and skills of the retired teacher? Can STARTT provide a forum to develop shared dialogue on holistic teacher development and practice which will include, for example, teaching and learning methodologies, subject knowledge and classroom relationships?	Dr Trudy Corrigan, DCU Dr Brian James Cummins, Stranmillis

Funded Projects 2003-2017

RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE AREAS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND INCLUSION			
Title	**Date**	**Author/Organiser Project leaders**	**Institutions**
Meeting the Needs of Children with Special Education Needs in Multi-grade Classrooms	2015-2016	Dr Bairbre Tiernan/Dr Ann Marie Casserly Dr Louise Long	St Angela's College Sligo St Mary's University College
Dyslexia in Ireland: Views regarding the provision for pupils with dyslexia since the publication of the Task force Reports, North and south (2002)	2013-2014	Dr Therese McPhillips Dr Ann Marie Casserly Mrs Donna Hazzard Mrs Gillian Beck Dr Bairbre Tiernan	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra St Angela's College St Mary's University College Stranmillis University College
Facing Autism Ireland Conference	2009-2010	Dr Karola Dillenburger Dr Geraldine Leader	Queen's University Belfast NUI Galway
Conference: Dyslexia, Literacy and Inclusion	2009-2010	Ms Louise Long Dr Therese McPhillips	St Mary's University College St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Development of North/ South cast studies identifying key features of good practice in the teaching of pupils from ethnic minorities	2009-2010	Mr Ken Wylie Dr Mark Morgan	Stranmillis University College St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Consulting pupils on the assessment and remediation of their Specific Literacy Difficulties	2008-2009	Ms Louise Long Dr Michael Shevlin	St Mary's University College Trinity College Dublin
Student Teachers' perceptions of their competence to meet the needs of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in mainstream primary schools	2008-2009	Ms Mary Greenwood Dr Patricia Daly Ms Anne O'Byrne	St Mary's University College Mary Immaculate College
The Professional Development Needs of teachers working in Special Educational Needs	2007-2008	Ms Elizabeth O'Gorman Ms Mairin Barry Prof Sheelagh Drudy Ms Eileen Winter Dr Ron Smith	University College Dublin Queen's University Belfast
Teacher Education for Special Educational Needs in the North and South of Ireland	2005-2006	Mr Hugh Kearns Dr Michael Shevlin	Stranmillis University College Trinity College Dublin
Together Towards Inclusion: a toolkit for trainers (2)	2005-2006	Ms Mary Yarr Ms Barbara Simpson Prof David Little	Southern Education & Library Board Trinity College Dublin
Together Towards Inclusion: a toolkit for trainers (1)	2004-2005	Ms Mary Yarr Ms Barbara Simpson Prof David Little	Southern Education & Library Board Trinity College Dublin
Special Education Needs and Initial Teacher Education in Ireland	2003-2004	Mr Hugh Kearns Dr Michael Shevlin	Stranmillis University College Belfast Trinity College Dublin
Preliminary evaluation of a teaching package for children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	2003-2004	Dr Jean Ware Dr Colette Gray	St Patrick's College Drumcondra Stranmillis University College
Meeting the Needs of Children with Special Education Needs in Multi-grade Classrooms		Dr Bairbre Tiernan/Dr Ann Marie Casserly Dr Louise Long	St Angela's College Sligo St Mary's University College
RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE AREA OF CITIZENSHIP AND DIVERSITY			
Title	**Date**	**Author/Organiser Project leaders**	**Institutions**
Religions and Beliefs in Changing Times:	2016-	Prof Marie Parker-Jenkins	University of Limerick

Perspectives of Student Stakeholders in Third Level Educational Contexts in Ireland North and South	2017	Dr. Aideen Hunter Dr. Niall Coll Dr. Norman Richardson	Ulster University St. Mary's University College Stranmillis University College
'Where to now?: Human Rights Education on this island, these islands and beyond'	2016-2017	Rowan Oberman Dr. Gerard McCann	Dublin City University St Mary's University College
Citizenship Education North and South: Learning and Progression	2014-2015		Queen's University Belfast Dublin City University
Inclusion and Diversity Service post primary initiative	2008-2009	Ms Mary Yarr Ms Barbara Simpson	NEELB Trinity College Dublin
Bringing School Communities together to promote education for diversity	2007-2008	Dr Ron Smith Prof Keith Sullivan	Queen's University Belfast NUI Galway
North/South Conference on Education for Diversity and Citizenship (2)	2005-2006	Ms Una O'Connor Mr Gerry Jeffers	University of Ulster NUI Maynooth
North/South Conference on Education for Diversity and Citizenship (1)	2003-2004	Ms Una O'Connor Mr Gerry Jeffers	University of Ulster NUI Maynooth
RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE AREA OF TECHNOLOGY AND MATHS			
Title	**Date**	**Author/Organiser Project leaders**	**Institutions**
The Programming Studio	2013-2014	Dr Pamela Cowan Dr Elizabeth Oldham Dr Ann Fitzgibbon	Queen's University Belfast Trinity College Dublin
Early number concepts: Key vocabulary and supporting strategies	2012-2013	Dr Ann Marie Casserly Dr Bairbre Tiernan Dr Pamela Moffett	St Angela's College Stranmillis University College
An exploration of mathematical identity using narrative as a tool (MINT)	2011-2012	Dr Maurice O'Reilly Dr Patricia Eaton	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra Stranmillis University College
Evaluation of the implementation of Realistic Mathematics Education (RME) within primary schools in the North and South of Ireland	2010-2011	Dr Pamela Moffett Dr Dolores Corcoran	Stranmillis University College St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Measuring the value of Education Technologies in Ireland North and South (MVET – Ireland)	2008-2009	Dr Conor Galvin Prof John Gardner	University College Dublin Queen's University Belfast
A cross-border comparison of student teachers' identities relating to Mathematics	2008-2009	Dr Patricia T Eaton Dr Maurice O'Reilly	Stranmillis University College St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Digital Video as a tool for changing ICT learning in schools and teacher education	2006-2007	Dr Roger S P Austin Ms Deirdre Graffin Dr Paul Conway Dr Joe O'Hara Dr Linda Clarke	University of Ulster University College Cork Dublin City University
Current Practice in ICT within teacher education	2005-2006	Dr Roger S P Austin Ms Deirdre Graffin Dr Paul Conway Dr Joe O'Hara	University of Ulster University College Cork Dublin City University
Pupil Interest and Enjoyment of Mathematics	2015-2016	Dr Ian Cantley Dr Mark Prendergast	Queen's University Belfast Trinity College Dublin
RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE PEDAGOGY OF SCIENCE, HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY			
Title	**Date**	**Author/Organiser Project leaders**	**Institutions**
Pupil Interest and Enjoyment of Mathematics	2015-2016	Dr Ian Cantley Dr Mark Prendergast	Queen's University Belfast Trinity College Dublin
Teaching Political History at Primary level	2013-2014	Dr Fionnuala Waldron Dr Alan McCully	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra University of Ulster
Teaching controversial history: a	2011-	Dr Fionnuala Waldron	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra

symposium on the teaching of 1916 and the battle of the Somme	2012	Dr Pauric Travers Dr Alan McCully	University of Ulster
Science enhancement and learning through exchange and collaboration among teachers	2011-2012	Dr John McCullagh Dr Colette Murphy Dr Cliona Murphy Mr Greg Smith	Stranmillis University College Queen's University Belfast St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Conference on findings of all-Ireland survey of student perceptions of History, Geography and Science	2008-2009	Ms Colette Murphy Mr Neil O'Conaill Ms Susan Pike	Queen's University Belfast Mary Immaculate College St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
All-Ireland survey of student perceptions of History, Geography and Science (3)	2006-2007	Ms Susan Pike Mr Richard Greenwood	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra Stranmillis University College
All-Ireland survey of student perceptions of History, Geography and Science (2)	2005-2006	Dr Colette Murphy Ms Fionnuala Waldron Dr Janet Varley	Queen's University Belfast St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
All-Ireland survey of student perceptions of History, Geography and Science (1)	2004-2005	Dr Colette Murphy Ms Fionnuala Waldron	Queen's University Belfast St Patrick's College, Drumcondra

RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE AREA OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Title	Date	Author/Organiser Project leaders	Institutions
Sharing the learning: lesson observation and reflective practice in vocational education and training	2016-2017	Cathal de Paor Celia O'Hagan	Mary Immaculate College Ulster University
Music and Initial Teacher Education in Ireland and Northern Ireland: A Study of Provision, Attitudes and Values	2016-2017	Dr Gwen Moore Dr John O'Flynn Dr Frances Burgess and Dr Jayne Moore	Mary Immaculate College Dublin City University Stranmillis University College
Embedding and Nurturing Enquiry-based Learning - developing a two-level model of Initial Teacher Education through enquiry	2016-2017	Dr Sandra Austin/Dr Karin Bacon Dr. Richard Greenwood Dr. Susan Pike	Marino Institute of Education Stranmillis University College Dublin City University
Study in Adult and Further Education Teacher Training in Ireland	2015-2016	Dr Anne Graham Cagney Ned Cohen	Waterford Institute of Technology General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
Visual Inquiry: Meaningful moments and experiences in learning to teach	2015-2016	Melissa Parker Paul Conway Jennifer Hennessy Carmel Inchon Aislinn O'Donnell Dr Alison McKenzie Prof Ruth Leitch	University of Limerick Mary Immaculate College Queen's University, Belfast
Teacher educator professional learning: Shaping the conversation of teacher education?	2015-2016	Dr Déirdre Ní Chróinín Ciaran Walsh Dr Melissa Parker Paul McFlynn	Mary Immaculate College St Mary's University College, Belfast University of Limerick Ulster University
Teachers' Pupil Control Ideology and Children's Voice Practices in the Island of Ireland	2015-2016	Dr. Marina – Stefania Giannakaki Dr Paula Flynn	Queen's University Belfast Trinity College Dublin
Video in STEM Teacher Assessment	2014-2015	Dr John McCullagh Prof Colette Murphy	Stranmillis University College Trinity College Dublin
Reconceptualising school placement as part of Initial Teacher Education in Ireland, North and South: the role of specialist school placement	2014-2015	Ms Dolores McDonagh Dr Pauline Kerins Dr Deirdre Harvey Dr Jackie Lamb	St Angela's College Ulster University
Navigating the Continuum: from student teacher to professional practitioner	2013-2014	Dr Fionnuala Waldron Dr Richard Greenwood Dr	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra Stranmillis University College

		Maeve Liston	Mary Immaculate College
3 PLY- Exploring the potential for transformative workplace learning for and by teachers	2013-2014	Dr Annelies Kamp Ms Dorothy Black	Dublin City University University of Ulster
Developing effective mentor pedagogies to support pre-service teacher on teaching practice	2012-2013	Ms Fiona Chambers Mr Walter Bleakley Prof Kathleen Armour	University College Cork University of Ulster University of Birmingham
Managing early years inclusive transition practice	2012-2013	Dr Colette Gray Ms Anita Prunty Dr Anna Logan Dr Geraldine Hayes	Stranmillis University College St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Assessment in teacher education north and south	2011-2012	Dr Tracey Connelly Dr Geraldine Magennis	University College Cork St Mary's University College
Teachers' views on the factors influencing their professional development: perceptions, experiences and motivation	2011-2012	Dr Helen O'Sullivan Dr Barbara McConnell Dr Dorothy McMillan	Trinity College Dublin Stranmillis University College
Directors of Teaching Practice research group for CPD for teacher practice supervisors	2010-2011	Ms Claire Connolly Mr Séamie Ó Néill	St Mary's University College Froebel College of Education
Comparative study into further education North and South: towards a framework for FE teaching qualifications	2010-2011	Mrs Celia O'Hagan Prof Gerry McAleavey Ms Violet Toland Dr Jennifer Cornyn Dr Ted Fleming	University of Ulster NUI Maynooth
Understanding the potential for capacity building in Initial Teacher Education programmes. North and South: a baseline comparative study, Phase 1	2010-2011	Dr Jim Gleeson Dr Ruth Leitch Dr Ciaran Sugrue	University of Limerick Queen's University Belfast Cambridge University
Peer Mentoring in post-compulsory teacher education	2009-2010	Ms Celia O'Hagan Dr Ted Fleming	University of Ulster NUI Maynooth
A study of work based learning models and partnerships in support of post-compulsory programmes of teacher education	2008-2009	Prof. Gerry McAleavey Mrs Celia O'Hagan Mr Walter Bleakley Ms Sylvia Alexander Mr Harry McCarry Dr Ted Fleming	University of Ulster Belfast Metropolitan College NUI Maynooth
Developing Reflective Skills in Student Teachers	2006-2007	Dr Gerry MacRuairc Dr Juidith Harford Mr Dermot MacCartan	University College Dublin St Mary's University College
Cross border exploration of CPD needs of heads of year in a sample of comprehensive and integrated schools	2006-2007	Mr Patrick McNamara Prof. Tom Geary Ms Caryl Sibbett	University of Limerick Queen's University Belfast
School based work in the North and South of Ireland: a review of policy and practice	2006-2007	Dr Brian Cummins Ms Bernadette Ni Aingleis	Stranmillis University College St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Diversity in Early Years Education North and South: Implications for teacher education	2005-2006	Dr Barbara McConnell Dr Philomena Donnelly Ms Louise Quinn	Stranmillis University College St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
North-South Conference on initial teacher education: The Competences Approach to Teacher Professional Development	2005-2006	Mr Barry Burgess Dr Andy Burke Ms Claire Connolly Ms Rose Dolan	University of Ulster St Patrick's College, Drumcondra St Mary's University College NUI Maynooth
North/South Directors of Teaching Practice Study Group	2004-2005	Mr Padraig Cannon Ms Sandra McWilliams Ms Margaret Farrar	Coláiste Mhuire Marino College of Education Stranmillis University College

			Church of Ireland College of Education
Teacher educator professional learning: Shaping the conversation of teacher education?	2015-2016	Dr Déirdre Ní Chróinín Ciaran Walsh Dr Melissa Parker Paul McFlynn	Mary Immaculate College St Mary's University College, Belfast University of Limerick University of Ulster
Meaningful moments and experiences in learning to teach	2015-2016	Melissa Parker Paul Conway Jennifer Hennessy Carmel Inchon Aislinn O'Donnell Dr Alison McKenzie Prof Ruth Leitch	University of Limerick Mary Immaculte College Queen's University, Belfast
Study in Adult and Further Education Teacher Training in Ireland	2015-2016	Dr Anne Graham Cagney Ned Cohen	Waterford Institute of Technology General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE LEARNING			
Title	**Date**	**Author/Organiser Project leaders**	**Institutions**
Exploring Teacher Confidence in the Teaching of Poetry at Leaving Certificate and A level	2016-2017	Dr Jennifer Hennessy Nicola Ward	University of Limerick Ulster University
Oracy in Schools, North and South: the perceptions, experiences and practices of oracy in primary and post-primary schools in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland	2016-2017	Dr. Aisling O'Boyle and Mr. Ian Collen Dr. Anne O'Keeffe and Dr. Fiodhna Gardiner-Hyland Mary Immaculate	Queen's University Belfast Mary Immaculate College
Threshold concepts in language teacher education	2012-2013	Dr Anne Devitt Dr Eugene McKendry	Trinity College Dublin Queen's University Belfast
The spoken Irish of pupils in Irish-Medium Schools	2009-2010	Mr Pádraig Ó Duibhir Ms Jill Garland	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra St Mary's University College
Lift off Literacy programme for the Irish-Medium School	2009-2010	Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir Sr Elizabeth Connolly	St Mary's University College Monaghan Education Centre
English as an Additional Language in undergraduate teacher education programme in Ireland	2008-2009	Mr Frank Quinn Mr Martin Hagan Dr Anne Ryan	St Mary's University College Marino Institute of Education
North-South Language Educators Conference	2008-2009	Dr Eugene McKendry Mr Patrick Farren	Queen's University Belfast NUI Galway
Teachers' Pupil Control Ideology and Children's Voice Practices in the Island of Ireland	2015-2016	Dr. Marina – Stefania Giannakaki Dr Paula Flynn	Queen's University Belfast Trinity College Dublin

RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PROJECTS FUNDED IN OTHER AREAS			
Title	**Date**	**Author/Organiser Project leaders**	**Institutions**
Conference: Contemporary Legal Issues for Management and Staff in Educational Settings: Exploring Legislation, Litigation, Approaches and Strategies and Implications for Teacher Education	2015-2016	Marie Conroy Johnson Gareth Parry	St Angela's College Ulster University
Creative Classrooms: Insights from imaginative and innovative teaching in Ireland North and South	2013-2014	Dr Anne McMorrough Dr Nicola Marlow	Marino Institute of Education University of Ulster
Nuns in education, North and south:	2012-	Dr Deirdre Raftery	University College Dublin

historical sources and interpretations on Sacred Heart convent schools	2013	Dr Mícheál Mairtín	St Mary's University College
Cyber-bullying and the law: What schools know and what they really need to know	2012-2013	Dr Noel Purdy Dr Conor McGuckin	Stranmillis University College Trinity College Dublin
The creative education infrastructure of Ireland	2012-2013	Dr Patrick Collins Prof Nola Hewitt-Dundas	NUI Galway Queen's University Belfast
Exploring and developing spaces among adult education practitioners for online and arts based reflection	2011-2012	Ms Shelley Tracey Mr Jim Mullan Ms Irene Bell Ms Geraldine Mernagh Ms Margaret McBrien	Queen's University Belfast Stranmillis University College Waterford IT
A critical analysis of north-south educational partnerships in development contexts	2011-2012	Prof Peadar Cremin Prof Peter B Finn	Mary Immaculate College St Mary's University College
Spiritual education: new challenge, new opportunity	2011-2012	Dr Anne O'Gara Dr Bernadette Flanagan Mr James Nelson	Marino Institute of Education Stranmillis University College
Writing as a professional development activity in ITE	2011-2012	Ms Rose Dolan Dr Judith Harford Mr Billy McClune	NUI Maynooth University College Dublin Queen's University Belfast
Disablist Bullying: an investigation into teachers' knowledge and confidence	2010-2011	Dr Noel Purdy Dr Conor McGuckin	Stranmillis University College Trinity College Dublin
Images and Identity (collaborative art and design education project within teacher education)	2010-2011	Ms Dervil Jordan Dr Jacqueline Lambe	National College of Art and Design University of Ulster
Effective Mentoring within Physical Education Teacher Education	2010-2011	Dr Fiona Chambers Mr Walter Bleakley	University College Cork University of Ulster
Exploring Japanese Research Lesson Study (RLS) as a model of peer to peer professional learning	2010-2011	Prof John Gardner Mr Gerard Devlin Dr Debie Galanouli Dr Mary Magee Ms Kathryn McSweeney	Queen's University Belfast St Angela's College
Children exposed to Domestic Abuse: helping student teachers understand their role in a primary school setting	2010-2011	Dr Bronagh McKee Dr Stephanie Holt	Stranmillis University College Trinity College Dublin
Contribution of Primary School Physical Education to health enhancing physical activity	2009-2010	Dr David McKee Dr Elaine Murtagh	Stranmillis University College Mary Immaculate College
Developing all-Ireland research capacity in Arts-based Educational Research	2009-2010	Dr Ruth Leitch Ms Shelley Tracey Ms Caryl Sibbett Dr Mary Shine Thompson	Queen's University Belfast St Patrick's College Drumcondra
Digitisation of three volumes of Irish Education Documents	2009-2010	Prof Áine Hyland Prof Tony Gallagher	Church of Ireland College of Education Queen's University Belfast
Sixth form/sixth year religion in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland	2009-2010	Dr Andrew McGrady Dr Christopher Lewis	Mater Dei Institute of Education University of Ulster
Investigation into the experiences of primary school teachers with regard to their teaching of healthy eating guidelines within the curriculum	2008-2009	Ms Elaine Mooney Ms Eileen Kelly Blakeney Ms Amanda McCloat Ms Dorothy Black	St Angela's College University of Ulster
Building North-South links in whole college initiatives in global justice education	2008-2009	Mr Brian Ruane Dr Gerard McCann	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra St Mary's University College
Art and Science in Education: Moving towards creativity	2006-2007	Mr Ivor Hickey Ms Deirdre Robson	St Mary's University College Mary Immaculate College

		Mr Donal O'Donaghue	
Building Effective Science Outreach Strategies North and South	2006-2007	Dr V McCauley Dr C Domegan Dr Kevin Davison Dr Sally Montgomery Ms Eileen Martin Ms Emma McKenna Dr Billy McClure Dr Ruth Jarman	NUI Galway W5 Interactive Discovery Queen's University Belfast
Social Justice Education in Initial Teacher Education: a cross border perspective	2006-2007	Dr Marie Clarke Dr Audrey Bryan Prof Tony Gallagher Dr Margaret Reynolds Dr Ken Wylie	University College Dublin Queen's University Belfast St Mary's University College Stranmillis University College
Conference: Contemporary Legal Issues for Management and Staff in Educational Settings: Exploring Legislation, Litigation, Approaches and Strategies and Implications for Teacher Education	2015-2016	Marie Conroy Johnson Gareth Parry	St Angela's College University of Ulster

PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH			
Title	Date	Author/Organiser Project leaders	Institutions
All Ireland Doctoral Student Research Conference	2013-2014	Dr Dympna Devine Prof Jannette Elwood	University College Dublin Queen's University Belfast
Cross Border Conference for Promoting Doctoral Research in Education: Expanding the horizons of Doctoral Research in Education: Comparing, Adapting, Advancing	2012-2013	Dr Patrick Walsh Dr Dympna Devine	Queen's University Belfast University College Dublin
Cross-border conference on Integration of Academic and Personal Learning in Post Primary Religious Education	2010-2011	Mr Vincent Murray Mr Norman Richardson	St Angela's College Stranmillis University College
Doctoral Research in Education North and South conference – links, challenges and opportunities (3)	2010-2011	Dr Caitlin Donnelly Dr Dympna Devine	Queen's University Belfast University College Dublin
Doctoral Research in Education North and South conference – links, challenges and opportunities (2)	2009-2010	Dr Caitlin Donnelly Dr Dympna Devine	Queen's University Belfast University College Dublin
Doctoral Research in Education North and South conference – links, challenges and opportunities (1)	2008-2009	Dr Dympna Devine Prof Jeanette Ellwood	University College Dublin Queen's University Belfast
ESAI and BERA joint conference (2)	2005-2006	Dr Anne Lodge Prof John Gardner	NUI Maynooth Queen's University Belfast
Educational Studies of Ireland(ESAI)/British Education Research Association (BERA) joint conference (1)	2004-2005	Mr Denis Bates Prof John Gardner	University of Limerick Queen's University Belfast
ASSEE Conference (2)	2004-2005	Dr Janet Varley Dr Colette Murphy	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra Queen's University Belfast
Irish Association of Social Scientific and Environmental Education (IASSEE) Conference (1)	2003-2004	Dr Janet Varley Dr Colette Murphy	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra Queen's University Belfast

NORTH-SOUTH STUDENT TEACHER EXCHANGE

The annual North- South Student Teacher Exchange is managed for SCoTENS by the Centre for Cross Border Studies, in partnership with the participating colleges. The project is run by a steering group drawn from the Centre for Cross Border Studies and the colleges of education, and all travel and accommodation costs of participating students are paid by SCoTENS.

The participating student teachers spend three weeks in colleges of education and on school placements in the other jurisdiction. Participating students are required to prepare fully for work/lessons in accordance with the requirements of the home college and giving due recognition to the curriculum requirements of the placement school. Both written preparation and classroom performance are assessed. Grades awarded are collated in the normal way in the home college and contribute to the participating student's overall year result as appropriate.

Students on teaching practice during the North-South Student Teacher Exchange Project are assessed by both the host college in the other jurisdiction and their home college. This involves a minimum of two supervisory visits to the placement school and the instrument of assessment normally used by the home college is used. The host college and the home college make one visit each, and supervision takes into consideration the complexities, pressures and preparation required of students in a different jurisdiction.

Each student has an Observation Day/Days in their placement school in advance of the exchange. This gives students an opportunity to get to know their placement school and its teachers, observe its teaching and learning methods, and prepare teaching materials in advance of their placement.

The aims of the Exchange
The aims of the Exchange are:

1 To provide opportunities for colleges of education on the island of Ireland to affirm and respect cultural difference and to promote positive attitudes towards cultural diversity.

2 To develop a model of professional practice in response to cultural diversity by supporting students who engage in a period of teaching practice in the other jurisdiction.

3 To develop a deeper sense of community among educators on the island of Ireland that recognises the contributions of different cultural and religious communities.

Directors of Teaching Practice and participants meeting for Orientation Day at Marino Institute of Education.

4 To become more familiar with a variety of curriculum programmes and methodologies, North and South.

5 To explore and develop strategies and approaches currently in practice in colleges of education and universities, North and South, and to contribute to the development of an inter-college culture of collaboration on the island.

Background to this project

The North/South Student teacher Exchange programme came about in the early 2000's. Its purpose was to allow student teachers in both jurisdictions of Ireland to experience a short period of teaching as part of their initial teacher education and training in primary education. Each participating student was allocated to a school in the other jurisdiction to the one in which they had grown up and studied in. This period of time was typically about three weeks. The underlying aim of the programme grew out of the desire to promote peace and reconciliation; the spirit of promoting diversity and mutual understanding is very much to the fore. Initially it attracted **funding from Europe; in later years both** governments of Ireland have provided funding. To date well over a hundred students from a variety of colleges in Ireland have participated. The programme has been welcomed and well received by a large number of teachers, schools and teacher trainers. To date, an annual evaluation report on the exchange programme has testified to the benefits that student teachers have gained from participating in the programme.

2017–2018 exchange

The following colleges participated in the programme. The aim was that two students from each of the colleges would participate.

Stranmillis University College Belfast

St. Mary's University College Belfast

Marino College of Education, Dublin

Froebel College of Education, Maynooth

Institute of Education Dublin City University

Dr Gail Eason completed an evaluation on this year's exchange.

Method of Evaluation

The Centre for Cross Border Studies has always carried out an annual evaluation of the exchange programme, part of which is subsequently published. This year a half day meeting was held on 31 March 2018 in Marino College Dublin. As there was a split practice this year a second evaluation event took place in Stranmillis University College Belfast on 2 May 2018. Throughout the years that this programme has run, a requirement to participate at the annual evaluation event has been in place. The views of students and their tutors were sought in an informal discussion and all were asked to fill in a short questionnaire. This forms the basis of this written report. Several Directors of Teaching practice attended, plus a few other members of staff. Staff and students who were unable to attend the evaluation event at St. Mary's University College were asked to forward their comments and views as well.

Findings of the evaluation

Personal Benefits

Quite a number of students commented that they had chosen this programme instead of going on an Erasmus placement, with the shorter time frame and proximity to home as major factors in this decision. Although a few students expressed some degree of nervousness prior to the commencement of teaching practice, they all felt that being away from home boosted their confidence, encouraged them to be more flexible and developed some degree of independence. They spoke of the necessity of being flexible, adaptable and resilient and learning to work as part of a team. A few students admitted to feeling homesick, but this usually passed by the end of the first week. Some students felt that while there were differences between the two jurisdictions, they were less obvious than they would have originally expected. The cultural events were a good opportunity for students to relax and enjoy each other's company in an informal setting. Quite a number of students hoped to maintain contact

with the other students and their placement schools through social media after the exchange was over. It should be noted that students were very positive regarding the personal benefits of this programme.

Planning of the programme, Accommodation and Pastoral Care

Both the Directors of Teaching Practice and the students were sympathetic to the fact that the organisation and delivery of this programme is a huge and detailed task. The directors and allied staff have invested a considerable amount of time and effort securing suitable placements, accommodation and dealing with pastoral care issues. Students were happy with their accommodation, with no complaints being made. The Southern students were complimentary about their stay in the Halls of Residence in Stranmillis University College Belfast.

Overall, all participating students were happy with the pastoral care support structures that were provided by the respective directors of teaching practice. All felt welcomed and supported.

Professional Benefits

This section is split in two; the first section will consider the benefits the Northern students felt they gained from their placements in the South while the second section will discuss what the Southern students gained from their Northern placements.

Northern Students on their Southern placements

This group of students welcomed a fresh perspective on a different curriculum. While they recognised that they were out of their 'comfort zone', they relished the challenge this brought to them. They felt there was a more relaxed attitude to discipline and a more relaxed style of teaching than was the case in the North. Shorter working hours and less contact time with pupils was noted. They felt that there was less time spent on planning lessons than was the case in Northern Ireland schools. Overall lessons were shorter with more emphasis placed on the use of workbooks. Another feature was decreased emphasis on Literacy and Maths than was the case in the North

and increased time devoted to the Arts. The inclusion of the Irish language and culture was welcomed and enjoyed. Another feature that they did notice and comment upon was the absence of classroom assistants.

Southern students on their Northern placements

While they felt that the curriculum of both jurisdictions was similar, there were also important differences and it was useful to see this in action. One student expressed the view that a perception existed that the North was 'ahead in Education'. Comments were made regarding 'better resourcing' and more 'in class support'. Planning appeared to be done weekly in the North while it was termly in the South. The timetable in the North was less structured and this allowed for more subject integration which led to more topic based learning. For younger pupils there was more emphasis on Structured Play. Most students felt that there was a stronger emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy than was the case in the South and this meant that less attention was paid to the Arts. Mention was also made that there was increased emphasis on Mental Maths. One notable difference was that students felt they had less autonomy in the Northern classrooms as Southern teachers often let student teachers take control of classrooms. All expressed the view that the experience was challenging, enlightening and there would be a transfer of learning when they returned home and went on future placements in Southern schools.

Conclusion

Students and their tutors were very positive about the exchange programme as indeed were participating schools. The evidence provided at both evaluation events suggests that this programme continues to be a successful one. There is evidence that the programme's main aim, as set out in the first section of this report i.e. to promote mutual understanding and an appreciation of diversity, has been achieved. The author of the evaluation report would like to pay tribute to the Centre for Cross Border Studies for seeking funding for this project on an on-going basis and managing the quite complex framework

around which it operates. Special thanks should go to the Project Manager, Mrs Eimear Donnelly, for maintaining this programme. Thanks should also go to both the academic and support staff involved in the different colleges across the island of Ireland who have worked hard to facilitate this on-going exchange programme. The students have received an invaluable experience that should assist their professional development as future teachers and classroom practitioners.

All students recommended the retention and development of this programme for future years.

SCOTENS STEERING COMMITTEE 2017 -2018

Dr Noel Purdy, Stranmillis University College, Belfast *n.purdy@stran.ac.uk* (Joint Chair)

Dr Kathy Hall, University College Cork *k.hall@ucc.ie* (Joint Chair)

Dr Linda Clarke, Ulster University *lm.clarke@ulster.ac.uk*

Dr Conor Galvin, University College Dublin *conor.galvin@ucd.ie*

Dr Kieran McGeown, St. Mary's University College *k.mcgeown@stmarys-belfast.ac.uk*

Dr Pamela Cowan, Queen's University Belfast, *p.cowan@qub.ac.uk*

Prof Teresa O'Doherty, Marino Institute *teresa.odoherty@mie.ie*

Dr Maria Campbell, St Angela's College *mcampbell@stangelas.nuigalway.ie*

Prof Anne Lodge, Church of Ireland Centre in the DCU Institute of Education *anne.lodge@dcu.ie*

Ms Moira Leydon, ASTI *moira@asti.ie*

Ms Dorothy McGinley, INTO *dmcginley@into.ie*

Mr John Unsworth, Education Authority *john.unsworth@eani.org.uk*

Dr Jacqueline Fallon, NCCA *jacqueline.fallon@ncca.ie*

SCOTENS MEMBERS

The following institutions and organisations are members of SCoTENS

Institute of Education, Dublin City University; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; St Angela's College, Sligo; Marino Institute of Education, Dublin; St Mary's University College, Belfast; Stranmillis University College, Belfast; Dublin City University; University College Dublin; Trinity College Dublin; National University of Ireland Galway; Maynooth University; University of Limerick; University College Cork; Queen's University Belfast; Ulster University; Waterford Institute of Technology; Irish Federation of University Teachers; Irish National Teacher's Organisation; Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland; Teachers Union of Ireland; National Council for Curriculum and Assessment; The Teaching Council (Ireland); General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland; Donegal Education Centre; Drumcondra Education Centre; Kildare Education Centre; Monaghan Education Centre; Middletown Centre for Autism and Belfast Metropolitan College

Centre for
Cross Border Studies