



# **SCoTENS**

## **Annual Report 2003**

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

has been established to develop discourse among teacher educators across the island of Ireland with a view to encouraging open, critical and constructive analysis of both current provision and future collaboration. Its intention is to stimulate and sustain wide involvement in a continuing process of informed enhancement of professional practice.

THE STANDING CONFERENCE ON TEACHER EDUCATION NORTH AND SOUTH (SCoTENS) RECEIVES  
FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE DEPARTMENT FOR  
EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND THE DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE IN IRELAND.



# Contents

<b>CHAIRPERSONS STATEMENT</b>	4
Professor John Coolahan Professor Anne Moran	
<b>ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT</b>	10
<b>‘Challenges to Teacher Education and Research, North and South’ – Malahide, 9-10 October 2003</b>	
<b>SECTORAL CONFERENCES</b>	
Irish Association for Social, Scientific and Environmental Education (IASSEE)	75
All Ireland Conference on Initial Teacher Education	77
<b>RESEARCH PROJECTS - PROGRESS REPORTS</b>	
North-South Early Years Network and Diversity and Early Years Research Project	80
North-South Student Teacher Exchange Project	81
<b>REPORT ON SCOTENS WEBSITE</b>	
Dr. Roger Austin Dolina Paterson	83
<b>NEW FUNDING APPLICATIONS APPROVED</b>	92
<b>FINANCIAL REPORT</b>	94

## Chairpersons' Statement

In July and September 2002 the Committee of the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) was informed that the Department of Education and Science in the Republic of Ireland and the Departments of Education and Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland were prepared to give financial support to promote the work of SCoTENS. The committee met on 6th September in NUI Maynooth and on 22nd November in St. Patrick's College Drumcondra to prepare a programme of work to be submitted to the Departments for approval. The committee negotiated arrangements with the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh to become the administrative location for SCoTENS and for the services of a part-time Director and Administrative Assistant to fulfil agreed roles.

The following were the agreed objectives of SCoTENS:

- Provide a supportive framework for collaborative research and professional activities on teacher education, North and South;
- Hold invitational conferences on themes of mutual interest to teacher educators, North and South;
- Provide seed funding for North-South research projects on teacher education issues;
- Promote position papers on issues of mutual concern to teacher educators, North and South;
- Use its good offices to assist in obtaining funding for approved research activities;
- Support exchange arrangements between teacher educators for approved purposes, as part of its concern to strengthen existing inter-professional and inter-institutional linkages;
- Establish and maintain a website which will incorporate several forms of computer-mediated communication in relation to educational developments in research, North and South;
- Act as an agency for advice or consultation by policy makers in the Departments of Education of both jurisdictions.

The programme of work was prepared so as to give effect to these objectives. The following was the programme of activities devised by the committee and submitted to the relevant Departments in early December 2002.

## Outline of Programme of Work

### Duration

- The joint North-South framework to support networking and joint projects will operate on a two-year pilot phase: in the first instance, from January 2003 to January 2005.

## Programme of Action

- The following is an outline of the networks/research projects which SCoTENS will support over the pilot period. Already, with the support of the SCoTENS, the Centre for Cross Border Studies has won EU funding to support two of the projects identified at the May 2000 Belfast Conference.

These are:

- A North-South research study into Diversity and Early Years Education in Schools.
- A Student Teacher Exchange Project between a number of teacher education institutions, North and South.

Work is already underway on these projects, and SCoTENS will be supporting and guiding the work.

- SCoTENS will also support the North/South Early Years Network which emerged from the 2000 Belfast Conference.
- SCoTENS will establish and maintain a website. This website will act as a major facility for the exchange of information, position papers, curricular materials, research ideas etc., between personnel involved in teacher education and research in institutions throughout the island.
- SCoTENS will support ICT initiatives which involve student teachers and teachers on in-career courses, North and South, to engage co-operatively in areas of mutual professional interest in the application of ICT to education. This work will draw on the experience of the Dissolving Boundaries Project.
- Since the 2000 Belfast Conference a group of academics from teacher education institutions have initiated meetings to share perspectives and exchange viewpoints on initial teacher education issues, North and South. With the delay in supportive funding they have not been able to sustain the momentum. SCoTENS will now be in a position to support this initiative and get the momentum re-energised. This form of networking is likely to have many productive outcomes, including joint research initiatives.
- The area of continuing professional development was also put forward as a priority theme for worthwhile joint attention at the Belfast Conference. SCoTENS intends to contact the named personnel involved and invite a programme of action for which some financial support would be forthcoming.
- A group of teacher education academics with a particular interest in social, scientific and environmental education has become active in cross-border research and teaching co-operation. SCoTENS will engage in dialogue with this group and will seek to be supportive of its efforts.
- SCoTENS also intends to organise a general conference for representatives of teacher education institutions, North and South, for October 2003. It is planned to hold it in a venue in the South. As well as providing an opportunity to discuss the work of SCoTENS, it is planned to choose a

theme of contemporary relevance to teacher educators throughout the island. The conference will also provide a valuable opportunity for renewing acquaintance, exchanging research ideas and establishing communication lines.

This programme was approved by the authorities in both jurisdictions on the island in January 2003. The grants for the first year of operation, of £40,000 by each jurisdiction, were made available in February 2003, which allowed the committee to engage more fully with the programme. The pilot phase would now date from February 2003 to February 2005. It was agreed that a report on progress would be submitted to the sponsoring Departments at the end of the first year of operation e.g. end of February 2004. We have pleasure in making this report available. We also are pleased to be able to inform the personnel involved that significant success is being recorded through the programme of activities in realising SCoTENS objectives. The following phrase from Minister Jane Kennedy's letter of 14th January 2003 caught the supportive spirit of the sponsorships from both jurisdictions: "Both the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Learning remain firmly committed to the development of the cross-border dimension of teacher education and believe that the proposed plan of action will provide a valuable contribution in taking forward this agenda." We consider that the work which is underway is in line with the objectives of the sponsoring Departments, as well as of SCoTENS.

The following represents a summary of activities and developments conducted over the year. A more detailed account of the various initiatives forms the rest of this Annual Report.

- The committee of SCoTENS met five times during 2003, hosted by teacher education institutions or departments North and South.
- SCoTENS has been supportive to the two North-South projects, administered separately by the Centre for Cross Border Studies, which have benefited from EU funding: the North/South Student Teacher Exchange project and the Diversity and Early Years research project. Members of the SCoTENS committee sit on the steering committees of these projects, which are progressing very well. The Diversity and Early Years project is enriched by the Early Years Network which emerged from SCoTENS. Summary accounts of these projects are included on pages 80-82 of this Annual Report.
- The second North/South Conference on Initial Teacher Education took place in Drumcondra, Dublin on 13th -14th November 2003. This was a follow-up to a similarly designed conference in Belfast in November 2000. The 2003 conference involved presentations on key aspects of initial teacher education in the South, followed by discussion sessions. On day two, visits took place to schools and other educational institutions of particular interest to participants. The conference concluded with a roundtable discussion. Participants found the conference of great value and further action lines were proposed. It has been suggested that the papers presented at the Drumcondra conference might be published as a valuable

reference document for teacher educators North and South. A Report of the Drumcondra Conference is on page 77 of this Annual Report.

- SCoTENS supported the Annual Conference of the Irish Association for Social Scientific and Environmental Education (IASSEE) which was held in Belfast on June 19th - 20th 2003. The Conference focused on three main themes: Initial Teacher Education in an All-Ireland Context, Citizenship and Identity, and Children's Learning. An account of this Conference occurs on pages 75-76.
- A very significant objective of SCoTENS was the establishment of a website of high quality as a major facility for the exchange of information, position papers, curricular materials and research ideas between teacher educators and student teachers, North and South. This has been set up at [www.socsci.ulst.ac.uk/education/scte](http://www.socsci.ulst.ac.uk/education/scte). An early initiative was to provide material on special education needs, which has been regarded as very valuable. Since then, under the guidance of D. Roger Austin and Ms Dolina Paterson of the University of Ulster's School of Education, a wide variety of materials have been made available on the website. A detailed report on the website is on pages 83-91.

SCOTENS has also supported the continuing cross-border ICT work in schools in the Dissolving Boundaries project.

- New North/South initiatives which are getting underway with the support and advice of SCoTENS are:
  - Special Educational Needs and Initial Teacher Education in Ireland
  - Education for Diversity and Citizenship
  - Evaluation of A Teaching Package for Children with PMLD
  - Continuing Professional Development North and South: Policy, Provision, Processes and Possibilities.

All these projects involve teams of personnel from teacher education institutions – North and South – working co-operatively with a research and development focus.

- As was planned in the programme of work for 2003, a major conference was organised by the SCoTENS committee, and held in Malahide, Dublin on 9th - 10th October 2003. This was on the theme "Challenges to Teacher Education and Research North and South". The conference was attended by about 120 delegates from teacher education institutions throughout the island. The Conference Chairperson was Dr Don Thornhill, Chairman of the Higher Education Authority, Dublin. Opening Addresses were given by Ms. Christine Jendoubi, Assistant Secretary, Department of Education Northern Ireland and by an t-Uas Gearóid Ó Conluain, Deputy Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Science, Dublin. These were followed by keynote addresses from Mr. David Istance, Project Leader in the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), responsible for the CERI project "Schooling for Tomorrow", and by Professor John Coolahan of the National University of Ireland Maynooth. A great deal of the Conference discussions took place through seven workgroups on themes of central importance to teacher education, North and South. The texts of the addresses, the reports from the workgroups and the closing remarks by Dr Pauric Travers are contained

in the report of the conference, included in this Annual Report. We wish to thank the Department of Education and Science in Dublin for support in disseminating the Conference Report in this way. Extensive dissemination of such material assists in the achievement of SCoTENS objectives. It is the hope of the committee that the contents of this Annual Report will be of interest and value to all with a professional or administrative interest in the themes.

- The Financial Report, at the end of the Annual Report, sets out the income and expenditure incurred up to 31st December 2003.

In conclusion, we wish to thank all those who have helped to make the first year of SCoTENS' operation such a success. This has involved a great deal of voluntary effort which is testimony to the high degree of interest which exists amongst teacher educators throughout the island in collaborative work on practices and research. We have much to learn about each other; we need to draw on best practice whenever demonstrated, and we need to use our best understanding and insights to solve common problems in the interests of our education systems. We wish to record our special thanks to Mr Andy Pollak and Ms Patricia McAllister of the Centre for Cross Border Studies for their very efficient and courteous support. On the basis of a year of significant achievement and of the palpable goodwill which exists North and South for the work, we look forward with great hope for further achievement in the year ahead.

Signed on behalf of the Committee



**JOHN COOLAHAN**  
Co-Chairperson



**AILISE MORAN**  
Co-Chairperson

## Members of the SCoTENS Committee

<b>Professor John Coolahan</b>	NUI Maynooth
<b>Professor Anne Moran</b>	University of Ulster
<b>Dr Pauric Travers</b>	President, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra
<b>Professor Mona O'Moore</b>	Trinity College Dublin
<b>Dr John O'Brien</b>	University of Limerick
<b>Professor Sheelagh Drudy</b>	University College Dublin
<b>Very Rev Professor Martin O'Callaghan</b>	Principal, St. Mary's University College, Belfast
<b>Professor Richard McMin</b>	Principal, Stranmillis University College, Belfast
<b>Dr Ruth Leitch</b>	Queen's University, Belfast
<b>Dr Tom Hesketh</b>	Director, Northern Ireland Regional Training Unit (RTU)
<b>Mr Andy Pollak</b>	Centre for Cross Border Studies, Armagh

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

**Challenges to Teacher Education  
and Research North and South**



## **Annual Conference**

**Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co Dublin  
9 – 10 October 2003**

# Contents

Opening Address: Ms Christine Jendoubi	12
Opening Address: Gearóid Uas. Ó Conluain	15
Teachers and the School of the Future: Mr David Istance	19
Positioning the Teaching Career for the Knowledge Society: Professor John Coolahan	26
Conference Chairman's Reflection: A Role for Educators to lead the way towards a Knowledge Society: Dr Don Thornhill	36
 <b>Workgroup Reports</b>	
Integrating ICT into Teacher Education Dr Roger Austin & Dr Aidan Mulkeen	43
Teacher Education for Diversity and Citizenship Ms Úna O'Connor & Mr Gerry Jeffers	46
Teacher Education and the Integration of Special Needs Mr. Hugh Kearns & Dr Michael Shevlin	50
School Placements in Teacher Education Dr Andrew Burke & Prof Anne Moran	54
Training for School Leadership Dr Tom Hesketh & Prof Diarmuid Leonard	55
Best Practice in Teacher Induction Mr Kieron Mellon & Mr Conor Galvin	58
Policy Approaches to Continuing Professional Development Dr Mark Morgan & Prof Harry McMahon	63
Conference Report on SCoTENS website: Dr Roger Austin	64
Closing Remarks: Dr Pauric Travers	67
Programme	69
List of delegates	70

## DAY ONE

### OPENING ADDRESS (1)

**Ms Christine Jendoubi**

**Assistant Secretary**

**Department of Education Northern Ireland**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for your kind invitation to share the opening of your conference.

I think the subject matter of your conference is a particularly apposite one – Challenges to Teacher Education – for we are in a time of enormously rapid change, in education just as in the rest of society. (We know this not just from experience, but because every conference we go to tells us we are!)

The education system, certainly in Northern Ireland, has tended to be in a reactive mode. Where I think where we need to be is at the forefront of leading change and helping to shape the society we want. And I think one of the major challenges for all of us must therefore be in learning how to manage change and control it, instead of continually running along behind trying to catch up (and ICT is probably the starkest, but by no means the only, example here).

In an idle moment in the office the other day I counted up the number of major reviews going on in the education system that I was aware of, and I lost count at about a dozen. It seems that every aspect of education is under review in the North, from pre-school to post-primary structures, from the curriculum to funding, from policy on educational technology to business-education activities.

In the area under discussion at this conference, we are at the start of a process of collective reflection on where teacher education needs to go to ensure that our teachers are, and remain, properly equipped to support today's young learners. That applies equally to our newly qualified teachers and to our 20,000 teachers in post.

In April of this year we held a major teacher education conference in Limavady, the first of its kind in the North, I'm told, for about 30 years. Many of you here will have attended it. At the end of it we had explored, and possibly depressed ourselves, with the changes the system was facing; and then buoyed ourselves up with the prospect of looking further at how we could go forward together to improve the provision we make and to work towards the very best in teacher education and professional development.

Over the coming months we are undertaking a number of studies that will give us further information on how teacher education is likely to be affected on a number of fronts. These studies will look at:

- The implications of the **post-primary review** and the **curriculum review** for teacher education;
- the potential impact of **e-learning** – for both teachers and students;
- Our current **‘teacher competences’** model of initial teacher education, including looking at the balance in students’ time spent in college and out in schools;
- The effect of **diversification** on existing Initial Teacher Education;
- The co-ordination, effectiveness and funding arrangements for **continuing professional development** of teachers;
- The relevance and value for money of **the support we provide to beginning teachers** in their early professional development;
- In Initial Teacher Education, **the effects of demographics on, and costs of, how we use our teacher education estate**. In terms of student numbers, projections show that we are set to lose 17% of our 4-18 year olds by 2026. However we have also just completed a piece of research indicating that, against popular belief, we do actually have teacher shortages in a number of subjects such as maths, physics, chemistry, languages, ICT, technology and design and home economics – all subjects where the uptake by pupils remains robust – and there are a myriad of other factors, like the implications of pay and conditions negotiations, that can also affect teacher numbers. How do we manage all this in teacher education terms?

You can see how much these studies chime with issues you also have in the South, and with the sorts of issues you all will be looking at over the next two days. We hope to bring the fruits of the studies I have mentioned back to a follow-up conference in the North around late spring of next year.

So can I say here that I think the challenges you have identified for your workshops tomorrow are spot on, ones that the Department of Education in the North could readily sign up to:

- How do we get the right people into teaching – and when we’ve got them, how do we make sure we are placing them in the right schools with the right teacher mentors?
- How do we make sure that teachers can at least understand students’ ICT queries, even if they can’t answer them – and more fundamentally, how do we plan for a future the technological landscape of which we can’t even envisage, but which is going to be populated by the children in front of us now?

- How do we find the right teachers to teach citizenship, and what does that word mean, North and South?
- How do we prepare people who thought they were going to teach a subject like geography to teach a whole range of abilities and disabilities they never thought they'd meet (but they will!)?
- How on earth do we prepare anybody to be a head teacher nowadays?

To your list of challenges, maybe I'd add one more. It has never been more true that teaching, by definition, has to be a learning profession, one where professional expertise needs to be continually evaluated, honed and refreshed. We are recognising this by the very fact of establishing General Teaching Councils, North and South, that will be the guardians of professional standards among teachers.

At the level of the individual classroom we are also increasingly recognising the importance of self-evaluation and peer evaluation in helping individual teachers to improve their skills. Learning to give and accept feedback, to and from others, is one of the hardest, yet most essential, aspects of professional life, and it is gratifying to see that it is becoming much more widespread now. Teachers are learning to open the classroom door. Is this perhaps another challenge for the teacher educators?

Enough of all this. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Department of Education in Northern Ireland, I hope you have a very successful conference.

## OPENING ADDRESS (2)

**Gearóid Uas. Ó Conluain**  
**Deputy Chief Inspector**  
**Department of Education and Science**

A dhaoine uaisle go léir,

Is cúis áthais dom bheith i bhur dteannta anseo inniu ag oscailt oifigiúil na Comhdhála thábhachtach seo.

It is indeed a pleasure to represent the Minister for Education and Science, Mr Noel Dempsey, T.D., at the opening of this important North/South conference. I would like to express my thanks to Professor John Coolahan and Professor Anne Moran, joint chairs of the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South, for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. I am pleased to welcome all participants to the conference, but in particular those who have travelled from the North. Over the next two days, you will have opportunities to engage in dialogue on matters of particular interest in the field of teacher education across the island of Ireland.

I welcome your initiative in organising this conference and urge that the momentum created during the conference will be sustained through ongoing collaboration in research and professional activities. The conference theme, **Challenges to Teacher Education and Research, North and South**, is one of immense interest, given the central role which teachers play in influencing the outcomes of education.

The challenges which currently face teaching are myriad: significant curriculum reform; a renewed focus on teaching and learning; concern with the quality of learning and improved student outcomes; the inclusion of pupils with varying abilities and disabilities in mainstream education; a policy focus on social inclusion; education for diversity; pupils' needs for living and working in a knowledge based society; literacy and numeracy; learning how to learn, developing flexibility and creativity; the ability to think critically and how to apply learning in new situations.

These issues present a challenge to teacher educators who, during the initial stages of teacher education, must ensure that students acquire the necessary pedagogic skills, as well as an understanding of the principles underlying curricula and the implications for classroom practice. Student teachers also need to develop the skills and competencies which will enable them to manage change throughout their careers, working as individuals and in teams. For teacher educators, there are a number of challenges: how to prepare teachers most effectively for their first years in teaching, and how to provide support and opportunities for development throughout their entire careers.

The most recent OECD publication, *Learners for Life*, which explored what PISA 2000 found out about 15 year old students' approaches to learning, suggested that there may be a need to re-orient teacher training programmes to ensure that teachers, in addition to learning how to impart knowledge, understand how to encourage

positive learning approaches. The findings suggest that there are significant gains to be made from changes in policies and practices so that teachers consciously point students towards stronger learning strategies and aim to foster the self-confidence and motivation required to adopt such strategies. This dual emphasis on both the **content** and **process** of learning, and the desirability of cultivating a love for learning at the level of the school, has equal resonance for institutions involved in teacher education.

The keynote addresses this afternoon – **Teachers and the School of the Future**, which will be presented by Mr David Instance of CERl at OECD, and **Positioning the Teaching Career for the Knowledge Society**, to be presented by Professor John Coolahan of NUI Maynooth – will begin to sketch the current challenges, the changes which are likely to occur in schooling over the next twenty years, and the implications for the preparation and ongoing development of teachers in this context.

As a backdrop to these presentations, highly significant studies on the teaching career are currently underway at both an international and European level. The OECD Project, **Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers**, and the work of the EU Objectives 1.1 Group, **Improving Education of Teachers and Trainers**, provide insights into the issues and challenges which face all of us who play a role in teacher education, whether at a policy or operational level.

At a national level, a number of activities, past and current, will be influential in shaping the teacher education policies and practices which will emerge in the coming months and years. I refer to the work of the **Advisory Group on Post-Primary Teacher Education** and to the **Report of the Working Group on Primary Pre-service Teacher Education, *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century***, which have provided a comprehensive review of pre-service education and proposals for action. It is timely that we consider one of the main recommendations of that report: a reconceptualisation of teacher education and a restructured programme. The initial policy decisions arising from these reports will contribute to the development of a vision and strategy for teacher education, dealing not only with initial teacher education, but also with induction and continuing professional development.

I believe that it is only by encompassing teacher development within a framework spanning the teaching career that we will begin to capitalise on the benefits of the initial teacher preparation programmes and allow for the incremental development of teachers at key stages during their working lives. At a national level, other very valuable work related to teacher education includes the **National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction**, spanning both primary and post-primary levels. This significant work, which has been underway for over a year, incorporates a number of strands: the continuing professional development of the newly qualified teacher; the furtherance of that work within the context of the school site; and the involvement of mentors, where the expertise of the excellent practitioner is recognised and given status. A report on the outcomes of this project will be available by the end of the current school year.

Other developments at system level, such as policies which encourage schools to

engage in collaborative planning, and to adopt processes of self-evaluation, underline the importance of teacher development, not only on an individual level, but also on a staff-wide basis. Increasingly, teachers and staffs are interacting with other professionals and have a greater involvement with parents and the broader school community.

In addressing the range of issues associated with teacher education being discussed during this conference, it is heartening to know that other teacher educators share the challenges faced. It is encouraging that a group such as the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South, exists. I believe the sharing of experience and expertise, through exchanges, conferences, networks, as well as collaboration on research and a range of projects, is of immense benefit in ensuring that teacher education policies develop in such a way that real benefits accrue to the recipients, and ultimately affect positively the quality of education provided in our schools.

In addition to the opening workshop, which will consider the broad theme **Teaching in the Future - The Challenge of Change**, the workshop themes organised for this conference are highly relevant and entirely focussed on the key current issues in teacher education. While I have referred to some of the themes already, others deserve mention. **Attracting, selecting and recruiting student teachers** is critical. In Ireland, teaching continues to attract the highest calibre students. We must ensure that this continues to be the case. **Integrating ICT into teacher education**, both in the delivery of programmes and in using ICTs in the teaching and learning process, is another key theme. The scope of these workshops encompasses issues associated with the teaching career within a context of lifelong learning, and for this reason, I believe they have been excellently chosen.

The spirit in which the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South, has been convened provides a very welcome forum for this work. In addition to providing opportunities for the cultivation of relationships between teacher education colleagues, North and South, the coming together of this group to analyse and debate openly, constructively and critically, both current provision and future collaboration, provides opportunities for enhancing professional practice, stimulating future initiatives and strengthening inter-professional and inter-institutional links, North and South. This follow-on to the very successful conference held in Belfast in May 2000, which brought together for the first time teacher educators from all parts of Ireland, occurs at a most important juncture for teacher education on this island. I know that the Belfast conference proposed a range of areas that would benefit from cross-border research and collaboration between individuals and institutions. You will no doubt dwell on the outcomes of this work, pursue the discussion and progress it during this conference.

In addition to the work which you, as a group, have been pursuing, I am very pleased to note that co-operation in education on the island of Ireland is now well established.

A range of links and exchanges, supported by the Department of Education and

Science, has been developing in recent years. A good example of this, which may be of particular interest to you, is the Dissolving Boundaries Project. This, as you may know, is a joint initiative managed from the Education Departments of the NUI Maynooth and the University of Ulster, which links schools, North and South, in collaborative projects ranging across the curriculum, while also exploring and developing ICTs through the initiative.

Of course, co-operation on a North/South basis in education is not just limited to school exchanges and collaborative projects. There are a number of joint working groups looking at key issues of educational policy as diverse as special education needs, literacy and numeracy, teachers' qualifications and pupil attendance, to name a few. The ongoing work of these groups is central to delivering tangible results which will be of mutual benefit both North and South.

I would like to acknowledge and pay special tribute to the work of the Centre for Cross Border Studies, and the head of the secretariat for the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South, Mr Andy Pollak. The Centre has been responsible for the organisation of this conference. While engaged in a wide range of projects, the Centre has been quite active in the field of education and, I believe, is currently working on a number of EU-funded educational 'action research' projects which are relevant to the work of this group. I refer, in particular, to the Early Years Education Project and the North-South Student Teacher Exchange Project. This latter project links seven colleges of education in Belfast, Dublin and Limerick in studying and doing teaching practice together in the other jurisdiction. Underpinning this work is a belief that young teachers have a key role in overcoming prejudice and misunderstanding. The Centre, which also organises regular conferences and study days and brings together policy makers, senior practitioners and academics to discuss research papers prepared by the Centre, provides a focal point for analysis and debate on matters which impact upon the North-South relationship on the island of Ireland. This work is very much to be welcomed.

The two Departments, North and South, are contributing funding to the work of the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South. I note that your final session tomorrow will ask the rapporteurs of your work groups to bring forward proposals for future North/South co-operation. On behalf of Minister Dempsey, I would like to say that the Department of Education and Science will be most interested to learn of the results of your deliberations, and to consider how any proposals arising may complement and indeed enrich the work that is already underway.

I hope that you, the participants, will gain from your presence at this conference and make contacts which will be enriching and useful. Equally, I trust your work will provide the basis for continued future co-operation, dealing with issues of mutual interest in teacher education on this island, and indeed between here and the rest of Europe and the wider world.

Guím gach rath ar bhur gcuid oibre sna laethanta agus sna blianta atá romhainn.  
Go raibh maith agaibh.

## TEACHERS AND THE SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE

**Mr David Istance**

**Centre for Educational Research and Innovation  
(CERI), OECD, Paris**

I would like to address ideas and scenarios for schooling in the future that have been developed as part of the OECD's 'Schooling for Tomorrow' programme. The inspiration behind this international work is that policies in education, despite being the part of our lives and of society that exercises such a long-term impact, are dominated by the immediate and the short-term – so much so that we lack the tools and even a convincing language to engage in serious thinking about the long-term. The scenarios have been built up through extensive discussions with experts in education, policy people and others outside education. The scenarios seek to reflect both ongoing trends and ideas and visions about where we would like to be; they are not forecasts but tools to help us think about the future.

I want today to ask what teachers might look like in these different scenarios. I will report, on the basis of the discussions we have had in our different OECD events, on where people in education assess where we are now in schooling and where they would like us to move in the future – for there seems to be a major gap between the two. Then I want to reflect on some of the emergent findings from another OECD programme – this one called 'Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers' – a major new study in which the UK and Ireland are actively participating.

In the 'Schooling for Tomorrow' project, we have developed six scenarios in three clusters. The first cluster of two we have called '**Attempting to Maintain the Status Quo**'. Here we imagine that the future in 15-20 years time is like today or even the past. Vested interests are so strong that radical change is very difficult to achieve. Despite constant talk of reform, and often criticism of schools, nothing much actually changes given the power of inertia. Resources are continually stretched as new duties get loaded onto schools.

The first of these two scenarios we have called '**Bureaucratic School Systems Continue**'. In it, the system is very strong and still essentially national in scope. It is highly bureaucratic. Teachers in this 'Back to the Future' scenario will, as is often the case now, be highly distinct, sometimes as civil servants, but suffering from problematic status. They will feel they do not receive the recognition they deserve but are fearful of change that might seriously disrupt existing arrangements. In particular, the classic isolation in which teachers work – as individuals in classes in front of a set of pupils essentially behind closed doors, and in schools which do not interact with other schools – is firmly maintained. Teachers' sense of professionalism is also ambivalent. It is unclear whether they see themselves as leading professionals or as craft workers, and indeed their working environment and preparation are a mix of the two. But in this scenario teaching is clearly a job and a career for life, to be entered young and left on retirement.

Our second 'Status Quo' scenario is something of 'worst case', centred precisely on the teacher variable: the '**Meltdown Scenario**', brought about by a galloping exodus and shortage of teachers that proves impossible to staunch through the usual mechanisms by which teacher demand and supply normally find balance. It would come about through a combination of factors:

- A rapidly ageing profession, where very large numbers are leaving through retirement or ill-health, totally outstripping the capacity to recruit and prepare beginning teachers;
- A buoyant job market for graduates, whereby the young look elsewhere, including for the greater rewards; but also where practising teachers are leeching in large numbers out of schools and out of education altogether.
- A mounting public dissatisfaction, exacerbated by the shortages and problems, which affects teacher morale and status and helps to fuel the vicious circle.

Were this to happen, it would be unlikely to represent a stable situation and might well lead to one of the other scenarios presented below. But while some might think it is unnecessarily 'doomsday', it has proved to be the one that has galvanised a lot of reflection in different OECD countries about undesirable possible futures to be avoided. For some it is not unrealistic at all: it has found particular resonance in the Central European countries who are relatively new to OECD – the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Poland – who say that for them this is a highly plausible and worrying future.

The next two scenarios we have called '**re-schooling**'. They are the futures that many in education prefer. In them, there would be very significant investment and renewal in education; openness to new ways of working; and teaching would be very clearly attractive and high status. Public and political recognition would be high, with professional demands on teachers correspondingly high. Those professionals engaged in education would be more diverse, built around a corps of highly skilled and rewarded teachers. Equity would be very strong, for while schools themselves would be more diverse, they would be of undoubted quality and it would not matter where one's child went to school since the level of professionalism, support and facilities would be equally attractive everywhere. In 're-schooling', the **school** – not the system as in the above bureaucratic futures – would be the key element.

The first of these two 're-schooling' scenarios is entitled '**Schools as Core Social Centres**'. In this, the school becomes perhaps *the* leading social and community institution, particularly with fragmentation in many of the other institutions which have provided the pillars of society in times gone by: the family, work, religion and even residential communities themselves. As well as, and as part of, being leading institutions, schools would be far less isolated: school walls would come down; many community activities would be located as part of school life, and the school would draw on a whole set of community experience and expertise as its resource. As regards teachers, the sharp line between the teacher and other relevant adults and experts would be blurred. Commitment and professionalism would be high, with more varied contractual arrangements but

high financial and intrinsic rewards for all. The public policy role would be critical, especially in ensuring high equity across communities that are unequal in their own resources.

The other scenario we have called '**Schools as Focused Learning Organisations**'. In this, schools would be key institutions, recognisable as schools today, but revitalised around a strong knowledge agenda in a culture of high quality, innovation, experimentation and diversity. Organisational forms would be far more varied, getting away from the single classroom and didactic models and assuming the resourcing and facilities to do so. ICT would be used extensively. There would be strong networking with other schools and groups - locally, nationally and internationally. Extensive links and partnerships would be forged with tertiary education and other organisations. Knowledge management and institutional learning would be to the fore, hence the applicability of the label 'learning organisation' to the vast majority of schools. As to the teachers, they would be correspondingly in more varied careers and profiles, with more flows in and out of the place called school. There would be major increases in staffing levels, but perhaps with schooling as a shorter and more intensive period in order to liberate the necessary resources.

All this stands in sharp contrast to the fifth and sixth scenarios: '**de-schooling**'. Here, the school ceases to be the central institution in educating the young. Dissatisfaction with what schools provide and their rigidities in the face of complex, fast-changing knowledge societies would see the development of a whole array of alternatives. The continuing growth and spread of inexpensive, powerful ICT would speed the process. 'Home schooling' would flourish too at the local level, but many of those engaged in 'teaching' and learning would be operating at the national and international levels as well. Cultural, religious and interest groups would be centrally involved. The role of government would be very substantially diminished, except for helping to support and develop the banks of learning materials and assessment instruments that would be essential to these de-schooled futures.

While to many in education this sounds either fanciful or nightmarish, they are precisely the kinds of arrangements envisaged by many non-educational futurists. Learning, of course, continues to feature prominently in their analyses, but many regard the institution of school as an outmoded residue of the 19th century that is ill-suited and incapable of adapting to 21st century life.

How do the two 'de-schooling' scenarios differ? The fifth we have called '**Learner Networks in the Network Society**', an essentially Illichian vision from the man who wrote *Deschooling Society* over 30 years ago. It is the most radical of the six, for in it schools as we know them, and therefore teachers, would disappear.

The sixth scenario - '**Extending the Market Model**' - is the one that many in education find most unpalatable, despite it leaving some room for schools and teachers, unlike the fifth Network scenario. As the title suggests, schooling would in this future be operated much more along market lines. A whole variety of new providers would come into that market, representing various interests in society

as well as the purely commercial. The government role would, as in networking, be in providing and supporting an array of learning materials and assessment instrument banks that would be widely available and accessible especially through electronic means. But government bodies would also regulate the market and provide a great deal of the resources – along with private household spending – that would make the learning market such an attractive option for many of the new providers to set up in. Flourishing indicators, measures and accreditation arrangements would displace direct public monitoring and curriculum regulation. Innovation would abound, but so too would painful transitions and possibly stark inequalities, depending on how the markets operated.

And the teacher in such learning markets? There would continue to be schools and teachers in them, but with a less distinct public profile than now. Teachers instead would have a wide range of profiles – public, private, full-time, part-time. They would be complemented by a wide range of other learning professionals, many in private companies, and an army of consultants for hire – by schools, private education companies, and individual families.

These are, of course, pure types – ideal, distilled scenarios – that have emphasised certain features to try to clarify some of the possible directions for change, or indeed lack of change. But to which are we currently closest? And, where are we moving or would like to move in the future? We have asked such questions to educationalists, officials, teachers and policy-makers at a number of our conferences.

As regards where they want to be, the answers are very clear. At our Rotterdam conference on Schooling for Tomorrow a couple of years ago:

- 85% of the participants thought the 'School as Focused Learning Organisation' highly or rather desirable;
- 81% supported the 'School as Core Social Centre'.

In contrast only 27% were in favour of the Status Quo, with a mere 21% supporting 'Extending the Market Model' as highly or rather desirable. Interestingly, while only 12% thought the 'Learner Networks in the Network Society' scenario, where schools would be abolished, highly desirable, another 40% (making 52% in all) thought it rather desirable.

How does this compare with the question: "Where do you think we are now – not as a hope or a wish, but as a matter of fact?" We asked that at an international forum on Schooling for Tomorrow held in Poitiers in France last spring, inviting participants from over 20 countries to locate their school systems in a hexagon drawn around the six scenarios. The answers were again clear. Collectively we in the OECD countries are pretty much stuck in the bureaucratic status quo, despite an almost universal and continual language of renewal and reform. There is some movement, some observe, in edging across the scenario space towards "re-schooling" but few of our forum participants felt this was rapid or easy. Some described the difficulty of attaining a 'tip over' point,

whereby the shift away from the bureaucratic system would have gathered enough momentum to carry it forward of its own volition.

Why should there be such a contrast between the where we are and where we want to go in the future? One reason is precisely that expressed in the bureaucratic model I outlined earlier – vested interests are very firmly entrenched and serve to seriously dampen any moves to radical change. Another reason is that transition and change are themselves painful, though we know that many other sectors of our economies have been forced into painful transition and some have even – with examples aplenty here in Ireland – emerged in good shape. Another is the sheer size of national education systems: they are very large undertakings employing and occupying millions. The challenge of reform and innovation is thus a very big one.

The tenor of public debate is too often backward-looking, to times when things were supposedly better. Parents, including successful middle-class parents, are often risk-averse, wanting their children to succeed in terms that they know and did reasonably well by themselves. Surveys of parental opinion across OECD countries systematically find that, while reasonably, even well, satisfied with their own children's schooling, their views on the system at large are significantly less positive. There is a sense of malaise as a feature of general opinion even when that is not borne out by parents' own direct experience.

Accountability measures that are put in place with the public interest in mind may be highly constraining for experimentation and innovation. Assessment systems and certificates may also operate conservatively, and come to dominate the lives of teachers and students – and prove to be untouchable – a case perhaps of the tail wagging the dog of education. And there are the teachers themselves, who may be very wary of the 're-schooling' practices that might well mean a major departure from the tried and the familiar.

I have referred already to a major international study under way at the OECD in which 25 countries have prepared detailed monographs on "Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers". Ten of these countries have submitted their teacher policies to detailed scrutiny through review by visiting examiners. A concluding synthesis report in 2004 promises to be a significant statement about the conditions and prospects for teachers across OECD countries.

From an initial perusal of these reports, there are some key aspects shared across most or all countries, such as:

- a recognition of the key importance of the teacher at the heart of education policies that are now so important nationally and internationally, and subject to such high expectations;
- a stronger focus on teacher education and professional development;
- a sense, whether countries are in teacher surplus or shortage, that quality issues are vital;
- in most countries there is a perception by teachers that they do not enjoy the recognition they once did, adding to a sense of malaise;

On the latter point, the evidence from surveys does not really support the thesis of a loss of prestige over time, and some pillars of society – politicians, the judiciary and the media – have suffered a far greater measurable drop in public respect. Yet teachers feel they have lost standing even if this is not borne out by any objective measures of prestige. They are caught in the middle of the pressures exerted by the very high expectations of and spotlight on education and an acute sense of the rising demands that are made on teachers. This combination is fraught with tensions. The danger is that it can result in a defensive stance in the profession as it feels itself increasingly beleaguered.

If these are common issues, in other respects the picture across countries is very mixed. Take salaries, for example, where teachers are in a very different situation across different countries, and not only as a reflection of the wealth of any one country and its ability to pay its teachers:

- a) There are countries where GDP is relatively low, and teachers' salaries are low even by the standard of those countries, e.g. Central Europe.
- b) There are countries which are also relatively poor but where teachers are comparatively well-paid, e.g. Mexico and, in particular, South Korea.
- c) There are rich countries where teachers are paid badly, although they might enjoy other factors and benefits, e.g. Norway.
- d) There are rich countries where teachers enjoy a high standard of living, e.g. Switzerland.

Whether there are severe teacher shortages also varies. Some countries report little by way of teacher shortages: Portugal, for example, or South Korea. Here in Ireland recruitment remains buoyant. Other countries face very severe issues, including those already mentioned as worried by the prospect of 'meltdown' in Central Europe. Netherlands owns up to severe shortages. Some countries face a very rapidly ageing teaching force. For example, a full half of the lower secondary teachers in Germany and Italy are aged 50 or more. In Sweden this figure is 40%.

It is probably fair to say that in the majority of OECD countries the teacher shortage issue is regarded as serious; that in all there is the general drive to quality, and few do not have issues related to particular groups of specialist teachers, for example in mathematics, science or modern languages.

The evaluation and appraisal of teachers seems to me to be more on the agenda across the OECD now than it was 10 or so years ago. This might be in the form of self-regulation, or it might be external, through inspectors. It might also – increasingly – be linked to the desire to identify and reward senior or advanced teachers. Such policies are, of course, controversial and are regarded by some as divisive. But they might also mean that for highly skilled teachers there is an option of promotion through staying in the classroom and taking on greater responsibilities such as for professional development or networking with others.

The OECD national reports give the impression that there is still not nearly enough networking and collegial activity going on, as opposed to the individual teacher working away on his or her own behalf behind the classroom door. Whether or not

this is the case for Ireland, here surely is a major factor for change if we are going to start to move across towards those 're-schooling' futures that so many in education see as the way ahead.

By way of conclusion, I would emphasise the value of developing more long-term thinking and dialogue as a serious, important activity – not just something fun to engage in when closeted away from the harsh realities of decision-making and practice. We need long-term thinking that is genuinely part of the processes of teaching, schooling and policy. That way, our desired futures might actually have a chance of happening. Teachers themselves should be absolutely at the heart of that process.

# POSITIONING THE TEACHING CAREER FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

**Professor John Coolahan**  
**National University of Ireland, Maynooth**

This address attempts to set out a contextual analysis of the teaching career within contemporary social circumstances. It highlights the need for integrated and systemic policy measures in support of the teaching profession if it is to provide the quality of teaching and learning required by the knowledge society.

## Features of the Knowledge Society

Contemporary society is undergoing a range of profound changes the accumulated impact of which indicates that we are in a new era of civilisation. The concentrated and contemporaneous character of the changes have profound ramifications for how society operates. The characteristics of this new era are by now well recognised and can be briefly outlined. There is general acceptance that the globalisation of the economy is having interpenetrating effects on the movement of capital, labour and knowledge. This, in turn, gives rise to more intense international competitiveness which puts a premium on human resource development. The extraordinary and accelerating impact of the information and communications technology revolution presents new ways of providing knowledge, accessing knowledge and disseminating knowledge, which is having huge influence on how people live and work. The rate of knowledge expansion has accelerated remarkably, primed by new research in the natural and social sciences. The drive for economic growth has raised concerns about environmental sustainability and poses new challenges regarding conservation of the environment and stability of climatic conditions.

Among significant social changes is the institution of the family, which has been experiencing profound change, with many new forms of alignment being forged. This, of course, impacts on many aspects of social and community activity and has many implications for how we care for the younger generations. Linked to this, the developed world has been experiencing great demographic change with great reductions in the proportion of young people, while at the other end of the life-cycle greater longevity is in evidence, involving new patterns of dependency between the young and old generations. Many societies have become much more multicultural, involving new demands for pluralism and tolerance with a greater diversity of cultures, languages and religions within them. Despite the general improvements in standards of living in developed countries over recent decades, there is increasing concern about the extent and durability of social exclusion. The gap between the rich and poor has been widening. In the knowledge society with its dependence on information and communications technology, the danger of increases in the gap between those who "know and can do" and those who "don't know and cannot do" is obvious. Without serious and sustained attention to reducing that gap, society is storing up disaffection and alienation with great potential consequences for social justice and democratic cohesiveness.

Overall, it can be concluded that we are living in an era of great achievement and potential, but one which also faces significant problems and challenges. Society looks to its education system as a major means of ensuring that the potential is realised and the challenges are met.

## The Challenge to Education

An education system needs to serve the needs of society, and when that society is undergoing profound and accelerating change, particular pressures emerge to improve the alignment between the education system and these changing societal needs. The teaching profession is a key mediating agency for society as it endeavours to cope with social change and upheaval. But the teaching profession must be trained and equipped so that it will have the capacity to cope with the many changes and challenges which lie ahead. If it is to retain the confidence of society, the teaching profession must adapt a great deal so that it can act in a constructive manner within a fast-changing society. The question arises whether or how the education system can meet the challenges being faced. The contemporary school system was designed and shaped by very different social circumstances than exist today. There is a realisation that the *status quo* position is not a tenable one for the future. Schools have been changing, but they will need to change much further. As an attempt to envision the framework such change may take, the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) has been conducting reflection on **The School of the Future**, and has set out possible scenarios. It is less an attempt at prediction, than a stimulation for necessary creative thinking on the developing interface between the school and the changing society outlined above.

## The Teaching and Learning Challenge of the Knowledge Society

Whatever other new demands are being placed on schools, it is the teaching and learning challenge posed by the knowledge society which gets at the core of the schools' work. From the mid nineties one can detect a more focused analysis by international organisations on the nature of the emerging knowledge society and of their adoption of lifelong learning as the guiding principle for education in the future. A few short, representative quotations may catch the flavour of this paradigmatic shift in perspective. In 1996 the OECD Ministers for Education launched their Communiqué, in association with the OECD Report, *Lifelong Learning For All*. The Chairman of the OECD Ministers stated:

We are all convinced of the crucial importance of learning throughout life for enriching personal lives, fostering economic growth and maintaining social cohesion ... and we have agreed on strategies to implement it ... the target may be ambitious, but we cannot afford not to work towards it.

The EU designated 1996 as the European Year of Lifelong Learning, following the publication of its first White Paper on education, *Towards The Learning Society*. This paper had asserted:

The society of the future will therefore, be a learning society. In the light of this it is evident that education systems ... have a central role to play. Education and training will increasingly become the main vehicles for self-awareness, belonging, advancement and self-fulfilment (p.16).

The UNESCO report, *Learning The Treasure Within: Education for the Twenty-First Century*, was also published in 1996 and it again emphasised lifelong learning as the guiding principle for education in the new century:

A key to the twenty-first century, learning throughout life will be essential for adapting to the evolving requirements of the labour market and for better mastery of the changing time-frames and rhythms of individual existence (UNESCO, *Learning The Treasure Within*, p.100).

The stage was clearly being set for a new policy framework. In the context of the re-positioning, within a changing world order, the EU from 2000 gave sustained attention to the lifelong learning approach and the place of education and the teaching career within it. This can be noted from statements such as the following from the EU *Memorandum of a Lifelong Learning* (2000):

The European Council held in Lisbon in March 2000 marks a decisive moment for the direction of policy and action in the European Union. Its conclusions affirm that Europe has indisputably moved into the Knowledge Age, with all that this will imply for cultural, economic and social life... .

Within the Knowledge Age it is recognised that education and training have been given significant priority:

The conclusions of the Lisbon European Council confirm that the move towards lifelong learning must accompany a successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society. Therefore, Europe's education and training systems are at the heart of the coming changes. They too, must adapt.

... Lifelong learning must become the guiding principle for provision and participation across the full continuum of learning contexts. The coming decade must see the implementation of this vision.

Within this scenario it is recognised that the teaching profession has a crucial role to play, and needs to become more innovative in promoting quality learning. Teaching as a professional role faces decisive change in the coming decades:

Teachers and trainers become guides, mentors and mediators. Their role — and it is a crucially important one — is to help and support learners who, as far as possible, take charge of their own learning... .

Active learning presupposes the motivation to learn, the capacity to exercise crucial judgement and the skill of knowing how to learn. The irreplaceable heart of the teaching role lies in nurturing precisely these human capacities to create and use knowledge (*EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, 2000).

The EU has set ambitious targets for itself over the next decade. The Lisbon European Council (March 2000) set the strategic goal for Europe of becoming by 2010: "The most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". The Barcelona European Council (March 2002) set the following overall goal for Europe: "The European Council sets the objective to make Europe's education and training systems a world quality reference by 2010". The work to promote these goals is well afoot and, as can be noted in the following quotation from a 2002 document, the aims are broader than economic development:

Lifelong learning is an overarching strategy of European co-operation in education and training policies, and for the individual. The lifelong learning approach is an essential policy sharing strategy for the development of citizenship, social cohesion, employment and for individual fulfilment (*European Report on Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning*, 2002).

These views are echoed in a recent (2002) document of the OECD which again stressed the centrality of the teacher to the goals to which developed countries aspire in the knowledge society:

Teachers are central to schooling. They are even more critical as expectations grow for teaching and learning to become more student-centred and to emphasise active learning. They must be in the vanguard of innovation, including the informed judicious use of ICT. Teachers must work in collaboration with colleagues and through networks, as well as through active links with parents and the community. This calls for demanding concepts of professionalism: the teacher as facilitator; as knowledgeable, expert individual; as networked team participant, oriented to individual needs; engaged both in teaching and in research and development. The role of the school principal in providing leadership is particularly critical.

Such statements envisage a very high quality of teaching in support of qualitative learning. The "learning to learn" motif is the aspiration which is emphasised. This involves a move toward self-directed learning and independent thought. It implies less emphasis on curricular content and more on processes and skills. A shift is sought from didactic teaching to learning sources and ways of generating and inspiring learning. The skills regarded as important for the learning society stress the significance of creativity, problem-solving, decision-making, teamwork.

## Whither the Teaching Career?

The cumulative impact of such demands on, and aspirations for the school as a social institution in contemporary society amounts to a very changed concept of the school from that which existed even a generation ago. In a particular way, it poses daunting challenges for the teaching profession. It is only intelligent, highly skilled, imaginative, caring and well educated teachers who will be able to respond satisfactorily to the demands placed on the education system in the era of the knowledge society. If society's concern is to improve quality in education and to foster creative, enterprising, innovative, self-reliant young people, with the capacity and motivation to go on as lifelong learners, then this will not happen unless the corps of teachers are themselves challenging, innovative and lifelong learners. It is generally accepted that teachers lie at the heart of the education process and that their morale, motivation and competence are of crucial importance in a reforming era.

However, just at the time that a high quality teaching force was never more needed, there are many indications that the teaching career is facing major difficulties, if not crisis, in some countries. At present, many teachers consider that they are experiencing change overload and that there is inadequate understanding among the public of the multi-faceted role they now perform, often in very difficult circumstances. They also consider that there has been insufficient attention paid to the implementation problems of many new policy initiatives.

OECD data indicates that the teaching profession in many countries is experiencing fundamental difficulties. A divergence seems to be emerging between the high conceptions held of the quality of teaching and the role of teachers, as set out in the preceding sections of this paper, and the many problems being experienced by the teaching career. In some countries teaching has experienced a decline in public image and status, serious difficulties in recruitment, large outflows from the profession, relative decline in salaries, an ageing and mainly female workforce, disimprovements in working conditions and declining morale. This poses a major policy dilemma. If the expectations of higher level of performance by the teaching force are occurring simultaneously with fundamental problems affecting the career, then urgent remedial measures need to be taken, or the seeds of a very bad harvest are being sown.

## Towards a Policy for the Teaching Profession

If the agenda for educational reform for the knowledge society is to be realised it is essential that greater priority be given to the teacher in strategic planning. If current trends are allowed to drift on, then it is quite clear that the aspirations for education in the knowledge society and its associated benefits would dissolve into empty and disillusioning rhetoric. Different aspects of the teaching career need to be regarded in an inter-connected, integrated, systemic way so that a restructuring and reculturation can be fostered to meet the needs of a new era. Among the policy issues which need to be borne in mind simultaneously in an integrated policy are image; recruitment; initial, induction, and in-service teacher

education; salaries; conditions of work and welfare; research; teaching resources; policy consultation; role in self regulation; retirement arrangements. The question may be posed – is there any likelihood of this occurring? The problems facing the teaching profession have local features linked to the tradition, culture, values and socio-economic context of individual countries. National governments need to take action in relation to their national responsibilities. While some countries have been neglectful or tardy in facing these issues, there is now a greater political realisation of the centrality of education reform to the future well-being of nations. Election manifestos in a variety of countries in recent years have given priority to educational expenditure for reform, including the buttressing of the teaching profession. Very striking has been the increased attention being given by international agencies such as the EU and the OECD to the analysis of problems being faced by the teaching profession and indicating a desire to take supportive action.

Following work at the Lisbon, Stockholm and Barcelona European Council meetings, a set of objectives for the education and training system of Europe were agreed, together with a detailed work programme. It is noteworthy that the first of the associated objectives was “Improving education and training for teachers and trainers”. Among the key issues set out were:

Providing the conditions which adequately support teachers and trainers as they respond to the challenges to the knowledge society, including through initial and inservice training in the perspective of lifelong learning and securing a sufficient level of entry to the teaching profession, across all subjects and levels, as well as providing for the long-term needs of the profession by making teaching and training even more attractive. (Council of European Union Educ.27, 6365/02)

This is the first time that the teaching career has been highlighted in this way in EU policy statements and it reflects a new concern across the fifteen member states to take action in support of the profession.

At their meeting in November 2001, the Ministers of Education in the OECD also chose the teaching career as a major area of policy concern. Looking to the image of teaching and towards a more coherent policy approach to the career, they considered the following:

Making teaching more attractive, for both present and future teachers, became a more urgent policy concern in the face of teacher shortages. Attractiveness is fostered by many factors – recognition, conditions, rewards, professional development, shared ethos – and is as relevant for practising teachers as it is for potential recruits. A key challenge for policy-makers is to meet demands for high quality teaching, and at the same time to address looming teacher shortages. (OECD, 2001c)

Arising from these discussions the OECD embarked on a major study entitled “Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers”. The purpose of the study is to provide policy-makers with information and analysis to assist them in

formulating and implementing teacher policies leading to quality teaching and learning at the school level. The activity has several objectives:

1. to synthesise research on issues related to policies concerned with recruiting, retaining and developing effective teachers;
2. to identify innovative and successful policy initiatives and practices;
3. to facilitate exchanges of lessons and experiences among countries;
4. to identify policy options.

The approach being taken is a comprehensive one involving a range of inter-connected factors from teacher recruitment to teacher retirement.

It is planned that the OECD comparative analytic study on the teaching career and the report of the EU working party on teacher training will be available in by the end of 2004.

Thus as the new century opens there is some encouraging evidence that the key policy agents are now taking a serious view of the problems which exist with a view to taking remedial action to equip the teaching profession to fulfil its demanding role in relation to the new educational change agenda. Time will tell how successful these efforts will be. It is crucial for the well-being of future society that they are successful.

### **Positioning the Teaching Career in Ireland - North and South**

The teaching career within both jurisdictions in Ireland is favourably positioned to move forward if it is alert to emerging possibilities and challenges. Teaching as a career has deep historical roots within the island and it is recognised that the people have been well served by the teaching force through many generations. Teaching has long enjoyed high social status and regard in Ireland, even if its remuneration did not measure up to this. This status continues to exist as we move into the twenty-first century. It is an asset of inestimable value, which should not be taken for granted, and which many countries would wish to have today. The image of the role of teacher continues to attract a strong supply of highly qualified and committed applicants, which is in strong contrast to trends in some other countries. Competition for entry into teacher education courses is at a high level. Ireland shares in the international trend whereby the big majority of such applicants is female. Again, both systems in Ireland are fortunate that retention rates within the profession remain high, in contrast to the attrition rates occurring in other systems. There would seem to be a strong vocational commitment in operation whereby a belief in the value of the work sustains personnel.

Teacher education traditions on the island are long established and are of high quality. The concept of the "3 Is" - initial, induction and inservice teacher education - are accepted by policy makers as interconnected aspects of support for the teaching career in contemporary circumstances. Ongoing reform of aspects of teacher education has been an in-built feature of the systems, and

plans exist for further development. There is an openness to developments to which a developing research tradition responds. Despite occasional tensions, co-operative partnerships exist between the key agencies with responsibilities for the teaching career. The scale of the societies and the tradition of good inter-personal relationships facilitate these linkages. The governing authorities in both parts of the island have given forthright expression to the significance of knowledge generation, dissemination and application for the future well-being of their societies. The centrality of education for human resource development is a strategic emphasis of economic and social policy.

While both parts of the island share common elements of a teaching tradition, each has, of course, put its specific stamp on evolving policy. Northern Ireland has been part of the framework of policy of the United Kingdom. Significantly, however, it applied a distinctive education policy approach within this broader framework. With the establishment in 1994 of the Northern Ireland Teacher Education Council (NITEC), it set out to attune the general policy to the ethos and culture of Northern Ireland's educational traditions, in many ways different from those in the neighbouring island.

Working within a committed approach to the "3 Is", Northern Ireland developed some distinctive features for its initial teacher education approach. It has also made significant strides in establishing strong links between its induction for beginning teachers, early professional development and continuing professional development. The elicitation of the support of the teaching profession for these elements of teacher development has been subtly achieved. Efforts have been made to promote a partnership of agencies between the teacher education institutions, the Education and Library Boards, the profession and officials of the Department of Education. It is not to be expected that this partnership would always experience "fair sailing", particularly when overshadowed by concerns of alleged over-supply of teachers and costs retrenchment, but there is no gain saying that significant progress has been achieved. The establishment of a Teaching Council for Northern Ireland in the recent past was a landmark development with much potential for safeguarding the interests of the teaching profession into the future. Planning goes on in relation to that demanding future. Many strengths are there to be harvested for the strategic planning progress.

In the Republic of Ireland reviews of primary and post-primary teacher education have been recently concluded. These point the way for innovative policy measures in support of teacher education throughout a teacher's career span. Initial teacher education is regarded as having many strengths but it needs more time allocated to it, as well as some modernisation of content and processes. National pilot schemes on primary and post-primary teacher induction are due to be reported on by autumn 2004, and Department officials have signalled policy commitments for teacher induction schemes in harmony with the traditions of the system. In-service teacher education (CPD) has been promoted through a diversity of forms and a variety of agencies, with significant success over the last decade. This has involved teacher education institutions, special support teams

of teachers, teacher unions, managerial groups and education centres. The Education Centre network was expanded and up-graded during the nineties.

Legislation was passed in 2001 for the establishment of a Teaching Council, which is expected to come into existence in 2004. The terms of reference for the Council are wide-ranging and, when in operation, it should greatly enhance the status of the teaching profession in the Republic. Its proposed role is the most extensive of any teaching council currently operating internationally. Over the last decade there has been considerable diversification introduced into the career track of teachers, with opportunities for new roles, secondments, career breaks and so on. A striking feature of the extensive educational policy formulation which has taken place over the last 10-12 years has been the consultative role played by the teaching profession in the development of that policy. This has helped to give a sense of ownership by the profession of many of the reforms which are being rolled out. This consultative process was also invoked in the preparation in 2003 of the Republic's Country Background Report for the OECD study, *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*.

The Republic has also been actively involved in the current EU Objectives study, *Improving Education and Training for Teachers and Trainers*. It is expected that this study may be reported on during the current (2004) Irish Presidency of the EU. The OECD Ministers for Education are also meeting in Dublin in March 2004 during the Presidency. Discussion of the OECD teacher career project will form part of the agenda for the meeting.

In conclusion, it can be noted that many indicators, both in the international and the national contexts, point to the contemporary period as a crucial one which provides opportunities for securing a qualitative teaching force for the knowledge society. Participants at this conference, and others, need to reflect on a number of questions. These include the following:

- How best can the strategic view of the teaching career be promoted?
- How can the voice of teacher educators be most effectively registered?
- How can a pro-active response be activated to meet the tide of opportunity?
- How can critical mass/partnerships of influence be built?
- How can an integrated policy on the teaching career be best promoted?
- How can liaison with the Teaching Councils be nurtured?
- How can research co-operation and dissemination on teacher issues be developed?
- How can teachers as lifelong learners be best supported?
- How can the "educational" quality core of teacher education be best practiced?
- How can the moral role of the teacher be supported?
- How can the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS) help in the favourable positioning of the teaching career within the knowledge society?

Hopefully some of these issues will be addressed at this conference, and through other SCoTENS activities. While encouragement can be taken from past achievements regarding the teaching career, the key to the future is not complacency but, rather, a pro-active awareness of the need for strategic planning for the teaching career in Ireland, and a utilisation of what beneficial outcomes may emerge from analysis and policy initiatives by the international agencies, of which we form a part.

## DAY TWO

### A ROLE FOR EDUCATORS TO LEAD THE WAY TOWARDS A KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

**Dr Don Thornhill**

**Chairman, Higher Education Authority**

This has been a very stimulating and exciting event, and there has been for me a continuing dynamic running through it which I will reflect on in a few moments. I think we were very fortunate to start off yesterday with two excellent plenary presentations from David Istance and John Coolahan. I subsequently had the great pleasure and privilege of four excellent briefings on the first evening's workgroups from Peadar Cremin, Maeve Martin, Richard McMinn and John O'Brien. I'll have to put in the customary disclaimer that if what you hear is not what you thought happened at your workgroup, the fault is not that of the leader, the fault is with the presenter.

What is the challenge facing me this morning? Some months ago John Coolahan rang me up, and in his usual beguiling way said I would like you to say a few words at a conference in Malahide on the morning of the second day about what happened the day before. John is a shrewd judge of human behaviour and I have this unfortunate inability to say 'no' to anything that seems like a few months away, since it doesn't impact on the diary at that stage. He said all I would have to do was reflect coherently, wisely and perhaps maybe a bit inspiringly on what I had heard during the previous day. I had thought a very enjoyable dinner yesterday evening was going to set me up nicely for a restful night, but the briefings from the workgroup leaders, plus my concerns about what I was going to say this morning, made me resemble the insomniac, dyslexic agnostic who stayed awake all night wondering if there was a dog!

The overarching conference theme that I have picked out is a concern about the future. It is possible to cluster both the keynote presentations and many of the issues that arose in the workgroups around that overarching theme. For me it was very appropriate that David Istance began with his scenario building exercise. Sometimes scenario building can be a somewhat fanciful exercise – a bit of what you might call intellectual entertainment with the emphasis on the shock value, and sometimes it can be a little weak on the substance – but that was not the case this time. What we heard from David yesterday was in my view very authentic and thought provoking, and I would like to thank him for presenting it to us in such a clear way. It helped me certainly, and I think it helped others to clarify some of the issues and challenges that are facing us.

It is always very useful to think in polarities as part of a process. The mistake is to position ourselves at one of the poles – because life isn't polar, life is much more messy, life is much more complex, life is much more interesting. And one workgroup began to reflect on the transition pathways to the different possible

outcomes outlined by David Instance. How do we get there? I suspect underlying that was a view of what individuals in the group thought were the desirable outcomes, and how to avoid the dangers, risks and challenges posed by some of the not very attractive outcomes, such as for example the meltdown outcome, which of course would spill over into other even less attractive outcomes. In this working group the reflections spilled over into wider issues in our society: for example, in ensuring distribution of life chances and the role of other government agencies and government departments in this, and the part education has to play in that particular fabric.

Other questions linked to that were about the composition and formation of future teacher training courses. David spoke about different actors and participants coming in. Questions were raised about the possibility of different entry routes into the profession, different levels of formation, different levels of participation in teaching. There was discussion about part-time teaching by people who have some other profession and do some teaching. This model is not unusual in third level, particularly in professional education, but is there a role for it also at first or second level, and what challenges does that face you as teacher educators?

There was also concern reflected in at least one group about the tension between the subject specialist – some teachers describing themselves by their subject speciality and not by the fact that they are teachers –and the holistic educator. What does that self identity mean for teaching, and more particularly what does it mean in terms of some of the issues which John Coolahan touched on - the status and morale of teachers? Also how well fitted is this notion of subject identity and specialisation to societal developments – because if there is anything that is characteristic about the world which we are now in, it is that multi-disciplinarity and inter-disciplinarity are increasingly important themes and currents running through our work. Boundaries are being blurred, and there can be unexpected and exciting interfaces between different disciplines. I am not a great fan of what one might call this blending of disciplines, since there are certain values attached to scholarship and education formation that are well grounded in particular disciplines. But where the modern developments have great value is in bringing us outside the boundaries of our original disciplines so that we see similar issues and sometimes the same issues being tackled from a different interactive perspective. That can be very exciting.

So David Instance sparked off quite a bit of reflection in the workgroups around those issues. Similarly John Coolahan, in his wonderfully lucid and reflective style which I first heard during the National Education Convention back in 1993 (and John reminded me that this is the 10th anniversary of the Convention), brought us up in his helicopter on a guided tour of the landscape and began to pick out the themes and pull the threads together to identify some coherent patterns and also some questions for the future. His overarching theme was the knowledge society and lifelong learning, and teasing out the implications of these momentous developments using the contemporary analysis that is taking place internationally through the OECD, the EU and other organisations.

David and John voiced one major concern that I would share which is the danger of taking reactive positions. John said clearly that the status quo is not an option and I would agree with that. The danger in taking a reactive position based on criticism of current developments or possible future prospects is that this line of thinking can become quite negative, and conservative in a negative sense. I don't mean conservative in a positive sense, since I have a personal view that educators should have a degree of bias towards conservatism, in the sense that the process in which all educators, and particularly teachers in schools, are engaged, is so long term that ideas, paradigms and concepts do have to be tested out before they are imposed with sweeping vigour. I have a view that much of the current value of primary and second level education, and many of the quality outcomes in both North and South, are the result of what were during the 1950s and 1960s very conservative education establishments resisting some of the mistakes of the so called progressive education movements which were much more pervasive in other English speaking countries. But that is a personal view and I am ready for people to rise up and contest it if I have misread the situation.

The issue of market forces and the impact of market forces on education is a recurring theme. Nobody certainly in the plenary – I don't know if it was mentioned in the workgroups – spoke of higher education as a commodity, but it's there. It has surfaced very explicitly at this conference under two headings. First is the issue of overseas students, and concerns about what now seems to be a developing policy position of attracting students from other countries into Irish Higher Education Institutions, and this being presented as a major revenue opportunity. As you know there are policy developments in this area. The Higher Education Authority has published a report on the issue, and the Minister in the South has established an inter-departmental committee that he is chairing himself - that itself is quite interesting!

Briefly, the HEA position was that this was a challenge that Ireland should embrace since there are very positive educational values attached to having a substantial cohort of overseas students on our campuses. There are also significant revenue earning opportunities; I don't think we should be negative about this because these people in many instances have money to spend and will go elsewhere if they don't come to Ireland. There is also a very important issue here, which is the implication of this development for institutional revenues and autonomy, and what a broadened revenue base does for institutional discretion and the capacity for institutions to be more flexible and responsive to challenges. There is also the question of whether we can be assured that we will deliver a quality education experience to an overseas cohort.

The second issue hangs around the composition of that cohort. Are we not so much exploiting as availing of the needs of economic elites in some developing countries for a first world professional or graduate education through the medium of the English language? And what are we doing about the wider issues of distribution of chances in these societies, many of which face severe problems of equity in societal development?

The HEA position on this is quite clear: that we should be clear in our minds about what we are doing, and we shouldn't use the same policy to mix both

objectives. Education is certainly a very important tool for development co-operation. However we should be quite explicit that we have particular funding instruments, ideally through the Department of Foreign Affairs and its overseas development co-operation vote, so that we are clear about the contribution we are making through scholarships, outreach programmes, distance education, and various other vehicles to avail of the potential of education as an instrument for development co-operation.

The other issue which some workgroups alluded to was the elephant in the corner of the room and that is the Hibernia College issue. There are concerns about quality here and about the appropriateness of a part time model for initial teacher education, for initial formation. In other words, is it appropriate that pre service education should be delivered in a part time mode? There were also concerns raised about what this means for the partnership between the colleges of education and the Department of Education and Science, and indeed for the wider partnership process.

There could be echoes here of David Istance's de-schooling scenario. I am obviously not going to go into the rights and wrongs of these issues, but this is a very specific instance of a challenge which is faced by all Higher Education Institutions, and especially Higher Education Institutions that are involved in professional education, training and development. That challenge is the emergence of new providers who can deliver education training and formation according to new models that are seen by many people as more responsive to their needs and their circumstances. There may be an issue for Higher Education Institutions to reflect on in terms of being faithful to principles and flexible on means.

Is this an illustration of an overarching dynamic which is taking place and which may pose huge threats for the universities? One of the important sources of prestige, energy and revenue to many universities is their business schools, and particularly their MBA programmes. Online providers now present a huge strategic challenge in that area because they can deliver the education and the educational material much more flexibly than the traditional university models, and in many instances the material is being presented by world leaders in their particular fields.

So we are back to the big question: are we destined to put ourselves in a reactive mode, and by 'we' I mean people involved in education in all its dimensions – policy, delivery and practice? Or can we join in shaping the future? If we are to participate in shaping that future, all of us need to do more in terms of scanning the horizon. This is difficult to do, because the internal challenges we face are very considerable and very difficult.

There are other issues raised by this conference: for example, the role of the head teacher, and the role of teacher educators in forming head teachers. There is concern in the South about the difficulties of attracting teachers to take up headship posts.

I was very interested in hearing from Richard McMinn about the experience in Northern Ireland where there is now a programme for the training and

formation of potential head teachers. What I find attractive about this programme is that this training takes place pre-appointment and involves a high degree of voluntary selection. So in other words, individuals cross some form of Rubicon in terms of deciding whether they want the job or not, and I think that is very important for a person taking up a position of responsibility.

Teacher councils seem to be a recurring theme. I don't know how many of you know this, but all during the time that public policy was in favour of teacher councils, and I as a loyal civil servant had to naturally enough progress and implement that policy, I had deep reservations and concerns about the concept, and I notice some of these concerns seem to be coming through now. My concern essentially was a scepticism about self-regulation, a danger that when self-regulators are under stress they will defend the professional group, rather than defend the interests of society. We see this in medicine, in accountancy, in law, and perhaps in other professions. But there is also a specific concern being voiced here about the role of teacher educators within the councils. The question is whether they are being marginalized and whether they are sufficiently influential, given that the teacher councils may well have a very important role in the future in determining the curriculum and the content of teacher education. The other issue is the remit and the scope of the councils, and the fact that the Southern model does not allow for participation by the third level teaching cohort.

Another issue raised in the workgroups was the tension there seems to be between the emphasis in professional development on skills versus personal development – and underpinning personal development, of course, is the huge and vitally important issue of the moral role of the teacher. I hope this is a false tension (and it may be a question of a pendulum swinging from one pole to another) because it seems to me that it is not an 'either/or', it is a both/and – both dimensions are important and essential. Certainly an exclusive emphasis on skills to the exclusion of personal development and the moral issues would be seriously inadequate.

So this brings me to three final points which I would like to leave with you. First of all is the leadership role of educators and the role particularly of Higher Education Institution educators and indeed the institutions themselves in a knowledge society. There is a paradox here. One of the characteristics of the knowledge society is that now and in the future many of the jobs in our society have to be carried out by people with a strong theoretical grounding in their areas and indeed with more than a passing familiarity with other disciplines and other areas of scholarship. That's a contrast with the industrialisation model, where training rather than education would have been very much the central paradigm. But what we also need in this knowledge society is a very significant cohort of people, of leaders, who are at the knowledge frontier, not in the sense of being researchers and pushing back the knowledge frontier (although of course we need a higher quantum of those as well), but people who understand what is happening at the knowledge frontier, and who can relate to it. So why in this situation does there appear to be growing disenchantment and dissatisfaction with educators? Surely this is a time when educators should be

taking pole leadership positions? Never was education more important – yet never have educators, it would appear, felt more threatened or less regarded. There is an issue here and it's one that at institutional and individual level has to be taken up by us all – because if that leadership role is not taken up by educators, others who do not have the insights of those of us involved in education will gladly take it up. We already hear industry and trade union groups talking authoritatively about the role of education in society – and perhaps not in as holistic a way as we would want to see.

Yesterday a surprising source gave me an insight into how we might deal with that problem. The famous business thinker Michael Porter, a member of the Harvard Business School, was giving a lecture at the Irish Management Institute. Porter, like all eminent gurus, has long ago dropped the mantras and flash presentations, and I found his presentation quite reflective and thought provoking. In the second part of his address he gave us his diagnosis of Ireland and its fitness to be a leading knowledge society, against the background of the remarkable economic progress that has been made in the South. His focus was on the South rather than on the island as a whole.

He diagnosed something (and this is my second point) which is prevalent in Ireland – which I think may also be the case in the North – an over dominance by the State. He said that too much initiative rested in the hands of the State, and this has implications for the work carried out by non-state groups, by representative associations, by professional groups. In his view the dynamic for leadership in knowledge-based societies has to come increasingly from outside the State. He sees this happening through a collaborative model which involves the State of course, but which also involves these professional and representative groups and others. This has a very important impact on the behaviour of these representative groups, he says. Where the State is dominant, representative groups form lobbies – they become reactive or they pursue special interests or they become defensive. Where the State is not so important and where it is not regarded as having the capacity of meeting every need, then these groups become more empowered, take on the development of issues themselves and essentially take the future into their own hands. I wonder is there something in what Porter says in the context of the future of higher education and the leadership role of Higher Education Institutions and professional groups such as the one gathered in this conference. Or maybe this group is an interface between an institution and a professional group.

The third point I would like to take up again concerns the model set out by David Istance: the bureaucratic control model. If I have a nightmare about the future of primary and second level education, it is that we could progress to the meltdown model. And none of these models are static, because of course they spill over into something else. How could this happen? It could happen if our teachers become defensive and resistant to change, and their world view and their view of societal needs depart significantly from that of society. The process may be slow or rapid, but at some stage or other a damaging spill-over could occur, and it does worry me that much of the public positioning taken, for example, by the teacher unions on various issues is a defensive or a self-interested one.

This comes back to a key question: is there anything teacher educators can do about ensuring – or at least increasing the probability – that our teachers and educators of the future are more pro-active and more receptive to change? Because I think that unless the teaching profession as a profession can convince its society that it is responsive and reflective on societal needs, then there is a real risk of the meltdown scenario, with all the implications that has for both the quality of education and for social equity and distribution. For in a meltdown scenario the better-off groups will find ways of looking after their own interests, and the people who will suffer will be the less well-off.

One final point I would like to leave you with is that in Ireland, North and South, we have registered some enormous achievements, particularly in the last decade. There has been huge economic progress in the South, and in the North I hope and am confident that we are moving towards systems of governance and structures in society which may well represent an experience from which other countries may draw in dealing with diversity in the future. So I am very hopeful about the future. Both North and South we are going where we have never gone before. We are facing the challenge of creating a knowledge-based society against the background of growing racial, ethnic and cultural pluralism. It is a wonderful prospect, but there are no guidebooks or prescriptions. I think there is an embracing role here for educators, and particularly those involved in the formation of educators, to seize the challenge and lead the way.

## WORKGROUPS

**Workgroup 1 – ATTRACTING, SELECTING AND RECRUITING STUDENT TEACHERS** – was cancelled due to the illness of the Northern rapporteur

### Report of Workgroup 2

## INTEGRATING ICT INTO TEACHER EDUCATION

**Chair:** Dr Roger Austin, University of Ulster

**Rapporteur:** Dr Aidan Mulkeen, NUI Maynooth

### Participants

John O'Brien, University of Limerick

Karen Bacon, Primary Curriculum Support Service, ROI

Chris Reid, Stranmillis University College

David O'Grady, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

Emer Malone, Léargas

Byron Evans, Regional Training Unit, NI.

### ICT in schools

The group began by comparing the situation of ICT in education, North and South. In both areas ICT has been a major focus of investment in education in recent years. In Northern Ireland a managed service (Classroom 2000) has been rolled out to schools, funded through a public/private partnership. This provides a common hardware and software platform and networking in all schools. All schools have access to the Internet, and the access is currently being upgraded to broadband, giving faster access but raising difficulties for schools involved in videoconferencing. In-service ICT training for teachers has been provided as part of the Classroom 2000 programme.

In the South, there has been a parallel investment in equipment, infrastructure and training, managed by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE). The strategy used was not a managed service, but a series of equipment grants to schools, allowing each school to purchase locally and identify their own needs. By 2002 the equipment levels had reached

- 11.8 pupils per computer in primary schools,
- 9.4 students per computer in post-primary schools,
- 4 students per computer in special schools.

The majority of post-primary schools have a network (69%), but there are networks in only 30% of primary schools and 19% of special schools. All schools were provided with Internet access, using a mix of ISDN and analogue lines. While very few schools have broadband access, an NCTE study of the feasibility of

broadband has recently been completed. In-service ICT training was provided to teachers as part of the ICT development strategy. Although this was provided on an elective basis, the take up was impressive, with over 70% of teachers participating. Following the training the majority of teachers in all sectors were reported to have some ICT skills.

It was noted that ICT also forms a key component of many North-South exchanges between schools and between youth groups. NcompasS, a recently formed North South educational exchange agency, will provide ICT training for youth workers to facilitate further developments in this area.

There were also some notable differences in approach between North and South. In Northern Ireland ICT skills are assessed at age 11 and 14 as part of the formal examination system. In the South, there is no formal assessment of ICT. At primary level the recommendation is that ICT be used to support learning in other curricular areas, rather than as a skill. At post-primary level there is no state assessment, but many schools have opted to use commercial assessment schemes.

In Northern Ireland a virtual learning environment (VLE) for schools called "Learning NI" is under development and should be available in schools from Spring 2004. While electronic content is being developed in the South, there is no firm commitment to a VLE as yet.

## ICT in Teacher Education

ICT is used in teacher education for a number of reasons. At one level, the teacher education institutions wish to ensure that newly qualified teachers have the appropriate ICT skills. This is a requirement as part of the teacher education programme in Northern Ireland and student ICT skills are assessed through a portfolio. While the situation is more varied in the South, most (if not all) teacher education courses include ICT components and many are assessed. It may be that in the long term there will be less need for this ICT skills development, as students will develop better ICT skills before they reach teacher education.

The second dimension to ICT in teacher education is the development of students' capacity to make appropriate use of ICT in their teaching. This is more challenging, as student teachers sometimes tend to use the most obvious applications of ICT, resulting in overuse of these ideas. In some teacher education institutions, developing ICT capacity in student teachers is the responsibility of one ICT specialist. This is an effective way to develop skills and the rudiments of educational use of the technology. However it may not be the best way to develop more imaginative uses of ICT within each subject area. To achieve a wider spread of ICT usage within teacher education may involve more staff development activities in some institutions.

A third dimension to ICT in teacher education is the use of a virtual learning environment to provide supports to student teachers. Examples of this were reported in a number of the institutions. This is both a useful support to the student teachers and an opportunity for them to develop some experience of a

VLE. Ideally student teachers should gain experience of the same VLE as is intended for school use, but this may present difficulties as the teacher education institutions are funded through different agencies and may have adopted different technology.

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

The group developed three ideas for possible future work:

### **ICT working group**

Given the variety of experience of ICT in teacher education, and the risk of duplication of effort, the group thought that it would be useful to establish a North-South ICT working group. This group would begin by sharing practice in ICT in teacher education, and then look for possible synergies or areas for collaboration.

### **ICT in Teacher Education Website**

Following the impressive special needs website, the group felt that a similar resource could be developed for ICT in teacher education. The site could provide links to policy documents North and South, examples of ICT in practice in schools, and provide an online database of Irish research on ICT in education.

### **Student Teacher Collaboration**

Ideally, student teachers North and South could use ICT to facilitate a dialogue that would help them to understand the differences in the educational systems. As a starting point, the group felt that institutions could examine student teacher use of and access to ICT. This research might be used to initiate a collaborative programme, or to examine the potential of schemes aimed at providing portable computers to student teachers.

## Report of Workgroup 3

### TEACHER EDUCATION FOR DIVERSITY AND CITIZENSHIP

**Chair:** Ms Una O'Connor, University of Ulster

**Rapporteur:** Mr Gerry Jeffers, NUI Maynooth

Those taking part in the morning and/or afternoon sessions included representatives from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) Support Service, the Department of Education and Science, and from the universities at Belfast, Coleraine, Drumcondra, Limerick, Maynooth and Stranmillis, as well as the Mater Dei Institute.

Initially, participants' brief self-introduction served to underline the diversity of backgrounds and interests within the group. There were shared concerns around aspects of education for citizenship, but also a commitment to research into related issues. The discussion was wide-ranging and productive, and concluded with an agreement to submit a proposal to SCoTENS to develop further North/South collaboration. Some of the key issues to emerge around teacher education for diversity and citizenship were :

#### Whole School Involvement

It was acknowledged that citizenship education is a whole school affair, starting at pre-school level and continuing through primary, secondary and tertiary education, including teacher education programmes. The inclusive culture of schools and the extent to which young people are involved in democratic and participatory processes is a key feature of citizenship education. The perception of the pupils' voice in the school, combined with strategies that facilitate meaningful pupil consultation, should be clearly promoted as part of the overall school ethos.

Citizenship is not the sole responsibility of any one individual teacher. The task for schools is to define citizenship education as a collective responsibility for all – from classroom to senior management – with agreed strategies for adequate provision.

#### Initial Teacher Education Programmes

There are elective courses dedicated to citizenship education within some existing teacher education programmes. In others, aspects of citizenship education are included as compulsory components of the programme. Discussion on this topic sought to examine the current nature of institutional provision and to investigate ways to include a citizenship dimension as a core feature of initial teacher education programmes for both primary and post-primary trainees.

Comments reflected those priorities previously mentioned regarding whole school involvement – namely that teacher education programmes should seek to provide genuine opportunities for students to voice their opinions, take part in democratic classrooms and generally experience learning in an appropriate, respectful, participatory environment. It was noted that these suggestions may present some significant challenges in the way initial teacher education is delivered.

### **In-Service Education for Teachers**

Providers of in-service education for diversity and citizenship have increased in recent years. The emergence in the ROI of a Support Service for Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE), made up of seconded teachers is one clear manifestation of this trend. The appointment of citizenship Advisory Officers and Assistant Advisory Officers to each Education and Library Board (ELB) in NI is another. Additionally, a growing number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) employ education officers who are well-informed about particular issues and highly skilled in specific methodologies. Some NGOs also produce relevant and adaptable resources that are attractive, relevant and of practical use for schools.

Many established teachers are unfamiliar with the pedagogical methodologies of citizenship education, and there are growing demands for in-service training. Discussion on this topic sought to examine what core requirements teachers might have. These included a sense of empowerment and confidence, borne out of combined active teaching methodologies and active participation.

### **In-Service for Teacher Educators**

It was noted that the roots of citizenship education are found in good educational practice. Changes in initial teacher education and in-service provision in education for diversity and citizenship carry implications for teacher educators. Teacher educators were identified as not only third level providers, but also development officers assigned to NGOs. It was noted that not all those involved in teacher education sufficiently understand or value citizenship education and its potential connection to their work. In-service training for teacher educators was advocated. This training should include active pedagogical methodologies, including the teaching of controversial and/or sensitive issues.

### **Who will Teach Citizenship? Dealing with Controversial Issues**

Education for diversity and citizenship, if it is to be relevant, must deal with the realities of peoples' lives. Local issues can be especially challenging to teachers. Practical examples include dealing with sectarian divisions in NI and attitudes to Travellers, asylum seekers and refugees in the ROI .

It was noted that teachers found issues relating to the internal aspects of school life among the most difficult. Initial teacher and in-service training in diversity

and citizenship education cannot overlook the probability of controversial and/or sensitive issues, and the complexities these can generate. It was noted that often teachers are given responsibility for teaching citizenship education when they have limited skills for such work or have insufficiently explored their own values and attitudes. Collectively, these are crucial issues for providers of initial teacher and in-service education.

## Dual Citizenship

Questions were posed about the implications - not least for citizenship education - of the commitment in the Good Friday Agreement to allow citizens in Northern Ireland to define themselves as British, Irish or both. The definition of citizenship in a Northern Ireland context was not fully explored during discussions. It was agreed however that it was an issue which merited further investigation within training and research environments.

## Transition Year Opportunities

It was noted that the Transition Year Programme in the ROI, with its flexible approach to curriculum design, presents many opportunities for practical citizenship education, including community service and cross-border links. However to locate the responsibility for citizenship education within one particular year is educationally indefensible. Meaningful education for diversity and citizenship must be developmental and feature in every school year group. With an overcrowded curriculum, the challenge of introducing an explicit citizenship dimension requires meticulous and extensive cross-curricular co-ordination.

## Research

Some participants spoke about current research activity. This includes looking at democratic schooling, the students' voice, the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, student participation in their own assessment and student teachers' perceptions of ideological and pedagogical obstacles in dealing with citizenship issues.

It was acknowledged that research can play a significant role in advancing education for diversity and citizenship education. It was agreed that efforts should be made to capitalize on existing research to develop potential future action. It was agreed that SCoTENS would have a significant role in disseminating research findings, in highlighting areas for further investigation and in aiding access to funding.

## Proposal

It was proposed that a conference on education for diversity and citizenship be planned for March 2004 to coincide with the Republic of Ireland's six monthly Presidency of the European Union Council of Ministers. Funding for this will be sought from SCoTENS.

The aim of the conference will be to bring together :

- those engaged in initial teacher education;
- those engaged in in-service teacher education (including members of support services and NGOs);
- those engaged in research.

The purpose of the conference will be to :

- share approaches to diversity and citizenship within schools and at ITE and CPD level;
- share insights from existing research in both jurisdictions;
- identify possibilities for joint research and evaluation.

It is proposed that in preparation for this conference a researcher will be engaged to undertake a mapping exercise to establish current provision and practice in Teacher Education for Diversity and Citizenship throughout the island of Ireland. The goal is that these findings should be available on the SCoTENS website in advance of the proposed Conference.

Alan Smith ([a.smith@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:a.smith@ulster.ac.uk)) and Gerry Jeffers ([gerard.jeffers@may.ie](mailto:gerard.jeffers@may.ie)) agreed to do some of the initial co-ordination for the proposed conference.

## Report of Workgroup 4

### TEACHER EDUCATION AND THE INTEGRATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS

**Chair:** Mr Hugh Kearns, Stranmillis University College

**Rapporteur:** Dr Michael Shevlin, Trinity College Dublin

#### Participants:

Mary Howard (St Patricks, Drumcondra)  
Sally Mc Kee (Ulster Teachers Union)  
Orla Ni Bhroin (St Patricks, Drumcondra)  
Mairin Wilson (CICE, Rathmines)  
Ann Dinan (Joint Managerial Body)  
Sheelagh Drudy (UCD)

#### Introduction

Participants from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland identified a number of common issues in special needs education. There was a lively discussion on policy developments and practice issues in both jurisdictions. The implications of policy initiatives favouring inclusion were explored and the barriers to inclusive practice identified. There was consensus that inclusion represented the only policy option though serious concerns were expressed about the lack of comprehensive pre and in-service programmes as well as the uncertainty around acquiring appropriate supports. Arising from this discussion research priorities were identified.

#### Policy issues: Republic of Ireland

Generally, policy has been reactive rather than proactive and has been developed on an ad hoc basis in response to the latest court case. Children with learning difficulties had been routinely excluded from educational provision until the landmark O'Donoghue case 1993 that established certain basic educational rights for these children. Pressure continues for enabling legislation to guarantee the delivery of special needs provision in an equitable manner. People have looked to the USA and the IDEA legislation as the 'gold standard' in terms of entitlements and rights.

#### Policy issues: Northern Ireland

Special needs policy in Northern Ireland is dominated by a bureaucratic model imported from the UK. This model developed from a policy of inclusion and the closing down of special schools. There was a definite sense that this bureaucratic system was in danger of collapsing.

It was observed that the Republic of Ireland was now also looking to a bureaucratic model to guarantee and deliver basic educational rights for children with special educational needs.

### Practice issues

Common concerns included the conceptualisation of special needs education. It appeared that the individual model of the special needs pupil was dominant. There was a widespread perception among teachers that there were discrete groups of children with identifiable characteristics and as a result the common needs of all children were overlooked. The usefulness of categories for educational inputs was questioned and the need to develop inclusive pedagogies was emphasised. The over-reliance on behavioural interventions and task analysis for pupils with special needs was challenged. From a Northern Ireland perspective it was stated that the pressure to get results and the pervasive impact of school league tables militated against the development of inclusive strategies. In addition, it was asserted that teachers were not equipped or properly supported to deal with children who have been 'statemented'. Inclusion is viewed as the 'cheap option' as extra resources are not forthcoming to guarantee the rights of the child to be fully included in mainstream. This view was reiterated from the perspective of the Republic of Ireland as school principals were adopting defensive positions in relation to inclusion issues. This issue appears very fraught, particularly as the proposed changes to a more comprehensive education system are imminent in Northern Ireland and to a certain extent in the Republic of Ireland also.

### Support issues

The lack of a coherent strategy in relation to pre-service and continuing professional development was highlighted in the Republic of Ireland. It was pointed out that learning support and resource training programmes were established as parallel courses with little acknowledgement that common ground exists. The educational psychology service appears to have been forced into focusing almost exclusively on assessment procedures. This over-reliance on test assessments was dictated by administrative priorities in allocating resources on an individual basis without taking contextual issues into account.

### Conclusions

It was generally agreed that the present responses to the provision of special needs provision in both jurisdictions had serious flaws. There was an inadequate conceptualisation of what constituted special needs, and policy initiatives tended to either reinforce the bureaucratic model (Northern Ireland) or lack clarity and consistency (Republic of Ireland). The notion of inclusion has been narrowly conceived and integral issues such as socio-economic status, gender and ethnicity need to be addressed as part of an overall societal response to diversity. A tiered and stratified education system exists in both jurisdictions and attempts to create schools as communities and as central to their local communities have been sporadic and lack systemic support.

## Research Ideas

Special needs education in initial teacher education/continuing professional development.

Identifying what is happening North and South.

Establishing a network of teacher educators involved in special needs education.

Examining conceptualisation of special needs.

Exploring methodologies employed in teaching special needs education.

Identifying and disseminating inclusive practice in schools.

## Research Proposal

The core purpose of the proposed research is (a) to identify policy and practice in the preparation of pre-service teachers for teaching pupils with special educational needs in Ireland; (b) to establish an all-Ireland network of teacher educators with responsibility for special educational needs in undergraduate and postgraduate courses of initial teacher education, and specifically those at:

1. Church of Ireland College, Dublin
2. Froebel College, Blackrock
3. Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
4. NUI Cork
5. NUI Galway
6. NUI Maynooth
7. NUI University College Dublin
8. St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra
9. Trinity College, Dublin
10. Queen's University, Belfast
11. St Mary's University College, Belfast
12. Stranmillis University College, Belfast
13. University of Ulster

The research seeks to provide for trainers and students a general rather than an institutional account of contemporary policy and practice in Ireland. The research will extend awareness of the range of training practice and identify training norms, constraints, aspirations and further priorities for research. The research method will require focus group discussions for 13 trainers at two two-day workshops hosted by institutions North and South. Funding will be required for the accommodation and travel of 13 trainers. The outcome will include a report with the following parts:

- Literature review: Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Initial Teacher Education, an international perspective.
- Comparative contexts: Overview of SEN trends (policy and provision), North and South.
- Expectations of newly qualified teachers North and South.
- Training provision: Core and optional; assessed and non-assessed; implicit and explicit course content and pedagogy supportive of SEN; diverse needs

and individual differences; differentiated teaching; inclusive approaches and curricula; multidisciplinary working.

- Training Resources and Partnerships: SEN dimensions of training; partnerships with placement schools; SEN expertise of trainers; external tutors with SEN expertise on ITE courses; visits to institutions of special education.
- Ways ahead in SEN and ITE: aspirations, realities, plans, opportunities, dilemmas and obstacles. Possibilities for the development of SEN content in ITE.

## Report of Workgroup 5

### SCHOOL PLACEMENTS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

**Chair:** Professor Anne Moran, University of Ulster

**Rapporteur:** Dr Andrew Burke, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra

The following were among the issues raised by participants in this workgroup:

- The difficulty of creating a mutual and equitable working relationship between schools and university departments / colleges of education in the matter of teaching practice.
- The arguments for and against grading teaching practice and the variations between institutions in this regard.
- The possibility of litigation and the contesting of teaching practice grades because of the financial implications involved.
- The high levels of tension generated by short teaching practice periods.
- The challenge of training and supporting both supervisors and co-operating / mentor teachers for their teaching practice roles.
- Since classroom teachers are not teacher trainers they generally do not have the vocabulary of analysis to assess a lesson.
- The difficulty of combining the dual roles of supervisor / assessor and advisor / mentor.
- The inequity involved in student placements – some in well-to-do and other in disadvantaged schools – and the potential impact of such placements on their teaching practice grades.
- The artificiality of short teaching practice periods and the need for extended school placements where students get a 'whole school' rather than a 'single classroom' experience.
- The possibility of developing a Masters in Teaching degree targeted at personnel who supervise or mentor student or beginning teachers, or who are involved in administration related thereto.

### Proposed Action

The discussion focused mainly on the professional development of student and beginning teachers.

It was agreed that, in view of the different approaches in the two jurisdictions, a research study comparing the teaching practice experiences of samples of students in both Northern Ireland and in the Republic would be valuable and informative. The proposed study might also include interviews with the co-operating / mentor teachers.

Dr. Rose Malone, NUI Maynooth, agreed to be the anchor person for the study. Those interested in becoming involved should contact her [Email: [rose.m.malone@may.ie](mailto:rose.m.malone@may.ie)].

## Report of Workgroup 6

### TRAINING FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

**Chair:** Dr Tom Hesketh, Regional Training Unit

**Rapporteur:** Professor Diarmuid Leonard, University of Limerick

This workgroup included representatives from schools, school management, the inspectorate and teacher education. This report describes issues discussed in the workshop, outlines some considerations that figured in discussion regarding possible future developments, and sets out an action proposal.

#### Issues discussed

Comparison of the contexts of provision North and South evoked considerable discussion. Possession of an accredited qualification in school leadership is not yet formally necessary anywhere on the island for appointment to the role of principal, although most appointees of recent years do in fact already hold such an award bearing qualification. In the North the Professional Qualification for Headship programme (PQH)(NI) offered by the Regional Training Unit (RTU) to aspirant school leaders represents that education system's major investment in succession planning – with the programme likely to achieve mandatory status at some point in the future.

In both jurisdictions Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) that provide professional development are numerous: six in the North and eight in the South (both figures include the Open University). A striking difference is that in the North a central state-provided agency, the Regional Training Unit (RTU), serves a co-ordinating vocational function in the professional development of serving and aspiring school leaders. Thus in the compact geography of the North, no serving or aspiring principal is geographically remote from vocationally relevant provision of professional development. In the more dispersed distribution of schools and HEIs in the South, and in a context of uncoordinated provision of programmes, it is not unknown that teachers may be obliged to travel journeys of several hours to attend university-based courses of school leadership. In the South, an initiative based at Clare Teacher Education Centre is under way in relation to school leadership: however its contact with HEIs in the Republic appears to be slight. By contrast, the RTU and the North's five HEIs have agreed an accreditation framework which links the PQH(NI) into the masters pathways provided by the HEIs.

Cultural differences shape the uptake and experience of school leadership programmes. School cultural climates in the South are not always considered favourable to such studies. Teachers may be inhibited by the sense that in their school 'it is not OK' to pursue professional development with the aim of taking on a leadership role. By contrast the prevailing experience in the North is that since the putting in place of the RTU about nine years ago such cultural inhibitions have gradually been overcome. There is also a view that despite

formal changes in the curriculum which in principle open up scope for teacher creativity, nonetheless traditional school culture may inhibit teacher willingness to engage in curriculum experimentation. Consequent frustration of initiative may to an extent contribute to teacher disenchantment and the drain of teachers from classrooms that are evident in many second-level school systems. Such factors reinforce the principle that cultural leadership is an essential force for initiative and change in schools.

It was felt that conventional notions of school leadership may need to be re-conceptualised to reflect evolving research and practice. Broadly, earlier models of 'the principal as superhero' are becoming internationally supplanted by a more distributive understanding and practice of leadership, as teachers other than the principal exercise forms of leadership in numerous roles across the school. At the same time, traditional conceptions linger in many schools in the South: according to the findings of practitioner-researchers, the structure of promoted posts created there such as assistant and deputy principals does not always translate smoothly to the practice of distributed school leadership.

It was encouraging to note that North-South collaboration in this area has already been going on for some time e.g. in the RTU's participation in the School Leadership Project based at Clare EC. The workshop felt a desirable objective would be to promote similar interaction and communication among all providers and interested parties both in the Republic of Ireland and across North and South.

### Guiding considerations for action

Against the background of the various issues considered in the workshop, there was unanimity about the following

- the existence of an information and communication deficit among the various providers and interested agencies in the Republic of Ireland;
- the need to secure a condition found indispensable in pursuit of quality in education, namely recognition that school leadership is a major issue in schools, especially as the schools experience a welter of changing circumstances, pressures and conditions; and the consequent need for investment in school leadership training to be championed at departmental level.
- above all, the importance of relating school leadership programmes to the key quality issue – the quality of student learning.

### Action proposal

There was unanimous agreement that as a preliminary step the most useful line of action would be to initiate an audit of the provision of school leadership programmes, North and South.

The audit would help reduce the information deficit by providing information on the models of provision in use across the country. The resultant database would

facilitate mutual understanding across the two jurisdictions and would facilitate the task of achieving the coherent provision that is felt to be badly needed, especially in the South. Additionally, such a database would open up opportunities where economies of scale and mutual benefit indicate potential areas for North-South co-operation.

## Report of Workgroup 7

### BEST PRACTICE IN TEACHER INDUCTION

**Chair:** Keiron Mellon, Western Education & Library Board

**Rapporteur:** Dr Conor Galvin, University College Dublin

#### Participants

There were 16 participants across the two sessions of the workgroup, representing a good spread of interests North and South, primary and post-primary. We had a number of induction providers from library boards and initial teacher educators, two school principals, two researcher practitioners and one member of an inspectorate.

#### Part One – Exploring some framing concerns

We set ourselves three framing questions. The group divided into pairs, one from each jurisdiction, who selected an image of a student from a collage of photographs and tried to imagine their 'back-story' with particular focus on what their concerns would likely have been as they began their teaching career. Lively discussion led to group listings under three headings / questions:

What initial concerns might beginning teachers have?

What could we do about these issues and what level of support could / should be put into place?

What are our shared experiences in relation to induction?

Each of these is now briefly considered in turn.

#### Initial concerns of Beginning Teachers

There was broad agreement that beginning teachers have a considerable number of shared characteristics and concerns. These were seen to include:

- Subject knowledge – feeling equipped to deliver the curriculum
- Behaviour management – classroom control and management
- School / staff room dynamics – where to sit, what cup to use etc.
- Meeting parents – the required procedure
- Assessment of pupil work
- Special needs
- Fitting in with the culture and practice of the school
- Having a critical friend
- Assuming the role of a teacher
- Knowing what you don't know so that pooling of expertise and sharing of resources may be worthwhile.

It is envisaged too that the work of mapping current provision would contribute to a key strategic goal, namely that it would help achieve recognition of the centrality of school leadership in relation to quality in education.

Interestingly, these suggestions were seen by members of the workshop to mirror closely many of the concerns raised by current primary and post primary beginning teachers in both jurisdictions attending their initial induction meetings.

### **The who and how of putting support in place for Beginning Teachers**

Considerable thought then went into compiling an agreed listing of what might be done to address these needs and who the appropriate parties might be in doing so. It was decided that the following groups or interests needed to be involved:

- HEIs – teacher education institutions in particular as a mechanism to ensure standards and quality
- The inspectorate / Dept of Education and Science/ Dept of Education Northern Ireland / General Teaching Council for NI / Teaching Council RoI (once activated)
- School management - a key area
- C & A services – primary and post primary
- Support services – e.g. SLSS in the South
- Education researchers – to provide a critical research base to feed into current practice

Considerable work still needs to be done in both jurisdictions to get the best blend for such involvement, but the workshop participants felt Northern colleagues were certainly moving in the right direction in regards to this issue.

### **A brief description of current practice in the Republic of Ireland**

Conor Galvin outlined in very brief form the National Induction Project currently underway in the South and also mentioned a separate Induction Network Project currently under way within County Dublin Vocational Education Committee schools and colleges, and advised by UCD.

### **The National Induction Pilot Project**

In 1998 a consortium of teacher union and teacher education interests approached the Dept of Education and Science (DES), seeking support for a pilot project to develop and evaluate models of induction and identify best practice as a basis for future policy in the area. This resulted in the setting up of a National Induction Pilot Project which involved the three teacher unions, the DES, the Education Department at UCD (post-primary pillar), St Patrick's College, Drumcondra (primary pillar) and a number of schools representing the range of provision and geographical type across the first and second-level sectors. The

basic methodology of this national project is action research, which would seem particularly appropriate for a partnership project that involves the co-production of new information, ideas and analysis within a research-based context. The focus is essentially on knowledge generation and as such the national project seeks to produce insights for both policy makers and participants into college and university structures and arrangements likely to work to good effect in supporting induction to the system. At this point the national project has moved into a second one-year cycle.

### The County Dublin VEC induction network project

The County Dublin VEC induction project takes a complementary approach to that of the national project and focuses in the main on the challenge of teacher induction faced by the individual school operating within an organised county-wide structure.

As one of the largest vocational education committees in the country, County Dublin VEC recruits a considerable number of teachers on a year-to-year basis. In common with other schools up and down the country, there is some excellent practice within county schools in helping these teachers to settle quickly and smoothly into new posts and roles. But the VEC has found that induction is a time-intensive and very fragmented activity. In the main, it proves hit-and-miss and can be unduly stressful for both the teachers and the schools concerned. In some cases staff retention difficulties may even result. Following from a discussion at a management forum in the autumn of 2001, a series of exploratory meetings took place at within County Dublin VEC - involving teachers, county officers and management from a number of schools - and it was agreed that a one-year, school-focused development project offered a good way of beginning to address this issue. At these meetings a number of alternative strategies and approaches to induction and mentoring were outlined and explored with the assistance of UCD's Education Department.

The resulting project is the first of its kind in the Republic of Ireland. The principal focus of the work to date has been on developing an **induction network** that identifies and builds good practice in relation to the induction of new / beginning teachers (NBTs) into County Dublin VEC. Ten schools / colleges signed up for a spearhead project to initiate work on induction resources and skillsets that would prove useful in these and other schools or at county level. The project is school-focused in that the project addresses the priorities that county schools themselves have identified as important, and it is developmental because the network of project participants largely determine where the project goes and how it does so. UCD Education Department provides guidance, advice and support to the project and the emergent network but leadership and ownership reside primarily with the induction network itself.

Where the national project looks primarily to the colleges' and university departments' role – the CoDubVEC Teacher Induction Network Project focuses instead on developing school level and county level responses to this challenge. The outcomes are to say the least impressive.

## A brief description of current practice in Northern Ireland

Keiron Mellon then briefly outlined the Northern system:

### The Induction / Early Professional Programme for Beginning Teachers

- The model used has been agreed by the Northern Ireland Teacher Education Committee and developed following discussions involving the HEIs, serving teachers and professional organisations.
- The aim of the integrated (partnership) approach to teacher education is “to encourage beginning professionals to develop their critical reflective practice in order to improve their teaching and the quality of pupils’ learning.”
- It is a competence-referenced programme.
- The competences underpin the three stages of teacher education and underlying these are five areas of professional characteristics or core criteria.

The three stages are:

- Initial – HEIs are the lead partners and their courses lead to ‘eligible to teach status’
- Induction – The Education and Library Boards are the lead partners.
- Early Professional Development (Inset) – the schools are the lead partners.

During induction the Education and Library Boards should provide:

- A differentiated programme of inservice education based on the identified needs of each group of beginning teachers.
- A regional inservice programme, which addresses the needs of specific groups and is linked to the local ELB inservice programme.
- Inschool support for beginning teachers to support professional development in the teaching, learning and assessment cycle.
- Training and development for teacher tutors in aspects of the management and coordination of the process.
- Inschool support for teacher tutors.
- Extra support where/when needed.
- Substitute cover is provided for teachers in post to attend their quota of relevant induction courses.
- Induction is a compulsory process.
- On confirmation of successful completion, the beginning teacher receives a Completion of Induction certificate from the Board of Governors on the recommendation of the principal and is able to proceed to early professional development.

## Possible Action Lines

In the second part of the workshop, we set about developing the morning's discussion into a number of possible action lines that SCoTENS might consider taking forward. The workshop concluded that:

1. There is a need North and South to further define the induction of new and beginning teachers in terms of entitlements and matching practice.
2. There is a need for a website showing good practice / case studies in induction. (The NINE site - Northern Ireland Network for Education - supports such a section and is currently being upgraded. However it was felt that an extra dimension could be brought to the process for beginning teachers and those who work with them if there was also a North/ South dimension which a SCoTENS supported site could provide).
3. There is need for research into the nature and detail - the similarities and dissimilarities - of the support that teachers need, arising from different models of primary and post primary teacher education, North and South.
4. There is value to be had in developing a forum to take forward policy and practice in teacher induction, North and South, through swapping and articulating ideas.

## Report of Workgroup 8

### POLICY APPROACHES TO CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Chair:** Professor Harry McMahon, University of Ulster

**Rapporteur:** Dr Mark Morgan, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra

This group concluded that more than anything else professional learning needs to become an integral element of the lives and work of teachers, and the quality of teaching and learning in the nation's schools depend crucially upon it. It was noted that activity in this sector has increased exponentially during the past decade, and much of that provision is of a standard and quality that can be a source of satisfaction. However the pace of change and the relentless demands for new programmes and pedagogies necessitate fundamental review as the enterprise needs to be scaled up and institutionalised in a variety of ways to make it more strategic and comprehensive, while continuing to be sensitive to system and individual needs. It was agreed that much of the current professional development is not systematic and tends to occur in fragmented ways.

Among the main conclusions were the following:

- There is a need for more proactive strategic thinking in relation to future plans for teachers' professional learning
- Strategic thinking in relation to CPD needs to reflect more modern conceptualisations of professional development
- Evaluation of policy and practice needs to be an integral element of the process of sustaining teachers' professional learning
- Policy development is more likely to happen when personnel have the time and space to devote to its formulation

It was also the view of the group that now was a particularly important time in planning professional development for the future. There was also a view that while the process of planning such development was different in both jurisdictions, there was considerable merit in planning such policies together. With this in mind, it was agreed that ideas from the group would be collated with the purpose of producing a joint statement on the future of professional development.

## Conference Report on

### SCoTENS WEBSITE

[www.socsci.ulst.ac.uk/education/scte](http://www.socsci.ulst.ac.uk/education/scte)

**Dr. Roger Austin**

**University of Ulster**

Ladies and gentlemen, I am going to introduce the website. Perhaps I should say by way of introduction that some of you will know me as the other half of the Austin and Mulkeen road-show. Aidan Mulkeen and I have been working very closely together on the Dissolving Boundaries Project, linking schools together, North and South - 172 of them now. However for the development of this website, Aidan has been there as an advisor and a help, but I am afraid all the faults are entirely mine.

What you are looking at is the front page of the SCoTENS website – [www.socsci.ulst.ac.uk/education/scte](http://www.socsci.ulst.ac.uk/education/scte). As a result of funding from the SCoTENS committee we have been able to press ahead with a development of one particular part of this: the resources on special education. I am not an expert in this field at all, but I recognise that in the training of our student teachers this was an area that we probably weren't doing as well as we should have been doing. It seemed to me that there was a notable absence of resources and help. In thinking about how we might develop something, it occurred to me that we might be a little bit more ambitious and try to do this on a cross border basis. So what you are looking at is a resource that is designed for student teachers on both sides of the border working in either primary/national schools or post-primary schools but who are working in mainstream education. So this is not really meant for those who are working in special schools as such. The other thing to say that the person who really brought this together was Dolina Paterson, whom we employed for three months to do all the hard work. I know that Dolina has been in touch with many of you and we are most grateful for the support and advice that many of you have given as the project was emerging and taking shape.

One part of this website I can't show you is the discussion forum, because this is not a live show – it's a cd rom I've got in there. But there is a discussion forum and one of the messages I want to leave with you is that there are opportunities for discussion not only on special education but indeed on any other topic in which you might wish to get involved with. When we thought about the shape of the site, it seemed to us that an important starting point had to be the legislative framework that exists in both jurisdictions. We are very conscious that the legislation is evolving on both sides of the border, so this is by no means a finished product. We would like you all to contribute to the development of this site in the course of the next year.

The other thing I want to say to you is that this is meant very much for student teachers. So if you find it a little simplistic, my apologies, but this is really to help

people become familiar with some of the many types of special need, and as you can see this is a fairly extensive list which starts with people with ADHD and runs down through everything to the visually impaired. To give you a flavour of the sort of information student teachers and tutors would find here: we've got definitions of ADHD and ADD; some instances of what to look out for in young people who have ADHD; and some indication of the kind of treatment that some of them might be receiving. Some people asked in feedback: Is it wise to start trying to describe each of these conditions in this A-Z way? I recognise, of course, that many children would suffer from more than one of these conditions, but it seemed to us that for student teachers it might be a helpful starting point.

Going back to the top of the page, the next bit looks at 'medical conditions'. 'People in roles' talks about the class teacher, but also connects into the whole area of ways in which classroom assistants can provide support for teachers. One of the things that we know about the provision for classroom assistants is that they are very unevenly spread, even in Northern Ireland. For example, not all of the Education and Library Boards would have the same level of support. So there are issues around this about the level of money that is put into this aspect of education.

You won't be entirely surprised to see a section on using ICT to support pupils with special education needs. It is clear from all of the work we have done, not just in Dissolving Boundaries, that ICT can have a huge effect. Quite recently Aidan and I were at a planning conference for some of our teachers in the Dissolving Boundaries project which now links a number of special schools together. As you probably know they are using video-conferencing to talk to each other. We were interested as part of the evaluation to discover that in at least one of the special schools, not only do the boys turn up with freshly laundered shirts and their ties in place, but they also have their 'after shave' on as well.

This ICT section also includes some material on subject areas. We would very much welcome further contributions and developments in this area. I'm going to click on the one on ICT and History for the benefit of any other historians in the audience, and it talks about a visit to the Folk Park, and Norman soldiers and so on. So this is all very practical stuff – we have downloaded raw material that student teachers can use.

I'd like to show you just a little bit from the case studies. Sometimes when we talk about special education needs we forget about individual children. Dolina came up with what I thought was a brilliant idea, of creating fictional accounts around children. I'm selecting one at random: this is about a boy called Jamie, details about the kind of boy he is and the kind of needs he has, and the ways in which advice and resources can contribute to continuing his development.

'Teaching strategies' is supposed to be very practically based. Look, for example, at the autistic disorders. All the advice that is in here has come to us from experienced special needs teachers. I know some of you might disagree with some of the elements of this, but it seemed to us that we should start with those who know most. 'Resources and help': this is linking into other websites with

more specialist information – for example resources for deaf or hearing impaired children. Again, if I can again connect across to the Dissolving Boundaries project: for the first time this year we are going to have two deaf schools, one on each side of the border, working together. We expect them to be using video-conferencing in order to use sign language to communicate.

I'd like to say that this is a site which we think should grow, and it will only grow through the contribution and input of yourselves and your colleagues and students. So this bit of the website is an opportunity for student teachers to post in things that they have been doing with pupils with special needs on teaching practice, or indeed for their tutors.

I'd like to finish by saying it is almost an accident that the SCoTENS website that has emerged at this moment has this substantial resource on special education needs. This simply grew out of a recognition that there was a gap there that we needed to fill. However it should be clear that this is a vehicle for all of us to use for whatever kind of cross border projects might be appropriate.

**See also pages 83-91 for a more comprehensive report on the website.**

## CLOSING REMARKS

**Dr Pauric Travers**

**President, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra**

I am delighted and honoured to have been asked to draw this conference to a close by making a few remarks. I use the phrase 'draw to a close' loosely because the conference is part of a process which commenced in Belfast three years ago and which, it is intended, will continue in the months and years ahead. That is as it should be. Academic conferences - even one as lively and inspiring as this - can be fleeting and ephemeral in their impact. This conference has been deliberately structured to ensure that it provides a continuing impetus to collaborative projects and networks across a wide range of areas.

The Belfast conference in 2000 identified a list of priority areas in teacher education of mutual interest North and South, and led to the creation or further development of networks in early childhood education, initial teacher education, ICT and teaching practice. These in turn have been responsible for a series of conferences, workshops and other valuable initiatives including the SCoTENS website now launched.

Progress in other areas is less evident. Continuing professional development and research are priority areas identified in Belfast in which less has been achieved than might have been hoped. The lack of a systematic framework for continuing professional development, with clarity about the role played by all providers and partners, remains a glaring feature of the scene south of the border and an area where the northern experience is instructive. In relation to research, we still lack a comprehensive research agenda required if we are to begin to address the glaring gaps in our knowledge about key areas of teacher education.

Today exciting new agendas have been identified by our workshops - we look forward to the rolling out of these work programmes in the months ahead. Inevitably some will bear fruit while others will fall by the wayside. If only a fraction come to fruition, a great deal will have been achieved.

Without wishing to add to the workload, I would like to add one other item to the agenda for further action. This arises from a number of the contributions to this conference, particularly those by David Istance and John Coolahan. There is a clear need for a policy forum to bridge the gap between teacher educators and senior departmental decision makers and to contribute to the formulation of policy in this sector. We live in an age of exciting potential and great opportunities - but also of great dangers. One danger is of a policy vacuum. If this develops, part of the responsibility will lie with ourselves. In this context, the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South has an important role to play, but it will need to become even more active and more visible.

In his presentation, John Coolahan referred to one unwelcome recent development in the Republic associated with e-learning. The recognition of a new on-line course for initial teacher education was a significant shock for the

existing colleges. I do not intend to rehearse here the serious concerns felt by many of us – especially in relation to the implications for standards and quality which go to heart of what we are about. However in the context of this conference, it is worth standing back and asking what lessons are to be learned. Above all, it strikes me as a failure in policy formation for which we in the colleges must carry a share of the blame. We should not wait for others to do the thinking for us. We need to lead the debate in relation to such issues rather than react to it. That is and would be the role of a policy forum. The priority task for such a forum might be to develop a coherent policy framework on the teaching career at all stages – initial, induction, early and continuing professional development. Such an initiative would help clarify inter alia the role of different forms of delivery, including e-learning.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of this conference: the speakers, especially David Istance; the chairpersons, facilitators and rapporteurs; you the audience for your energetic participation; Andy Pollak and the staff of the Centre for Cross Border Studies for their efficient organization; and the staff of the Grand Hotel for looking after us so well. Finally, if the members of the steering group will forgive me for singling out one person: on your behalf I would like to thank John Coolahan for this conference and for nurturing this project sensitively and wisely over the last few years. Thank you John and thank you one and all. Slán abhaile. Safe home.

# Conference Programme

## Thursday 9th October

2.45	Registration
3.30	Official opening: <b>Mr Gearóid Ó Conluain</b> , Deputy Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Science, and <b>Ms Christine Jendoubi</b> , Assistant Secretary, Department of Education Northern Ireland
4.00	<b>Dr David Istance</b> , OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), Paris <i>Teachers and the School of the Future</i>
4.45	<b>Professor John Coolahan</b> , National University of Ireland, Maynooth <i>Positioning the Teaching Career for the Knowledge Society</i>
5.15	Refreshments
5.45	Four opening workgroups: <i>Teaching in the Future – The Challenges of Change</i>
7.30	Reception
8.15	Dinner

## Friday 10th October

9.15	Reflections of the Conference Chairperson, <b>Dr Don Thornhill</b> , Chairman, Higher Education Authority, on the first day
9.45	Workgroups: first session (eight themes): <b>1. Attracting, selecting and recruiting student teachers</b> Facilitators: <b>Professor Sheelagh Drudy</b> and <b>Dr Colette Murphy</b> <b>2. Integrating ICT into teacher education</b> Facilitators: <b>Dr Aidan Mulkeen</b> and <b>Dr Roger Austin</b> <b>3. Teacher education for diversity and citizenship</b> Facilitators: <b>Gerry Jeffers</b> and <b>Una O'Connor</b> <b>4. Teacher education and the integration of special needs</b> Facilitators: <b>Dr Michael Shevlin</b> and <b>Hugh Kearns</b> <b>5. School placements in teacher education</b> Facilitators: <b>Dr Andrew Burke</b> and <b>Professor Anne Moran</b> <b>6. Training for school leadership</b> Facilitators: <b>Professor Diarmuid Leonard</b> and <b>Dr Tom Hesketh</b> <b>7. Best practice in teacher induction</b> Facilitators: <b>Dr Conor Galvin</b> and <b>Keiron Mellon</b> <b>8. Policy approaches to continuing professional development</b> Facilitators: <b>Dr Mark Morgan</b> and <b>Professor Harry McMahon</b>
11.00	Refreshments
11.30	A new departure in teacher education in Ireland: The Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South – report of progress, plans for the future and launch of website.
12.45	Lunch
2.00	Workgroups: second session (eight themes as above)
3.00	Final plenary session, with proposals from workshop rapporteurs on areas for future North-South co-operation. Closing remarks by <b>Dr Pauric Travers</b> , President, St Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra
4.00	Close of conference

## List of Conference Delegates

Arundel Liam Mr	Chief Executive Officer, Dublin City VEC
Austin Roger Dr	Head of School, School of Education, University of Ulster at Coleraine
Bacon Karin Ms	Assistant Co-ordinator, Primary Curriculum Support Programme
Barr Liam Mr	Head of Machinery of Government Department, Department of Education
Bates Denis Mr	Vice President, Educational Studies Association of Ireland
Burke Andrew Dr	Senior Lecturer, Education Department, St Patrick's College
Burke Mary Ms	Official, Irish National Teachers' Association
Cannon Paráig Mr	Director of Teaching Practice, Colaiste Mhuire
Carey David Dr	Chair of Research Committee, Froebel College of Education
Caul Leslie Dr	Director of Academic Affairs, Stranmillis University College
Coady Lisa Ms	Postgraduate student, University of Limerick
Coleman Eileen Ms	Regional Development Officer, Civic, Social, Political Education, Department of Education and Science
Connaughton Breeda Ms	Department of Education and Science
Conway Paul Dr	Lecturer in Education, Education Department, University College Cork
Coolahan John Prof	Professor of Education, NUI Maynooth
Costello Fergal Mr	Head of Policy and Planning, Higher Education Authority
Cremin Peadar Dr	President, Mary Immaculate College
Crudden Malachy Mr	Education Adviser, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Dinan Ann Ms	Director, Education Development, Joint Managerial Body
Donnelly Frances Ms	Senior Development Officer, NI Council for Integrated Education
Donnelly Philomena Dr	Education Department, St Patrick's College
Doyle Tony Mr	Education Department, Mary Immaculate College
Drudy Sheelagh Prof	Professor of Education, Department of Education, University College Dublin
Drumm Michael Mr	Director, Mater Dei College of Education
Egan Emer Ms	Assistant Chief Inspector, Inspectorate Division, Department of Education and Science
Evans Byron Mr	ICT/Distance Learning Advisor, Regional Training Unit
Fahy John Mr	Lecturer in Education, Education Department, University College Dublin
Farrar Margaret Ms	Director of Teaching Practice, Church of Ireland College of Education
Furlong Catherine Dr	Acting Director of Teaching Practice, St. Patrick's College

## List of Conference Delegates

Furlong John Prof	University of Oxford School of Education
Gallagher Frank Mr	Education Officer, North South Ministerial Council
Galvin Conor Dr	Lecturer in Education, Education Department, University College Dublin
Gardner John Prof	Dean, Faculty of Legal, Social and Educational Sciences, Queen's University Belfast
Gleeson Jim Dr	Department of Education, University of Limerick
Gordon SI Dr	Managing Inspector, Department of Education
Gray Eileen Ms	Regional Development Officer, Civic, Social, Political Education
Harrison Conor Mr	National Co-ordinator, Civic, Social, Political Education
Hesketh Tom Dr	Director, Regional Training Unit
Howard Mary Ms	Lecturer in Drama in Education, St Patrick's College
Hughes Joanne Ms	Information Assistant, Centre for Cross Border Studies
Hughes Mairéad Ms	Administrator, Centre for Cross Border Studies
Istance David Dr	Project Leader, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)
Jeffers Gerry Mr	Lecturer, Department of Education, NUI Maynooth
Jendoubi Christine Ms	Department of Education
Jordan Dervil Ms	Lecturer in Art and Design Education, Faculty of Education, National College of Art and Design
Kearns Hugh Dr	Principal Lecturer, Special Education/Continuing Professional Development, Stranmillis University College
Kelly Carmel Ms	Administrative Officer, National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
Lane Dermot Rev	President, Mater Dei Institute of Education
Lawlor Aíne Ms	National Co-ordinator, Primary Curriculum Support Programme
Leonard Diarmuid Prof	Department of Education and Professional Studies, University of Limerick
Leydon Moira Ms	Assistant General Secretary, Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland

## List of Conference Delegates

Looney Anne Ms	Chief Executive, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
Lynagh Nichola Ms	Community Relations Officer, NI Council for Integrated Education
MacDonald Mary Ms	Assistant Co-ordinator, Primary Curriculum Support Programme
Malone Emer Ms	Programme Manager, Education Service, Leargas
Malone Rose Ms	Education Department, NUI Maynooth
Margrain E Mrs	Regional Organiser, NASUWT
Martin Maeve Dr	Senior Lecturer, Education Department, NUI Maynooth
McAllister Patricia Ms	Administrative Assistant, Centre for Cross Border Studies
McCann Seán Mr	General Secretary, Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
McClenaghan Paul Mr	Deputy Director, Regional Training Unit
McDonagh Patricia Ms	Deputy Principal, National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
McGlynn Claire Dr	Senior Lecturer in Educational Studies, Stranmillis University College
McGrath John Mr	Principal, Legamaddy Primary School
McKee Sally Ms	President, Ulster Teachers' Union
McMahon Harry Prof	School of Education, University of Ulster at Coleraine
McMinn Richard Prof	Principal, Stranmillis University College
McMorris Doreen Ms	Assistant Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Science
McNamara Gerard Dr	Head of School, School of Education Studies, Dublin City University
McSorley Fiona Ms	Acting Director of Teaching Practice, Mary Immaculate College
McWilliams Sandra Ms	Head of Teaching Studies, Stranmillis University College
Mellon Keiron Mr	Assistant Advisory Officer, Curriculum Advice and Support Service CASS, Western Education and Library Board
Montgomery Alison Ms	Senior Research Officer, Education, Northern Ireland Assembly
Moody Janet Ms	Department of Education and Professional Studies, University of Limerick
Moran Anne Prof	Professor of Education, Dean of Social Sciences, School of Education, University of Ulster at Jordanstown
Moran Seán Mr	Staff Tutor, Education, Open University
Morgan Mark Dr	St Patrick's College
Mulcahy Carmel Ms	Senior Researcher, School of Education Studies, Dublin City University
Mulkeen Aidan Dr	Lecturer, Education Department, NUI Maynooth
Mullan Hazel Ms	Assistant Senior Education Officer, Southern Education and Library Board
Mullins Tom Mr	Head of Department, Education Department, University College Cork
Mulrennan Madeleine Ms	President, St Catherine's College of Education for Home Economics
Murphy Cliona Ms	Lecturer in Primary Science, St. Patrick's College

## List of Conference Delegates

Murphy Colette Dr	Head of Learning and Teaching (Pre-Service), Graduate School of Education, Queen's University Belfast
Murphy Regina Ms	Director of In Career/CPD, St. Patrick's College
Nelson James Mr	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
Nesbitt Raymond Mr	Sector Manager, North South Ministerial Council
Ni Bhroin Orla Ms	St Patrick's College
O'Brien John Dr	Acting Dean, Department of Education and Professional Studies, University of Limerick
O'Connor Tim Mr	Joint Secretary, North South Ministerial Council
O'Connor Una Ms	Research Associate, University of Ulster
Ó Diomasaigh Seán Mr	National Co-ordinator, Pilot Project on Inductions, Education Department, St Patrick's College
O'Doherty Teresa Dr	Assistant Dean (Research), Faculty of Education, Mary Immaculate College
O'Dowd Val Ms	Assistant National Co-ordinator, Primary Curriculum Support Programme
O'Flaherty Joanne Ms	Postgraduate student, University of Limerick
O'Grady David Mr	ICT in Education, Mary Immaculate College
O'Moore Mona Dr	Head of Department, Education Department, Trinity College Dublin
Pollak Andy Mr	Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies
Reid Chris Dr	Head of Teaching and Learning, Computing and Information Technology Department, Stranmillis University College
Renehan Caroline Ms	Lecturer, Mater Dei Institute
Rolston Brian Mr	Heads, Teachers and Industry (HTI)
Shevlin Michael Dr	Registrar for Higher Diploma in Education, Education Department, Trinity College Dublin
Shine Thompson Mary Dr	Co-ordinator of Research, St. Patrick's College
Smith Alan Prof	UNESCO Chair, School of Education, University of Ulster at Coleraine
Smith Alice Ms	Administrative Officer, Department of Education and Science
Thornhill Don Dr	Chairman, Higher Education Authority
Travers Pauric Dr	President, St Patrick's College
Tubbert Brian Mr	Froebel College of Education
Waldron Fionnuala Ms	Lecturer in Education (History), St. Patrick's College
Watson Mae Ms	Director, Academic and Information Services, Stranmillis University College
Whitehead Joan Prof	Liaison and Policy Officer, Universities Council for the Education of Teachers
Wilson Mairin Ms	Co-ordinator of the Programme of Training Learning, Support Teachers of First and Second Level Pupils, Church of Ireland College of Education
Wright Kenneth Mr	Principal, Orritor Primary School

## Other Conference and Research Reports



## Report on

### IASSEE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2003

19-20 June 2003

**Fionnuala Waldron**

**St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra**

The Irish Association for Social, Scientific and Environmental Education (IASSEE) held its third annual conference in St. Mary's University College, Belfast on June 19th and 20th 2003. This conference received financial support from SCoTENS. IASSEE is an association of lecturers in colleges throughout Ireland with responsibility for science, history and geography education. The aims of the association include the development of North/South links in initial teacher education, the promotion and dissemination of research in the teaching and learning of history, science and geography at primary level on an all-Ireland basis, and the development of cross-curricular projects and research.

This year's conference focused on three main themes: Initial Teacher Education in an all-Ireland context, Citizenship and Identity, and Children's Learning. The keynote speaker on the first day was Professor Tony Gallagher (QUB) who gave an interesting and challenging presentation on 'Social and Environmental Education, the Challenge of Diversity in Initial Teacher Education: A North/South Perspective'. This year, for the first time, the conference included a post-graduate forum where students researching at post-graduate level in history, science and geography education or related areas were invited to give short presentations on their research. This proved to be very successful and four students presented in all. Philomena Donnelly (PhD, St Patrick's Drumcondra) gave a presentation on 'The World and the Universe as a Source for Teaching Thinking through SESE'. This was followed by a presentation by Sinead O'Reilly (M.Ed, St Patrick's Drumcondra) on 'Science with Special Needs'. John McCombe (UNESCO Research Student, University of Ulster) addressed 'Citizenship and the Northern Ireland History Curriculum' and Tom McCloughlin (PhD, TCD) looked at 'Concept Mapping of Concrete Concepts'. It is hoped that providing a forum for post-graduate research will support and encourage the development of research in social, scientific and environmental education.

Following these presentations, Rupert Brakespeare (Earth Education) led a participative and interactive workshop entitled 'Our Environment – Our World: Issues of Environmental Education in Initial Teacher Education'. The first day closed with two presentations which focused on sharing skills in the use of ICT. In the first presentation, Richard Greenwood (Stranmillis University College) focused on 'Encouraging students to design on-screen worksheets for use with primary pupils- examples from geography and history'. This was followed by a presentation from Julian Greenwood (Stranmillis University College) on 'Online Surveys: A Case Study'.

The second day of the conference opened with a presentation by Dr Colette

Murphy (QUB) on 'Children's Learning in Science'. This was followed by an analysis of teaching history in the early years of primary by Dr George Beale (Stranmillis U.C.) entitled 'Teaching Early Years History – the Northern Ireland Curriculum a decade on'. This was followed by Neil O'Conaill (Mary Immaculate College) who looked at 'Student B.Eds' Preferences in Science'. The second keynote address of the conference was delivered by Dr Roland Tormey (Mary Immaculate College) on the topic 'History and Identity: A View from the South'. This was followed by a participative and lively discussion. The final session of the conference was a plenary session on 'Bringing Research Forward: Presentation of Pilot Questionnaire for the All-Ireland Research into Initial Teacher Education' which was facilitated by Fionnuala Waldron and Cliona Murphy (St Patrick's Drumcondra). This session focused on the evaluation of a draft questionnaire for use by IASSEE in an inter-college research project which is ongoing.

Overall, the conference was very successful and drew an attendance of approximately 40. Those who attended the conference expressed a high level of satisfaction with the content and organisation of the conference. The range and quality of speakers and the inclusion of the post-graduate forum were particularly welcomed. Both of these aspects of the conference were made possible by the funding IASSEE received from SCoTENS. A post-conference meeting of IASSEE was held in December at which the conference was evaluated, the joint research questionnaire was finalised, a new committee was elected and plans were made for the 2004 conference.

## Report on

### **SECOND NORTH-SOUTH CONFERENCE ON INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION**

**13-14 November 2003**

**Dr Andrew Burke**

**St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra**

At the first North-South conference of teacher educators in Belfast in May 2000, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) was identified as one of the areas for further cross-border co-operative ventures. To further this initiative, Prof. Anne Moran of the University of Ulster and Dr. Andrew Burke of St. Patrick's College, Dublin undertook to organise two follow-up conferences on the initial education, induction and continuing professional development of teachers, North and South. The first ITE conference took place in Belfast in Nov. 2000. It was hosted by the University of Ulster at its Jordanstown campus and by St. Mary's College, Belfast. The first day was devoted to a description and discussion of the integrated model of teacher education operating in Northern Ireland, and the support mechanisms and materials for same. Day two involved visits to first- and second-level schools in the morning and an open discussion on the entire experience in the afternoon.

The second ITE conference in the South was initially planned for Spring 2001. Because of scheduling difficulties, lack of formalised structures and uncertainty regarding future funding of the entire venture, the conference was postponed. It took place on Thursday and Friday, Nov. 13th and 14th 2003. The first day was at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and the second day at St. Mary's College, Marino. The Southern conference followed a pattern similar to the earlier Belfast conference. Most of the colleges and university education departments, North and South, were represented.

A series of short presentations, followed by question and answer sessions, took place on the first day while visits to schools and other institutions of particular interest to participants were arranged for day two. The schedule of presentations was as follows:

SPEAKER	INSTITUTION/POSITION	TOPIC
Professor John Coolahan	Professor of Education, National University of Ireland, Maynooth.	Overview of the historical development of ITE in the Republic of Ireland since independence.
Dr Tom Kellaghan	Director, Educational Research Centre, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and chairman of the Working Group on Primary Pre-service Teacher Education.	Review of Primary Pre-service Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland.
Professor Sheila Drudy	Profession of Education, University College, Dublin.	Review of Second-Level Teacher Education (Consecutive Programme).
Dr Jim Gleeson	Head of Education, University of Limerick.	Review of Second-Level Teacher Education (Concurrent Programme).
Mr Paráig Cannon	Director of Teaching Practice, St. Mary's College, Marino, Dublin.	Teaching Practice in the Colleges of Education in the Republic of Ireland.
Dr Tom Mullins	Head of Education, University College, Cork.	Teaching Practice on H.Dip. in Education programmes in the Republic of Ireland.
Mr Gerry Jeffers	Department of Education, National University of Ireland, Maynooth.	Transition Year Programmes in second-level schools in the Republic of Ireland.
Ms Emer Egan	Assistant Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Science, Dublin.	Continuing professional development for teachers in the Republic of Ireland.

## Institutions visited on Day Two of Conference

INSTITUTION	FOCUS
Education Centre, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin.	Provision for the continuing professional development of teachers.
Maryfield College, Dublin, 9.	Transition Year Programme in practice.
St. Patrick's School, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.	1. Special Speech and Language Class 2. Mild General Learning Disabilities Class. 3. Regular classes.
St. Joseph's Adolescent and Family Services Unit, St. Vincent's Psychiatric Hospital, Fairview, Dublin.	Services for 12-17 year old students with serious emotional / behavioural problems.

The Conference concluded with a roundtable discussion, reflection on the two-day meeting, identification of possible future co-operative North-South ventures and topics for future conferences. It was suggested that

1. The summary PowerPoint presentations be made available on the SCoTENS website.
2. The presentations be published.
3. The South could benefit from the North's experience in a competency-based approach to ITE.
4. The North, in reviewing its Primary School Curriculum, could benefit from the South's recent experience in this regard.
5. That both North and South could benefit mutually from discussion of how the Bologna requirements might be met in the two jurisdictions.
6. A comparative study of selection and admission criteria/procedures in ITE North and South might pay dividends.

Professor Anne Moran resigned from the organising committee due to pressure of other commitments. Dr Andrew Burke agreed to stay on the committee to maintain continuity while Dr Barry Burgess (University of Ulster) and Dr Rose Malone (National University of Ireland, Maynooth) agreed to join the committee. It was agreed that the committee might co-opt other members to ensure a broad representation of colleges and education departments, North and South.

There was a strong consensus that the two ITE conferences had been successful; that they had provided a welcome forum for the discussion of common interests and the sharing of professional wisdom, and that there was considerable potential for further development.

## Report on

### **NORTH-SOUTH EARLY YEARS NETWORK and the DIVERSITY AND EARLY YEARS RESEARCH PROJECT**

**Dr. Philomena Donnelly**

**St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra**

The North South Early Years Network has been meeting at least once a semester since the initial North/South conference of teacher educators in May 2000. The Network is coordinated by Louise Quinn, Stranmillis University College, Belfast and Philomena Donnelly, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and has members in all the colleges on the island involved in early childhood education. The Network has met in a number of venues, North and South, to discuss issues such as the curriculum, the role of play in learning, assessment in the early years and disadvantage in the early years.

In September 2002 the Centre for Cross Border Studies, with the support of SCoTENS, made a successful application for EU Peace and Reconciliation funding for a research project on diversity in the early years of primary school. The aim of the research is to look at the issues facing teachers regarding conflict, sectarianism, multiculturalism and other areas of diversity. Two part time researchers have been appointed, one attached to Stranmillis University College and one attached to St Patrick's College Drumcondra. A steering committee of members of the North South Early Years Network was set up to oversee the project.

Twelve schools, six in the North and six in the South are involved in the research. A conference is planned for early April 2004 in Newry to discuss the research findings with the teachers involved and members of the Network. From this conference it is planned to draw up a diversity framework for preparing student teachers to teach in early years classrooms and working with practising teachers on in-service courses. Hopefully the framework can become an integral part of teacher education courses in all of the colleges, North and South.

The network would like to acknowledge and thank the colleges for their support and encouragement in sustaining the Early Years Network.

## Report on

### NORTH-SOUTH STUDENT TEACHER EXCHANGE PROJECT

**Sandra McWilliams**  
**Stranmillis University College**

In September 2002 the Centre for Cross Border Studies, with the support of SCoTENS, made a successful funding application to the EU Peace and Reconciliation programme to reactivate an exchange project between students at colleges of education, North and South, first initiated in 2000.

In the interim Stranmillis University College and the Church of Ireland College of Education in Rathmines had continued with a small low key exchange of four students travelling North and South for a block of school based work.

With the knowledge and experience gained from these two exchange programmes behind them, they agreed to act as coordinators (in partnership with the Centre for Cross Border Studies as overall project manager) in their respective jurisdictions for the first year of an expanded exchange in 2003. Unlike in the 2000 exchange, the 2003 project involved the participating students in assessed teaching practice in schools in the other jurisdiction.

Four out of the five primary providers in the Republic of Ireland participated in 2003: CICE, St Patrick's Drumcondra and St Mary's Marino from Dublin and Mary Immaculate College in Limerick. Froebel College will join the second year of the exchange in 2004. St Mary's University College joined Stranmillis University College in participating from Northern Ireland.

An initial planning meeting was held in November 2002 in CICE to discuss the managing of the project and other meetings followed, usually held in one of the HEIs involved.

Students in all the institutions were invited to submit an application for a place on the project in which they were to indicate what they thought they might gain by being part of such a venture. Sixteen students from the colleges in the South and eight from Belfast were eventually selected on the strength of their responses. The students and their tutors from both jurisdictions met as a group in Armagh for an orientation day prior to the exchange, and again for an evaluation day in Dublin following three weeks of assessed teaching practice in schools in the other jurisdiction in March-April 2003.

The participating schools conveyed their curricular requirements prior to the exchange to allow students to prepare for their placement classes. Interesting insights were gained by tutors when they compared the effects of the highly centralised and controlled curriculum of Northern Ireland accompanied by a relative lack of control by HEI tutors over student work in schools, with the less centralised curriculum of the Republic, which leaves more control of student work to their HEI tutors.

The project was enjoyed by all the students. It was essentially about students working very hard in schools in another jurisdiction, improving their professional skills and knowledge, and gaining insights into the education systems and cultures of the respective jurisdictions.

The tutors involved felt that the insights gained in the preparation of teachers for the exchange needed further exploration and deliberation. They applied for funding from SCoTENS to allow them to allow them to meet to develop their ideas. They met prior to the SCoTENS annual conference in Malahide in October 2003. They hope to present a paper at an Association for Teacher Education in Europe conference and publish in a European journal of teacher education.

In 2003-4 Mary Immaculate College at the University of Limerick will act as the host institution in the Republic. Arrangements in Northern Ireland will be the same. There are plans to extend into a third year.

## Report on

### THE PROGRESS OF THE SCOTENS WEBSITE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

**Dr Roger Austin**  
**Dolina Paterson**  
**University of Ulster**

#### Background to the project

In the last couple of decades there has been a slow but steady trend towards more integration of children with special educational needs into mainstream schools. The process has been gaining momentum in Northern Ireland since the publication of the Code of Practice of Special Educational Needs Statements in 1996. Prior to this the general trend in the North was for children with severe physical or learning disabilities to attend special schools or, where available, special units attached to mainstream schools. In the Republic there was more integration within the primary sector, but special schools became the norm when pupils reached transfer age.

Whether following or led by parental opinion, subsequent government policies suggested that, where possible, the aim should be to educate all children within mainstream classrooms, giving support where necessary. The role of the special needs teacher, which had largely focused on children needing 'remedial' help with reading or maths, was to be increased in status and scope to become one of co-ordinator for all children with learning difficulties of any sort.

During this period many teachers were struggling to cope with the increasingly differential needs of pupils in large classes. They felt their training had not prepared them adequately to teach children who had difficulties which they often had not even heard of; they had no knowledge or understanding of suitable teaching strategies. Although teacher training colleges had always made it clear that students had to think of and prepare for children of different abilities, very little time was spent preparing students who might have to teach children with dyslexia, dyspraxia, cerebral palsy etc. and not least the problems of apparently increasing numbers of pupils with emotional and behavioural disorders.

In response to all of these factors, the teacher training institutions in Ireland began to respond to the need for training courses in special education both at the initial training stage and at post-graduate level.

The expansion of use of information technology for educational purposes has developed rapidly; all teachers in Northern Ireland have now been trained up to a minimum required standard and universities and colleges are preparing student teachers to the same standards. In the South there has also been a major expansion in the provision of IT equipment and training provided to teachers.

The use of e-media as a teaching medium is becoming widespread, enabling students to access learning material when and how they wish from the Internet. In addition, the cost of making the resources available to huge numbers of students across Ireland and beyond is relatively minimal; updating electronic resources is quick and easy and it is a resource which helps to reduce environmental waste.

It was for these reasons that this website project has developed.

## Design

Initial pilot work in summer 2003 involved speaking to education lecturers, practising teachers and student teachers to ascertain what knowledge, experiences and needs they had in relation to their teaching role with special educational needs. Many exploratory emails were sent to the various teaching institutions in Ireland and also to members of a mailing list supplied by the Centre for Cross Border Studies. Small groups of practitioners from each of these categories were interviewed in an open-ended discussion, notes being taken by the researcher/designer. These initial ideas were then transferred to the planning stage using the aid of an e-mind map. This plan was then shown personally to some of the initial interviewees and to a further sample of interested practitioners.

The ideas from the early e-maps were then transferred to computer using a simple web-editing package. Design issues which needed careful consideration included ease of navigation, use of appropriate language, colours and font styles used, and choice of graphics. Navigation was relatively simple to achieve by keeping to the eight main sections: Legislation, Policy and Guidance, Types of Special Need, Medical Conditions, Teaching Strategies, Case Studies, Resources and Help, and People and Roles (with Student Activities added later). The intention of the website was not to reproduce material easily available elsewhere, so much of the content would be indicated and hyperlinked to its source elsewhere. This had the added benefit of ensuring validity and verification. Consistency is also an important quality in a website to ease navigation for the reader and to enhance visual appeal; therefore page designs were kept to a minimum number, with templates being chosen for each section. It was important to think about the special needs of users, particularly those with visual difficulties.

## Early Consultation Findings

At this stage there was very positive opinion on the need for and the value of such a website resource. There was some disagreement, however, on the depth and breadth of information which might be required. Some student teachers felt that they did not really need much of the detailed information available; they felt that some of the disabilities mentioned were rare and they were unlikely to need to know about them. They also believed that they did not really need or want to know about the legal and/or policy issues covered in the website. They believed that this was not important for their role as teachers; they suggested that it was for the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or even the

school itself to make sure legal and policy issues were appropriate. Students were more interested in general sections such as suitable strategies for differentiating lessons and practical issues for dealing with physical disabilities in their classes. One section identified as important, and not covered by the initial plan, was the inclusion of a medical section to deal with such issues as epileptic fits, hypoglaecemia etc.

Practising teachers who had been consulted because of their particular interest in special educational needs were very enthusiastic and suggested that the site went beyond the needs of trainee teachers and would actually be very useful for teachers across the spectrum of experience. They too, though, believed that the depth was unnecessary for the average classroom teacher. One principal interviewed suggested that issues such as medical emergencies should be left to individual school policy. He also believed that legislative and policy issues were not ones which most classroom teachers needed to know about.

The intention behind the interviews with lecturers was to find out how they were addressing special educational needs issues with their students, and how they felt the website could be used to make better use of the limited time devoted to these issues. The findings suggested that curriculum requirements meant that some students only received a few very general lectures and references to documents. There was no time for students to examine individual situations or to study legislation, e.g. the Code of Practice of Special Educational Needs Statements. By making these documents available on a website, plus examples of children to whom they might apply, lecturers could further direct their students and perhaps ultimately set assignments around them.

## Gathering the information

The methods used included extensive use of the World Wide Web, booklets and documents from the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI), the NI Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), the Department of Education and Science (DES), information from practitioners as a result of interviews face to face, by email, by letter and by telephone. There was also a considerable time spent as a participant observer in classrooms both in the North and South of Ireland. Most of the case studies were based on the personal experiences of the researcher or as a result of observations or discussions with other teachers. The worksheets and lesson ideas are mainly those of the researcher. One advantage of this is that the author owns the copyright and can therefore make them available for use by anyone who is interested.

One successful method of data collection was through the use of specialist forums on the World Wide Web. The researcher joined up as a member of the Department of Employment and Skills SENCO Forum and the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) Forum for Support Teachers. By posing appropriate questions, reading queries and responses and taking note of any useful information, the researcher could more accurately assess what was needed on the website.

## Publishing the website

Funding had been secured from SCoTENS to enable technical expertise from the University of Ulster to advise and publish the website. A number of questions arose from this;

- Where would the site be hosted, i.e. what would the address be?
- What additional features could be integrated?
- What type of graphics could we use, bearing in mind technical, ethical and practical considerations?
- How could we allow for modification and extension?

Although it was necessary to host the site under the domain name of the University of Ulster's site, the necessity to make it easily accessible for users was important. While many of the users would be aware of its URL, other people searching for suitable resources of this type should be able to access it, probably through the use of a search engine. It was decided to publish the website as a sub-section of the University of Ulster's School of Education. This did result in a very long and not very memorable URL but it was recognised that this was likely to be an interim solution rather than a permanent one. As SCoTENS' activities increase, it is hoped that the organisation will purchase its own domain name.

To make the site as useful as possible for student teachers and lecturers, it was felt that there should be some interactive features if at all possible. There was much discussion about the use of discussion forums and chatroom facilities. Chatroom facilities were not technically possible due to the limited nature of the available software. A discussion forum was an easy and useful facility to include, but this is limited in its design. Ideally participants would be able to post attachments along with their messages, possibly to discuss each other's work. However, as part of a large educational institution whose policy is not to allow attachments which might include offensive, copyrighted or illegal material, this facility is not available. Because the aim of the website is to make it available to the education community anywhere, no restrictions on use were wanted; therefore password access was not an option for the discussion forum. This, however, opened up the possibility that things could be uploaded which would be contradictory to the ethos of the University of Ulster. As a result of this, it was deemed necessary to have discussion messages moderated before publishing. A statement to this effect is included in the discussion area of the website.

Much time was spent considering the appearance of the site for visual appeal and also for those with visual problems. It was decided that a white background was the best option and simple graphics should be added to enhance visual appearance. Ideally the graphics would be produced by SCoTENS from photographs but it was important to protect children. The photographs which are used have been carefully edited to remove any identifying features. Other simple graphics have been used, although it is intended that these should eventually be replaced with real images.

It was recognised that the website would be a dynamic medium and therefore regular modifications would take place. Due to the publishing of the site being

done by the technicians, this would mean close liaison between the researcher and the university's technical department. There was also a need for someone to moderate any discussions and to deal with any queries sent via the contact facility within the web site.

The individual roles were defined and a timetable was set in place to enable the site to be published on a trial basis.

## The Pilot

An email was sent to a small number of education personnel inviting them to preview the website and return comments in response to the following four questions:

1. Is the information on the site accurate and suitable for student teachers?  
If not please email us with specific corrections.
2. Could you make use of the site with your students this academic year?
3. Will your plans include the use of the discussion forum?
4. Are there significant omissions/areas for development we need to include?

Eighteen emails were sent out to lecturers, DENI personnel, DES personnel and CCEA personnel. In addition another six emails were sent to personal acquaintances, mostly teachers.

Responses	North	South	Total
Lecturers	2	2	4
DENI/DES/CCE	1	0	1
Teachers	1	1	3*
Other Professionals working with SEN	1	0	1
Others	0	2	2

### \*additional response from a teacher in England

Despite the low response rate, the feedback provided excellent data for assessing the value of the website and for improving the resource.

All the responses agreed with the need for the resource and all were enthusiastic about the content and style of the site. Of the eleven responses, six gave detailed information on points which needed to be edited, clarified or expanded.

A number of issues arose out of the responses:

- The site is suitable for all teachers and professionals working with SEN.
- The website deserves its own domain name.

- More links, specifically to resources in RoI are needed.
- Is this site going to be regularly updated and maintained?
- Inclusion of a number of additional resources (some named specifically).
- Is the site accessible for disabled people?
- Need for background information on SCoTENS.
- Difficulty of obtaining participation in discussion forum.
- Additional information on various professional roles.
- It is important to make clear which documents are legislative and which are recommendations.
- Aspects of terminology which differ in the North and South.
- Need for more coverage of individual curriculum subject differentiation and strategies.
- Should the site cater also for more severe and profound disabilities?

### Action on feedback

As a result of the feedback, the site was carefully inspected and amended to deal with terminology issues and improve understanding. Where additional resources were suggested, these were verified and added. The additional professional information which was sent was added to the amended pages. The researcher/author accepted that there was a need for additional links and resources and this would be a target for future action. The technical issues would be referred to the funding body (SCoTENS) and to the computer technicians working on the project.

After the above modifications the site went live to the general public on 5th September 2003.

### Progress to Date

In the five months since the official launch, the website has grown considerably. There have been a number of additional pages, e.g. severe and complex needs have been added together with a case study and some teaching strategies. Each page has been regularly added to as additional information has been received by the researcher. Many new resources and resource links have been included, e.g. ideas and materials for early reading have been added to the primary page. Some questions and answers raised by teachers have been added and these continue to grow weekly. There has been development beyond what have normally been considered as 'special needs' of a long term nature, into areas of special needs which are (hopefully) of a more temporary nature, and therefore issues such as bullying are now being addressed. Some more unusual 'special needs' - e.g. Noonan syndrome - have been mentioned in response to feedback from users of the site.

### Evaluation

The value of the website will be determined by the number of educational practitioners who access the site and use the information to inform their teaching and learning. Although there has been informal feedback throughout the period

in which the website has been online, there has been no way to determine who is using the site and in what way. Although the aim will be to establish how effective the various parts of the sites are and how the site meets the needs of the various professionals, that cannot be done until a user base has been established.

It was decided to contact by email all the teacher training establishments in the North and South of Ireland, and as far as possible all the lecturers within each. Mailing lists were accessed from University of Ulster, Queen's University Belfast, Stranmillis University College, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick and University College Dublin. An email was sent asking three questions;

1. Are you aware of the existence of the site?
2. If you are aware of it, have you been making use of it with your students?
3. If not, why not? Is there something that could be done to make it more useable?
4. If you were not aware of it, do you think it could be of use?

People were invited to respond further if they wished.

In addition a number of schools were contacted. The names were taken from the lists of schools participating in the Dissolving Boundaries project. These were chosen because they had previously taken part in research done by the University of Ulster and had shown willingness to participate in educational projects. It was not possible to contact all the listed schools as email addresses had to be accessed through Internet searches. It was expected that very few of them would know of the existence of the website, but their responses to question three would be useful.

## Response to email

	No. of emails sent to teacher training institutions	No. of replies from teacher training institutions
University of Ulster	30	7
Stranmillis University College	27	6
Queen's University	19	5
UCD	18	2
Mary Immaculate	42	2
Open University	1	1
Froebel	1	
Church of Ireland College	2	
Trinity College Dublin	1	
St. Mary's College	1	

As can be seen from the number of replies, the response rate was low. Even allowing for a small number of invalid e-mail addresses, absenteeism etc., it was expected that lecturers would have at least responded yes/no to the short questions.

Of the replies received, 12 said they had heard of the site and 11 had not been aware of it.

	North	South
Aware of site	10	2
Not aware of site	9	2

Where people had been using the site, they reported using it for specific aspects of a course, e.g. becoming familiar with the legislative framework in which the students will be expected to work and becoming familiar with the types of learning difficulties which they are likely to meet when they are in school. Most people who have used it have done so by referring students to it as an information resource. Comments such as "excellent resource" have been noted.

Where respondents had not been aware of the website, a number have now indicated that they will make use of it.

"Having looked at it, I believe that it will be useful"

"It looks potentially useful. A quick glance suggests it contains useful information."

"I have looked at it just now, and it seems very useful."

"Yes, I think increasingly this is an area that students demonstrate that they have concerns about"

"I think it would be extremely useful and I look forward to hearing more about its development in the coming months."

"Yes, it looks useful - beleaguered PGCE students might find it helpful."

"I am impressed by the number and range of resources. The links are varied and contain essential information especially for new teachers and those unaware of the different special needs of pupils"

"The site looks very useful and it is a very good idea. I think that suggestions about specific successful approaches and already used materials and ideas are what teachers are looking for."

A number of the respondents suggested areas which could be expanded, e.g. they would like to see the student resources page used, and an expansion of the ideas for lessons and materials. One respondent was concerned that the strategies might be seen as prescriptive and suggested it should be made clear that these were only starting points.

Complimentary e-mails have been received from teachers working in schools all over Ireland.

"It is delightful to see an Irish based site that deals with the needs of children with special needs and I commend the obvious thought and effort that has gone into it."

There has been evidence that the website has been of use to educationalists abroad. A number of e-mails have been received from users who had found the website through their own searching. An enquiry was received from a professor in the US asking if she might make use of the forum with her own students.

"I am Professor at New York Institute of Technology and thoroughly enjoyed your site. Your case studies are wonderful. Would it be possible for my graduate students to participate in your discussion forums?"

A number of those lecturers who responded positively were then invited to take part in a questionnaire in February 2004 to gain more detailed information about individual aspects of the site. It was also decided at this time that it would be useful to ascertain the students' responses to the site and a questionnaire was developed for them too. At present these are in the process of being distributed.

## Conclusions and Work in Progress

Despite the relatively low response rate to date from education lecturers in the initial trawl, the project has more than fulfilled its purpose. It has provided an electronic resource which is of use to students and meets their needs in terms of what they are expected to cover in their teacher training courses. The project has recently gained much deserved publicity from the University of Ulster itself, having appeared in the first week of February 2004 as a major news item on the home page of the university's own website.

The low initial response rate from lecturers would suggest that there is still a need to make educationalists in Ireland more aware of the value of the website. But it is important to remember that lack of responses to e-mail questionnaires may simply suggest that lecturers do not respond well to e-mail. The design team are aware that the site is being used extensively, and first hand reports are received regularly about its value in education. For example, in early February word was received through a third party that the site was being promoted by a senior lecturer in the Open University.

As well as continuing to update, improve and expand the website it is intended that detailed evaluation will continue. Observation and interviews with students using the website are planned for the very near future. These will be used to produce a paper detailing the project and the value of websites for teaching and learning. Efforts will continue to publicise the website and the work of SCoTENS.

## NEW FUNDING APPLICATIONS APPROVED

*In December 2003-January 2004 a number of new funding applications for research projects and conferences were approved by a SCoTENS research selection committee. They included:*

### Special Educational Needs and Initial Teacher Education in Ireland

*Dr Hugh Kearns, Stranmillis UC and Dr Michael Shevlin, TCD*

**The Research Proposal:** To host a two one-day conferences in Dublin and Belfast for 30 people to discuss the following:

1. to identify policy and practice in the preparation of pre-service teachers for teaching pupils with special educational needs in Ireland.
2. to establish an all-Ireland network of teacher educators with responsibility for special education needs in undergraduate and postgraduate courses of initial teacher education.

Granted £5,000 to host two one-day conferences.

### A North/South Conference on Education for Diversity and Citizenship

*Una O'Connor, University of Ulster, and Gerry Jeffers, NUI Maynooth*

**The proposal:** To assist with the finances for hosting a major two day conference to develop joint North/South proposals in the following areas of Education for Diversity and Citizenship:

1. Initial teacher education
2. In-service teacher education (including members of support services and NGOs)
3. Research and evaluation

The Main objectives of the conference will be to:

1. Share approaches to diversity and citizenship at ITE and CPD level
2. Share insights from existing research in both jurisdiction
3. Identify possibilities for joint research and evaluation

Granted £4,000 to assist with costs associated with organising conference

## **A preliminary Evaluation of a Teaching Package for Children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)**

*Dr. Jean Ware, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra*

**The proposal:** To build on research into the practicalities of teaching cause and effect to children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties conducted by the Special Education Department in St. Patrick's College, by extending the trial of its specially written teaching package to include teachers of PMLD children in the North.

The Main objectives of the project will be:

1. To carry out refinements to the teaching package in line with the suggestions made by the staff in the trial school, and the teachers who took part in the inservice course in the South.
2. To introduce the package to staff from Northern Ireland schools and run a short course for teachers expressing an interest in its use.
3. To support teachers from both the North and the South in implementing the teaching technique with appropriate children in their classes
4. To evaluate the usefulness of the package and the success of the support provided in enabling teachers to use the techniques practically, effectively and independently.

Granted £4,000 to assist with costs towards implementing the project.

## **Continuing Professional Development North and South: Policy, Provision, Processes and Possibilities**

*Dr Paul Conway (NUI Cork), Dr Hugh Kearns (Stranmillis UC), Dr Mary McAteer (University of Ulster, Magee College) and Regina Murphy (St Patrick's College, Drumcondra)*

**The Proposal:** To conduct a comparative study of principles, policy, processes and provisions for teacher continuing professional development (CPD) in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and to outline a set of principles for the provision of teacher CPD in Ireland, identifying obstacles to progress and opportunities for growth. The research will focus upon the following five aspects of CPD:

1. Overarching principles
2. Regional policy
3. Processes
4. Provisions
5. Possibilities

There has been agreement in principle to fund this project subject to a number of recommended revisions.

# Financial Report

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT Period Ended 31 December 2003

	EURO		STERLING	
	€	€	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>				
Grants		121178		80000
Malahide Conference & IPA		8596		5675
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Website	22111		14400	
Malahide Conference	24837		16175	
Cross-border Teachers Conference	1555		1013	
ITEC Conference	2646		1723	
Funding Applications Approved	25335		16500	
IASSEE Conference	4622		3010	
Salaries etc, CCBS	12589		8199	
Miscellaneous Expenditure	7583		4939	
Balance of Grants and Sundry Income	28496		19716	
	129774	129774	85675	85675
Balance of Grants and Sundry Income @ 31 December 2003		28496		19716
Budgeted Salaries etc. CCBS & Website	21106		14501	
Available for Research Projects, Conferences etc.	7390		5215	
	28496	28496	19716	19716

Secretariat provided by

**THE CENTRE FOR CROSS BORDER STUDIES**

39 Abbey Street  
Armagh BT61 7EB  
Northern Ireland  
Tel: 028 3751 1550  
Fax: 028 3751 1721  
(048 from the Republic of Ireland)  
E-mail: [patricia.mcallister@qub.ac.uk](mailto:patricia.mcallister@qub.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.crossborder.ie](http://www.crossborder.ie)