

# OIDEAS

Earrach/Spring 2003

	<b>Page</b>
<b><i>NÓTA ÓN EAGARTHÓIR</i></b>	3
<b><i>EDITORIAL COMMENT</i></b>	5
Principals' Professional Development: Realities, Perspectives and Possibilities <b>CIARÁN SUGRUE</b>	8
Primary to Second-level Transition Programmes: Rationale, Principles and a Framework <b>PATRICK NAUGHTON</b>	40
Teacher Professionalism: The Pastoral Dimension <b>JAMES NORMAN</b>	66
Teaching as a Vocation? <b>FRANK M. FLANAGAN</b>	79
Spléachadh ar Theagasc agus ar Fhoghlaim na Gaeilge : Cá bhfuil Ár dTreo Anois? <b>MUIRIS Ó LAOIRE</b>	90
Paired Reading with Peers and Parents <b>KEITH J. TOPPING</b>	103
<b><i>REVIEWS</i></b>	125
<b><i>EDITORIAL BOARD</i></b>	132

## INVITATION

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

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

Articles and reviews should be typed in black, in double spacing, and on one side of the paper. A short note on the writer's background should accompany every article submitted *and an abstract of the paper also should be supplied*.

Reference to authorities should be made in the text by the use of either the Footnote Style with superscript numbers, or the Harvard style. The names of authorities should be set out in alphabetical order in the list of references.

Preferably books should be cited in the following form:

DRUDY, S. and LYNCH, K. (1993) *Schools and Society in Ireland*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.

Titles of journals should not be abbreviated.

Articles should be cited thus:

CARTER, G. L. A. (Winter 1973) 'Strategy for Curriculum Reform', *Irish Journal of Education*, Vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 66-78.

## AN GHAELGE

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

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

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

Foilsítear *Oideas* faoi stiúradh Boird Eagarthóireachta.

Editor: Dr Pádraig Ó Conchubhair,  
Department of Education and Science,  
Office of the Inspectorate,  
Irish Life Buildings,  
1A, South Mall,  
CORK.

# Nóta ón Eagarthóir

Foilsíodh an chéad eagrán d'Oideas i bhfómhar na bliana 1968. Scríobh an t-eagarthóir ag an am go raibh sé mar aidhm againn 'eolas a scaipeadh i measc lucht oideachais in Éirinn agus ábhar staidéir agus machnaimh a chur ar fáil dóibh i dtaobh cúrsaí oideachais'. Foilsíodh seacht n-alt ann ar théamaí éagsúla ó *Theicnelolaíocht an Oideachais* leis an Roinnchigire, Tomás Ó Domhnalláin (fear a raibh an teideal 'oifigeach áiseanna closamhairc na Roinne Oideachais' bronnta air ag an am agus inar chuir sé síos ar an leas gur féidir a bhaint as áiseanna iontacha mar an teilgeoir scannán, an t-osteilgoir agus an taifeadán!), ceann eile ar *Oideachas Speisialta in Éirinn* le Tomás Ó Cuilleanáin, Roinnchigire, agus ceann eile fós ar ról an oide le Charles McCarthy, Ard Rúnaí Chumann na nGairm Mhúinteoirí mar a ghlaoití air ag an am.

Le breis agus tríocha bliain anuas is ábhar bróid dúinn go bhfuil suas le ceithre-chéad alt spreagúil foilsithe againn. Aithnítear gur leagadh troime na béime ar an teoiric in altanna áirithe agus gur díriodh níos mó ar an ghné phraiticiúil den obair in altanna eile. Níl aon amhras ach go raibh ardchaighdeán fiúntais ag gabháil leo uile agus iad ag tabhairt aitheantais d'fhorbairt leanúnach ag dul chun cinn inár scoileana agus inár n-ardinstiúidí léinn.

Le fiche bliain anuas tá an-fhás tagtha ar an taighde iarchéime inár n-ollscoileanna agus tá curtha go mór leis an eolas atá againn. Is ábhar sásaimh dúinn gur éirigh linn freastal a dhéanamh orthusan a raibh rud suntasach le hinsint don phobal oideachais acu; murach sin, tharlódh go luífeadh a gcuid saothair ar sheilfeanna ollscoile gan a bheith léite. Ar an mbonn céanna, is mór againn gur fhoilsíomar páipéir uathusan nach raibh ar thóir cáilíochtaí acadúla a bhaint amach. Ba dhaoine iadsan a raibh sé mar phríomhchuspóir acu a gcuid smaointe agus a gcuid cleachtas a chraobhscaoileadh. Agus, sna tosca, is fiú a thabhairt faoi deara go scaiptear *Oideas* ar gach ionad oideachais sa tír ón mbunscoil aon-oide go dtí an ollscoil agus an instiúid taighde.

Níor mhiste a chur in iúl nach guth oifigiúil na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta é *Oideas*. Bíonn saoirse ag gach scríbhneoir a chuid smaointe a nochtadh gan scáth, agus cuirimid fáilte freisin roimh dhearcadh a ritheann ina choinne. Ar an mbonn sin táimid ag iarraidh cur le saol intleachtúil an oideachasóra agus, fairis san, cur leis an gcóras oideachais ina iomláine ar mhaithe lenár gcéad sprioc dul chun cinn an mhic léinn a fhorbairt.

Anois cuirimid *Oideas 50* faoi bhur mbráid. De bhreis ar sé alt, tugtar liosta iomlán de na hailt a foilsíodh san iris ó bunaíodh den chéadair í mar áis don léitheoir go dteastaíonn uaidh alt faoi leith a aimsiú. Sé cinn d'ailt ar fad atá idir na clúdaigh agus iad uile dírithe ar ról an oide agus ar na dea-chleachtais mhúinteoireachta ar aidhm leo leas oideachais an dalta a chur chun cinn.

Déanann an **Dr Ciarán Sugrue** cur síos ar céard is brí le forbairt phroifisiúnta an phríomhoide. Aithníonn sé trí ré i bhforás choincheap na príomhoideachta, cíorann sé iad ar bhealach oilte agus tarraingíonn sé ar fhoinsí idirnáisiúnta nua-aimseartha chun an obair a shaibhriú. Léiríonn sé a bhfuil á mhaíomh ag scoláirí an lae atá inniu faoi chothú na foghlama i gcomhpháirt le comhghleacaithe freisin, rud a gcuirfidh léitheoirí spéis faoi leith ann.

Gineann an t-aistriú ón mbunscoil go dtí an scoil dara leibhéal fadhbanna nach beag do dhaltaí áirithe agus tá an téama san idir chamáin ag an **Dr Pat Naughton** ina alt spéisiúil. Déanann sé cíoradh mion ar na toscaí éagsúla a bhaineann leis an gceist agus maíonn sé nár mhiste athrú a imirt ar na socruithe atá i bhfeidhm sa rangsheomra agus sa scoil ina hiomláine chun an t-eagar agus an córas measúnaithe a fhorbairt.

Is é an cúram tréadach atá á phlé ag **James Norman**. San alt seo chomh maith díritear ar an tábhacht a ghabhann leis an dearcadh proifisiúnta a fhothú i measc oidí, leagann an tAthair Norman béim ar chothú na dea-ghaolmhaireachta mar ghné lárnach de chleachtais an oide agus maíonn sé go bhfuil an dul chun cinn sa chás préamhaithe go bunúsach i gcarachtar an oide.

Is féidir glacadh leis go bhfuil leas oideachais an dalta ag brath go mór ar dhílseacht an oide dá ghairm agus feicimid i litríocht an oideachais iliomad tagairtí don oide cumasach mórchroíoch, a bhí gafa go hardaidhmiúil lena ghnó ar mhaithe leis an dalta (féach *Oideas 46* agus an t-alt ar eiseamláir amháin, RL Russell, oide clúiteach as Co Antrama). Ina alt ar ghairm an oide tugann an **Dr Frank Flanagan** faoi chíoradh choincheap na gairme mar bhealach chun cleachtas na múinteoireachta a thuiscint. Ní amháin, dar leis, go mbaineann tábhacht faoi leith leis an oide mar dhuine a sholáthraíonn seirbhís phraiticiúil, ach is eiseamláir é chomh maith den ghné intleachtúil den saol. Is rí-luachmhar dá bharr an forás a chuireann sé ar fáil don duine aonair agus don phobal ina iomláine.

Fiafraíonn an **Dr Muiris Ó Laoire** cá bhfuil ár dtreo i dteagasc agus i bhfoglaim na Gaeilge sa lá atá inniu ann. Cé go n-aithníonn sé gan cheist na buntáistí a ghabhann leis an gcur chuige cumarsáideach, cuireann sé ar ár súile go bhfuil sé den ardtábhacht a bheith airdeallach go gcothaítear fíorchumarsáid seachas athrá meicniúil. Molann sé go láidir aire a dhíriú ar an bhfeasacht teanga sa rangsheomra d'fhonn an cur chuige cumarsáideach a shaibhriú agus, mar thaca d'fhorbairt na foghlama, meabhraíonn sé dúinn nár mhiste féachaint arís ar na gléasanna measúnachta atá in úsáid againn lena chinntiú go gclúdaíonn siad an ghné chumarsáideach den fhiontraíocht idir lámha.

Is eolaí idirnáisiúnta ar an léitheoireacht bheirte (PR) é an Dr Keith Topping. Aithnítear go forleathan an dea-thoradh a ghabhann le hiarrachtaí an oide nuair a chleachtann sé an cur chuige seo. Déanann Dr Topping cur síos ar na prionsabail bhunúsacha a bhaineann leis agus tugann sé léargas dúinn ar nuachleachtais le tamall anuas. Is spéisiúil ach go háirithe go ndeir sé go ndéanann an teagascóir maraon leis an bhfoghlaiméir dul chun cinn suntasach ina gcuid scileanna léitheoireachta. Ní aon iontas é go dtéann oidí na tire seo i muinín PR go rialta ina gcuid scoileanna agus táthar ag súil leis go ndéanfaidh a bhfuil san alt seo a gcuid cleachtas a ghéarú a thuilleadh.

De bhreis ar a luaitear thuas soláthraítear léirmheasanna ar leabhair thábhachtacha a foilsíodh ó chianaibh. Cuirfimid gach a bhfuil anseo faoi bhráid an léitheora le súil go mbainfidh sé idir thaitneamh agus thairbhe as gné éigin den saothar ar a laghad.

## Editorial Comment

The first issue of *Oideas* was published in autumn 1968 and in the foreword of the slim, sixty-page journal the editor declared that our intention was 'to disseminate information and to stimulate study and thought about educational matters amongst all engaged in the work of education in Ireland'. And in accordance with this worthy aim seven papers were published on such diverse topics as *Teicneolaíocht an Oideachais* by 'Audio Visual Aids Officer of the Department', Tomás Ó Domhnalláin, Roinnchigire, (who highlighted the value of such technological marvels as the film-strip projector, the tape recorder and the overhead projector!), *Special Education in Ireland* by the late Tomás Ó Cuilleanáin, Roinnchigire, and *The Role of the Teacher in a Developing Education System* by the late Charles McCarthy, General Secretary of what was then the Vocational Teachers Association.

In the intervening thirty years we have been happy to publish almost four-hundred papers on topics covering a wide range of interest to all educationists at whatever level of our system they are located. Some were theoretical in nature and have had a particular appeal to the academic, others were more practical and centred on the practices and reflections of the classroom practitioner. All were of high quality and bore testimony to a developing intellectual life within our education institutions.

With the exponential growth of postgraduate research in our universities in the last ten years or so, the boundaries of knowledge have been greatly extended. It is a source of no little satisfaction for us to record that we have served as a conduit for many who have had something significant to say to the education community and whose work perhaps might otherwise have reposed unread on university shelves. Equally, we have been happy to publish papers by practitioners whose initial impulse might not have been the pursuit of academic qualification, but rather the desire to share with others practices and deliberations which have occupied their lives in whatever sphere of education they operate. And *Oideas* has had the unique advantage of access to virtually every education establishment in the country from the one-teacher primary school to the university and research institution.

We are not the official mouthpiece of the Department of Education and Science and our contributors are free to express their own ideas and opinions; and a response from the dissenter is particularly welcome. Accordingly, we invite educationists to favour us with their contributions as in the past so that we may continue to make a modest contribution to the intellectual life of those who share our interest in education in every setting. Ultimately this may serve to bring us closer to the achievement of our ultimate aim of enhancing the experiences of our students at all levels.

We now present our fiftieth issue which contains a total of six papers. In addition, we publish a full list of papers published in *Oideas* since its inception in the hope that we may facilitate the interested reader in accessing material of particular relevance. The reader will note that all six papers focus on issues that

are central to the promotion of good practice in schools. They vary in orientation, some are more theoretical than others, but all share in common a concern to add to our understanding of the role of the teacher and how it may be enhanced in particular ways in the interests of the pupil.

**Dr Ciarán Sugrue** explores what is meant by professional development in a paper that has as its focus the needs of principal teachers in this area. He identifies three distinct phases in the evolution of principalship and presents an incisive discourse on each that is likely to serve as a valuable resource for education scholars. He goes on to conceptualise several 'ways of seeing' that characterize professional development and draws on international perspectives to highlight different approaches. His recognition of a growing interest within research literature on learning communities will be of particular interest in light of a growing recognition among scholars today of the distributed nature of knowledge and the value of situated learning.

In his paper on transition, **Dr Pat Naughton** presents a convincing case for the effecting of change at the interface between first and second-level schooling in this country. While acknowledging the progress already made, he proposes a set of principles that might usefully be deployed in facilitating transfer. What is desirable, he suggests, is a willingness to look beyond the immediate issues of transition towards the creating of a situation in which schools and classrooms are more effectively organised. And a crucial feature of this must be a reappraisal of learning and assessment practices.

The value of pastoral care structures in postprimary schools is highlighted by Dr Naughton and the theme is taken up and developed by **James Norman**. Fr Norman claims that the pastoral dimension is at the heart of a positive teacher-pupil relationship and argues that we need to reconceptualise our ideas of what it means to be professional. Viewing the development of a professional attitude as a major challenge for those involved in teacher training, he explores some of the underlying conditions that facilitate its promotion among teachers. Readers will recognise that the four conditions he specifies (integration, empathy, defensibility and adaptability) do not in themselves constitute a prescriptive list — nor does the writer suggest they do — but he does see them coming from a person's character and fundamental to the development of personal relationships with pupils.

It may be taken as a given that the success of arrangements in schools to facilitate smooth transition and effective learning will depend to a critical degree on the level of commitment shown by teachers. The literature of education is replete with descriptions of dedicated teachers, and a great many of us look back with warm affection on that gifted character who clearly made a difference (one such as Antrim's RL Russell whose work was celebrated in *Oideas 46*). In attempting to explain their generosity of spirit, people have claimed that these admirable individuals have had what we call 'a vocation'. In inviting us to accept the appropriateness of the concept of vocation as a way of understanding teaching, **Dr Frank Flanagan** in his paper argues that this conceptualisation falls

short of committing us to a particular ideological view. What in effect it does is present the pursuit of teaching as a form of socio-political commitment practised by one who not only represents the world of knowledge and value but also one who also consciously presents himself/ herself as the embodiment of a certain order. Hence, the teacher ought not to be seen as a service provider to the consumer but an intellectual of some ideological significance who is providing a highly valuable social as well as individual service.

Readers with knowledge of Irish will be particularly interested in **Dr Muiris Ó Laoire's** discussion on the teaching and learning of Irish. They will note therein a qualified endorsement of the communicative approach and an appeal for a re-orientation of emphasis from the teaching to the learning curriculum. For many this will resonate with the socioculturalist preference for the participation rather than the acquisition metaphor as an explanatory concept in the characterisation of effective learning. Of interest too will be his valuing of a constructivist approach to second language learning and his parallel focus on the development of metacognitive skills as an important underpinning of the complex process of transfer in language learning.

Paired Reading has been rigorously evaluated in a variety of locations throughout the world during the last decade and has been found to be effective with a wide range of learners. An acknowledged expert in the field, **Dr Keith Topping**, contributes a paper on the technique in which he outlines the essential principles underpinning paired reading and presents discussion on a number of new developments and applications. Of particular interest is his observation that there is a bonus in terms of reading progress not just for the tutee but also for the tutor and, given its flexibility, he notes that it fits easily into most reading strategies. Certainly the message will not be lost on Irish teachers.

Finally, we add some book reviews on topics of current interest which complete an issue which we hope will serve our readers well as a source of no little stimulation combined with a sense of pleasure born of enlightenment.

Ciarán Sugrue

## **PRINCIPALS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: REALITIES, PERSPECTIVES AND POSSIBILITIES<sup>1</sup>**

*Ciarán Sugrue is Director of Post-Graduate Studies in Education at St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra. He is currently General Editor of Irish Educational Studies (a Journal of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland) and chairperson of the International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching. He is author of 'Complexities of Teaching: Child-centred Perspectives' (London: Falmer Press, 1997) and editor (with Chris Day) of 'Developing Teachers and Teaching Practice: International Research Perspectives' (London & New York: Routledge/ Falmer, 2002). Dr Sugrue is a former primary teacher and primary school inspector.*

*ABSTRACT: This paper is in five parts. First, it outlines the manner in which the role of primary principals in Ireland has evolved during the past three decades with emphasis on its increasing complexity and diffusion. Second, what is meant by professional development is explored conceptually as a lens through which to scrutinize possible content, modes of delivery, evaluation and certification of professional learning opportunities for principals. Third, the nature and potential of networks/ support groups for promoting supporting and sustaining principals are explored as part of a multi-dimensional approach to principals' continuing professional development. Fourth, a comparative analysis of principals' professional development programmes in institutions located in eight countries is undertaken. Fifth, the concluding section focuses on policy issues and comments on the nature and content of a possible programme of professional development for principals. The intention is to provide some tools for thinking about principals' professional learning and these may have implications also for teachers' professional learning in general.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As the decade of the 1990s progressed, the new millennium drew near, and pressures on schools and school principals increased to implement a whole

plethora of emerging mandates, curricular and others, the pace of change accelerated to an alarming rate, the emerging consensus was, and remains, that the role of principal has expanded exponentially, with no real prospect of this scenario changing. Consequently, in many instances, crisis management has become institutionalized, a way of life for school principals, and, as indicated by evidence nationally and internationally, the position has become much less attractive to potential applicants. Yet, research evidence, particularly from schools effectiveness literature, throughout this period continued to stress the pivotal importance of the principal by turn as instructional, transactional, transformational leader, as the lynchpin of school effectiveness and school improvement with a growing emphasis on principals' leadership capacity (Leithwood et al., 1996; Leithwood et al. 1999).

For many Irish principals, there is a constant tug between the more routine administrative chores, particularly in the absence of consistent secretarial and caretaker support, management responsibilities and the kinds of leadership that is implied in much recent literature (Dimmock, 1996). In such circumstances, some principals feel inadequate, never quite measuring up to what the literature suggests are the really important issues to which they should give most attention and what they actually succeed in doing on a daily basis. In short, there is a mismatch between the rhetoric and the reality in the lives and work of many primary principals. As these nagging doubts persist, there is a growing realization that 'business as usual' is no longer adequate for the challenges of primary principalship in the first decade of the 21st century (Little, 2001,1993).

If crisis management is a perceived commonplace in the lives and work of principals, increasingly also professional development is proffered as the solution, the panacea that will bring calm to turbulent waters. Consequently, there is a tendency to demand professional development as an end in itself without being clear about purposes. The primary focus of this paper therefore is on professional development and its potential to enhance the lives and work of principals. However, there is recognition also that the role is inherently complex, unstable and uncertain. This is in part why principals sought the responsibility in the first instance, so that professional development is not going to change the nature of the role. Rather, it will help to create some 'situated certainty' to enable principles to accomplish more by bringing some order and coherence to everyday realities (Hargreaves, 1994).

This paper is in five parts. First, how the role of the primary principal in Ireland has evolved during the past three decades is discussed briefly. Seeking to build on current realities is a more secure and sure-footed means of establishing some continuity while grappling with unprecedented challenge and change as well as recognizing also that context is important in shaping discussion and addressing professional needs. Second, it is necessary to explore conceptually what is meant by professional development as a precursor to advocating particular kinds of programme content, modes of delivery, evaluation and certification. Third, the nature and potential of networks/ support groups for promoting, supporting and

sustaining principals are explored as part of a multi-dimensional approach to principals' continuing professional development. Fourth, a comparative analysis of principals' professional development programmes in institutions located in eight<sup>2</sup> countries is undertaken and this provides a backdrop to a more focused analysis of two specific programmes: one in Stanford University for aspiring principals, the other at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto), the latter being well established and a requirement throughout the province. Fifth, the concluding section raises some important policy issues, as well as making more focused comments on the nature and content of a possible programme of professional development for principals. It is anticipated that the analysis will provide some tools for thinking about principals' professional learning, as well as some action oriented suggestions. These emergent issues should prove valuable also in the context of professional development as a whole-school activity, and teachers' professional learning in general.

The perspectives developed in this paper are informed by three different but related sets of data. One, research completed for the DES on the quality of in-service provision for primary and secondary teachers (see Sugrue *et al.*, 2001). Two, an international comparative study on the life history of school leaders that involves Ireland, Denmark, Norway and the north of England (see Sugrue and Furlong, forthcoming). Three, work with primary principals in a masters specialization in educational leadership (St. Patrick's College) as well as more than a decade of experience as a facilitator of a primary principals' support group.

### **EVOLUTION OF IRISH PRIMARY PRINCIPALS' ROLE**

This analysis is conducted in three parts. At the risk of over-simplification, the three phases in the evolution of Principalship or *príomh-oideacht*, are labeled as follows:

1. Phase One: Pre 1971- predominantly administrative
2. Phase Two: 1971-1989 - predominantly managerial
3. Phase Three: 1990s- a growing emphasis on leadership in addition to the tasks of administration and management.

Each of the three periods is analysed briefly in terms of its dominant characteristics and underlying values to develop perspectives on the manner in which understandings of leadership are constructed so that the reader becomes more aware of the extent to which the role is shaped and buffeted by wider social forces, policy contexts, by personal biography and the immediate context of individual schools. Such an approach is warranted for 'the traditions through which particular practices are transmitted and reshaped never exist in isolation from larger social traditions' (Goodson, 1992. p. 242). Key concerns in the growing complexity of the principal's role are identified with reference to evidence on the realities of teaching and administrative principal's daily working lives as well as pupil's perceptions of the role of principal.

### ***Phase one: Pre 1971— school administration***

Developing a historical perspective on the evolution of the principals' role is necessary for 'to ignore or to disregard our past is to remain in corrosive collusion with it' (Kearney, 1985, p. 37). What then were the dominant characteristics of the role of primary principal, its underlying assumptions and embedded values during this period?

While the Rules for National Schools (Department of Education, 1965) may describe the duties of the principal in seemingly neutral terms, this brief job description tends to hide the underlying values attached to the post that were redolent of pervasive values in the wider society. The rules, inter alia, required the principal to open and close the school, keep the registers, and have responsibility for the administration of discipline. There was a very clear hierarchy of relationships - manager, inspector, principal, teacher and the overarching value was to serve and not to question, whatever about more recent claims that the role of the principal has always been that of '*primus inter pares*' (INTO, 1990, DES, 1999). What the OECD Report (1991) identifies as the 'legendary autonomy' of the classroom teacher in Irish primary schools, derives, from this period. Treating the classroom as an independent Republic in an oppressive and authoritarian system became teachers' means of protecting their autonomy, something to be guarded jealously in a highly regulated system. This is a legacy that now works against more collaborative endeavours that have become recent policy orthodoxy. However, collaboration, by means of whole-school development planning, for example, may also be understood as a means of controlling teachers (Helsby, 1999), a form of 'contrived collegiality' (Hargreaves, 1994).

The role of the principal in these circumstances was to administer the system efficiently within clearly prescribed rules and regulations determined by church and state. What Oakes et al. (1998) call the 'zone of tolerance'<sup>3</sup> was limited, where prescription was everywhere in terms of rules, syllabi and pedagogy, with little opportunity to deviate from the prescribed or 'ordained' norms. Who teachers were during this period is also of significance. They were those who were selected to attend Preparatory Colleges, as well as members of male and female religious communities, as part of a concerted church-state axis to construct a Gaelic and Catholic Ireland in the post-independence period.

The curriculum was narrow - 3Rs focused almost exclusively with much time being devoted to the teaching of Irish. Pupils were expected to learn much by rote, were frequently punished for failure to memorise, and the Primary Certificate Examination (PCE) and county council scholarships were the dominant yardsticks by which the success of the school was measured and the status of the master or mistress determined (see Sugrue, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999). It may be suggested that the few were successful at the expense of the many. Class teaching predominated and the system of inspection, examination and the dominant patterns of teaching that they spawned were stifling to many (McDonagh, 1969).

Dominant characteristics and values of this era include - stability (if not stagnation), predictability, continuity, and certainty in relation to cultural and religious values. Curricula, as cultural 'artifacts', tended to be treated rather like museums, those quintessential nineteenth century institutions whose function it was 'the accumulation of rare and priceless artifacts, and the subsequent ordering, displaying and labeling of these - were seen as the most effective way towards the instruction and edification of the general public' as a means of establishing official orthodoxy and maintaining 'the status quo' (Sheerin, 1998, p. 48).

### *Legacy*

The legacy of the period includes - teacher autonomy at the expense of isolation 'conservatism and privacy' (Lortie, 1975), the principal as 'licensed authority' (Ball, 1987) was distanced from colleagues, while evaluation of teachers' (and principals' work) was the responsibility of inspectors. These identification marks continue to impact on attitudes and behaviours and cast long shadows on the system as a whole.

### ***Phase two: 1971-1989 - Management***

Reforms that began in the mid 1960s, against an international backdrop of social and cultural ferment and national economic development, include - universal access to secondary education, school transport, and abolition of the PCE. These major structural changes were precursors to the introduction of the 'new' curriculum (Department of Education, 1971). The word 'radical' has been used repeatedly to describe the departure that the Teacher's Handbooks (Parts 1 & 2) came to symbolize (McDonagh, 1969; Coolahan, 1981; Primary Education Review Body Report, 1990; Sugrue, 1997). The 1971 curriculum heralded a significant number of additional responsibilities for primary principals and rendered the role more public, both inside and outside the school.

### *Locus of decision-making*

One of the major consequences of the changing role of the principal and the devolution of decision-making for curricular matters to the level of the school was that staff meetings, slowly and unevenly, began to take hold. This process of democratisation had impact in two significant ways. One, selection of textbooks, procurement of resources with meager funding became the source of ongoing negotiation and tensions. Two, the principal was exposed to colleagues in a manner previously unknown.

### *Planning*

The principal was expected to consult with staff and to design a curriculum appropriate to the needs and interests of the children who attended the school in a context where the curriculum had been broadened considerably to include a range of new subjects- PE, Art and Craft as well as Social and Environmental

Studies (Department of Education, 1971). While the *Plean Scoile* remained a vague concept for some years to come, the office of principal was taking on a whole new range of responsibilities that were encapsulated in circular 16/73.

### *Time*

As the need for a variety of meetings became more manifest, time to meet, during and after school, was beginning to emerge as a constant dilemma, that continues to grow in intensity as the role becomes more complex, and the boundaries between school and community become more permeable. The revised primary curriculum (Ireland, 1999) and its attendant professional support programme has intensified time considerations immeasurably.

### *Posts of responsibility*

As larger schools materialized, a consequence of increasing urbanization and amalgamation of smaller rural schools, A and B posts of responsibility became rewards to long serving staff rather than a means of sharing the growing burden of responsibilities on the school principal. However, the manner in which these posts were 'managed' encouraged and perpetuated the view established in the previous era that the responsibility for running the school was almost exclusively that of the principal. It is the case also that many principals liked that arrangement as their image of principal as 'heroic leader' (Gardner, 1995) could be sustained and perpetuated: a solo performer rather than team player. It may be argued that the seeds of the 'myth of the superprincipal' were sown during this period (Copland, 2001).

### *Boards of management*

Probably the most significant structural change during this era was the creation of Boards of Management (1976). It is worth recalling the degree of opposition to such structures by principals, teachers and managers alike. None wished to have their authority questioned and it was with the greatest of misgivings that managers and principals began to move slowly towards more democratic structures though it is only in much more recent years that the composition of boards have taken on a more democratic hue. For the principal, there were more meetings to attend, minutes to keep, reporting, and correspondence all of which exposed the principal in a more public manner. Additionally, managing the paper work, frequently in the absence of secretarial assistance and when PCs and computer skills were still a long way off, principals were increasingly devoting more time and energy to the duties of the manager who, in many instances, was only too willing to pass his responsibilities to the principal.

### *Parent-teacher meetings*

The annual ritual of meeting with parents to discuss their children's progress became another feature of the rhythms of the school year during this era with further consequences for the administrative responsibilities of the principal, and

resulting in further exposure to colleagues and parents. Meetings for First Communion and Confirmation have been added to this list in more recent years, probably beginning at the end of this period. More formal and structural recognition was given to the significance of home/ school/ community links with the creation of positions within schools dedicated to that purpose.

### *Parents' Council (national and local)*

In the early 1980s, (during Gemma Hussey's term of office in education — 1984-1987), greater participation in education decision-making by parents was championed by the Minister and finance was provided to assist with the establishment of the National Parents' Council. Principals were being requested to facilitate the creation of school councils and again, the kinds of tensions that existed a decade earlier in relation to parental participation on BoMs, were now being played out in relation to the role of a local parents' council. All of these initiatives continue to make more demand on principals' time, organizational abilities and communication skills, while the role is increasingly played out in public and semi-public arenas.

While the list of developments briefly indicated above is not exhaustive, they need to be understood within wider ferment in Irish society. Old certainties, cultural religious and others, were being questioned increasingly and in such a climate traditional authority was being steadily undermined and eroded. Primary principals were being asked to take on a whole plethora of new responsibilities while the authority of those in positions of power was being questioned. In such a climate principals, and particularly those who were not particularly adept at negotiation and the art of compromise, tended to make unilateral decisions to avoid conflict. Without professional development, they were left to their own devices and neither was there a legislative framework that would provide some guidance.

### *Legacy*

Principals were expected to interact much more with teaching colleagues as the curriculum was to be negotiated, textbooks chosen, timetables synchronised, equipment stored, audio-visual equipment organised and maintained, library stocks to be procured etc. Through BoMs and Parents' Councils, there were many more meetings to be organised and attended: both management and administrative responsibilities increased while the tradition of leadership being invested in the 'Head' continued.

Time after school hours became more of a reality with old certainties and boundaries being eroded. The principal's role, while becoming more complex was more of a challenge also. While the position may have continued to be manageable for administrative principals, for teaching principals, with full teaching responsibilities along with a growing list of managerial duties, the position was already becoming increasingly problematic. In the third phase, through the 1990s, the role has become increasingly complex and problematic.

### ***Phase Three: 1990s— a focus on leadership***

As the Irish economy emerged from the crippling debts of the late 1980s, globalisation and acceleration of the pace of change became more relentless, as the last decade of the twentieth Century played host to a plethora of discussion documents, policy document and legislation; creeping change has become a veritable flood; a continuous cascading of issues and arguments that have increasingly created a turbulent environment in which schools are expected to operate. This relentless mushrooming of responsibilities is creating confusion for principals through unprecedented role diffusion, with attendant frustration and burnout for some (see Blasé, 1982; Cole and Walker, 1989; Cox and Heames, 1999).

A report on Irish Education published by OECD in 1991 identified a particular need for management training for school leaders. In a section entitled 'Training for Leadership and Management' it says: 'only tentative and ad hoc efforts had been made so far to prepare principals and senior staff in the schools for their onerous duties' (OECD, 1991, p. 132). The report concludes that 'a significant expansion of leadership and management training would be required in the near future if schools were to be able to respond to the assumption of greater autonomy ... and greater responsibility for their own affairs' (p.133). Increasingly principals were expected to be administrator, manager-bureaucrat and leader. Dimmock describes the consequent dilemma for principals as follows:

... school leaders experience difficulty in deciding the balance between higher order tasks designed to improve staff, student and school performance (leadership), routine maintenance of present operations (management) and lower order duties (administration). Restructuring generates increased expectations for school leadership, while at the same time demanding more work of a maintenance and lower order nature. (1996. p. 150).

With the benefit of hindsight, the arrival of the OECD report effectively opened the floodgates to a persistent torrent of documentation that continues unabated and all of which arrives on the principal's desk for attention.<sup>4</sup> Fullan describes the consequence of this information overload and the risks of superficial adoption of new policy fashions in the following terms:

With change forces abounding, it is easy to experience overload, fragmentation and incoherence. In fact, in education this is the more typical state. Policies get passed independent of each other, innovations are introduced before previous ones are adequately implemented, the sheer presence of problems and multiple unconnected solutions are overwhelming. Many schools and school systems make matters worse by indiscriminately taking on every

innovation that comes alone - what Bryk et al. called 'Christmas tree schools'- so many innovations as decorations, superficially adorned. (1999, p. 27)

Principals are particularly sensitive to the quantity of paper arriving on their desks as a barometer of change. How these changes impact on their daily lives is summarised by Greenfield:

The work of the school administrator involves extensive face-to-face communication, is action oriented, is reactive, the presented problems are unpredictable, decisions are frequently made without accurate or complete information, the work occurs in a setting of immediacy, the pace is rapid, there are frequent interruptions, work episodes themselves tend to be of very brief duration, responses often cannot be put off until later, resolution of problems often involve multiple actors, and the work is characterised by a pervasive pressure to maintain a peaceful and smoothly running school in the face of a great deal of ambiguity and uncertainty (1995, p. 63).

How this frenetic existence impacts on Irish principals is captured in the extracts below. They document activities engaged in during the thirty minutes immediately prior to the commencement of the 'official' school day.

*Teaching Principal:*

*Photocopied work for class, answered phone call from parent of sick child. Unlocked all doors in school. Wrote some receipts for swimming money. Checked maths book for difficulties. Brought in classes from the yard. Arranged for distribution of milk and sandwiches. Spoke to parent.*

The variety conveyed by this shorthand account is indicative but scarcely does justice to the complexity of the beginning of the school day as it is almost inconceivable that this principal did not also speak to teachers and pupils. This account gives the US term 'multi-tasking' a whole new meaning!

Within an identical timeframe, the administrative principal undertook similar activities, but did not have to begin teaching at the end of this thirty-minute period.

*Administrative Principal:*

*Checked playground and e-mail. Took telephone call re absent teacher. Discussed IT allocation with post holder- arranged class for distribution. [The diary went on to record the following comment].*

*Post holder has post of dispersing classes of absent teachers but I find myself helping out. Spoke with visiting teacher re [name of child] dyslexic.*

The comment in relation to a post holder is illustrative of the growing issue of delegation of responsibility and shared leadership throughout the school but particularly with respect to members of middle-management (see Ó Díomasaigh, 2000; O'Hanlon, 2000). At the conference of the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) in Galway (February 2002), there was growing recognition that shared leadership included meaningful participation in and contribution to the smooth running of the school rather than merely attending to a list of duties in isolation.

Pupil's perceptions of principals contrasts sharply with the diary records quoted above. The following extracts from essays written by senior primary pupils are included as being broadly representative of a number of schools. They indicate that teachers, parents and pupils have only partial visibility of the role. In the absence of systematic documentation of the heterogeneity of the role, it is principals only who have a panoramic perspective of its diversity and scale.

Having read through more than one hundred essays by fifth and sixth class pupils I am astonished at the recurring patterns in children's perceptions. Their observations repeatedly revolve around discipline, resources and maintenance. The following example is illustrative, and is written by a fifth class girl in a middle-class school.

*The principles [sic] job is a very important job. The principle has to make sure everything in the school is working and in good order. She has to make sure everything is safe as well. I think it is a great responsibility being a principle. The principle is very cross because she has to deal with very bold kids every day ... Give all the storeroom, roof leaks, and other things are fixed. Our principal is a very good one.*

This next extract is written by a fifth class boy in a large urban disadvantaged community and his comments are representative of many of the other essays.

*Most of the day he gives out. He goes checking classrooms. He calls pupil's parents. He is not bad of a principal. He has a very loud voice. Some of the times he's in his office. He's always checking the yard.*

Others commented that they were forbidden to eat crisps and chocolate and the boys in particular frequently referred to the Ford Mondeo that he drove, one suggesting that he might one day 'rob' it!

Discipline continues to be perceived as one of the principal's primary functions, particularly from pupils' perspectives. Their comments also suggest that the role is primarily administrative and managerial-custodial, when increasingly research literature emphasises a principal's leadership function. Stoll and Fink describe this situation in the following terms:

...the balance between leadership and management needs to be realigned because, as we become more deeply embedded in the global economy, management is being given pre-eminence when in fact *leadership* is being demanded. (1996, p. 187)

When attention is focused in the next section on ways of looking at professional development, this tension becomes more manifest. First, what is the legacy of this third era?

### *Legacy*

It is difficult to capture and do justice to the frenetic, action oriented nature of the principals role and its multifaceted dimensions. Additionally, this period continues to unfold while globalisation and market forces continue to buffet and alter in unpredictable ways the manner in which policies are interpreted and how they impact on local school communities. Consequently, the role continues to become less predictable, demanding and diversified. Middle-management structures, though intended to share the burden of school leadership, create new demands on principals, while additional funding of schools, though welcome, increases the necessity for accounting, thus increasing the amount of paperwork significantly. Increasing expectations among parents as to the range of services provided by schools, and the demands of special needs children and increasing multi-culturalism, all impact to varying degrees on the daily lives of principals. Frequently, professional support is advocated as a means of bringing coherence to this maelstrom. It is necessary therefore to turn to how professional development might be conceptualized. This is the task of the second section of this paper.

## **CONCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Introduction***

In an international and national context where a policy of lifelong learning is espoused, if not yet practiced, the term *inservice*, with its connotations of occasional, frequently 'one shot' courses is increasingly redundant (see Sugrue et al., 2001). Continuing professional development (CPD), with an emphasis on sustained and ongoing support, has become the term of choice, while some favour teacher learning to focus attention on the necessity for teachers to be

learners rather than dispensers of information. Both CPD and teacher learning are used interchangeably throughout.

Irish policy documents increasingly reflect this emerging emphasis. There is recognition of the 'teaching continuum' which is consistent with lifelong learning and that this learning includes 'personal and professional needs' (Coolahan, 1994, p. 84). These perspectives recognize the need also for a comprehensive and coherent policy for teachers' (including principals) lifelong learning, and this is consistent with international trends, summarized in the following terms:

Over the last twenty years teacher learning has become one of the most important concerns of the educational establishment. It has been more or less assumed that teachers who know more teach better. This 'simple' idea has governed multiple efforts to improve education in the arenas of policy, research, and practice by focusing on what teachers know and need to know (emphasis in original) Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999, p. 1).

While it is a commonplace to advocate professional learning, there is pretty fundamental disagreement as to appropriate approaches and purposes. However, in the literature, there are three broad conceptualizations or 'ways of seeing' professional development (Berger, 1972). These are briefly outlined and their implications for policy and practice succinctly summarised.

The three broad conceptualizations are-

- (a) Knowledge for practice
- (b) Knowledge in practice, and
- (c) Knowledge of practice

I begin by representing key features of these three conceptualizations diagrammatically and provide a brief elaboration with particular focus on their implications for policy and practice.

**Figure 1.**

**Representations of Principal (teachers') learning**

<b>Knowledge for practice</b>			
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Professional Learning</b>	<b>Research</b>
A body of empirically verifiable knowledge is generated by experts	Disseminate/ update teachers' knowledge-base to attain pre-determined goals	Teachers 'bring back' 'best practice' to their classrooms: knowledge users	Researchers, not teachers, generate knowledge
<b>Knowledge in practice</b>			
Constructed by Teachers in specific contexts	Focus on schools as learning communities for teachers and learners	Teachers: active agents-knowledge construction & re-inventing their practice	Systematic documentation of teachers' knowledge
<b>Knowledge of practice</b>			
Is problematic and contested	Should empower teachers as transformative agents	Learning is Focus on schools as learning communities for teachers and learners social and communal: committed to seeking significant questions in 'learning communities'	Conducted by teachers as agents of their own learning

I understand these three 'ways of seeing' or means of thinking about principals' learning as distinct points on a continuum, rather than entirely separate approaches.

***Knowledge for practice***

The major tendency within the first conceptualization is to perceive principals as knowledge users and not knowledge producers, where professional researchers generate knowledge and practitioners are 'instructed' to put this new knowledge into practice, to bring it back to their schools/ classrooms. This stance is described by Bennis, Benne and Chin (1985, pp. 22-45) as an empirical-rational approach that puts its faith in knowledge generation and dissemination as widely as possible throughout the system, while its critics have labeled it technical-rational (Schon, 1983). A typical policy initiative arising from this way of seeing is what Lieberman and McLaughlin (1999, p. 2) label 'standards-based' approaches: ' ... once clear goals are specified, the other mechanisms of schooling- curriculum, teaching, teacher training, organizational features, and

other resources will be marshaled to attain them' (O'Day and Smith, 1993) (1999, p. 2).

It is assumed within this approach that 'the key elements in educational change are the knowledge, skills and norms of practice that professionals hold and use, and that a cadre of teachers who meet such standards will be a powerful lever for change' (Lieberman and McLaughlin, 1999, p. 4). Grossen is highly critical of this 'bringing back' mindset and he summarises the demands on principals and teachers when he says:

The reformers who provide teachers with theories ... and no details for how to use them—are really demanding that teachers do most of their work for them. To ask that teachers create all of their own tools and curricula is like asking doctors to invent all of their own drugs; like asking airplane pilots to build their own airplanes. When would teachers have time to do this? Engineering a highly effective instructional sequence would more than consume most teachers' private time. (1996, p. 27)

In a climate of rapid change this approach has increasing appeal to many policy makers so that reforms are driven by prescriptions designed by policy elites. It may be suggested that the professional learning provision currently being provided for the revised primary curriculum (Ireland, 1999) is shaped by such thinking, even if it is being delivered by teachers for teachers; practitioners are being invited to 'bring back' 'best practice to their classrooms, but by whom and by what criteria is this practice being determined?

### ***Knowledge in practice***

The second conceptualization frequently takes as its point of departure what is often absent from the first way of seeing, namely teachers' knowledge, the craft wisdom of the profession (see Sugrue, 1997). Such knowledge is typically referred to as practical knowledge, or personal practical knowledge and often documented as teacher narrative (Clandinin, 1986; Connelly and Clandinin, 1988; Elbaz, 1983; Beattie, 1995). An underlying assumption of this conceptualization is that 'teaching is to a great extent an uncertain and spontaneous craft, situated and constructed in response to the particularities of everyday life in schools and classrooms' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, p. 20). Implicit in this perspective also is the idea that much of what teachers and principals know is tacit. Some commentators take this concept a stage further and describe teaching through this lens as craft or artistry (Eraut, 1994; Grimmett and Erickson, 1988). A crucial element within this conceptualization is reflection. It is assumed that teachers learn by having opportunities to reflect on their practice and that they are capable of this in isolation or in partnership with a trusted colleague or in small groups. Grimmett and MacKinnon (1992, p. 387) for example, suggest that 'craft knowledge' is a blend of Shulman's pedagogical

content knowledge and what they describe as ‘pedagogical learner knowledge’ or ‘pedagogical procedural information useful in enhancing learner-focused teaching in the dailiness of classroom actions’. This recognition of and respect for teachers’ craft knowledge suggests that they need to be actively engaged in their own (re-)education, but the notion of reflection too is problematic.

Lieberman and McLaughlin summarize policies that follow from this ‘way of seeing’ in the following terms:

... the effort to create greater participation and a collective perspective among school staff is viewed as a resource for reform and an opportunity for teacher learning and change. The leverage for change is thought to lie initially in the transformation of professionals’ sense of purpose and mission and consequently in renewed instructional work they undertake together. (1999, p. 4)

Unlike the first conception, here teachers are constructed as actively generating new knowledge and understandings that will enable them to transform their practice. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995, p.597) conclude that: ‘professional development today ... means providing occasions for teachers to reflect critically on their practice and to fashion new knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy and learners’. Professional development initiatives within this perspective can be expected to support as well as advocate collaboration and reflection.

This policy perspective translates into understanding schools as ‘sites and sources of learning’ for teachers as well as students (McLaughlin, 2001; Barth, 1990; Darling-Hammond, and McLaughlin, 1995; Lieberman and McLaughlin, 1999). From a research perspective, documenting teachers’ knowledge may be undertaken primarily by researcher, or more collaboratively through participation by practitioners and researchers espousing more emancipatory approaches to changing practice through action research. Even at an informal level, recent curriculum days for whole schools staffs or school clusters may be understood as enabling and encouraging teachers to discuss their practice, share their expertise, thus increasing capacity within the system.

### ***Knowledge of practice***

Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1999) argue that this third perspective focuses more on individual professional development and is intended to be transformative. They suggest that knowledge can be both local and public at once. Implicit in their way of seeing –

... knowledge-of-practice is the assumption that through inquiry, teachers across the professional life-span— from very new and very experienced— make problematic their own knowledge and practice

as well as the knowledge and practice of others and thus stand in a different relationship to knowledge. The third conception of teacher learning is ... based on fundamentally different ideas—that practice is more than practical, that inquiry is more than an artful rendering of teachers' practical knowledge, .... (1999, p. 37)

This approach places teachers at the centre of professional learning, and assumes an ongoing commitment to inquiry where practice as well as theoretical knowledge, the kind generated particularly by the first way of seeing, are both understood as problematic and open to question. This approach is particularly consistent with the policy of the Department of Education and Science that will shortly be publishing documentation on Whole School Review (WSR) where teachers will take primary responsibility for evaluating their own work as an integral element of an emerging professionalism (see Bascia, 1998). However, depending on the climate in which such reviews are conducted, they may be understood as increasing bureaucratization of teaching as well as increasing surveillance of teachers' work (see Lawn, 1996; Helsby, 1999).

Within this perspective also there are multiple approaches, from commitment to collaborative learning in groups, communities and networks to a more overtly political approach that seeks continuously to challenge the status quo with the deliberate intent of fostering and promoting more democratic schooling and a more just and equitable society. It includes a strong action research orientation with a major focus on teacher inquiry as the fulcrum for learning, reform and a continuous challenging of epistemological, pedagogical and policy orthodoxies.

The policies that ought to be pursued according to advocates of this approach would enable teachers to build inquiry communities that:

... use a wide range of texts, not all of which are published or disseminated but are essential to teachers' individual and collective gathering, recording, and analyzing of data. These include reports, and accounts of teacher researchers, action researchers, and other practitioners as well as selections from the extensive theoretical and research literatures in the many fields related to teaching, learning and schooling. (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, p. 71)

While this approach may have wide appeal for teachers and principals, within the rigid structures of the school day as presently constructed, it is difficult to envisage how a collective inquiry stance can be practiced. Similarly, given the frenetic nature of a typical principal's day, there are serious constraints to schools becoming communities of inquiry, however attractive or desirable.

It is also important to recognize that there are pitfalls to practitioner-focused inquiry, sometimes disparagingly referred to as a 'pooling of ignorance' rather than a building of expertise (Skilbeck, 1984; 1998). Espousal of this approach, therefore, needs to avoid an exclusive focus on teachers' craft knowledge. Rather, teachers would need to work continuously towards 'forming and

reforming frameworks to understand their practice', but they would do this in a widely-contextualised manner by creating frameworks-

... informed not only by thoughtful consideration of the immediate situation and the particular students they teach and have taught but also by the multiple contexts within which they work (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, p. 65).

Adherents of this approach advocate networks and learning communities as a means of improving practice that may or may not lead to more democratic schooling or a more equitable society. There is more explicit recognition within this 'way of seeing' that schooling does not exist and function in a vacuum but is connected to larger social forces so that being a teacher requires engaging with these wider movements towards more democratic, just and equitable ends. In an increasingly prosperous Ireland, it is necessary to ensure that schooling does not exacerbate disparities between 'haves' and 'have nots'. The research agenda is set by teachers in collaboration with researchers rather than the latter co-opting the former to ends predetermined by policy-makers or those who fund research. This third perspective on professional learning seeks to put principals and teachers at the centre of their own learning, and a 'problem-based' approach is increasingly being advocated as an effective means of supporting this kind of inquiry (see Bridges, 1992).

As pressures for school restructuring and curriculum reform continue to increase, as an extension of an inquiry based approach to teacher learning, there has been a growing interest in and emphasis on the importance of learning networks and learning communities as a means of providing support and sustained learning. This phenomenon is the focus of the next section.

## **NETWORKS: THEIR POTENTIAL FOR PRINCIPAL'S LEARNING**

While there is a growing emphasis and focus within research literature on learning communities (Little, 1993; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999) relatively 'little is known about how such networks are formed, what they focus on, and how they are sustained' (Lieberman and Grolnick, 1996, p. 8). While some activists within Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) may be able to provide some contextualised responses to this larger question (see Sugrue, 2002), Lieberman's own quest led to the work of Parker (1977, p. 25) who identified the following characteristics of networks. These are:

- Commitment to an innovation
- Shared purpose
- Mix of information sharing and psychological support
- Effective facilitator
- Voluntary participation and equal treatment

These characteristics make support groups for principals more problematic in that a group has to identify its needs while principals' initial motivation for membership may be to overcome isolation. Thereafter, there is a leadership role within such groups, and this may change over time, but it has potential to be an important means of learning about leadership and shared leadership by groups self-consciously reflecting on their own dynamics. It may be suggested that such critical self-review is also necessary if these groups are to survive and thrive. Group membership is premised on the assumption that everyone is a learner with potential to contribute so that the over-riding values are democracy and inclusion as well as respect for the individual (Sugrue, 2002). There is not a blueprint for successful networks, but a more recent study indicates some underlying characteristics.

### ***From networks to communities of learners***

Fundamentally, networks are 'about creating "public spaces" in which educators can work together in ways that are different in quality and kind from those typical of their institutions, as well as from much that is considered standard professional development' (Lieberman and Grolnick, 1996, p.41). Another way of asserting this scenario is to talk about partnerships between, for example, Colleges of Education personnel, principals and teachers with an agenda of sharing knowledge, experience, insights and understandings for the purpose of generating new meaning and knowledge to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Many networks elsewhere, some of which have been 'granted' substantial funding, and are therefore, 'contrived' (Hargreaves, 1992, 1994) or 'pseudo-communities' rather than something that has evolved more organically. When principals and teachers become committed members of learning communities they are more likely to shape the agenda for learning rather than having that agenda set for them by funding agencies, reformers or policy-makers. Reforms, therefore, such as the Revised Curriculum (Ireland, 1999) are subjected to continuous adaptation, a combination of interpretation and experimentation as teachers' intentions and actions are brought into productive tension with policy documents and early formative evaluations of change initiatives (Cuban, 1998; Kliebard, 1990). The emergence of networks is part of a more general attempt to invent new opportunities for learning that do not fit into traditional academic moulds of what counts as knowledge.

Learning in networks can be powerful, but it is often indirect- a result of new commitments and friendships, the exposure to new ideas, contacts with and observation of others' work, long-term involvement with many kinds of educators, growing cosmopolitanism and openness to ideas (Lieberman and Grolnick, 1996, p. 45).

A learning community is something that needs to move beyond initial contrivance to a more definite commitment to learning. The following is particularly instructive in this regard:

For a community to be sustained, members must believe in their right to express themselves honestly, without fear of censure or ridicule. But genuine communities make demands on their members—membership comes tethered with responsibilities. In ... professional community, a core responsibility is to the learning of other [members]. ... If a feature of pseudocommunity is withdrawal from the public space when conflict erupts, then a feature of a mature community is the willingness to engage in critique in order to further collective understanding (Grossman and Wineburg, 2001, p. 54).

Lieberman's<sup>5</sup> study of the California Writing Project (a network that has been in existence in the US for twenty-five years) affirms Parker's characteristics above, and adds the following:

- Focus on Authentic Problems of Practice
- Collaborative
- Organised by subject matter or specific issues of pedagogy
- Groups are Evolutionary and Flexible
- Tight on Values, loose on Structures
- Provide Time for Sharing and evaluating and choosing among alternatives

In addition, Lieberman observes that Networks are often outside the system, but if they survive and thrive, they frequently become mainstream. As they become more mainstream and institutionalized, it is important to recognize the risks of losing some important contextual flavours that account for individual's involvement and participation in the first instance.

Part of the challenge of mainstreaming apparently spontaneous evolutionary groups of learners or networks is an issue about accreditation of the kinds of knowledge and learning that occur in such contexts. This issue, as it has emerged in a North American context, is highlighted in the following:

This view of learning presents a measurement and evaluation problem that has not yet been solved in ways that satisfy the expectations of many funders, or confirm the concrete experiences of those who view reform networks as the most appropriate forms for professional growth and learning (Lieberman and Grolnick, 1996, p. 45).

How will the learning to be provided by the new Leadership Development for Schools (LDS) initiative be legitimised and accredited for certification, and possible remuneration?

These are crucial concerns to which many new partnerships are already working towards satisfactory arrangements. However, rather than get immersed in possibilities in relation to more formal mechanisms for documenting principals' learning at this point, it seems more productive to assert the principles involved. The models of professional learning outlined above, should serve as a framework. Beyond this, various learning partnerships, through building learning communities will find practical and creative ways to divine appropriate means of accreditation that should satisfy the various constituencies. This is a challenge that awaits further attention.

Provisionally, therefore, how can the contribution of learning communities be summarized in ways that help to frame professional learning for primary principals, deputies and members of middle-management, as well as for aspiring principals. The following summary provides important guiding principles:

- Each individual is a valuable resource to the group
- Teachers teaching teachers- sharing knowledge while giving it dignity and legitimacy also (while it is necessary to avoid group think)
- Skills of professional dialogue and critique are learned
- Ownership of the learning belongs to the learners themselves
- Learning is situated both in practice and relationships (cognitive and affective/social; personal and professional)
- There can be multiple entry points to a group
- Groups work effectively when they are lean on administration and focus on ideas rather than structures and funding.

Commitment to professional learning appears to require attention to these underlying assumptions with potential to give direction to emerging professional learning in the Irish context.

The next section turns to a variety of contexts internationally to analyse critically these various ways of seeing professional learning and the extent to which they are reflected in formal professional learning programmes for principals and those aspiring to the role.

## **PRINCIPALS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

### ***Introduction***

Despite the rhetoric of globalisation, market forces and the erosion of national autonomy, whether within the EU or on the larger international stage, it is a mistake to assume that there is some magic formula 'out there' that will solve our problems. It is necessary to acknowledge the rhythms, traditions, and cultures of

schooling in Ireland and, while being mindful of international developments in the arena of principals' education, both formal and informal, work out a programme of learning that suits individual and system needs for the first decade of the 21st century. Built into this perspective are a number of assumptions. First, it is advisable to start from where we are. Second, what is decided in partnership with various individuals, agencies and institutions will be provisional and subject to ongoing review and adaptation. Third, principals must model adult learning behaviours in a public manner, head learner rather than head teacher, in ways that create a climate and school context where teachers are encouraged to take risks as part of their own learning.

### ***International trends***

As part of the process of globalisation and competition for increasing international market share, four tendencies are readily identifiable in relation to principalship and professional development of principals and deputies.

1. There is a general crisis in recruitment of principals as the position is increasingly being perceived as unattractive. Recently, in Norway for example, it is typical to have 'on average less than three' applicants for a vacancy, and in many instances, these applicants are perceived not to 'have the required competency' (Moller, 2000). The Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium (Sherman *et al.*, 2000) reports that teachers perceive the position of principal as—'too stressful', were discouraged from applying due to 'inequitable hiring practices' and 'the amount of time required in the job' (p. 3). . While respondents in the study indicated also that inadequate remuneration for responsibilities in a climate of accountability was an additional disincentive, the three issues above were cited by teachers as having greater significance. However, in the Irish context, issues of remuneration are more contentious, with a growing realisation also that the role of Deputy Principal may be significantly more attractive in terms of pay and responsibilities, while that role, particularly in large schools, requires systematic re-definition. The report concludes that it is necessary to recognise the changing nature of the principal's role, and to provide appropriate and sustained professional support with an emphasis on 'coping' strategies.
2. There is a general move towards formal certification/ accreditation of principals' preparation programmes and increasingly it is not possible to be appointed to the position without this formal qualification. This has been the case in Scotland for five years and recently became a requirement in England and Wales. It is the case also in a number of states in the US and some provinces in Canada.
3. There is a trend towards the imposition of private sector management principles and practices in the public sphere where, arguably, different criteria, skills and expertise are warranted.

4. Depending on international dynamics and historical precedent within national borders, responses to current trends have spawned two contradictory responses. One is towards greater centralization and prescription, the other is towards greater decentralization with responsibility for principal professional development being devolved to the local level, thus giving rise to a variety of responses based on a combination of local expertise and perceived needs. However, even in these circumstances, programmes increasingly reflect strong private sector influences.

The kernel of this tension is a struggle surrounding the primary purpose of the principal's role which connects directly with, a) the purpose of schooling and, b) principal and teacher professional development.

*Centralisation:*

In Sweden, for example, 'The National Head-Teachers Training Program is ... on offer to all school boards in Sweden from the state' (Moller, 2000). The state determines the parameters of the programme that is delivered by six universities, while the cost of travel and subsistence is borne by local municipalities.

Greater intensity of centralization is readily detectable in published documentation regarding both the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH, 1998) and its equivalent in England provided by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, 2000). Significantly, both documents nail their 'objectives' to the mast at the earliest opportunity. In the title of both documents (respectively) (*The Standard for Headship in Scotland* and *National Standards for Headteachers*), the key word is 'standards' and the intent is quickly confirmed immediately inside. The foreword to the latter, while drawing on the first conception of professional learning outlined earlier and relying heavily on a school effectiveness agenda, states:

Research and inspection evidence demonstrate the close correlation between the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils, and between the quality of leadership and the quality of teaching. It is these links which lie at the heart of the government's drive for school improvement. (DfEE, 2000, p. 1)

The foreword in the Scottish document, written by the Minister for Education, is more subtle in its choice of words but their import suggests little difference from the agenda south of the border. He states: 'the core of the headteacher's job is how the business of learning and teaching is managed in a school (SQH, 1998, p. 1). The preferred approach to principals' professional development in this model is to get all headteachers to do 'what the best of our headteachers do'; one fit for all, regardless of context and circumstance.

Both documents set about determining the 'standards' to be applied to the work and training of principals, beginning from these espoused perspectives. If space permitted, the initial analysis outlined above, could be continued throughout the document.

### *Decentralisation:*

The Danes, arguably the aberrant Europeans, assert their difference against the dominant international re-centralisation trend and a historical backdrop of a jealously guarded local participatory democracy, to the extent that 'there are no national guidelines, formal expectations or competence objectives for educational leadership in compulsory and non-compulsory schooling (up to 18 years)' (Moller, 2000). The Irish system has some similarities with Denmark to the extent that 'a teachers training certificate and a few years of practice as a teacher' are the only pre-requisites to become a principal in a Danish school (Moos, 2000). However, for a number of years the national association of municipalities has been offering four-week optional courses for newly appointed principals. There is a genuine tension and power struggle between central government and municipalities with the former seeking to stress 'pedagogical and organizational competencies' while the former, due to having responsibility for funding etc., stressing 'managerial' competencies ... in finances and efficiency' (Moos, 2000).

In larger federated systems such as the US, Canada and Australia, provincial or State Education offices set the standards and requirements for principal appointments and professional development so that there is significantly more variation. However, there is a general trend towards greater emphasis on managerialism of the private sector variety. Where programmes are being developed, such as New South Wales, there is a growing tendency towards targeting deputy and assistant principals so that aspiring principals generally increasingly will have some leadership training and placement experience prior to appointment. Currently, the School Leadership Preparation Programme in NSW is being piloted, and it is expected to become mandatory for aspirants in the near future (Retallick, 2000).

From this general analysis it seems clear that there is a very definite tension between individual principal's professional needs and school/ system priorities that are played out within the contours and content of principal professional development programmes. There is no reason to assume that such programmes in the Irish context will be any different. Before turning attention to policy and programme priorities for Irish principals, a more focused analysis of two particular programmes will be helpful to the discussion.

### ***Analysis of two programmes***

Two rather different programmes are contrasted while both are looked at through the lens of the three ways of seeing professional learning outlined above. The purpose of looking at each programme through the lens of the conceptualisations is to see how each programme deals with, combines and strikes a balance between these competing and conflicting ways of seeing. The two programmes are the 'Principal Qualification Program' that provides certification for all principals in the province of Ontario, Canada, and a Masters degree in administration and policy analysis at Stanford University that also

earns the candidates the administrative credential required by the State of California. (see Appendix 1 & 2 for a detailed analysis of programme content).

In so far as it is possible to make judgements from a document analysis of detailed outlines of both programmes and from conversations with their respective directors, there appears to be a very genuine effort to provide *theoretical frameworks*, so that participants have tools to reflect critically on their work and the role they are about to fulfill. There is a strong emphasis in both programmes on participation and facilitation by experienced practitioners, thus tending towards the strengths of the second conceptualisation, of exposing participants to *craft knowledge*, but they are encouraged also to become critical consumers of theoretical and practical perspectives through fieldwork assignments and to document their learning through reflective journals and field-based projects, thus much of their work also seeks to develop their skills of *inquiry*.

Both programmes are similar in broad outline, while the latter is more intensive as it is an accredited Masters programme, but it must also satisfy State requirements for principal credentials. In these and other programmes, there are three issues that receive particular attention.

1. *Policy Analysis*. This is an important issue that might profitably be included in principal professional development programmes for three reasons. One, principals as the prime movers of change at the level of the school, should have the capacity to interpret and analyse policy and curriculum documents that emanate from DES, NCCA and other agencies so that they are critical consumers rather than slavish adherents. Two, implementation of policy at school level requires critical analysis as policies continue to be interpreted and adapted as part of the process of implementation. Three, principals should not just be interpreters of policy; they should be shapers of it also at national as well as school level as policy makers sometimes develop poor policy that needs to be reviewed and revised and, in some extreme cases, abandoned. For example, principals should have much to say about the resource implications of new policies particularly as they impact on teaching and learning resources within the school.
2. *Teaching and learning*. Irish Principals, as change agents with responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning in schools, have continued to shy away from monitoring and/or evaluating the work of classroom colleagues. While this is potentially controversial, in a context where the perception persists that such work is the responsibility of the inspectorate, it continues to be problematic for principals and teachers. It is problematic in other contexts also, particularly where there is increasing emphasis on test scores and pupil achievement. However, as new forms of professionalism emerge, it is likely that principals and school staffs as a whole will take greater responsibility for their own self-evaluation and professional learning as defining characteristics of a newly emerging professional identity. Principals

need to prepare for and lead this process while being careful to avoid playing into the hands of a narrowly conceived effective schools agenda. Documentation to be published in the near future by the DES in relation to Whole School Review will give impetus to this initiative.

3. *Conflict resolution.* One of the cumulative impacts of educational change and school improvement literature is a realization that conflict is unavoidable when attempting to change well-established behaviours and routines. Consequently, having the skills to deal with conflict, not just in dealing with an occasional irate parent, but with staff also is a definite pre-requisite for the role that needs a very prominent place within the overall issue of communication and relationships. In the Irish context, where school staffs are characterized by stability rather than mobility, this focus becomes a more urgent necessity, while care must be taken to distinguish between obduracy and 'principled disagreement' (Hargreaves, 1994).

## CONCLUSIONS

It would be contrary to many of the principles and practices that have been articulated in this paper to be prescriptive in relation to a professional development programme for Irish primary principals in this concluding section. However, a number of policy issues emerge that appear to require attention as part of an over-arching strategic plan for the professional learning of principals.

1. *Initial and continuing professional development.* Across the eight countries that were surveyed for this paper, there is a growing emphasis on professional development for aspiring principals so that they already have some experience and expertise prior to appointment to their first post. In the comparative study on life history of school leaders in which I am currently engaged, one of the significant continuities between primary principals appointed more than twenty years ago, and some recent appointments is that none have received formal training prior to their appointment. If principals are of pivotal importance to the quality of teaching and learning in schools, and school leadership is a comprehensive set of learned skills, attitudes and knowledge, then it seems inexcusable that classroom experience only continues to be the most important pre-requisite for ascent to the position. Implicit in the necessity to provide initial professional development for aspiring and beginning principals, is a more clearly differentiated career structure, which should be feasible now since the advent of middle-management structures, while this also necessitates a mentoring system organized in a sophisticated but sensitive, and confidential manner.
2. *Continuing professional development of primary principals.* In the meantime, experienced principals need ongoing professional learning. At a policy level, there are two issues that appear to warrant attention: a) are all incumbents

to be given the opportunity to receive a formal qualification for the role and b) should there be an annual entitlement to a minimum amount of professional development for principals? If the answer to the first part of this question is in the affirmative, this has obvious implications for the delivery of programmes in particular to maximize access, and probably will entail the use of technology. If the answer to the second element of the question is also positive, then it suggests an evolving programme of 'advanced' courses or modules with maximum access also. While the advent of the Leadership Development for Schools (LDS) design team is a welcome initiative in this regard, a partnership approach with existing providers, such as Colleges of Education, education departments in the Universities, as well as utilizing the network of Education Centres and the expertise and infrastructure being systematically developed also by the Irish Primary Principals' Network will be necessary to meet this challenge. Developing such partnerships would be an important policy and infrastructural breakthrough so that providers would collaborate rather than compete (see Sugrue et al. 2001).

3. *Accreditation.* There is little doubt that the preferred option for the initial qualification for primary principals is that such provision be formally accredited. The collaborative partnerships advocated immediately above can provide accreditation, and my own institution is on record as being willing to collaborate in this important endeavour. An important element of that process is that modules be cumulative so that an individual can build enough of course credits for a formal qualification, whether Certificate or Diploma. Additionally, credits should be linked with Masters programmes so that by accumulating a required number of modules, and adding a dissertation, it would be possible to be awarded a Masters degree. Consistent with the various conceptions of professional learning outlined above, it would be important that there be a focus on inquiry that would provide opportunities for a judicious mix of theoretical and practical knowledge with appropriate rigour to make the learning process both challenging intellectually while simultaneously increasing skills and expertise. Developing new approaches to professional learning such as problem-based learning and professional portfolios will provide a challenge to more orthodox accrediting procedures.

The above are likely to be key shaping influences on principals' professional learning for the next decade. From a policy perspective, the challenge is to provide a judicious mix of the competing conceptions of professional learning outlined above when courses and programmes are being designed and implemented for leadership development. From a practice, perspective, there is an even greater challenge.

It will be necessary to model emergent approaches to adult learning of a sustained continuous nature rather than a selective and episodic approach. Issues of module content, length and duration, while important in their own way, are not the major barriers to professional renewal. Rather, it is necessary to

recognize that change begins with the individual. The challenge to principals is to redesign learning so that they become role models for colleagues, pupils, parents and communities. Taking inquiry seriously, as part of practice, is an important element of this emerging challenge. Towards that end, it will be necessary to document principal's practice in all its complexity and variety in an inclusive manner, and this will become both the basis for and means of building professional communities that are evidence-based. This research agenda will be helpful also in identifying emerging professional and systemic needs, as well as systematically creating a knowledge base on school leadership.

The work has only just begun. Along the way, it should be remembered that learning too should be fun and an opportunity to form new friendships and relationships. Finally, much of what has been discussed above in relation to principal professional learning has application to teachers also, but to do justice to that complex topic, another paper is required!

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was an invited presentation to the annual national conference of the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN), Galway, February 2001.
- <sup>2</sup> The eight countries concerned are Scotland, England, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Australia, United States of America and Canada. I am indebted to colleagues in all of these countries for information in relation to specific programmes, electronic correspondence and, in some instances also, face-to-face conversations.
- <sup>3</sup> Oakes et al. define the 'zone of tolerance' as 'the latitude or maneuverability granted (or yielded) to the leadership of the school by the local community' (1996, p. 958). I extend this concept to include the latitude provided or denied by the system as a whole.
- <sup>4</sup> The reader will probably not require any reminding of the extent of this cascade of paper, but it includes- Education for A Changing World (Ireland, 1992), Report on the National Education Convention (Coolahan, 1994), Charting Our Education Future (Ireland, 1995); apart from curriculum innovations during this period such as Stay Safe and Relationships and Sexuality Education, there have been reports also on Early Childhood Education, Adult Education and Remedial Education, as well as the Education Bill (1998) and this list is by no means exhaustive!
- <sup>5</sup> The characteristics identified immediately below have not yet been published as part of the final report on the Writing Project. I am grateful to Ann Lieberman for sharing them with me and others in her course at Stanford: The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change.

## Appendix 1

### Ontario: Principal Qualification Programme

Duration	Location	Timing	Content	Pedagogy	Cost	Assessment	Accreditation	Personnel	Notable?
One Year	Off Campus-School	125 Hrs. 125 hrs 40 hrs. 10 on-site days (75Hrs)	Three Parts: 1. Course 2. Course 3. Practicum	Lecture Small group-facilitator Participation rewarded Individual study	\$1,600 CD Participants pay, no financial assistance from Ministry or School Boards	Assignments Projects Participation Problem-solving Regular feedback-satisfactory or better essential	Certification by the Ontario College of Teachers	Course Leaders; Guest lecturers and Group Facilitators	Good deal of on-line conferencing both on and off site

Currently, there is no entitlement to continuing professional development for principals in Ontario. They participate voluntarily in what they are prepared to pay for. The College of Teachers (1996) is currently discussing the possibility of CPD for principals but a definite policy in this regard does not exist. Traditionally, the center that provides the initial programme, also provides 'advanced leadership' courses for principals but primarily for political reasons these have been in abeyance due to industrial action in recent years. However, new courses are planned for Summer 2001. <sup>(1)</sup>

1. I am indebted to Professor Paul Begley for this information. he is director of the Centre for Educational Leadership which is the engine for the Ontario Programme.

## Appendix 2

### Stanford: Prospective Principals' Program

Duration	Location	Timing	Content	Pedagogy	Cost	Assessment	Accreditation	Notable?
2 years- 3 Summers	Campus Field-based	8 weeks x 3 Summers + school based	9 Core Modules (1)  Problem-based learning (1,2,3) 6 Fieldwork Modules (1,2,3)	Small group interactive Craft-practitioner  Master Principal/coordinator of Field Exp.	\$8,000 per summer institute; some scholarships available; candidates pay	Premium on Writing, but various folders/portfolios are developed in the fieldwork modules	Masters Degree (University)	Problem-based learning a particular feature of this programme

Stanford's center for continuing education provides some courses that are tailored to the needs of school principals. However, the Masters programme admits a very limited number of students (a maximum of nine annually) so that a high level of attention from tutors and participating principals is assured. <sup>(2)</sup>

2. I am indebted to Professor Michael Copland for information in relation to the Masters programme and the continuing education. he is director of the programme for Prospective Principals.

## REFERENCES

- Ball, S. (1987) *Micro-politics of the school: towards a theory of school organisation*, London: Methuen.
- Barth, R. (1990) *Improving Schools from within: teachers, parents and principals can make a difference*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bascia, N. (1998) 'Teacher Unions and Educational Reform', in *International Handbook of Educational Change* A. Hargeaves, Lieberman, A., Fullan, M. and Hopkins, D. Dordrecht/ Boston/ London, Kluwer: 895-915.
- Beattie, M. (1995) *Constructing Professional Knowledge In Teaching*, Toronto and New York, OISE Press and Teachers College Press.
- Bennis, W., Benne, K. and Chin, R. (1985) *The Planning of Change* (fourth edition) New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Berger, J. (1972) *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin.
- Blase, J. (1982) 'A social psychological grounded theory of teacher stress and burnout', *Educational Administration Quarterly*, **18**(4): 93-113.
- Bridges, E. (1992) *Problem Based Learning for Administrators*, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon.
- Clandinin, D. J. (1986). *Classroom Practice: Teacher Images in Action*, London, Falmer Press.
- Cochran-Smith, M. and Lytle, S. (1999) 'Relationship of knowledge and practice: teachers' learning in communities', *Review of Research in Educational*, Vol. 24, pp. 249-306.
- Cole, M. and Walker, S. (eds). (1989) *Teaching And Stress*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Connelly, M. and Clandinin, J. (1988) *Teachers As Curriculum Planners: Narratives of Experience*, Toronto: OISE Press.
- Coolahan, J. (1981) *Irish Education: History and Structure*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.
- Coolahan, J. (Ed.) (1994) *The Report of the National Education Forum on Education*, Dublin: Government Publications.
- Copland, M. A. (2001) 'The Myth of the Superprincipal', *Phi Delta Kappan* **82**(7): 528-533.
- Cox, S. and Heames, R. (1999) *Managing the Pressures in Teaching*, London: Falmer Press.
- Cuban, L. (1998) 'How schools change reforms: redefining reform success and failure', *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 99, No. 3, pp. 453-477.
- Darling-Hammond, L. and McLaughlin, M. (1995) 'Policies that support professional development in an era of reform', New York: National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Day, C. (1999) *Developing Teachers*, London: Falmer Press.
- Department for Education and Employment (2000) *National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)*, London: DfEE.
- Department of Education (1965) *Rules for National Schools*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

- Department of Education (1971) *The Teacher's Handbook*, Part I & Part II, Dublin: Brown and Nolan.
- Department of Education (1990) *Report of the Primary Education Review Body*, Dublin: Government Publications.
- Department of Education (1995) *Charting Our Education Future: White Paper On Education*, Dublin: Government Publications.
- Department of Education (1999) *Primary School Curriculum*, Dublin: Government Publications.
- Department of Education and Science (1999) *Report of the Review Group on the Role of the Primary Principal*, Dublin: Government Publications.
- Dimmock, C. (1996) 'Dilemmas for school leaders and administrators', in Leithwood, K., Chapman, J., Corson, D., Hallinger, P. and Hart, A. (eds) *International Handbook of Leadership and Administration*, The Netherlands: Kluwer Publishers.
- Elbaz, F. (1983) *Teacher Thinking: A Study of Practical Knowledge*, London: Croom Helm.
- Eraut, M. (1994) *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*, London: Falmer Press.
- Fullan, M. (1999) *Change Forces: The Sequel*, London: Falmer Press.
- Gradner, H. (1995) *Leading Minds An Anatomy of Leadership*, London: Harper Collins.
- Goodson, I. F., Ed. (1992) *Studying Teachers' Lives*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Greenfield, W. (1995) 'Toward a theory of school administration: the centrality of leadership', *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 61-65.
- Grimmett, P. and Erickson, E. (eds) (1988) 'Reflection in teacher education', New York, Teachers College Press.
- Grimmett, P. and MacKinnion, A. (1992) 'Craft knowledge and the education of teachers', in Grant, G. (ed) *Review of Research in Education*, 18, Washington DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Grossen, B. (1996) 'Making Research Serve the Profession', *American Educator*, pp. 7-27, Fall.
- Grossman, P. and Wineburg, S. (2001) 'In pursuit of community', in *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 103, No. 6, pp. 942-1012.
- Hargreaves, A. (1992) 'The cultures of schooling' in Hargreaves, A. and Fullan, M. (eds) *Understanding Teacher Development*, London: Cassell.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times*, London: Cassell.
- Helsby, G. (1999) *Changing Teachers' Work: The 'reform' of secondary schooling*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (1990) *Review of the Primary Principal's Role*, Dublin: INTO.
- Kearney, R. (1985) *The Irish Mind: Exploring Intellectual Traditions*, Dublin: Wolfhound Press.
- Kliebard, H. (1990) 'Vocational education as symbolic action: connecting schooling with the workplace', *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 9-28.
- Lawn, M. (1996) *Work, Professionalism and Citizenship in Teaching*, London, Falmer Press.

Leithwood, K., Chapman, J., Corson, D., Hallinger, P. and Hart, A., (Eds) (1996) *International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Administration* Dordrecht/ Boston/ London, Kluwer.

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. and Steinbach, R. (1999) *Changing Leadership for Changing Time*. London: Falmer Press.

Lieberman, A. and Grolnick, M. (1996) 'Networks and reform in American education', *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 98, No. 1, pp. 1-45.

Lieberman, A. and McLaughlin, M. (1999) 'Professional development in the United States', a paper delivered at the International Conference on New Professionalism in Teaching, January.

Little, J. W. (1993) 'Teachers' professional development in a climate of educational reform', *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 129-151.

Little, J. W. (2001) 'Locating learning in teachers' communities of practice: opening up problems of analysis in records of everyday work', keynote paper presented at the biennial conference of the International Study Association of Teachers and Teaching, Faro, Portugal.

Lortie, D. (1975) *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

McDonagh, K. (1969) *Reports on the Draft Curriculum for Primary Schools*, no publisher credited.

McLaughlin, M. W. (2001) 'Sites and sources of teachers' learning' in Sugrue, C. and Day, C. (eds) *Developing Teachers and Teaching Practice*, London: Routledge/ Falmer, pp. 95-115.

Moller, J. (2000) Personal Correspondence, Faculty of Education, University of Oslo.

Moos, L. (2000) Personal Correspondence, Danish University of Education, Copenhagen.

Ó Díomasaigh, S. (2000) *Primary Principals' Perspectives on the Impact of the New Middle Management Structure on Their Role*, unpublished MEd Dissertation, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

O'Day, J. and Smith, M. (1993) 'Systemic school reform and educational opportunity', in Fuhrman, S. H. (ed.) *Designing Coherent Education Policy: Improving the System*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

O'Hanlon, M. (2000) *Leadership Through the In-School Management Structure*, unpublished MEd Dissertation, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

Oakes, J., Welner, K., Yonezawa, S. and Allen, R. (1998) 'Norms and Politics of Equity-Minded Change: Researching the 'Zone of Mediation' ', in Hargreaves, A. et al. (eds) *The International Handbook of Educational Change*, The Netherlands: Kluwer Publishers, pp. 952-975.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (1991) *Review of National Education Policies. Ireland*, Paris: OECD.

Parker, A. (1977) 'Networks for Innovation and Problem Solving and Their Use for Improving Education: A Comparative Overview', unpublished manuscript, School Capacity for Problem Solving Group, Washington DC: National Institute of Education.

Retallick, J. (2000) Personal Correspondence, Faculty of Education, Charles Sturt University, New South Wales.

Schon, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, New York: Basic Books.

Scottish Qualification for Headship (1998) *The Standard for Headship in Scotland*, Edinburgh: The Scottish Office.

Sergiovanni, T. (1993) *Building Community in Schools*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Skilbeck, M. (1984) *School based curriculum development*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Skilbeck, M. (1998) 'School-Based Curriculum Development' in A. Hargreaves, Lieberman, A., Fullan, M. and Hopkins, D. (eds) *International Handbook of Educational Change*, Dordrecht/London/Boston, Kluwer, pp. 121-144.

Sheerin, E. (1998) 'Heritage centres', in Peillon, M. and Slater, E. (eds) *Encounters with Modern Ireland: A Sociological Chronicle 1995-1996*, Dublin: IPA, pp. 39-50.

Sherman, A., Macmillan, R. and Orr, J. (2000) 'Addressing The Potential Shortage Of Administrators in Nova Scotia Schools: A Report to the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium', Antigonish: St. Francis Xavier University.

Stoll, L. and Fink, D. (1996) *Changing Our Schools: Linking School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Sugrue, C. (1996) 'Student teachers' lay theories of teaching: implications for professional development', in Goodson, I. and Hargreaves, A. (eds) *Teachers' Professional Lives*, London: Falmer Press.

Sugrue, C. (1997) *Complexities of Teaching: Child-centred Perspectives*, London; Falmer Press.

Sugrue, C. (1998) 'Confronting student teachers' lay theories of teaching and culturally embedded archetypes of teaching: implications for professional development' in Sugrue, C. (Ed.) *Teaching, Curriculum and Educational Research*, Dublin: St. Patrick's College.

Sugrue, C. (1999) 'Primary Principals' Perspectives on Whole-School Evaluation', *Irish Journal of Education*, Vol. 30, pp. 54-76.

Sugrue, C. (2002) 'Principals' professional development through a support group: social collegiality or professional collaboration?' in Raunch, F. and Biott, C. (eds) *Challenges and Support for School Leaders*, Innsbruck, Studienverlag, pp. 35-49.

Sugrue, C., Morgan, M., Devine, D. and Rafferty, D. (2001) *The Quality of Professional Learning for Irish Primary and Secondary Teachers: A Critical Analysis*, Dublin: A Report commissioned by the Department of Education & Science: 126.

Sugrue, C. and Furlong, C. (2002) *International Journal of Leadership*, vol.5, no.2, pp.189-210.

Patrick Naughton

## **PRIMARY TO SECOND-LEVEL TRANSITION PROGRAMMES: RATIONALE, PRINCIPLES AND A FRAMEWORK**

*Pat Naughton NT, BA, HDE, MEd, PhD is a Learning Support Teacher in Mathematics at Scoil Barra, Ballincollig, Co. Cork. He was Research Fellow on the Multiple Intelligences, Curriculum and Assessment Project at University College Cork from 1996 to 1999, and has lectured on MEd, HDE and HDEA programmes at UCC. Dr Naughton has also taught at Mary Immaculate College (University of Limerick), and guest lectured at NUI, Maynooth. In 2000 he was awarded a Doctorate at UCC for his research on transition from primary to postprimary schooling.*

*ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to lay out principles for the construction of a transition programme for young people moving from primary to second-level schooling in Ireland. The paper opens with a discussion of the nature of the transition and its multiple dimensions. It goes on to identify the most salient considerations when planning such a programme, proposes a number of principles for its construction, and suggests methods through which such considerations / principles might be embodied in the school experiences of young people.*

Research internationally indicates that the transition from primary to second-level schooling creates difficulties and challenges for most young people (NCCA, 1999). While it would appear that the period of anxiety is short-lived for the majority, the longer-term effects of the transition on student development and achievement generally are uncertain. Many students - as many as forty per cent of those transferring, according to the *ORACLE Project* (Galton and Willcocks, 1983) - appear to stagnate or even regress in their academic performance during the first year after transition (Sainsbury, Whetton, Mason and Schagen, 1998).

Reductions in levels of motivation, interest and effort are also reported (Anderman and Maehr, 1994).

The change from a single-teacher classroom to a multi-teacher environment can be disconcerting for many, while the varied (and new) subject content and teaching methods may also create difficulties. Other problematic aspects of the transition include: the status change experienced on transferring to the new (and usually larger) school; establishing new friendships and negotiation of position in the peer group; management of timetables and homework. Of course, it has to be acknowledged that many of the foregoing changes can act positively for young people – paradoxically, the issues that create anxiety are also those that generate excitement and expectation.

In this writer's view, the transition phase in schooling receives inadequate attention. Some 58,000 children made the transition from Ireland's primary schools in 2000 (Department of Education and Science, 2001). It does not seem unreasonable to speculate that the alienation of many teenagers from their schooling may be traced to this period. Anderson, Jacobs, et al. (2000) claim that 'the process of disengagement from school too often follows unsuccessful transitions'. The 'dropout' phenomenon, which afflicts many countries, is also a matter for concern in Ireland, where each year, between two and three thousand young people leave full-time schooling without sitting for the Junior Certificate examination - in other words, without any formal qualifications, while as many as six hundred spend little or no time in a second-level school (Williams and Collins, 1997).

While the onset of adolescence has commonly been proposed as justification for a sharp break between the primary and subsequent educational experience, there is an opposite opinion which views continuity in schooling experiences as a valuable means of aiding young adolescents in the multiple personal transitions they are required to make at this time. Striking the appropriate balance between *continuity* and *progression* has been a central theme in the literature on transition in recent decades.

For those holding the view that educational progress is best facilitated by a smooth uninterrupted experience, the lack of articulation between the primary and second-level sectors is a major cause of the educational discontinuity that many students experience. Indeed the very existence of separate primary and post-primary schools may be considered antithetical to the achievement of an educational continuum. Yet, there is also a widely held view that educationally, a 'fresh start' is appropriate and desirable in early adolescence, being compatible with and supportive of the challenges the young person faces at this time. I propose that this schooling transition be considered as potentially a springboard for personal growth and accelerated educational progress, but simultaneously as a time when both personal and educational development are at risk in a rapidly-changing environment.

## Ways of thinking about transition

Many of the issues surrounding transition may at first sight appear to be self-contained concerns of one or other schooling level. However, a focus upon articulation between the levels reveals that frequently these issues are, or rather should be, of common concern to both levels of schooling. Thus, the *aims and philosophy of education* come to the fore, as does the *nature of adolescence* and its relevance to *teaching, learning and assessment*. The *organisation of schooling*, whether in the classroom, in the whole school, or in the relationships between schools, also emerges as a significant element in the transition process.

When setting out a Transition Programme, I believe it will be useful to consider the experience of transition for young people as one of multiple changes. It is the young person's *adjustment* to these changes that must be the focus of any transition programmes. Such adjustment may be considered as being broadly threefold:

*adolescent adjustment* — the personal, social and intellectual changes accompanying early adolescence

*learning adjustment* — the shift in the nature of the learning environment especially in terms of curriculum and assessment

*organisational adjustment* — the move from the 'world' of the primary school to that of the second-level school

When the 'difficulties of transition' are referred to, it is one or more of the foregoing dimensions that people have in mind. I consider these dimensions in some detail in the following section, and outline Irish and international initiatives which have been undertaken in efforts to ameliorate transition difficulties.

## Transition and adolescence

It is not mere coincidence that the primary to second-level transition occurs at the onset of adolescence. In societies around the world, the onset of puberty is generally marked by religious or secular 'rites of passage' determined and conducted by the community's elders. The initiation's function is to recognize that a new stage of life is beginning for the young person, heralding new responsibilities and new rights and choices.

While the characteristic physical and emotional changes that accompany adolescence are universally recognized, opinion is not as clear on the nature of the intellectual development of the young adolescent. Cognitive research in recent decades has indicated that the pace and sequence of development of a child's learning are not as predictable as was once thought. However, the structure of schools, their organisation into different levels, and the nature of learning programmes and experiences therein, reflect the dominant opinion that

a fresh start is warranted. The crucial point is the achievement of an appropriate balance between the provision of continuity and progression (Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1986; Jarman, 1995).

Adolescence is perceived in western cultures as a 'bridge' between childhood and adulthood, a transitory but necessary learning phase (Coleman and Hendry, 1990). Young people now remain longer in education to prepare them for economic roles. This constitutes in essence a deferral or suspension of adulthood. Some cultures, on the other hand, do not recognise adolescence as a separate stage, but see the onset of puberty as the beginning of adulthood itself. In this view, once the young person has been initiated into adulthood — frequently marked by ritual ceremony — he or she has the same rights as adults and may soon have to bear the responsibilities of adulthood.

The contrasting paradigm of adolescence typical of western countries does not feature a recognisable 'initiation' ceremony or ritual. In a sense, the whole of the adolescent phase, extending from about eleven years to eighteen years, consists of a series of minor initiations, as the legal and personal rights and privileges of adulthood are gradually conceded — the right to purchase cigarettes and alcohol, to view certain films or purchase certain literature, to qualify for a driving license, to vote, to marry, to gamble, to be legally employed, to engage in sexual relationships. In the context of the present discussion, the transition to the second-level school represents perhaps the first and most visible manifestation of the end of childhood. It is accompanied in some cultural settings by a religious initiation, such as the Christian sacrament of *Confirmation* or the Jewish *Barmitzvah*.

This writer suggests that in the absence of a commonly-recognised ritual of initiation, the educational transition assumes even greater significance for young people. It is hardly surprising therefore to find young people express their fears of being subjected to some kind of ordeal at the hands of senior students — a substitute 'initiation by the elders'? These fears are created and exaggerated by the development of a form of folk-culture, which is characteristic of young people's talk at this time. These 'urban myths' (Brunvand, 1984; Measor and Woods, 1983) generally consist of lurid and bizarre accounts of the ordeals the incoming students can expect in the new school.

Such 'myths' should not be lightly dismissed - even though they are largely unfounded. It may well be that the distortions of reality embodied in this 'street-culture' serve an important function, telling of the 'initiation' to come, and preparing the 'candidate' for its undertaking. There is a sense in which young people need an initiation into adulthood. In the absence of a clearly-defined and widely-recognised ritual of initiation in contemporary society, it would appear that youth culture constructs its own (Naughton, 1997).

Some schools might therefore conclude that efforts to familiarise incoming pupils with their procedures are likely to be of limited effect. However, this does not 'let schools off the hook' - in this context of 'high emotion and low information', the urban myth needs to be balanced by targeted induction

programmes which have proved to be valuable in facilitating transition (City of Galway VEC, 1998; Garton, 1987; Kirk, 1994; Ó Dálaigh and Aherne, 1986).

### **Adolescence as a cultural construct**

Our cultural interpretation of adolescence has implications for how we structure schooling experiences for young people. First, we tend to see adolescence as a preparation for adulthood, rather than as a stage in its own right; second, perhaps partly in consequence, we withhold from young people any serious opportunities for the exercise of autonomy, pending their completion of the adolescent years; third, we tend to view the teenage years as potentially troublesome and problematic.

The first of these views of adolescence is reflected educationally in the way in which school programmes and services for early adolescents tend to be 'shaped primarily by the curriculum and credential requirements of what is to follow in the senior years' (Gorwood, 1986; Hargreaves *et al.*, 1996). This observation is of particular import in the Irish educational context, where the shadow of the terminal examinations looms over the entire span of post-primary schooling, extending even into the primary school. Young people are frequently obliged to select their second-level school subjects at as early an age as twelve years (NCCA, 1999). There is a sense also in which the experience of adolescence is devalued, its potential and energies being largely directed towards adulthood. Further tensions are thus built into this phase: the social, personal and economic rewards of the adult role are held out as a motivator, yet denied to the adolescent.

The subject-centred, teacher-directed and examination-oriented nature of much second-level schooling reflects the relevance of the second point above — the withholding of autonomy and opportunity for decision-making. Hargreaves *et al.*, (1996) speak strongly on this:

Too many of our students are turning away from schools physically, or tuning out of them emotionally and intellectually. When young teenagers yearn for greater independence, we tighten the screws of classroom control. When they are most in need of care and support to guide them through the turbulent years leading to adulthood, we focus on teaching subject matter, put away care with other childish things, and leave students' emotional needs to the peer group and the gang. Early adolescents need independence, but we show them indifference. They need kindness, but we crush them with control. They are brimming with criticism and curiosity, but we bludgeon them with content and its coverage (p.159).

In practice, students in most schools have little or no say in selecting learning content, or in deciding how they will learn it. Neither is it the norm that students are asked or encouraged to assess their own work. Student representation at

school management level has been exceptional, but has now become a right (Ireland, 1998). Lodge and Lynch (2000) have given voice to the concerns of young people in Irish second-level schools, many of whom believe their school lives are controlled by such means as dress code, or by the surveillance of teachers. The absence of control and power from young people's lives is also highlighted by Csikszentmihalyi and Schmidt (1998).

The 'overcontrol' of the second-level learning environment is compounded by the third point above — viewing the adolescent as a source of potential trouble encourages overbearing disciplinary procedures and didactic teaching methods, and supports the view that the teacher should make all major decisions about students' learning. Of course it also limits opportunities for students to participate in any kind of democratic classroom control and planning, much less in assessment. All this despite the fact that the extent of disturbance of adolescent emotions and behaviour may actually be much less than is commonly believed (Csikszentmihalyi and Schmidt, 1998; Simmons and Blyth, 1987). Hargreaves *et al.* (1996) talk of how schooling for early adolescents 'often leads to suppression of their strengths', because 'adolescent energy can seem . . . organisationally dangerous and imminently . . . overpowering' (*ibid.* p.13).

### **Transition initiatives aimed at facilitating personal and academic adjustment**

Generally, those who consider adolescent development and adjustment to be at the heart of transition difficulties advocate support and guidance for young adolescents. The single most common approach to facilitating transition is through the provision of information and the familiarising of transferring students with their new school. This is variously achieved through 'open days' or evenings, often for parents as well as students; distribution of a school's prospectus; visits by second-level teachers to the primary school, and *vice versa*; and orientation experiences of many kinds for students. These initiatives are based on the belief that most student anxiety results from apprehension, uncertainty and mistaken beliefs about the new school. Consequently, a well-informed student who has had at least some contact with the school before the first day of term is likely to settle in more quickly, and experience less anxiety. The value of induction programs is confirmed by Allan and McKean, 1987 (Canada); Garton, 1987 (Australia); Galton and Willcocks, 1983 (United Kingdom); Ó Dálaigh and Aherne, 1986 (Cork); City of Galway VEC, 1998 (Galway).

Ongoing support and guidance for young students is emphasized too, and many post-primary schools have developed pastoral care structures over the past two decades, including systems of Year Heads, Class Tutors and Guidance and Counselling services. Smyth (1999) reported that the personal/social development among the students she studied was quite high, but she attributed this to 'positive informal relations' rather than formal pastoral care structures. O'Brien (2001), presenting Irish students' own perspectives on the transition, stresses the importance of attending to the emotional dimensions of the young

person's transition. Sometimes, the pastoral dimension at transition is enhanced by a cooperative effort by both the providing and the receiving schools. One such transition initiative outlined by Ó Dalaigh and Aherne in Cork (1986) was termed a 'pastoral transition programme' [details in *Oideas* 35]. (A developed version of the programme continues to be used by the same schools some sixteen years later). Kirk, in outlining his transition programme (1994) acknowledges the Cork programme as his model, while a strong pastoral care dimension is also at the centre of the elaborate *Deis na Gaillimhe* Project (City of Galway VEC, 1998).

Hamblin (1986) suggests that a first year pastoral programme 'should give pupils the immediate experience of success and being cared for' (p.118); and that 'first year guidance is concerned with feelings and perceptions at least as much as with behaviour' (p.120). He takes to task those who argue that there is no need for an induction programme because 'pupils will settle down anyway':

The reply must be, 'Yes, but into what?'. Superficial adaptations can occur which obscure the fact that pupils are moving into apathy, ritual performance, underfunctioning and growing dissociation from school. The transition reveals weaknesses which may not have been evident in the primary school.

(Hamblin, 1986: 120).

## II

### **LOCATING TRANSITION DIFFICULTIES IN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT ISSUES**

For some who see the origins of transition problems within the schooling process itself, it is curricular and assessment issues that are to the forefront. These issues include (i) the relevance of the material students are asked to study; (ii) the nature of the learning tasks; (iii) the balance of continuity and progression; and (iv) the nature of the assessment process.

#### **Curriculum and assessment in this context**

Foremost among the principles for effective curriculum and assessment reform is that which recognises the power of the assessment system to dictate both the content of schooling and the manner in which it is taught — the 'backwash effect'. This consideration has particular relevance when we are examining the issues of curriculum and assessment at the primary / second-level transition, given the fundamental philosophical and practical differences in approaches to both curriculum and assessment between the two levels. Many consider that these differences are at the root of transition difficulties for young people. While this may be true, the complex dynamics of learning in schools and classrooms permit neither easy diagnosis of the problems nor simple prescriptions for their alleviation. Nevertheless, shared concerns and a degree of agreed interpretation have emerged from analysis of curriculum and assessment issues at this time.

## Relevance

A schooling problem experienced internationally is the oft-quoted 'irrelevance' of much of schooling's content to young people, a charge levelled most frequently at second-level school programmes. Hargreaves, *et al.* (1996) discuss studies of dropout rates in Canadian schools, and suggest that it is curriculum more than any other factor which leads to adolescents' disenchantment. They suggest that secondary schools' curricula often 'fail to engage students in the intrinsic commitment to learning'. In Ireland, many reports and surveys on education have expressed concern about the significant minority of young people who apparently reject the worth of spending years at school (McCormack and Archer, 1998). Ninety per cent of second-level principals surveyed by Morgan for the Junior Cycle Review (NCCA, 1999) stated that 'failure to be engaged by the curriculum' was a significant cause of early school leaving.

The Curriculum and Examinations Board, in *In Our Schools* (1986), stated that the curriculum should be relevant 'in the sense that it is seen by pupils and their parents to meet their *present and prospective needs*' (CEB, 1986: 15) [emphasis added]. Over recent years, attempts have been made to meet pupils' *present needs* through reform of curriculum content in many programmes; meeting *prospective needs* has tended to be seen largely in vocational-relevance terms. Progress has been made in several directions, it should be acknowledged. The principles underpinning the new Junior Certificate programme introduced in 1989 sought to imbue courses with relevance to young adolescents (NCCA, 1989). The content of some Junior Certificate literature courses was revised and brought up to date - through the inclusion of contemporary literature, for instance. Similar revision of the syllabi of some Leaving Certificate subjects was undertaken. Civic, Social and Political Education was introduced to the Junior Certificate programme from 1996.

Increasingly, schools and educational systems, in Ireland and elsewhere, are responding to high levels of student alienation and dropout by devising and implementing a range of vocationally-oriented courses and programmes of study. In Ireland, initiatives such as the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, as well as the Transition Year Programme have been well received, and continue to strengthen.

Awareness has also grown of the need to take initiatives before some young people have already disengaged from the traditional offerings in classrooms. Up to the age of about 15 in Ireland, the great majority of students experience roughly the same curriculum fare. A notable exception is the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), which is an alternative approach to the Junior Certificate, and which aims to keep 'at-risk' students in school longer, as well as providing a more appropriate curriculum for other students. Among a raft of schemes and initiatives under the 'educational disadvantage' rubric, a number, such as the '8-15 Project' (*Early School Leavers' Initiative*) have been

established in designated areas, aiming to enhance educational continuity and stem the phenomenon of early school leaving.

### **Narrow range of methodologies**

The academic orientation of much of the work of schooling — both primary and second level — results in a rather narrow range of teaching methodologies. At primary level in Ireland, for instance, it has been observed that the (1971) Primary Curriculum principles of guided-discovery learning and pupil activity are less utilised as one reaches the upper end of the school, with a corresponding increase in didactic teaching and rote learning (OECD, 1991; *Report of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum* — ‘the Quinlan Report’- NCCA, 1990). For their part, primary teachers have often blamed the entrance examinations set by some second-level schools for a narrowing of the curriculum in Fifth and Sixth Classes in particular.

At second level, the academic bias of the curriculum and its accompanying teacher-centred instruction have proven resilient in the face of desired change (Callan, 1994; Marino Institute of Education, 1992; NCCA, 1999; OECD, 1991). Much of the blame for this has been laid at the door of the Junior Certificate examinations, which continue to reward written performance and memorisation above all other forms of assessment. The NCCA has been critical of the narrow range of modes and techniques of assessment in the Junior Certificate examination, declaring that there was ‘an ongoing mismatch between the aims and principles of the Junior Certificate programme and the modes and techniques currently in use for the formal assessment of that programme’ (NCCA, 1999: 31-2). Assessment is seen to determine not only the curriculum content, but its teaching methodologies also.

### **Continuity and progression**

If one subscribes to the view that the nature of young people’s thinking alters significantly at around the age of twelve, then one may feel that a ‘fresh start’ in the nature of their schooling is not only justified, but essential. Subscribers to this view, such as the authors of the *Hadow Report* in the United Kingdom (HMSO, 1926), have argued that age 11 to 12 should be seen as the beginning of a new phase in education, and that this would require ‘a fresh departure in educational methods and organisation’. The Hadow Report is often recalled for its justification of age 11-plus as the age of transfer into secondary education in the United Kingdom and for differentiating primary and post-primary education as ‘the education of childhood’ and ‘the education of adolescence’. However, this view was not unanimous among educators even then, and the only Irish report comparable to Hadow — *The Report of the Pupil Transfer Committee* (Ireland, 1981) — said that there was ‘no evidence for other than a gradual mental and intellectual progress between the ages [of ten to fourteen]’ (ibid., p.11).

There has long been a recognition that a student at about this age begins to think in more abstract terms, and is capable of complex reasoning and analysis, as well as such skills as hypothesising and logical argument (Miller, 1983; Piaget, 1971). However, such abilities do not develop uniformly at this particular age; neither is there a sudden change in direction (Jones and Jones, 1992). The continuity of some existing ways of thinking alongside the gradual development — even into adulthood — of a capability for abstract reasoning have been stressed (Gardner, 1991; Miller, 1983).

Yet there is also a view that an emphasis on *continuity* inevitably retards *progress*. In the opinion of this writer, this view, which sees continuity and progression as incompatible, is mistaken. It arises from simplistic notions of what actually constitutes continuity and progression. In fact, clear definitions of curricular continuity are elusive, and the many references to it in official publications and reports in Ireland remain aspirational. Neither has the balance between continuity and progression ever been prescribed for either schooling level. Jarman (1995), in the context of her research into continuity in science teaching in Northern Ireland, defines what is required as:

[affording] *sufficient congruence* between the primary science experience and the secondary science experience *to support the pupils* in transition, while . . . also ensuring *enough change to provide a challenge*

(Jarman, 1995: 149) [emphasis added]

This balance of *congruence* and *challenge* in any subject lies at the heart of the continuity / progression discussion, and defining it is a prerequisite for curriculum planning across the primary-secondary interface. The tradition of separate curriculum planning for the first and second levels of schooling in Ireland — except for a brief period during the mid 1980s — has greatly hindered the cause of curriculum continuity.

### **Assessment at transition time**

For many years, the question of assessment at the interface between primary and second-level schooling in Ireland has been characterised by uncertainty, inconsistency, distrust and recrimination. This is despite the fact that at transition time, the nature of assessment can have major implications for young people, for their learning environment and for their subsequent learning success.

Whatever assessment system is in place, at any level of schooling, it is likely to have to serve several purposes, which will necessarily encompass a range of modes and techniques (NCCA, 1993). Four main purposes of assessment may be listed: *accountability, certification, diagnosis, and motivation*. However, for students beginning their second-level schooling, it is the latter two of these purposes that should be paramount. In other words, assessment should help solve learning problems, and should encourage learning through motivation. The

techniques of assessment should therefore be predominantly formative, and should include student reflection and elements of self-assessment (as in portfolios), as well as projects and redrafting of work, since these aid students in identifying weaknesses and gaps in their learning and offer opportunities to remedy them. Yet it can be argued that the widespread practice in Ireland of obliging entrants to second-level schools to undergo formal assessment is indirectly using assessment for certification purposes, as well as for the purposes of diagnosis and motivation. The subsequent placing of young students in streams of homogenous academic ability (Hannan and Boyle, 1987; Oakes, 1985; Smyth, 1999) can be, in effect, an extremely premature form of 'certification'.

### **Entrance examinations, tests and assessment**

The most recent data (NCCA, 1999) suggest that as many as 40 per cent of Irish second-level schools oblige prospective students to undergo some form of entrance assessment, the majority of these being pre-entry achievement tests. In his 1996 study in Cork, Lally's respondents (teachers of Sixth Class) complained that entrance assessments did not relate to the Sixth Class programme, either in content or in standard. It is also true that there has been a lack of congruity between many tests and the Junior Certificate programme. At the very least, there is an incongruity about using the results of a written examination of just three subject areas, often inappropriately set, and completed by 12-year-old children midway through their Sixth Class year in pressurised conditions, to determine their learning potential in the second-level school. Almost always, only the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences are assessed in these tests, and where classes are streamed, it is on the basis of these two intelligences.

While use of these tests for selection is prohibited (Department of Education, 1993), the tests give messages (i) through the fact they are held at all (the child has to undergo a formal written 'test', usually the first such experience he or she has ever had outside of his or her own school); (ii) through the perceived difficulty level of them (often pitched at a standard beyond the average student's capability), and (iii) through their almost exclusive testing of verbal reasoning and logical / mathematical thinking – this is what is valued by the test; thus they cannot be considered 'intelligence-fair' assessments. While the tests may not directly bar entry to a school, they can in effect 'cool out' prospective candidates. (This effect is compounded if Sixth Class teachers advise parents that their child is unlikely to do well in such a test). Where students do gain entry, the tests can subsequently determine access to various areas and levels of curricular knowledge, through ability grouping. The tests effectively become 'high-stakes' assessment. Recent debate concerning the future of the 11-Plus examination in Northern Ireland has included a questioning of the appropriateness — and indeed fairness — of such formal high-stakes assessment for children of this age (DENI, 2001).

Some schools which still set entrance assessments in Irish, English and Mathematics acknowledge that they feel obliged to do so because other schools, especially those regarded as 'prestige' schools, do so. Yet in recent years, quite a number of second-level schools have discontinued written examinations in favor of aptitude tests of various kinds. Interestingly, few girls' schools are found to use achievement tests to organize First Year classes, while children entering schools designated as 'disadvantaged' are the most likely to have their achievement level determine their class stream (NCCA, 1999).

The writer has dealt elsewhere (Naughton, 1998) with the development of assessment at the transition in Ireland. There, it is shown that over the 1990s, the movement has been towards the development of 'curriculum profiles' at the end of primary schooling, to include a balance of formal assessments and teacher judgements (INTO, 1997; Ireland, 1995; NCCA, 1990, 1993). It is to be hoped that such profiles will satisfy the legitimate assessment requirements of each side of the transfer divide. Procedures for the transmission and subsequent interpretation of the profiles' content will also require resolution (McCallum, 1996).

## **Summary**

Achieving curriculum and assessment continuity and consistency in Ireland and elsewhere have proven elusive, with traditional pedagogical practices proving resistant to change. The young student in transition is particularly vulnerable to the shortcomings of a system that is slow to change its ways. Reform of curriculum and assessment practices would serve the interests of all school students, not just those in the transition years.

There is persistent and widespread concern that the principles of *breadth* and *balance* in the Junior Cycle curriculum have not been well served by current practice in assessment in the Junior Certificate (NCCA, 1999). Many students arriving into First Year classes are already conscious of the examinations that are yet three years away. Experiencing formal assessment before they even enter the second-level school increases the significance and the influence of 'the exam' for young adolescents.

Shared understandings could develop however, if, after transfer, the principles of the Junior Certificate built (as intended) upon the principles of the (revised) Primary School Curriculum (Ireland, 1999). Coherence and continuity in teaching methodologies and in assessment modes and techniques can be keys to improving the transition experience for young people. Creatively designed, judiciously employed and wisely interpreted, assessment can be a valuable means of facilitating the transition to second-level school.

### III

## ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES and TRANSITION

First and second-level schools are different organisations, with contrasting physical and social environments, and they differ in educational aims and purposes. Approaches to teaching and to learning and its assessment are contrasting, as are orientations to discipline, student welfare and pastoral care. They may even be said to be different 'worlds'. Many believe that the fundamental changes in the organisation and means of provision of education create many transition difficulties.

### **The macro-organisation of schooling systems**

Ireland has separate schools at primary and second level for reasons to be found in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but which have become institutionalized in the structures we see today. Around the world, many countries have separate primary and post-primary systems, although there is considerable variation in the ages considered suitable for transition from one system to the other. A number of nations employ the concept of the *middle school* as a means of bridging the gap between the first and second level (Alexander, 1987; Hargreaves and Tickle, 1980; McEwin, 1983). Yet other systems are termed 'undivided', with a continuous span that avoids the sharp divide between the levels. Huusko and Pietarinen (1998) discuss Finland's transition to such a structure. The 'secondary tops' of the middle decades of the twentieth century were the closest that Ireland's schools came to this model. (This writer's final primary year was in the same classroom as the school's First Year cohort, all covering the Latin syllabus of Longman's Book One!). Arguments about the merits of a divided or unified system invariably come back to the desirability of a 'new beginning' as children end their primary years. However, divided systems seem inevitably to compromise the quality of communication between schools and the learning continuity of young people.

### **Primary or secondary practice?**

It would seem possible to transfer some middle school practices into second-level schools, for example: the use of more 'elementary' teaching approaches, particularly in the first year, including the use of mixed-ability teaching; the formation of a small group of teachers who would have combined responsibility for all subject areas in the first year; the locating of First Year classes in a 'home base' of some kind; the provision of a wide range of curricular experiences, the delaying of specialisation for as long as possible. A notable development in this latter regard is the recent provision of subject 'taster programmes' by many second-level schools. Anecdotal evidence suggests that practices such as those above do occur at local level, but generally they are not recorded or disseminated.

Some transition programmes have introduced second-level practices into the last year of the primary school, examples being the use of secondary-style timetables, the planning of homework across the week rather than for just one night, and the sharing of the curriculum by two or more teachers (City of Galway VEC, 1998; Kirk, 1994). In Ó Dálaigh and Aherne's (1986) Transition Programme, a subject concerning itself with life in the second-level school was taught to Sixth Class pupils.

### **Primary / second-level communication**

It would appear that relationships and communication between the primary and second-level sectors in many countries are of poor quality (Derricott, 1985; Gorwood, 1985; Hargreaves *et al.*, 1996). It may well be that throughout the span of formal education, each interface evinces a similar lack of communication, articulation, and often of mutual comprehension. The most common feature of this is the failure of the receiving institution to recognise the efforts or interests of the providing institution — in Gorwood's (1986) words: 'It is standard usage to underrate previous learning' (p.204).

Separateness of school buildings, fundamentally different pre-service education for teachers at both levels (Burke, 1992), separate teacher representative bodies, separate curriculum and assessment planning (OECD, 1991) — all are contributors to the gulf that exists between the primary and second-level sectors in Ireland. In its 1991 Report, the OECD commented on the 'often quite distant relations' between the sectors. While lack of alignment between the primary and second-level curricula was the focus of discontent in the 1970s, this was but a symptom of a deeper malaise, i.e. the fundamentally differing educational philosophies at primary and second level. In addition, the political agendas of the teacher representative bodies — pursuit of resource allocation for their respective sectors, and the defence of the interests of their own memberships — placed further obstacles in the way of bridge-building.

It should be added that educational structures themselves can be responsible for inhibiting co-operation at several levels: between individual teachers at any level; between schools, even neighbouring ones; and between the sectors. The pattern of individual teachers operating in a largely autonomous manner within primary classrooms is mirrored by the subject-allegiance and subject-protectiveness of their second-level colleagues. In a related way, the inter-school competitiveness that has seen schools fight for enrolments in recent years occurs beside the intra-school rivalry that can exist between subject teachers and departments (Siskin, 1994).

### **What makes our first and second level schools different?**

Owing to their local community-based function, elementary schools tend to be smaller on average than secondary schools. Economies of scale also demand that resources be concentrated in larger units at second level. The organisation of post-primary schooling into subject departments leads to a more fluid and

variable arrangement of the physical learning environment, especially when compared to the routines of the ‘homeroom’ of the primary school. The smaller primary environment is often referred to as being more ‘intimate’, the larger second-level one as less personal. This is reinforced by the more frequent home / school communication required for the welfare of younger children at primary level. Generally, the systems gradually develop their characteristic modes of operation, ways of doing things that derive from their understanding of their educational role or function. There is an evolving pattern throughout the schooling span, as illustrated in Fig. 1.

**Figure 1. Characteristic differences across schooling levels in Ireland**

	<b>Lower/middle primary</b>	<b>Upper primary</b>	<b>Lower Second level</b>	<b>Middle/Upper Second level</b>
<b>AIMS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	Promote overall development of child. Aid acquisition of skills of literacy and numeracy.	Broaden and enhance skills and facilitate their utilisation in accessing knowledge	Lay foundations in the subject disciplines; provide subject and programme choices	Direct student towards vocational aspiration. Facilitate gaining of credentials.
<b>FORM OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION</b>	Children in classes taught by one teacher, based in home room. Each teacher responsible for delivery of full range of curriculum.	Generally as lower/middle primary. Some use of specialist teachers (often extra-curricular), esp. in performing arts, sport, etc.	Teachers as subject specialists, each responsible only for that area of learning. There is usually no home room.	Increasing subject specialisation. Greater range of programme options. Increasing differentiation of programmes.
<b>ORGANISATION OF CURRICULUM AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>	Child-centred curriculum espoused. Broad range of curricular experience.	Broad curricular experience, but dilution of child-centred principles. Instruction becomes increasingly formal.	Curriculum is structured around subjects. Academic emphasis becomes stronger. Environment becomes more competitive.	Rigid subject boundaries. Subject-matter paramount. Curricular experience is highly differentiated between classes and between schools. Environment increasingly competitive and focused upon examinations.
<b>NATURE OF ASSESSMENT</b>	Largely informal and formative. Some use of standardised tests in mathematics and English. Carried out by class teacher.	More formal and more frequent assessment and testing. Now also more summative. Still sole responsibility of class teacher.	Frequent testing within school – ‘house exams’. Largely formal and summative. Responsibility of subject teachers.	School life dominated by public examinations and ‘pre-exams’. Assessment almost exclusively summative and increasingly perceived as route to credentialisation.

*(continued over)*

Figure 1. Characteristic differences across schooling levels in Ireland — continued.

	Lower/middle primary	Upper primary	Lower Second level	Middle/Upper Second level
INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED STUDENT ABILITY ON ORGANISATION OF LEARNING	Class generally taught as homogenous group. Within class, groups based on ability may be formed in reading and mathematics. Learning Support often provided for children with learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy.	Similar to lower/middle primary. Ability groups when employed, are more differentiated. Learning Support less available. Increasing awareness of abilities relative to class cohort.	Classes often 'streamed' or 'tracked' on basis of measured ability in literacy and numeracy. Level of courses and programmes closely related to stream status. Students likely to have formed strong beliefs about their own ability.	Class streams more rigidly set. Overt organisation of school life and work around ability levels. Expectations of student performance in examinations directly related to perceived ability level. Some flexibility may allow individuals to work towards different levels of attainment in different subjects.
STUDENT AUTONOMY / CONTROL BALANCE	School life directly controlled by teacher. Minimal choice for children.	Increasing autonomy allowed reflecting seniority of students, and ability to work independently. Choice still limited to minor details of class and school life.	School- and teacher-control reasserted. Autonomy restricted. Little voice for students in organisation of school life.	Level of student autonomy varies from school to school — more allowed in middle-class schools. Choices increase with seniority. Students still have very little say in organisation.
TEACHER / PARENT ROLES	Teacher <i>in loco parentis</i> . Close communication between home and school — largely informal.	Similar to lower / middle primary. Balance of parental concerns shifts from social / personal welfare towards academic performance.	Teachers not seen <i>in loco parentis</i> . Lessening of home / school communication.	Home / school communication infrequent and largely formal.

These characteristic differences all contribute to the perception of contrasting primary and secondary environments. The orientation towards teaching and learning at each level throws these differences into even sharper relief. As Fig. 1 details, there is an increasing emphasis on the terminal examination as one moves through the secondary phase, with a 'backwash effect' even into upper primary. The character of assessment becomes more formal and summative throughout the schooling span. Research in American schools has shown that second-level schooling there emphasizes *relative ability* above *effort and achievement* to a greater degree than primary schooling does (Midgley, Anderman and Hicks, 1995). The streaming, grading and ranking that characterize much second-level schooling in Ireland (Lynch, 1989) suggest that similar comparisons may well apply in this country.

Yet the fundamental desires of teachers at both levels of schooling in Ireland would appear to be very similar. An analysis of the beliefs and values of first and second-level teachers on the recent Multiple Intelligences, Curriculum and Assessment Project at University College Cork supports the view that teachers share many common ideals in their work, but are often frustrated in pursuing

those ideals for their students (Naughton, 2000). The principal source of such frustration was identified as the dominance of the examination system. However, issues such as class organisation, class size, timetabling, 'teaching by textbook', subject rivalries, and teachers' 'territorialism' were also commonly listed as villains. These factors constitute much of the means by which the curriculum is delivered, be it overt or hidden.

Would similar or common pre-service training for all teachers help in reducing the first-level / second-level gap? Some have argued that it would (Burke, 1987; INTO, 1947; *Report of the Pupil Transfer Committee*, 1981), but the strengths and weaknesses of the *concurrent* and *consecutive* models of teacher education (Burke, 1992) have not allowed clear conclusions to be drawn on favouring one over the other as a common approach. A frequent observation contrasting the models is that the concurrent structure places greater emphasis on generic methodologies, while the consecutive model narrows the instructional programme in favour of greater depth of study within the subject discipline. Arguments that all teachers should undergo a common basic education to be followed by specialised preparation for a particular schooling level or subject area appear to have merit (Burke, 1987; Ireland, 1981, 1992).

### **Student / teacher relationships**

For students in transition between schools, the quality of relationships between them and their teachers is of great importance. Galton and Willcocks (1983) claimed that *changing teachers* was of more significance than *changing schools*. They say that teaching style is one of the most important determinants of pupil progress, and that pupils adjust their attitude to work depending on the pedagogical style of the teacher. Eccles *et al.* (1993) explored the way teachers handled their students in different school types [in the United States]. They found that relationships were more formal in second-level schools than in elementary schools, and that seventh-grade teachers believed students needed more discipline and control than sixth-grade teachers thought they needed.

Spelman (1979), in Northern Ireland, found that pupils in all types of secondary schools most frequently evaluated their teachers in terms of their 'approachability, warmth and manifestations of personal interest'. A recent report *Making Connections: Access to Education in Ballyfermot* highlighted the fact that 'in the minds of young people who leave school early, the quality of relationships with teachers and authority in the school is critical' (Quoted in *Junior Cycle Review*, NCCA, 1999: 70). It was earlier suggested that the potential difficulties of the adolescent years are sometimes used as justification for rigid codes of discipline in second-level schools. Many students worry about the anticipated severity of the regime before they even transfer, expecting more and stricter rules, stricter teachers and excessive homework (Galton and Willcocks, 1983; Garton, 1987; Naughton, 1996). Clearly, the attitudes of teachers, as well as their teaching styles, contribute greatly to the environment of classrooms and of schools as experienced by students on a daily basis. The OECD Report (1991)

was critical of the 'formal authority-based relationships' between teachers and taught in Irish schools. The passivity of the learners implied in such perceptions should give serious cause for concern.

## CONCLUSION

The thrust of this paper has been to argue for change at the interface between first and second-level schooling in Ireland. In order to provide our young adolescents with the kind of schooling that will bring out the best in them, I have argued that change is required (i) in relation to the acknowledgement and pastoral management of adolescent development; (ii) in relation to curriculum and assessment issues; and (iii) in relation to the organisation of schooling. It sounds like 'a tall order'. However, I would suggest that many desirable changes in these areas are already underway in recent years. The accelerating pace of innovation in myriad areas of human knowledge and technology, along with social and cultural evolution, has obliged schools to re-evaluate their aims, purposes and methods. Rapid change does not come easily to schooling systems, but change *is* happening. The means of improving schooling are also evolving apace. New understandings of how and why people learn, or fail to learn, are being informed daily by a range of scientific disciplines such as developmental psychology, neurology, genetics, biochemistry and others. We are gaining new insights into how the brain functions. Our understanding of intelligence is being revolutionized (Gardner, 1991; 1993; Sternberg, 1985). Learning theories abound, and programmes for 'Teaching for Understanding' (Veenema, Hetland and Chalfen, 1997), lateral thinking, cooperative learning, mastery learning, and many more, are available.

### **What to change? Where to start?**

I have laid out in the attached grid (Fig. 2) a summary of many of the issues that have a bearing upon the business of first- to second-level transition. This analysis of the issues demonstrates how viewing transition in different ways results in a variety of practices by schools, especially at second level. The 'additional / alternative' interpretations and initiatives represent somewhat more radical approaches to the problem. Some of these do occasionally inform an individual school's pre-transition or post-transition practice in Ireland – and do so more frequently in other countries — but it will be recognised that the more conventional approaches are those most usually employed in this country.

**Figure 2. Summary of interpretations of transition difficulties and related responses in Irish schools.**

	<b>NATURE OF PERCEIVED DIFFICULTIES</b>	<b>PRACTICES IN RESPONSE</b>	<b>RATIONALE FOR THESE PRACTICES</b>	<b>ADDITIONAL AND / OR ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE INITIATIVES</b>
<b>ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT</b>	<p>Period of social and personal 'storm and stress'</p> <p>Student anxieties about new school</p> <p>Adjustment to new schooling situation</p> <p>Peer group highly influential</p>	<p>Minimise potential disruption and conflict through disciplinary code</p> <p>Provide information on school through Open Days, visits, etc. Run induction programmes</p> <p>Organise inter-school transition programmes</p> <p>Provide pastoral guidance</p> <p>Set up anti-bullying programmes</p> <p>Maximise involvement and identification with school through sporting and extra-curricular activities</p>	<p>Adolescence viewed as problematic; peer influence also often viewed as source of difficulty</p> <p>Young people are going through a period of educational adjustment and personal development — they require a balance of care and control</p> <p>Provision of information will reduce anxieties</p> <p>Specific interventions can speed up adjustment and reduce risk of alienation</p>	<p>Schools shut down opportunities for autonomy and self-responsibility when they should be facilitating them</p> <p>Peer group affiliation can be harnessed to promote self-esteem, idealism and commitment</p>	<p>Structure school and classroom life so that it builds upon the energies and idealism of young adolescents</p> <p>Increase opportunities for the exercise of autonomy in self-directed learning and self-assessment</p> <p>Provide programmes that engage the learning interests of adolescents</p>
<b>CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT</b>	<p>Curriculum content not always relevant to needs and interests</p> <p>Curriculum centred on academic studies</p> <p>Assessment overly summative</p> <p>Assessment mainly measures linguistic and logical performance</p> <p>Curricular continuity between first and second level is haphazard</p>	<p>Revise curriculum content to make it more relevant to students' present and future needs</p> <p>Balance curriculum content by inclusion of wider range of learning opportunities</p> <p>Structure assessment so that it has of a more 'ongoing' character</p>	<p>Increased relevance of content will more successfully engage students and maintain their motivation and investment in learning</p> <p>Students learn and understand in different ways, and should be given the opportunity to show that understanding in different ways</p>	<p>Much of schooling emphasises individual performance and competitiveness</p> <p>Work is built around relative ability rather than effort at tasks</p> <p>Most assessment fails to value the full range of student intelligences</p> <p>Understanding needs to be pursued as a central goal in education</p>	<p>Promote co-operative learning and problem-solving</p> <p>Reduce coverage of material to allow pursuit of depth of understanding</p> <p>Use modes of assessment that allow varied demonstrations of learning and understanding — more 'authentic' assessment</p> <p>Build continuity upon agreed principles of understanding</p>

*(Continued over)*

**Figure 2. Summary of interpretations of transition difficulties and related responses in Irish schools — continued.**

	<b>NATURE OF PERCEIVED DIFFICULTIES</b>	<b>PRACTICES IN RESPONSE</b>	<b>RATIONALE FOR THESE PRACTICES</b>	<b>ADDITIONAL AND / OR ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE INITIATIVES</b>
<b>ORGANISATION OF SCHOOLING (inter-sector)</b>	<p>Excessive division between first and second-level schooling, including poor communication between the sectors</p> <p>Contrasting pre-service education for teachers</p>	<p>Contact between principals and/or teachers from both levels concerned with students in transition</p> <p>Localised initiatives to improve communication and understanding</p> <p>Attempts to introduce primary-type methodologies and class organisation to second level and vice-versa</p>	<p>Increased communication will foster increased mutual understanding</p> <p>Improved communication and understanding will benefit students</p>	<p>The fundamental orientation towards learning and the very cultures of primary and second-level schooling differ</p> <p>Interests on both sides of the divide resist changes</p>	<p>Structure a system such as middle schools to offer an appropriate learning environment to the transition years age-group</p> <p>Restructure pre-service education for teachers</p>
<b>ORGANISATION OF SCHOOLING (within the school)</b>	<p>Class allocation by academic ability</p> <p>Provision of subjects/ access to subjects at appropriate level</p> <p>Timetabling restrictions</p> <p>School ethos and culture</p> <p>Rigid disciplinary code</p>	<p>Greater use of mixed-ability teaching</p> <p>Maximising students' access to subjects at First Year level, and allowing students to work at appropriate levels in their subjects</p> <p>More flexible timetabling; fair time allocation for all areas; more availability of double periods</p> <p>Public valuing of wide range of student excellence, not just in academic achievement</p> <p>Fair and reasonable disciplinary procedures</p>	<p>Students should be aided in maximising their performance through equal access to knowledge and skill acquisition</p> <p>Flexible timetabling promotes more varied teaching and learning approaches</p> <p>All students should be recognised for excellence of achievement, in whatever area of learning it occurs</p>	<p>Grouping students by ability results in unequal access to knowledge</p> <p>The organisation of second-level schooling is built around a hierarchical valuing and rewarding of different kinds of knowledge</p> <p>The culture of schools can be changed</p>	<p>Keep open students' choices about their learning for as long as possible, and delay specialisation in learning</p> <p>Commit school to a culture of learning excellence for all students, in all subjects they study</p> <p>Promote cross-curricular project work, and reward co-operative effort</p>

*(Continued over)*

**Figure 2. Summary of interpretations of transition difficulties and related responses in Irish schools — continued.**

	<b>NATURE OF PERCEIVED DIFFICULTIES</b>	<b>PRACTICES IN RESPONSE</b>	<b>RATIONALE FOR THESE PRACTICES</b>	<b>ADDITIONAL AND / OR ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE INITIATIVES</b>
<b>ORGANISATION (within the classroom)</b>	<p>Little opportunity for student input in planning of learning or in assessing their own work</p> <p>Little voice for students in decision-making</p> <p>Narrow range of teaching methodologies</p>	<p>Setting up and operating students' representative councils</p> <p>Programmes (e.g. Transition Year, CSPE) which foster student initiative and self-direction</p> <p>In-career Development that seeks to equip teachers with new methodologies</p>	<p>Student ownership of learning encourages initiative and leads to better learning outcomes</p> <p>Teachers need substantial ongoing support if they are to use new teaching methodologies</p>	<p>Teachers are unwilling to give students a say in organising their own learning, and fear the sharing of responsibility for assessing students' learning with the learners themselves</p>	<p>Build a culture of student self-assessment from the earliest years in the school</p> <p>Negotiate learning objectives and criteria for assessment of quality with students</p>

Restructuring and reforming education around the primary / second-level interface needs to be given attention at national policy level; options for reform require analysis, debate and evaluation. Dialogue between interests at the various levels is a priority – the NCCA and teacher representative bodies could play a pivotal role here; parents and other education partners also have important contributions to make. In the meantime, transition policies and procedures must be informed by the evidence of best practice and underpinned by a guiding rationale. In addition, practice should be based upon a set of ‘principles of operation’, such as those suggested below.

### **Proposed principles of a primary / second-level transition programme**

1. The fundamental principle guiding any transition programme must be that the process should facilitate the personal, social and educational progress of all students to the maximum extent possible.
2. Educational processes, practices, routines, structures and general environments should be designed for the welfare and benefit of students in the first instance. It follows that such environments should be appropriate to the learning needs of young people at their particular stage of development.
3. Every effort should be made to ensure the *maximum educational continuity and progression* for the young adolescent during transition.
4. The provision of the optimum transition experience for the young person is a shared responsibility. Schools at first and second level have the largest measure of responsibility; parents can also contribute significantly.

5. The nature of the contribution that the primary school and the second-level (transfer) school can make is qualitatively different, in that, while the former may assist in preparing the child for the transfer, the latter must ensure the child adjusts successfully, and therefore has a more open-ended responsibility.
6. Relationships between the child's primary school and the transfer school should be such as to aid the transition of the child. Such relationships can only be built upon mutual professional respect.
7. While acknowledging the strength and value of tradition, teachers and schools at either side of the transition divide should be open to altering practices / procedures in order to enhance the learning environment of young adolescents.
8. While local circumstances may require particular arrangements, all students transferring should benefit from a minimum set of standard transition practice.

I have proposed that the primary to second-level transition experience be seen from various perspectives, and while no one school or schools' partnership can hope to cover all the possibilities, attempting to keep the wider picture in view will enable transition planning to be more coherent and holistic. In my view, planning for transition should go well beyond the mere provision of information, or assuaging of students' anxieties, although this is indeed an important part of what is required. What is more needed is a willingness to look beyond the immediate issues of transition, at how schools and classrooms can best be structured, and at how learning and its assessment can be better designed for adolescents. How young people adapt to their schooling transition tells us much about schooling itself. It follows that improving education for adolescents would mean providing better education for all.

## REFERENCES

- Alexander, W. M. (1987) 'Towards Schools in the Middle: Progress and Problems', *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 2, 4: 314-329.
- Allan, J. and McKean, J. (1987) 'Transition to Junior High School: Strategies for Change', *The School Counselor*, 32, 1: 43-48.
- Anderman, E. M. and Maehr, M. L. (1994) 'Motivation and Schooling in the Middle Grades', *Review of Educational Research*, 64, 2: 287-309.
- Anderson, L. W., Jacobs, J., Schramm, S. and Splittgerber, F. (2000) 'School Transitions: beginning of the end or a new beginning?', *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33: 325-339.
- Brunvand, J. (1984) *The Choking Doberman*, New York: W. Norton.

- Burke, A. (1987) 'From Primary to Post-primary: Bridge or Barrier', *Oideas* 30: 5-23.
- Burke, A. (1992) 'Teaching: Retrospect and Prospect', *Oideas* 39, Dublin: The Stationery Office.
- Callan, J. (1994) *Schools for Active Learning*, Maynooth: Education Department, St. Patrick's College.
- City of Galway Vocational Education Committee (1998) 'OK, Let's Go. . .' — *A Primary to Second-level Transition Programme*, Galway: City of Galway VEC, on behalf of the Deis na Gaillimhe Consortium.
- Coleman, J. C. and Hendry, L. (1990) *The Nature of Adolescence (2nd Edition)*, London: Routledge.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. and Schmidt, J. A. (1998) 'Stress and Resilience in Adolescence: An Evolutionary Perspective', IN: Borman, K. and Schneider, B. (eds.) *The Adolescent Years: Social Influences and Educational Challenges*, 97th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Derricott, R. (1985) *Curriculum Continuity: Primary to Secondary*, Windsor: NFER- Nelson.
- Eccles, J. S., Midgley, C., Wigfield, A., Miller Buchanan, C., Reuman, D., Flanagan, C., Mac Iver, D. (1993) 'Development During Adolescence — The Impact of Stage-Environment Fit on Young Adolescents' Experiences in Schools and in Families', *American Psychologist*, 48, 2: 90-101.
- Galton, M., and Willcocks, J. (eds.) (1983) *Moving From the Primary Classroom*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Gardner, H. (1993) *Frames of Mind -The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, London: Fontana Press.
- Gardner, H. (1991) *The Unschooled Mind -How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach*, New York: Basic Books.
- Garton, A. F. (1987) 'Specific Aspects of the Transition from Primary School to High School', *Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, 4, 11-16.
- Gorwood, B. T. (1986) *School Transfer and Curriculum Continuity*, London: Croom Helm.
- Hamblin, D. (1986) *A Pastoral Programme*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hannan, D. F. and Boyle, M. (1987) *Schooling Decisions: The Origins and Consequences of Selection and Streaming in Irish Post-Primary schools*, Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute (Paper No. 136).
- Hargreaves, A., Earl, L. and Ryan, J. (1996) *Schooling for Change — Reinventing Education for Early Adolescents*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Hargreaves, A. and Tickle, L. (eds.) (1980) *Middle Schools: Origin, Ideology and Practice*, London: Harper and Row.
- Huusko, J. and Pietarinen, J. (1998) *Towards an Undivided Comprehensive School: An Opportunity for Improvement?*, Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, Ljubljana, Slovenia (September 1998).
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (1947) *A Plan for Education*, Dublin: INTO.
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (1997) *Teaching and Learning: Issues in Assessment*, Dublin: INTO.

- Jarman, R. (1995) 'Science is a green-field site: a study of primary science / secondary science continuity in Northern Ireland', *Educational Research*, 37, 2: 141-157.
- Jones, L. and Jones, L. P. (1992) 'Spiralling upwards: progression across the interface', *British Journal of Curriculum and Assessment*, 3,1: 10-12.
- Kirk, B. (1994) *A Whole New Life Style — The Management of Transition from Primary to Secondary School*, Proceedings of The Society for Management of Education in Ireland, Number 2.
- Lally, M. (1996) *The Backwash Effect*, Unpublished M.Ed. research project, Education Department, University College, Cork.
- Lodge, A. and Lynch, K. (2000) 'Power: A Central Educational Relationship', *Irish Educational Studies*,19: 46-67.
- Lynch, K. (1989) *The Hidden Curriculum*, Lewes: The Falmer Press.
- Lynch, K. (1999) *Equality in Education*, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.
- McCallum, B. (1996) 'The transfer and use of assessment information between primary and secondary schools', *British Journal of Curriculum and Assessment*, 6, 3: 10-14.
- McCormack, T. and Archer, P. (1998) 'Inequality in Education: The Role of Assessment and Certification', IN: *Inequality in Education: The Role of Assessment and Certification, Analysis and Options for Change*, Dublin: Education Commission, CORI.
- McEwin, C. K. (1983) 'Schools for Early Adolescents', *Theory into Practice*, 83, 22: 119-124.
- Marino Institute of Education (1992) *School Communities and Change: The Junior Certificate*, Dublin: MIE.
- Measor, L. and Woods, P. (1983) 'The interpretation of pupil myths', in: M. Hammersley (ed.) *The Ethnography of Schooling*, Driffield: Nafferton Books.
- Midgley, C., Anderman, E. and Hicks, L. (1995) 'Differences Between Elementary and Middle School Teachers and Students: A Goal Theory Approach', *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 15, 1: 90-113.
- Miller, P. H. (1983) *Theories of Developmental Psychology*, New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Naughton, P. (1996) *From Primary to Post-Primary: Students' Views on the Transition*, unpublished M.Ed. research project, Cork: University College Cork.
- Naughton, P. (1997) *Time for Change*, Paper delivered to the Annual Conference of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland at University College, Galway, March 1997.
- Naughton, P. (1998) 'Learning and Assessment at the Transition between Primary and Second-level Schools in Ireland', IN: Hyland, Á. (ed.) *Innovations in Assessment in Irish Education*, Cork: Multiple Intelligences, Curriculum and Assessment Research Project, Education Department, University College, Cork.
- Naughton, P. (2000) *The Age of Possibilities: A Study of the Schooling Transition of Early Adolescents*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University College, Cork.
- Oakes, J. (1985) *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*, London: Yale University Press.
- O'Brien, M. (2002) *Transfer from Primary to Second-level Schooling: Pupils' Voices and Perspectives*, Irish Association for Management in Education, Trinity College, Dublin.

Ó Dálaigh, S. and Aherne, D. (1986) 'From Primary to Post-primary: Report of a Local Transition Committee', *Oideas* 35: 86-100, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Piaget, J. (1971) 'The Theory of Stages in Cognitive Development', IN: Green, D. R., Ford, M. P. and Flamer, G. B. (eds.), *Measurement and Piaget*, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Sainsbury, M., Whetton, C., Mason, K. and Schagen, I. (1998) 'Fallback in attainment on transfer at age 11: evidence from the Summer Literacy Schools evaluation', *Educational Research*, 40, 1: 73-81.

Shachar, H., Suss, G. and Sharan, S. (2002) 'Students' concerns about the transition from elementary to junior high school: a comparison of two cities', *Research Papers in Education* 17 (1): 79-95.

Simmons, R. G. and Blyth, D. A. (1987) *Moving into Adolescence: The Impact of Pubertal Change and School Context*, Hawthorn, New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Siskin, L. S. (1994) *Realms of Knowledge: Academic Departments in Secondary Schools*, London: The Falmer Press.

Smyth, E. (1999) *Do Schools Differ?*, Dublin: The Oak Tree Press, in association with the Economic and Social Research Institute.

Spelman, B. J. (1979) *Pupil Adaptation to Secondary School*, Belfast: Northern Ireland Council for Educational Research.

Sternberg, R. J. (1985) *Beyond IQ: A triarchic theory of human intelligence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Veenema, S., Hetland, L. and Chalfen, K. (eds.) (1997) *The Project Zero Classroom: New Approaches to Thinking and Understanding*, Boston: Project Zero.

Williams, J. and Collins, C. (1997) *The economic status of school leavers, 1994-1996*, Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute.

### **Official publications: Ireland**

Curriculum and Examinations Board (1986) *In Our Schools: a framework for curriculum and assessment*, Dublin: Curriculum and Examinations Board.

Department of Education (1993) *Circular 51 / 93: Selection Procedures for the Enrolment of Pupils in Second-level Schools*, Dublin: An Roinn Oideachais.

Department of Education and Science (2001) *Statistical Report*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1981) *Report of the Pupil Transfer Committee*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1992) *Education for a Changing World: Green Paper on Education*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1995) *Charting our Education Future: White Paper on Education*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1998) *Education Act*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1999) *Primary School Curriculum*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (1989) *A Guide to the Junior Certificate*, Dublin: NCCA.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (1990) *Report of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum*, Dublin: NCCA .

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (1993) *A programme for reform. Curriculum and assessment policy towards the new century*, Dublin: NCCA.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (1999) *The Junior Cycle Review, Progress Report: Issues and Options for Development*, Dublin: NCCA.

### **Other official publications**

Department of Education (Northern Ireland) (2001) *Education for the 21st Century – Report by the Post-Primary Review Body* ('The Burns Report'), Belfast: DENI.

*Hadow Report* (1926) *The Education of the Adolescent*, London: HMSO.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1991) *Review of National Policies for Education: Ireland*, Paris: OECD.

James Norman

## TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM: THE PASTORAL DIMENSION

*James Norman is Head of Chaplaincy Studies at the Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University where he lectures in education and pastoral care. He studied philosophy and theology at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, education at UCD and NUI Maynooth and is currently pursuing doctoral studies at the Institute of Education, London. His current research interests include pastoral care in education, school ethos and culture.*

*ABSTRACT: Recent debates about the nature of teacher professionalism have tended to focus on the teacher's role in cognitive development and a rejection by some of 'non-teaching' duties. These arguments are rooted in an analysis of teaching in terms of classical professionalism where the teacher, like the doctor or lawyer, claims to have an expert knowledge, an ethic of service and autonomy of practice. However, a deeper analysis of teaching as a profession, particularly regarding an expert knowledge, suggests that unlike doctors for example, teachers have a weak claim to an expert knowledge as the foundation of their professional status. This paper argues that such a classical definition of professionalism does not fit the teaching profession as we experience it in Ireland. Teachers as professionals in Irish schools have always been committed to both the cognitive and pastoral or 'non-teaching' aspects of their role. It is this commitment to the education of the whole person that is at the heart of teacher professionalism in Ireland.*

### INTRODUCTION

We have reached a stage, in terms of our thinking, where life is characterised by the process of questioning rather than the attainment of answers. This time has been described as *post-modernity*, a time in which rigid boundaries are shifting and many previously held ideas are in a constant state of flux, seeking to respond to the changing world in which they are applied. In this context our notion of schooling has developed considerably and this in turn has impacted on the expectations we place as a community on those who teach.

In recent years the curriculum has seen many additions, which have raised our expectations of the goals of education and the role of the teacher. This is reflected in the pastoral goals of recent legislation, which obliges schools to promote the '*moral, spiritual and personal*' development of the pupil (Education Act, 1998, 9d). New syllabi such as *Social Personal and Health Education* (SPHE), *Civic Social and Personal Education* (CSPE) and *Relationships and Sexuality Education* (RSE) have been introduced to promote pupils' social and personal needs and to provide a balance to the pervading academic ethos of Irish schools (Boldt, 2000, p.41). Despite the fact that these initiatives have been introduced during a relatively short period of time onto an already overloaded curriculum, teachers have for the most part responded wholeheartedly to them.

However, debates such as those during the recent industrial dispute in Ireland between the teachers' union and the government highlight the fact that our notions of teacher professionalism are quite fluid and it can be hard at times to arrive at a common understanding of what it means to be professional and to be a teacher. I wish to reflect on the impact of the developments mentioned above for the professional nature of teaching. Is there a danger that teachers will become a jack-of-all-trades and master of none and so undermine their professional integrity? This paper will address two questions, firstly in what sense can teachers be described as professionals and, secondly, is pastoral care a necessary dimension of teacher professionalism.

In exploring these issues I am aware that the concept of pastoral care is not as strongly associated with teaching in other countries as it is in Ireland and Britain. For example, since World War II in Germany, somewhat in reaction to the Nazi's, the remit of the school decreased in favour of the family's responsibility for personal and social education. Even today, Giesecke (1999) warns that any attempt in Germany to compensate for the failings of society would put such a strain on the education system that it would fail (p.391-403). On the other hand, in both Britain and Ireland personal and social development is seen as an important dimension to schooling and teachers work (Education Act, 1988 and Education Act, 1998). Consequently, this paper will not argue for or against but take as a given that schools in Britain and Ireland have a strong duty of care and instead will explore the relationship between teacher professionalism and pastoral care of pupils.

I will draw on three principal sources, literature on professionalism, literature on pastoral care and my own experience as a teacher in a large comprehensive school. There has been a considerable amount of writing on the topic of professionalism (Abbott and Wallace, 1990, Freidson, 1994, Hargreaves, 1994, May, 2001), but for the purpose of this paper I will mainly draw on some insights on the concept of professionalism as applied to teaching by Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) Gaden (1988) and Williams (2001). Regarding the literature on pastoral care and education, I will develop my insights based on works by Best (1999) Collins (1999) and Campbell (2000).

## ARE TEACHERS PROFESSIONALS?

Mainstream professions such as medicine, law and the clergy have been characterised by their claim to have a specialised knowledge or shared technical culture, an ethic of public service and a high degree of autonomy in a practice that is regulated by a self-governed collegial body (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996, p.1) Despite some well reported cases of bad practice in some of the above professions (Sardar, 2000, p.25) which were in some way allowed to happen due to their lack of accountability to those outside the profession, there is still a tendency among other occupations such as teaching to use the conventional characteristics of a profession like medicine as a benchmark for judging their own professional status.

Although in Ireland the public has traditionally conferred a professional status on the teacher along with the local priest and doctor, a further examination of teaching in the light of the professional qualities mentioned above will reveal that teachers do not necessarily rely on a specialist knowledge to the same extent as those engaged in medicine and or who are members of the clergy. Kevin Williams (2001) compares the role of the teacher with that of a doctor and the degree to which each requires specialist knowledge to achieve their occupational aims. He argues that in teaching a pupil about the atom for example, *'teachers do not need to know about higher order scientific exploration of why their procedures have the effects they have'* (p.23). Good teachers will simply employ a number of strategies until they find one that helps the pupil to learn. I can illustrate this point by recalling an experience I had in a school where I was a member of the Board of Management. The principal reported that the science results for that year's Junior Certificate examinations were higher than previous years despite the fact that the newly appointed temporary teacher had no formal educational qualification. She did of course hold a science degree and was an innovative communicator using empty soft drink cans to teach concepts such as the cylinder to her pupils. Although I am not advocating that unqualified teachers become the norm in our schools, I am suggesting that, apart from their own teaching subject, teachers do rely less on specialist knowledge than doctors who would be arrested if they were to experiment on their patients to find out which treatment will work. Williams (2001) points out that *'however complex the skill of teaching may be, the explanatory theory available to teachers is much less than that available to doctors'* (p.24).

Consequently, I would suggest that the apparent professional status conferred in the past by the public on teachers in Ireland probably had more to do with the perception by a largely uneducated public that teachers were the gatekeepers to knowledge and ultimately freedom from poverty than it had to do with their technical competence. If teachers cannot claim ownership of specialist knowledge, as doctors can, then in what sense can they claim to be professionals?

As already noted, the traditional conceptions of what it means to be professional can be problematic, especially as their closely guarded autonomy

and self-regulation have often allowed roguish practitioners such as serial killer Dr. Harold Shipman and paedophile Fr. Brendan Smith to transgress the ethical limits of their professions without question. Furthermore, in these post-modern times, when previously held certainties are being questioned and boundaries are constantly changing, it seems that there is a need to reconceptualise our ideas of what it means to be a professional. It is in this context that the term *professionalism* has come to be identified with both the maintenance of high standards in an activity and, more fundamentally, with an attitude that marks the relationship between the practitioner and the client such as the teacher and the pupil (Gaden, 1988, p.29). While we have formal structures such as the Leaving Certificate examination to measure standards in teaching in terms of cognitive development, it is not so clear how we can measure the extent to which a teacher has a professional attitude, which, arguably, is at the heart of a positive teacher pupil relationship. Gerry Gaden (1988) describes a professional attitude as '*a complex of dispositions and tendencies, with underlying beliefs and commitments, which broadly determines the manner and spirit in which the practitioner carries on in his occupation*' (p. 29). While the concept of a 'professional attitude' itself may be somewhat elusive, it is possible to identify some fundamental conditions that teachers will need to possess if they are to develop the professional attitude that is required for to develop a good personal relationship with their pupils and to be successful as a teacher.

I will now expand on the above definition of a professional attitude by exploring some of the underlying conditions that promote a professional attitude among teachers.

Firstly, it is argued that the teacher with a professional attitude will possess a high degree of *integration* between the values that influence their personal and professional self. Gaden (1988) calls this condition 'authenticity', remarking that '*self and work do not have to be the wholly identified, but they cannot be wholly cut off*' (p.31). In other words teachers can be said to have a professional attitude when they maintain a level of continuity between their private and public life. Similarly, in identifying personal relationships as central to effective teaching, Karl Rogers (1969) wrote about the need for the teacher to be a '*real person...without presenting a front or façade*' (p.106-107). In the past the integration between a teacher's personal and professional life was promoted by the fact that teachers lived in the communities where they worked. They were identified by others and by themselves as 'the master' or 'the mistress' and viewed as upright people who could be relied on to provide leadership and stability in the community as well as educating children in school. Furthermore, because the school was so closely linked to the local community, its boundaries were porous in that events in the local community often spilled over into the life of the school. The annual harvest or in Irish '*meitheal*' is an example of the integration of school and community, whereby the school would suspend lessons so that the pupils could help in the work on the farms.

Today teachers are more likely to travel many miles to their schools and consequently, the integration that is required for them to have a professional

attitude towards their work will be harder to achieve in that, like others, teachers' lives are becoming more fragmented and consequently the connection between self and work is not as apparent as in the past. If a gap develops between a teacher's personal and professional identity, s/he is in danger of seeing their work merely in terms of salary or *just a job* and thus be less likely to successfully develop positive relationships with their pupils. Authenticity here doesn't just mean that I believe teaching to be a worthwhile endeavour, but rather that it is a worthwhile endeavour for me. If teachers are to be successful in their work and develop a professional attitude they need to achieve a consistency between the value judgements made in professional practice and in the rest of their lives. While this may appear to be overly demanding on teachers when compared to other occupations, but imagine the situation if it was not the case. At the heart of teaching is a relationship that is based on trust and respect. If teachers promoted a value system in schools that they do not believe in or actually apply in their own lives this could result in them being accused of hypocrisy or double standards and so undermine the teacher pupil relationship.

Secondly, teachers who establish strong relationships with their pupils have an ability to take into account their pupil's experiences and perspectives and this awareness of their pupils personal experiences and perspectives can influence the teachers approach to how their pupils will learn. Consequently, it can be argued that *empathy* is an essential condition for the development of a professional attitude among teachers. Cooper (2000) defines empathy as:

A quality shown by individuals, which enables them to accept others for who they are, to feel and perceive situations from their perspective and to take a constructive and long-term attitude towards the advancement of their situation, by searching for solutions to meet their needs.

(p. 121)

Empathy has been identified as a key factor in the development of a child's moral growth (Kohlberg 1981; Rogers 1975). However, the acquirement of empathy depends on the extent to which the child has been shown empathy by other significant adults including teachers. Thus, empathy is not just important for the development of a professional attitude between the teacher and the pupil but it is also essential if the pupil is to develop as a moral being. Teachers who spend time getting to know and understand their pupils develop an attunement with them that is realised in close relationships, good behaviour and positive modelling (Cooper, 2000, p. 124).

Thirdly, a professional attitude is *informed* by developments in educational theory and developing educational policy on curriculum and best practice in teaching as well as an awareness of what is recognised as the common good of education. In other words, it is not professional for a teacher to do just anything in their work that is not rationally defensible. For Gaden (1988) this 'defensibility' has to do with a certain *realism with regard to the main structural features of the*

*occupation and its context*' (p.32). A teacher who can justify their practice in terms of the agreed aims of education can be said to have developed a certain professionalism in their work. The recently developed *School Development and Planning Initiative* in Irish schools may provide a forum in which teachers and school managers can reflect on and articulate the rationale behind their practice and so further develop the concept of professionalism in education.

The final condition required for the development of a professional attitude is *adaptability*. While the practitioner may be guided by an awareness of current theory and best practice in education, they are also responsive to the changing circumstances of the work place (Gaden, 1988, p. 32). Pupils become ill, they get upset or they can have bad days when, sometimes as a result of stress at home, they are unable to concentrate and learn. Their distress may even express itself in disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Teachers who take a purely '*reactive*' stance by punishing this type of behaviour are shortsighted in that they are ignoring the causes (Watkins and Wagner, 1987). Furthermore, discipline programmes that are narrowly linked to the behaviourist school of psychology such as *Discipline For Learning* (Smyth, 1996) could be said to undermine the adaptable nature of a teacher's professionalism in that they demand a conformity of approach to all students in every situation. These programmes also undermine the holistic aims of education as set out in recent legislation (Education Act 1998, 9d), in that they fail to respect the individuality of each student and the impact of their home life on their ability to succeed in school. Adaptability is an important skill for a teacher in the development of a professional attitude towards their pupils in that it allows them to respond to their pupils emerging needs as they arise in the context of the classroom.

In so far as teachers possess the four core conditions outlined above, they can be said to be professionals as I understand the term. However, their professionalism cannot be learned from a book in the same way as a doctor might learn medicine. These four conditions, *integration, empathy, defensibility* and *adaptability* are not a prescriptive list that can be followed in order to achieve a professional attitude; they come from a person's character. The challenge for those involved in teacher training and ongoing development is how to develop this type of character in teachers. For Aristotle goodness of character (*éthos*) was achieved through habit (*êthos*). In other words, a teacher acquires a professional attitude through habitual interaction with other good teachers (*Ethics* II, 1). This interaction may begin while the teacher is still a pupil in school and continues through his/her training and induction and afterwards during his/her teaching career. In this way, we can say that teachers have a professional status that goes much deeper than any claim to a specialist knowledge or status that the public may or may not confer on them. Teacher professionalism comes from character and is fundamental to the development of personal relationships with pupils. Furthermore, these personal relationships are a key factor in the promotion of pastoral care in any school.

## NATURE OF PASTORAL CARE AND TEACHING

Having shown how teachers may be considered as professionals in a way that is fundamentally different from those who work in medicine or law, I will now explore to what extent pastoral care is a professional characteristic of teaching. From my own experience working in second-level schools, this is an important question to be explored because while most teachers have overwhelmingly embraced the pastoral aims of recent legislation, there are others who argue that they should not be expected to become 'counsellors' and that they should be left to get on with the business of teaching. These teachers have been described as 'anti-collectivists' who at most view pastoral care as a means of controlling pupils whose behaviour is unacceptable to them (Best in Collins & McNiff, 1999, p. 21). While these anti-collectivists represent a small number of teachers, they do challenge the rest of us to be able to articulate a defence of the relationship between pastoral care and teacher professionalism. For the rest of this paper I will try to present such a defence by exploring the link between pastoral care and teaching.

There is hardly a school in Ireland that doesn't claim to offer pastoral care to its pupils. Apart from the specialist care offered by school chaplains and guidance counsellors, recent research indicates the majority of pupils' pastoral needs are met by the classroom teacher (Norman, 2002). However, teachers have many perceptions of what it means to be involved in pastoral care. For some teachers it means the provision of a Social, Personal and Health Education programme. For others, pastoral care refers to the role of the head of year, the class tutor, and the chaplain or guidance counsellor. It is sometimes understood as being part of the Religious Education programme or a way of describing the 'good' teacher. Collins (1999) has defined pastoral care as:

that which the student experiences in their school life. It is the spirit, the culture, the heart of the school. It is the recognition, respect and support which each student can claim as a right and as a responsibility within the learning community. (p. 8)

The vagueness of this particular definition reflects the elusiveness of pastoral care as a concept in Irish second-level schools. However, for the purposes of this paper, I will attempt to provide an etymology of the term and describe it as I have experienced it in second-level schools in Ireland.

The word 'pastoral' (*pascere*), meaning shepherd, is biblical in origin and was used as a metaphor for the relationship between God and his people (Isaiah 40:11, Ezekiel 34:16). In the New Testament, the term 'pastoral' (*poimen*) is applied to Jesus Christ to describe his care and concern for God's people, particularly those who are lost or outcast (Luke 15: 1-8). In the Bible and the early Christian Church, the term 'pastoral' was used to describe the care of God or his representative for his people. In this context, the term 'pastoral care' describes a faith action, that is an action carried out by a person of faith for another person (Campbell, 1998, p.31).

In the 1960s and 1970s when comprehensive schooling was developing in Ireland teachers looked to Britain, as our nearest neighbour, where this type of schooling had already been established since the 1950s (Lang, 1983, p.61). Consequently, the model of pastoral care in British comprehensive schools greatly influenced the development of pastoral care as a formal concept for teachers in what was to become the Community/Comprehensive schools and later on in the voluntary secondary schools. However, it has been argued that in an informal way pastoral care as we now know it has always been part of the good school and the work of the good teacher in Ireland (Collins, in P. Lang et al, 1998). It is also important to note that the fact that there was no legislative obligation on schools in Britain to promote pupil's spiritual development until quite recently (Education Reform Act, 1988, 1a) meant that their pastoral care structures tended to neglect this aspect of education (Talbot in Best, 2000, p. 13). To a certain extent this has influenced a common perception among some teachers in Ireland that pastoral care is not concerned with anything religious or spiritual. Furthermore, the lack of any mention of the term 'pastoral care' in official literature in Ireland until quite recently (National Education Convention Secretariat, 1994:53) meant that, at times, teachers engaged in pastoral care without any formal training and without a language to express what they were doing. This often resulted in the perception that pastoral care was the 'soft option' and had less to do with teacher professionalism than academic work and maintaining discipline in the classroom. The establishment of postgraduate courses for teachers in pastoral care, school chaplaincy and guidance counselling as well as the establishment of the Irish Association for Pastoral Care in Education (IAPCE) have over the past ten years contributed greatly to the present situation whereby most second-level teachers in Ireland now recognise pastoral care as a dimension of their professional work.

Despite these developments and the emerging recognition of pastoral care as a dimension of teacher professionalism, there are still differing views on what pastoral care can mean. These perceptions of pastoral care can be generally described in terms of three stages. These stages of pastoral care are intrinsic to the daily endeavours of teachers as professionals in that they are rooted in their professional attitude and personal relationships with their pupils. I describe the first stage as *humanistic* pastoral care, the second as *spiritual* pastoral care, and the third as *curricular* pastoral care. These stages of pastoral care can occur simultaneously or in isolation depending on the pupil's needs and the competence of the teacher.

### **Humanistic Pastoral Care**

In describing this first stage of pastoral care as humanistic I am not implying anything that could be described as humanism. This stage is concerned with the essentials of life that are a prerequisite of education such as the need for food, the need for warmth, the need for security and a sense of belonging. Teachers will offer this type of pastoral care in the most mundane of ways by affirming their

pupils when they do well, by making sure that the classroom is a safe and welcoming place and by letting each pupil know that they are interested in them through frequent use of their name and asking questions about other aspects of their life apart from their academic work. Where it is apparent that a student has specific needs due to a learning difficulty or a disadvantaged background, the teacher might be involved in a more 'reactive' type of pastoral care such as running of a breakfast or homework club or liaising with social services. Sometimes a pupil may require a more skilled type of support beyond the competences of their teacher and this is where the teacher will recognise the need to refer the pupil to the guidance counsellor or the school psychologist. However, essentially this humanistic stage of pastoral care requires no more from the teacher than a professional attitude and a genuine interest in the well being of his/her pupils.

### **Spiritual Pastoral Care**

Research and experience has shown that young people do search for meaning and seek to explain their life situations through authentic relationships and spiritual definitions (Tuohy and Cairns, 2000, p. 196-197). Consequently, it would not be possible for a teacher to claim to have a personal relationship with their pupils and to ignore the spiritual dimension of their life. In describing this stage of pastoral care as *spiritual* I am not necessarily referring to any one denomination or religious belief system. Although for some, the spiritual and the religious are synonymous, it is important to recognise that they are not always one and the same and that the spiritual dimension of the pupil pre-empts any religious affiliations (Hay, 1998, p.21 ff). In fact the over-association of these two concepts can lead to reluctance on the part of some teachers to see themselves as having a contribution to make to their pupil's spiritual development. However, spirituality is more than membership of a particular religion, which suggests that the teacher's contribution to spiritual development is important if students are to realise their full potential as human beings. Furthermore, spiritual development does not just take place in Religious Education or at assembly. It takes place in every subject and classroom and most importantly it takes place within the personal relationship shared by the teacher with the pupil. There has been a tendency in Irish schools to see the pupil's spiritual development as the responsibility of the religious educator or to identify it solely with sacramental preparation or the transmission of doctrinal information for the churches. In fact this practice goes against the teachings of the Catholic Church itself, which state that this dimension of education is the responsibility of the whole school and not just the religion teacher (*RDECS*, 1988: 64). Spirituality has been described by Rodger (1996) as:

...not knowing something different, it is a different way of knowing;  
it is not doing something different, it is a different way of doing; it is  
not being something different, it is a different way of being. (p.60)

Teachers who recognise that pupils are spiritual beings will seek to promote this spirituality in the way they pace their lessons, and the use of strategies which will allow time and space for prayer, meditation and reflection on the deeper questions which arise during their learning. For example, during a lesson on famines in the Developing World a teacher might not only teach the socio-economic causes of famines, but they might also help students to consider more spiritual questions like 'why are some people born in these countries and others are not?' 'What is the meaning of suffering?' 'Why do bad things happen to good people?' In the same way that teachers are concerned with a pupil's cognitive development so too are they concerned with other aspects of their development such as the spiritual dimension. In recognising the importance of the spiritual development of the pupils, teachers can be said to be promoting a holistic education in the way that is indicated by the Education Act (1998). Consequently, it can be argued that teacher professionalism in Ireland is holistic in nature in that it embraces the cognitive and spiritual development of the pupil. From time to time a pupil's spiritual needs may require a greater competency than their teacher possess, for example when a pupil experiences bereavement. Again, as a professional the teacher will have the skill to recognise this situation and to refer the pupil onto someone who is more skilled in spirituality such as the school chaplain or a member of the local clergy.

### **Curricular Pastoral Care**

This third stage of pastoral care refers to a teacher's involvement in the many taught pastoral programmes in our schools such as *SPHE*, *CSPE*, *RSE* and *RE*. These programmes can be described as '*proactive*' and '*developmental*' in that they seek to develop the pupil's life skills, self esteem and confidence and in doing so prepare the pupil to live a complete and fulfilled life (Best in Collins, 1999, p. 19). These programmes have been added to the national curriculum in Ireland over the last number of years and the extent to which they have been implemented varies from school to school. What is clear, though, is that in introducing these programmes to the national curriculum the government has given teachers who are involved in pastoral care an equal status with those who are involved with the more academic subjects. However, there is a risk in establishing pastoral care in the formal curriculum and that is that it may become over-identified with a small number of teachers and a specific place in the timetable. The provision of a pastoral syllabus is important, but it would be wrong if such a syllabus became equated with the totality of pastoral care, which as outlined above is a fundamental dimension to the relationship between the teacher and the pupil, and consequently it is fundamental to teacher professionalism.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper I have tried to show how teachers can be described as professionals and that the pursuit of the students pastoral needs is a characteristic of this teacher professionalism. However, whether it is correct to describe teachers as pastoral care professionals is another matter. In so far as teachers, who are professionals, care for the well being of their pupils, then it is true to say that teachers are 'caring professionals'. However, to describe a teacher as a 'pastoral care professional' would seem to indicate that the practitioner had a competency or expert knowledge beyond the ordinary competency of a classroom teacher in area such as counselling, psychology and spirituality. Although the Colleges of Education in Ireland give a basic training to teachers at the pre-service stage in philosophy, psychology and sociology, teachers, like doctors and other professionals, cannot be said to possess any great depth of technical expertise in these areas. Consequently, the term 'pastoral care professional' may be better used to describe those who have received a specific training in the discipline of pastoral care such as Guidance Counsellors and School Chaplains. The teacher pupil relationship is essential to the professional nature of teaching. In this context teachers will act out of a genuine concern for the well being of their pupils. However, it is clear that they do not possess the skills or expert knowledge to meet all of their pupils pastoral needs all of the time and will have to refer to other more qualified practitioners. In other words, while it may not be true to describe teachers as pastoral care professionals, it is true to describe them as caring professionals.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* translated by J.A.K. Thompson (1976) revised by H. Trendennick with an introduction by J. Barnes (London: Penguin).
- Best, R. (1999) 'Pastoral Care and the Millennium' in *Rethinking Pastoral Care*, New York: Routledge.
- Boldt, S. (2000) 'A Vantage Point of Values' in Furlong, C., Monahan, L., *School Culture & Ethos, Cracking the Code*, Dublin: Marino.
- Burnett, J. (1967) *Aristotle on Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Campbell, A. (2000) *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- Collins, Ú. and McNiff, J. (1999) *Rethinking Pastoral Care*, New York: Routledge.
- Coolahan, J. (Ed.) (1994) *The Report of the National Education Forum on Education*, Dublin: Government Publications.
- Cooper, B.(2000) 'Rediscovering the Personal in Education' in Best, R., *Education for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development*, London: Continuum.
- Gaden, T.G. (1988) 'Professional Attitudes' in *Irish Educational Studies, Vol. 7:1*, Dublin: Educational Studies Association of Ireland.
- \*Giesecke, H. (1999) Das 'Ende der Erziehung'. Ende oder Anfang pädagogischer Professionalität. *Pädagogische Professionalität*. A. Combe and W. Helsper, Frankfurt: Main.
- Hargreaves, A. and Goodson, I. (1996) 'Teachers Professional Lives: aspirations and actualities' in Goodson, I., Hargreaves, A., *Teachers; Professional Lives*, London: Flamer Press.
- Hay, D. and Nye, R. (1998) *The Spirit of the Child*, London: Fount.
- Hogan, P. (1995) *The Custody and Courtship of Experience: Western Education in Philosophical Perspective*, Dublin: Columba Press.
- Ireland (1995) *Charting our Education Future: White Paper on Education*, Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Ireland (1998) *Education Act*, Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Kohlberg, L. (1981) *The Meaning and Measurement of Moral Development*, London: Longman.
- Lang P., Katz, Y., Menezes, I.(1998) *Affective Education*, London: Cassell.
- Norman, J. (2002) *Pastoral Care in Second-Level Schools: The Chaplain* Dublin: Centre for Research in Religion & Education.
- Parks, T. (2000) *An Italian Education* London, Vintage.
- Report of the National Education Convention* (1994) Dublin: National Education Convention Secretariat.
- Rodger, A. (1996) 'Human Spirituality: Towards an Educational Rationale' in Best. R., *Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child*, London, Cassell, 1996.
- Rogers, K. (1969) *Freedom to Learn*, Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill.
- Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1998) *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, Rome.

Smyth, A. (1996) *Discipline for Learning*, Langford.

Talbot, M. (2000) 'Developing SMSC for the Curriculum' in Best, R., *Education for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development*, London, Continuum.

Tuohy, D., Cairns, P. (2000) *Youth 2K: Threat or Promise to a Religious Culture*, Dublin: Marino.

Lang. P. (1983) 'Pastoral Care: Some reflections and Possible Influences' in *Pastoral Care in Education*, 2 (2).

Rogers, K. (1975) 'Empathic: an unappreciated way of being' in *The Counselling Psychologist*, Vol. 5(2) 2.

Sardar, Z. (200) 'Professionals who lost their virtue' in *New Statesman*, (10 July,) pp. 25-27.

Williams, K. (2001) 'Professions and Professionalism: The Case of Teaching' in *Issues in Education*, *ASTI Education Journal*, Vol. 4, Dublin, Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland.

*\*This text is available only in German and was explained to me by a German speaking colleague on the Ed. D. International programme.*

Frank M. Flanagan

## **TEACHING AS A VOCATION?**

*Frank M. Flanagan, lectures in the Education Department, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick where he teaches courses in Philosophy of Education, Educational Theory, and Research Methodology, as well as directing and supervising post-graduate research. He has extensive teaching/educational experience at all levels and in virtually all sectors of the Irish education system, and in 1998 he was awarded a Ph.D. by Hull University for his thesis: 'Rights, Parents, Children, and Communities: some educational implications of children's rights'. He has worked extensively with Radio Teilifís Éireann, in particular writing and presenting three series on educational ideas.*

*ABSTRACT: The paper attempts to revive the concept of vocation as a legitimate conceptualisation of teaching. It first attempts to articulate a conception of vocation which is secular and developmental. It then, through an analysis of the notions of ideology and commitment, attempts to identify the function of teaching, cultural/ideological transmission as a moral imperative, which separates teaching from most, if not all, other occupations. Finally, the ideological choices facing teachers as significant intellectuals who provide an indispensable social, as well as individual, service are identified.*

### **SUMMARY**

Most recent debate about a correct, appropriate or fruitful model of teaching as an occupation has tended to polarise between, on the one hand, various conceptions of professionalism and a variety of critiques of the general concept itself on the other. The debate, and the polarisation it has engendered, has obscured, if not entirely obliterated, a possible viable alternative, conceptualising

teaching as a vocation. The latter may well have the capacity to lead us to a more adequate account of teaching as an occupation. In particular the concept of vocation may help to rescue and rehabilitate the irreducible moral and socially significant realities of being a teacher. It is an alternative which warrants more serious consideration than it has received to date, not as a simple reaction to the debate about professionalism or professionalisation but as a viable alternative; not as a programme of negative critique but as a positive effort to deepen our understanding of teachers and teaching.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since the 1960s the concept of profession or professionalization has dominated discussion of many occupations including teaching. At the same time the concept of vocation has fallen out of favour; it seems to have been dismissed peremptorily as being of no further significance in the understanding of occupations. The rejection of the traditional vocational conception of teaching as a quasi-religious, or devotional idea presumes that there are no viable or desirable alternatives within the general concept of vocation itself: in rejecting a particular conception we have abandoned the entire concept. The abandonment does not seem to have been a result of a deepened understanding or appreciation but, rather, the rejection of a conception which postulated a divinely imposed role within a specific, received social order. Simultaneously the concept of 'vocational' has been drastically attenuated to exclude its traditional function of assigning priority or value to certain occupations over others. The word now has a largely descriptive economic significance denoting employment, trade or occupation, a means of livelihood, or of making a living. Reassessment requires a separation of the dual senses of the term. The traditional sense of '(Divine) calling, or sense of fitness for a career' must be rescued from archaism and rehabilitated to re-emphasise the normative component of 'commitment to a way of life'.

## **TRADITIONAL THEORIES**

Traditionally vocation has been presented in religious/devotional terms as concerned, primarily, with explaining how individuals are selected for certain occupations. A reappraisal requires that we establish its legitimacy as a secular concept concerned, centrally, with participation in certain occupations.

Schleck<sup>1</sup> identifies three traditional theories of vocation: the internal vocation theory, the attraction theory, and the external vocation theory. Both the internal vocation theory and the attraction theory posit direct divine intervention as constitutive: 'a private divine call', or 'a call in the form of a special grace', or 'a strong and permanent supernatural attraction'. In either of these theories a secular interpretation is impossible: without the element of direct divine intervention the theories are meaningless. The case of the external vocation theory appears to be different, however.

External vocation theory identifies three elements in vocation: a material element which comprises 'the presence of mental, physical and moral qualifications, and the right intention' and a formal element which is 'the call of a legitimate ecclesiastical superior'. The qualifications of the material element are conventionally interpreted as manifestations of a divine call but there is no reason to believe that they are not amenable to alternative modes of interpretation. The formal element, the call is, as it were, a confirmation, a sanctioning of the interpretation of the material element and an endorsement of the right intention. The vocation is confirmed in the sense that

- (i) the prior interpretation of the mental, physical and moral qualifications is accepted as valid and adequate and
- (ii) 'right intention' of the applicant is acknowledged.

'Why do you want to be a teacher?', what Altman has called the 'perennial hoary question'<sup>2</sup> is not a stupid question just because it is routinely asked and insincerely answered. It is a legitimate, if naïve, attempt to establish right intention. It might be considered less naïve if it were understood that intention in such cases is not a fixed and unalterable state of mind but a developmental process of evaluation of one's own interests, capabilities, commitments, and aspirations.

Now clearly 'an ecclesiastical superior' is concerned only in cases where an occupation is ecclesiastical in character. While we can accept its legitimacy in such cases we can also think of occasions (fitness for other ways of life) where it would be inappropriate. Rather than discard the formal element entirely we need only require that the legitimizing or sanctioning authority be appropriate and competent in the relevant case. It is not, as would be the case with the internal vocation theory or the attraction theory, contradictory to exclude the related terms 'divine' and 'ecclesiastical' from the external vocation theory. A secular vocation theory could retain both material and formal elements. We could say that to 'have' a vocation is to judge that one has the correct mental, physical and moral attributes for a particular occupational undertaking; that one is entering the undertaking with the right intention, and that these judgements have been confirmed and/or sanctioned by an appropriate competent authority.

There is nothing contradictory about this and there is no part which begs supernatural explanation. As a matter of fact it describes accurately what happens in the selection of candidates for, and in legitimizing practitioners within, a wide range of occupational pursuits. This shows that a secular theory of vocation is possible but it tells us nothing substantive. It may be doubted if the concept of vocation used to legitimize selection ever did. Even while the theories which invoked direct divine intervention as a necessary part of a vocation were current, the concept was used promiscuously to refer to any way of life which was socially sanctioned. Each member of the laity, for example, was deemed to

have a special vocation appropriate to his or her station in life. In such cases, however, 'vocation' makes no conceptual distinction, the phrase 'vocation appropriate to one's station in life' is a tautology. It is in this sense that we use the word today to refer generically to all occupations or ways of earning a living. What I wish to reaffirm is the use of the term 'vocation' to identify a distinction between occupations or categories of occupations. It will be my argument that there is a class of occupations — besides the professions — which is conceptually different from others.

## VOCATION AS DEVELOPMENTAL

Traditional theories represented vocation as something fixed and complete at the moment of vocation. Bernard Haring<sup>3</sup> contrasts the medieval conception of vocation with the contemporary conception in two respects. Firstly, the medieval conception emphasised the element of compulsion whereas the contemporary emphasises free choice. Secondly, the medieval conception posits a static social order while the contemporary posits a dynamic social order. In the medieval conception: 'freedom was frequently an acceptance of what other people or the circumstances had determined more than personal choice'. In other words, the element of freedom was radically restricted to mean compliance with the perceived will of God within an unchanging and unchangeable social order. By contrast the contemporary conception requires the freedom to approach the world not as given but as malleable, a world which can be 'shaped'.

MacQuarrie<sup>4</sup> emphasises the developmental nature of vocation; he insists that the concept 'makes sense only in the context of a process of growth and commitment'. It is an ongoing developmental process:

A moment of vocation implies that there has been a growing sense of vocation; ... the decisive moment of commitment does not rule out (rather, it entails) a continued development of the sense of vocation, and an unfolding, *ambulando*, of a content which may not have been explicit in the moment of commitment itself.<sup>5</sup>

The individual evaluation of mental, physical and moral requirements, and the forming of right intention (subject to confirmation by the authoritative body), is an ongoing process which may develop negatively or positively: that is, one can grow out of, as well as into, a vocation. It is a process of growth, of becoming, of commitment not an indelible divine mark. Even in the context of the mission of Christ which he offers as paradigmatic, MacQuarrie makes it clear that vocation is developmental.

Haring does not distinguish between vocation and profession. He does, however, distinguish both from 'job'. In the case of the latter work in a capitalist society is perceived merely as a way to earn one's living, to support one's family, and to affirm one's social status; work is an article to be sold. Haring finds nothing

intrinsically wrong with such a perception provided that it is integrated into a 'broader vision'. This broader vision is, in the religious context, discovering 'the potentialities of the created reality and participation in God's created action'. This is developmental in both personal and social terms. It addresses both the dynamic of social change and the individual's capacity for responsible action in pursuit of such change.

So far I have tried to show that the concept of vocation is not necessarily religious or devotional; it requires that three conditions be met: material suitability, right intention, and appropriate independent confirmation of these; that it is located within a dynamic social order and entails free commitment; that the commitment which vocation entails is worked out in terms of both personal and social development.

## COMMITMENT

All occupations entail several kinds of commitment. Firstly, it would be reasonable to expect commitment to technical competence or skill (including intellectual competence). This is a weak sense of commitment since any and every occupation requires some level of technical competence and, at least in principle, has accessible standards by which competence can be judged. Such a criterion, being general, does not enable us to distinguish between occupations.

However, possession of a skill or competence is no guarantee of its responsible exercise. A second kind of commitment would require commitment to the welfare or well-being of those who are the objects, recipients or beneficiaries of the exercise of any occupation. Again I would argue that this is a weak sense of commitment. All occupations have person-directed ethical responsibilities, from the value-for-money of the shopkeeper to the due care of the motor mechanic.

These commitments are characteristic of any occupation, of any job. For an occupation to be marked off as a vocation something more is required. Clearly vocation, as traditionally conceived, included technical competence and a commitment to personal welfare. Equally clearly these were not sufficient. A further requirement was that they would be exercised within a context of belief in, and commitment to, a particular way of life: Haring's 'broader vision'. Perhaps it is this commitment to a way of life which separates an occupation which can be described as a vocation from other occupations. The latter are pursued as a way of making a living, the former as a way of life, as an all-embracing ideological commitment.

Consider the following:

As teachers it is your role — a very privileged role — to prepare your pupils for life, to help them understand what life has to offer and the demands it makes. Your pupils cannot be satisfied with mere

information, with a knowledge of facts, methods and techniques. They are seeking a meaning and purpose in life, a vantage point from which to survey the world around them, with all its problems, challenges and opportunities, with its many negative as well as positive aspects. They seek a key to the profound significance of the world and especially to the significance of their own lives.

(Is it possible to identify the ideological orientation of the author of these remarks?) Without using the word what is being articulated here is a conception of teaching as a vocation, not just a job. There is the recognition of inescapable normative and ideological aspects of teaching. The 'job' elements are referred to: competently imparting information, facts, methods and techniques. But the point of the remarks is the central need for a broader ideological framework which gives significance and meaning to the 'job' elements.

## IDEOLOGY

Ideology has had bad press: from Marx's and Engels' declaration that ideologies are belief-systems which serve the interests of a dominant class by engendering 'false consciousness', to right wing commentators who use the term to disparage the ideas and programmes of the political left. This ironic reversal, Marx's intellectual descendants being lashed with a whip of his own creation, obscures the reality that any social group can, in principle, articulate a set of beliefs, values and ideas which it uses to explain itself both to itself and to others. A social group which is prevented from articulating its own representation of itself by having a dominant ideology imposed on it is, in the language of liberation, oppressed; it is, literally, alienated by being prevented from seeing itself as itself. The notion of ideology meaning exclusively 'false consciousness' can be sustained only by a belief in a wholly objective scientific method of analysis; such a belief has been superseded even by science itself. It is a belief which, in fact, itself constitutes an ideology. In Polanyi's words: 'we cannot possess any fixed framework within which the reshaping of our hitherto fixed framework could be critically tested'.<sup>6</sup>

There is no ideologically neutral stance from which all ideologies can be critiqued. Every society needs a social consensus. This consensus will be based on a common set of representations and evaluations. There is no way out of ideology which does not lead back into another ideology. A similar point is made by Popper in his injunction against what he calls 'social canvas cleaning'<sup>7</sup> not because it is inefficient, but because it is logically impossible.

There is more to ideology than the self-representation of social groups. There is also the capacity of an ideology to influence behaviour, whether by inducing quietism and fatalistic acceptance of a *status quo* or by motivating people to action. The complex of ideas and beliefs which comprises the self-representation of a social group has a justificatory as well as a descriptive function: it tells us not just *what* we believe but *why* we are *right* to believe it. And this introduces a further motivational function: we do not just believe that we are right but we are

prepared to take action (positively or negatively, social or political) to promote our system of beliefs, values, and aspirations. This is still weak, however. It does not reflect adequately how rational individuals can be driven to individual and collective action by the power of ideas, to action which often threatens their individual welfare, even their individual existence.

A more muscular and robust definition is to be found in George Sorel's definition of myth which is central to ideology. According to Sorel myth is a body of symbols and images. It is the factor in social life which gives it guidance and direction. It consists of two logically distinct components: a statement of goals or objectives, and a commitment to a line of action for their realisation. A myth is an 'expression of a determination to act'. Rejai summarises: '(Myth) binds a group of people together, taps their sentiment and emotion, and directs their energy toward specific objectives. The most important function of any leadership group is to provide the appropriate myth for a society'.<sup>8</sup>

This is precisely what the unattributed quotation above was calling for: an appropriate myth, located within an extensive ideological framework, to bind the group in a common effort, to tap their sentiment and emotion, and to direct their energy toward specific objectives. People need not only to be informed, they need to be inspired.

Everyone is ideologically situated: in their work, their private lives, and their political action (or inaction) they buttress or undermine the prevailing ideology. What makes holders of a vocation different from any other occupation cannot simply be the exhortation to be supportive of the prevailing social order or of some alternative to it: in times of social crisis, at least, everyone is likely to be so exhorted.

In the case of teaching, however, and perhaps this is the definitive difference between teaching and most other occupations, it is the social order, the ideology itself, which is the proper object of the occupation. Teaching is not just another a job, it involves the articulation and transmission of the ideological context itself.

## **IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT**

Education is not neutral. Schools are not places where instruction occurs in a neutral setting. Education always involves some form of intellectual, social, and cultural imposition, whether overt or covert. Such imposition will reflect a particular ideological perspective.<sup>9</sup> In brief, an educational system functions mainly to transmit and reproduce the culture and institutional arrangements of the prevailing culture. Being a teacher in this context demands a commitment to such a culture and to such arrangements: teachers are not neutral, and are neither required nor expected to be neutral with respect to the prevailing dominant ideology. Quite the contrary; the quality of the vocation is truly tested in the quality of the commitment and in the quality of the teacher's own belief in the ideology. It is the teacher's task to initiate children into a particular set of explanations of, and justifications for, their historical, social and cultural location and to mark out the limits to the exercise of freedom which these constitute. To

provide children, in the words quoted above<sup>10</sup> with the 'key to the profound significance of the world and especially to the significance of their own lives.'

Thinkers as diverse as Martin Buber and Antonio Gramsci give accounts of teaching which stress its normative character as fundamental and constitutive. In the teacher/learner relationship children encounter, in Buber's words, 'a scale of values... a knowledge of good and evil'. This comprises 'a selection by man of the effective world'.<sup>11</sup> These are not merely represented to pupils by the teacher but 'concentrated and manifested ... embodied in the teacher'. What makes the teacher effective in the transmission of knowledge and values is not just that the teacher knows about such things, but that he or she has lived the world that he or she teaches.

Buber would, I imagine, have little patience with the notion that, given the enormous growth in alternative sources of information and knowledge, the importance of the teacher's role has diminished significantly. On the contrary what distinguishes the educator from all other sources of knowledge, value, and information is

his will to take part in the stamping of character and his consciousness that he represents in the eyes of the growing person a certain selection of what is, the selection of what is 'right', of what should be. It is in this will and in this consciousness that his vocation as an educator finds its fundamental expression.

The teacher does not just represent the world of knowledge and value but embodies it, consciously presenting him/herself as the embodiment of a certain order. This is at a substantial (and substantive) remove from merely 'giving instruction'!

This role need not necessarily be reactionary or conservative. Gramsci, in his analysis of the role and function of the schools in bringing about revolutionary change, insists that the teacher must be 'conscious of his obligation to accelerate and regulate the child's formation' in conformity with 'the type of culture and society which (the teacher) represents'.<sup>12</sup> The teacher must be acquainted with the 'folklore' of the child's environment, that is the popular, superstitious and unreflective culture, so that he knows

that other conceptions of the world and of life are influencing the moral and intellectual development of the younger generation, in order that he may uproot them and replace them with conceptions that are deemed superior.<sup>13</sup>

In Gramsci's view teachers have always belonged to the ranks of the intelligentsia, those who provide philosophy and ideology for the masses and who consequently enable the ruling class to exercise 'hegemony' by 'supplying the system of belief accepted by ordinary people'.<sup>14</sup> In pursuit of revolutionary

change teachers would fulfil a similar function though more critically and with obviously different intent: to 'produce a new stratum of intellectuals ... from a social group [the urban working class and the peasants] which has not traditionally developed the appropriate attitudes' towards learning, study and education, so that eventually the child emerges 'as a person capable of thinking, studying and ruling — or controlling those who rule'.<sup>15</sup>

In the views of both Buber and Gramsci the normative account of teaching is located within, and sustained by, an avowedly ideological context. Each identifies and elaborates the inescapable normative commitment which is required of the teacher irrespective of whether it is the personal (Buber) or the political (Gramsci) which is given initial priority. The differing conceptions presented are unified by the element of explicit commitment to a valued way of life, that is by the presence in each of an ideological preference. In each case certain common elements recall the devotional conception of (teaching as a) vocation: personal choice, suitability, commitment and service.

## TEACHING

An adequate elaboration of the concept of teaching which is true to historical precedent as well as to present practice will stress its irreducibly normative nature. This normativeness transcends contemporary impoverished accounts of teaching as being simply another provider/consumer or practitioner/client relationship. It transcends, too, the restricted ethical dimension of the professional model which effectively restricts ethical considerations to a set of rules governing practitioner/client and practitioner/practitioner relations. The normative aspect of teaching is an all-embracing morality of 'way of life' rather than a restricted and restrictive set of behavioural rules governing the pursuit of a livelihood; it makes the parameters of this 'way of life' explicit and points up their centrality in pedagogical practice; it can be critical or reinforcing, transformational or conservationist, liberating or oppressive. It cannot be neutral.

Teaching is future oriented. To be a teacher is to believe, necessarily, in something more than the immediate: it is to believe in the future and the possibility of human improvement. That visions of perfectibility and salvation take different, often mutually exclusive, forms does not change the conceptual truth that teaching is inseparable from optimism expressed through conviction and commitment: the conviction that the future can be better, commitment to the form such a future will take and to the means for attaining it.

Consequently, it is to the normative rather than to the logical or sociological structure of teaching as an occupation that we must first attend in order to articulate a satisfactory account. Teaching is more than 'giving instruction' in X or Y; it addresses the totality of the learner and not just a clientist need for 'treatment', a 'product', or 'a service'.

The transmission of an ideology, whether in the mode of critique or of elaboration, is the task which has been traditionally placed upon teachers and

defines the normative character of teaching as an occupation. Teachers are the carriers and transmitters of society's representation of itself. Their task becomes problematic when the ideological consensus of a society begins to break down, when teachers themselves, among others, begin to question the adequacy of the dominant ideology.

In the post-modernist climate, when all meta-narratives have lost, or are losing, authority, and human identity seems condemned to defining itself in a succession of loose alliances which have no more than temporary claim on the loyalty of the individual, teachers more than most others, are at a loss. If there is no consensus regarding a common identity, a shared way of life, then there is nothing for the teacher to transmit as the core of the educational message. Education itself cannot provide an alternative: for there is no norm, or what Buber calls 'fixed maxim', for education. That is, there is no essence of education which we can identify as being valid or legitimate for all places and at all times. What appears at any given time to be the essence of education only appears so because it is rooted in stabilities and certainties which in turn only appear to have permanence. When the appearance of permanence dissolves there is no overt ideological consensus to inform and to legitimize the work of the teacher. At such times three possibilities present themselves.

Firstly, individual teachers may attempt to conserve the vocational concept by operating from within an ideological framework which no longer adequately reflects the prevailing social and cultural reality.

Secondly, the teacher may accept unquestioningly the 'de-vocationalisation' of the occupation of teaching and consequent changes in occupational identity and significance. The professional model inflates into the void which is created when overt ideological consensus breaks down. It provides a consolation and reassurance that lost status may be regained in another guise: through the organisation and control of the occupation itself rather than through a reaffirmation of its fundamental values. Teachers become practitioners delivering functional and instrumental services to clients but have no further sense of obligation to the conservation or transformation of society.<sup>16</sup> The appeal of professionalism is at its most persuasive when teachers have nothing else to believe in.

The third possibility is commitment to the establishment of a new ideology to replace the old, the establishment of a new social order; a commitment to teaching, perhaps, as a subversive and revolutionary activity. Such a stance does not necessarily imply an ideology which might be akin to 'close-mindedness', a 'system of ideas, beliefs, thoughts, that is closed to further questioning'.<sup>17</sup> The process of cultural transmission itself can replace the certainties of an old order with the more open-minded, post-modernist search for satisfactory meaning. What it cannot do is persuade the young that there are no answers possible, that the selection of a comprehensive moral attitude to life is a matter of 'shopping around' alternative value systems. Choices are not unlimited. They are constrained by our rootedness in history and by the need for

social consensus: what binds societies is at least as important as the differences that open societies will tolerate. Toleration itself is a fundamental value in such a situation.

Accepting the correctness or appropriateness of the concept of vocation as a way of understanding teaching does not commit us to any particular ideological view. The concept of vocation merely stresses the centrality of some ideology which invests the pursuit of teaching with some particular form of socio-political commitment. In such a conception the teacher is seen not just as a practitioner delivering services to a client or consumer who is judged by the practitioner to be temporarily in need of such services, but as an ideologically significant intellectual providing an indispensable social, as well as individual, service.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> C.A., Schleck (1967) 'Vocation, Religious and Clerical' in *The New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vol. XIV, New York, McGraw-Hill.
- <sup>2</sup> Altman, E. (1969-70) 'Teaching as a Vocation: A Reappraisal', *Education For Teaching*, 82, pp. 30, 31.
- <sup>3</sup> B. Haring (1981) *Free And Faithful In Christ III*, London, St. Paul's Publications.
- <sup>4</sup> J., MacQuarrie (1977) *Principles Of Christian Theology*, London, SCM Press.
- <sup>5</sup> MacQuarrie, (1977: 283).
- <sup>6</sup> M. Polanyi (1962) *Personal Knowledge: Towards A Post-Critical Philosophy*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- <sup>7</sup> K.R. Popper (1972) 'Toward a Rational Theory of Tradition', *Conjectures And Refutations: The Growth Of Scientific Knowledge*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- <sup>8</sup> Rejai, M. (1973) 'Ideology', in P.P. Weiner, (ed) *Dictionary Of The History Of Ideas*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons.
- <sup>9</sup> P. Freire (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- <sup>10</sup> Bishop Kevin McNamara (1987) 'The Catholic Teacher', *The Furrow*, February.
- <sup>11</sup> M. Buber (1974) 'Education', *Between Man And Man*, trans. R.G. Smith, London, The Fontana Library.
- <sup>12</sup> A. Gramsci (1971) *Selections From The Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, New York, International Publishers.
- <sup>13</sup> Emphasis added.
- <sup>14</sup> J. Joll (1977) *Gramsci*, London, Fontana.
- <sup>15</sup> A. Gramsci, (1971) *Selections From The Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, New York, International Publishers.
- <sup>16</sup> Writing on the 'formalisation of caring' or 'the colonisation of communicative practices by instrumental rationality', Smith contends that '(A)n exclusive concern with professionalization is likely to bring, in its wake, increasing formality and a tendency to abandon the socioemotional character of caring in favour of a more dispassionate and functional approach to getting the job done'. Carole Smith, (1997) 'Children's Rights: Have Carers Abandoned Values?', *Children and Society*, 11, 3-15, 10, 11.
- <sup>17</sup> David T. Hansen, 'Revitalizing the idea of Vocation in Teaching'.

Muiris Ó Laoire

## **SPLÉACHADH AR THEAGASC AGUS AR FHOGHLAIM NA GAEILGE : CÁ BHFUIL ÁR dTREO ANOIS?**

*Tá an Dr. Muiris Ó Laoire ina léachtóir san Institiúid Teicneolaíochta, Trá Lí agus ina Oifigeach Oideachais le Gaeilge Iar-bhunscoile sa Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta. Tá sé ina chomheagarthóir ar Theagasc na Gaeilge, i gcomhpháirt le Helen Ó Murchú agus ar 'Journal of Celtic Language Learning' le Nancy Stenson.*

*COIMRIÚ: San alt seo, caitear súil siar thráthúil ar theagasc na Gaeilge le deich mbliana anuas ó tosaíodh ar í a mhúineadh de réir phrionsabail an chur chuige chumarsáide, mar atáthar ag tosú sa bhunscoil i láthair na huaire. Suítear na hathruithe i dteagasc na teanga laistigh d'fhráma tagartha an chur chuige cumarsáide agus díritear aird ar a bhfuil i gceist le cumarsáid sa seomra ranga agus ar thábhacht ghníomhaíochtaí chun an sealbhú teanga seachas an fhoghlaim teanga a chur i gcrích. Tugtar aghaidh ar laigí an chur chuige seo agus ar an síorimní i dtaobh míchruinnis. Pléitear forbairtí agus treonna nua i dteagasc teangacha i gcoitinne nár mhiste a phlé i gcomhthéacs mhúineadh na Gaeilge, ait a bhfuil gá le diriú níos mó i ndáiríre ar phróisis na foghlama agus na feasachta le linn teagaisc*

### **RÉAMHRÁ**

Tá siollabas nua Gaeilge na bunscoile atá bunaithe ar an gcur chuige cumarsáide á chur i bhfeidhm anois. Ina theannta sin, tá siollabas 'nua' Gaeilge an Teastais Shóisearaigh i bhfeidhm i gcuraclam na hiar-bhunscoile ó 1989 i leith agus siollabais na hArdteistiméireachta Bonnleibhéal ó 1994 agus Gnáthleibhéal agus Ardleibhéal ar an bhfód ó 1995. Níor mhiste, mar sin, súil siar thráthúil a chaitheamh ar theagasc na Gaeilge ag an dá leibhéal chomh maith le spléachadh a thabhairt ar threonna agus ar fhorbairtí déanacha sa teangeolaíocht fheidhmeach nár mhiste a n-oiriúint do mhúineadh agus

d'fhoghlaim na Gaeilge a iniúchadh go háirithe ó tharla níos mó béime anois ar phróiseas na foghlama féin seachas ar an gcur chuige agus ar na modhanna múinte a mbaintear feidhm astu le linn teagaisc sa seomra ranga.

## CÚLRA NA NUASHIOLLABAS

Tosaíodh ar athnuachan iomlán a dhéanamh ar shiollabais na Gaeilge na hiarbhunscoile níos mó ná deich mbliana ó shin ar chúiseanna a bhain le hathnuachan churaclaim ina hiomláine agus ar shainchúiseanna a bhain le himní mhúinteoirí faoin dhrochbhail a bhí ar theagasc agus ar fhoghlaim na Gaeilge ag an tráth sin (Ó Dubhthaigh 1978; Hopkins 1984; Ó Laoire 1997). Cé go raibh tacaíocht agus bá an phobail leis an teanga á samhlú le dán na teanga, (CLAR 1975: Ó Riagáin agus Ó Gliasáin 1984), bhí údar imní le sonrú, mar sin féin, i dtuarascáileanna an INTO (1985) i dtorthaí taighde de chuid ITÉ agus i dtuairimí múinteoirí féin. Sa tuarascáil a d'eisigh An Bord Curaclaim agus Scrúduithe (1985:23), mar shampla, bhí an méid seo a leanas le rá ag na húdair:

Tá a mbuntáistí féin ag Cúrsaí Comhrá Gaeilge a úsáidtear ins na Bunscoileanna ach tá siad sin teangalárnach sa chur chuige agus tá siad ag teacht salach ar an gcur chuige leanbhilárnach i leith an oideachais a moladh i gcuraclam na bunscoile a tugadh isteach i 1971. Ag an dara leibhéal níl an siollabas don Ghaeilge chun sástachta múinteoirí ná mac léinn in aon chor. Tá aidhmeanna na gcúrsaí Gaeilge neamhshoiléir agus neamhréalaíoch. ... Tá múinteoirí dara leibhéal ar aon aigne go bhfuil an ró-bhéim(*sic*) ar litríocht sa siollabas agus na cleachtais mhíshásúla múinteoireachta a d'fhás de thoradh an chórás scrúdúcháin i measc na bpríomhchúiseanna atá leis an isliú i gcaighdeán na Gaeilge.

I dtuarascáil a d'eisigh An Coiste Comhairleach Pleanála (1986: xxvi), áitíodh an méid seo a leanas i bhfianaise an taighde a rinneadh ar thorthaí na hArdteistiméireachta sa Ghaeilge :

...feictear dúinn ón réasúnaíocht go dtí seo gur ghá an Ghaeilge a mhúineadh do gach scoláire iar-bhunoideachais chun sochaí dhátheangach a dheimhniú amach anseo. Ach má fhéachtar ar thoradh an pholasaí (*sic*) seo sa lá inniu, i gcás breis agus dhá thrian de na scoláirí – nach mbaineann siad ar a mhéid ach cumas neamhghníomhach amach nó go mbíonn doicheall acu roimh an teanga....

Luadh sa tuarascáil chéanna nach raibh an Ghaeilge á múineadh mar ba cheart chun daoine a ullmhú le bheith páirteach sna gréasáin Ghaeilge agus dearbhaíodh gur cúinsí tríú leibhéal ba mhó a bhí in uachtar sa churaclam. Bhí

géarghá, mar sin, le feabhas a chur ar chúrsaí teagaisc agus foghlama ag an dá leibhéal.

## NA SIOLLABAIS NUA

Chuathas, mar sin, i mbun athnuachana siollabais don iar-bhunscolaíocht i lár na n-ochtóidí. Chuige sin, cuireadh coiste cúrsa de chuid an CNCM (An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Churaclaim agus Measúnachta) ar bun a raibh de chúram air moltaí a chur ar fáil maidir le siollabais a dhéanfadh freastal cuí ar riachtanais mhúinteoirí agus daltaí araon, maidir le teagasc agus foghlaim na Gaeilge. Mhol an coiste úd go gcuirfí siollabas cumarsáide i bhfeidhm ar aon dul le siollabais na nuatheangacha. B'ionann na siollabais nuatheangacha cumarsáide agus athrú mór ar mhúineadh agus thástáil teanga. Den chéad uair riamh, bhí siollabas ann a dhírigh ar phróisis an teagaisc agus na foghlama seachas ar chlár scrúduithe amháin mar a d'fhaightí go n-uige sin, i *Rialacha agus Cláir* na Roinne.

Ba chur chuige, seachas modheolaíocht nó modhanna múinte a bhí á mholadh; ceann a bhí bunaithe go dlúth ar fheidhm chumarsáideach na teanga, arbh fhéidir cur síos a dhéanamh uirthi i dtéarmaí na gcumas seo a leanas: cumas gramadaí, cumas straitéise (Bachman 1990) agus cumas sochtheangeolaíoch (Canale agus Swain 1980: 29-30). Bhí gné shocaíoch na teanga lárnach sa chur chuige seo, i.e. chuirfí an bhéim ar fheidheamma úsáide na teanga i réimsí iomadúla an phobail teanga. Chiallaigh sé sin go raibh an teanga bheo le cloistéal anois agus níos tábhachtaí fós, bhí an chumarsáid bheo le pobal labhartha na teanga sin ina sprioc ag an teagasc féin chomh maith.

Bhíodh sé de nós ag múinteoirí faoi anáil fhadbhunaithe an mhodha dhírigh an Ghaeilge a úsáid mar ghnáth-theanga theagaisc sa seomra ranga. Cé go raibh dea-theist ar an modh díreach féin, go minic, ní bhíodh ar siúl, áfach ach ordaithe á dtabhairt ag an múinteoir nó ceisteanna den chineál 'dúnta' [an múinteoir i gcónaí ag súil leis an aon fhreagra ceart amháin], nó caint á déanamh ar mhaithe le rial áirithe gramadaí a mhíniú agus a shoiléiriú. B'annamh mar sin a bhíodh deis á tabhairt do dhaltaí le fíorchumarsáid a dhéanamh. Go minic, is baolach gur cuireadh srian le húsáid nádúrtha na teanga laistigh den seomra ranga agus gur fanadh, dá réir, le cineál teanga amháin ann. B'ionann an cineál teanga seo agus an teanga thuairisciúil i.e., an teagascóir nó an múinteoir ag cur na ceiste: *Inis dom faoi sin.....* agus an foghlaimoír ag tabhairt an fhreagra a fhanann taobh le cineál na teanga tuairisciúla. Anuas air sin, is gnách an múinteoir ag tabhairt breithmheasa ar an gcineál teanga sin, trí mholadh a thabhairt '*Maith an cailín!*' nó trí iarracht an fhoghlaimoíora a cheartú '*Ná habair mar sin é.. Abair.....*' I gcásanna mar sin, ba é an teagascóir a stiúraíodh an cineál teanga agus an dioscúrsa iomlán.

Rud eile ar fad atá sa chur chuige cumarsáide. Baineann an chumarsáid féin le riachtanas, nó i bhfocail eile, éilíonn comhlíonadh ár ngnáthriachtanas laethúil cumarsáid i gcónaí. Míníonn Ní Nuadháin (2000:13) a bhfuil i gceist: "...nuair a bhíonn an cur chuige cumarsáideach sa seomra ranga bíonn an bhéim ar an gcumarsáid i ngach gné den mhúineadh agus den fhoghlaim, ar na rólanna a

bheadh ag daoine i suímh áirithe agus ar an gcumarsáid a bheith chomh nádúrtha agus is féidir.

Bhí deacrachtaí áirithe, agus tá fós ar ndóigh, a bhain le cur chuige mar seo a chur in oiriúint don Ghaeilge. Baineadh leas as an gcur chuige seo den chéad uair i gcomhthéacs sealbhú na mórtheangacha i measc inimirceach san Eoraip i gcaitheamh na seachtóidí. Toisc a lárnaí is a bhí pobal feiceálach úsáideoirí teanga do bhunchoincheap an chur chuige seo, measadh, áfach, nach bhfeicfí an 'gá' nó an 'phráinn' chéanna i gcás na Gaeilge i ngeall ar an uireasa úsáide teanga sa timpeallacht. Bhí sé i gceist, mar sin, go bhféadfaí inspreagadh a thabhairt d'fhoghlaimoirí Gaeilge sa ghearrthéarma ar a laghad agus riachtanais chumarsáide a chothú sa seomra ranga mar aon le faisnéis a bheith ann faoi idirbheartaíochtaí réadúla inar féidir an teanga a úsáid sa tsochaí.

### CUMARSÁID SA SEOMRA RANGA

Moladh sna siollabais nua suímh *inchreidte* chumarsáide a chothú sa seomra ranga. Chuige sin, bhí réimse gníomhaíochtaí ag teastáil nach raibh á gcleachtadh go minic i seomraí ranga go dtí sin, i.e., obair ghrúpa, obair bheirte, rólghlacadh. Cuireadh ábhair agus téacsanna 'aiceanta', dílse foghlama (ábhar a bhféadfaí úsáid inchreidte shochaíoch a shamhlú leis) faoi bhráid foghlaimoirí, m.sh giotaí as irisí, nuachtáin, cláir raidió agus teilifíse &rl agus fiú féachadh le téacsanna litríochta a theagasc sa tslí seo chomh maith (Ó Laoire 2000). Baineann na doiciméid dhílse seo go dlúth leis an gcur chuige cumarsáide. Baintear feidhm as an téarma 'doiciméid dhílse' chun cur síos ar théacsanna labhartha agus scríofa a úsáidtear chun críche cumarsáide i measc pobal teanga ar bith, mar a mhíníonn Little et al (1998:5) '... a text that was created to fulfil some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced.' Murab ionann agus téacsleabhair thraidisiúnta ar cumadh agus ar grádaíodh na téacsanna a bhíodh iontu ó thaobh deacrachta de, chun pointí áirithe gramadaí agus teanga a mhúineadh, gnáthábhar nár cumadh d'aonghnó don seomra ranga atá sna doiciméid dhílse, mar atá ailt as nuachtáin agus irisí, sleachta as úrscéalta, dánta, cláir raidió agus teilifíse, fógraí, litreacha, teachtaireachtaí ríomhphoist scannáin, &rl. Má bhaintear feidhm i gceart as na doiciméid dhílse seo le linn ceachta chun suímh idirghníomhaíochta, chumarsáideacha a chothú, cuirtear go mór leis an sealbhú teanga sa seomra ranga (feic mar shampla Devitt 1989, McGarry 1995, Melvin agus Stout 1987). Tagann úsáid na n-ábhar foghlama seo le linn teagaisc go fóirsteanach fóinteach le teoricí Krashen (1981, 1982) (a bhfuil aitheantas forleathan faighte acu i measc teangeolaithe) i dtaobh ionchur teanga atá ar leibhéal deacrachta atá céim amháin chun tosaigh i gcónaí ar chumas foghlaimoirí sa sprioctheanga. Tagann siad freisin leis an mbéim a chuirtear anois ar theagasc ábhardhírithé. Ní mór cuimhneamh ar a raibh molta i bplépháipéar *Teanga Sa Churaclam*, ag an mBord Curaclaim agus Scrúduithe i bhfad siar: (CEB 1985:25):

Is é an bonn atá ag an gcur chuige cumarsáideach ná 'riachtanais' nó 'práinn' chun cumarsáid a dhéanamh. Admhaítear go bhfuil mórán daltaí ann nach bhfeicfeadh gá ar bith le Gaeilge a fhoghlaim i ngeall ar an uireasa tacaíochta don teanga atá sa timpeallacht, ach is cosúil go bhféadfaí inspreagadh a thabhairt dóibh sa ghearrthéarma ar a laghad, má chruthaítear riachtanas chun an teanga a úsáid chun gníomhaíochtaí céillí a bhrostaíonn a spéiseanna agus a samhlaíocht a chur i gcrích

Ba thionscnamh radacach go leor i dteagasc na Gaeilge a bhí sa chur chuige seo. Ach cén toradh a bhí air?

### **LAIGÍ AN CHUR CHUIGE CHUMARSÁIDE**

Bíodh is go bhfuil glacadh forleathan le héifeacht an chur chuige chumarsáide cumarsáide i gcás na nuatheangacha Eorpacha, níl sé gan a sciar féin de laigí ar ndóigh ná ní íocshláinte ár gcuid deacrachtaí uile é ach oiread. D'áitigh Canale agus Swain (1980) i bhfad siar, nuair a bhíodhas ag cur an cur chuige i bhfeidhm sa teagasc, nach raibh an cur chuige féin á chleachtadh i gceart agus á chur i bhfeidhm mar ba chóir sa seomra ranga. Mhol siad go ndéanfaí breis taighde ar éifeacht agus ar thorthaí an chur chuige, sula mbeadh glacadh forleathan leis. Moladh leis go mbeadh deis ag foghlaimoírí agus ag múinteoirí araon machnamh a dhéanamh ar phróisis na foghlama féin (Richard agus Lockhart, 1994) agus go mbeadh foghlaimoírí i gcoitinne freagrach as a modhanna pearsanta foghlama féin. Cé go bhfuil cuid de na teoricí sin á cur i bhfeidhm (feic Holec 1981; Little 1991; Dickinson 1992; Dam 1995; Dam 2001) meastar fós go mbíonn iomrall cumarsáide ag titim amach i seomraí ranga mar a gcaitheann múinteoirí formhór an ama i mbun cainte agus níos lú ama i mbun chothú na cumarsáide mar ba chúí (Brown 200:184).

Chomh maith leis sin, is léir anois nach bhfuil an cur chuige cumarsáideach féin chomh héifeachtach sin i gcás na nuatheangacha féin maidir le cruinneas agus cruthaitheacht a chothú i measc foghlaimoírí. (feic, mar shampla, Legutke, agus Thomas 1991:7-12). Deirtear i dtaobh chleachtadh na cumarsáide seo nach mbíonn ann go minic ach athrá abairtí agus aithris ar chumarsáid seachas an fhíorchumarsáid féin. (Mitchell 1996) Ag déanamh anailíse dó ar nádúr na cumarsáide mar a chleachtaítear go minic í i dteagasc sna nuatheangacha, tá an méid seo a leanas ag Grenfell (2000:6):

There are major questions here concerning what is taught and why. Certainly memorisation of vocabulary and phrases is at a premium, But what else is there here of value? On many levels the social nature of this interaction is a sham, mimicking the features of communication rather than genuinely communicating. Little wonder therefore, if the final effect were to produce walking phrase books:

individuals equipped with a repertoire of stock phrases but little by way of creating the means for personal expression in the language. We might not be surprised if such an effect were highly demotivating for pupils caught in this way, as so often, on the treadmill of repetition, memorisation and regurgitation.

Fiú nuair a éiríonn le foghlaimeoirí áirithe teanga na cumarsáide a thabhairt leo ón dianchleachtadh, ón athchleachtadh agus ón rólaithris, ní bhíonn ar a gcumas a bhfuil foghlamtha acu a úsáid arís i suímh úra teanga. Pé scéal é, is mór idir suímh chumarsáide an tseomra ranga agus an gnáthshuíomh laethúil cumarsáide lasmuigh den seomra ranga a gcaitheann daoine formhór a saoil ann. D'fhéadfaí a áiteamh go bhfuil suíomh an tseomra ranga féin róthacair b'fhéidir leis an bhfíorchumarsáid laethúil sin a chothú ann ina hiomláine. Ní hionann sin is a rá, ar ndóigh nach mbíonn fíorriachtanais ag foghlaimeoirí i gcaitheamh gnáthlae ach go minic ní bhíonn an dara teanga chomh lárnach sin ina saol go bhféadfaidís í a tharraingt chucu chun a gcuid riachtanas a chur in iúl trína meán. Cad tá á mholadh mar sin sa teangeolaíocht fheidhmeach anois? An raibh an dul amú orainn siollabas cumarsáide a tharraingt chugainn an chéad lá?

### SEALBHÚ TRÍ FHÍORÚSÁID

Ó shaothar Krashen (1981, 1982) anall, tá idirdhealú déanta idir sealbhú nádúrtha teanga, m.sh. sealbhú na máthairtheanga agus foghlaim na sprioctheanga laistigh de chomhthéacs foirmeálta foghlama (an seomra ranga). Creidtear go n-éiríonn le páiste an chéad teanga a shealbhú i slí neamhchomhfhiosach agus is féidir an dara teanga a shealbhú go neamh-chomhfhiosach de réir an phróisis chéanna, chomh maith, nuair a dhéantar iarracht leis an sprioctheanga a úsáid i ngnáthshuímh nádúrtha chumarsáide agus araile. Dá réir sin, creidtear go gcabhraíonn próisis áirithe foghlama le sealbhú an dara teanga laistigh den chomhthéacs scolaíochta (Ellis 2002). Bíonn baint tábhachtach ag an bhfeasacht agus ag an 'tabhairt faoi deara' leis na próisis sin (feic mar shampla Kupferberg agus Olstain 1996). Dá mhéad feasa a bhíonn foghlaimeoirí faoi rialacha na sprioctheanga agus ar a córas úsáide, is amhlaidh is fearr agus is buaine an sealbhú féin (Sharwood –Smith 1981: Schmidt 1993: Ellis 1994; Harley 1994). Is mór idir eolas lom agus feasacht, ar ndóigh. D'fhéadfaí dearmad a dhéanamh go pras ar an eolas lom, ach fanann an fheasacht greanta go buan sa chuimhne fhadtéarmach. Is ionann seo is a rá go bhfuil tábhacht mhór ag baint leis na próisis trína sealbhaíonn duine an sprioctheanga. Tá na próisis seo chomh tábhachtach céanna nó níos tábhachtaí fós ná bheith ag cur eolais ar an teanga féin. Laistigh den chomhthéacs scolaíochta, dá réir sin, ní mór comhthéacsanna agus suímh shealbhaithe a chruthú agus bheith i láthair le linn gnáthcheachta, mar shampla — ionchur iontuigthe teanga, rogha, bearna eolais nó tuairime, comhthéacs inchreidte, comhtháthú scileanna.

## MÚINEADH AGUS FOGHLAIM NA GRAMADAÍ

An féidir an ghramadach a mhúineadh laistigh den chomhthéacs cumarsáideach seo? Is mó múinteoir a chloisfeá ag gearán go bhféadfadh dalta tabhairt faoi riail áirithe gramadaí a chleachtadh go cruinn i slí mheicniúil, chórasach, ach a sháródh an riail chéanna sa chaint nó sa tsaorcheapadóireacht ar a bhogadam! Ní haon ionadh é sin, mar caithfear cuimhneamh go bhfoghlaimíonn foghlaimeoirí conas rialacha gramadaí a úsáid i gceart nuair a bhíonn géarghá leo chun críche cumarsáide. Ciallaíonn sé seo i ndáiríre nach mbíonn an oiread sin gá le cruinneas ach amháin nuair a bhíonn réimse poiblí teanga i gceist. I bhfocail eile, níl an oiread tábhachta céanna ag baint le cruinneas teanga dá mbeifeá ag labhairt le cara leat agus a bheadh, dá mbeifeá ag tabhairt cainte go poiblí agus go hoifigiúil. Baineann an cruinneas teanga, mar sin, leis an réimse poiblí níos mó ná leis an réimse pearsanta. An gcaithfear bheith chomh buartha sin faoi fhoghlaimí bheith míchruinn i litreacha pearsanta, cuntais dialainne etc?

Tá teoríc á scaipeadh ag scoláirí áirithe, dála Harley,(1994) Schmidt (1994) a áitíonn, pé scéal é, gur beag is féidir a dhéanamh i ndáiríre laistigh den seomra ranga chun cruinneas a chothú. Creidtear go bhfuil córas inmheánach, gramadaí ag an duine, atá beag beann ar an teagasc is éifeachtaí, mar go ndéantar an fhoghlaim go neamh-chomhfhiósach. An tslí is fearr ná dul i bhfeidhm sa teagasc ar chomhfheasacht an fhoghlaiméora le deis a thabhairt dó/di teacht ar thuiscint iad féin ar struchtúir agus ar ghnásanna na teanga. Ní féidir, pé scéal é, dul ó ráta 0 [náid] máistreacht go lánmháistreacht ar chruinneas laistigh d'aon chéim foghlama amháin. Téann foghlaimeoirí i gcoitinne trí phróiseas casta idirtheanga an tsealbhairthe ó ord focal go foirmeacha diúltacha go ceisteanna. Níl aon fhianaise againn go bhfaigheann siad máistreacht ar rialacha gramadaí ceann i ndiaidh cinn. Téann gach foghlaimeoir trí phróiseas casta 'idirtheanga' ó ord focal go foirmeacha diúltacha, go foirmeacha ceisteacha ach níl aon fhianaise eolaíoch againn go bhfaigheann siad máistreacht ar rialacha gramadaí ceann i ndiaidh cinn, pé scéal é, mar a dhéantar talamh slán de go minic. Feir Cook (2001:41) faoi seo:

The main issue is the connection between conscious understanding of a rule and the ability to use it. Grammatical explanation in the classroom has thus relied on the assumption that rules that are learnt consciously can be converted into unconscious process of comprehension and production. Some people have questioned whether academic knowledge ever converts into the ability to use the language in this way.'

An bhfuil teorainn, mar sin, leis an méid ar féidir a dhéanamh sa seomra ranga ó thaobh shealbhú teanga de?

## MODHANNA MÚINTE AGUS FOGHLAIM: TREONNA NUA

Ní hionann in aon chor múineadh agus foghlaim teanga. Ní chinntíonn teagasc foghlaim, mar a deir Allwright (1993:39): 'Learners do not learn what teachers teach. Whatever they do in fact learn stands in some infinitely more

complex relationship to what teachers teach. They learn more or learn less, and it seems extraordinarily difficult to predict what they will get from a lesson, however clearly structured it is'. Baineann siollabas tagartha ar nós chinn an Teastais Shóisearaigh agus na hArdteistiméireachta go minic le teagasc seachas le foghlaim na teanga. Is éard atá sa siollabas ná sainiú nó beachtú de réir phrionsabail nó theoiricí áirithe teangeolaíochta ar ábhar cúrsa/clár teagaisc. Baineann modhanna múinte nó modheolaíocht leis an gcaoi agus leis an bpróisis ina mbaintear spriocanna an tsiollabais amach. Ach cé go leagtar béim ar ghníomhaíochtaí teanga a chothaíonn foghlaim sna treoirlínte teagaisc a ghabhann leis na siollabais, fós féin, bíonn níos mó béime ar conas tabhairt faoi na scileanna éagsúla a theagasc, seachas ar phróisis fhíorthábhachtacha na foghlama féin. Glactar leis go minic, má bhíonn an teagasc féin i gceart agus go críochnúil gurb ionann sin is a rá, go leanfaidh an fhoghlaim é.

Tá forbairtí nua ag teacht chun cinn sa teangeolaíocht fheidhmeach le tamall de bhlianta anuas atá ag déanamh forlíonadh ar an gcur chuige cumarsáideach, nó atá ag cur leis, agus a leagann béim ar thábhacht phróiseas na foghlama féin sa mhodheolaíocht. Ní foláir breis airde a thabhairt ar an bhfeasacht teanga le linn teagaisc. Cuimsíonn an fheasacht teanga na próisis iomadúla trína gcuireann an foghlaimeoir eolas ar an teanga, ní de bharr an eolais teanga amháin ach de bharr machnaimh ar phróisis na foghlama chomh maith. Deir James (1999: 102) faoin machnamh seo: 'I define Language Awareness as having or gaining explicit knowledge about and skill in reflecting on and talking about one's own language over which one has also a related set of intuitions. Intuitive knowledge will thus be explicated.' Gineann an machnamh seo scileanna eile, scileanna foghlama, scileanna idirdhealaithe agus scileanna féinaithne mar fhoghlaimeoir teanga. Gineann sé go háirithe scileanna san fhoghlaim eair a chuireann ar a chumas comparáid a dhéanamh idir an mháthairtheanga nó an dara teanga atá aige agus an sprioctheanga. Is de nádúr foghlama teanga comparáid den sórt seo a dhéanamh idir an teanga nua atá á foghlaim agat (an sprioctheanga) agus an teanga/ na teangacha atá ar do thoil agat, nó atá foghlamtha agat cheana féin. Cé go bhfuil an teanga á foghlaim le fada ag foghlaimeoirí áirithe, tá an seans ann nach raibh deis acu riamh cuid de ghnéithe na teanga a phlé agus machnamh a dhéanamh orthu i dtéarmaí comparáide idir an Ghaeilge agus a máthairtheanga nó teangacha eile. Bíonn eolas inmhéanach ag gach duine ar a theanga féin. Nuair a thosaíonn duine ar theanga eile (T2) a fhoghlaim, baineann sé/sí úsáid éigin as an eolas sin — fiú go neamhchomhfhiosach le comparáid a dhéanamh idir córas na máthairtheanga agus córas na sprioctheanga sin. Má bhíonn deis ag foghlaimeoirí na difríochtaí agus na cosúlachtaí sin a phlé, tá gach seans ann go dtiocfaidh feabhas ar an gcruinneas dá bharr. Míníonn Wolff (1994:12) a bhfuil i gceist: '...learners' personal experience of the task and processes of language learning itself, their strategies of language learning, their language learning history, their metalinguistic awareness, their difficulty or failures to master certain aspects of the target language are all an established part of Language Awareness work'. Tá sé tábhachtach ó thaobh teagaisc de, go ndéanfaidh an

múinteoir comparáideanna rialta chomh maith. Léiríonn taighde atá déanta ag Byram agus Morgan (1994), mar shampla, go n-éiríonn níos fearr le múinteoirí a bhaineann feidhm as modh na comparáide seo le linn teagaisc.

Bíonn deacrachtaí ag foghlaimeoirí le gnéithe áirithe de ghramadach na teanga agus is minic a léiríonn siad míthuiscintí bunúsacha sa mhíchruinneas labhartha agus scríofa. Fiú nuair a dhírítear sa teagasc ar na rialacha gramadaí, feictear nach mbíonn dea-thoradh fadtéarmach ar an iarracht i ndáiríre. Éiríonn le foghlaimeoirí áirithe an riail a chleachtadh go cruinn nuair a bhíonn sraith de thrialacha nó de chleachtaí bunaithe go tomhaiste ar an riail sin le déanamh acu, ach níos minicí ná a mhalairt, tá a fhios ag múinteoirí go ndéanfaidh siad faillí i gcruinnúsáid na rialach céanna, i ngan fhios dóibh féin i gcomhthéacsanna úsáide eile. Ach tá dearcadh eile ar an mbotún á thabhairt anois a deir linn, gur deis thábhachtach atá sa bhotún má dhíríonn an foghlaimeoir agus an múinteoir ní amháin ar an bhfoirm cheart den bhriathar, nó den ainmfhocal &rl ach ar an gcúis a ndearadh an botún sa chéad áit, cheal tabhairt faoi deara.

Cabhraíonn an fheasacht teanga le foghlaimeoirí úsáid na teanga sa saol laethúil a thabhairt faoi deara chomh maith agus plé 'pearsanta' a dhéanamh de réir a n-acmhainne ar a bhfuil i gceist sa dátheangachas, sa Ghaeltacht, san ilteangachas, i gcanúintí, (fiú canúintí an Bhéarla) atá timpeall orainn sa lá atá inniu ann. D'fhéadfadh sé seo suim fhoghlaimeoirí a mhúscailt sa teanga, mar feictear dom go bhfuil an Ghaeilge á cur i láthair ar dhaltaí i gcineál folúis go minic ionas nach dtuigeann siad na cúiseanna tábhachtacha a bhfuil an teanga le foghlaim acu sa chéad áit.

Cuid thábhachtach den fheasacht teanga ná go ndíríonn sé aird fhoghlaimeirí ar na modhanna foghlama atá in úsáid acu. Tá ról tábhachtach ag an bhfoghlaim neamhspleách, mar a nglacann foghlaimeoirí níos mó freagrachta orthu féin as próisis chasta, iomadúla a gcuid foghlama féin. (Little 1991, 1995, 1996) Ní amháin go gcabhraíonn an fheasacht teanga le foghlaimeoirí dul i ngleic leis na fadhbanna áirithe a bhíonn acu i mbun foghlama agus i mbun chruinnúsaid na teanga; ach tugann sé breis tuisceana dóibh chomh maith ar nádúr na foghlama féin agus cuireann sé ar a gcumas a gcuid iarrachtaí féin mar fhoghlaimeoirí teanga a mheas go críochnúil, eolaíoch macánta. Cabhraíonn an fhoghlaim neamhspleách nó an fhoghlaim fhéinriair mar go gcuireann sí ar a gcumas straitéisí foghlama a aimsiú a chabhraíonn leo breis freagrachta a bheith acu as próisis na foghlama féin. Roghnaíonn foghlaimeoirí scileanna foghlama a oireann dóibh féin dá réir (Holec 1981). Tá samplaí eiseamláireacha praiticiúla den chur chuige seo curtha ar fáil cheana féin, (feic Page 1992; Dam 1995; Ó Laoire 1994; 1997).

Sna cúrsaí bunaithe ar na siollabais seo, murab ionann agus na cúrsaí a d'imigh rompu, ní féidir srian iomlán a chur leis an méid foclóra a d'fhéadfadh an foghlaimeoir teacht air trí bheith ag éisteacht le nó bheith ag léamh téacsanna dílse aiceanta. Tá sé tábhachtach mar sin, go mbeadh scileanna agus straitéisí foghlama sealbhaithe ag an bhfoghlaimeoir a chabhródh leis/léi dul i ngleic le

nádúr na foghlama teanga ag an leibhéal. Dá mhéad freagrachta a bhíonn ag an bhfoghlaimoir, is amhlaidh is fearr é.

Creidtear anois chomh maith go bhfuil tábhacht ag baint le haird fhoghlaimoirí a dhíriú d'aonghnó ar an tslí ina bhfoghlaimíonn siad an teanga. Foghlaimíonn siad faoi na straitéisí foghlama éagsúla atá ann (Oxford 1987.1990, O'Malley, Chamot 1990, Naiman et al 1995) agus foghlaimíonn siad conas tabhairt faoin bhfoghlaim féin. Faigheann foghlaimoirí amach faoi na cineálacha straitéise is oiriúnaí dóibh féin agus iad i mbun foghlama. Creidtear go dtagann feabhas suntasach ar an bhfoghlaim féin nuair a chuirtear eolas ar na straitéisí is fearr a oireann do shealbhú na scileanna éagsúla.

## CONCLUÍD

Is léir go bhfuil forbairtí móra tagtha ar an bhfód sa teangeolaíocht fheidhmeach ó cuireadh an cur chuige cumarsáideach i bhfeidhm den chéad uair. Tá níos mó béime á cur, dá mbarr, ar phróisís na foghlama seachas ar mheicníocht na múinteoireachta. Is mithid mar sin súil a chaitheamh ar a bhfuil ag titim amach inár seomraí ranga Gaeilge arís faoi léas na bhforbairtí seo. Ní mór athmhachnamh ar an gcur chuige cumarsáide trí dhíriú ar an bhfeasacht teanga i gceart sa seomra ranga. Tá an fheasacht teanga luaite sna siollabais go léir agus is tuar dóchais é go bhfuil aird faoi leith á tabhairt air i siollabas na bunscoile. Ach caithfear díriú air i gceart agus ina iomláine i slí chórasach leanúnach. Go minic cloistear gearáin ó mhúinteoirí dara leibhéal gur bhreá leo 'tabhairt faoina leithéid' ach go mbíonn siad ró-ghnóthach i mbun ullmhúcháin do na scrúduithe. Caithfear a admháil go bhféadfaí an t-ullmhúchán sin a dhéanamh gan tabhairt faoina bhfuil molta de réir an chur chuige chumarsáidigh! Níor mhiste féachaint arís ar na hionstraim mheasúnachta atá in úsáid againn lena chinntiú go mbeidh siad níos cumarsáidí. Ach ar deireadh an cheist is tábhachtaí atá le freagairt againn mar mhúinteoirí Gaeilge ná — an mbíonn deis ag foghlaimoirí teacht ar thuiscint ar a bhfuil i gceist le foghlaim na Gaeilge agus an dtuigeann siad nádúr na cumarsáide le pobal na Gaeltachta sa Ghaeltacht agus lasmuigh di? An mbeidh níos mó airde á tabhairt againn ar an ngné seo-an ghné is tábhachtaí ar fad, i.e., gné na foghlama féin agus gné na feasachta amach anseo? Tugaimis faoi phlé arís ar na ceisteanna tábhachtachta seo!

## TAGAIRTÍ

Allwright, R. (1993) in Huttunen, I. (eag) *Proceedings Report on Workshop 2B: Learning to Learn Languages: Investigating Learner Strategies and Learner Autonomy*, Council of Europe Council for Cultural Co-operation, pp. 14-15.

Bachman, L.F. (1990) *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brown, K. (2000) 'Creative thinking about a new modern languages pedagogy', in Green, S. (eag) *New Perspectives on Teaching and Learning Modern Languages*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters pp. 183-194.

Byram, M. Morgan, C. (1994) *Teaching and Learning Language and Culture*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Canale M. Swain, M. (1980) 'Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing', *Applied Linguistics* (1) 1, 1-47.

CLAR (Committee on Language Attitudes Research) (1975) *Tuarascáil*, Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair.

CCP (Coiste Comhairle Pleanála)(1985) *Irish in the Educational System: An Analysis of Examination Results*, Baile Átha Cliath: Bord na Gaeilge.

Cook, V. (2001) *Second Language Learning and Teaching*, Londain: Arnold.

Curriculum and Examinations Board (1985) *Languages in the Curriculum*, Baile Átha Cliath: CEB.

Dam, L. (1995) *Learner Autonomy: From theory to classroom practice*, Baile Átha Cliath: Authentik.

Devitt, S. (1989) *Classroom Discourse: Its Nature and Its Potential for Language Learning*, Páipéar Ócáide Uimhir 21, Baile Átha Cliath: CLCS, Coláiste na Tríonóide.

Ellis, N. C. (1994) 'Consciousness in second language learning: Psychological perspectives on the role of conscious processes in vocabulary acquisition', *Aila Review* 11, pp. 37-56.

Ellis, N.C. (2002) 'Frequency effects in language acquisition: A review with implications for theories of implicit and explicit language acquisition' *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 24: 2, pp. 143-188.

Grenfell, M. (2000) 'Learning and teaching strategies' in Green, S. (eag) *New Perspectives on Teaching and Learning Modern Languages*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, pp. 1-23.

Harley, B. (1994) 'Appealing to consciousness in the L2 classroom', *Aila Review* 11, pp. 57-68.

Harris, J. Murtagh, L. (1999) *Teaching and Learning Irish in Primary School: A Review of Research and Development*, Baile Átha Cliath: ITÉ.

Holec, H. (1981) *Autonomy and foreign language teaching*, Oxford: Pergamon.

Hopkins, M. (1984) 'Irish language and literature in the post-primary school: theoretical and practical directions for curriculum change', *Studies in Education* 2 (2).

INTO Irish National Teachers' Organisation (1985) *The Irish Language in Primary Education. Summary of INTO Survey of teachers' attitudes to the position of Irish in primary education*, Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair.

- James, C. (1999) 'Language awareness: implications for the language classroom', *Language Culture and Curriculum*, 12 (1) 94-115.
- Krashen, S. (1981) *Second language acquisition and second language learning*, Oxford: Pergamon.
- Krashen, S. (1982) *Principles and practices in second language acquisition*, Oxford: Pergamon.
- Kupferberg, I. and Olshtain, E. (1996) 'Explicit contrastive instruction facilitates the acquisition of difficult L2 forms', *Language Awareness* 5: 3 & 4, pp. 149-165.
- Legutke, M. and Thomas, H. (1990) *Process and experience in the language classroom*, New York: Longman.
- Little, D. Devitt, S. and Singleton, D. (1989) *Learning Foreign Languages from Authentic Texts: Theory and Practice*, Baile Átha Cliath: Authentik.
- Little, D. (1991) *Learner Autonomy: Definitions, Issues and Problems*, Baile Átha Cliath: Authentik.
- Little, D. Devitt, S. and Singleton, D. (1994) 'The communicative approach and communicative texts' in Swarbrick, A. (eag) *Teaching Modern Languages*, Londain: Routledge, pp. 48-47.
- Little, D. (1991) *Learner Autonomy*, Baile Átha Cliath: Authentik.
- Little, D. (1995) 'Learning as dialogue: the dependence of learner autonomy on teacher Autonomy' in *System* 23(2), pp. 175-181.
- Little, D. (1996) 'Learner autonomy: some steps in the evolution of theory and practice' in *Teanga* 16, pp. 1-14.
- McGarry, D. (1995) *The Role of Authentic Texts*, Baile Átha Cliath: Authentik.
- Melvin, B. and Stout, D.F. (1987) 'Motivating language learners through authentic materials' in Rivers, W. (eag) *Interactive Language Teaching*. Cambridge: CUP, pp. 44-56.
- Mitchel, R. (1996) 'Language, education and applied linguistics in a changing world' in Hickey, T. Williams, J. (eag) *Language, Education and Society in a Changing World*, Baile Átha Cliath: IRAAL/Multilingual Matters, pp. 7-20.
- Naiman, N. Frölich, M. Stern, H.H. and Todesco, A. (1995) *The Good Language Learner*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Ní Nuadháin, N. (2000) 'Cur chuige cumarsáideach, modhanna múinte, straitéisí teagaisc agus foghlama' in *Teagasc na Gaeilge* 7. 13-31.
- Ó Dubhghaill, A. agus Ó Súilleabháin, E. (1986) 'Teagasc na Gaeilge sa 21ú haois: amhras faoin gcur chuige cumarsáideach' in *Comhar* 45(5) pp.13-16.
- Ó Dubhthaigh, F. (1978). 'Múineadh na Gaeilge san Iar-bhunscoil' in *Léachtaí Cholm Chille* IX, pp.19-43.
- Ó Laoire, M. (1994) 'Challenge, exploration and change in the teaching of Irish at post-primary level' in *Teanga* 14, pp. 40-47.
- Ó Laoire, M. (1997) 'Gearáin agus Caighdeáin', *Irisleabhar Mhá Nuad 1996-1997*, pp. 204- 225.
- Ó Laoire, M. (1997) 'The role of instructional inputs in promoting autonomy in the second language classrooms', *Teanga* 17, pp. 43-54.

Ó Laoire, M. (2000) 'Teagasc na Gaeilge san iar-bhunscóil: cén treo anois?', in *Teagasc na Gaeilge* 7, pp. 32-42.

Ó Laoire, M. (2000) 'Cumarsáid: aimsigh bunteachtaireacht an scríbhneora', in *Teagasc na Gaeilge* 7, pp. 264-272.

O' Malley, J., Chamot, A. (1990) *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ó Riagáin, P. Ó Gliasáin, M. (1994) *National Survey on Languages 1993: Preliminary Report*, Baile Átha Cliath: ITÉ.

Oxford, R.L. (1987) 'Use of language learning strategies: a synthesis of studies with implications for strategy training', *System* 17(2), pp. 235-247.

Oxford, R. L. (1990) *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*, Rowley, Mass: Newbury House.

Page, B. (eag) (1992) *Letting Go, Taking Hold: A Guide to Independent Learning by Teachers for Teachers*, Londain: CILT.

Richards, J.C. Lockhart, C. (1994) *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schmidt, R. (1993) 'Awareness and second language acquisition', *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 13, 206-226.

Schmidt, R. (1994) 'Deconstructing consciousness in search of useful definitions for applied linguistics', *Aila Review* 11, pp. 11-26.

Sharwood Smith M. (1981) 'Consciousness-raising and the second language learner', *Applied Linguistics* 2:159-69.

Wolff, D. (1994) *New Approaches to Language Teaching*, CLCS Occasional Paper Uimhir 39, Baile Átha Cliath: CLCS.

Keith J. Topping

## PAIRED READING WITH PEERS AND PARENTS

*Dr. Keith Topping is director of graduate Educational Psychology and the Centre for Paired Learning at the University of Dundee in Scotland. He holds degrees from the universities of Sussex, Nottingham and Sheffield and is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society. He develops and researches methods for parent and peer assisted learning, behaviour management and social competence, electronic literacy and computer aided assessment.*

*ABSTRACT: Paired Reading (PR) is a very specific structured technique for enhancing reading accuracy, comprehension and fluency, designed for use by parents, peers, volunteers and other non-professional helpers. It has been intensively evaluated and found to be effective with a wide range of age and ability, resulting in social and emotional as well as cognitive gains. However, the term 'Paired Reading' has also been applied by some practitioners to almost anything that two people do together with a book, so clarity is needed about nomenclature. More recently, the method has been extended to higher order reading and thinking skills. The structured PR method is increasingly used around the world, and in electronic as well as paper reading environments. There is also increasing interest in deploying PR to promote inclusion.*

*([HYPERLINK 'http://www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology/Inclusion'](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology/Inclusion)) [www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology/Inclusion](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology/Inclusion)).*

### INTRODUCTION

In a recent review of the effectiveness of twenty interventions in reading, Paired Reading ranked as one of the most effective, surpassed only by one or two methods which seemed to have produced spectacular results, but which had only been evaluated with very small numbers of children (Brooks, Flanagan, Henkhuzens and Hutchison, 1998). By contrast, Paired Reading has been demonstrated to be effective with thousands of children in hundreds of schools. Additionally, implementing Paired Reading typically involves very modest additional costs in time and materials, with strong implications for relative cost-effectiveness.

Of course, just because a method is effective does not ensure it continues to be used, and some teachers have been heard to express declining interest in Paired Reading because it is not 'the latest thing'. Fortunately most teachers are too sensible and pragmatic to be so easily influenced by concern with novelty. Indeed, amidst much talk of higher standards and targets, governments around the world are showing greatly increased interest in evidence-based education and issues of school effectiveness (see, for example, Postlethwaite and Ross, 1992; Teddlie and Reynolds, 1999). And as this paper later outlines, there are a number of new developments and applications in the world of Paired Reading.

Nomenclature has been another problem – the phrase 'Paired Reading' has such a warm, comfortable feel to it, some teachers have loosely applied it to almost anything that two people do together with a book. Of course, the effectiveness research only applies to 'proper' Paired Reading – the specific and structured technique described below (and in more detail in Topping, 1995, 2001). Some teachers have invented their own procedure, cheerfully (mis-)labelled it Paired Reading, then found it did not work, and looked around for somebody else to blame. This dilution through problems of loose nomenclature and poor implementation integrity can easily result in muddled attitudes to the technique. Indeed, in the USA, the need was felt to re-label 'proper' Paired Reading to try to avoid this kind of confusion – teachers there felt the new name 'Duolog Reading' was unusual enough to remain clearly identifiable in an educational market-place overwhelmed with a plethora of methods.

In the 1980's, there was a great surge of interest and activity in the UK in parental involvement in reading. In the 1990's, although parental involvement figured strongly in governmental rhetoric, the real effect of other changes and stresses seemed to be a slowing down in work with parents, unless through a specifically funded project – at best a plateau phenomenon. However, the pressure to 'do more with less' increased. In striving to raise attainments, some schools turned increasingly to various forms of peer tutoring in reading.

It would be most unfortunate if peer tutoring were seen as a substitute for parental involvement. It is certainly potentially powerful and effective, and has the attractions to teachers of requiring relatively little teacher energy to establish, and being very much under the direct control of the school. Parental involvement tends to require more energy to establish (especially in the early days, when there can be frustrations and disappointments), and seems inherently more risky (who knows what those parents are saying and doing?). However, the positive side effects of parental involvement can be enormously potent. Peer tutoring can improve ethos and relationships between children in school, but parental involvement can improve ethos and relationships between adults and children through the whole local community.

## PARENTS OR PEERS AS TUTORS?

For decades many ordinary primary (elementary) schools claimed to have a policy of sending reading books home, so that children could be 'heard read' by their parents. In fact, surveys indicated that practices even within one school were often very various, according to which class teacher a child happened to have. Often, little guidance might be given to parents as to the rationale for the child reading any particular book, and what the parent was actually expected to do at home in interaction with the child and the book.

The Haringey research led to both quantitative and qualitative changes in practice. In 1980, Jenny Hewison and Jack Tizard reported research on a disadvantaged area of inner London which demonstrated clearly that one of the largest factors in children's reading attainment in school was whether they read with their parents at home, irrespective of whether the school operated a formal parental involvement scheme. This was followed up by a direct intervention, and in 1982 Jack Tizard, Bill Schofield and Jenny Hewison were able to report on a project in which teachers had encouraged parents to hear their children read at home, given a little additional guidance and the support of home visits. The attainment of the project children rose substantially, in comparison to a control group and children who had received extra small-group help from qualified teachers. It was subsequently reported that these differentials had been maintained at long-term follow-up (Hewison, 1988). Suddenly it had become clear that it was actually more cost-effective for a teacher to spend some time encouraging and organising the involvement of parents in their own children's reading development, rather than spend all their time on the direct classroom teaching of reading.

Peer tutoring is also a long-standing method. The idea is a very old one, first noted hundreds of years ago. In Britain, Bell and Lancaster used peer tutoring on a large scale about 200 years ago. By 1816, 100,000 children were learning in this way. However, in recent years it has become much clearer how to organise peer tutoring more effectively. Peer tutoring involves children purposely helping other children to learn, in role as tutors and tutees. Sometimes older children help younger children, and sometimes more able children help less able children of the same age. When peer tutoring is properly organised, tutors gain as much, if not more, than the tutees. To tutor a subject, you have to really strive to understand and communicate it well – this intellectual engagement benefits the tutor.

Reviews of research on peer tutoring consistently find that structured methods of tutoring are associated with better-measured outcomes for both tutors and tutees (e.g. Sharpley and Sharpley, 1981; Cohen, Kulik and Kulik, 1982; Topping & Ehly, 1998). Many studies show that peer tutoring also improves how both tutor and tutee **feel** about the subject area — they grow to like it more. Also, in many cases the tutor and tutee grow to like each other more, and get on better. There are many reports of both tutor and tutee showing more confidence and better behaviour.

Some primary schools are now offering all their younger children the chance to be a tutee, and all their older children the chance to be a tutor. This helps to settle the young children into the school socially, and gives a boost to the older children, who feel very grown-up and responsible. Like class-wide tutoring, this is important because it gives all children an equal opportunity to participate. (In other schools there is still a tendency to select a few of the ‘best’ children as tutors. These are often those who are most like the teachers and might be very disparate in ability from their tutees, raising anxieties about any possible gains for the tutors, and implying that peer tutoring is a form of inferior surrogate teaching.)

Parental involvement and peer tutoring are thus both powerful methods for interactive learning. They should not be construed as alternatives to each other, although at some ages one might seem more developmentally appropriate and acceptable than another. For instance, in high schools parents can lose touch with what their children are doing, but peer tutoring is often more and more popular with children as they move up through the school.

### **WHAT IS PAIRED READING (PR)?**

The elements in the structure of the method are described below in relation to peer tutoring – minor adaptations are made for parent tutors.

#### **Selecting Material**

The tutee chooses high-interest reading material, from school, the community library or home. Newspapers and magazines are fine. Because Paired Reading is a kind of supported or assisted reading, tutees are encouraged to choose material above their independent readability level. Of course, the material must not be above the independent readability level of the tutor!

#### **Contact Time**

Pairs commit themselves to an initial trial period of at least 15 minutes per day at least three times per week for about eight weeks. At least some of this should be in regular scheduled class time, with the possibility of doing more during recess if the pair wish. This frequency of usage enables the pair to become fluent in the method and is sufficient to begin to see some change in the tutee’s reading.

#### **Position & Discussion**

Finding a relatively quiet and comfortable place is desirable — not easy in a busy school with many other pairs at work around you. It is important that both members of the pair can see the book equally easily — tutors who get neck-ache get irritable! Pairs are encouraged to talk about the book, to develop shared enthusiasm and to ensure the tutee really understands the content. Of course, discussion makes noise.

## **Correction**

A very simple and ubiquitously applicable correction procedure is prescribed. When the tutee says a word wrong, the tutor just tells the tutee the correct way to say the word, has the tutee repeat it correctly, and the pair carry on. Saying 'No!' and giving phonic or any other prompts is forbidden.

## **Pause**

However, tutors do not jump in and put the word right straight away. The rule is that tutors pause and give the tutee four seconds to see if they will put it right by themselves. Tutees will not learn to self-correct if not allowed the opportunity to practise this. Holding off for four seconds is not easy. Tutors can be encouraged to count slowly to four in their heads before allowing themselves to interrupt. (The exception to this rule is with the rushed and impulsive reader. In this case earlier intervention and a finger point from the tutor to guide racing eyes back to the error word is necessary).

## **Praise**

Praise for good reading is essential. Tutors should **look** pleased as well as saying a variety of positive things. Praise is particularly required for good reading of hard words, getting all the words in a sentence right and putting wrong words right before the tutor does (self-correction). PR does not proscribe undesirable behaviours (since that is usually ineffective), but instead promotes desirable behaviours which are incompatible with the undesirable ones.

## **Reading Together**

So how can the tutee manage this difficult book s/he has chosen? Tutors support tutees through difficult text by Reading Together — both members of the pair read all the words out loud together, with the tutor modulating their speed to match that of the tutee, while giving a good model of competent reading. The tutee must read every word and errors are corrected as above.

## **Signalling For Reading Alone**

When an easier section of text is encountered, the tutee may wish to read a little without support. Tutor and tutee agree on a way for the tutee to signal for the tutor to stop Reading Together. This could be a knock, a sign or a squeeze. When the tutee signals, the tutor stops reading out loud right away, while praising the tutee for being so confident.

## **Return To Reading Together**

Sooner or later while Reading Alone the tutee will make an error which they cannot self-correct within four seconds. Then the tutor applies the usual correction procedure and joins back in Reading Together.

## **The Paired Reading Cycle**

The pair go on like this, switching from Reading Together to Reading Alone, to give the tutee just as much help as is needed at any moment. Tutees should never 'grow out of' Reading Together; they should always be ready to use it as they move on to harder and harder books.

Of course there is relatively little new about Paired Reading — some aspects of long-standing practice have merely been put together in a particularly successful package. However, it is this precise combination which has been proven. Remember PR does not constitute the whole reading curriculum, but is designed to complement professional teaching without interfering with it. Full details of how to organise PR successfully are given in Topping (1995, 2001).

### **EVIDENCE ON EFFECTIVENESS**

The Paired Reading method has now been very widely disseminated all over the world, and has been the subject of a great deal of research. This has been the subject of reviews by Topping and Lindsay (1992) and Topping (1995). Much of the evaluation has been in terms of gains on norm-referenced tests of reading before and after the initial intensive period of involvement. The general picture in published studies is that Paired Readers progress at about 4.2 times 'normal' rates in reading accuracy on test during the initial period of commitment.

Nor are these results confined to isolated and possibly atypical research projects. In the Kirklees LEA in Yorkshire the technique has been used widely by a large number of schools, and in a sample of 2372 children in 155 projects run by many different schools, average test gains of 3.3 times normal rates in reading accuracy and 4.4 times normal rates in reading comprehension were found. This represents a very substantial effect size. These results were supported by baseline and control group data. At follow-up the gains of Paired Readers had not 'washed out' (Topping, 1995). More data were available for parent-tutored than peer-tutored projects, but no significant difference in outcomes between the two was found. The evidence suggested that tutors tended to gain more than tutees, although this difference did not reach statistical significance. There was less follow-up research on peer tutoring than parent tutoring.

Taking another approach to evaluation, the subjective views of tutors, tutees and teachers in the unselected projects were also gathered by structured questionnaire (Topping and Whiteley, 1990). In a sample of over 1000 tutors, after PR 70% considered their tutee was now reading more accurately, more fluently and with better comprehension. Greater confidence in reading was noted by 78% of tutors. Teachers reported generalised reading improvement in the classroom in a slightly smaller proportion of cases. Of a sample of 964 tutees, 95% felt that after PR they were better at reading and 92% liked reading more. Eighty-seven per cent found it easy to learn to do, 83% liked doing it and 70% said they would go on doing it.

In the Paired Reading phase of the pilot Paired Reading and Thinking project in Scotland during the National Year of Reading (Topping, 2001), 13 schools and 34 classes were involved (in 4 classes not all children were involved, often because they were mixed-age classes, so the equivalent of 32 full classes participated). For tutees in 16 full classes, 9 classes showed average gains well above normal which reached statistical significance, 6 classes showed gains above normal which did not reach statistical significance, and one class showed only normal gains. For tutors in 16 full classes, 7 classes showed gains well above normal which reached statistical significance, 8 classes showed gains above normal which did not reach statistical significance, and one class showed only normal gains. The aggregated gains for all tutors were highly statistically significant ( $p < 0.000$ ) (i.e. the probability of a gain of that size happening by chance was so small that when giving results only to three places of decimals it doesn't seem to exist at all). The same was true for the tutees.

An analysis was conducted of the relationship between pre-test reading ability and amount of reading test gain. Overall, the **least able tutees gained most, and the least able tutors gained most**. Low ability tutors produced tutee gains at least equivalent to those produced by high ability tutors, and low ability tutors themselves gained more than high ability tutors.

The relationship between reading gains and gender was also analysed. Overall, female tutees did better than male tutees, but male tutors did better than female tutors in terms of their own test gains. So perhaps boys learn better by being tutors than by being tutored. Teachers had been encouraged to match children by ability differential, disregarding gender, but nevertheless cross gender matching proved to be less usual. However, cross gender matching actually yielded better tutee gains than same-gender matching, and was good for tutors as well. Male-Male pairs appeared very good for the tutor, but not for the tutee (contrary to previous findings of high gains for both partners in this constellation, see Topping and Whiteley, 1993). Female-Female pairs did least well on aggregate.

Social gains were also widely reported. Each participating teacher was asked to record their summary observations of child behaviour. They were asked to comment only on children in their class whose reading they knew before Paired Reading started, and only indicate change if they had observed it, it was significant, and it had definitely occurred since PR started. The response rate was 33 out of 34 possible (97% — one teacher had left the school). The summary results are displayed in Figure 1 for behaviour in the classroom during Paired Reading, and in Figure 2 for behaviour in other activities in the classroom and outside the classroom within school.

Figure 1: TEACHER OBSERVATIONS: DURING THE PR SESSIONS

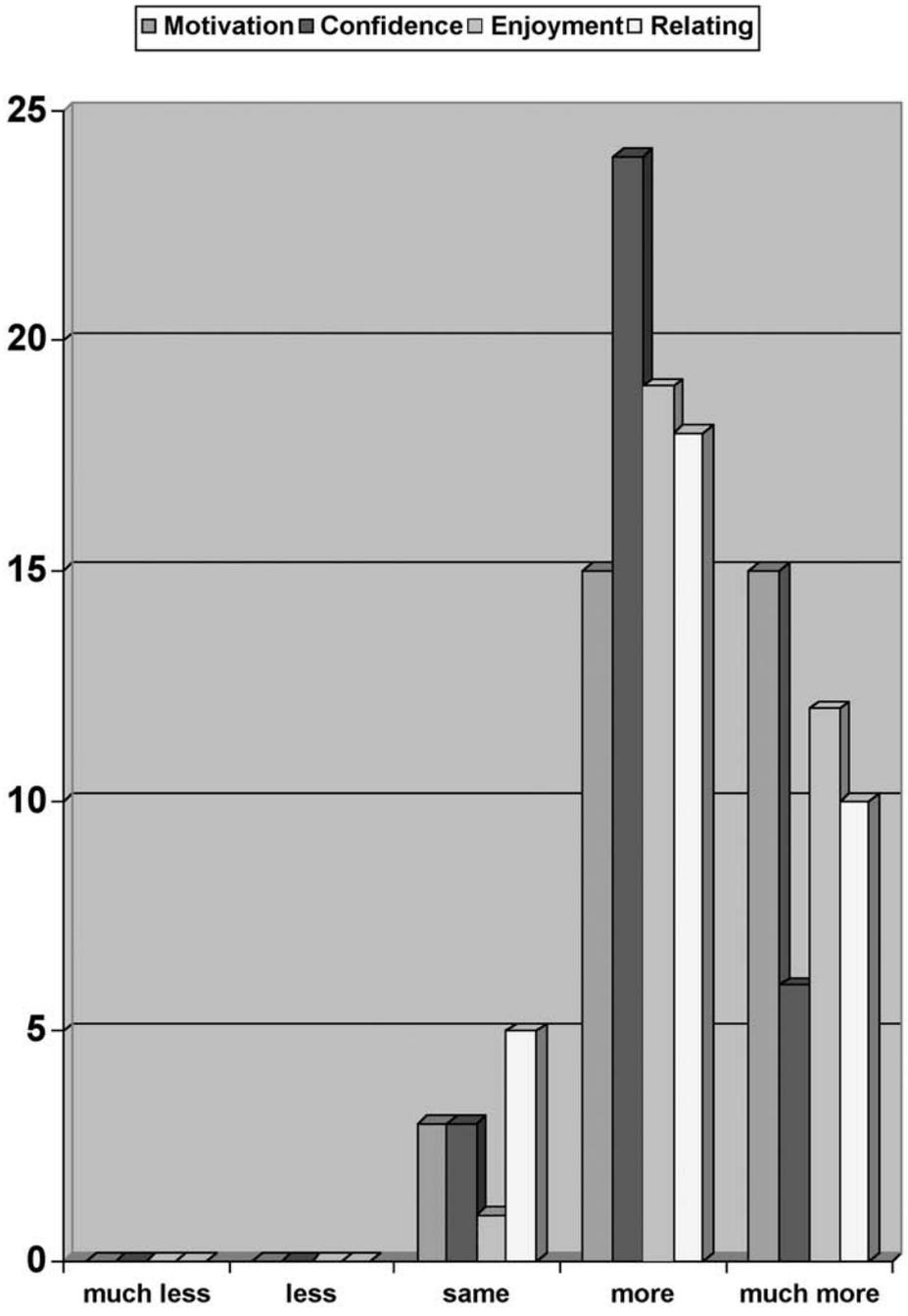
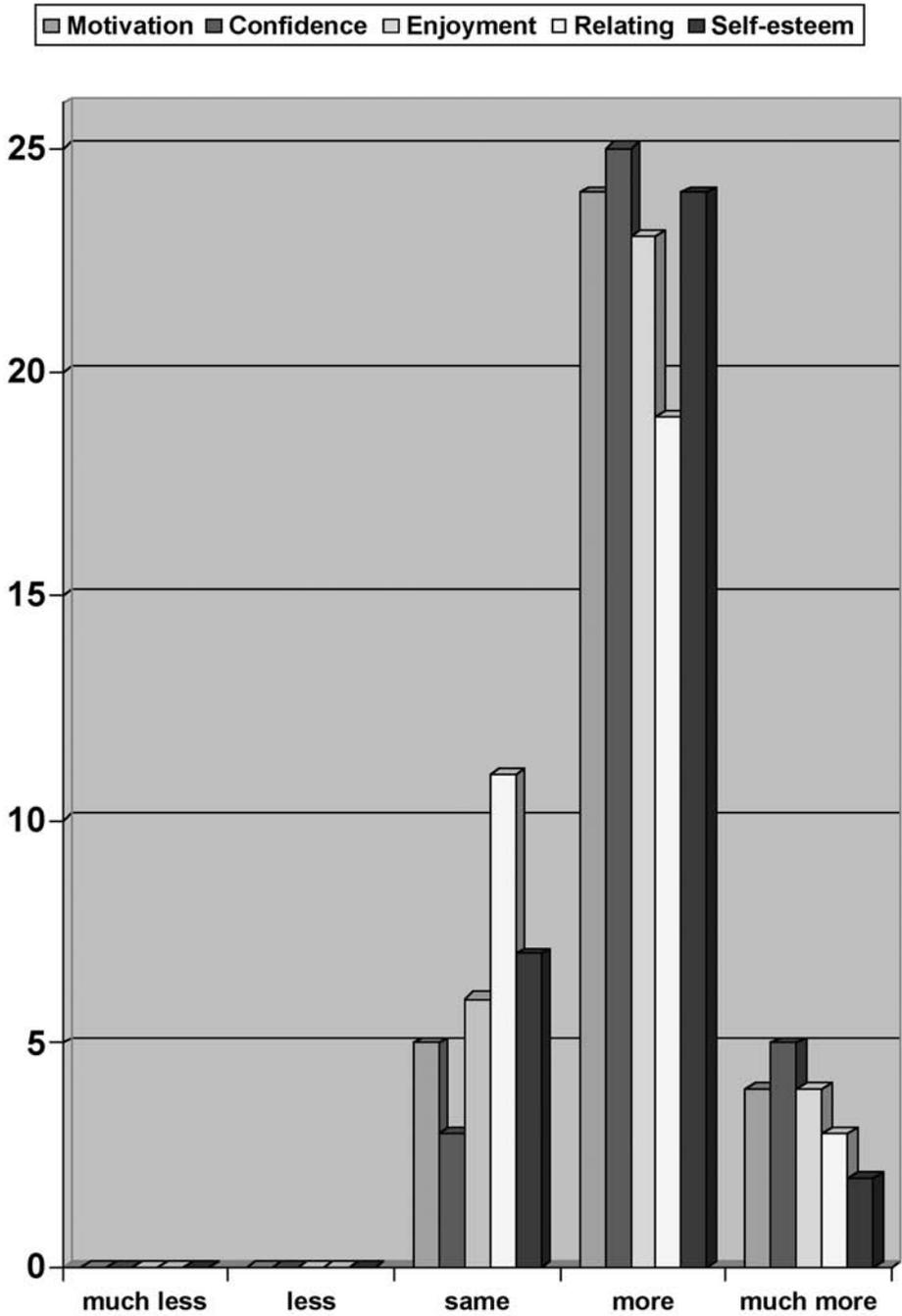


Figure 2: TEACHER OBSERVATIONS: OUTSIDE THE PR SESSIONS



It is clear that for behaviour in the classroom during Paired Reading, very few teachers had **not** observed a positive shift in the majority of their children. Regarding generalisation of positive effects to other subject areas and outside the classroom, the effects were not as strong (as would be expected), but were still very positive. The improvement in motivation during the PR sessions was particularly striking. Especially worthy of note was the improvement in ability to relate to each other – and that their social competence improved both during PR and beyond it.

### **FACTORS IN EFFECTIVENESS: PR PROCESS STUDIES**

So it works. But **how** does it work? Relatively few of the very many studies of Paired Reading have reported detailed information on the behaviour of participants after training and during involvement in projects. It cannot be assumed that participants' behaviour was standard throughout, i.e. that training was actually effective, especially in the longer term.

Topping (1995, 1997a) reviewed process studies of PR, and readers should consult these sources for more detail – only the conclusions will be given here. In both the parent-tutored and peer-tutored process data, many contradictory findings were evident. Participants were more likely to show the required process behaviour in studies of smaller numbers of participants, especially when the training had been more detailed. In larger studies of parent-tutored Paired Reading, conformity to good technique has been found in from 75 to 43 per cent of participants, the higher figure being associated with home visits. Amount of time spent engaged with PR correlated relatively weakly with test outcomes, so other effects in addition to a practice effect appear to be operating. Degree of compliance with the procedure was related to test outcomes in only a minority of studies. Of course, there are issues about the sensitivity, reliability and validity of the reading tests which were the outcome measure. Thus, the relation between process and outcome remains more or less obscure, and the vast majority of studies have evaluated on a crude input-output model. Output variables may reflect the structure and quality of service delivery (training and follow-up) as much as the impact of a particular technique that is assumed to have been applied. Perhaps past process studies have not been addressing a sufficiently wide range of questions.

Indeed, the conception of PR as a unitary intervention might be oversimplistic. As with other methods for reading instruction and improvement, what is taught and what is learned might not be identical. The PR experience might offer participants multiple pathways to improvements in multiple aspects of the reading process. Thus different components of the technique might be most potent for different subjects, these interactions reducing the probability of finding one or a few process factors which are omnipotent for all.

Studies of the impact of PR on the reading style of participants might illuminate the processes and mechanism involved. Topping (1995) also reviewed

this literature – again only the conclusions are given here. Considering parent, peer and teacher-tutored studies together, in eight of these studies error rates had been found to reduce in Paired Readers and in no cases had error rates increased (remember that Paired Readers choose harder books as they progress, so the error rate might have stayed the same or even worsened). In seven studies, Paired Readers showed decreases in refusal rates and in two cases an increase. In seven studies, use of context showed an increase, in one case no difference was found, and in no case was there a decrease. In four studies the rate or speed of reading showed an increase and in no case was there a decrease. In four studies, self-correction rate showed an increase and in no case a decrease. In three studies the use of phonics showed an increase and in no case was there a decrease.

Although many of the differences cited did not reach statistical significance and only a few studies used either control or comparison groups who were non-participant or used another technique, strong consistent trends emerge from all these studies considered together. The general pattern is of Paired Reading resulting in fewer refusals (greater confidence), greater fluency, greater use of the context and a greater likelihood of self-correction, as well as fewer errors (greater accuracy) and better phonic skills. However, it is difficult to establish whether these are causal factors or themselves effects.

The empirical process and reading style studies thus leave us with a patchy and incoherent picture of how PR has its effects. Of course, PR might work through different pathways for different children, which could be why group studies seeking to find one mechanism which operates for all the children have shown such various results.

## **NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

The Paired Reading method was originally devised with a view to developing fluency and comprehension. The Reading Together and Reading Alone aspects proved to be relevant to readers of any level of ability, because everyone can be faced with a text which challenges their independent reading competence. Because PR supported the tutee and raised their confidence, it always tended to give them more time and spare processing capacity to think about what they were reading. However, the PR method has now been extended to enable a greater emphasis to be placed on higher order reading skills and thinking about the reading.

‘Paired Reading and Thinking’ usually involves starting with regular PR, then in a second training session moving the participants on into ‘reading and thinking’, which involves training and prompting tutors and tutees to ask ‘increasingly intelligent questions’ of each other about what they have read together. Details will be found in Topping (2001) and the associated web site [www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology/TRW](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology/TRW). Paired Reading and Thinking is structured in four differentiated levels, so young and less able readers can participate, but the top level is certainly applicable to higher ability and age ranges. At all levels,

the intellectual strain on the tutor is quite considerable (so the tutors ruefully tell us), so the cognitively effortful nature of tutoring is transparent and unquestionable. Indeed, among both researchers and practitioners in general, more interest is now focusing on the impact of being a tutor than on the value of being a tutee.

Additionally, the PR type of method has been extended to spelling and to writing – so all aspects of literacy can be approached (see Topping, 2001).

## **NEW APPLICATIONS**

Paired Reading started life as a method for weaker readers, then quickly became a method offered on an equal opportunity basis to readers of all abilities, including adults. Similarly, it started in the U.K., but has spread to very many parts of the world, and is now widely used in developed countries (e.g. within the U.S.A. in volunteer tutoring schemes) and also in countries with great development needs (e.g. within family literacy programmes in the townships of South Africa and in provincial parts of Brazil).

In more advantaged countries, PR is connecting with the development of electronic literacy (Topping, 1997b). It can be used with material on the World Wide Web, or with a shared story loaded into an Ebook rather than on paper, for instance. Stemming from its reincarnation as Duolog Reading in the USA, PR is also linking to software for computerised self-assessment of reading comprehension of real books by children – an excellent additional form of motivation, monitoring and accountability for both members of a peer tutoring pair (e.g. Vollands, Topping and Evans, 1999; Topping, 1999).

As we have seen above, PR can be deployed to help address concerns about the under-achievement of boys in reading. It can be deployed to support the transition from primary school to high school both socially and academically, and has featured in many literacy summer schools. It can also be deployed to address issues of equal opportunities and social inclusion, social competence and school ethos, especially in schools where different year groups, classes or other groups do not customarily relate well.

Over the years it has proved to be an extraordinarily flexible method. In the UK, it fits well into the National Literacy Strategy. Indeed, it fits well into most strategies, and has proven to be philosophically and ethically acceptable by very diverse teachers who might not agree on anything else. There are undoubtedly many new applications still waiting to be found.

Finally, then, remember that good organisation remains crucial as you begin to plan your PR initiative. Start small and do it well, rather than being over-ambitious. Even the most effective peer tutoring or parental involvement in reading technique might not survive an attempt to deliver it which is not properly planned.

## REFERENCES

- Brooks, G., Flanagan, N., Henkhuzens, Z. and Hutchison, D. (1998) *What works for slow readers? The effectiveness of early intervention schemes*, Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research.
- Cohen, P. A., Kulik, J. A. and Kulik, C-L. C. (1982) 'Educational outcomes of tutoring: a meta-analysis of findings', *American Educational Research Journal*, 19, 2, 237-248.
- Hewison, J. (1988) 'The long term effectiveness of parental involvement in reading: a follow-up to the Haringey Reading', Project', *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 58, 184-190.
- Hewison, J. and Tizard, J. (1980) 'Parental involvement and reading attainment', *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 50, 209-15.
- Postlethwaite, T. N. and Ross, K. N. (1992) *Effective schools in reading: implications for educational planners*. The Hague: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.
- Sharpley, A. M. and Sharpley, C. F. (1981) 'Peer tutoring: a review of the literature', *Collected Original Resources in Education*, 5(3), C-11.
- Teddlie, C., and Reynolds, D. (eds.) (1999) *The international handbook of school effectiveness research*. London & Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis.
- Tizard, J., Schofield, W. N. and Hewison, J. (1982) 'Collaboration between teachers and parents in assisting children's reading', *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 52, 1-15.
- Topping, K. J. (1995) *Paired Reading, Spelling & Writing: the handbook for teachers and parents*, London & New York: Cassell.
- Topping, K. J. (1997a) 'Process and outcome in Paired Reading: a reply to Winter', *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 13, 2, 75-86.
- Topping, K. J. (1997b) 'Electronic literacy in school and home: a look into the future', *Reading OnLine (IRA)* [Online], 1, 1. Available: [www.readingonline.org/international/future/index.html](http://www.readingonline.org/international/future/index.html) [June 1].
- Topping, K. J. (1999) 'Formative assessment of reading comprehension by computer: Advantages and disadvantages of the Accelerated Reader software', *Reading OnLine (I.R.A.)* [Online]. Available [www.readingonline.org/critical/topping/](http://www.readingonline.org/critical/topping/) [November 4]. (hypermedia).
- Topping, K. J. (2001) *Thinking reading writing: A practical guide to paired learning with peers, parents & volunteers*, New York & London: Continuum International. Associated web site with free resources: [www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology/TRW](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology/TRW).
- Topping, K. J. and Ehly, S. (eds.) (1998) *Peer-assisted learning*, Mahwah, NJ & London, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Topping, K. J. and Lindsay, G. A. (1992) 'Paired Reading: a review of the literature', *Research Papers in Education*, 7, 3, 199-246.
- Topping, K. J. and Whiteley, M. (1990) 'Participant evaluation of parent-tutored and peer-tutored projects in reading', *Educational Research*, 32, 1, 14-32.
- Topping, K. J. and Whiteley, M. (1993) 'Sex differences in the effectiveness of peer tutoring', *School Psychology International*, 14, 1, 57-67.
- Vollands, S. R., Topping, K. J. and Evans, H. M. (1999) 'Computerized self-assessment of reading comprehension with the Accelerated Reader: action research', *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 15, 3, 197-211 (themed issue on Electronic Literacy).

## REVIEWS

***Athbheochan na hEabhraise: Ceacht don Ghaeilge?*** le Muiris Ó Laoire, 1999, Baile Átha Cliath: An Clóchomhar Tta. (leathanaigh xviii + 258).

Dhá phríomhchuid atá sa saothar cumasach ríshuimiúil seo le Muiris Ó Laoire, is iad sin scéal athbheochan na hEabhraise, a rianaítear ó 1880 go dtí 1930 den chuid is mó, agus cuntas ar athbheochan na Gaeilge sa tréimhse chéanna. Tá taobh na hEabhraise roinnte ina dhá chuid, mar atá ‘cúlra agus idé-eolaíocht’ agus ‘feidhmiú agus dul chun cinn’. Ar an gcuma chéanna, is faoi dhá cheannteideal a phléitear cás na Gaeilge. Is iad sin ‘síolta na hathbheochana in Éirinn’ agus ‘gnéithe den phleanáil teanga 1922-30’.

Is dócha gur sna caibidlí a dhíríonn go sonrath ar an Eabhrais is mó a bheidh faisnéis agus tuiscintí nua le fáil ag an ngnáthléitheoir Éireannach. Is léir go bhfuil a chuid féin déanta ag an údar de na foinsí a bhí ar fáil dó. Déanann sé cíoradh ar fhorbairt na sruthanna éagsúla idé-eolaíochta i measc na nGiúdach i lár agus in oirthear na hEorpa i dtreo dheireadh an 19ú céad. Tugann sé an-aird ar an tslí ar leathnaigh an tuiscint gur chóir do Ghiúdaigh filleadh ar an bPalaistín, agus gur chóir don Eabhrais a bheith mar dhlúthchuid den náisiúnachas nua ann. Cé gurbh í an Ghiúdais a bhí in uachtar mar urlabhra i measc Ghiúdaigh na hEorpa agus na Rúise, bhí dímheas coitianta ag an aos intleachtúil ar an teanga sin toisc gur shíolraigh sí ón nGearmáinis agus gur chuir sí ról tánaisteach cleithiúnach a bpobail i gcuimhne dóibh.

Rianaítear cúlra na hEabhraise ó thús ama go gonta soiléir, á chur in iúl nár imigh sí i léig go hiomlán riamh, cé gur shíolraigh sí mar ghnáth-theanga chumarsáide dhá chéad bliain roimh aimsir Chríost. Is amhlaidh a mhair sí ina teanga reiligiúnach a raibh eolas áirithe uirthi ag cuid mhaith den phobal agus dealraíonn sé go raibh feidhm theoranta léi mar *lingua franca*. Pé scéal é, tosaíodh ar úsáid a bhaint as an Eabhrais mar mheán caidrimh i dteaghlaigh áirithe i gcuid de na cóilíneachtaí nua a bhí á mbunú sa Phalaistín ó 1880 i leith. Tosaíodh ar í a úsáid mar mheán teagaisc i scoileanna áirithe sa Rúis timpeall an ama chéanna, sa tslí, nuair a tháinig grúpaí imirceach chun na Palaistíne, go raibh cuid áirithe acu i dtaithe ar an Eabhrais a labhairt cheana féin. Dealraíonn sé nach furasta anois teacht ar eolas beacht faoi leathnú na hEabhraise mar

ghnáth-mheán caidrimh sna blianta tosaigh sin. Is follas, áfach, gur chuaigh sí chun cinn go tapaidh sa teaghlach, sa naíonra agus sa chóras scolaíochta sna pobail nuachruthaithe faoin tuath. San áit nach raibh gnáthchainteoir ar bith ag an teanga sa bhliain 1880, meastar go raibh thart ar 400 teaghlach ann a raibh an Eabhrais á labhairt iontu ar bhonn laethúil faoin mbliain 1914. Meastar leis gur thart ar 25,000 as an 85,000 Giúdach a bhí ag cur fúthu sa Phalaistín i 1914 a labhair an Eabhrais. Bhí an Eabhrais láidir a dóthain chun bheith ina teanga oifigiúil mar aon leis an mBéarla agus leis an Araibis, nuair a cuireadh an Phalaistín faoi Shainordú na Breataine sa bhliain 1922.

Cé go raibh cuid mhaith de na tuiscintí céanna mar bhonn le náisiúnachas cultúir na hÉireann, bhí cúinsí difriúla ag baint leis an gcomhthéacs abhus. Caitheann taighde an údair solas nach beag ar go leor gnéithe den staid anseo a bhí i gcodarsnacht le suíomh na Palaistíne. Braitheann sé go raibh d'easnamh ar chur chun cinn na hathbheochana in Éirinn nár léiríodh go raibh ceangal idir leas eacnamaíoch an duine aonair agus cur chun cinn na Gaeilge mar theanga phobail. Ba mhór idir é seo agus an ghluaiseacht náisiúnta ar son úinéireacht na talún, mar shampla. Ní in aghaidh leithéid na Giúdaise a chaith an Ghaeilge a cás a dhéanamh, ar ndóigh, ach in aghaidh an Bhéarla, teanga na himpireachta anoir agus teanga na sairse agus an rathúnais sa Talamh Úr thiar. B'fhéidir a áiteamh chomh maith nach raibh col ag Éireannaigh i gcoitinne leis an mBéarla ach an oiread, go háirithe agus athbheochan liteartha Angla-Éireannach faoi lánseol ag deireadh an 19ú céad. Tá sé suaithinseach a thapúla a tharla an t-athrú teanga sa Phalaistín. Níor bhréag a mhaíomh go raibh deis ag idir mhúinteoirí is dhaltáí a gcuid féin a dhéanamh den Eabhrais agus teanga nua, geall leis, a chruthú. Ní fhéadfadh sé seo a bheith i gceist in Éirinn, mar a raibh meas i gcónaí ar na pobail a bhí ag labhairt na Gaeilge le sinsearach. Ní léir mar shampla cén bonn a d'fhéad a bheith faoi na roghanna foghraíochta a deineadh i gcás na hEabhraise, go háirithe ó thaobh rithim na habairte de, sainábhar nach dtagraítear dó in aon chor sa saothar seo.

Is iomaí ábhar machnaimh a spreagann iniúchadh comhthreomhar an leabhair seo ar an dá theanga. Tá sé le tuiscint go bhfuil amhras ar Ó Laoire faoi chloí go hiomlán leis an modh díreach i gcás theagasc na Gaeilge, cé go raibh polasaí docht den sórt sin á chur i bhfeidhm leis an Eabhrais chomh luath le 1890. Luann sé go minic chomh maith nach raibh múinteoirí na hÉireann ábalta ar fhreagra soiléir a fhail ó údaráis an tSaorstáit faoin aidhm a bhí le múineadh na Gaeilge, is é sin an rabhthas ag súil leis an nGaeilge a chur in áit an Bhéarla nó an raibh saghas éigin dátheangachais i gceist. Rithfeadh sé le duine, áfach, go mb'fhéidir go raibh an doiléireacht polasaí ag freagairt do chúinsí agus, fiú amháin, do mheon mhuintir na hÉireann. Cad é an tairbhe, cuirim i gcás, cinneadh soiléir a iarraidh, má tá an baol ann go mbeadh an cinneadh níos neamhshásúla ná an staid reatha, dar le lucht páirte na teanga? Nach minic a oireann an débhríochas don té atá lag, agus a thugann sé an chaoi dó ar mhaireachtaint? Nach fearr an rith mhaith ná an drochsheasamh? Meabhraímis go mbíonn éiginnteacht polasaí le tabhairt faoi deara i réimsí eile in Éirinn. Rud

eile de, is ábhar mór plé i gcónaí na cúinsí teanga laistigh de theaghlach an cheannródaí Shiónaigh Eliezer Ben Yehuda. Tá sé ráite gur chaith a bhean chéile staonadh de labhairt lena céad mhac go dtí go raibh a dóthain Eabhraise sealbhaithe aici chun cumarsáid a dhéanamh leis sa teanga sin. Ar ndóigh, ní thráchtar sa leabhar seo – ná i saothair eile – ar na gnáis teanga a bhí i réim i dteaghlach cheannairí na hathbheochana in Éirinn.

Is mór is fiú ábhar an leabhair seo a léamh agus a mheas. Ar an gcuma chéanna, ba mhaith ab fhiú scéalta teangacha eile ar nós na hIoruaise, mar a luann an t-údar féin, a bheith ar fáil ag Gaeilgeoirí an lae inniu. Ach ní mór a aithint, dá chosúla cás aon dá theanga lena chéile, go mbeidh difríochtaí substaintiúla idir cúinsí aon dá phobal agus aon dá iarracht athbheochana. Oireann eolas agus oireann tuiscintí ó thíortha eile. Ach ar deireadh thiar caitheann gach pobal a mbealach féin a dhéanamh. Níl aon amhras ach gur cás ann féin cás na Gaeilge cuid mhaith. Dúshlán ar leith is ea é athrú teanga a chur chun cinn ar bhonn comhthuisceana i sochaí dhaonlathach, mar a mheabhraigh Seán Ó Tuama dúinn tráth. Teastaíonn síorphlé ar pholasaí, ar straitéisí pleanála agus ar dhálaí na huaire. Tá a chion féin déanta ag Muiris Ó Laoire sa saothar breá seo.

Is beag earráid cló nó eile atá le tabhairt faoi deara in *Athbheochan na hEabhraise: Ceacht don Ghaeilge?*, ach sonraítear dátaí foilsithe áirithe a thugtar mar thagairtí i gcorp an leabhair gan a bheith ag teacht leis an eolas sa Liosta Leabhar ag an deireadh. Idir chlúdach deannaigh, cheangal cruá, chaighdeán an pháipéir, fhuáil na leathanach agus shoiléireacht an chló tá an leabhar seo ar áilleacht ar fad. Is deimhnitheach gur maise é an 87ú hmlleabhar seo ar Leabhair Thaighde an Chlóchomhair.

Liam Mac Mathúna

**Tá Liam Mac Mathúna ina léachtóir le Gaeilge i gColáiste Phádraig, Droim Conrach, Baile Átha Cliath.**

**Compulsory Irish: Irish language and education in Ireland 1870s — 1970s**  
Adrian Kelly, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, €27.30 paperback, €54.70 hardback, 183 pp.

This is at once a significant and deeply disturbing book. Its central thesis is that the basic thrust of the Irish language policy, with its overriding emphasis on the schools as the instruments of language and cultural revival and maintenance, was misdirected, ineffective, damaging to the development of many young Irish people and a force of alienation to their parents.

In most post-colonial societies, language issues are highly contested, complex and emotionally charged. Language usually becomes important

politically in a context where power structures are being rearranged. The Irish situation is no different. With the emergence in the 19th century of cultural hostility to England and its concomitant, de-Anglicisation of Ireland the attempt to promote the customs, language and values of the traditional indigenous culture gained a central political dimension as a token or symbol of ethnic distinctiveness. Side by side, the concept of an idea of a Gaelic literature expressing and strengthening this sense of nationality took root. It was no wonder then that when the native government was established 'that it was united in its determination to revive Irish and was undeterred by the economic, social and cultural realities of early 20th century Ireland'.

As well as by maintaining the centrality and viability of the Gaeltachtaí, the responsibility for this enormous revival task was to rest largely with the schools and the teachers. This the State did by making the study of Irish compulsory in the schools. It was a task many undertook with enthusiasm, committed as they were to the passions of the time and a love of the language. What Kelly presents in considerable detail and with relevant quotation and extensive documentation are many of the factors which influenced the debate on this issue. He attempts to analyse the gulf between nationalist ideals and pragmatic realities.

With chapters on Language Education 1870s-1920s Compulsory Irish, 1922-1973, Irish as a medium of instruction, Teacher Training, mór ghanntanas leabhar. An atmosphere gallda — Irish outside the schools and a concluding chapter *An Saol Nua*, the author develops his argument using some well-known sources and many previously unused government files. He presents a picture of an unrealistic revival programme which despite heroic self-sacrifice by teachers and pupils failed in its central ambition. This picture also includes many administrators and politicians who failed to accept reality and who consciously ignored research findings.

The whole area of minority language revival had attracted major research attention. The Irish scene is replete with publications on policy, on motivation, on bilingualism, on syllabus definition, on teaching methodology, on ideology, on the role of the state, etc. Enormous energy and enthusiasm has gone in the revival effort with some success. In a world where there is regression and repression of minority languages and where language death is widespread one is loath to be critical of revival efforts. However, while accepting the value of bilinguality and linguistic and cultural diversity, it is important that we critically evaluate any human endeavour by which a community in advancing its right to minority language and cultural maintenance does so in a manner which damages or interferes with some other more fundamental rights.

One may find excuses for the ongoing failure of the majority of the Irish people to learn Irish properly despite enthusiastic attitudinal support. One may point to unsuitability of syllabi, inappropriate teaching methods, inadequate teacher training, inadequate resources etc. This may be partially true. What is clear however from simple observation as well as from the historical analysis in this work is that it is now time to re-evaluate the whole educational project. I call

for this evaluation in full awareness of a new energy in the revival movement since the period covered in this volume. I am aware of the growth of the all-Irish schools, of the success of the Naíonraí, of the adoption of the communicative approach in the 1999 Primary syllabus, of the efforts of Bord na Gaeilge, TG4 and many other bodies. In my view, it is in the longer term interest of the language that assumptions underpinning the question of the role of Irish in the schools be re-examined in a measured debate. Sociolinguists are convinced of the importance of the place of a minority language in the Education system and so am I. However, there must surely be another way in which Irish culture and language can have a successful presence in the school system without it being imposed on everybody. I do not accept that the present arrangement is appropriate. A reasoned debate must lead to a more effective and fruitful approach.

I recommend this work as a call for such a debate. I know that this is in the interest of the maintenance of Irish in our society and community. The author is to be commended for his scholarship and his courage.

Pádraig de Bhál

**Pádraig de Bhál lectures in the School of Education at Trinity College, Dublin**

**Managing Behaviour in the Primary School – Third Edition** by Jim Docking, revised and updated by Michelle MacGrath, (2002) David Fulton Publishers, London, 1-85346-911-44, paperback, 176 large format pages, £16.00.

This book is the third edition of *Managing Behaviour in the Primary School*, which was originally written to assist teachers in putting the recommendations of the Elton Report (1989) into practice. The current edition, which has been updated by Michelle MacGrath, provides practical suggestions and an insight into best practice in relation to responding to behaviour problems and supporting behaviour difficulties. The book should prove helpful to teachers and student teachers, along with classroom assistants and others engaged in supervisory duties in schools. Its publication is timely for Irish schools as staff other than teachers become involved in working with, and supervising pupils.

The book is very readable and deals with issues which are constantly in the minds of teachers and which can cause difficulties for those starting out on a career in teaching. These include pre-empting and responding to behaviour problems, reinforcing and developing good behaviour, developing a whole school behaviour policy and combating bullying. The reader's interest is captured at the beginning of each of the eight chapters by an opening quote, mainly from the

Elton Report, and by focusing on the practicality of issues as experienced by teachers or pupils. This is followed by discussion based on research and on practice in schools, which provides both food for thought and practical suggestions on how to improve pupils' behaviour. The addition of checklists in each chapter is useful both as a summary of content of the chapter and as a tool for putting suggestions into practice.

The acceptance that the jargon associated with teaching and specifically with social behaviour is changing is noted in the first chapter. Teachers have moved from the traditional terminology of 'discipline' and 'control' to 'managing behaviour' not simply to provide new labels but to indicate that a change in underlying assumptions has occurred and that a fresh approach is necessary. Contrasting ideas characterising the distinction between the two styles are clearly outlined both in discussion and in diagram form and the chapter concludes with a framework for developing a school and classroom behaviour policy. The following chapters highlight the connection between pupils' behaviour and the classroom management skills of the teacher, the effective use of praise and the communication of positive expectations. Pre-empting misbehaviour by establishing classroom rules, by planning lessons to engender an atmosphere of purposefulness, and by communicating confidence and enthusiasm are advocated as important classroom management strategies. Short checklists provided in each of these areas provide a valuable guide to teachers who wish to improve this aspect of their skills. A candid review of research on praise indicates that a *discriminating* use of praise can have a potent effect on children's motivation to work better and behave well" (p44). The importance of the effective use of praise is highlighted and other rewards to reinforce pupils' achievements are considered. Involving children in decisions about rewards in order to ensure 'ownership' of the behaviour policy is suggested. Research on the effect of teacher expectation on pupil behaviour, achievement and attitude, highlighted in Chapter 4 merits reflection by all teachers. Teachers communicate their expectations not only verbally but also with non-verbal cues, by the level of challenge involved in tasks given to pupils, by the use of labelling language and by the amount of support provided for tasks. This, along with a focus on developing pupils' self-esteem and feelings of competence and confidence and on the connection between personal-social development and academic education, makes this chapter particularly worthwhile.

Chapters entitled 'Responding to Behaviour Problems' and 'Playtime and Lunchtime' deal with specific issues including punishment, hyperactivity, playground codes and supervision, conflict resolution and improving the environment. The contentious issue of bullying is carefully handled in the final chapter. The term 'bullying' is defined and a list of examples of bullying behaviour is included. Three important checklists outline preventative measures for combating bullying, protection and support for victims and procedures for supporting perpetrators. These, along with a framework outlining interview procedures, provide the reader with valuable information at a glance.

The formulation or review of a whole-school behaviour policy has been the focus of planning in a number of Irish schools in recent years. While chapter one of this book provides justification for a collaborative approach to behaviour policy, chapter six details particular ways in which schools might go about making and reviewing policies. Schools embarking on a review of their code of behaviour would do well to read this chapter as part of the process. Although examples of whole-school strategies cited relate to projects in the English system, the content is equally relevant to Irish schools. The five essential features in a whole-school policy: uniqueness to the school, being pro-active rather than re-active, *by* the whole school (involving all who work in the school), *for* the whole school (respecting all and involving relationships between staff members as well as between staff and pupils and among pupils), and included in the School Improvement (Development) Plan are in keeping with expectations of Codes of Behaviour in Irish schools. Suggested stages in the development of the policy are clearly outlined. A methodology for establishing general principles and identifying common concerns is suggested and a framework for developing whole-school strategies to deal with identified problems is included. The proposal that working groups, made up of a cross section of adults with different responsibilities, can be formed to deal with each identified concern is likely to be valuable as time is a precious commodity in all schools. The importance of building in a system of monitoring from the start is recommended to ensure that a means of knowing that the policy is working is available. In spite of time constraints, the authors accept that it is necessary to review the policy on an annual basis. Two reasons are put forward for this: first to allow changes to be made in the light of the findings from monitoring, and second to ensure that the policy reflects the changing needs of the school population. The chapter concludes with details of how pupils can be involved in the formulation of a school's code of behaviour. Readers are asked to reflect on two notes of caution— the importance of ensuring that involvement amounts to more than tokenism, and the need to enable pupils to become partners in policy-making by establishing an ethos of cooperation in the school. The challenge of involving all pupils in the process and the possibility of extending school councils to primary schools are interesting aspects of collaboration suggested.

*Managing Behaviour in the Primary School* can be read in its entirety or one chapter at a time as needs arise. All those interested in improving behaviour in schools will gain from its content. The inclusion of a list of books for further reading under six categories is valuable for those seeking greater detail on individual aspects of behaviour. The strengths of the book lie in its ease of reading and its practicality. By detailing the various aspects of behaviour management the complexity of the topic is highlighted. This may cause concern for student teachers. The inclusion of checklists, however, should counter this to some extent.

Deirdre Mathews

**Deirdre Mathews is a District Inspector with the Department of Education and Science.**

# EDITORIAL BOARD

<b>Margaret Condon</b>	Department of Education and Science (Chairperson).
<b>Pádraig Ó Conchubhair</b>	Department of Education and Science (Editor)
<b>Hilda Mhic Aoidh</b>	Department of Education and Science
<b>Pádraig de Bhál</b>	School of Education, Trinity College Dublin.
<b>Maureen Bohan</b>	Department of Education and Science
<b>Richard Coughlan</b>	Department of Education and Science
<b>Uinsinn Mac Domhnaill</b>	Department of Education and Science
<b>Oilibhéir Ó hEidhin</b>	Department of Education and Science
<b>Jean Geoghegan,</b>	Principal, Christ the King Secondary School, Cork.
<b>Pat O’Keeffe</b>	Principal, St Francis’ School, Portlaoise.
<b>Anne Kelleher</b>	Director, Education Centre, Kildare.