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Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

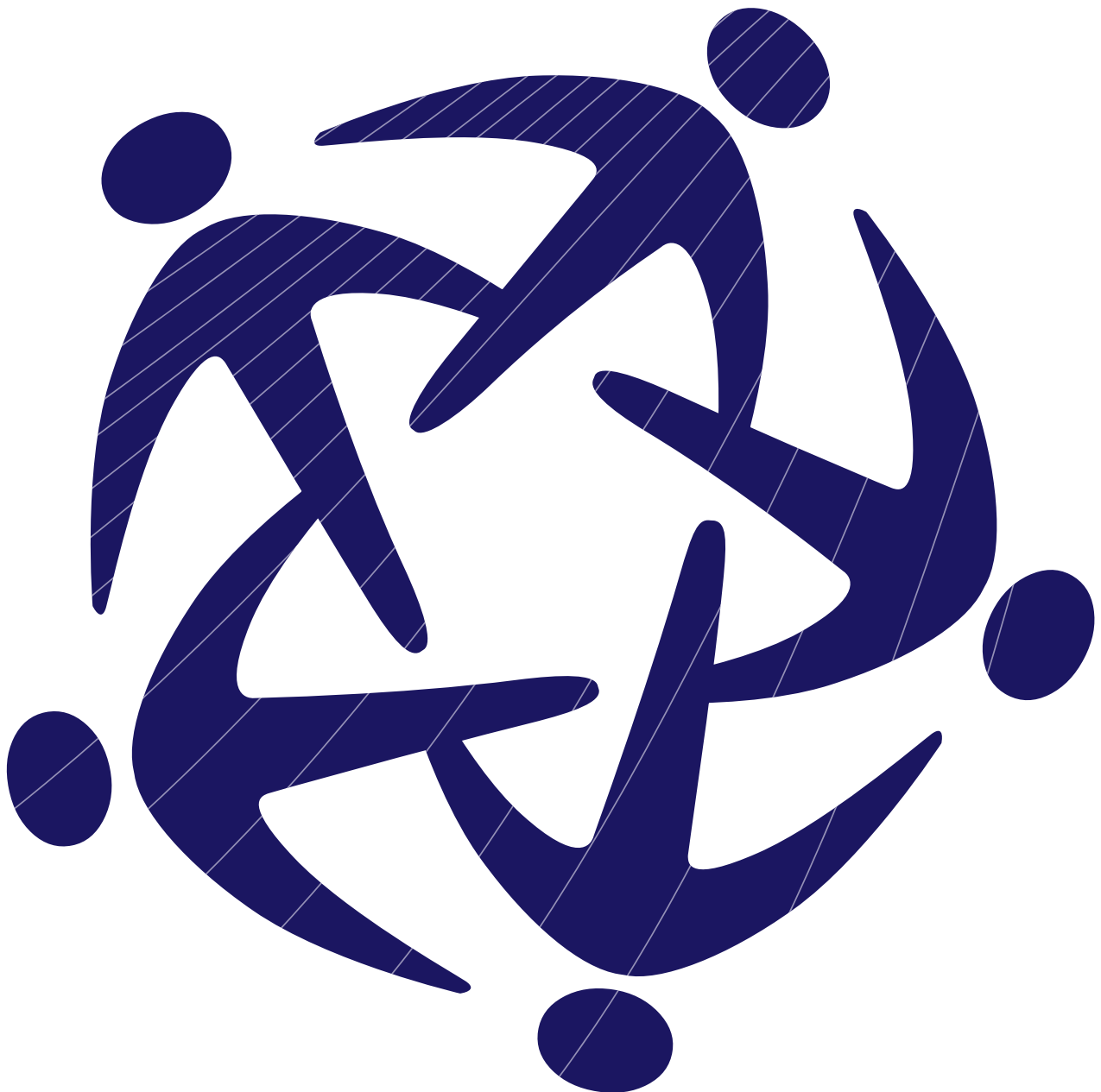
150

The Teaching Profession – 150 years on

Consultative Conference on Education 2018

Gairm na Múinteoireachta – 150 Bliain ar Aghaidh

Comhdháil Chomairleach ar Oideachas 2018



Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone
16ú – 17ú Samhain 2018



Fáilte

Colleagues,

We are delighted to welcome you to Athlone for the 2018 INTO Consultative Conference on Education. This year, the theme of the conference is ‘The Teaching Profession – 150 Years on’.

Life is very different for the primary teacher of 2018 than it was for teachers in 1868. Teachers continue to be well-regarded by their communities as they were in 1868. However, today, teachers are involved in school management, are regarded as professionals and have their own regulatory body, and also have opportunities to engage with educational policy and curriculum developments through both the INTO and educational agencies. Nevertheless, there are new challenges to the status and professionalism of teachers. The economic context of the last ten years created pay inequalities and led to additional demands being made on schools and teachers without the necessary resources, creating additional stress and workload. As part of the research for this conference, members of the Education Committee undertook interviews with teachers on the theme of professionalism and these will be presented during the conference.

Over the next 150 years, the INTO will continue to promote the status of teaching, ensuring that teachers continue to be highly-regarded professionals supported in their work by decent and attractive working conditions, opportunities for professional development and collaboration, and by professional autonomy.

I hope this conference will provide an opportunity for the lively, professional debate that is essential to the health of our teaching profession.

Tá súil agam go mbainfidh sibh uile taitneamh agus tairbhe as an gComhdháil.



Sheila Nunan

Sheila Nunan
General Secretary



Joe Killeen

Joe Killeen
INTO President

Clár

Friday, 16 November

- 2.30 p.m. Registration**
- 3.00 p.m. Opening of conference**
– Joe Killeen, *President*
– Siobhán Lynskey, *Cathaoirleach*
INTO Education Committee
- Address by Deirbhile Nic Craith**
– *INTO Director of Education and Research*
- 3.30 p.m. Discussion groups**
- 4.15 p.m. Tea/Coffee**
- 4.40 p.m. Keynote speaker**
– *Professor Andy Hargreaves*
- 6.15 p.m. Address by Sheila Nunan**
– *INTO General Secretary*
- 6.45 p.m. Wine reception**
– *Sponsored by Comhar Linn*

Saturday, 17 November

- 9.30 a.m. Workshop A**
- 10.45 p.m. Tea/Coffee**
- 11.15 a.m. Workshop B**
- 12.30 p.m. Keynote speaker**
– *Dr Kathleen Horgan, MIC*
- 1.15 p.m. Críoch**



General information

Registration

Registration opens at 2.30 p.m. on Friday 16 November. We ask you to assist INTO staff by completing your delegate card, which is in your pack, prior to your arrival at the registration desk.

Absence from school

The Department of Education and Skills has given approval for leave of absence for delegates to attend the conference. A copy of the letter is included in your pack and is also available on the 'Education Conference' page on the INTO website. However, substitute cover is not available.

INTO Conference app

The INTO Conference app will allow you to view the conference agenda, find your way to the conference venue (locations and maps section), view press releases and speeches, connect with friends and receive reminders of key events and news alerts during the event.

The free app is available for download for both iPad/iPhone and Android devices.

Conference evaluation

Delegates are asked to supply their email address on their delegate card and they will be contacted after the conference with a link to a short online questionnaire.

Exhibitors

The following are the exhibitors in attendance and their stands will be located in the lobby area outside the main conference hall:

- ✦ INTO Credit Union Comhar Linn
- ✦ EMU Ink Schools' Publishing Programme
- ✦ 4Schools.ie
- ✦ ABC Schools Supplies
- ✦ Outside the Box Learning Resources
- ✦ Eile Mental Activity Park
- ✦ CJ Fallon
- ✦ Global Solidarity Network

Car park

There is ample complimentary car parking available on-site.

Full coverage of the conference plenary sessions is available on the INTO website



Follow the conference on Twitter @INTOnews #INTOEDC18

Keynote speakers

ANDY HARGREAVES is Research Professor in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College and holds visiting professorships at Hong Kong University, the University of Ottawa and the University of Stavanger in Norway. He is President of the International Congress of School Effectiveness and Improvement, founding Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, adviser in education to the Premier of Ontario and the First Minister of Scotland. He is also founder of the Atlantic Rim Collaboratory (ARC): a group of nine nations committed to broadly defined excellence, equity, wellbeing, inclusion, democracy and human rights www.atrico.org.

Professor Hargreaves is a world renowned expert in educational change and leadership, and is known for his support for greater autonomy for teachers and concerns about the impact of high-stakes testing. His latest book is *Collaborative Professionalism: When Teaching Together Means Learning for All*, co-written with Dr Michael T. O'Connor.



DR KATHLEEN HORGAN is a member of the Faculty of Education, Mary Immaculate College. A former primary teacher, Kathleen currently lectures and supervises educational research at undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels. She was awarded a Government of Ireland Senior Research Scholarship and a National Award for Excellence in Teaching in Higher Education.

Her research interests embrace early years education, teacher education and reflective practice. She has undertaken longitudinal research studies on the evolution of student teachers' personal theories of teaching during undergraduate and induction years. Kathleen has published and presented her work nationally and internationally and has collaborated with educational institutions, government agencies and philanthropic organisations at home and abroad. Her recent co-authored book is entitled *Learning to Teach: Teaching to Learn*.



Workshop presenters



DR ANN CAULFIELD'S background spans the fields of education, community development and health. She is a co-founder of Mindfulness Matters with Derval Dunford and facilitates face-to-face and online wellness courses for professionals. She completed doctoral research into mindfulness and stress reduction among Irish primary school teachers and has written various articles and book chapters on teacher self-care.

Ann is a part-time lecturer in Applied Social Studies at the Galway Mayo Institute of Technology and is a graduate of Dublin City University and the University of Lincoln.



VERONICA BEHAN is a graduate of Mary Immaculate College of Education, Limerick. She is a former member of staff at St Nessian's NS, Mungret, Co Limerick.

Veronica spent a number of years working as Regional Development Officer and Primary Team Leader with the National Induction Programme for Teachers.



CIARA REILLY BCL, HDip (Prim), MEd is a primary school teacher on secondment from St Peter's Primary, Bray. She is currently an advisor on the Digital Technologies team of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). She has delivered modules in the use of technologies in the B.Ed., B.Sc. (Education Studies) and PME (Primary) programmes at the Marino Institute of Education.

Ciara co-founded Teachmeet Ireland in 2014 and has facilitated workshops at national conferences of the INTO, the Teaching Council and the IPPN. She is also a co-author of *The Essential Parents' Guide to the Primary School Years*, published by CJ Fallon in 2017.



DR EMER RING is Head of the Department of Reflective Pedagogy and Early Childhood Studies at Mary Immaculate College (MIC), Limerick, and lectures in primary and early childhood education. Emer previously worked as a primary mainstream class teacher, a learning support teacher, a resource teacher and a senior inspector with the Department of Education and Skills. In her work with the Inspectorate, in addition to school inspection and probationary work with teachers, she was involved in a wide range of research projects related to inclusion. Emer has published widely in the area of early childhood and primary education and is co-editor and author of *Autism from the Inside Out: A Handbook for Parents, Early Childhood, Primary, Post-Primary and Special School Settings*, published recently by Peter Lang, Oxford.



JACKIE CURLEY is a primary school teacher in Knocknacarra NS. She completed her M. Ed with the University of Ulster in 2016. Her thesis focused on play as a pedagogy with a particular emphasis on child-led play. Jackie has been an NCCA Aistear tutor for the past seven years. She currently designs and facilitates workshops and summer courses in the Galway Education Centre. Her interest in play-based learning has evolved to include the outdoors in recent years.

Jackie was a key member in the school team who planned, designed and created the outdoor classroom in Knocknacarra NS.



CONALL Ó BREACHÁIN is the Deputy National Director of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). He began his teaching career in 2002, in a primary school in north county Dublin, and has spent the last 12 years working in teacher professional development with a particular focus on supporting teachers and school leaders in the areas of language, literacy and assessment. Conall has led several national teams within the PDST and is current chairperson of a number of interagency professional development design committees and is a member of the NCCA's board for early childhood and primary education.



LISA NIC DHOINNLÉIBHE is team leader of the Primary Language Curriculum team in the PDST. She is a primary school teacher, on secondment from Gaelscoil Aonach Urmhumhan in Nenagh. Lisa joined the PDST in 2015 and initially worked as a Gaeilge advisor supporting schools in the areas of Gaeilge and school self-evaluation. Subsequently, she worked as an advisor with the Primary Language Curriculum team where she was involved in seminar design and delivery. In November 2017, Lisa was appointed to her current role as Team Leader for Primary Languages.



Discussion group and workshop venues

Room	Discussion Group Friday 3.30 pm	Workshop A Saturday 9.30 am	Workshop B Saturday 11.15 am
CLONMACNOISE	–	Researchmeet	Teachmeet
KILLINURE	A	Self-care: Building Resilience in the Teaching Profession	Self-care: Building Resilience in the Teaching Profession
LOUGH REE 1	B	Technology and the Primary School Teacher	Technology and the Primary School Teacher
LOUGH REE 2	C	From Junk Art to Mudcakes Aistear at Knocknacarra NS	From Junk Art to Mudcakes Aistear at Knocknacarra NS
LOUGH REE 3	D	The Inclusive Classroom	The Inclusive Classroom
LECARROW SUITE 1	E	The Stages of Teacher Development	The Stages of Teacher Development
LECARROW SUITE 2	F	PDST – Primary Language Curriculum	PDST – Primary Language Curriculum

Workshop details Saturday, 17 November

*Delegates may choose **TWO** workshops by signing up at registration.*

Please be aware that workshops will be filled on a first come, first served basis.

Workshops

<p>Teachmeet/Researchmeet</p> <p><i>Maeve McCafferty</i></p> <p>A Teachmeet is an organised (but informal) meeting where participants are called on to share good practice, practical ideas and personal insights into their role as a teacher. Delegates can opt to present a nano (2 minute) or a macro (5 minute) presentation. Participants can be actively involved as presenters, or can simply relax and listen to all that will be on offer.</p> <p>The Researchmeet is a similar process with teachers presenting the findings of their own research.</p>	<p>Self-care: Building Resilience in the Teaching Profession</p> <p><i>Ann Caulfield</i></p> <p>Wellbeing, mindfulness and resilience are essential for healthy teachers and self-care is vital for good teaching within a profession that is becoming increasingly challenging. Using theory and practice, this workshop offers simple guidelines that encourage teachers to pay attention to their own needs and aspirations in order to support a way of ease, confidence and optimism.</p>	<p>Technology and the Primary School Teacher</p> <p><i>Ciara Reilly, PDST</i></p> <p>The purpose of this workshop is to support and inform participants in applying the new Digital Learning Framework to embed digital technologies in teaching, learning and assessment.</p>	<p>From Junk Art to Mudcakes: Aistear at Knocknacarra NS</p> <p><i>Jackie Curley, NCCA</i></p> <p>This workshop will give an overview of the evolution of play in Knocknacarra NS. From the introduction of junk art to the creation of an outdoor classroom, Jackie will share her play journey as both a teacher and an Aistear tutor.</p>
<p>The Inclusive Classroom</p> <p><i>Emer Ring, MIC</i></p> <p>The Case of Inclusion: Why Hard Cases Make Good Law: Exploring Research-Informed Practical School and Class-Based Strategies for Inclusion. The workshop will include reference to children with autism, but it will also adopt a broader view in promoting 'inclusion for all' through identifying a range of teaching and learning strategies, examining elements of inclusive culture and considering management and staff-development.</p>	<p>The Stages of Teacher Development</p> <p><i>Veronica Behan</i></p> <p>This workshop will explore teacher development theories to help participants gain a deeper insight and understanding of the career cycle of the teacher. Participants will be enabled to pinpoint their place on the continuum of teacher development and identify the supports and actions required to navigate the various stages.</p>	<p>Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile: Cad atá i gceist leis? Forléargas ar eochairphrionsabail Churaclam Teanga na Bunscoile le béim faoi leith ar nádúr comhtháithe an churaclaim</p> <p><i>Conall Ó Breacháin and Lisa Nic Dhoinnléibhe</i></p> <p>Tá leasú curaclaim ar siúl faoi láthair in Éirinn agus i 2016 cuireadh curaclam teanga nua os comhair mhúinteoirí bunscoile na tíre. Tá Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile bunaithe ar thaighde a rinneadh go náisiúnta agus go hidirnáisiúnta, faoi choimisiún an CNCM. Ceann de na gnéithe a luaitear go sonrach sna tuarascálacha taighde ná traschur scileanna ó theanga go teanga. Sa cheardlann seo déanfar cur síos ar an gcoincheap seo agus tabharfar foramharc ar chur i bhfeidhm praiticiúil samplach ag úsáid Churaclam Teanga na Bunscoile mar bhunús.</p> <p>The Primary Language Curriculum: What's the big idea? An overview of the core tenets of the primary language curriculum with a specific focus on its integrated nature</p> <p>Curriculum redevelopment is currently underway in Ireland and a new language curriculum was introduced to primary schools in 2016. The Primary Language Curriculum is underpinned by national and international research, which was commissioned by the NCCA. One of the key features highlighted in the research reports is the concept of transfer of skills across languages. This session will examine this concept and consider the pedagogical implications of teaching for transfer from first to subsequent languages.</p>	



The Teaching Profession –

The INTO was founded 150 years ago in 1868 to promote the status of teaching as a profession and to improve the terms and conditions of teachers. The INTO's history has been documented by Niamh Puirseil in *Kindling the Flame* (2017) and the life and work of Vere Foster, the INTO's first president has also been researched and documented. Education was important to the Irish people, as evident in the popularity of the hedge schools prior to the establishment of the national school system in 1831. At the time the INTO was founded, teachers were well-regarded as educated persons in their communities, but not highly regarded by their clerical school managers or by the Board of Education. Conditions were appalling and salaries were poor. One hundred and fifty years later teachers are well-regarded by the Irish public, enjoying a high level of public trust and satisfaction, and retaining a higher status than many of their colleagues around the world (Teaching Council, 2010). Salaries and conditions have improved immensely, though new challenges continue to emerge. This brief overview will outline where the teaching profession stands today as the INTO marks its sesquicentenary.

In Ireland, teachers themselves, through their unions, worked long and hard to secure proper conditions of employment, opportunities for professional education and training and a role for teachers in the education policy-making process (Lennon, 1999). Primary teachers became graduates in the 1970s and the disciplines of philosophy, psychology and sociology became foundational studies in initial teacher education. Since the 1970s teachers exercise more control over the curriculum they teach and have greater flexibility in the classroom (INTO, 1992). Today, there are almost 73,000 registered teachers in Ireland,

serving education at primary, post-primary and further education levels. With more than 4,000 schools involving close to a million students, the contribution which the teaching profession makes to society is significant.

The establishment of The Teaching Council in 2006 represented a milestone in the development of teaching as a profession in Ireland. The establishment of the regulating body had been advocated by many in the profession for several decades on the basis that self-regulation is strongly linked with enhanced teacher status and professionalism (INTO, 1994). The role of the Teaching Council is to promote the teaching profession; to promote the professional development of teachers through the ongoing development of Cosán; to maintain and improve the quality of teaching in the State; to provide for the establishment of standards, policies and procedures, for the education and training of teachers; to provide for the registration and regulation of teachers and to enhance professional standards and competence (Teaching Council Act, 2001).

There is an acceptance amongst teachers in Ireland that maintaining standards in teaching is part of being a professional primary school teacher (O'Donovan, 2013). This point has implications for the Teaching Council in its capacity as guardian of teaching standards. Among the many significant developments initiated in recent years to strengthen and underpin teaching in Ireland, was the adoption of the Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers in 2007. The Council acts in the interests of the public good while striving to uphold and enhance the reputation of the teaching profession. In this regard, Part 5 of the Teaching Council Acts, 2001-2015 was formally commenced

on 25 July 2016 to allow the Council to receive complaints about registered teachers and to conduct investigations and hold inquiries, where deemed appropriate.

Teacher professionalism and teacher professional identity continue to be highly contested issues, both at the level of policy and the level of practice (Sachs, 2001). In the 1960s the debate centred on whether teaching was a profession or a semi-profession (Etzioni, 1969), with arguments around issues such as length of training, specialised knowledge, and autonomy. Even as we enter the 21st century, debate continues on whether teaching is a profession, with debate around issues such as body of knowledge, professional control and autonomy and prestige, (Kubow and Fossum, 2001). The question for teachers today is what constitutes professionalism in a 21st century education system? Different forms of teacher professionalism have emerged in the context of reforms and developments in education since the 1970s. Arising from educational change associated with new public management, accountability imperatives, school effectiveness and school improvement movements, the discourse of managerial professionalism has become dominant at policy level in many jurisdictions. Nevertheless, Sachs (2003) argues that a concept of democratic professionalism is emerging from the profession itself.

Teacher professionalism is understood in many different ways in the knowledge society of the 21st century. There is a stronger focus on learning how to learn, creativity, teamwork, problem-solving and risk-taking. In this changing context of teaching, there is more of an emphasis on collaboration, coping with change, involvement in research and

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continuous professional learning (Hargreaves, 2003). Teaching is a professional activity involving concern for the whole-person, requiring a form of professionalism which is demanding of them as person and that has at its core the moral purpose of teaching (Burke, 1992). Forms of professionalism for the 21st century require new relationships with colleagues, with students and with parents, building alliances, working in cooperation with other stakeholders and supporting the common good (See for example, Apple, 1996; Bottery, 1996; McLaughlin, 1997; Bottery and Wright, 2000; Whitty, 2000). Teachers need to understand the social and political context in which they work. Hoyle's (1994) concept of 'extended professionalism' also requires teachers to understand the broader social context of teaching and sees the skills of teaching as being derived from a mediation between experience and theory, drawing on professional and pedagogical knowledge. Democratic discourses of professionalism extend the idea of teacher professionalism beyond the traditional ideas of expertise, altruism and autonomy, seeing teaching as a collaborative professional activity, underpinned by values of social justice, advocacy, transformation and activism (Whitty, 2000, Sachs, 2003).

The work of Judyth Sachs has a profound influence on understandings of teacher professionalism, based on democratic principles, for the 21st century. She put forward the concept of transformative professionalism based on teacher learning, participation, collaboration, cooperation and activism, seeking to break down traditional individualism and isolationism, as teachers work both individually and collectively to enhance education (Sachs, 2003). According to Sachs the 'activist

Teachers often have to balance competing expectations of them and require a professional responsibility which goes beyond accountability

teaching professional' is concerned with the wider issues of equity and social justice, inclusiveness, collective and collaborative action, recognition of expertise of all parties, trust and mutual respect, ethical practice, responsiveness, responsibility and passion. Teachers' continued learning is central to such understandings of professionalism, whether through teacher enquiry, reflective practice, learning communities, professional conversations and research (McNiff, 1993; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1992, Sachs, 2003; Cochran-Smith 2013).

There are, however, alternative views of teacher professionalism that are not based on democratic principles, where teachers are viewed narrowly as competent practitioners whose skills derive from experience, and who are managed in a climate of performativity. Working in environments of reform that lead to greater standardisation, curriculum prescription, micro-management of teaching and learning, increased measurement of outcomes and increased regulation, leads to stress and burnout, and to increased workload (Vonk, 1997; Hargreaves, 2003). Teachers are de-professionalised in such environments. A narrow, technicist view of teaching fits with The Global Education Reform

Movement (GERM), which expands neo-liberal policies across the world.

There has been a global trend towards GERM policies which, in turn, has cultivated a new culture of control, challenging the professional autonomy of teachers in many countries (Sahlberg, 2007). Teacher professional autonomy is important to teachers (Nias, Southworth and Campbell, 1992) and has an important role in offsetting the impact of this neo-liberal movement. Professional autonomy is also essential given that teachers, as professionals, are required to exercise professional judgement in uncertain situations (Hoyle and John, 1995). It's about whether teachers control themselves and their working environments (Shortt, 1994). According to Hoyle and John (1995) teacher autonomy is relative, limited and contextual, given that teachers work in schools and in collaborative relationships with colleagues. Teachers often have to balance competing expectations of them and require a professional responsibility which goes beyond accountability.

Traditionally, Irish teachers' pedagogical freedom and legendary autonomy went unchallenged (OECD, 1991). Teachers in Ireland derive a significant degree of autonomy in relation to classroom and behaviour management from the implied delegation of parental authority (the principle of being in loco parentis) and from their independent professional status (Berka, De Groof & Penneman, 2000). However, there are indications of a sense of reduced autonomy in Irish schools in that Irish teachers identified increasing micro-management by the DES as one of the most fundamental pressures bearing on them (Morgan & Nic Craith, 2016). This is noteworthy in the context that autonomy is a key variable that emerges when examining professional motivation, job satisfaction, stress and educational



reform (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006).

With a view to rejecting the GERM approach, Ireland has chosen to participate in the Atlantic Rim Collaboratory (ARC), an international initiative to explore and advance equity, excellence, wellbeing, inclusion, democracy and human rights for all students with high-quality professionally-run systems. Ireland's participation is supported by the Department of Education and Skills and by the teacher unions as an alternative to the Global Education Reform Movement that promotes standardisation, introduces corporate management models and test-based accountability. The work of Andy Hargreaves, Ken Robinson, Pasi Sahlberg, Jeanie Oakes and others inform the Atlantic Rim Collaboratory. Notwithstanding the efforts of ARC to safeguard teaching and education, a number of challenges still continue to confront the teaching profession in Ireland.

The increase in legislation related to education has placed a considerable responsibility on teachers to comply on a statutory basis. Until the enactment of the Education Act in 1998, there was virtually no legislative framework for educational policy in Ireland – the notable exceptions being The School Attendance Act 1926 and The Vocational Education Act 1930. The system relied heavily on the *Rules for National Schools* and on memoranda and circulars issued by the Department of Education. The Education Act 1998 was wide-ranging in scope, being an Act to make provision in the interests of the common good for the education of every person in the State, including a person with a disability or who has other special educational needs, and to provide generally for primary, post-primary, adult and continuing education and vocational training.

However, since the 1998 Education Act, there has been a plethora of legislation, which impacts either directly or indirectly on schools. Indeed, apart from legislation relating directly to education provision such as the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2005, the EPSEN Act 2004, the Schools' enrolment /

At present, the ethnic, socio-economic and gender makeup of the teaching profession doesn't reflect the heterogeneous nature of the Irish student profile.

admissions act 2018, there are also several pieces of legislation that affect schools. Developments in employment law, Health and Safety legislation, child protection and welfare (Children First Act 2015) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018) all add to the obligations and workload of school staff and management. A major piece of legislation impacting on the work of teachers is The Teaching Council Act (2001), which has already been discussed.

Other broad changes in Irish society have also had implications for the teaching profession. Today's classrooms differ hugely from those of 1868. Other than the fact that there are far fewer pupils in our classrooms today, there is a growing diversity among the student population of primary classrooms that mirrors the changes in the constitution of Irish society. At present, the ethnic, socio-economic and gender makeup of the teaching profession doesn't reflect the heterogeneous nature of the Irish student profile. The Irish teaching profession, including the student teacher population, has been found to be relatively homogenous with teachers being predominantly white, female, and of the majority ethnic and social class groupings (Keane & Heinz, 2015). While the homogeneity of the teaching profession is an international phenomenon (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005), Hyland (2012) argues that the teaching profession in Ireland, especially at primary school level, is less culturally and ethnically diverse than in other OECD countries.

In Ireland, the gender imbalance in primary teaching continues to widen, currently at 87% female, two percent higher than the EU average. This is a global phenomenon, firmly rooted in issues relating to economic development, urbanisation, the position of women in society, cultural definitions of masculinity and the value of children and childcare (Drudy, Martin, Woods and O'Flynn, 2005). In an Irish study of perceptions of the low level of men choosing to be teachers, the reasons offered to explain the falling number of males entering primary teaching included the perception that primary teaching is a woman's job, or that it relates to a mother's role (Drudy et al. 2005). The importance of a teaching force which is representative of both sexes, as well as representative of a range of ethnicities, social class and so on, is obviously a goal worth aiming for (Skelton, 2003). With a greater diverse workforce, stereotypes, perceived or real, of gender inequality or identity need to be challenged and addressed.

Based on the Growing Up in Ireland data, an ESRI report *The Transition to Primary Education* (Smyth, 2018) found that the quality of relationship, between teacher and student, is found to vary significantly by gender, social background, migrant status and whether the child has a disability. Overall, these differences are greater in relation to 'poorer' outcomes, that is, higher conflict and lower closeness in pupil-teacher relationships.

The teaching profession should aim to reflect the diversity of society for several reasons. In a time of teacher shortage in Ireland, a diverse profile within the teaching profession can help to avoid limiting the pool of candidates who apply to initial teacher education. In addition, it is also a matter of equity that there is equal access to the profession. Furthermore, a diverse profession offers a range of role models in which pupils can identify with. Conversely, more diversity in teaching would create a context whereby teachers could relate in a more tangible way to the socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds of the pupils they teach.

In order to promote a diversified teaching profession in Ireland it is necessary to explore the 'soft' and 'hard' barriers, if any, along teachers' pathways from selection into teacher education to entering and staying in the profession whilst focusing on whether these obstacles are cumulative or not. The education system must explore targeted strategies, policies and initiatives to overcome these obstacles and incentivise recruitment from a wider pool to make teaching a more 'representative' profession (Carrington and McPhee, 2008). In April 2017 the then Minister for Education and Skills, announced the allocation of €2.4 million in support of new initiatives identified in the areas of widening participation in access to primary and post-primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE). This development is a step in the right direction in the diversification of the Irish classroom by fostering a culture among under-represented groups in society to consider the teaching profession as a desirable and achievable career option.

Another significant development in the Irish educational landscape over the last 150 years is the role of parents as formal stakeholders and full partners in the education of their children. Involvement on boards of management, the establishment of the National Parents' Council, and Section 26 of the 1998 Education Act which allowed for the establishment of Parents' Associations by parents in recognised schools, and the Educational Welfare Act of 2000, which placed a statutory obligation on parents to ensure their children attended a recognised school, all contributed to the change from passive to active involvement of parents in matters relating to their children's education. This change has been of particular importance in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

In 2011, the DES launched the *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and for Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People*. The importance of parental involvement was highlighted with an

entire chapter devoted to 'Enabling parents and communities to support children's literacy and numeracy development'. Recommendations included valuing parents' engagement in their children's learning and encouraging schools to, "take active steps to welcome, communicate and engage all parents to identify ways to support and encourage parents to become actively involved in their children's learning" (DES 2011, p.23).

Concluding comment

There is no doubt that increasing workload is an issue for teachers in Ireland, both North and South, at present. The increasing workload relates to administrative matters, curriculum, and demands for accountability. At policy level, there is strong focus on developing the capacity of schools and teachers to cope with additional demands and responsibilities and to manage change. There is a tension between giving teachers greater autonomy to make decisions regarding curriculum and learning for their pupils and allocating teachers sufficient time and space to make decisions and utilise their professional judgement. Schools are

Our vision for education is that all pupils have a high quality education that enables them to reach their potential...

expected to take on more responsibility for administering and managing the educational system, but are not given additional resources to do so, thereby creating additional workload at local level (Morgan et al, 2015). At the same time, curriculum change is aimed at enhancing the professional role of teachers. Irish primary teachers' relationship with the education reform agenda is complex, and in some instances contradictory

and conflicting in nature. These contradictions are what teachers experience in their day-to-day work and impact on how the INTO progresses both education and conditions of employment issues. Teachers would do well to heed Barber (1996, p. 207) who argued that that the only way teachers can reclaim their sense of ownership of the profession and shape future education policies is by taking 'educational reform by the scruff of the neck and leading it'. Teachers must assert their agency in the drive for improved professionalism, trust, autonomy and responsibility.

If the teaching profession is to thrive into the 21st century, a newer and more up-to-date understanding of professionalism must be nurtured that fits with the work of teachers in the Irish context. The case for collaborative professionalism, as put forward by Andy Hargreaves and Michael T. O'Connor, is worthy of consideration. The idea of collaboration is not new, but expectations that collaboration among teachers happens just because it's a good idea doesn't work. Teachers will collaborate when it makes sense for themselves and their work and when the enabling structures are there.

Our vision for education is that all pupils have a high quality education that enables them to reach their potential, through a broad and balanced curriculum, in spacious, bright, well-equipped modern classrooms, with reduced class sizes, in schools with facilities for all aspects of the curriculum, including indoor and outdoor play facilities, with sufficient supports for pupils with special and additional needs, where our history and heritage are respected, where pupils are prepared for an uncertain future, and where teachers are highly qualified professionals, well-rewarded and appropriately supported. To date, Ireland has succeeded in attracting and retaining high-calibre candidates to the profession. Going forward, the INTO must strive to maintain this record over the next 150 years.

Please note: references are available on the Education Conference page of the INTO website



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The Teaching Profession – 150 Years On

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