

# The Teaching Profession:

*150 years on*

Discussion Document and Proceedings  
of the Consultative Conference on  
Education 2018



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# The Teaching Profession: 150 years on

## Discussion Document and Proceedings of the Consultative Conference on Education 2018

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*A nation's greatness depends upon the education of its people*

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# Foreword

The teaching profession has come a long way since the foundation of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation in 1868. It wasn't always an easy journey, but the standing of the teaching profession in today's Ireland is a testimony to the work of the INTO over the years. However, the INTO's work will never be done, as the organisation continues to support and promote the teaching profession in a climate of continuing challenges and constant change.

Marking the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the INTO, the Education Committee chose the theme of the 'Teaching Profession – 150 Years On' for discussion at the Annual Consultative Conference on Education. We were privileged to be addressed by Professor Andy Hargreaves, a distinguished writer, researcher and presenter on the life and work of the teacher and on teaching. We include an edited transcript of his presentation in this publication, however it cannot do justice to the passionate, interactive and storytelling approach Professor Hargreaves takes when addressing an audience of teachers. Nevertheless, his key messages regarding collaboration as central to today's understanding of teacher professionalism are clear and give us pause for thought.

Kathleen Horgan, a former primary teacher now working in Mary Immaculate College, in her creative approach to describing teaching and the work of teachers uses the metaphor of the pearl and pearl fishing. Acknowledging the achievements of the INTO over 150 years, she left delegates at the conference with a sense of pride in their profession for their contributions to children's education both today, in the past and into the future.

Our thanks are due to Professor Andy Hargreaves and Dr Kathleen Horgan for their presentations. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the Education team of Head Office and Northern Office under the direction of Dr Deirbhile Nic Craith, Director of Education and Research. In addition, the contribution of the INTO Education Committee is greatly appreciated.

I hope this publication will contribute to current discussions and deliberations on the central role of the teaching profession in the education of our children.



John Boyle  
General Secretary  
May 2021





# Part One

## The Teaching Profession: 150 years on

### A Discussion Paper

#### The Teaching Profession – 150 Years On

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. 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 about 4,000 schools involving close to a million students, the contribution that 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 regulatory 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 at 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 entered the 21st century, debate continued 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 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 the teacher 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 (1974) 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 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 and Lytle, 2009).

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 and 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 and 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 and 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 supports 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 *Education Act (School Admissions) 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 and Heinz, 2015). While the homogeneity of the teaching profession is an international phenomenon (Zumwalt and 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 for the NCCA *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 of parents on boards of management, the establishment of the National Parents' Council, 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 Department of Education and Skills launched *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 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 and Nic Craith, 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 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, (2018) 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 additional supports for pupils with special and additional needs, where our history and heritage are respected, where pupils are prepared for the unknown 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. Into the future, the INTO must strive to maintain this record over the next 150 years.



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# Part Two

## Proceedings of the Consultative Conference on Education 16 and 17 November 2018, Athlone

### Presentations and Opening Speeches

#### Introduction

##### **Joe Killeen, INTO President**

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all. It is a great pleasure to be here in Athlone for our annual Consultative Conference on Education. Tá fáilte mór romhaibh go léir ag comóradh 150 bliain de Chumann Múinteoirí Éireann.

Today in addition to you, our delegates, we also have with us representatives from ASTI, TUI, ATECI, the Inspectorate, Early Childhood Education, Educate Together, Froebel Department Maynooth University, Hibernia College, Marino Institute of Education, Mary Immaculate College, NCSE, NIPT and NCCA. I also welcome our guest speakers who will be introduced to you somewhat later. This year we have 400 delegates from branches all over the country in addition to our invited guests and national committee members. The theme of this year's conference is 'The Teaching Profession – 150 years on'.

As you can imagine, life is very different for the primary teacher in 2018 compared to what life was like for teachers in 1868. We no longer have to bring a gabháil of turf to school. From a teaching profession point of view, teachers continue to be well regarded by communities as indeed they were in 1868 when the union was founded. However, today, teachers are involved in school management and are regarded as professionals with their own regulatory body. They also have the opportunity to influence education policy. Of course, life is not all rosy and there are new challenges to the status of the professionalism of teachers.

The economic context of the last ten years created pay inequalities and led to additional demands being placed on schools and teachers without the necessary resources and this has created additional stress and workload. This is not acceptable to any of our members and pay equality is now top priority for the INTO executive. It is up there with benchmarking and workload - also very much to the fore. As you know, we recently balloted our members on a proposal on new entrant pay. The ballot was rejected as you know, it is therefore beholden on us all to unify, work together as one and meet the challenges that lie ahead.

We are at present in a period of consultation with our members which will continue. We want to listen to our members' views and consider what comes next. We remain committed to balloting for industrial action. The CEC will decide how and when we will initiate that process. All members of the INTO are committed to delivering equal pay for all members. We will have to win over the hearts and minds of our membership if we are to secure a two thirds majority in the forthcoming ballot. However, we have to move together as one union to persuade the powers that be of the necessity of equal pay for equal work.



There are now 100,000 members of the teaching profession both primary and post-primary on the island of Ireland. In order to take a closer look about how teachers feel about their profession, in 2018, the INTO Education Committee conducted a series of indepth one-to-one interviews with teachers from all over Ireland including our post-primary members in the North and at all points of the teaching continuum. Siobhán Lynskey, Cathaoirleach of the Education Committee will be outlining some of the results of the interviews shortly. But I would encourage you throughout this conference to look at the posters that are around the venue which give a small sample of some of the wisdom, some of the experience and some of the frustrations that go with being part of the teaching profession.

An important part of being a professional is being given the opportunity to meet with others for dialogue and discussion. Today all delegates will get an opportunity to attend a discussion group and this is in addition to two workshops tomorrow. You will have signed up for these at registration so please make a note of which workshops you will attend. I hope this conference will be a thought-provoking and enjoyable experience for all. Tá súil agam go mbainfidh sibh go léir taitneamh agus tairbhe as an ócáid seo.

## The Work of the INTO Education Committee

### **Siobhan Lynskey, Cathaoirleach, Education Committee**

The Education Committee has elected representatives from the 16 INTO Districts, in addition to the president, vice-president, and general secretary. Director of Education and Research Deirbhile Nic Craith, senior official Northern Ireland, Nuala O'Donnell and official Maeve McCafferty support the work of the committee.

#### ***The aims of the Education Committee are as follows:***

- To be the leading voice in education policy development
- To anticipate and be prepared for emerging trends in education
- To determine and lead major movements / trends in education
- To be to the fore in progressing educational issues
- To respond to both national and international research
- To be aware of broader trends in education

The Education Committee meet regularly, to advise the CEC on education related matters, and to organise the annual consultative conference in education. The following are the areas that have been examined and discussed by the Committee over the last few years.

#### ***Curriculum and Assessment***

The Education Committee monitors current developments in curriculum and assessment. Members of the Education Committee sit on development groups of the NCCA – the Primary Language Development Group, and the Maths Development Group. The Education Committee contributes to curriculum development work, consults members on curriculum developments and drafts submissions for consideration by the CEC. The process to review the whole primary school curriculum is underway. A discussion paper is likely to be published for consultation in summer 2019.

The NCCA will conclude development work on the revised language and maths curriculum. The NCCA are working on recommendations from feedback. Inspectors are looking to see some trialling of the new language curriculum in the classroom. We need more professional development for 3rd to 6th class. There will be a school closure for school planning day this academic year as outlined in *Circular 0039/2018*. It is planned that the entire revised primary





language curriculum will go to the minister in September.

Consultation on the draft specifications for a revised primary maths curriculum has also taken place. Issues that were identified include - progression continua, learning outcomes, and accessible language. The NCCA is listening to teachers and is trying to take things on board. Projected implementation for the entire maths curriculum is 2021.<sup>1</sup>

A review of RSE (relationships and sexuality education) will be carried out by NCCA. In its submission, the INTO said that RSE should be reviewed in the context of whole curriculum development. We cannot be responding to every societal demand. Teachers need clarification around RSE and school ethos. Teachers need support around CPD. External agencies are often used to support RSE and it should be the decision of the school. Parents have rights which schools have to respect but schools need guidance. Programmes need updating to reflect the 21st century.

### ***Standardised Tests***

The INTO will complete its joint research project with CARPE (Centre for Assessment Research Policy and Practice in Education) on standardised tests in primary schools. The Drumcondra tests have been updated (Drumcondra Online Tests). They have been re-normed and will be available in the spring.

### ***Early Childhood Education***

The Education Committee monitors developments in early years' education and considers their impact on pupils and teachers in primary schools. The committee advises the CEC regarding education developments in the early years including infant classes. Currently, the Education Committee is monitoring whether the second free pre-school year is being taken up and what change of profile is being felt in junior infants. Discussion is likely to take place regarding the school starting age. Curriculum developments will focus on the curriculum in junior and senior infants using the *Aistear* early years' framework. Transition templates for transfer of information from preschool to primary school are being prepared by the NCCA. These should be available by January. While it will be recommended that they be used by pre-schools to share information and progress about pupils entering primary school they will not be mandatory.

### ***Teacher Education***

The Education Committee monitors and contributes to developments in teacher education – initial teacher education, induction and professional development, consulting members when appropriate and relevant and advising the CEC. The new conceptualised initial teacher education programmes (BEd and PME) are likely to be reviewed. School placement will continue to be an issue of concern. Montessori qualified teachers will continue to be recognised for registration with the Teaching Council until 2022. The induction process, Droichead, will continue to be embedded. The Teaching Council will continue with the development process of Cosán scheduled to be completed in 2020.

### ***Special Education***

The Education Committee monitors and contributes to developments in special education. Where relevant, the committee advises on consultations with members and provides advice to the CEC. Special schools face challenges in relation to the complexity of the needs of their pupils. The leadership and management functions of principals will continue to increase. Special classes for pupils with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) continue to be set up. The new allocation model in mainstream schools will continue to be bedded down. Work will have to be done on the appeal system, a definition of complex educational needs, and re-profiling of schools. The NCSE regional

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1 This date has since been revised.



support service for children with SEN is being reviewed. A model of school-based therapy services is being developed, commencing with a pilot in September 2019.

### ***Social Inclusion***

The Education Committee monitors, contributes to and provides advice regarding developments concerning social inclusion, including DEIS, EAL (English as an additional language), Traveller education and homelessness. Additional schools are likely to be included in DEIS. The census information will be used to determine schools' social context. EAL needs more attention.

### ***Gaeltacht Education***

The Department of Education has developed and published indicators of good practice for schools as part of the *Gaeltacht Education Policy* and 78% of primary schools in the Gaeltacht have decided to seek recognition as Gaeltacht schools. These schools have been given additional language support hours for Gaeilge.

### ***Digital Strategy Action Plan***

The Digital Strategy Action Plan will provide funding based on how technology is being embedded. Its function is to embed digital learning in all areas of the curriculum. The numeracy curriculum will include computational, flexible and creative thinking skills. Effective practice cases and exemplars will be developed in 2019.

### ***Other Education Issues***

The Education Committee is also likely to consider other educational developments in relation to professionalism, Gaeilge, school evaluation, EAL, technology, workload and accountability and global solidarity. All of the above are contributing greatly to workload issues. The main areas of concern regarding workload are administration, teaching and learning, communication and relationships. Recommendations regarding workload suggested by the Education Committee include: more release time for teaching principals, deputies and post holders; restoration of posts of responsibility; a step-down facility for principals; a reduction of curriculum content as part of a curriculum review; planning time for teachers of SEN; access to SNAs; a reduction of paperwork; and opportunities for CPD and sabbaticals.

### ***Education Conference***

The topic of this year's conference is 'The Teaching Profession – 150 years on'. The Education Committee reached out to teachers in the field, at the coalface, and asked them about their experiences and core beliefs. These are some of the teachers' quotes:

- 'It is not a 9 to 3 job – in fact, it's not even a 9 to 5 job!'
- 'People don't take into consideration the evening work you are doing, corrections, paperwork and preparation'
- 'More teachers, smaller classes, more resources, less paperwork'
- 'There have been many cultural and societal changes and they have all impacted on teachers ... the changes in the classroom reflect the changes in society'
- 'Being seen as the 'cure all' for all society's problems'
- 'I would like if there was less paperwork, if parents would take more responsibility, and if society and government stopped introducing new initiatives in primary schools with the aim of curing society's ills'
- 'Teachers should take a break from teaching – take a sabbatical. Just to re-charge and do something different'



## The Teaching Profession Today

### **Deirbhile Nic Craith, Director of Education and Research**

Is mór an méid ama é 150 bliain. Tá athruithe suntasacha tar éis teacht ar ghairm na múinteoireachta sa tréimhse sin. É sin ráite, is beag a athraíonn ar bhealach eile. Múinteoir i mbun ranga le grúpa daltaí, cé go bhfuil na grúpaí daltaí i bhfad níos lú ná mar a bhíodar 150 bliain ó shin. Maidir leis an oide féin, tá an-mheas ag an bpobal i gcoitinne ar mhúinteoirí agus ar an obair a dhéanann siad, in ainneoin a mbíonn le léamh ar na meáin shóisialta ó am go ham. Is dúshlán mór dúinn é a chinntiú go leanann meas an phobail orainn agus go dtuillimid an meas seo. Mar a dúirt an file fadó 'Is uasal ceird an Oide'.

Luaigh an tUachtarán 'Equal Pay' agus gur tosaíocht é seo don CEC. Ach ní raibh comhionannas pá ann nuair a bunaíodh Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann. Bhí pá níos airde le fáil ag an Máistir ná mar a bhí ag an Máistreás. And it wasn't only gender - during the period of payment by results, senior pupils earned more for their teachers than did junior pupils. It has also been a long time objective of the INTO to secure pay equality between primary and post primary teachers, which exists in Northern Ireland, but has yet to be achieved in the Republic of Ireland. And now we have the emerging profession of early childhood educators seeking pay parity with primary teachers. Cnámh spairne arís é éagothroime pá ó rinne an rialtas cinneadh aontaobhach i leith pá na múinteoirí nua-cháilithe.

In my brief overview this afternoon, I'll give a snapshot of the life and work of teachers during the last 150 years. I will then reflect on where teacher professionalism is today.

The history of the INTO has been ably written by Niamh Puirseil, and follows TJ O'Connell's memoirs written for INTO's 100th birthday. But our literature and folklore are also strong sources of information about the life and work of teachers since the foundation of the National School System.

### ***Buildings and Resources***

The INTO was established to enhance the status of the teaching profession. At the time, teachers were poorly paid and school accommodation was very basic. One of Vere Foster's contributions to education in 19th-century Ireland was the spending of his own money on the improvement of school buildings and on providing residences for teachers. Teachers were often responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of school buildings. Indeed, inspectors often commented on the state of the school in their reports:

... there is no teacher so poor that he could not produce the time and labour to colour its walls at each vacation and with the aid of pupils, by the expense of a brush or broom, preserve decency and cleanliness...<sup>2</sup>

**Teachers had to provide their own teaching materials - usually prepared at their own expense, and where teachers didn't have the money to buy resources they had to make them. But, homemade resources could also be used to teach an integrated curriculum – in the case of Master McCole, the integration of history and geography using a colourful globe made by a local craftsman.**

Bhí na tíortha agus na ranna daite, cuid buí, cuid gorm, cuid donn, cuid liath agus dá réir sin. Agus bhí impireacht na Sasana dearg. Bhí, chomh dearg le fuil. Agus a dheartháir, ba é an dóigh le geograife, agus stair san am chéanna, a theagasc do pháistí na hÉireann.<sup>3</sup>

2 John Magee, 'The Master, A Social History of the Irish National Teacher', 1831-1921. In: *An Múinteoir Náisiúnta*, Vol.27. No2. Summer 1983, p.21

3 Séamus Ó Grianna, *Saol Corrach*, 1945, pp20-21



### **Inspectors**

Teachers' relationships with inspectors have a chequered history. Today we have whole school evaluations, incidental visits, and school self-evaluation. The chief inspector describes the current model of inspection as a co-professional approach to school evaluation. Teachers may no longer fear the visits of the inspector, though such visits can be stressful all the same. Our relationship with inspectors has evolved since these accounts - when visits were awaited with trepidation and teachers often forewarned by the community when strangers arrived in town:

News of any unusual looking passenger on a jaunting car – and the inspector did not look in any way native – was flashed to the boys' and to the girls' schools by casual observers<sup>4</sup>

Ba gheall le gealt é agus lá an scrúdaithe ag teannadh leis. Gach carr a d'airíodh sé ag dul an bealach thugadh abhóg chun na fuinneoige agus sheasadh ar bharrá cos agus d'fhéachfadh amach...<sup>5</sup>

Chuir an mháistreás bhocht fantais di tar éis é imeacht...<sup>6</sup>

Before the publication of *Looking at Our Schools*<sup>7</sup>, inspectors had a reputation for having pet projects. Teachers liked to know what particular aspects of teaching an inspector had a keen interest in.

'What sort of man is this new inspector that you are sending us?, asked the Reverend Mother of a large convent in Leinster 'and what are his fads?' 'He's all fads,' replied Dr Starkie, who was accompanied by the Gallo-Irishman, 'but be sure to teach Irish and Irish history and regional matter, and you'll find him sane enough'.<sup>8</sup>

### **So where does the teaching profession stand today?**

Teachers are all graduates since the 1970s – a status the INTO had long pursued. Our understanding of what constitutes professionalism changes over time. In teaching, there are two schools of thought around teacher professionalism. The first school of thought sees teachers as compliant and competent practitioners, who develop their skills through experience. They are managed professionals, who work with prescribed curriculum and measured outcomes. They are efficient, effective and accountable, and do a good job.

The second school of thought sees teaching as a professional activity – where teachers work collaboratively with colleagues but also with parents and the wider community in the interests of improving outcomes for pupils. This teacher professional is committed to both personal and professional development, ongoing learning, collaboration, research and dialogue. Teaching is seen as a process requiring teacher autonomy and professional judgement.

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4 Joseph Brady, 1958. *The Big Sycamore*. Dublin: M.H.Gill and Son, p.95

5 Padraig Óg Ó Conaire, 1939. *Ceol na nGiolcach*, p.79

6 Tomás Ó Criomhthain, 1929. *An tOileánach*, p.68

7 Department of Education and Skills, 2016. *Looking At Our School 2016, A Quality Framework for Primary Schools*. Dublin: DES Inspectorate

8 From *An Máistir*, Caoimhe Máirtín



In my view, teaching in Ireland is much closer to the second school of thought. Of course, there are challenges, but we can take heart from this teacher's comment when asked what it means to be a professional?

What does it mean to be a professional? It means I engage in CPD, I plan and monitor pupils' progress, engage with my colleagues in school and with parents to achieve best outcomes for the pupils in my care.

*(Class teacher, 19 years teaching – interview with INTO Education Committee)*

There is no doubt, however, that teachers are under pressure - from social, economic and political developments. In the social arena, we are seeing a changing world where society's values are different. Schools and teachers are the first port of call to solve society's problems. On the economic front, we continue to strive for investment in education, a reduction in class size, more resources, IT infrastructure, professional development, teacher pay and support for inclusion. In the political space, we have education reform, increased regulation, a litigious society and demands for accountability.

### **Measurement**

A particular challenge I would like to give some attention to here today is the increase in measurement and information. The gathering of data on student achievement is a feature of many education systems, including our own. The culture of measurement is associated with accountability, control, transparency, evidence, choice and social justice. Therefore, it is difficult to critique it when so many discourses are intertwined. Teachers are strong advocates of social justice, parents demand choice, the State wants accountability, and the public likes transparency.

The global measurement industry seeks to respond to all and tries to pin down what exact 'value' teachers add to all these measurements (Biesta, 2017)<sup>9</sup>, but this is a very complex question. Do we talk about education as effective or efficient? Or do we talk about good education? Can our values be measured?

Data is seductive. The media, in particular, are interested in rankings and league tables, that are often perceived as indicators or definitions of quality. We like it ourselves when we are ranked in the top ten in international assessments. There is an assumption that measurement is objective. It can be easier to use a measurement than to make a judgment which is a difficult task. As teachers our judgement is an integral part of our professionalism. Education is not a machine – it is a human endeavour.

### **Purpose of Education**

We must always remind ourselves of the purpose of education – what gives teaching meaning and identity? In all the attention that is given to learning we should never forget the teacher and the role of teaching.

According to Bryan Mac Mahon who wrote *The Master*<sup>10</sup> about his life and work as a primary teacher, he described his mission as a teacher as planting seeds in children's imagination and in finding their unique gifts:

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9 Biesta, G. (2017). Education, Measurement and the Professions: Reclaiming a space for democratic professionalism in education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Vol. 49, No. 4, pp. 315-330

10 Mac Mahon, B. 1992. *The Master*. Poolbeg Press



If I could only plant a seed in the imagination of each one that would fructify later in each unique individual; if only I could find the gift that I sensed was latent in each one of them: perhaps then I would have fulfilled the purpose of my being a teacher.<sup>11</sup> (p. 18)

I realized that each child had a gift, and that the “leading out” of that gift was the proper goal of teaching. To me a great teacher was simply a great person teaching.<sup>12</sup> (p. 8)

Teachers interviewed by the Education Committee expressed pride in their work, responding to pupils’ interests, and children blossom in their care:

Plans for a day’s teaching can go out the window if a topic interests the pupils so much they want to spend time exploring it. Flexibility is key.

*(Class teacher, rural school, 30 years teaching)*

I feel very proud when I see children’s lives change or improve in some way because of my teaching and support.

*(Class teacher, 28 years teaching)*

Primary school teaching is a rewarding career for me as I enjoy seeing the children progress socially, emotionally and academically.

*(Shared special education teacher, 3 years teaching)*

### **Change**

Many aspects of teachers’ life and work have changed since 1868. Early years’ education is one such area. Two-year olds attended the national school up to the 1880s and three-year olds until the 1930s. The INTO strongly fought against government plans to raise the school starting age further to four and a half or five in the early 1980s on the grounds that early education was vital in children’s learning and development. What position would we take today if the government decided to increase the school starting age again now that children are entitled to two years of pre-school education?

The second area in which we have seen significant change is inclusion. Today’s classrooms are inclusive of all children. While teachers have embraced inclusion, it is a struggle when the proper supports are not in place.

We have also seen induction replace probation, the growth of mentoring, the establishment of our own professional body, the Teaching Council and the development of a Framework for Teacher Professional Development. CPD for teachers should be encouraged, supported and incentivized. We acknowledge the Teaching Council’s current position that engagement in CPD will not be linked to renewal of registration as reflecting our congress resolution. We will continue with our conversations with the Teaching Council on this matter.

### **Workload**

Workload is not a new word in the vocabulary of teachers. Indeed, the first edition of the *Irish Teachers’ Journal* published a letter from ‘an overworked and underpaid teacher’ complaining of

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11 MacMahon, B. *The Master*, p. 18

12 MacMahon, B. *The Master*, p. 8



the paperwork teachers were expected to do, outside of school hours and for no extra money – not even a thanks.

Of course, such returns must be filled by the Teachers, and whatever labour devolves upon them in their preparation must be performed outside of school hours'. . . 'the notion of giving teachers any extra allowance for the performance of such troublesome duties will be received . . . with astonishment . . . Even the cheap acknowledgement of thanks never has been given to the teachers for the discharge of many such duties which have frequently fallen to their share.<sup>13</sup>

Curriculum overload is not new either. In 1904, teachers, while complementing the new Programme, which was almost perfect, complained about the inclusion of additional subjects without taking any away. Sounds familiar?

The newest Irish Programme . . . is certainly the best yet issued. In fact it is almost perfect. The idea of suggesting to take an additional subject in an already overloaded programme is, however, too ridiculous for even the National Board. The Board is certainly endeavouring to meet the popular demand, but their efforts are useless, or worse, if all the existing subjects are insisted on.<sup>14</sup>

We hope to make progress on this issue through the Workload Forum with the department and through our forthcoming research project as demanded by Congress.

### ***The INTO***

The INTO strives to be an activist profession committed to advancing equity, social justice, wellbeing, inclusion, democracy and human rights in education. And we have a good track record. We will continue to build alliances and partnerships with parents, other teacher unions, and with education bodies as we seek to improve our education system for pupils and teachers. We will continue to resist the Global Education Reform Movement that seeks to reduce education to core measurable skills, deprofessionalising teachers in the process.

INTO is a democratic organisation. Collectively we continue to strive towards enhancing the status of the teaching profession. It was what the INTO was founded for 150 years ago. It is what we will continue to do for the next 150 years and more.

We look forward to Andy Hargreaves' talk this afternoon on where teacher professionalism is today.

Bainigí taitneamh agus tairbhe as an gComhdháil.

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13 *Irish Teachers' Journal*, August 1, 1868

14 *Irish Teachers' Journal*, June 25, 1904



## The Teaching Profession – Where is it going?

### **Professor Andy Hargreaves, Boston College**

In August this year, I broke my ankle in two places on the Appalachian trail in the United States. I have a stick which has three purposes; it helps me walk, it helps me get through airports much more quickly as it folds up quite handily and if you fake a limp you will get through much faster than everybody else; it also makes a good audio-visual aid, so there will be two or three times when I will suggest that you have a conversation with each other and at the end of it, like Gandalf, I will raise it.

Because I broke my ankle, I had to cancel a lot of things in various parts of the world during August, September and October. The day before yesterday was the first flight I had taken in six months and this is my first day teaching a class, of any kind, since June. It was strange coming back to this – I felt a bit like you must feel around September 4th. You have had a long break and you wonder if you are going to be a bit rusty. Do you ever have that feeling? You've had a long summer and think, will I still have it? Will I be a bit rusty? Then you start to have weird dreams. Now some of us have weird dreams anyway, but the week before school you start to get weird dreams. Perhaps you dream that you have a class in front of you and nobody will do what they are told. Or perhaps you dream you are on a stage like this and your words dry up and you have lines and you have no idea what they are or where they will be. Or if you're like me - when I was 12 my dad died. My mum had to raise three boys and eventually it got too much for her, so she got very sick. We were on welfare and there was a period of a few months when I never got to school before 11am because I was making the fire. Of course, it was the morning lessons that I would always miss - maths classes - and until I was about 14 my maths scores were fantastic and after 14 they were abysmal. My arithmetic is great and my calculus is shocking still. So, whenever I have anxiety dreams, my dreams are always that I go into a school and it's a maths test. I go into my old school, sometimes a child, sometimes I am an adult, I turn over the page and I have no idea what the questions mean. Sometimes I can't even find the room where the test is. I am almost there, but wandering about the school, lost. All these things, I think, are anxiety about our own learning and anxieties, or perhaps a better word is apprehension, about our own teaching. And it is wonderfully humbling to have that as a teacher because it reminds us to never take for granted who we are and what we do. It does not come effortlessly ever - even though we feel it does. It does not happen by magic. It is not the way we were born. It requires deliberate effort every day to keep it the level that it is. If we don't have that deliberate effort, then our lives can end up like those dreams that we have before the 4th of September. So, it is good to feel rusty again. It reminds me of the importance of not just what I do but of what we all do.

I believe you have a birthday! INTO is 150 years old. Happy birthday to you!

It is wonderful to be amongst all these educators. What I will try to do with you over the next hour or so is to talk about what you do. I'll talk about the teaching profession and where the teaching profession is moving. I particularly want to focus on two or three areas with you. I want to talk about where our thinking is going around professional learning and development - and you are going to get involved in a little bit of interaction around that shortly.

I am going to explore an example with you of what that means - which is the example of what happens when you take an idea or a practice from one classroom and try to move it to another. When we see something good or interesting going on, how do we look at it here – which might be a classroom just down the hall or it could be another school or even another country? When you bring it back, how do you bring it back in a way that is useful for the people here?

The third area I want to talk about is autonomy and collaboration. The basic point I will make on autonomy is that the goal of the quest should not be for individual autonomy, which is how autonomy is traditionally seen. No profession - architecture, medicine, social work - can be a true profession unless people share the expertise that they have together. Of course, most of the





time you are on your own. You're on your own with your own class, but the question is, 'who is in your head?', when you are on your own. Is what you do just something you made up by yourself over 20-25 years? Or is it the product of all the things you have learned from the colleagues that you have around you? So, instead of individual autonomy, I want to introduce you to the idea of collective autonomy. What do I mean by that? Simply, collective autonomy means that we have more autonomy from the people above us in the bureaucracy, less standardisation, less regulation, less micromanagement - but the trade for that is we have less autonomy from each other. We have more autonomy from the people above - but we are more open, transparent and collaborative with each other. So, it is still autonomy, but it is a different kind of autonomy and it is not only better for kids, the evidence shows that, on average, (there are lots of studies now), if we collaborate with people around us and because we have their moral support and because we pick up their ideas we will get better results - and I just don't mean test scores - but better results, better learning with our kids than if we do it all by ourselves. The second thing is, it is better for you - teachers are more motivated or more engaged in and enjoy their jobs when doing it with other people if there are other people to share it with. It sounds like a cliché but you wouldn't believe how much of the world actually fails to do this or bring it into being for all kinds of reasons. So that is one thing I want to share with you.

### ***Solidarity and Solidity***

Another thing I want to share with you is an article in our book. It has a very American type of title - they love these Greek letters - so it is Phi Delta Kappan International<sup>15</sup>. It is a piece on solidity and solidarity and throughout today's presentation we are going to look at these. When we are growing as a profession and becoming better, we need two things, not either/or - we need both/and. Most answers in education are both/and, not either/or. They really are. Is it direct instruction or is it informal group work? And the answer is yes. Right, it is a bit of both. That is how I was taught by a brilliant teacher, when I was ten years old, who had us write newspapers together, work in small groups, engage with the nature table, practice our multiplication tables and go through levels of reading and so on. The answer is not either/or. The answer is both/and.

With this, solidarity is really important. Solidarity is a very strong word for unions. It is the linchpin of what unions do, for example, the solidarity movement in eastern Europe that brought about the fall of the Berlin wall. Solidarity, and what it means for the union movement also has an even deeper meaning. It is who we are, how we are, how we support each other, how we stand by each other together, how we help each other out when things are difficult, how we stand by someone who is being picked on by somebody else. This is solidarity, but as well as solidarity of relationships we also need the solidity of what we do. Solidarity doesn't just mean conversation, talk, exchanging ideas - it means doing things together that have substance. It means curriculum planning, developing rubrics, creating a network in a way that students can exchange their ideas and work and give each other feedback across the network. There are many kinds of things to do but alongside the solidarity of relationships we need the stuff that people do in the field of leadership.

### ***Leadership***

There are two theories that describe leadership - theory X and theory Y. To find out which theory you belong to, I am going to ask you a question. Turn and talk to somebody next to you that you feel comfortable with. The question is - and it is one minute, 30 seconds each - how do you organise your wardrobe? I mean the stuff in your wardrobe - how do you organise it?

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15 Hargreaves, A. and O'Connor, M.T. Solidarity with solidity: The case for collaborative professionalism. *Phi Delta Kappan*



Brilliant, you reach silence so much more quickly than the principals do. I have some questions to ask you so just raise your hands if this applies to you. You may raise your hand more than once, by the way. If you organise your wardrobe according to colour could you raise your hand - okay that's enough. Next, if you organise it according to type of garment - I just don't mean pants versus tops - I mean among your tops like things with long sleeves and short sleeves, no sleeves - if you organise it like that, could you raise your hands. Perfect. I have two more questions. If you organise it by season, could you raise your hands. Just two observations here - one is that in Ottawa, where I now live in Canada, season is the primary one. People have entire floors of clothes according to the season and they never go to the other floors for five months until the season changes in about a week - and they go back to the other one. But the other one that I have noticed is that some people have put up their hands three times already - they have a Dewey decimal system of organising. They think, 'I need to go to 370.12.125 today and I will get that one there'. Then there is the fourth question which is when I ask this question - organise your clothes? That's a new idea! Who thought of that? Did any of you think that? Okay, good.

So, what have we learned from this? Those of you who have ways of organising your closets to some degree, and especially if you have three or four different ways of organising it that intersect like a complicated set of outcomes, basically then, you are definitely theory X people. In the field of leadership and administration theory X people are people who like 'stuff' - they like systems, ideas, strategies, protocols, structures, roles, responsibilities, timetables, timelines, deadlines, outcomes, things that can be measured, things that you can see, product - they are all theory X. It is not a bad way to be. These are theory X people. They approach learning and teaching, and their leadership, a lot in that kind of way. It is about doing the stuff and getting the stuff done and having the structures, procedures, roles and responsibilities to get the stuff done and move on to the next thing.

Then there are theory Y people. Theory Y people don't have time to think about organising their stuff because really what they care about are relationships. They care about who they are, the existential nature of life, the people they are with, developing a trust, a sense of belonging, openness. You are like that with your classes and you may be like that with your colleagues and with your community as well. Theory X and theory Y - the thing is that they are both important. Theory X - it is important to get the stuff done. Theory Y, as Michael Fullan and I said when you're dealing with difficult people remember this, 'it's hard to eat something you've had a relationship with'<sup>16</sup>. If you like to eat rabbit, which I do, then it is easier to eat the rabbit when somebody you have never met goes out and shoots it for you and brings it back, skins it and cooks it for you then you eat it and it is delicious. But if you have a pet rabbit, cuddly and fluffy and you have looked after it and it sits on the bottom of your bed sometimes, it is a bit difficult when you are peckish to think, 'I fancy some rabbit - where is she'? So, it is hard to eat something you have had a relationship with and so if you build relationships with all your kids, including the ones who are difficult, with your parents, if you call the parents before things go wrong and call them when things are going well, they are less likely to devour you when things are going badly. So always have a good conversation with a parent before you have a difficult one and the difficult one will be much easier. It's hard to eat something you've had a relationship with - that applies to you and them and that applies to them and you. So, theory X and theory Y both matter. If you can't do both of these yourselves - you are just not that kind of person - then you need in your group to take care of theory X and theory Y. You need these things to be taken care of even if they are not taken care of by you. This will be a theme running through pretty much everything we do now.

### ***Professional Learning and Professional Development***

Next, I am going to divide the room into two halves. Over this side, I am going to ask you to talk

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16 Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A. 1996. What's worth fighting for in your School. *Teachers' College Press*



again - this time either to someone behind you or in front of you. But this time don't talk until I tell you to start because I am going to tell this side what they are going to do. So just hold on and wait for the suspense! This again is very short. I will give you 90 seconds max and the question is - what do you think professional learning is? What does professional learning look like for you? Think of some phrases, images, sentences that come to mind. And over on this side, I am going to ask you a very similar question - what do you think professional development looks like? So, you are the professional learning side and you are the professional development side. It will be approximately two minutes. I will stop you and we will decide what to do next. It is too big a room to start getting feedback but there may be time for a few questions at the end. But I am going to give you some examples and I want you to raise your hand if you think it applies to your view or your idea of what professional learning is here or what professional development is there. The secret to this, when you respond with your hands up is to look forward, not sideways at the people next to you or across, and to respond viscerally with your gut. So, if you feel this broadly applies to you then just raise your hands.

If you are mentoring a relatively new teacher to develop and support their classroom management skills so that they become more effective in behaviour management - if you think this applies to you, either side of the room, with what you have just been thinking about could you raise your hands. Now look around – okay hands down.

If you are engaged in curriculum planning with colleagues, you are developing a new curriculum, it might be a subject in secondary schools, or it might be learning outcomes for anywhere in the system - if you think this applies to you and what you have been talking about raise your hands.

I actually have other questions, but they are pointless as I think we see the pattern already - which is either that you think everything involves both professional learning and professional development or that we are totally confused about what the difference is between professional learning and professional development. We use these terms all the time. We use them interchangeably. We use them for things we don't like as well as for things we do like. So to try and sort our way through this little morass in a way that might be helpful - do any of you know Michael Fullan's work on change? A couple of years ago we did a session on 'Bringing the Profession Back In'<sup>17</sup> for what used to be called the National Staff Development Council in the US - a big conference of about 5,000 people, teacher leaders mainly, sometimes consultants working in school districts with groups of schools, like your clusters of schools and we tried to figure out some of this for them and with them. What we concluded is that both (professional learning and professional development) are important, but that the most important thing is how they intersect. This is one of your classic Venn diagrams.

Professional learning is deliberately learning something in order to become better and more effective as a teacher. Deliberately, so you might be learning how to teach literacy more effectively. Sometimes, if you are a secondary school teacher you might just be learning more about your subject. You might get excited about developing a deeper knowledge about geography or music or whatever it might be. You might want to learn more about Asperger's syndrome because you are finding that more kids coming into your school are autistic and have Asperger's syndrome and you don't want just the special education teachers to deal with that. So, it is deliberate learning in order to become better as a teacher.

Professional development is like child development. When children are learning as we teach them about maths, literacy, about dance - we are also developing the children as young people. We are developing their sense of responsibility. We are developing their sense of self regard. We are developing their capacity to live and work in a community. The same is true when we are working with other adults - whether the adults are parents or whether the adults are teachers.

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17 Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A. 2016. *Bringing the Profession Back In*. Oxford, USA: Learning Forward



Adults are at different levels of development just as children are. When we work with them and with ourselves in terms of professional learning, some of it is emotional work or even a moral process of development - not just a cognitive process. This plays out in all kinds of ways. For example, some teachers don't like to collaborate. This may come as a terrible shock, but some teachers don't like to collaborate. There are many kinds of reasons for that - sometimes they don't have the time, sometimes they are overloaded, sometimes they can't even get out of their hut in the yard to see anybody else or even go to the toilet. Sometimes, they have collaborated with people before and they got poisoned or burned. Sometimes they are made to collaborate on things that they don't want to collaborate on - so somebody else is telling them to do it. Collaborators in war time got shot!

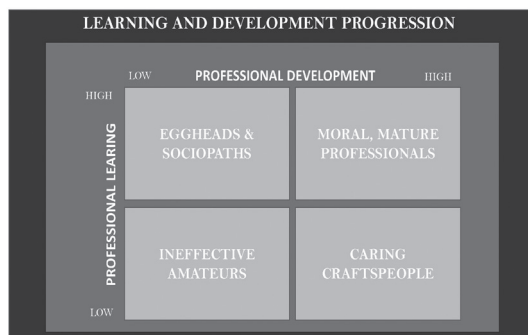
So, there are all kinds of reasons as to why people don't collaborate. But one is psychological - it's called ego development. When we develop our ego, our sense of who we are, we develop a sense of boundary around ourselves. Some people say today it's fashionable to say that all boundaries and borders are gone, they don't matter anymore. They do! If you don't have a sense of boundary you don't know who you are or what separates you from anybody else. If you are still living in your parents' basement when you are 28 years old, you haven't probably yet developed a full sense of who you are, separately from your parents. This is harder for the millennials today where 28 is the new 18, right? And so when you ask people to collaborate, but they don't have a clear sense of who they are by then, what their competence is, what they stand for - it doesn't mean they know everything - then you ask them to collaborate with someone else and they fear they will be invaded and taken over by this other person. If this other person is a brilliant teacher, it will merely demonstrate what a crap teacher they are. Or if this person has a different way of approaching things, they will lose the way they approach it and they will lose their sense of self and who they are as a teacher. Are you with me?

We work with teachers of all kinds, parents of all kinds, and people fear change for many kinds of reasons. Sometimes, it's a bad change or it's a wrong change or the change is done too quickly. But sometimes, it is because the first thing most of us experience when we change is loss. It's strange - even changes we like. I have emigrated three times now - it is becoming a bit of a habit - from England to Canada, from Canada to the US and from the US back to Canada to be close to our grandchildren. Each time you move - because it is a gain - you want to move. Some people have to move. It is very hard for them, the loss is enormous. Some people choose to move, but even when you choose to move you leave all kinds of things behind. You wake up one morning and it totally surprises you. All you are thinking about are all the things you are losing or all the things you have lost. There is a sadness, even amidst the happiness and the joy, of what it is you are getting. You have a baby - and the good news is that you have a baby, but the bad news is that you lose your independence! So, it can't be 5.30pm, I've had a hard day and you say to your partner, 'let's go out to the movies, let's just leave the two-year-old to look after themselves and they will be absolutely fine'. All change involves senses of loss. When we ourselves learn to take on new skills and new knowledge, we are dealing with a process of change. We worry about the things we value that might get left behind and the things we have to give up. The people we work with worry about that as well. That's why, when you propose a new idea to them, they don't jump up and down with joy immediately you explain it to them - because the first thing they are thinking about is, 'how will this affect me and what will I lose'?

When we ourselves learn, grow and change as teachers, and when we work with other people, both professional learning and professional development matter. A way to think about this is through the dreaded grid which always helps me think. Do any of you use these (grids) when you are stuck with an idea and you have no idea where it is going? The last resort is always to draw a grid and you will think of something that you have not thought of before. So up the vertical axis is professional learning from low to high and the horizontal axis is professional development from low to high. If you are in the bottom corner, you are not learning and you are not growing. What are you - as a teacher? If you are not learning and you are not growing - you are 'ineffective



amateurs', ineffective amateurs who are making it up as they go along. You are not deliberately learning anything to get better and there is no means for you to grow and mature as a person.



The next cell is quite interesting - if you have a lot of professional learning but no professional development, you are very smart but have no growth. Who are you? 'Eggheads and Sociopaths' - otherwise known as a university professor. I have many colleagues up in this box - they have brilliant ideals and sometimes are superb teachers with terrific minds. They can't manage their way out of a paper bag and wouldn't understand an emotion if it hit them in the face. Luckily, we have places for people like this to go. They are called universities. There they have a moderately fulfilling and socially useful life.

What do we have on the bottom right? It is a bit more serious. 'Caring Craftspeople' - people who really care about the kids but don't willingly develop enough knowledge that would help them to care for those kids more effectively. Let me give you some examples. If you have kids in your class or school who are LGBT, you might be concerned that they are being bullied. You might see it as a bullying issue. It is a bullying issue, but it is also an LGBT issue. It is an issue of prejudice and marginalisation. It is an issue of identity and self-identity. So to help those kids you actually need not only to be caring and to be concerned about bullying, you also need content knowledge. You need to deliberately learn things - whether you are gay or straight - you need to learn things deliberately about the LGBT community. This is what one of my graduate students taught me - because we learn from our students as well as learning from our colleagues if we are open to it over time.

The other area to look at is in Northern Ontario in Canada. If you read the book *Collaborative Professionalism*<sup>18</sup> - it's a short book with bigish print and different colours - well, we are all busy these days, right? If you don't want to read the book, go onto my website. There is a shorter paper online that is free of charge and you can download it. So, I'm not asking you to buy books, but suggesting ways for you to engage with the ideas - once you have left here. One of our examples for what we call collaborative professionalism is a school district in the North of Ontario, in Canada, which has 23 schools in an area the size of France. You think that you have isolated rural schools, but their schools are really isolated and 50% of their kids are indigenous, native, first nations Canadian. They have had an appalling history over the last 100 years, some of which you will know. They were the children of the last generation, through to the 1970s, who were torn away from their parents and their families, and put into residential school, separated from their families, their brothers and sisters, their parents, their communities, their land, their language, everything. When the communities refused to move to where people wanted them to move, they sent the police at night to slaughter the dogs that these communities depended on for their livelihood and protection against predators. That has left an appalling legacy of alcoholism, drug abuse, incredible rates of suicide amongst children - children as young as 10, 11, 12 and 13 years old committing suicide - very dysfunctional parenting, and very divided fractured families.

18 Hargreaves, A. and O'Connor, M. 2018. *Collaborative Professionalism: When teaching together means learning for all*. Corwin Impact Leadership Series



When these kids came into school, when we started working with them eight years ago, the teachers wanted to care for the kids. They really saw that the kids needed somebody who could care for them and look after them. But they thought the kids couldn't learn because the evidence was that they couldn't. They said that not only could these kids not read and write, they could barely grunt - but they cared for them. Then the superintendent of the school district - who at that time was too ashamed to tell anybody that his mother was native Canadian, first nations, now he flaunts it, now he is proud of it, now he advertises it - he got the teachers together in groups. He organised communities - that were a bit difficult - where people shared examples of kids' work. There are always some teachers who were ahead of the others. It doesn't mean that they were ahead of everything - but on everything there were some that were a bit further ahead than everyone. Teachers would see some examples of the kids' work - kids like theirs - where they were getting results and the kids were learning. So they began to develop a belief, for the first time, that actually it was possible with the right supports, despite these appalling circumstances, for these kids to learn. Once they got these first conversations going then there were some real step changes. The teachers began by working with the community to try and engage these kids - not on the basis of what they were missing and what they didn't have - but on the basis of what they did have. Indigenous families love being outside. They live and thrive in the outdoors. They have knowledge that far exceeds ours. The Franklin expedition that failed to find the Northwest passage ended up eating each other because they wouldn't take any knowledge from the indigenous communities who survived superbly in that environment.

They began to build the curriculum around what the kids had, rather than what the kids were missing - outdoor activities, wilderness camping, building fishing traps to trap one-eyed fish, which is a traditional indigenous activity, bringing elders into the school, developing performing arts, ice hockey - they discovered that some of the kids, whom nobody thought could learn, were superb players on the ice hockey rink, and in the changing rooms were leaders of the other players. However, when they went back into the regular classroom they were just as abysmal as they were before. The teachers then - not the principals, not the superintendents - but the hockey coaches said, 'okay, we will start a professional learning community, the teachers will lead it and we will connect with the regular classroom teachers and we'll figure out what the transferable skills are that the kids actually have'. They have them 'here' but they don't have them 'there'. How can we get them 'here', so that they can learn maths and science and all the other things that will help them progress over time. They were no longer just 'caring craftspeople' who just wanted to care for kids they didn't think could learn. Now they were professionals. They developed knowledge about indigenous communities by also - theory Y - building relationships with those indigenous communities. Now they weren't just 'caring craftspeople', they were 'Moral, Mature Professionals'. They have relationships, they have moral commitment, and now they have knowledge and strategy and ways of sharing it as well. That is professional learning and professional development - however the community is and however the learners are, whether they are LGBT, whether they are indigenous, whether they are immigrants or refugees, or whether they are poor white working class.

That is professional learning and professional development - however the community is and however the learners are, whether they are LGBT, whether they are indigenous, whether they are immigrants or refugees, or whether they are poor white working class - which is a group we also need to talk about by the way, they need to be acknowledged as well, not instead, but as well.



### ***Borrowing Ideas***

Now I have another question for you before we move to another topic. All the questions are strange, but the answers are interesting. Imagine for a moment it's the summer. You are with a group of friends. It's a beautiful day. You go out to the countryside - Wicklow mountains. You go hiking. You carry a magnificent picnic on your back and one of you brings a bottle of wine with you. You sit down and lay out the cloth on the ground and then - you have been saving this wine for two years - you get it out and you say, 'who has got the corkscrew?' Everyone looks around - the corkscrew? So, the question is without looking on google, or on any other search engine - you have one minute - how do you open a bottle of wine that has a cork in it without a corkscrew? Okay, this is a pretty quick one. I am just going to ask for a show of hands. If your answer was something like - push it in rather than pull it out, use a toothpick, a nail file, a twig or something in that area - could you raise your hands? You have all failed! There is no self-esteem about this - let's just be really clear - this is a nation which now values developing creativity amongst its young people and now I can understand why. (A video is played showing the removal of a cork from a bottle of wine using a shoe and a wall). When you go back to school on Monday, and your colleagues say, 'you were at some professional learning and development at the INTO conference, did you actually learn anything practical this time?' And you will be able to say, 'as a matter of fact we did, actually!' There is just one flaw in this brilliant example. Has anybody ever tried this? Yes. Did it work? Yes. Another person said no because the cork broke half-way out. Another person said it didn't work - nothing happened. So the thing is that mainly it works but not always. That is true of everything - pretty much. Mainly it works, but it is not a guarantee. It depends on the wall. It depends on the shoe. It depends on the amount of force you are prepared to risk when you have a live bottle of wine and a white suit on. This also applies when we are taking an idea from one place and moving it to another. Even though it has worked 30 times somewhere else, it doesn't mean necessarily that it will work with you. To give an example of this, I'm going to ask you what you think that is?



Well done this participant down here who said it is two people sitting and putting their arms around each other. This picture is from Norway. It is a friendship bench and the idea of the friendship bench is that if you don't have anybody to play with you go and sit on the friendship bench and somebody will come and play with you. Do you have them here? Buddy benches, that is what they call them in America. I just thought it was a lovely thing when I saw it. When I took it back to America and started talking about it in America on came a discussion on public and national radio about buddy benches. What some people were finding in some schools in America is that they build the buddy bench, it's a snowy day, and a kid would go and sit on it and the other kids would say, 'what a loser, let's throw snowballs at them'. Because it is not all about the bench. The bench doesn't solve the problem, of itself, of how kids are with other kids. The bench is a technology that can help you. But there is so much else you need to do in building relationships amongst the kids - a moral code, things about bullying, belongingness - are needed as well as the bench. You can't just take things from one culture or school and move it to another culture or school and leave it untouched.



## The 4 Bs

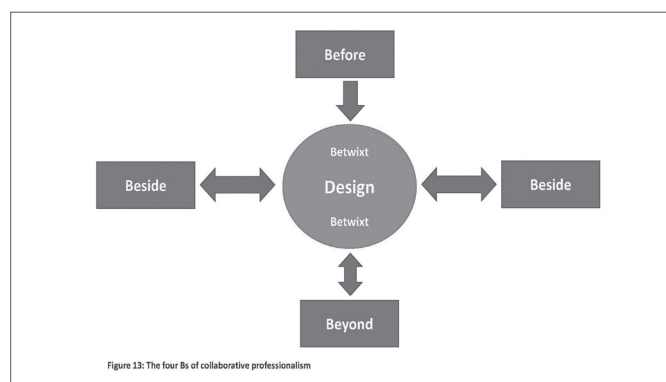


Figure 13: The four Bs of collaborative professionalism

What we need to know are called the four Bs. I want you to imagine for a moment, or remember, seeing something in another school or classroom and thinking about how it fits you. Or imagine somebody coming into you and seeing something you do that is inspiring, and what you might need to tell them - so that they can usefully take it back. I'm not asking you to talk about it. I'm just asking you for a few seconds to put one of those things in your mind - either something that you have, that you shared with other people, or you would like to share with other people, something that you have developed or enjoy. It might be something you invented or something that you have adopted, or something you have seen elsewhere that is coming to you. I just want you to think about this as I introduce you to what we call the four Bs.

The four Bs are these - we saw them when we looked in our book at five designs for collaborating amongst teachers - five ways of getting people to collaborate in a particular way in five different countries and cultures.

### **Before**

What we learned from this is that you need to be able to take an idea, and for it to make sense somewhere else, you need to understand, first of all, what went on before, how long did it take to get like that. I can take you now to Ontario in Canada where there is a culture of collaborative enquiry, which means, routinely, whenever there is a problem or an issue or curriculum development in the school, the teachers will effortlessly get together to enquire together - what is the evidence? What does the literature say? What are other schools doing? How can we respond to this in ways that fit our children? In some schools, they have this magnificent thing called 'students of wonder'. 'A student of wonder' is a particular student who is wonderful, but teachers wonder why they are struggling with a particular aspect of their learning. So they will bring a whole multidisciplinary team together - speech pathologist, special education support, perhaps a second language expert, all the teachers who teach this child - and try and figure out together, including with the child, why it is that they are struggling with learning. There is a structure, there are supports, there is a focus to concentrate on, but there is also a culture, an ethic, a routine of how teachers habitually explore the problems that are in front of them, together. But ten years ago, we didn't see that anywhere in the system in Ontario. It didn't just happen overnight - somebody had a bright idea and then they did it! It has taken ten years of deliberate work to evolve to that point. The innovations we saw - typically the principals that have been in the school for eight, nine, ten years - a long time. People would talk about how they collaborated badly before they collaborated well. So sometimes you have to start off and it feels a bit awkward initially.

I'm president of an international organisation. We have 500 members. We have a Congress for 700 people every year in January in a different country. It is a complicated organisation. I have a board of a dozen people. We meet virtually every six weeks and we meet physically twice a





year. It is very complicated to run. Sometimes we have extremely difficult decisions to make - we understand and learn from this that sometimes we have to have a bad meeting before we have a good one. You have to have a meeting where people can't reach a decision, or don't really understand what is going on, or oppose it, or think there has to be some other solution, or fight each other. Then we will talk about it in a break, or over dinner, or we will sleep on it and then come back the next day and have a brilliant meeting. Sometimes you have to have a bad one before you have a good one. By the way, I have written and edited 31 books - 28 of those are with other people. Ten per cent of those were a hideously disastrous experience. I have worked with people who didn't do their work, didn't do it properly, wouldn't compromise or respond. My Mum used to say to me, 'if you want a job done, do it yourself'. I really have thought that sometimes. But the important thing is not to let that bad ten per cent poison the possibility. Every so often you will have a bad relationship with a parent, don't let it poison your relationships with all parents. Every so often you will have a bad collaboration, don't let it poison the possibilities of good collaboration with other people. The first thing is, what you are seeing - the brilliant teacher you look at - you didn't see them on their first day of school or in their first year of teaching. So what sort of 'stuff' went on before, you need to explain to someone else that a lot went on before what you're seeing now.

### ***Beside***

Second, what goes on beside - who is beside you? Hands up anyone if you have been trained by Barry Bennett. Cooperative learning has the sense of somebody at the shoulder. Somebody at your shoulder is somebody who stands by you, another learner that will help you, be like a peer tutor for you. When you are teaching, you need a system that stands by you - that is the principal standing by you, rather than getting in the way or micro-managing you, or not caring at all and leaving you to it. Then you need a government that stands by you, who gives you the time to collaborate - a government who doesn't expect you to do it all by yourself. A government that gives you the resources to be able to visit teachers in other schools. I have done a lot of work in Scotland for the Director of Education for Scotland. There they take groups of teachers from schools, they spread them out and they go to see different schools all on the same day. Then they will come back and share. They go in groups of two or three and they will come back and share what they are learning in their own school and how it applies to them. You need structures, you need time, you need resources. You need a system that stands by you and a system that doesn't hinder you and get in the way.

You know these things called clusters, are they more of a good thing or a bad thing? Or more of a bad thing than good thing? That is an interesting one! Well, lots of people in lots of countries now have clusters. In Australia, they set them up particularly badly in the State of Victoria. The people who were called cluster leaders were unkindly labelled 'duster cleaners'. So, clusters can be a good thing or they can be a bad thing. The point of clusters is they are also a system, so if you are part of a cluster you shouldn't feel like the cluster is not over the top of you, but that the cluster is beside you - that it is at your shoulder, there to help and support and nudge you along. That is what beside is.

### ***Beyond***

Then there is what is beyond. That idea that you have - where did you learn it from? Who did you pick it up from? We have a school in Hong Kong that does lesson study. The basic idea of lesson study is that a bunch of people will come into your class - they may be complete outsiders - and watch you teach a lesson. It could be all day, or a group of lessons, and the feedback may be quite critical, some of it. It won't be all affirming or overly polite. This school in Hong Kong does that. You watch it, and it is a bit of a shock at first - 10 people in your class seeing somebody teach a class, some teacher presenting, some people talking in pairs, some people talking in fours, kids



presenting back to the front of the class, all going at a very fast pace and all in front of somebody else, who will come back afterwards and criticise your class or give you a critique. Why don't they fall apart like nervous wrecks? The answer is a couple of things. They have protocols - so first of all when you give feedback, you are separated into different groups. Some are expected to look for things that need improving and some are expected to look for things that need affirming. The criticism is separated from the critic. You don't get the person sitting at the back corner of the room, yet again, when you have a staff meeting, who is going to witter on for 10 or 15 minutes about the awful thing we have all done before and we have to do again. Of course, there is a grain of truth in what they are saying but it is always the same person who says it. You separate the criticism from the critic.

The second thing is that the lesson you see the teacher teaching is not the teacher's lesson. They have planned it with all the teachers in their department, or all the other teachers in their year level. Then they have all tried it and then they have come back and refined it, and then they have developed their plan a bit farther. They have developed and refined it three times, so when somebody comes to look at the lesson, it is not my lesson - it is our lesson. They are not criticising my teaching - they are giving feedback on our lesson. What we have learned from this, remember, is that the relationships are important, the theory Y and structures and the protocols - so when you give difficult feedback to somebody they don't collapse in pieces or feel vulnerable. But the other thing is their version of lesson study is not copied from any other place anywhere else. They went to Singapore to look at lesson study there. They went to Japan to a regular public school there and spoke with some of the world's greatest experts on lesson study and from what they learned from these different places, they found something that uniquely was right for them that they created for themselves. Never show a teacher one idea for them to copy, because there are only two responses - one is that they will do it but they won't understand it and they will do it badly because it won't fit, and the other is that they will reject it. If you give people two or three ideas - not 10 or 12 - then you have a range of ideas and you have to learn together how it will fit you and your capabilities and where your community is. So the 'beyond' is important.

### ***Betwixt***

The last one is a very Irish word, 'betwixt'. I have actually seen the word betwixt here more than I have seen in any other English-speaking culture. Betwixt is as well as what you are seeing, what other things are teachers doing in their school as well as this, that this fits into somehow. What is the culture like - the way they work together? For instance, we can go to Columbia, the country. In Columbia, they have 25,000 schools that are part of a network of schools in very poor rural communities called 'escuela nueva'. In these schools, they improve in two ways - by teachers spreading ideas around amongst each other in learning centres, the kind of learning centres where you sometimes meet, and when they share their ideas their focus is on peace and democracy as the core of the curriculum. When the teachers meet to talk about how to improve their curriculum in peace and democracy, they argue all the time. They met once on the day I was there. I'm sorry I have to say this, there was a teachers' strike and they were forbidden to meet, but they are Columbian, so they met anyway. Even though they thought the learning was too important, but while they were there, they talked about the strike. So actually, they complied with everything, but didn't, and argued voraciously, waving their arms around and interrupting each other all the time. That is what it means to collaborate in Columbia.

In Hong Kong, this is how you collaborate. Principal Veronica Yao stands here - on her right-hand side stands her teacher leader Marco and on her left-hand side stands her other teacher leader Grace. Veronica speaks and when she is done, right on cue with no arm movements or anything, at precisely the right moment, Marco comes in and then it goes back to Veronica and at the right moment Grace comes in. When they sit in staff meetings, there are no iphones, no scrolling through messages, there is no interruption and there is no distraction. Because it is



Hong Kong, which means it is a bit of old British, like from 1960, combined with Confucianism not confusionism but Confucianism, which has respect for elders, respect for authority, filial piety, the importance of hierarchy, the strength of community - all these things go together. What you see is not jazz, not rock and roll, it is an orchestra, it is chamber music, and everybody knows. You try that in Columbia and you will die like a stone in seconds. You take the Columbian way of being into Hong Kong and it will throw the school into chaos. Schools are like this, and departments - they have cultures too. The math department is totally different from the English department. If you go into a high school, the cultures of subject departments are as different from each other as schools are sometimes elsewhere. So, when we collaborate, we have to be aware of what the culture is, how it fits our way of being compared to their way of being, and think about it intelligently – we don't just take a design off the shelf, decide and go implement it. We ask all these other questions around it - it is about professional learning and professional development.

### ***The role of expertise***

The Appalachian trail goes for 2000 miles in North America. You might have read Bill Bryson's book, *A Walk in the Woods* - it is much more dangerous than he says. There are snakes and bears, there are thunderstorms and some of the strongest winds in the whole of America. I like to go out there from time to time with friends. I have walked about a third of it now from the border of Maine to southern Pennsylvania and in August I fell off. I fell off not on the hardest four days, but on the easiest 100 yards. I had to be brought out by mountain rescue in the middle of the night. It was a bit more of an adventure than I was bargaining for and here is what I learned:

### ***The Fellowship of the Trail***

When I fell off the trail, I was walking by a pond looking for a moose that didn't exist and took my eye of the trail for a minute. Never take your eye off the trail! My foot caught under a tree stump and my ankle snapped on both sides. We were lucky that we only had to stagger for about 20 yards to a campsite and Tom came by. Tom is what is called a 'true trailer'. He is walking the entire trail - 2,000 miles - all in one go. Tom has had prostate cancer for four years, has no testosterone in his body, and is trying to see if, in that condition, he can walk the entire trail. The magic of the trail is that everybody helps everybody else out - anybody in trouble, anybody stops. He stopped and had something to cover me up with a sheet to lie on. He made a bit of campfire and because I wasn't moaning and whining, it was very moving, he said, 'you inspire me'. What on earth was I doing inspiring him? He should have been, was, inspiring me. What is the fellowship of the trail in your school? If anybody is struggling, or having difficulty, or if anybody has got a kid that they can't control, do you say, 'what can I do to help?'. Or do you say, 'he was never a problem in my class'. So, do you have a 'fellowship of the trail' in your school? It applies to the small things as well as the big things.

### ***Solidity of Evidence and Expertise***

Do you value experience as well as evidence and expertise? That's important. The advance party arrived. There was a medic amongst them who proposed to reset my ankle without anaesthetic. I don't know if you ever had your ankle reset without anaesthetic, but I said, 'hold on a minute, I have two questions for you. One, how many times have you done this before?' I really wanted to know what his experience was as that is a good predictor of how effective it would be. Second, I asked what his certification was. He told me that he was qualified in emergency mountain rescue. I said, 'what do you learn on that?' He told me and I said, 'we can talk about it'. Eventually, I had talked him out of resetting it, thank God, because even John Wayne gets whiskey! Then they immobilised it - expertise matters. I think, sometimes, we have great difficulty acknowledging that other people have more expertise than we do, and we need to get over that. I've worked



with groups of teachers like here, from all over the United States, and asked, 'what happened when you became teacher of the year'? They said, 'my colleagues stopped talking to me - how are you teacher of the year? I work as hard as you. I should be teacher of the year'. Or, 'you just got somebody to nominate you or you put a fancy CV together'. Actually, I'm against 'teachers of the year', as it implies that they are great at everything. But we need to acknowledge - on everything some people know more than others. We need to embrace these differences, because if we don't, we get problems like this.

#### ***This book 'The Death of Expertise'*<sup>19</sup>**

Problems, like in Ontario, trying to improve maths through collaborative enquiry in primary schools, getting teachers together into collaborative groups, and figuring out how to improve maths teaching - a lot of those groups said there is nobody who is competent in maths, even confident in maths, it is the blind leading the blind. When somebody comes in and they say, 'I'm not the expert, I'm just here to help and facilitate'. If you really are the expert never say that. If you are really not the expert, say you are really not the expert, and that is okay. If you really are the expert, don't hide your expertise, don't hide it under a bushel just to be polite and make people feel better. You are the expert, thank God, because that is going to help people get better, and on something else, somebody else will be the expert for you.

#### ***Small Data as well as Big Data***

The first plan was, when they found out how heavy I was - which they ask for when you ring 911 (and I lied) - to calculate how many people they would need to carry me six miles over the mountain down to the bottom on a winding precipitous trail with sheer rock faces. Luckily, they had a plan B, because they had two kinds of data. The big data is GPS and several years ago we wouldn't have been able to tell them exactly where we were - now we can. Sometimes the big data is good. Don't whine about the big data, whine when it is the only data, but don't whine about it just because it is there. It is helpful. But, someone in the fire department said, 'you don't need to go six miles. I know those old trails through the woods and on the other side of the mountain, we can get within a mile of him on ATVs by going through these really rough completely overgrown trails.' So, they brought in four all-terrain vehicles within a mile of where I was, bush whacked through, because there was no path. They cleared the way and carried me out on a different guy's back every four minutes. What did we learn from this? Small data, knowledge of your kids, your knowledge of your school, knowledge of your community, your professional judgement matters as much as the big data, the test scores, the rubrics and so on. Both of them, not either/or, but both of them are really important.

#### ***Personal Responsibility and Collective Responsibility***

When I came off the trail, law enforcement came and sat down by me, while I was having my ankle x-rayed in hospital. They had a check list. He said, 'I know all your answers are yes, but I have to ask the questions'. So, first, it was a beautiful sunny day, did you have extra layers of clothing? Yes. Did you have rain gear? Yes. Did you have a compass? Yes. Did you have a headlamp? Yes. Did you have a map? Yes. By the way, for some people the answer is, 'I have an iphone', which is not an acceptable answer. Because my answer was 'yes', they paid for the rescue - collective responsibility to get me out. If my answers had of been 'no', I would have had to pay for the rescue as that is my personal responsibility. Collective responsibility of the system and of you, each other, to support each other to support the kids that you serve with time, with space, with resources, with effort, with intention - that is collective responsibility. But individuals have responsibility too - to step

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19 Nichols, T. 2017. *The Death of Expertise: The campaign against established knowledge and why it matters*. USA: Oxford University Press



forward, to take the initiative, to lead a community, not to wait to implement somebody else's initiative. Parents have responsibility. Kids have responsibility. It is not all about us and what we have to do. It is about the others as well. Everybody has responsibility - personal and collective.

### ***Suspend Stereotypes***

The people who rescued me were from the Fish and Game Commission. I don't hunt. I don't shoot things for any reason at all. I went fishing once. These guys were from the Fish and Game Commission - who I am almost opposed to as the environmentalist that I am, but salt of the earth, absolutely dedicated, left their families, their children, everything behind, to come and get me, and people like me, off the mountain, for no pay, in their own time. We can't just work with the people we like, or people who are like us, or people who remind us of our fabulous selves, or with the people who are our friends. We have to work with the people we don't like, and the people we don't know initially. People are different, the X people have to work with the Y people. The Y people have to work with the X people, because if we spend all our time working with only our friends - that is probably two or three people - we're never working with all the others. I'm not saying that you shouldn't work with your friends. I'm saying you shouldn't work only or mainly with your friends. So, suspend your stereotypes of who you can work with.

### ***Most accidents happen on the way down***

My friend reminded me, 'remember most climbing accidents happen on the way down because you think you have stopped climbing.' I was on the Appalachian trail. I had just had a day going over six peaks in pouring rain coming down at 11pm at night with our headlamps, having started off at 5am - 15 miles. That was like the hardest day. On this day, thank God, I came across a few hundred yards of totally flat trail and a beautiful pond. I looked for an invisible moose and took my eye off the trail. Now I have this [injury], which takes a year to recover from completely, because I took my eye off the trail for one second and fell. Metaphorically, never take your eye off the trail. Never stop teaching, even on Friday afternoons. You are still teaching, because no matter how you do it, every minute we have with the people we have got, really counts and really matters. If these clusters build really great collaboration, the danger is then that they will stop, because, 'oh we are okay, now we can do it.' No, it stops if you don't keep supporting it. It stops.

### ***Conclusion***

Have you heard of learning outcomes? This is my closing shot. I have studied and worked with learning outcomes in, Tasmania, Western Australia, Kentucky and South Africa. In all of these places they failed. All of them. (Clapping) You are not going to clap after the next thing, because you know what came after them - because lots of the teachers said they failed, lots of the parents said their kids didn't know what they were doing because the teachers didn't know what they were doing - so after them came standardisation. After them came GERM<sup>20</sup>. After them came testing. After them came top-down control.

Why did they fail? Some people think they failed because they weren't written well enough, or they weren't precise enough. But what we found is - if they were precise, teachers didn't like them because they were precise, and if they were vague, teachers didn't like them because they were vague. Within a system there are schools that do them well and schools that do them badly. The schools that do them well are places that build a community of teachers that knows what it is about, knows its kids, knows what its priorities are and works together in pursuit of those priorities and then they figure out together what the outcomes mean for them. Right! That's when they work well. But the systems either didn't invest in that collaboration at all or invested in it for



a short time and then imagined it would look after itself after that - it doesn't. Because if you take your eye off the trail, you fall. Even worse, the kids fall, and then the system and everything falls. I would encourage you not to dismiss outcomes because behind them is something much worse. I would encourage you to negotiate with the system the on-going support that will then enable you - I don't like the word implement - fulfil them in a way that makes sense to you, makes sense to the kids and makes sense to the parents. If you do that, you may be the first system in the world that have made outcomes-based education successful, because you have added to it the value of collaborative professionalism and collective autonomy.



## Harvesting the Pearls of 150 Years

**Dr Kathleen Horgan, Mary Immaculate College**

*This paper was the basis for a keynote address given by Dr Kathleen Horgan to the INTO Education Conference on 17 November 2018.*

### **Introduction**

We have just spent the last 24 hours on an awesome challenge. Or maybe even a 'mission impossible'. We have been reflecting on no less than a century and a half of the INTO!

And what an evolution it has been! Or perhaps even a revolution.

In the past, teachers relied on sods of turf brought to school by their pupils to heat their classrooms. Today we have automated heating systems powered by wind turbines. And who knows what tomorrow will bring?

Teaching materials of yesteryear were almost literally etched in stone. Today we can draw on the magic of an iPad and a global network of educational partners in schools around the world. And in the years ahead, the possibilities are limitless.

So, it is such a pleasure for me to be here today to celebrate with you on the occasion of INTO150.

These moments of pause and celebration are milestones but they are also nexus points where we have an opportunity to reflect on where we have come from, to understand better where we are now and, by a process of winnowing, to determine our vision for the future.

### ***The Pearl as a Metaphor for Learning***

In this presentation, I use the image of a pearl as a metaphor for learning. As teachers, we have long used metaphors as a means of better understanding ourselves and of communicating that meaning to others. Aristotle claimed that

'between the unintelligible and the commonplace,  
it is metaphor that produces knowledge' ('Rhetoric III', 1952, p. 141b).

In a sense, standing at this fulcrum point, we are looking ahead to an unintelligible future while standing on the familiar ground of the present and reflecting on the past. But what is a pearl? And what does it symbolise?

Pearls have an association with knowledge and wisdom. Pearls are made when a small object, such as a grain of sand, is washed into an oyster. As a defence mechanism, the oyster creates a pearl to seal off the irritation. Hence, like learning then, the pearl is honed and formed from experiences of

- challenge – because learning doesn't always come easily;
- from experiences of adaptation – because learning requires adapting or changing our ways of seeing and experiencing the world;
- and, ultimately, new growth – because each time we learn we literally grow new neural pathways which create a new platform from which to begin the process all over again but from this newly-created, elevated standpoint.

Also, like learning, the pearl is precious, elusive and much celebrated when discovered.



### ***Pearl Diving as Metaphor for Teaching***

So, if the pearl is learning, I believe teachers should see themselves as pearl divers and think of teaching as pearl diving. Let us think about what pearl diving entails. Pearl divers free-dive into the salty waters to harvest the precious and elusive pearls. Like teaching, pearl diving is physical and psychically challenging. Teachers, like pearl divers, need to be courageous and resilient. It can take time to find the pearls and many different attempts may be required. Like teachers, the work of pearl divers requires strength, perseverance and unwavering commitment to the task of bringing to the surface that which is dormant and hidden. Like teachers, pearl divers also rely on the received insights and wisdom of their lineage as they plunge the depths and navigate the challenges of an uncharted terrain in pursuit of valuable pearls.

### ***150 Years of Pearls***

There are many pearls which merit celebration over the past 150 years. The INTO was founded in 1868 'to promote education in Ireland and to elevate the social and intellectual position of teachers' (Walsh, 2012, p.24). As an organisation, the INTO has remained steadfast to these ideals and has championed the education of children in Ireland, of teaching as a profession and of teachers as professionals. For the purpose of this paper, I can only highlight some of the key aspects of what this conference is celebrating. In this context, the essence this past century and a half of the INTO can be represented as a period of constancy, of exponential change and of achievements deserving of great celebration.

### ***Constancy***

In terms of constancy, first let us look at the foundations. In many ways the physical infrastructure of many schools has not changed dramatically over the decades. There are still desks, blackboards, classrooms and school buildings which are resonant of the past. There are even roll books which bear testimony to a past era and the experiences of teachers and learners of previous generations.

Another example of constancy is the way in which teachers have been guardians of culture, and custodians of what we value as a society. The National Folklore Children's Collection of the 1930s is an example of this guardianship. And its legacy remains as a rich cultural repository for present and future generations.

Teachers have certainly represented a line of continuity and constancy as anchor points within the community. Teachers have helped to build and sustain their communities through their involvement across a broad spectrum of sporting, musical, artistic and cultural activities. And it bears mentioning that this involvement has spanned both their professional time and their private discretionary time in the community.

Among the many defining attributes that have been constant hallmarks of Irish primary school teachers over the past 150 years, one thing that I think we can all agree on is that teachers are passionately committed to enhancing the lives of the children they serve. And perhaps this is the most precious pearl among the many that teachers harvest. We can all recall teachers who saw the best in us and inspired us to see those qualities in ourselves. These teachers remain our personal heroines and heroes throughout life.

As part of my own research, I have interviewed many student teachers about their perceptions and beliefs about teaching and about how children learn. And what I heard over and over were stories of inspiring teachers, teachers who touched their hearts, challenged their minds and changed their lives. I have time to share just one such story with you now:

I recall that my early education was very difficult for me. Most of the time, I just didn't get it and was often in trouble. My time in Fifth Class was a defining year for me. We had a new teacher – Mr. Murphy. He was a very kind and encouraging teacher. After small break, he would sit down and have a chat with us for a couple





of minutes each day. He always told us interesting stories. We all got the work done, and then we would sit down and have a little rewarding chat before we carried on working. There was a great sense of industry, purpose and enthusiasm in that class, and I don't remember any bad behaviour. My decision to become a teacher was very much inspired by my experience in Mr Murphy's class. It felt like an oasis of calm, a place where we could go to engage with ideas and learning in a way that was very open-ended and enjoyable. Having experienced learning difficulties and problems with other teachers in the years prior to this, it was in that classroom that I realised that I was capable..... (Horgan, 2005)

And it is because of their experiences with inspiring teachers like Mr Murphy that so many high-achieving young people in Ireland are literally 'called' to teaching. And even despite the cuts that have been made to the salaries of new entrants since 2011, teacher education institutions continue to attract entrants from the top percentiles in terms of Leaving Certificate results, a testament to the potency of this calling to teaching. To illustrate the passion of the new entrants to the profession, I refer you to a short film, which I, and my colleague, Dr Tony Bonfield, commissioned as part of the launch of our recent book on teaching and learning. We asked children to interview student teachers and a school principal teacher to explore what inspired them to become teachers and their answers are compelling evidence of the special nature of the role and impact of the teacher. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ms4\\_1Q6RzVQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ms4_1Q6RzVQ))

Aren't we truly lucky to have such inspiring new entrants to the teaching profession? And we are also fortunate that we can have confidence that they will be constant in their passion and commitment to enhance the lives of children in the years ahead.

### **Change**

Just as constancy has been one of the defining characteristics of the past 150 years, equally this has been a period of profound change. In response to these changes, Irish primary teachers, like the pearl divers, have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. During this period, as Walsh (2016, p.3) has written, the curriculum "evolved from a colonial, to a nationalist to a child-centred perspective and each had a particular impact on the design, content and delivery of the curriculum in schools".

Since the introduction of the 1999 curriculum, the pace of change has accelerated. Teachers have seen the introduction of *Aistear: The Early Years' Curriculum Framework*; the literacy and numeracy strategy and have embraced the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* which prioritises child voice and agency. Teachers have seen significant demographic changes in our schools – from a homogeneous school-going population to significant ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity. Since the *EPSEN Act of 2004*, teachers have opened the doors of their classrooms to enrichment provided by children with additional learning needs and have embraced the *Inclusive Education Framework* (NCSE, 2011).

Teachers have become mindful of the importance of key transition points for children from pre-school to primary school and from primary school to secondary school. And, staying true to its founding ideals, the INTO has led the way in the professionalization of teaching. The establishment of the Teaching Council in 2006 marked a milestone in the development of teaching as a profession in Ireland. Teachers have also responded to increasingly more demanding expectations regarding individual- and whole-school planning and have engaged with assessment for, of and as learning. All of this points to teacher resilience, adaptability and a genuine commitment to evolve in response to an ever-changing teaching landscape.



### ***Celebration***

And there is much to celebrate as we review the past 150 years of the INTO. Here are but a few of the pearls that have been harvested:

- According to the international reading study (PIRLS) 2016, Irish fourth-class primary pupils are the best in Europe at reading, with significant improvement since 2011 in the reading skills of boys.
- According to the international maths and science study (TIMSS) 2015 Irish fourth-class students ranked 9th out of 49 countries in maths (up from 17th in 2011).
- Recent NCSE research shows that Irish primary schools were generally providing an inclusive learning environment for children with special educational needs and that substantial progress had been made in recent years. The researchers concluded that there was significant positive progress achieved by students in their education as well as in areas of happiness, engagement and independence.
- Also, in an *Evaluation of Public Attitudes to the Teaching Profession*, which was commissioned by the Teaching Council in 2009, teachers were ranked second only to nurses in terms of public satisfaction.

### ***The Perils of Pearl Diving!***

However, in the face of all these changes, we need to be ever mindful of the relentless pressure on the agents of change, the teachers. As pearl divers, teachers plunge into the symbolic depths of society, to bring back richness and beauty, to recover what is hidden or may have been lost. Pearl divers have traditionally been seen as elevating the economic wellbeing of their society. However, society's desire to uncover and cultivate the pearls of knowledge and skill in the next generation can place unreasonable and misplaced demands and pressures on the pearl divers. We can see a trend internationally towards greater standardisation of education with an emphasis on test-based accountability and a narrowing of curricula to focus primarily on literacy and numeracy. This has been called the Global Education Reform Movement. We are fortunate in Ireland to have the INTO, a strong union representing highly educated teachers, to withstand forces such as these where they threaten the professionalism and autonomy of teachers.

### ***Imagining the Pearls of the Future***

The future is unquestionably uncertain and we cannot predict it; but we need to be open and ready for it. The children who started in junior infants this past September will be young adults in 2030. How can schools prepare them for jobs that have not yet been created, for technologies that have not yet been invented, and for problems that have not yet been anticipated?

To navigate through such uncertainty, children will need to develop curiosity, imagination, resilience and self-regulation; they will need to respect and appreciate the ideas, perspectives and values of others; and they will need to cope with failure and rejection, and to move forward in the face of adversity. Their motivation will have to be more than merely getting a good job and a high income; they will also need to care about the well-being of their friends and families, their communities and the planet. These are the pearls that teachers will need to continue to harvest. Almost 100 years ago, Rudolf Steiner advised that we should ask:

what lives in each human being and what can be developed in him or her? Only then will it be possible to direct the new qualities of each emerging generation into society. (Steiner, 1927)



### **Conclusion**

The future unquestionably has many challenges in store for us as teachers. But the good news is that, thanks to the achievements of the INTO over its lifetime, we, as educators, have greater agency than ever before.

And, with absolute certainty you can know this universal truth, that over the last 150 years and today and for the next 150 years, teachers have the unique capacity to touch the lives of every single citizen of our country and to change the course of their lives for the better.

So, in your role as a pearl diver in the years ahead, I urge you to dive bravely into the challenges you face; dive deep into the depths to find the best harvest you can; and bring the precious pearls to the surface with a well-earned sense of accomplishment. And I hope you will, at least on some occasions in the typically busy life of a teacher, stop every now and then and say to yourself - "I am a pearl diver. Watch me dive!"

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# Report from Discussion Groups

## Introduction

Delegates attending the conference were divided into discussion groups, facilitated by members of the Education Committee, with a view to discussing a future vision for primary education and the teaching profession in Ireland. The delegates explored the themes outlined in the background paper and reflected on the challenges presented. Reports from the various discussion groups have been collated thematically and are presented below. The groups' participants reflected a diversity of members in terms of teaching experience and length of career.

## Teaching as a Profession

Delegates explored what makes teaching a profession today. Teachers were of the opinion that having a certain standard of education determined teaching as a profession. There was general agreement on the importance of teachers' engagement with CPD throughout their careers. Delegates suggested that to improve professionalism in the teaching profession, all student teachers should have modules on communication skills, problem-solving skills, how to conduct parent-teacher meetings and how to act as a professional.

There was a view that it was important for teachers to engage with progressing their qualifications throughout their teaching career through both formal and informal professional development and learning. The majority of respondents considered that ongoing opportunities for learning and development are needed, however, they may not be necessarily valued in schools. Teachers are not always open to sharing their professional learning. Delegates suggested that the *Professional Code of Conduct* drawn up by the Teaching Council was a clear indicator that teaching is considered a profession. The fact that a certain level of educational attainment is required to enter the Colleges of Education was seen as another indicator. Teachers discussed how communication within the profession had improved greatly with the advent of internet access and email. There is legislation surrounding education and delegates believed that this was a further indication that teaching is perceived as a profession.

On the less positive side, some delegates felt that the best candidates were not always employed in the profession due to supply and demand issues. There was also a view that the professional opinion of the teacher was of limited value in some instances, despite a wealth of experience and qualifications. The fact that teachers' remuneration was not commensurate with other professions, such as the legal profession, was also raised.

Delegates were of the opinion that teachers were committed to lifelong learning, and that teachers provided an essential service that was not constrained by the clock and that went well beyond teachers' contracted hours. Teachers had a varied skill-set related to teaching and their duties in the profession, such as planning, evaluating, assessing, preparing, designing, observing and collaborating to name a few. Most teachers felt that their sense of purpose, common goals, collaboration, commitment and mutual respect for each other was the predominant indicator of teaching as a profession. There was general consensus that the ever-changing role of teachers involved many other roles for example, mother, father, nurse, doctor, counsellor, psychologist, sociologist, and therapist, and that this expectation warranted the recognition of the professional status of the teaching profession. Many delegates expressed their concern regarding how the teaching profession was portrayed by the media and by social media, where teachers were often criticised rather than supported.



## Professional Development and Learning/Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The majority of respondents agreed that CPD should be sustained and ongoing. One day events were not sufficient. Respondents agreed that effective CPD was meaningful, practical and resourced properly and not reliant on goodwill of teachers. Delegates said that they preferred face-to-face CPD as opposed to online CPD. They agreed that when teachers get the opportunity to share ideas or practices with each other or get the chance to have an informal chat with other professionals or external agencies, that this was the most enjoyable and therefore memorable form of CPD.

Delegates suggested a range of approaches to teacher professional development and learning. Some delegates suggested that effective CPD may involve clusters of schools coming together. Other delegates suggested that CPD needed to be built into the school day and should not take place outside of school hours unless there was time in lieu. There was a view that CPD should be organised on a whole-school basis, but others felt that this did not always need to be the case. On the issue of whether engagement in CPD should be mandatory for teachers, the overall view among delegates was that engagement in CPD should not be mandatory. Some reasons given for this viewpoint included that a lot of the time CPD is done 'on the cheap', that CPD was not linked to or recognised by the Teaching Council and that any courses in Education Centres were not acknowledged during the year. Only summer courses offered extra personal leave days (EPV). The majority of delegates were of the view that teachers needed to engage in CPD out of necessity but that did not mean CPD should be mandatory as that could lead to resentment. Delegates suggested that CPD should be flexible to suit the needs of the teachers and the school. Several teachers commented that there needed to be a clearer distinction between professional development and training as they were not the same.

## Curriculum

The majority of delegates expressed concern regarding the lack of control teachers have over the curriculum they teach. In general, delegates were of the view that curriculum change did not emerge from teachers themselves. Discussions highlighted how teacher input was diluted by other stakeholders. Teachers suggested that if collaboration and teacher input was really valued, specific time should be allocated, whether this time was through Croke Park hours or through release time for contributions to new curriculum development. Some teachers felt that they had no control over the curriculum they teach in the context of their own school. Many teachers were concerned about the workload and paperwork that teachers were asked to do, more so in more recent years. The majority of delegates agreed that change is needed in the curriculum, that the curriculum was very broad. Some teachers discussed how a lack of interest in the curriculum may lead to poor attendance in schools.

Delegates were of the view that teachers were engaged in the curriculum consultative process, however, concern was expressed regarding whether consultation was genuine. Concern centred on the perception that education systems in other countries were copied and pasted on to the Irish system. Teachers were concerned as to why Ireland appeared to be following failed systems. While other delegates agreed they had an input into the curriculum to a certain extent, they lacked professional confidence as parents often looked for evidence from books. Delegates felt that teachers could be more involved in curriculum and policy development with school self-evaluations, staff feedback and reflection.



## Interest and Enthusiasm in the Teaching Profession

Delegates discussed how to sustain interest and enthusiasm in the teaching profession. Discussion highlighted that mobility between classes and schools was a primary motivator for many teachers. The ability and opportunity to engage in professional dialogue was important for teachers in terms of sustaining interest and enthusiasm in the profession. Delegates also acknowledged the importance of being able to switch off. There was general agreement about teachers challenging themselves in seeking promotion, undertaking further educational qualifications or short courses and how this can help to sustain interest and motivation. Delegates outlined how involvement in team teaching and other collaborative teaching methods and learning initiatives can be energising for some teachers. There was a strong view that CPD was considered as playing a significant role in sustaining teachers' interest, both during the year and at the end of the year. Delegates proposed that staying updated and upskilled was key to the profession. The majority of delegates highlighted that the children whom they teach inspired their continued engagement in the profession.

## Changes in the Profession over the Years

As teachers in the 21st century, delegates seem to be 'bogged down' in paperwork, constant curricular change, learning outcomes and new initiatives. The paring back of supports such as SNA hours had a significant impact. Teachers expressed concern regarding the over-emphasis on standardised testing, however, the better a school's results, the less SEN resources would be made available under the new teacher allocation model. The majority of delegates indicated that learning outcomes seem to be all-important, that they were constantly asking themselves if the learning activity matched the learning outcome. Teachers were particularly concerned about the culture of smart phones and the impact they have on learning. Over the years, teachers noted that children were less able to express themselves. Some teachers discussed the increased variety of needs and the emphasis on responding to those needs in their classrooms. Discussion highlighted concern regarding the higher expectations from parents in more recent years, however, parental involvement had increased significantly. There has been a significant change in the role of the inspectorate and the nature of school evaluation. On the issue of whether delegates would recommend a career in teaching to young people today, some teachers were slow to say they would recommend a career in teaching due to poor pay. Other deterrents included the huge demands being made by parents and a lack of respect for the public sector. Some delegates expressed a concern regarding the shortage of males entering the profession. On the whole, many delegates agreed that the opportunity to make a difference and to mould the next generation was for them the primary motivator for being a member of the profession.

## Concluding Comment

Teachers identified many challenges for the teaching profession today, ranging from pay equality issues to curriculum and professional learning and development issues. The INTO will play a key role in addressing these challenges to ensure teaching remains a well-rewarded and attractive profession offering intrinsic satisfaction and career progression to all teachers. Teachers play a key role in society making a difference to children's and young people's lives and future prospects. Supporting teachers benefits both the teaching profession and the children and young people they teach.



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