

The Development of Educational Studies and Teacher Education in Ireland

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Introduction

When one examines the traditional pattern of the study of Education in modern Ireland, one is struck by its very chequered history. There have been periods of breakthrough, promise and serious concern for its promotion. These were succeeded, however, by long valley-periods where the approach to the subject was unimaginative, instrumental and intellectually shallow.

It is a topic on which there has been very little published research. Yet, it can be argued that the strength or weakness of Educational Studies has an intimate bearing on the quality of the education system. Educational Studies and teacher education are again under appraisal in contemporary Ireland, with two reviews of teacher education recently completed, the imminent establishment of a Teaching Council and Ireland's involvement with two contemporaneous international studies — the OECD's *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* and the EU's Study Group of the Lisbon Objectives on the 'Education of Teachers and Trainers' (2002–2004).

This synoptic paper attempts to identify the key approaches to the study of Education, to give some evaluation of them and to establish a perspective from which current developments in the subject can be assessed.

Early Conceptions of Education

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and in the wake of the profound societal changes associated with the Agricultural, Industrial and French Revolutions, the challenge of providing mass Education was faced by many European states. It was a period characterised by considerable optimism about the potential of Education to lead forward to a new era of progress and civilisation. It was a seminal and rich period for educational theory and experiment. Among the rationalists evolved the view that a Science of Education might be established based on a study of what was termed 'the

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science of the mind'. Brian Simon has written: 'The idea that education could be developed as a science, utilising observation and experiment, arose directly from the tradition of English materialist philosophy deriving, in particular, from the work of Hobbes and Locke'.¹ Simon went on to examine the work of Joseph Priestley in this regard, but he also acknowledged the work of Richard Lovell Edgeworth.

Edgeworth's *Practical Education*, published in 1798, was the first full-scale treatise on Education by an Irishman and it won an international reputation. Strongly influenced by Lockean tradition, Edgeworth stated in his Preface that 'Experimental education is yet but in its infancy, and boundless space for improvement remains. To make any progress in the art of education, it must be patiently reduced to an experimental science'.² The long work of twenty-five chapters was a remarkable, if uneven, demonstration of educational principles and practice. While many insights in this book are of perennial value, Edgeworth's system, as he admitted himself, was a beginning rather than a comprehensive system.

What was important was the concept that an understanding of the Education process required reflection, reading, and structured experiment by educators; that teaching was worthy of the serious concern of leaders in society. A friend of Edgeworth, Dr. Reuben Bryce, in many educational works pressed the cause of Education as an area of study central to establishing teaching as '... a fourth profession'. In his *Plan for System of National Education* (1828), he wrote:

All endeavours to improve education, however zealous and generous they may be, must *utterly fail* as to every purpose of real value, unless means be provided for enabling teachers to study education as a liberal art, founded upon the philosophy of the *Human Mind*.³

Bryce urged that professors in the art of teaching be established in the University of Dublin and in regional universities, which should be instituted. In Bryce's view:

Every teacher, before entering on the duties of his profession, ought to make himself acquainted with the *Art of Teaching*; that is, with a system of rules for communicating ideas and forming habits and ought to obtain such a knowledge of the philosophy of mind as shall enable him *to understand the reasons of these rules*, and to apply them with judgement and discretion to the great diversity of dispositions with which he will meet, in the course of his professional career.⁴ (Author's emphasis)

Thomas Wyse was a contemporary of Edgeworth and Bryce and took a leading role in the establishment of the National School system. In 1836, Wyse published *Education Reform*. Throughout the book, Wyse indicated

acquaintance with a vast range of educational writing and experiments abroad. In his striking philosophy of the curriculum, he differed from Edgeworth in the emphasis he gave to aesthetic Education and the cultivation of the imagination. He envisaged long and assiduous preparation by intending teachers. He went on to state that:

The teacher must not only be a perfect master of the various branches of education which he is called upon to teach, but he must also, in addition, be thoroughly acquainted with the Art of Education itself. He must understand the science of mind, the principles of instruction, the best methods, the latest improvements; and not only must he understand them, but he must also have so repeatedly exercised them, that their practice shall be as familiar as their theory.⁵

Wyse regarded pre-service training as essential, and wrote tellingly of the value of University Chairs of Education for building a teaching profession. He acted as Chairman of the Committee on Foundation Schools and Education in Ireland, which reported in 1838. Among its wide-ranging proposals, it urged a two-year course in central and regional écoles normales for primary teachers. Secondary teachers would benefit from '... courses in the art and science of teaching'⁶ under professors of Education in the universities.

The concern of individuals such as Edgeworth, Bryce and Wyse was to establish a body of knowledge and formalised experience that would establish principles and perspectives on the Education process, would urge teachers to understand such principles and inform their teaching with them, and would mark out teaching as one of the learned professions.

Education was one of the great public issues of the 1830s, and it is interesting that one of the earliest societies of Irish teachers we know about — the Armagh Teachers' Society — in 1839 adopted as its principal object '... the improvement of the literary and professional character of its members'.⁷ The first teachers' professional journal in Ireland seems to have been *The Schoolmasters' Magazine and Educational Inquirer*, founded in September 1839. This journal of impressive quality urged its readers to lift their sights towards genuine professional status. It commented: 'Until teaching is studied as an art, and practised on the principles of mental science, you will never be recognised as professional men. You must study Paideutics [sic]'.⁸ Teachers were urged to set up teachers' libraries stocked with the works of writers such as Edgeworth, Wyse, Pestalozzi, Hill, Hamilton, and journals such as *The Journal of Education* and *The Education Magazine*. Teachers were urged to study and discuss these works and '... to make the schoolroom the theatre of experiment, testing their utility, and trying whether their opinions suit

you as an elementary teacher'.⁹ Despite aspirations for the study of Education contained in such writings, when teacher education became formally established, the model adopted was different.

'Education' in the Training College, 1837-1896

The Commissioners of National Education in 1835 and 1837 set out plans for a two-year pre-service teacher training programme and for the appointment of five professors to their new Central Training Establishment. The National Board saw itself moving away from the apprentice tradition of the hedge school and from the mechanical and rote methods of the monitorial system introduced to Ireland by the Kildare Place Society in its model school in 1814. The first Professor of Teaching Method in the Board's Training College, Robert Sullivan, stated in a lecture delivered to its students on 12 April 1838: 'I would consider it an insult to your understanding to offer a single argument in favour of the new or intellectual system, which indeed alone deserves the name of education'.¹⁰

The 'new or intellectual system' favoured the simultaneous teaching method over the individual and monitorial instruction methods. Apart from that, however, it is not at all clear that the term 'intellectual' was appropriate for it. Instead of the two-year training courses envisaged, the course was to amount to only four or five months and two professors, rather than five, were appointed. The main concern of the training course came to be the mastery of the content of the Board's reading books and the content of subjects that would be taught in national (primary) schools. The approach to the study of Education was confined to lectures in teaching method, supplemented with observation and teaching practice in the model school. Thus was set the predominant pattern of primary teacher training for well over a century. At all times, the need was felt that the content of subjects, rather than the study of Education as such, should dominate the college courses. A new form of apprenticeship was also adopted, whereby selected pupils at the end of their own schooling would be apprenticed as monitors to the local master, pass a number of examinations largely based on subject content and qualify as teachers.

One of these monitors was Patrick Keenan, who graduated to become, in turn, assistant teacher, headmaster of the Central Model School, a district inspector, an assistant professor in the Training College, a chief of inspection and, at the age of 45, Resident Commissioner of National Education, a post which he held for 23 years. Keenan had a gift and flair for the practice and organisation of teaching. In 1856, as Head Inspector, he gave a course on 'The Science and Practice of School Management' to 'organising teachers'.

Among these teachers was P.W. Joyce, later headmaster of the Central Model School. Joyce was very impressed by Keenan's lectures and went on to write *A Handbook of School Management and Methods of Teaching* in 1863. In his preface, Joyce acknowledged 'I have incorporated the most important of them [Keenan's lectures] and they form a very considerable portion of the book'.¹¹ This book formed the central text for Irish teachers in their study of Education and teaching for over half a century. An introductory statement indicated the author's approach: 'While carefully avoiding all mere theory, I have endeavoured to render the instruction contained in it plain, useful and practical'.¹² The suspicion of 'mere theory' was to have a long life in Irish education circles. The book was a very useful, clearly written compendium of practical guidelines, model lessons and hints relating to methodology and organisation of the school.

The Powis Commission of 1870 was highly critical of the Central Training Institution and the courses pursued in it. Among various criticisms, the investigators stated:

To spend twenty weeks in incessant occupations, wandering from one subject to another, is hardly the most promising method of changing the inefficient teacher into a competent one.¹³

It criticised the system of teaching practice and student assessment. It urged that fewer subjects be taken and the course extended to at least one year's duration. The need for a good library and encouragement in its use were stressed. The Commission pointedly remarked: 'Less fare for the mind than the 'Books of the Board' should be put before the students. This perpetual feeding on husks stunts and dwarfs the minds of these people'.¹⁴

The course was extended to one year and, in 1884, to two years for non-certificated teachers. The concept of the closed, boarding institution with students subject to set regimens of timetable and close supervision from early morning until late at night was intensified within the new denominational training colleges, which were set up in the 1870s. A written examination paper, entitled 'Methods of Teaching and School Organisation', was introduced for all students in 1883, but a pass in it was not essential for graduation. Five questions were to be answered in an hour and a half, and it is clear from the structure of the questions that definite, clear-cut factual answers were being sought. That the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject Education were seriously undervalued *vis-à-vis* the other subjects in the colleges is clearly evidenced by contemporary comment of inspectors and others.¹⁵ The introduction of payment by results in 1872 implied a functional definition of teaching as a job with clearly defined targets which encouraged a great deal of

mechanical and rote learning and positively discouraged professional flair and personal initiative.¹⁶ Imagination in teachers was not considered a prized talent by officials in charge of the schooling system in the 19th century.

Developments in Education, 1897–1922

A less closeted approach to the study of Education emerged from the mid-1890s. Payment by results fell out of favour and the New Educational Movement was gaining international influence.¹⁷ Again, Ireland opened windows to international thought on Education and there was a resurgence of interest, as in the early part of the 19th century, in Education as a subject of study. This was clearly reflected in the new programmes for the training colleges introduced in 1897. There was a change of title to 'Theory of Method' and as part of a special course for high-level students, a subject called 'Science of Education' was introduced. The programmes and examination papers clearly reflected a concern to lift the pattern from basic factual questions on methods and regulations to '... the general principles of teaching and the intelligent application of these principles to the teaching of the elementary subjects'.¹⁸ The type and standard of questions now being asked were, indeed, impressive. Education was now allocated about 20 per cent of overall marks — a large improvement.

However, the Revised Programme for National Schools, introduced in 1900, placed new pressures on the colleges, and the continuous tendency to overload the courses re-exerted itself. Inspectors complained that over 50 hours a week had to be devoted to lectures and associated study, and remarked on '... the want of time for thought or for assimilation of what has been learned'.¹⁹ The fact that students could qualify from the colleges without passing in the Theory of Method examination reveals the continuing suspicion of 'mere theory'. There were usually only one or two staff members specialising in Education who worked extremely hard, with lecture schedules of about 32 hours each week.²⁰ From 1 April 1900, training in a recognised training college became essential for appointment as a principal teacher in a national school.

The hopes of Bryce and Wyse that Chairs of Education would be established in Irish universities had not materialised in the 19th century. Secondary education was largely a private concern, with no direct State involvement. The Intermediate Education Act of 1878 introduced indirect State involvement through its payment by results examination system, but totally ignored the teacher or teacher training. The cult of the amateur held full sway for secondary teaching, knowledge of subject content was deemed quite sufficient for secondary school teachers. Religious orders such as the Jesuits and the Christian Brothers had a more organised form

of teacher induction. About the same year, 1897, as the changes were introduced to give Education a more serious position in the training colleges, the first steps were taken to provide a qualification in Education for secondary teachers in Ireland. Trinity College Dublin decided to hold examinations for graduates in the History and Theory of Education and in the Practice of Education. No formal courses were provided, and the first examinations were held in January 1898.²¹ Successful candidates in both examinations were awarded a Diploma in Education. This was also the title of the award for two similar examinations established in 1898 by the Royal University. At first, confined to Arts graduates, they were later extended to Science graduates. As was the case with all its academic awards, the Royal University provided no courses for students, as it was purely an examining body. The standards were high, and the papers were in line with the conception of Education as a subject in England and Europe at the time.²² Very few students took the examinations; there were about three or four successful students in any year. Also, in September 1896, the Ursuline Convent in Waterford established a training course for women secondary teachers, which was recognised by the Cambridge Syndicate.²³ The Dominican nuns and the authorities of the Protestant Alexandra College in Dublin also set up training courses for women.

The questions of teacher training and the setting up of a Chair of Pedagogy were raised in deliberations of the Commission of Inquiry into Intermediate Education (Palles) in 1898-99 and in evidence to the Commission on University Education (Robertson) in 1901-03, but neither Commission regarded the matter as coming within its terms of reference.²⁴ The new Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (1900) established courses from 1901 for secondary teachers of Science, and from 1905 required candidates for the Irish Secondary Teachers' Science Certification to pass an examination in the Principles, Methods and History of Education, with special reference to the teaching of Science.²⁵ Among the terms of reference to the Dale and Stephens Committee on Intermediate Education, established in 1904, was the issue of 'training for secondary teachers'. While urging flexibility in the requirements for training, Dale and Stephens favoured a system of training and commended the German pattern, whereby the course would be post-graduate, should include a 'systematic course of study in Mental and Moral Sciences bearing on Education', and in the Theory and History of Education. These were to be complemented by teaching practice and classroom observation and, before accreditation as a teacher, there should be a probationary period in a recognised school.²⁶ These proposals were later to form the core of the Teacher Registration requirements introduced in 1918. Dale and Stephens went further to recommend encouragement '... to teachers to interest

themselves whilst teaching in original work connected either with some branch of scholarship or with studies of value for the science and art of teaching'.²⁷ The Report stated that funds should be available to publish theses by secondary teachers, holding that the stimulus to teachers would be of great value and would enhance the dignity of the teacher and of his profession.

Thus, we can note that the question of providing a structured course in Education for secondary teachers was a live one around the turn of the century. Some important initiatives followed, and the first Chair of Education in Ireland was established in Trinity College in May 1905, following the publication of the Dale and Stephens Report. Professor Culverwell was the first occupant of the Chair. The establishment of the National University of Ireland in 1908 resolved the long-disputed issue of providing university education acceptable to Catholics. Two of the constituent colleges, University College Dublin and University College Cork, established Chairs of Education straight away, to be followed by University College Galway in 1915. Queen's University Belfast set up its Chair in 1914.

Finally, it seemed as if Education was being accepted as a serious subject whose status was endorsed by the establishment of Chairs of Education in all Irish universities. This seemed to be particularly the case in University College Dublin, where Rev. Professor Corcoran succeeded in having Education at Diploma and Higher Diploma levels as an undergraduate subject for the BA and the BSc, and also for MA and PhD levels.²⁸ An Education Society was established in the university, and publication of Educational Studies was initiated. Another important initiative at that time was that a two-year course was made obligatory for all training college students.

The Higher Diploma in Education was the training course introduced for graduates and it was designed towards secondary teaching as a career. The consecutive pattern of the one-year post-graduate course has survived to the present as the basic structure for secondary teachers of general subjects. A key problem in its early years was the lack of demand for the course, as secondary teachers were not required to have a pre-service qualification in teaching. The Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI) was set up in 1909 and pressed strongly to raise the status of secondary teaching. Due largely to its pressure, a Registration Council for Secondary Teachers was established, whose regulations came into effect from 31 July 1918. To qualify for registration, candidates needed to have a university degree, a Higher Diploma in Education and probationary experience in approved schools. This was a landmark development, but it was still the case that teachers could be employed in secondary schools

who did not satisfy the registration requirements. MA studies in Education were by now well established, and Professors of Education had published some important works. Thus, the period from 1898 to 1918 was one that witnessed significant breakthroughs on several fronts for Education as a serious subject of the study. The foundations seemed to have been laid for further development as Ireland emerged into independence.

'Education' in Independent Ireland, 1922-1962

Following political independence in 1922, renewed efforts were made to establish more integrated links between the universities and the training colleges. A scheme of 1923 for a university degree course for national teachers was not proceeded with because of opposition from the new Department of Education, formally established in 1924. Both the National University and Trinity College extended some credits to academic subjects in the training colleges. Other than these arrangements, no liaison was established between the training colleges and the universities, and they grew apart from one another.

The primary educational aim of the new State was the preservation and revival of the Irish language as a living language. A heavy onus was placed on the training colleges and schools to promote this aim. Irish was to be the medium of instruction and of social life within the training colleges. In 1931, recruitment to the colleges was based on levels of performance in the Leaving Certificate Examination and in specifically designed oral examinations, and a high level of competition existed for entry. New courses were introduced in 1932-33, which were to remain in operation for 30 years. Examination papers were taken in 'Principles of Education' as well as in 'Teaching Methods'. For the first time ever, success in written papers in Education became essential for a pass in the overall examination. The marks allocated to Education in the second year course amounted to about 23 per cent of overall marks.

The colleges continued to be denominational, single-sexed, and highly routinised and closed off as boarding institutions. The students' day was very crowded; as late as 1959, the average attendance at lectures was 30 hours per week, apart from other organised activities.²⁹ Lectures were given through the medium of Irish, but no books on educational studies were available in the Irish language. Thus, the tendency to rely on lecturers' notes was intensified. Lecturers were neither expected nor facilitated to engage in educational research other than lecture preparation. A heavy reliance was placed on practical experience, an excellent thing in itself, but the value of which is augmented by probing at new frontiers. The colleges had very little academic autonomy, with entry standards and numbers decided by the Department of Education, which

also prescribed the courses. Departmental inspectors set and corrected the examination papers as well as inspecting lecturers' work. There was very little time for personal reflection or wide reading by the lecturers or the students in the colleges. The libraries were inadequate and little used. This was probably a factor in the somewhat anti-intellectual sub-culture which prevailed in the colleges.

To delineate these general characteristics is not to denigrate the tremendous input of work by committed and often gifted staff members, or the resilience of talented and motivated students to benefit from and go beyond their college experiences. Rather, it is to remind us of the context in which they had to work and the lack of scope and of vision with regard to Educational Studies for a well-educated and highly intelligent student clientele.

It would be refreshing if we could shift our gaze and be impressed by the state of Educational Studies within the universities in the first forty years of independence. Regrettably, this is not so, and the promising early beginnings were not improved on, or even satisfactorily sustained. The staff of Education Departments remained pitifully small up to the 1960s. Indeed, the very serious situation developed whereby different universities left the Chair of Education vacant for considerable periods. The predominant concern of the small staff became the teaching of the one-year Higher Diploma Course to graduates. This affected the status of Education among other university staff members. This course was conducted under very difficult circumstances up to the 1970s, whereby lectures had to be given in the late afternoon or evening.

In 1945, UCD removed Education as an undergraduate subject for the BA and BSc. A significant decline also set in regarding the number of students successfully concluding Masters Degrees in Education. Only about 80 Masters theses on educational topics were produced in the universities of the Republic of Ireland in the 20 years from 1945 to 1965. These were not all directed in Education Departments,³⁰ and educational publications were very limited.

Education had, in fact, declined from the position it occupied circa 1920. It had reached a very weak position by the early 1960s, just at the time that there was to be a great renewal and development of the Irish education system generally, including a massive expansion in post-primary school enrolment.³¹ University Education Departments were in a weak position to contribute to or, indeed, cope with the situation. Well might the Commission on Higher Education (1967) comment: 'There are indications that academic opinion does not regard university departments of education on the same footing as other university departments'.³²

The Revitalisation of Education and Teacher Education, 1962-87

The 1960s was a decade of significant reappraisal of the state of the education system, and developments pointed the way towards significant changes in teacher education and Educational Studies. A number of reports were issued which had important implications for Education and teacher education, such as the Investment in Education Report (1966), the Commission on Higher Education Report (1967) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Report on Teacher Education (1970). It became clear that major reforms were required, in tune with many other social, economic and cultural changes in society. A more vibrant national economy provided resources and motivation to move forward.

The training colleges which had been built in the late 19th century were remodelled and benefited from new buildings and facilities. They now became more generally known as colleges of education, and 'teacher training' was dropped as a term in favour of 'teacher education'. Student numbers in the colleges increased in line with attempts to improve teacher-pupil ratios in the schools. The colleges became more 'open' as institutions, with more personal responsibility devolving on students in the management of their scholastic and leisure time. Their older tradition as boarding institutions died away. The single-sex colleges gradually gave way to mixed colleges, with female students forming the majority of the student body. The student body also became more diversified by a greater infusion of university graduates on a one-year training course, and the participation of what were known as 'mature' students (not school leavers) within the student community.

Staff numbers were expanded in the colleges, and staff were employed who were more specialised in subjects that would form part of the new primary school curriculum of 1971. From 1962, colleges assumed greater scholastic responsibility for their courses and examinations, and were less under the control of the Department of Education. An important change occurred in 1963 when, following discussions between College of Education personnel and the Department of Education, new courses were devised which reduced the number of subjects to be studied and established a restructured course in Education. Education became more central as a subject, with revamped courses in Methods and Principles of Education. This latter now included Psychology and elective courses such as History of Education, Sociology of Education and Comparative Education.³³ The change was directed at giving a more theoretical underpinning to the students' studies. There was also a shift in course emphasis toward more child-centred perspectives. Teaching practice now included some block-teaching placement in schools close to students' homes, in the September of the second year of their course. Libraries

became better staffed, tutorials/seminars were introduced, and students were expected to utilise libraries in preparing assignments. Educational technology also became more utilised within the delivery of college courses. The establishment of the Educational Research Centre in 1966, located on the campus of St. Patrick's College, was symbolic of a new concern that the health and vitality of a modern education system required empirical research studies on the system.

The national teachers' union (INTO) had long sought a university-linked award for primary teachers, and a number of reports had suggested that the time was ripe for the establishment of such a degree. Eventually, the government decided to request the universities to agree to the award of degrees to primary teachers, and a notable landmark in teacher education was the introduction of Bachelor of Education Degree (BEd) in 1974. The three largest colleges became 'recognised' colleges of the National University of Ireland, while the Church of Ireland College, Marino College and Froebel College became associated with Trinity College Dublin for their BEd Degree. (In the early 1990s, St. Patrick's College became a college of Dublin City University, and Mary Immaculate College Limerick became a college of the University of Limerick.) For the great majority of students, the BEd Degree was a three years honours framework, while students associated with Trinity College undertook a fourth year to achieve an honours grade. Under the BEd structure, Education became the central subject, and the extended time facilitated a deeper study of the subject. The colleges assumed the normal academic freedom traditional within the universities. Methodology involved a range of approaches including lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, practice and library/research studies. Education was seen as both a theoretical and practical discipline, and the emphasis shifted towards developing 'reflective practitioners'. The colleges continued to benefit from very high-calibre students, and the college lifestyle was attuned to preparing them better for teaching in a fast-changing society.

With regard to Education within the universities, heed was taken of the calls of the Commission on Higher Education (1967) that the university departments should be expanded as a matter of urgency, and that a more active research role be developed. Each university appointed new professors, and filled each Chair of Education. Recruitment of more fulltime staff with various specialisms took place. Premises and facilities were also improved, particularly in the areas of audio-visual equipment, resource rooms, micro-teaching studios, workshop spaces and library resources. The Higher Diploma in Education was restructured as a one-year fulltime course, with a better balance between university- and school-based experience. Over time, class numbers were reduced and better staff-

student ratios achieved. This allowed for less reliance on mass lectures and more scope for seminar, tutorial and workshop groups. More emphasis was placed on Psychology and Sociology of Education, with educational technology, micro-teaching and elective courses becoming more prominent. Efforts were made to place a more practical emphasis on the courses. In later years, the quality and motivation of entrants increased and, by the 1990s, entry to the Higher Diploma in Education courses had become very competitive, with quotas operating for each university.

All Education Departments had revitalised their post-graduate work since 1970. MEd courses were introduced, while MA and PhD Degrees in Education were expanded. There was a great expansion of post-graduate Diplomas in Education, of a specialist character, such as Guidance and Counselling, Remedial Education, Computers in Education, and Educational Management. The development of the certified in-career development course for teachers had many benign effects. It fed in productively to aspects of initial teacher education, it established closer links between Education Department staff and experienced teachers, and it promoted a greater research orientation for both university staff and involved teachers.

A significant new departure in teacher education was the setting up of the National College of Physical Education in 1970, which developed within a few years to Thomond College of Education. Thomond College was designed on different lines from the traditional colleges of education and the university education departments. It was to concern itself with the education of specialist second level teachers in subjects such as Physical Education, Woodwork, Metalwork and Rural Science. The students followed four-year concurrent courses, with teaching practice taking place on the block placement model. The Degrees were initially awarded by the National Council for Educational Awards. Thomond College became absorbed within the University of Limerick, following its establishment in 1989, and degrees were subsequently awarded by this university. It also offered some post-graduate teacher education Diplomas, such as the Higher Diploma in Business Studies.

The National College of Art and Design (NCAD) was restructured in the early '70s as an institution, to be more independent of the Department of Education. In more recent years, the NCAD has become a Recognised College of University College Dublin. Art and Design teachers were trained on a dual model—the concurrent course model over four years, or the consecutive model, with professional studies following undergraduate degrees, over a one-year period. Art teachers were also trained in the Crawford Institute Cork. The two colleges of Home Economics became associated with universities—Sion Hill, Dublin with Trinity College, and

St. Angela's, Sligo with the National University of Ireland, Galway. They, too, followed a concurrent course model. In the late 1960s, the Mater Dei Institute of Education was established by the Archbishop of Dublin for the education and training of teachers of Religious Education. It followed the concurrent model. Its degrees were, for many years, validated by the Pontifical University of Maynooth. In recent years, the Institute became a College of Dublin City University, which now confers the awards for its initial teacher education course, BRelSc, and its in-career courses.

Thus, within a short period in the 1970s, the teaching profession became an all-graduate one, offering a mixture of concurrent and consecutive initial teacher education courses, and all-new categories of teachers having degree status. The changing profile of the teaching profession was also reflected in the establishment, in 1972, of a common salary scale for all categories of teacher, with extra allowances for qualifications and the exercise of posts of responsibility. It was also reflective of great change that a report issued in 1974 recommended the establishment of a Teaching Council,³⁴ which would exercise considerable self-governing powers by the teaching profession. However, this proposal was not implemented at that time.

While reforms of initial teacher education had dominated policy concerns in the late sixties and early seventies, a greater awareness of the importance of in-service teacher education was also in evidence. This was signalled, in part, by the setting up of regional Teacher Centres, from 1972, to support in-service activities for all categories of teacher in the region. Accordingly, one can conclude that the decade 1965 to 1975 was a momentous one for the teacher career and, in particular, for initial teacher education.

Initial and in-career teacher education were further enriched and deepened by a contemporaneous flowering of educational research, and of scholarly associations with educational research interest. The Educational Research Centre provided valuable findings, particularly in the area of empirical research studies. Staff in the teacher education departments and institutions came to see engagement in educational research as an integral part of their professional responsibility. There was a significant increase in research-based Masters and PhD degrees. The education holdings of academic libraries were greatly expanded. External research agencies, such as the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Linguistics Institute, focussed more on educational research issues. The Reading Association of Ireland (RAI) was founded in 1975, and the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) in 1976, and they acted as major agencies for the instigation of research and the promotion of scholarly debate on Education. State funding for educational research remained

lamentably small, but improved from 1992 with the establishment of an Educational Research Committee within the Department of Education and Science. Many reports, pamphlets, books and articles with an educational research emphasis became available. These helped to build a knowledge base, with an Irish dimension to it, to underpin initial and in-service, as well as teacher education policy issues.

Policy 'Wobbles' and 'Steadying' the Policy Approach, 1987–2004

From the mid-'60s to the mid-'80s, much creditable work had been achieved regarding teacher education. However, linked to national economic difficulties, a slowdown of momentum occurred from the mid-'80s, and a number of policy 'wobbles' occurred which bade fair to undermine some of the progress that had been made. There was a lack of government action on a number of policy reports, such as *The Report on the In-Service Education of Teachers*³⁵ in 1984. That year also marked the beginning of a decline in the birth rate. Short-term thinking led to the very controversial closure of the country's largest teacher education college, Carysfort College, in 1987. A more drastic development occurred when, in January 1991, the Cabinet decided to close three of the five university departments offering courses in Higher Diploma in Education. Due to strong opposition by university leaders, this decision was never implemented. Instead, the Higher Education Authority conducted a review, arising from which a quota system for the Higher Diploma in Education was agreed by a tripartite Committee of the Authority, the Department of Education and Science and the universities, which has operated since then. These developments caused considerable uncertainty in teacher education circles, but a more 'steading' affirmative attitude came to prevail shortly afterwards. In June 1991, the OECD published its review of Irish education, with particular reference to the teaching career. The report was very complimentary to the quality of the teaching force and of the personnel and infrastructure in place for teacher education. Instead of retrenchments, it recommended developments in support of the teacher career viewed from the perspective of the '3 I's' — good quality initial teacher education, followed by a structured form of induction and greatly expanded in-service teacher education. This approach was also endorsed in major policy papers that followed. Chapter 6 of the government's *Green Paper on Education* (1992), Chapter 11 of the *Report On The National Education Convention* (1994) and Chapter 8 of the government's *White Paper on Education* (1995) endorsed the '3 I's' policy, affirmed the quality of the teaching force, proposed qualitative reforms for a better future and recommended the establishment of a Teaching Council.³⁶ These strategic statements of policy coincided with a dramatically improved performance

in the national economy, and with a greater political and public realisation of the centrality of a good education system for the promotion of the economic, social and cultural life of Irish society.

What might be termed a 'rolling' reform process was set in motion. Through the '90s, various ongoing reforms took place in initial teacher education programmes. There was a further expansion of the post-graduate, in-career certified courses. In 1992, the In-Career Development Unit (ICDU) of the Department of Education and Science was established. Significant expansion took place in in-service teacher education, now more commonly termed Continuing Professional Development (CPD), with a range of providers, in a variety of modes. The Teacher Centres were upgraded and provision extended, under the new title of Education Centres. A structured system of induction was slow to take off but, in 2002, pilot schemes were initiated for primary and post-primary teachers, which hold much promise for development.

Since the early '90s, Irish education has been subject to an unprecedented amount of reappraisal, analysis, policy formulation and legislation, within a lifelong learning policy paradigm. The policy process engaged in has been very consultative, which has cultivated a high degree of public awareness of, and engagement with, the issues. Politicians, economists and educationalists have been emphasising the desirability of Ireland developing its niche within the evolving knowledge society that is opening up. Within this context, it is realised that a high-quality education system is a *sine qua non* if the ambitious aspirations are to be realised, and that such a system is contingent on the availability of a quality teaching force. A range of recent developments in teacher education are being considered against this background.

In 1998, reviews of primary and post-primary teacher education were initiated. The reports have been available since 2003, and it is understood that the Department of Education and Science is preparing to respond to these reviews in the near future. The Department has recently established a new section to deal with teacher education issues. A more controversial issue arose in the summer of 2003, when the Department recognised the qualifications of a new distance teacher education agency, Hibernia, which had no track record in the field and about whose courses many reservations have been voiced.

Also in 1998, a report of a Ministerial Committee was presented on the establishment of a Teaching Council.³⁷ Legislation was passed in 2001 for such a Council, and elections to the Council took place in autumn 2004. The Council begins its work in spring 2005. The Teaching Council will have significant powers relating to the standards of entry to the profession, approval of initial teacher education courses, promotion of induction and

continuing professional development (CPD), commissioning research, and advising the Minister on supply and demand issues in teacher education. The Teaching Council has the potential to be a major influence on the future shape of teacher education and of the teaching career.

Ireland has also been an enthusiastic participant in the major OECD study, *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*, (2002–04). The synthesis report of this study, drawing on the experience of 25 countries, is scheduled for publication in early 2005. Ireland has, of course, also been a member of the EU study on the education of teachers and trainers, under associated Objective One of the UE Lisbon Objectives. The Chairperson of this working group is an Irishman, Mr. Sean Feerick, who gave an address on this study to the Annual Conference of the Standing Conference On Teacher Education, North and South (SCOTENS), on 11 November 2004. For a number of years, SCOTENS has been fostering greater communication about, and research on, teacher education issues on a cross-border basis. Thus, there is a confluence of reports and reflections on teacher education and the teaching career from national and international sources that are likely to be influential in charting new pathways for the future. There is a preparedness and appetite to continue the rolling reform process within the teacher education community, which cherishes Ireland's valuable asset of very high-quality candidates for teacher education, good morale in the teaching force and high retention patterns within the profession. Having experienced many vicissitudes of fortune over a long time-span, it would seem that Education as a subject of study and research is now securely established within Irish higher education, and is well positioned for further development in the knowledge society.

NOTES

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3. R.J. Bryce, *Sketch of a Plan for a System of National Education*. (London: Cowie, 1828), p.v.
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5. Thomas Wyse, *Education Reform*. (London: Longman, 1836), p.293.
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14. *Ibid.*, p.813.
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18. John Coolahan, 'Education in the Training Colleges 1877-1977', in *Two Centenary Lectures*. (Carysfort College, 1981), pp.20-52, p.29.
19. Quoted in *Ibid.*, pp.31, 32.
20. *Ibid.*, p.32.
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22. Examination Papers of Royal University, 1899-1906.
23. Report of Messrs. Dale and Stephens, *Intermediate Education in Ireland*, (Cd. 2546) 1905, p.80.
24. *Appendix to Commission of Inquiry into Intermediate Examination*, (Cd. 900), H.C. XXXI.
25. *Report of Dale and Stephens on Intermediate Education*, p.81.
26. *Ibid.*, p.79.
27. *Ibid.*, p.81.
28. *Calendar of UCD, 1911-12*.
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30. *ESAI Register of Theses on Educational Topics, 1911-79*. (Galway: Officiiana Typographica, 1979).
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