

St Mary's University College

Research Newsletter

ACADEMICS OBTAIN RESEARCH FUNDING



Dr Ivor Hickey (Science Department) and Deirdre Robson (Art Department) were successful in gaining research funding from The Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation for their project “**SCIART: Interdisciplinary Art & Science - Inspiring Pupils To Engage With Education**”. The project aims to apply the outcomes of “The Leonardo Effect” study at Key Stage II to the post-primary Key Stage III setting, in an attempt to make an impact

on known problems in current education provision. Planned outcomes include: producing increasingly committed and confident pupils of all abilities, through an interdisciplinary art/science approach to education; helping teachers to recognise the value of creativity and appreciate that learners can make significant contributions to organising their own learning; and creating a lasting legacy of reorganisation of teaching methods, facilitating genuine integration and flexibility of subject learning in schools. The programme commenced with an intensive two day training event, with a contribution from distinguished SCIART practitioner Prof Helen Storey. The impact of the project on school organisation and legacy will be obtained from head teachers through interviews and questionnaires. The programme of learning is currently being applied in six secondary schools drawn from each region of the UK, involving students between the ages of 11 - 14 and their art and science teachers. The programme is being independently evaluated and the team works closely with local education authorities, inspectorates and curriculum bodies.

AUTHORED BOOK BY ACADEMIC



Dr Birgit Schippers has recently published a book entitled “**Julia Kristeva and Feminist Thought**” (Edinburgh University Press). It provides a detailed exposition and examination of the key ideas of Julia Kristeva, an important and influential figure within contemporary Continental philosophy, and she explicates and appraises the complex and diverse feminist responses to Kristeva’s work. As Dr Schippers argues, these responses can only be understood by attending to the diversity and heterogeneity that make up contemporary feminism. Pursuing such an approach, the author maps the fault-lines that run through contemporary feminism, and she clarifies the anxiety that Kristeva’s ideas generate amongst her feminist critics. At the core of her discussion lie a series of questions that have occupied feminist theorising for the last three decades. These include debates pertaining to the nature of identity and its relationship with difference or otherness; the significance of female embodiment to feminist projects of ethics and politics; and the relationship of gender to other identity categories, such as race and ethnicity. To elucidate these debates, the book draws in particular on Kristeva’s most recent writings, and it offers a sympathetic assessment of Kristeva’s significant contribution to those feminist projects that share her account of fluid identity, her critique of identity politics and the deeply ethical orientation of her work towards conditions of otherness. As Dr Schippers argues, while a Kristevan conception of fluid identity can be profoundly unsettling to feminism, it also keeps feminism’s plural and diverse theory and practice alive. The research for this book was funded by the British Academy.

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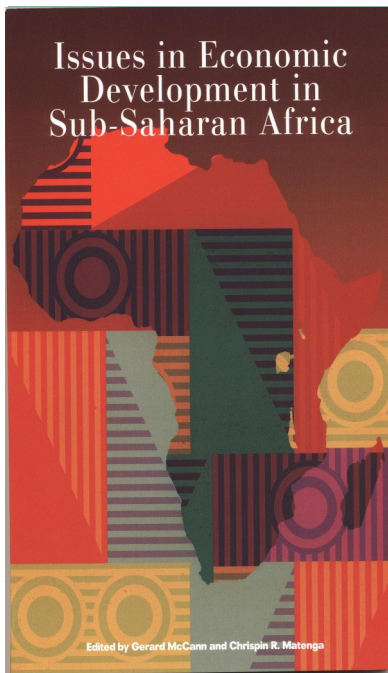


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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Joint research and development proposal submitted by Kieran McGeown and Martin Hagan to the EU Lifelong Learning Programme
- Frank Quinn appointed member of review panel for British Journal of Special Education
- Denise McKee and Rev. Dr Eddie McGee currently conducting research on the causes and effects of trauma upon children in post-primary schools



EDITED BOOK BY ACADEMIC

Dr Gerard McCann has edited a recent book in collaboration with Chrispin Matenga, the title of which is “**Issues in Economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa**”. The book has twelve chapters (one of which is written by Dr McCann) which report on economic development, economic policy and social economy, and is part of an on-going initiative between St. Mary’s University College Belfast and the University of Zambia. Academics and development specialists from the UK, Ireland and Zambia outline issues pertinent to a broad spectrum of concerns from the European Union’s policies in Africa to the emergence of the social economy, and from the role of the International Financial Institutions to the

impact of the Millennium Development Goals. The book is primarily for university lecturers and students who are involved in the teaching and learning of economic development and it provides examples and supporting ideas around the issues of development, employability and entrepreneurship within the context of the regional economy. It also assists regional business leaders to engage with the key themes of economic development and entrepreneurialism. Readers will learn about economic development, business acumen, the social economy, micro-finance, indigenous development theory and practice, work related learning and employability skills.

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HEA SEMINAR SERIES

Listening to students: case studies of development through engagement with students

Gerry Trainor was successful in gaining funding from the Higher Education Academy to host a seminar series at St Mary’s University College. Micheál Martin, Joan Campbell and Mary Greenwood will present case studies designed to give students a voice, to listen to their feedback and to develop as a result. One project is aimed at 1st-year students across the BEd and BA (Liberal Arts) programmes. The second looks at how 2nd & 3rd-year students are shaping what they do on the Work Placement aspects of the BA (Liberal Arts) programme. The third looks at how feedback from students in a specialist option on the BEd programme has led to developments in the course. There will also be an opportunity for participants to discuss their own experiences of student voice and to share ideas and good practice.

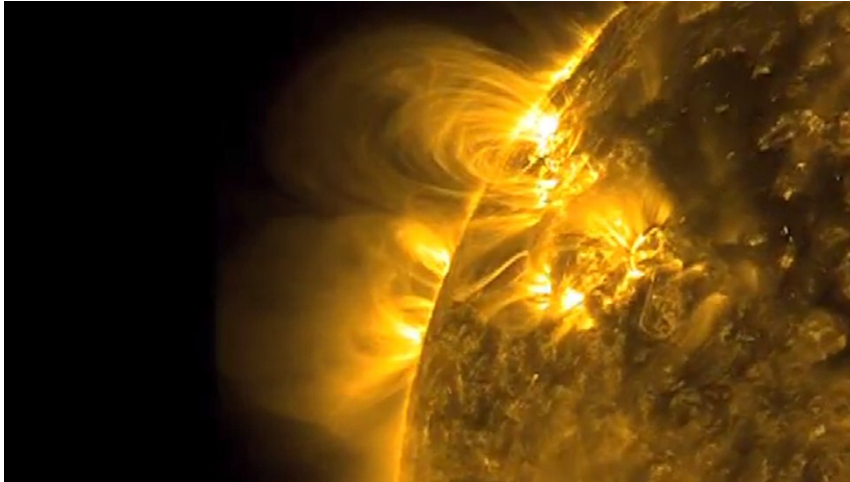
BOOK CHAPTER PUBLISHED

Peter Stevenson has contributed a chapter to the book, “Issues in Economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa”. The title of Peter’s chapter is “**Enterprise, Entrepreneurship and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa**” and its aim is to investigate and explore the potential for enterprise and entrepreneurship to contribute to and assist in the sustainable development of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The chapter addresses the following relevant questions:

- ◆ Is entrepreneurship already contributing to development within Sub-Saharan Africa?
- ◆ Can the development of entrepreneurial skills within the population provide a ‘new way’ to challenge the persistently high levels of poverty which have historically blighted Sub-Saharan Africa?
- ◆ How can this new approach to development be inclusive so that benefit is brought to everyone?
- ◆ What conditions or opportunities need to be created for such an approach to work?

The central theme of the chapter is the assertion that development is best achieved via a bottom-up, people-centred approach with a focus on the cultivation of enterprise and entrepreneurship as a way of creating economic growth and alleviating poverty. The author concludes by indicating that there is currently a need for a new multi-stranded approach to development that creates the necessary opportunity and environment which allows the human endeavour and skill of Sub-Saharan Africans to make a real and significant difference.



“These initiatives support the commitment by academic staff at St Mary's University College to build research partnerships...”

SUCCESSFUL SCoTENS RESEARCH FUNDING

Two members of academic staff have helped raise the research profile of the College with success in joint research proposals to SCoTENS during the most recent call for 'seed funding' for research in 2011. These initiatives support the commitment by academic staff at St Mary's University College to build research partnerships and to contribute to educational research.

The first SCoTENS-funded project is titled **"A critical analysis of North-South educational partnerships in development contexts"** and is a joint research project between Professor Peadar Cremin, Mary Immaculate College Limerick and Professor Peter Finn, St Mary's University College Belfast. The aims of their project are to: initiate a critical review of North/South teacher education partnerships involving Irish and African institutions to assess the contribution of the principles and practice of the partnership model; identify and itemise the key issues to be addressed within sustainable, mutually beneficial teacher education partnerships; organise a conference of Irish and international experts to assess educational partnerships and to consider how future planning and policy decisions nationally and internationally may be improved; and produce an edited book of papers to disseminate the lessons learnt and inform future collaborative projects in development contexts.

The second project is titled **"Assessment in teacher education North and South"** and is a joint research project between Dr Tracey Connelly, University College Cork and Dr Geraldine Magennis, St Mary's University College Belfast. The aims of their project are to: explore the nature and conduct of school-based work assessments within a sample of primary and post-primary initial teacher education degree courses drawn from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; investigate the links between various school-based assessment techniques and subsequent planning, teaching and learning at degree and post-graduate diploma level; examine the extent to which these various methods of assessment of the school-based work element are found to be satisfactory in the opinions of a selection of stake-holders and end-users; and situate and critically discuss the findings with reference to current thinking, including formative assessment.

MUSIC RESEARCH

Dr Peter Downey has been conducting research within the discipline of music for many years and has published and presented his research work in various formats and at national and international conferences. Dr Downey is currently working on the following areas of research:

- ◆ a paper on the musical hunting codes used in England and Ireland from 1547 until 1800;
- ◆ research into the life and education of the Berlin trumpeter Caspar Hentzschel (fl. 1614-1629) and an annotated edition of his printed 'defence of the knightly art of the trumpeter' (1620);
- ◆ research into early 17th century sacred music with trumpet participation from Thuringia and Saxony, including musical editions of works that have previously survived in incomplete form only;
- ◆ research into the various manuscript sources of the first trumpet method, the *tutta l'arte della trombetta* of 1614, including comparative study and stemmatic examination, as a companion to engagement in the recently-published facsimile edition of one source;
- ◆ research into the Austrian composer Abraham Megerle, including first modern editions of some of his works;
- ◆ research into the sources of Beethoven's *Irish Airs* (1814-1816);
- ◆ research into trends and policy on pedagogic music, including teacher education.



ASE CONFERENCE

Recently, St Mary's University College Belfast hosted the Association of Science Education (ASE) annual regional conference. With over 250 participants, from a range of educational sectors including primary and post-primary schools, ELBs and HEIs and over 20 different seminars and workshops, this was thought to be the biggest ever ASE conference held in Northern Ireland. The theme of the conference was "STEM - Sharing Good Practice". Participants learned about a range of developments in science education with speakers from the ETI, CCEA, CASS, and the primary, post-primary and university sectors. Speakers included Dr Ivor Hickey who addressed the issue of integrating science with art.

RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATION

In January 2011, Dr Birgit Schippers presented a paper at the Second European Conference on Politics and Gender, held at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. Her paper, entitled "**Europe Unveiled: The Geopolitics of Gender and Race in Kristeva's Conception of Europe**", draws on Dr Schippers' long-standing interest in the work of Julia Kristeva, an important figure in contemporary Continental philosophy, social and political theory, psychoanalysis and feminist theory. The principal aim of the paper was to assess an intriguing gendered and racial narrative that underpins Kristeva's recent writings on Europe. As Dr Schippers suggests, this narrative frames a conception of Europe that is surprisingly void of the diversity and difference that characterises contemporary Europe, and that therefore cannot adequately conceive of a multicultural Europe. Furthermore, this discourse reveals a tension in Kristeva's work, between her ethical commitment to an, essentially abstract, conception of difference and otherness on the one hand, and the challenge of coming to terms with the concrete implications of this difference, embodied in the figure of the migrant. To alleviate this tension, the paper suggested the need to emphasise the concrete political manifestations of the ethical commitment to otherness, by installing forms of citizenship that are attentive to the needs of difference.

STAFF PROFILE



Louise Long has been employed at St. Mary's since 2004, and within a short period of time has developed a substantial research portfolio within the field of Education. Louise's specialist area of research focuses on literacy and dyslexia, and her efforts have resulted in producing research output published in peer-reviewed academic journals. In 2007, Louise collaborated with academic colleagues in conducting research on supporting post-primary pupils identified with dyslexia through an emotional model

of literacy. A year later, she wrote a research article on narrative autoethnography and the promotion of spiritual well-being. Louise has also collaborated with a work colleague, and in 2009/10 produced research output on parents' perspectives towards psychological assessment and dyslexia, as well as looking at teachers' perspectives towards personal and civic education within the NI curriculum in primary schools. Louise has had success on two occasions with obtaining research funding from SCoTENS, and in 2010 Louise, in partnership with colleagues from the Republic of Ireland, organised a research conference on the theme of "Literacy, Dyslexia and Inclusion", at which she presented her research on consulting pupils on the assessment and management of their literacy needs. Louise recently worked on a major international research and development project between Ireland and Uganda based at the Centre for Global Development through Education in Mary Immaculate College Limerick, and has produced a chapter for a book on the implications of the findings from the project for teacher education due for publication in September 2011. She is also co-author of the final report to the Ministry of Education & Sport in Uganda. Much of Louise's research has been facilitated by the support and advice offered by staff in the College library and research office, to whom she acknowledges in her research work. Currently, Louise is completing her EdD thesis, which has the potential to generate more papers for conference presentation and publication.

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