

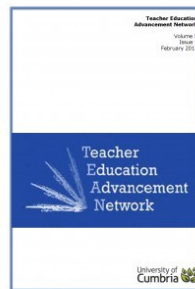
Research Newsletter



St Mary's
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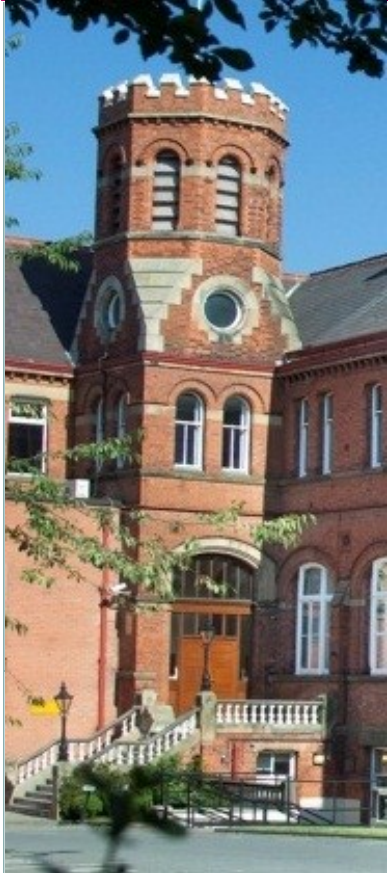
RESEARCH PAPER ON TEACHER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Teacher Education Advancement Network publishes its journal aimed at teacher educators, with the intention of advancing research and scholarly activity in teacher education. It is designed as a journal whose contributors offer examples and inspiration from their own practice and activity with the intention of impacting on the practice of others. Its latest issue in February 2013 featured a research article by Martin Hagan titled *Developing teacher competence and professionalism in Northern Ireland: an analysis of 'Teaching: The Reflective Profession' (GTCNI, 2007)*. In his paper, Martin traced the development of the discourse on teacher education in the United Kingdom and, through an analysis of *Teaching: The Reflective Profession (GTCNI, 2007)*, he suggested that teacher development in Northern Ireland is characterised by its individuality and difference in approach to that of the rest of the United Kingdom. It proposed that teacher education in Northern Ireland rejects the technical rational model of teacher competence in favour of one which promotes critically reflective, activist teachers. The paper also identified a range of factors which mitigate the actualisation of reflection, partnership and effective collaboration becoming fully embedded across the phases of the profession.



THREE RESEARCH CONFERENCE PAPERS RELATED TO WORK ON ACADEMIC'S FORTHCOMING BOOK

The dissemination of an academic's research ideas and debating them through writing papers and giving presentations at research conferences, are critical aspects of scholarly work. It offers an academic the opportunity to receive critical feedback and the potential to form collaborative working relationships with other academics in a similar discipline. Three such opportunities were seized in October and November 2012 by Dr Birgit Schippers who disseminated her research work at conferences held in the United Kingdom and Ireland. The first was at the Political Studies Association of Ireland's annual conference held in Derry, where she presented her paper *Becoming human: Arendt, Fanon and Butler on violence, freedom and new beginnings*. The second was at the Human Rights Thought and Practice in the Contemporary World conference in London, with the paper titled *Who is the human in human rights?* The final opportunity was at the First Joint Society for Women in Philosophy Ireland/UK conference held in Dublin, where Birgit made a presentation on *Plurality as a feminist political strategy? Reconsidering coalitional politics in the age of the 'War on Terror'*. Versions of these three research papers will feature in Birgit's forthcoming book.



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ACADEMICS HIGHLIGHT THE WORK OF SEOSAMH MAC GRIANNA AND SEÁN BÁN MAC GRIANNA AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The annual conference of the School of Irish Language and Literature was held at the University of Ulster in October 2012 under the heading Éigse Loch Lao.

Two members of academic staff from the College presented papers at this conference, the first of whom was Dr Seán Mac Corraidh whose paper was titled *Seosamh Mac Grianna, aistriitheoir / Seán Bán Mac Grianna, file*.

The second presentation was delivered by Seán Mac Labhraí who gave a paper on *Seosamh Mac Grianna - athchuid agus athléamh*.



Seosamh Mac Grianna



Seán Bán Mac Grianna

A VERY SUCCESSFUL AND EXPANDING RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

The College offered a very comprehensive research seminar series between September and December 2012 due to the organising efforts of Dr Geraldine Magennis, Dr Brian Hanratty, Dr Birgit Schippers and the Research Office. The presenters were a combination of staff from the College, as well as invited academics and a primary school teacher.

The research seminars presented by staff in the College focused on: motivating post-primary pupils towards science and technology; assessment practices at foundation stage in Irish-medium settings; comparing writing centres worldwide; assessment in teacher education; engaging pupils with contemporary art; the personal reflection of postgraduate students; migration and economic development in the EU; and Irish links with St Anthony's College Leuven.

The presentations from visitors to the College included: *Benjamin Black's (aka John Banville's) representation of 1950s Ireland in his fiction with a specific focus on gender issues* by Dr Auxiliadora Peres Vides, University of Huelva Spain; *The German 'Länder' and their approaches to modern language teaching* by Dr Astrid Klooth, University of Duisburg-Essen Germany; *Cognitive processing* by Dr Ulrich Nehm, University of Paderborn Germany; and *An exploratory case study of reading attitudes and motivations synonymous with reading for pleasure* by Gemma McKernan, St Mary's Primary School Newtownbutler.

The discussions that ensued as a result of the research presentations were found to be extremely productive in terms of generating new thinking and ideas for future research projects and collaborations.



Dr Auxiliadora Peres Vides with Dr Brian Hanratty

"I find the College's research seminar series provides a great opportunity to disseminate my research in an environment that is highly professional, motivating and friendly."

RESEARCH ON ENGAGING PUPILS WITH A CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION

The World Alliance for Arts Education and the Institute for Northern Culture at the University of Lapland Finland hosted a global gathering of arts educators in November 2012 to learn of and discuss arts education informed by diverse global perspectives. One of the foci of the conference was on sharing international arts education research on pedagogy, curriculum, cultural sustainability and community engagement. This focus related to a paper presented by Mary Flanagan on *Challenging pupils and extending learning through engagement with contemporary art: a cultural historical perspective*. The paper outlined a recent project involving a group of students of initial teacher education who worked with two primary school classes (8-9 year old pupils).

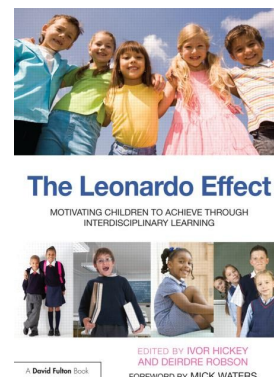


The initial stimulus for the work was an exhibition in a contemporary art gallery that examined the relationships between artist and poet, drawing and writing, as well as text and image. Relationships were intrinsic to the project on many levels: from the actual theme of the exhibition to the collaboration between visual artists and poet in the conceptualising and mounting of the exhibition; the interactions between the students of initial teacher education and the pupils; and the connections the participants made with the artworks. From a cultural historical perspective, the discussion centred on the exploratory and creative processes in the artistic learning and development of both the students of initial teacher education and the pupils. In the paper, Mary deliberated on the significance of the very different environments (gallery, classroom, art studio) where the learning activities were situated and how they have been culturally organised for different, but related, purposes.

Mary also considered the physical tools, such as the materials and art implements that the pupils utilised in their exploration, experimentation and creation. Particular attention was also given to psychological tools, for example the artworks on exhibition that inspired and shaped the creative journey taken by the participants. Language was also considered, for example via the discourse of learning throughout the various stages of the project or the written word and the manner in which it was used by the artists, the students of initial teacher education and the pupils.

TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND RAISING ATTAINMENT THROUGH THE LEONARDO EFFECT

The combination of dedication and collaborative research work paid dividends in December 2012 with the publication by Routledge of the book *The Leonardo Effect: motivating children to achieve through interdisciplinary learning*. This book was edited by Deirdre Robson and Dr Ivor Hickey (recently retired from the College) both of whom also included chapters. In part one of the book, chapters were also written by Dr Geraldine Magennis who explored The Leonardo Effect's unique method of integrating art and science in detail with a focus on literacy development, and Mary Flanagan who examined art education at the heart of learning. In their chapters, Deirdre and Ivor analysed various aspects of The Leonardo Effect project. Part two of the book comprised a series of illustrated case studies from teachers and principals who have embedded The Leonardo Effect in their schools and found it transformed their curriculum. In the foreword of the book, Professor Mick Waters from the University of Wolverhampton wrote, "This book records the work of teachers who have sought to develop the intellect of the children they teach through a focus on The Leonardo Effect. Integrating the creative with the logical, the experiment with the record, the science with the art and helping children to see the connectedness of learning experiences".



YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TO EUROPE HIGHLIGHTED AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

An international conference on European identity took place at the University of Ljubljana Slovenia in September 2012. The conference programme was based on the findings and outcomes of the PAM-INA project, which had several European partners and focussed on the teaching of Europe at school as well as determining young people's reflections on European identity. The acronym PAM-INA stands for Perception, Attitude, Movement-Identity Needs Action and during the life-time of the project a survey was conducted to find out about the knowledge, attitude and perception young people had towards Europe. The curricula of the partners' countries were analysed to understand the construction of Europe in their teaching. The findings of both the survey and the curricula analyses enabled the project partners to develop feasible, variable, innovative and student-centred tool kits to be used in schools for pupils between the ages of 10 and 18.

During the conference, presentations were given by Dr Angela Vaupel and Dr Tracey McKay focusing on the views of young people towards Europe in 9 post-primary schools in Northern Ireland and a corresponding tool kit. Their research suggested that most young people in the 9 schools are moderately indifferent to Europe and maintain traditional attitudes towards identity and nationality. This is, however, not to claim that their attitude towards Europe is over-sceptical but rather that Europe is for the most part viewed in instrumental terms.

STAFF PROFILE

Kieran McGeown is the current Course Team Leader in the College's Technology and Design department, which he joined in 2003. Kieran has made a considerable contribution to the creation of an integrated STEM education strategy for the College involving research and development that reflects best practice. He is currently part of an international research team of academics, teachers and educational training specialists, which secured funding from the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme to conduct a research project referred to as STIMULA. This research project focuses on developing innovative pedagogical strategies for the purpose of enhancing post-primary pupils' engagement with science and technology.



Kieran has presented preliminary findings of this research at the College's research seminar series and has had a paper accepted for The Future of Education international conference, due to be held in June 2013. The paper is titled *An innovative approach to enhancing pupil engagement with science and technology*, and he will be previewing the research at the Institution of Engineering and Technology's Engineering Policy Group for Northern Ireland (EPGNI) in June 2013. Kieran is a member of the EPGNI, as well as the nominated STEM coordinator for the College. He recently managed the College's partnership with SENTINUS, a not for profit educational charity which works with Northern Ireland schools to deliver programmes that promote engagement in STEM. This partnership involved the development of resources for a Department of Education funded STEM project titled *Smart Gear 2013*, delivered to over 90 Northern Ireland primary schools.

Kieran is presently conducting research for his doctoral thesis which is titled *A study of Northern Ireland post-primary pupils' (11-16yrs) perceptions and motivations towards technology and design*.

INVITED TALK FOR RESEARCH ON INTERCULTURAL ISSUES

The West Saxon University of Applied Sciences Zwickau in Germany was the venue for an invited talk by Dr Angela Vaupel in November 2012 who presented a research paper titled *Interculturality and the development of intercultural competence: the PAM-INA case study*. Angela's paper was based on the chapter she had published in the book *Bridging Cultures: intercultural mediation in literature, linguistics and the arts*, edited by Hogan, C., Rentel, N. and Schwerter, S. (2012).

St Mary's University College, Belfast
191 Falls Road
Belfast
BT12 6FE
Northern Ireland

Phone: 02890 327678
Fax: 02890 333719

E-mail: research_admin@smucb.ac.uk



St Mary's
University College
Belfast
A College of Queen's University