

Research Newsletter



St Mary's
University College
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THE FOCUS OF 'EUROPE' IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Two active members of the research community in the College have seen the efforts of their research published recently in a book featuring a host of international researchers, which was edited by Stavroula Philippou from the University of Cyprus. The book, titled **'Europe' turned local – the local turned European? Constructions of 'Europe' in social studies curricula across Europe**, presents a chapter by Dr Tracey McKay and Dr Angela Vaupel. The title of their chapter is "The place of the European dimension in the post-primary curricula of Northern Ireland" and aims to identify to what extent content on 'Europe', 'European dimension' and 'European identity and citizenship' exists in Northern Ireland social studies secondary school curricula and how these are constructed.

The book takes a theoretical and methodological perspective on the sociology of curriculum, educational policy and comparative education to meta-analyse the findings of nine separate studies on 'Europe' and the various curricula in Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Poland, Spain and Sweden. The book has three objectives, which include: to explore constructions of 'Europe' and 'European identity-citizenship' in the various curricula of the countries; to discover whether there is a 'Europeanisation' of the national curricula; and to discuss the similarities, differences, continuities, discontinuities and tensions identified when comparing the various curricula. The chapter by the two authors from the College contributes towards achieving these three objectives.

SCHOLARLY WORK ON IRISH-MEDIUM INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME PROVISION

The College's growing research community has had success recently through the research activity of Dr Eibhlín Mhic Aoidh, Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir and Dr John Sweeney. Along with Jill Garland, they had their chapter included in a new book published by The Liffey Press. The book, titled **Re-imagining initial teacher education: perspectives on transformation**, was launched by Tomás Ó Ruairc (Director of The Teaching Council, Ireland) at St Patrick's College Drumcondra.

The chapter written by the members of academic staff in the College, titled "Irish-medium initial teacher education: lessons from self-evaluation", fits the theme of language teaching and learning in initial teacher education. It outlines the development of an Irish-medium PGCE Programme and describes the immersion approach implemented in the College by locating it within international research and practice. It highlights aspects of a self-evaluation process that influenced the programme's development and concludes that collaborative critical self-evaluation processes can promote cross-institutional collective ownership and innovation, while affirming existing good practice.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The focus of 'Europe' in secondary schools

Scholarly work on Irish-medium initial teacher education programme provision

The importance of fostering good religious education

'STIMULA' project presented to engineering policy advisers and scholarly researchers

Keynote speech opens research conference in Dublin

Twelve lively and spirited short stories published in book

College academic meets with scholars to discuss the history and politics of Labour

College plays host to conferences and annual lecture

Book review appears in art & design publication

Academic shares ideas on assessment in teacher education with researchers

Staff profile

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOSTERING GOOD RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Research conducted recently by Rev Dr Niall Coll has resulted in a chapter which has been included in a new book **Toward mutual ground: pluralism, religious education and diversity in Irish schools**, published by Columba Press. The book, edited by Gareth Byrne and Patricia Kieran, was launched at St Patrick's College Drumcondra on the 26th April 2013 by Professor John Coolahan in the company of its contributors and key stakeholders from the fields of policy and religious education. In his opening address, Professor Coolahan stated: "The debate on and experience of religious pluralism in Central and

Eastern Europe by Elzbieta Osewska, and in Northern Ireland by Niall Coll, also add an international dimension to the book. For a variety of reasons the experience in Poland and Northern Ireland is of particular interest to us in this jurisdiction".

The chapter, titled "Religious pluralism and educational practice in Northern Ireland", concludes with a call by the author for greater acknowledgement relating to the importance of fostering good quality religious education to deepen knowledge and hopefully create sympathy between Protestant and Catholic pupils in Northern Ireland schools.

"The debate on and experience of religious pluralism in Central and Eastern Europe by Elzbieta Osewska, and in Northern Ireland by Niall Coll, also add an international dimension to the book."

KEYNOTE SPEECH OPENS RESEARCH CONFERENCE IN DUBLIN

A keynote lecture by Dr Birgit Schippers, one of the College's increasingly active academic researchers, was delivered at the **Society for Women In Philosophy (SWIP) Ireland Spring Conference** hosted by University College Dublin from the 1st – 2nd March 2013. The title of Dr Schippers' keynote speech was "Affective states: rethinking violence, ethical responsibility, and the social ontology of the human".

'STIMULA' PROJECT PRESENTED TO ENGINEERING POLICY ADVISERS AND SCHOLARLY RESEARCHERS

The 'STIMULA' Project was highlighted recently for engineering specialists who are members of the **Engineering Policy Group for Northern Ireland**, which is part of the Institution of Engineering and Technology. The presentation by Kieran McGeown and Damian Knipe took place at the University of Ulster on the 3rd June 2013. It focused on the findings from a post-primary pupil survey, which is part of the EU funded 'STIMULA' Project, and its corresponding science and technology related classroom activities.

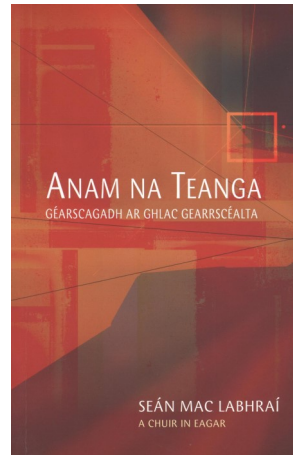
This particular presentation was followed up with a conference paper presented by the two researchers at the international research conference **The Future of Education** held in Florence, Italy from the 13th – 14th June 2013. The research conference aimed to promote transnational cooperation and share good practice in the field of innovation for education and featured nine different themes, one of which was "Innovative Teaching and Learning Methodologies" which matched the theme of the 'STIMULA' Project. The title of the conference paper, which appeared in the book of conference proceedings, was "An innovative approach to enhancing pupil engagement with science and technology". The specific focus of the paper outlined the relevant outcomes of research on young people's perceptions of science and technology and how they informed the choice of science and technology project activities to be piloted in Northern Ireland post-primary schools.



Damian Knipe & Kieran McGeown at The Future of Education Conference

TWELVE LIVELY AND SPIRITED SHORT STORIES PUBLISHED IN BOOK

A book of stories in the Irish language, **Anam na Teanga: Géarscagadh ar Ghlac Gearrscéalta** edited by Seán Mac Labhraí, was launched at Gaeláras Mhic Ardghail, Iúr Chinn Trá on the 2nd May 2013. The book is comprised of a collection of twelve short stories written by leading authors ranging from the revival era (Pádraic Ó Conaire, Pádraig Mac Piarais, Séamas Mac Grianna, Seosamh Mac Grianna) through the mid-twentieth century (Liam Ó Flaithearta and Annraoi Ó Liatháin) to the modern era (Peigí Rose, Micheál Ó Conghaile). The book gives the reader a deeper understanding of the short story genre and provides a comprehensive notes section, exploring the language, characters, literary themes, and linguistic style. The book will be of value to the general reading public, but especially to post-primary pupils and third level students who are serving their apprenticeship as literary critics.



COLLEGE ACADEMIC MEETS WITH SCHOLARS TO DISCUSS THE HISTORY AND POLITICS OF LABOUR

A paper was delivered on the 8th March 2013 by Dr Peter Collins at a research conference, **The British Labour Party & Twentieth-Century Ireland**, held at the Moore Institute within the National University of Ireland, Galway. This conference was attended by academics from across Great Britain and Ireland, with the keynote address delivered by Dr Kevin McNamara, the former Labour Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The title of Dr Collins' paper was "British Labour and developments in the immediate post-war years". The conference convenor and historian at the National University of Ireland, Dr Laurence Marley, commented: "The theme of the event provides an opportunity to examine a largely neglected aspect of Anglo-Irish relations in the twentieth century. By drawing on the expertise of a broad range of scholars from Ireland and Britain, the conference will bring a fresh perspective to the historical and commemorative focus on relations in 'these islands' and at a cross-border and regional level".

COLLEGE PLAYS HOST TO CONFERENCES AND ANNUAL LECTURE

The College facilitated four important events recently which focused on education, research and continuing professional development. The first was the **United Kingdom Literacy Association Conference** under the theme of "Raising Standards in Literacy", organised by Donna Hazzard with input from Catherine Gilliland and Dr Geraldine Magennis. The conference, which took place on the 12th April 2013, offered an excellent professional development opportunity for those working in the field of literacy to reflect on the quality and impact of current practice. It brought together a range of expertise, experience and talent to share up-to-date research and examples of best teaching.

The second was the **Le Chéile (Together) Annual Lecture** delivered by Professor John Haldane, Director of the Centre for Ethics, Philosophy and Public Affairs at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. The title of the talk, organised by Rev Dr Niall Coll which took place on the 8th May 2013, was "Education and the need of a Catholic enlightenment".

The third was the **Association for Science Education (Northern Ireland) Biennial Conference** held on the 7th June 2013, under the theme of "Engaging Pupils in STEM: Sharing Good Practice". It was an event focusing on continuing professional development for proactive primary and post-primary teachers, which included a series of workshops and exhibitors.

The fourth was the **Peace for Africa Conference**, organised by Dr Gerard McCann and held on the 10th June 2013. Members of the African diaspora in Northern Ireland gathered to agree a series of resolutions on the peaceful development of Sub-Saharan Africa. With input from the International Office at the College, the Centre for Global Education and the All Nations Ministries, the event attracted community and NGO representatives from eleven different countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Under the banner of the "Peace for Africa Initiative", the conference agreed on nine key resolutions which will be distributed to the G8 Office, the EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, the Stormont All Party Group on International Development and the African Union. Individual testimonies were heard from all the countries present and the event finished with a networking session and a commitment to develop ideas further.



Donna Hazzard, Professor Peter Finn and guests at the UKLA Conference

ACADEMIC SHARES IDEAS ON ASSESSMENT IN TEACHER EDUCATION WITH RESEARCHERS

BOOK REVIEW APPEARS IN ART & DESIGN PUBLICATION

A recent review of a 2013 book, **The Leonardo effect: motivating children to achieve through interdisciplinary learning**, edited by Deirdre Robson and Ivor Hickey, appeared in the Spring 2013 issue of the National Society for Education in Art and Design magazine. The review was written by Robert Watts from the University of Roehampton, London who commented: "Inspired by Leonardo, and drawing on the results of research in 19 schools in England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, authors Deirdre Robson and Ivor Hickey have formulated a convincing argument for the value of interdisciplinary learning in primary schools".

Greece was the location for a presentation given by Dr Geraldine Magennis based on a SCOTENS-funded research project titled "Assessment in teacher education: North & South (ATENS)". The paper was delivered at the **Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER) 15th Annual International Conference on Education** which took place from the 20th – 23rd May 2013. The ATINER was established in 1995 as an independent world association of academics and researchers. Its mission is to become a forum where academics and researchers can meet and exchange ideas on their research and discuss the future developments of their discipline.

Dr Magennis' small-scale, Irish, cross-border research project investigated the assessment of and satisfaction with school-based placements as experienced by a sample of primary and post-primary students and their tutors. The resultant connections between such professional practices and subsequent planning, teaching and learning were also examined. The research illuminated the reduced time and space students have to explore, integrate and reflect upon theory-pedagogy links and to conduct professional, collegial conversations. Completing extraneous and repetitive college paperwork, often excluded many from their schools' communities of practice. Current assessment methods were deemed subjective and somewhat non-representative of teaching practice placement especially in terms of relationships forged and learning completed. A disconnect existed between the reality of practice within individual, engrained school cultures and procedures and college provision. Despite both tutors and students largely endorsing assessment for learning as a journey, students tended to formalize the process to achieve high grades. Sadly, few if any linkages were made between the students' own experiences of being assessed and their subsequent planning, teaching and assessment of their pupils.

STAFF PROFILE



Dr Angela Vaupel has lectured in International Studies at the College since 2005. She teaches on aspects of European culture such as the history of the idea of Europe and representations of otherness in European film and literature.

Angela's research interests are interdisciplinary and draw from Cultural and Film Studies as well as from Exile and Identity Studies. She explores aspects of the political dynamics of contemporary culture and its socio-historical foundations. Politically relevant issues such as how cultural media relate to ideology, nationality/ethnicity, gender/sexuality and social class are key issues of her research output. Angela has presented her research at national and international conferences and has collaborated on international projects. She has contributed reviews on new publications relevant to her field and has published peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters on identity representations in European cultural media, interculturality, and on young people's attitudes towards 'Europe'. Angela is the author of two books, on the post-1945 German reception history of exile literature 1933-1945 (2007) and on the representation of women in Nazi film (2005), and has recently co-authored a multilingual text book (2012) that promotes a European dimension in the study of social science subjects. Angela is a member of the University Association of Contemporary European Studies, a fellow of the Higher Education Academy and an external member of the Centre for Irish-German Studies at the University of Limerick.

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