

Research Newsletter



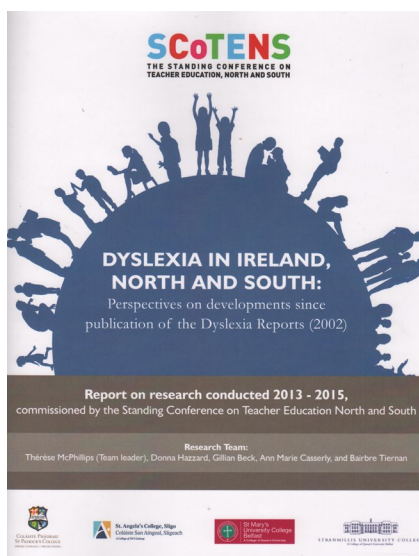
St Mary's
University College
Belfast
A College of Queen's University

ALL-IRELAND POLICY AND PRACTICE FOR DYSLEXIA

Donna Hazzard (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) was part of an all-Ireland research team which submitted its final research report to the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) in June 2015. Donna and her colleagues produced the research output, titled ***Dyslexia In Ireland, North And South: Perspectives On Developments Since Publication Of The Dyslexia Reports (2002)***, following extensive research carried out since 2013. The research was also presented at conferences in April, June and July 2015 for the Dyslexia Association of Ireland, the Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education, and the UK Literacy Association.

The research sought to clarify present policy in the area of dyslexia support, North and South, and to identify strategic policy which informs good practice. Its aim was to consult with original members of the Northern Ireland Task Group on Dyslexia, the Republic of Ireland Task Force on Dyslexia and key stakeholders in the area of dyslexia support, to ascertain their views on support provision for pupils with dyslexia, twelve years on.

The research findings strongly suggested that a review of the Task Group and Force on Dyslexia was long overdue. Despite the inclusive definition of dyslexia outlined in 2002, there were persistent gaps and contradictions in understandings of dyslexia at all levels of the system. Provision for students with dyslexia in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland continued to be characterised by inadequacies in identification and assessment and precariousness in appropriate support. The vision and understandings in the Task Group and Force on Dyslexia needed to be developed further. The need for alertness to indicators of possible learning difficulties in the child's earliest years, recommended in these reports, had been overlooked. A concluding finding was that students with dyslexia had been among those most vulnerable to economic cutbacks which have blocked timely and appropriate support, in primary and post-primary schools.



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TEACHER EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN COMMUNICATION

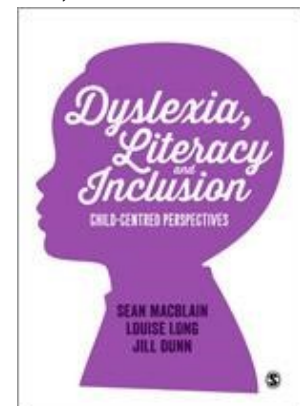
Ciaran Walsh (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) is part of an all-Ireland research team which received notification of a successful research proposal from the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) in April 2015. The purpose of the research, titled ***Teacher Educator Professional Learning: Shaping The Conversation Of Teacher Education***, is to

examine the professional learning experiences of individual teacher educators, within a community of learners, related to the area of communication. It plans also to determine how this professional learning influences their pedagogical practices with pre-service teachers. The research will last two years and combine collaborative self-study methodology alongside photo elicitation visual methodologies.

CHILDREN AT THE CENTRE OF RESEARCH ON DYSPLEXIA

Dr Louise Long (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) co-authored a recent book published in March 2015, titled ***Dyslexia, Literacy And Inclusion: Child-Centred Perspectives***. The book focused on raising standards in literacy for children with dyslexia by putting them at the centre of everything practitioners do, by focusing on well-being, and by recognising the role that adults have to play in ensuring all children reach their potential. Louise contributed two chapters on her own, alongside two other chapters written with colleagues. The book has been received positively within the academic community and has been described as a very valuable resource, with the child being central to the authors' thinking. By

concentrating on children in primary schools and early years settings, the book looked at early intervention, pupil voice, working as a team, new literacies, challenges for the inclusive school, and child-centred identification, assessment as well as provision.



“...a very valuable resource, with the child being central to the authors' thinking.”

STUDENTS' IMMERSION IN STORY TO STIMULATE LEARNING

Catherine Gilliland (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) wrote an article which appeared in the Literacy Association of Ireland's Literacy News in May 2015. The article, titled ***Rhyme, Rhythm And Repetition Make The Wheels Of The Language Bus Go Round And Round***, referred to research that motivated Catherine to further immerse her students of initial teacher education in the world of story and to develop their ability to use literary texts to stimulate thinking, engagement and discussion. As a result of this, Catherine concluded that it was paramount that teachers are trained and retrained to appreciate the value in daily immersion with rhyme, rhythm and repetition as best case literacy provision. Catherine believed that making this teaching as visual as possible will ensure the five pillars of reading instruction are met simultaneously within a real book environment. As a result of her teaching and research, Catherine will give the keynote speech at the upcoming Literacy Association of Ireland's 39th International Conference due to take place in September 2015. The research was also presented via a workshop at the UK Literacy Association International Conference in July 2015.



ACADEMIC'S WORK HELPS STUDENTS TO PLAN AND BECOME INDEPENDENT LEARNERS

Dr Matthew Martin (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) had his research work, titled ***What Are TeachMeets?***, included as a vignette to accompany a chapter in the book *Personalized PD: Flipping Your Professional Development* published in July 2015. Each chapter in the book provided a window into how practicing educators execute their plan to get every teacher what they need and move each individual towards their own plan of learning. Chapters were accompanied by short vignettes which expand on and go deeper into useful tools and techniques.



Matthew also contributed a chapter to a Compendium Of Effective Practice In Directed Independent Learning produced by the Higher Education Academy in March 2015. His chapter, titled ***Flipping The Classroom: On The Road To Independent, Critical Reading In First Year English***, referred to a project designed to help students navigate the transition from their A-level studies to the greater independence demanded of them while studying English at university level.

RESEARCHERS SHARE THEIR PRACTICE OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Orla Nugent, Frank Hennessey and Martin Hagan (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) represented the College at the 6th Teacher Education Advancement Network Annual Conference, which took place in May 2015 in Birmingham, England. The theme of the research conference was Knowing About Teaching and it offered a chance for teacher educators to come together to debate and share research and scholarly activity with as wide an audience as possible.

Orla's research paper, titled ***Student Teachers' Perceptions Of Their Competence To Teach In A New Phase Primary School Placement – The Value Of Pre-Placement Exposure***, aimed to assess the impact of a short period of school exposure for students in a new Key Stage within a programme of initial teacher education. The paper analysed the impact upon student learning and professional understanding and highlighted the value of such initiatives in developing greater capacity for reflective practice.

Frank presented a paper titled ***The St Mary's Entrepreneurial Learning Certificate: A Case Study Of Curricular Reform Designed To Promote And Integrate Entrepreneurship Education Within Initial Teacher Education***. It aimed to share the experiences within the College, especially the challenges encountered and addressed. It outlined the process of developing a coherent institutional policy framework to support Entrepreneurship Education within initial teacher education. The presentation described also the change management process by which Entrepreneurship Education was embedded, and addressed the developmental stage and its concerted focus upon capacity building.

Martin's paper (co-authored with Deirdre Cree), titled ***Developing Research Capacity In Initial Teacher Education: A New Approach To Early Professional Learning***, aimed to outline the development of a research capacity-building initiative (Capstone Project) within a programme of initial teacher education and to analyse the impact upon student learning. The paper highlighted the value of such initiatives in developing research-literate teachers who have the potential to contribute to self-improving education systems.

STUDENTS OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION SEIZE OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT THEIR RESEARCH

Martin Hagan (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) and colleagues organised the first student teacher research conference under the theme of ***New Approaches To Professional Learning In Initial Teacher Education*** in April 2015. The conference included a keynote address by Dr Alison Jackson from the University of Cumbria and a presentation from Megan Turner, a recent winner of the Undergraduate Awards for best teacher education submission in 2013/14, based on her BEd4 Capstone Project. Sessions outlining the various Capstone Projects were presented by final year students of initial teacher education. These were attended by their peers in third and fourth year, alongside academic staff and invited guests. The conference concluded with a presentation by a representative from the INTO to Michaela Mulholland who was the College's 2015 Capstone prize winner.



From L to R: Michaela Mulholland, Dr Alison Jackson and Martin Hagan

“Sessions outlining the various Capstone Projects were presented by final year students of initial teacher education.”

MEMBERS OF IRISH-MEDIUM RESEARCH CENTRE DEMONSTRATE THEIR RESEARCH STRENGTHS

Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir, Dr Eibhlín Mhic Aoidh, Dr Seán Mac Corraidh and Denise Mhic Aoidh (Irish-medium Research Centre) were part of a 200+ group of delegates who attended the First All-Ireland Research Conference On Immersion Education, which took place at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick in May 2015. Gabrielle gave a joint presentation based on a funded research project titled ***An Analysis Of Models Of Provision For Immersion Education In Ireland***. Eibhlín gave a presentation on research based on her doctoral thesis titled ***Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practices In Irish-Medium Foundation Stage Settings***. Seán presented his research on ***The Professional Knowledge And Skills A Teacher Needs To Apply A Phonics Approach In The Irish Language***. Finally, Denise drew upon her professional doctorate by presenting a paper titled ***Perspectives On Students' Opinions Of Their Competence And Needs In Relation To Teaching In The Irish-Medium Primary Sector***.

The conference brought together academics, practitioners and professionals to exchange and discuss immersion research, theory and best practices. Its aim was to initiate and sustain meaningful professional dialogue on the specific needs, expectations, demands, contemporary developments and diverse contexts of all-Irish education. Delegates engaged in critical debate on the enduring questions and innovative responses unique to immersion education.



From L to R: Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir, Pádraig de Bleine, Dr Seán Mac Corraidh, Dr Eibhlín Mhic Aoidh and Denise Mhic Aoidh (Members of the Irish-medium Research Centre)

IRISH-MEDIUM PRE-SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

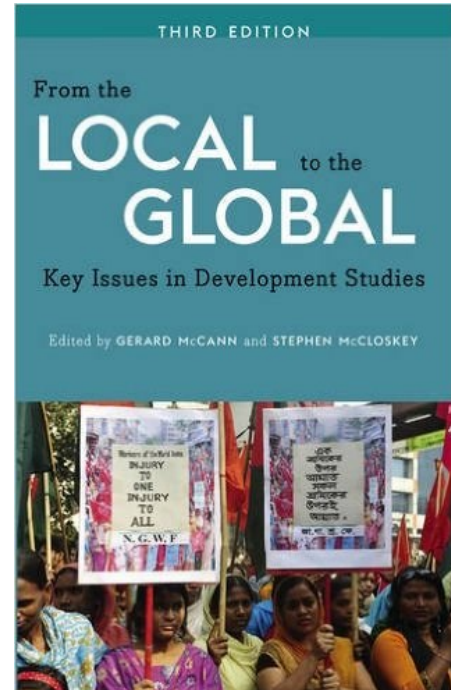
Dr Eibhlín Mhic Aoidh (Irish-medium Research Centre) was the leader of a research team working with RSM McClure Watters (Consulting) Ltd on a research project that began in April 2015. The project, titled **Research On The Educational Outcomes Of Pre-School Irish-Medium Education**, was funded by the Department of Education Northern Ireland. The research planned to identify which core components in Irish-medium pre-schools lead to optimum readiness for transition to Foundation Stage in Irish-medium primary schools. It aimed also to identify the extent to which these components are present currently in Irish-medium pre-schools in the statutory and voluntary sector in the North of Ireland. The proposed stages included project initiation, desk-based research including a review of literature, fieldwork in a sample of Irish-medium pre-school settings, stakeholder consultations, an analysis of learning outcomes for Irish-medium pre-schools, and a final report and presentation.



REVISED TEXT ON KEY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES GAINS MOMENTUM WITH ITS THIRD EDITION

Dr Gerard McCann (Centre for Global Justice) co-edited the third edition of the very successful and completely revised publication *From The Local To The Global: Key Issues In Development Studies*, which was published in May 2015. The book has been referred to as being of global value to a radically changing world and as essentially a survey of all the issues that affect the global South and shape the global North. Gerard contributed two chapters to the book - the first titled **Europe, Development And The Colonial Legacy** with the second titled **Neoliberal Decline And International Development Post-2015**.

The book highlighted the extent to which the local and global are interconnected in today's globalised economy and questioned the legitimacy of the neoliberal model of development which set in motion the crisis. This revised third edition took stock of the international development environment as it embarked on new policy frameworks to confront new challenges. The book has been viewed by many as an indispensable introduction to key development issues such as aid, debt, trade, migration, security, gender in development and climate change.



EXILE LITERATURE IN EUROPEAN CONTEXTS



Dr Angela Vaupel (Centre for Global Justice) has had a chapter featured in the book *Feuchtwanger Und Berlin* edited by G.V. Davis, which was published in March 2015. The title of Angela's chapter was ***Feuchtwanger Goes Europe? The Legacy Of Lion Feuchtwanger's Works In European Contexts***, which explored the legacy of Feuchtwanger's oeuvre in Europe since the new millennium with particular reference to regions that had specific links to the exile community of 1933-45. By using Feuchtwanger as a prominent

example, the chapter focused on the reception and impact of exile literature in European cultural media and institutional education.



Lion Feuchtwanger: Novelist and Playwright

“the chapter focused on the reception and impact of exile literature in European cultural media and institutional education.”

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON IRELAND'S ECONOMY

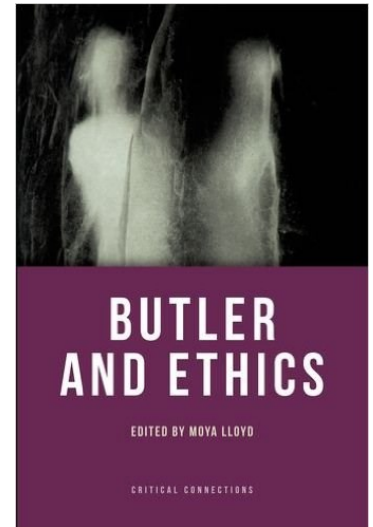
Dr Gerard McCann (Centre for Global Justice) had his research output profile raised in July 2015 by having an article accepted for publication in the most recent issue of *The Journal Of European Economic History*. Gerard's paper, titled ***Protectionism And The “Economic War” In Interwar Ireland***, was based both on a research seminar he delivered in the College and his corresponding book - *Ireland's Economic History*. The article assessed the extent to which the Irish economy was affected by the Great Depression and how the respective Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil governments managed this period in Irish economic history. It connected this also to partition itself, ideological bias, the depression in the north and how both governments struggled to address the implications of global economic meltdown.



ETHICAL FEELING AND RESPONSE TOWARDS VIOLENCE

Dr Birgit Schippers (Centre for Global Justice), who was appointed recently as the co-convenor of the Political Studies Association specialist group 'Global Justice and Human Rights', enhanced her expanding research profile with a publication in the book *Butler And Ethics* edited by M. Lloyd. Birgit's chapter, titled ***Violence, Affect, Ethics***, was one of nine that provided the first sustained evaluation of Judith Butler's alleged ethical turn in this book published in June 2015.

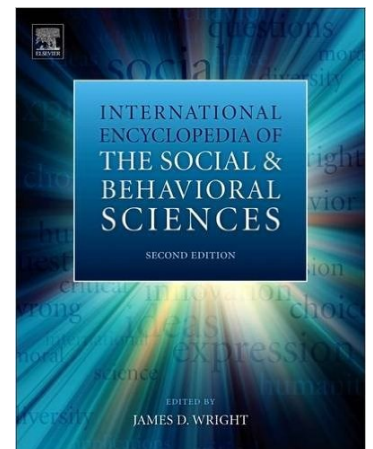
With contributions from other internationally renowned theorists, Birgit's chapter considered Butler's treatment of affect and its import for understanding ethical responses to violence and war. Building on what she calls Butler's affective conception of ethics, Birgit argued that Butler's emphasis on the visceral dimensions of political life makes an important contribution to a still neglected topic in the fields of global ethics and international political theory. However, despite the explanatory force and normative ambition of Butler's rendering of the relationship between affect and ethics, her account lacks normative plausibility. Birgit went on to claim that while Butler tells why we should respond ethically towards others, she cannot tell why we should feel ethically disposed towards others. This connection between ethical obligation and ethical feeling, or affect, is not finally resolved in her work.



MAJOR INTERNATIONAL VOLUMES OF WORK ON THE SOCIAL SCIENCES FEATURE ACADEMIC'S RESEARCH

Dr Birgit Schippers (Centre for Global Justice) was part of a consortium of authors who featured in the second edition of the *International Encyclopedia Of The Social & Behavioral Sciences*, which was published in April 2015. Birgit's chapter, titled ***Butler, Judith (1956 –)***, appeared in volume three of what many consider to be an essential reference point for social and behavioural sciences which is more in-depth than any other academic material.

In her chapter Birgit wrote about the American philosopher Judith Butler who is one of the most influential scholars working in the field of contemporary critical theory. Best known for her contributions to gender theory and feminism, specifically for her account of gender as performative, Butler's recent writings on international theory and global ethics, her critique of U.S. foreign policy in the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and her interest in the conflict in Israel–Palestine, have broadened her oeuvre and have made her work of interest to a wider public, beyond academia.



RESEARCH ETHICS TRAINING

Dr Birgit Schippers (Centre for Global Justice) held a research-related event in May 2015, titled **Preparing For A Research Ethics Review**, for all academic staff to attend. The purpose of this important staff development opportunity was to demystify the process of ethical review by reminding the College's community of researchers, including academic staff involved in the supervision of student research, about the requirements of a research ethics review. The focus was on ensuring researchers and lecturers revisited the ethics review process, which involved the facilitator providing them with examples of good practice and identifying key issues involved in the supervision of student research.

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DECIPHERED FRAGMENT OF STONE MAY LEAD TO CREATING REPLICA

Dr Peter Downey produced a research article titled **The Nendrum Cross-Slab And The 'Glory of Creation'** in June 2015, which has been accepted for publication in the next issue of *Lecale Review: A Journal Of Down History*. The research was based on Peter's deciphering of the fragment of inscription on the cross-slab fragment known as the 'Nendrum runic stone', the reconstruction of its possible original form, and consideration of the implications of the restored text in the context of the early 9th century Nendrum monastery in County Down.

Additionally, his reconstructed design has been incorporated into the new extension in the Down County Museum in Downpatrick, which houses the Downpatrick High Cross among other early Christian monuments. It is hoped that a full-scale replica in stone of the reconstructed Nendrum Cross-Slab will be developed for display in the museum.



STAFF PROFILE



Dr Geraldine Magennis began working for the College in 2004 as a senior lecturer within the Education and Literacy departments. She co-ordinates the Voluntary Reading Tutor Programme, which facilitates student teacher support for low-progress readers in a variety of schools. Since 2009, Geraldine has represented the College on the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South, which is a body set up to facilitate cross-border research collaboration through

various educational pursuits. The College's successful Teacher Education Seminar Series was co-founded by Geraldine in 2004, where she continues to serve as co-chair. Geraldine is also a member of the College's Research and Research Ethics Committees and delivers the on-line Masters module in Educational Research Methods.

Geraldine's research interests extend across both Education and Literacy. She is a regular contributor to *Le Chéile*, a Catholic school ethos journal, having submitted articles related to the power of children's literature and the importance of promoting reading for pleasure among the young. In 2012, Geraldine was co-author of a chapter, titled **Buried Treasure: Uncovering Literacy Jewels In The Leonardo Effect**, which featured in the book *The Leonardo Effect: Motivating Children To Achieve Through Interdisciplinary Learning*. In 2013, she was also a lead researcher with a colleague from University College Cork in a funded project titled **Assessment In Teacher Education, North and South**. This research was presented at both national and international conferences, resulting in an article published in the *Athens Journal Of Education*. More recently, Geraldine has co-authored another chapter, titled **Teacher Education Policy In Northern Ireland: Impediments, Initiatives and Influences**, with a colleague from the Teacher Education Group. This is due for publication at the end of the year in the book *Teacher Education In Changing Times*.