

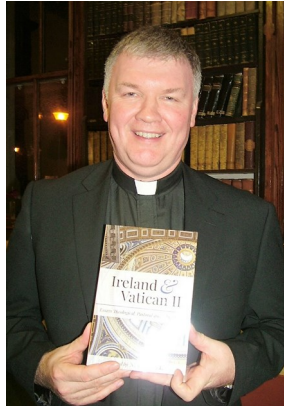
Research Newsletter



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

CONTRIBUTORS TO BOOK ON IRELAND & VATICAN II

Rev Dr Niall Coll (Research Group for Catholic Education) achieved

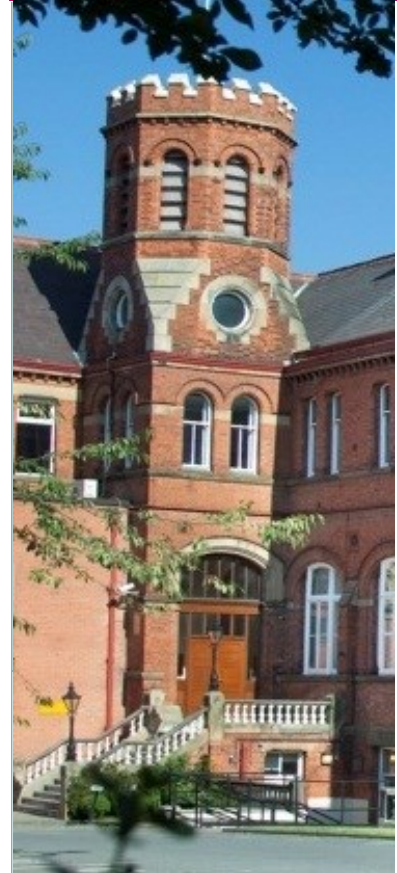
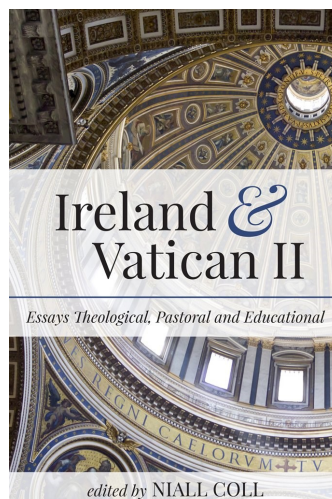


success recently with the publication in November 2015 of a book he edited on Ireland and Vatican II. The book was published by Columba Press and launched by one of its contributors, Baroness Nuala O'Loan, who described the book as a *"seminal contribution to understanding the state of the Church in Ireland today and a hope for the future"*.

The book explored the scope, impact and future implementation of the Second Vatican Council with special reference to Ireland, north and south. It did so by

examining the documents of the Council and applying them to an Irish context, taking into account areas such as education, human rights, social justice, liturgy, society and theology. The teachings of post-Vatican II Popes were also considered, in particular those of Pope Francis, who is widely seen as a champion of the spirit and culture of the Second Vatican Council in the contemporary Church. Contributors were drawn from the ranks of scholars, pastors, educationalists and people prominent in the life of the Catholic Church in Ireland, as well as Protestant voices whose valuable perspectives illuminated the Council's relevance to other Christian traditions. It is designed for the general reader, most especially those searching for a more informed and sustaining handle on faith, who will welcome the well-grounded, accessible style of these articles.

Contributors from the College, with corresponding chapter titles, included: Dr Gerard McCann, **A Philosophy of Hope and Vatican II**; Rev Dr Edward McGee, **Towards a Fuller Participation in the Liturgy: Embracing the Mystery of God**; Rev Feidhlimidh Magennis, **From *Dei Verbum* to *Verbum Domini***; Rev Dr Paul Fleming, **Mary and her Role in the Church Today**; Sharon Haughey, **Spirituality in School: Encouraging Young Faith**; and Rev Dr Niall Coll, **The Path of Interfaith Dialogue: Catholic Theological Explorations and their Significance for Education**.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Contributors to book on Ireland & Vatican II

Holistic education highlighted in research journal

Research on empathy and identity at Catholic education conference

Global Studies Association conference 2016—call for papers

Academic convenes workshop and presents paper at research conference

College scholar featured in new book on the British Labour Party

STEM in primary schools: the microbot project

SCoTENS-funded research aiming to meet needs of children with SEN

Paper presented at Irish conference

College secures funding for research project on Irish-medium education

Researcher part of Teacher Education Group that produces insightful book

College engages in research involving Museum of Orange Heritage

Conference keynote speech on literacy addiction

Researchers from College at Literacy Association of Ireland conference

BERA 2015 conference sees rhyme, rhythm & repetition

Staff profile

HOLISTIC EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTED IN RESEARCH JOURNAL

Dr Madeleine Lombard (Research Group for Catholic Education) had her research published in the journal, **The Pastoral Review**, in September/October 2015. Madeleine's article, titled **Only Connect - Meaning and Coherence in Holistic Education**, explored the concept of holistic education in a range of contexts and argued for the kind of connectedness, meaning and coherence which it promotes. It examined the concept in its historical and educational contexts and proposed that, whether holistic education is secular or faith-based, whether it is founded on pedagogic or spiritual principles, its very identity and sense of individual and collective self depends on the articulation of a clearly defined and lucid sense of purpose. The article proposed that there is no neutral zone in education - that in every educational context a core set of values, however differently defined, provides a central axis around which educational policies and practices rotate. Neutrality, in other words, is an impossibility in the field of education. Holistic education in the context of Catholic education was examined alongside the work and theories of a range of educationalists, and it was argued that in this context too a particular philosophical and theological view provides the foundation, cause and rationale of its work.

Intrinsic to this work is the imperative to both exist within the dominant ideology and to unmask and challenge some of its assumptions. The recent challenge to the existence of St Mary's University College was considered in the light of these assumptions, and it was argued that educational development based on either fiscal or political arguments will not suffice if the kind of critical consciousness which holistic education promotes is to be realised.



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RESEARCH ON EMPATHY AND IDENTITY AT CATHOLIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Rev Dr Niall Coll (Research Group for Catholic Education) presented at a conference held in the Cistercian College Roscrea, Co Tipperary in November 2015. The theme of the conference was **Re-visioning and Renewing Catholic Education Today** and it was held to mark the 50th anniversary of the declaration of the Second Vatican Council on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*. The conference welcomed speakers well-known in education who drew on the Church's teaching and their own experience to look at the role of the Catholic school, and its outreach, in contemporary Ireland. Niall's paper, titled **Empathy and Identity: Priorities for the Contemporary Catholic School**, explored ways in which the Catholic school can live out its own distinctive identity in ways which respect and engage with those of other religious backgrounds.



Niall had also a research paper published in **The Furrow** in September 2015. He began the article, titled **Light from the West – The Year of St Columbanus**, by providing a brief wider theological and historical context and then referred to St Columbanus' *peregrinatio*. Niall went on to evaluate St Columbanus and outlined some thoughts on his legacy. **The Furrow** is a journal which enjoys an international reputation as a courageous and impartial forum for discussing the challenges facing the Church today and of the resources available to meet them.

GLOBAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2016—CALL FOR PAPERS



Dr Birgit Schippers, Dr Gerard McCann and Dr Angela Vaupel (Centre for Global Justice) are part of an organising team in the College which is hosting the Global Studies Association Annual Conference in 2016. The theme of the conference is **Global (In-)Securities** and the keynote speakers will be Professor Jef Huysmans (Queen Mary, University of London) and Professor Marysia Zalewski (University of Aberdeen). **Global (In-)Securities** will provide a platform to explore and discuss questions relating to the practices, technologies and experiences of securities and insecurities in a globalised world.

In recognition of the complexities that pertain to the question of security and insecurity, relating to issues such as war and conflict, migration and the global economy, the conference will probe multi- and interdisciplinary perspectives on global (in-)securities. While cognisant of the contribution from the field of security studies, the conference will welcome paper and panel proposals from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and methodological perspectives.

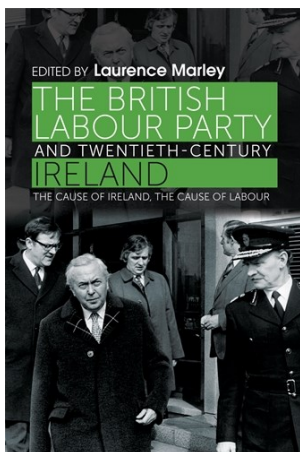
Submissions that engage with the conference theme and address the following topics will be particularly encouraged: Theorising (in-)security; Representations of (in-)security in film and literature; Spatial and temporal dimensions of (in-)security; Technologies of (in-)security; Risk and resilience; (In-)security and transnational migration; Gender and (in-)security; Affective and embodied experiences of (in-)security; Precarity, vulnerability and (in-)security; (In-)security in the global economy; (In-)security and human rights; (In-)security and the anthropocene; and Ethics, cosmopolitanism and (in-)security. Further information is available at [GSA 2016 Conference](#).

ACADEMIC CONVENES WORKSHOP AND PRESENTS PAPER AT RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Dr Birgit Schippers (Centre for Global Justice) attended the Manchester Centre for Political Theory based at the University of Manchester in September 2015 as a convenor for a workshop under the theme of **Critical Perspectives on Human Rights**. The workshop, which was made up of delegates from North and South America, continental Europe, Britain and Ireland, included five panels and seventeen papers. The aim of the workshop was to present, discuss and consider critical interventions in human rights scholarship and to appraise the continued significance of human rights for critical theory and practice. Paper presentations engaged with many questions, with some examples including: Which thinkers, traditions and resources enable the articulation of critical perspectives on human rights? What would a critical theory of and/or for human rights look like? How does 'difference', broadly construed, frame our understanding of human rights? Birgit also presented a paper, which was titled **From Paradox to Performativity: Human Rights and the Discursive Constitution of the Human**.



COLLEGE SCHOLAR FEATURED IN NEW BOOK ON THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY



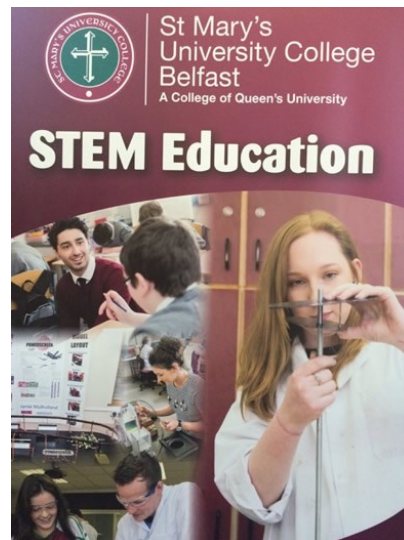
Dr Peter Collins (Centre for Global Justice) contributed a chapter, titled **British Labour and Developments in Ireland in the Immediate Post-War Years**, to a book published by Manchester University Press in December 2015. The book featured a range of distinguished Irish and British scholars, whose contributions provided the first full treatment of the historical relationship between the British Labour Party and Ireland in the last century, from Keir Hardie to Tony Blair. By widening the lens on Labour's responses to the 'Irish question' over an entire century, the book offered an original perspective on longer-term dispositions in Labour mentalities towards Ireland and on the relationship between 'these islands'. The publication will prove essential reading for those with an interest in modern Irish and British history, Anglo-Irish relations and the current Northern Ireland peace process.

STEM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: THE MICROBOT PROJECT

Pupils and teachers from five schools were invited to a mini-university microbot experience in the College during February 2016. The pupils worked in teams of four to programme microbots (small robots) to complete four STEM-oriented, problem-solving activities: navigate the perimeter of a forty centimetre square; synchronize the microbots' flashing lights; enable the microbots to navigate a maze; and programme two microbots for synchronized dancing to music. A concurrent research study was also undertaken to investigate whether engagement in practical STEM problem-solving activities might enhance understanding of mathematical concepts involving space and time.

Prior to the two-day experience, the pupils completed a Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) informed test and a learning preference questionnaire to determine the significance, if any, of pupils' learning preferences with respect to their engagement with STEM-oriented, problem-solving activities. A second TIMSS informed test was completed a week after the activity days, and an inter-college

research team, involving Dr Katrina Mulholland and Mr Kieran McGeown (STEAM Research Centre) from St Mary's University College as well as Dr Michael Ievers and Dr Brian Cummins from Stranmillis University College, are currently working on analysing the results for their research.



SCOTENS-FUNDED RESEARCH AIMING TO MEET NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH SEN



Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir (Irish-medium Research Centre) and two colleagues from St Angela's College Sligo began their research in September 2015 having secured seed funding from the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS). They will carry out research to investigate how mainstream teachers meet the needs of children with special educational needs in multi-grade

classrooms. Current educational legislation and policy support the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. At present, the policy in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland facilitates schools to be flexible in designing inclusive responses for children with special educational needs. However, despite the support in place in mainstream schools, teachers indicate that the inclusion of children with special educational needs is an issue which they find challenging, particularly in multi-grade classrooms. Therefore, this research will identify good practice, as well as challenges with regards to the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream, multi-grade classrooms in primary schools. The objectives will identify examples of good practice with regards to the inclusion of children with special educational needs in multi-grade classrooms, will identify the challenges that teachers encounter when teaching children with special educational needs in multi-grade classrooms, and will establish how teachers address these challenges.

PAPER PRESENTED AT IRISH CONFERENCE

Dr Seán Mac Corraidh (Irish-medium Research Centre) gave a presentation at Comhdháil ar Litríocht agus ar Chultúr na Gaeilge which was held at the National University of Ireland Galway in October 2015. The title of Seán's paper was **Seosamh Mac Grianna: Aistritheoir**.

COLLEGE SECURES FUNDING FOR RESEARCH PROJECT ON IRISH-MEDIUM EDUCATION

A team of academics, which includes Dr Eibhlín Mhic Aoidh, Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir, Dr Seán Mac Corraidh and Padaí de Bléine (Irish-medium Research Centre), was awarded a research grant in February 2016 from the Central Procurement Directorate on behalf of the Department of Education and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment to conduct research for Irish-medium key stage 3 textbooks. The purpose of the research will be to analyse language attainment in pupils at the start and end of key stage 3, to provide a baseline of language acquisition, and to make recommendations to writers of textbooks in the context of Irish-medium education.

A mixed-methods approach will be applied to the research to maximise the opportunity to create new knowledge and to facilitate a comparative database to be used in a future phase of the project. However, a significant element of the project will be grounded in the principles of qualitative research. A detailed, systematic qualitative analysis of the pupils' language will be carried out in order to provide reliable evidence and meaningful insights into the language acquired by pupils through key stage 3. The discussion of findings and interpretation of outcomes will be considered within the context of immersion pedagogies, professional practices in Irish-medium schools and theories underpinning second language acquisition, prior to the formulation of recommendations.



Department of
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“...to analyse language attainment in pupils at the start and end of key stage 3, to provide a baseline of language acquisition, and to make recommendations to writers of textbooks in the context of Irish-medium education.”

RESEARCHER PART OF TEACHER EDUCATION GROUP THAT PRODUCES INSIGHTFUL BOOK

Dr Geraldine Magennis (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) is a member of a group focusing on teacher education and has co-authored a chapter that appeared in a book, titled **Teacher Education in Times of Change**, published by Policy Press in December 2015. Geraldine's chapter, titled **Teacher Education Policy in Northern Ireland: Impediments, Initiatives and Influences**, was co-authored with Linda Clarke and began with a contextual outline of the distinctive policy-making landscape in Northern Ireland. In order to demonstrate the ways in which certain influences have impacted on policy, the authors outlined some key examples of policy for schools and policy for teacher education. Focusing largely on post-devolution changes, the core of the chapter explored how both the many reviews of teacher education and some key elements of teacher education policy, i.e. institutional arrangements, partnerships and professionalism, were influenced by the tensions between local impasses and local initiatives, demographic and economic pressures, as well as policy transfers. The chapter concluded with an outline of some potential new directions for teacher education policy in Northern Ireland.

Teacher education in times of change

The Teacher Education Group

Gary Beauchamp	Aileen Kennedy	Trevor Mutton
Linda Clarke	Geraldine Magennis	Teresa O'Doherty
Moirá Hulme	Ian Menter	Gillian Peiser
Martin Jephcote	Jean Murray	

COLLEGE ENGAGES IN RESEARCH INVOLVING MUSEUM OF ORANGE HERITAGE

Dr Tracey McKay (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) has been working with David Scott from the Museum of Orange Heritage in Belfast, who conducted workshops with students in January 2016, on case study research which seeks to examine the perceptions of the Orange Order held by students of initial teacher education. The research explored the students' perceptions of the opportunities and challenges of crossing 'borders' and collective memory in the context of contributing to a shared society through educational engagement and learning about/engaging with 'others' and 'otherness'. It involved students completing a questionnaire to explore their present knowledge, understanding, perceptions of and attitudes towards the Orange Order. It investigated also their perceptions and feelings about crossing 'traditional' cultural borders to participate in a learning programme intended to raise awareness about the Orange Order, its history and heritage.

The research will form an integral part of a larger Erasmus+ funded project (BE-SMART) on Border Education. Recognising the close interrelationships between social change and paradigm shifts, this larger project aims to contribute to the discussion and

interpreting of conceptual change in the study of 'borders' by linking it to memory narratives and by adapting the discourse for applied educational environments. The larger project focuses on the representations of 'borders' in national educational frameworks, initial teacher education programmes and cultural media. It seeks to encourage wider reflection on and evaluation of existing conceptualisation of 'borders' within initial teacher education settings and to contribute to the development of new approaches to education on 'borders' which it is hoped will challenge some of the more traditional, mainly spatial conceptions that have tended to prevail to date.



CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEECH ON LITERACY ADDICTION

The keynote speech at the international conference organised for the Literacy Association of Ireland, which took place in September 2015, was given by Catherine Gilliland (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) under the title **Making Literacy Addictive**. In summarising her speech Catherine claimed that, if we are serious about reimagining literacy, then we must be more willing to loosen up the stranglehold of what counts as literacy. Her presentation considered the role of story, puppets and film as central to quality literacy provision. Catherine suggested that the educational world of playful teaching and learning encompasses a home for igniting children's love of literacy and language. Any activity that is associated with enjoyment will mean that the learner will crave more and more. This creates a most positive and powerful addiction to literacy. Teachers have a very privileged role to play in both igniting and fuelling this addiction. She went on to say that storytelling, picture books and graphic novels must be a central cog for literacy development. The story, in whatever form presented, must make the listener enter the new world do eyed, with a dribbling lip and an urgency to hear what happens next. As teachers, we must ask ourselves, "*why do we make literature become black and white at the age of 8?*" Puppets are natural storytellers and, as their narrative is not confined to a picture word set script, they are pivotal to reimagining literacy. Too often, film is not viewed as a key element of quality literacy provision. For many of our children it is their very first experience of narrative. Its value in the classroom must never be underestimated. Short animated films are the perfect resource to focus on the strategies needed to comprehend text but are also motivating and engaging. In conclusion, Catherine believes that there are many ways we can reimagine literacy but the key message is the importance of the practitioner, who must be a willing participant, joyful, playful and have true commitment and belief in the process.



RESEARCHERS FROM COLLEGE AT LITERACY ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND CONFERENCE

The 39th international conference organised for the Literacy Association of Ireland took place in September 2015 at the Marino Institute of Education Dublin under the theme of **Living Literacy: From Tots to Teens**. The conference explored research and practice on numerous topics including, for example, oral language development, best practice in the teaching and study of literacy, promoting children's literature in schools, and research-based best practice for children with literacy difficulties.

One of the presenters was Dr Brian Hanratty (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) whose paper, titled **Imagining Education: Selected Representations of Teachers and Teaching in Twentieth Century Irish Fiction and Autobiography**, had twin objectives. Firstly, keeping an eye to form as well as theme, it explored a representative selection of the fascinating range of portraits of teachers to be found in twentieth-century Irish fiction and autobiography. Secondly, it examined the varieties of the models of teaching and pedagogy which were embedded in these portraits. While the paper, therefore, was not exclusively pedagogical in its focus, it had significant implications for pedagogical methodology. The range of books selected for evaluation was quite broad, though, given the authoritarian and priest-ridden structure of education in Ireland for much of the twentieth-century and given, also, the counter-cultural instincts of most writers, many of the portraits of teachers were quite dark. However, there were also quite a few sympathetic and friendly portraits at the more benign end of the spectrum. Furthermore, whether implicitly or explicitly, the pedagogical message in these latter portraits still have important resonances for contemporary teachers, not least for those for whom effective teaching of literacy is a primary concern.

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The second presenter from the College was Donna Hazzard (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) in collaboration with colleagues from other HEIs in Ireland. The paper, titled **Dyslexia in Ireland: A Review of Current Provision of Support Since the Publication of the Task Force Reports, North and South**, stemmed from a SCoTENS funded project. The presentation described a collaborative research project aimed to determine if the needs of students with dyslexia were being met in primary and post-primary schools in the North and South of Ireland, since the publication of the Task Forces on Dyslexia. The objectives of the research project were to consult with original members of the Dyslexia Task Force groups and ascertain their views and perspectives on the provision of support for pupils with dyslexia, twelve years on. In addition, the project aimed to consult with key stakeholders in the area of dyslexia. The research report was timely given the renewed focus on literacy practices, literacy attainment, and also the development of effective models of professional development in both jurisdictions.

The third presentation was from Teresa Cash and Catherine Gilliland (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) whose paper, titled **Exploring the Role of Historical Fiction through Engagement with Active Approaches to Comprehension**, took the form of a workshop involving many delegates. In summarising their presentation Teresa and Catherine referred to History being the study of change over time. They suggested that the beautiful world of historical fiction brings History to life by placing appealing characters into accurate historical settings. They referred to Marita Conlon McKenna's literature which has adorned bookshelves across Ireland's schools for many years and has invited children into the world of 'The Great Hunger' in their own country. They also referenced Michael Morpurgo and John Boyne who have written prolifically regarding the historical period of World War Two with their engaging story lines which have immersed children into historical facts perfectly mixed with imaginative and figurative narrative. Teresa and Catherine argued that as children develop from tots to teens they can become addicted to the wealth of literature that will tell them about the world in which they live, both past and present. They believe that exposure to high quality historical literature will encourage the addiction process and ensure this aim is achieved. The workshop revolved around awareness raising of key historical children's literature and how to fully exploit its potential for the development of children's knowledge, skills, vocabulary and empathy.



TEACHER EDUCATION SEMINAR SERIES

Dr Sean Mac Corraidh

Literary Translation from English to
Irish: Seosamh Mac Grianna's
Translations Revisited.

Dr Eibhlin Mhic Aoidh

A Study of the Educational
Outcomes of Pre-school Irish-
medium Education.

Dr Dessie O Reilly

Lost Villages of Belfast.

Dr Brian Hanratty

Imagining Education: Selected
Representations of Teachers and
Teaching in Twentieth-Century Irish
Fiction and Memoir.

Ms Lesley Emerson

Conflict and Curriculum: Findings
from an Evaluation of the 'From
Prison to Peace' Educational
Programme.

Mr Séamas Ó Donnghaile

The Importance of P.H. Pearse for
Irish-medium Education in the 21st
Century: Leaders' Perspectives.

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BERA 2015 CONFERENCE GETS RHYME, RHYTHM & REPETITION

Catherine Gilliland (Centre for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment) attended the British Educational Research Association's annual conference in September 2015, held at the Queen's University Belfast (QUB). Organisers were particularly interested in sessions that created more opportunity for audience participation and Catherine's involved the use of storytelling, puppetry and the exploration of the rhyme family. It was of particular interest to those working in the area of language and literacy development in teacher education. Catherine's presentation, titled **Rhyme, Rhythm and Repetition Make the Wheels of the Language Bus Go Round and Round!!!!**, suggested that picture books that are rich in rhyme, rhythm and repetition are the natural food for the reading brain. Catherine proposed that the frequency of rhyme, rhythm and repetition within an outstanding storyline is a true reading experience for children and ensures they enjoy the social activity and simultaneously develop reading-like behaviours and essential reading skills. By using short stories to develop vocabulary, Catherine believes that teachers have the benefit of developing vocabulary through context. She sees this as offering opportunities to revisit the words learned and also to understand and use them in real life communication which guarantees the required retention. Catherine went on to say that there are also numerous literacy benefits of repeated readings and clapping of rhymes, games and associated actions. The importance of training and retraining teachers to appreciate the value in daily immersion with rhyme, rhythm and repetition as best case literacy provision is paramount. Making this teaching as visual as possible, Catherine argued, will ensure the five pillars of reading instruction are being met simultaneously within a real book environment.

STAFF PROFILE



Dr Matthew Martin's research focuses on three areas: teacher professional development, blended and independent learning, and writing pedagogy. His work on Research Lesson Study (RLS) involved collaboration with QUB and the GTCNI during which the practice of RLS was piloted in thirty schools across Northern Ireland. Matthew was also commissioned by the NSPCC to devise a toolkit on RLS in support of their new 'Keeping Safe' programme for schools. He has delivered

presentations at conferences and professional development events on RLS and has been involved in organising both the Belfast TeachMeet and Student Teacher TeachMeet held in 2015 at the College. **What are TeachMeets?** is his account of the grass-roots TeachMeet phenomenon included in the book **Personalized PD: Flipping Your Professional Development**.

Matthew's case study, **Flipping the Classroom: On the Road to Independent, Critical Reading in First Year English**, appeared in the HEA **Compendium of Effective Practice in Directed Independent Learning** in 2015. He has spoken at conferences on blended learning and on engaging students in research-based, independent learning projects. In 2014, he produced an online video for the Regional Support Centre under the title **The Blended Learning Toolkit in Action**.

Matthew's work in helping to set up writing centres and academic writing programmes has led him to organise a panel discussion on **Adapting Writing Centre Models for Diverse School Environments** for the UKLA conference to be held in April 2016 at the College. He has also delivered keynote addresses on student writing for the European Writing Centre Association and for the annual Dublin Institute of Technology conference on postgraduate student writing.