

Research Newsletter



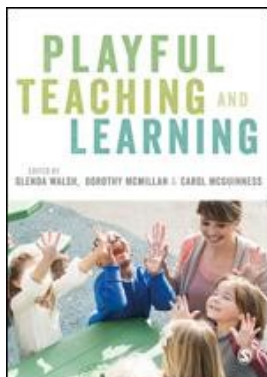
St Mary's
University College
Belfast
A College of Queen's University

LITERACY ADDICTION THROUGH PLAY

A new book, titled **Playful Teaching And Learning**, was published by SAGE Publications Ltd in March 2017 and it featured a chapter written by Catherine Gilliland. The book provided an innovative and creative approach on how play in learning and teaching can become a reality in early years classrooms in an effort to meet the needs of all 3 to 8 year old children. It was comprised of three main strands: principles of playful teaching and learning; the role of the playful professional; and playful teaching and learning across the curriculum, under which Catherine's particular chapter was placed. Professor E. Wood, in her foreword

for the book, referred to each of the chapters being informed by international research and offering contrasting perspectives about different forms of play including the challenges that practitioners face in their practice.

Catherine's chapter, titled **Playful Approaches To Literacy**, focused on the playful approaches that teachers can use to help children become not only literate but addicted to literacy, and she addressed three interconnecting themes. Firstly, with rich storytelling being at the epicentre of all effective learning environments, Catherine explored this skill in relation to picture books and the ancient craft of oral storytelling within a localised context. Secondly, with close connections in the brain between the processes of music and language, Catherine showed that children can benefit by being immersed in rhyme, rhythm and repetition to stimulate and enrich their literacy development. The chapter illustrated ways in which practitioners can help children's bodies come together as a self-conducting orchestra by referring to a case study set in a nursery environment. Thirdly, Catherine delved into the world of puppetry and the magical ability of puppets to ignite language, creativity and a motivation to learn.



Catherine Gilliland, along with other contributors, attending the book's launch



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CONFERENCE PROMOTES THE VISUAL ARTS IN EDUCATION

Mary Flanagan worked in partnership with the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD) to organise a conference, titled **Defining The Future Of Art And Design Education**, which took place in the College during April 2017. Mary welcomed the large number of delegates to Belfast within the surroundings of the work of art students from the College, as well as that of associate lecturer and former artist in residence, Joanne Porter.

The first keynote speaker was Dr Peter Gregory from Canterbury Christ Church University who enquired about educators' roles in defining the future of art and design education. He further reminded delegates of their need to consider how, as art educators, they affect and inspire the lives and futures of pupils. Dr Gregory considered the different meanings of curriculum and the power of the art and design teacher in opening or closing possibilities, removing barriers, articulating values as well as challenging and inspiring. This was followed by parallel sessions on a successful whole school development programme, and science/art interdisciplinary teaching and learning at the post-primary level.

A second keynote speaker was Professor Gary Granville from Dublin College of Art and Design who considered the tripartite links between art, art education and education, urging a positive, not defensive, response to

the challenges faced by the subject. Professor Granville focused on the subject's unique ability to look beyond what we can see, what artists do, what they are about, and how that is understood. This was followed by sessions highlighting creative industries focused on virtual reality drawing, projects to engage children in the arts, and creative book making.

Delegates then had an opportunity to discuss the role of NSEAD in Northern Ireland before listening to the final presenter who specialised in ceramics. The conference inspired delegates to return to their classrooms, studios, galleries, offices and lecture theatres more ready and reinvigorated to champion the subject, to be agents of change and to value and promote the visual arts in education.



Mary Flanagan welcoming delegates

"The conference inspired delegates to return to their classrooms, studios, galleries, offices and lecture theatres more ready and reinvigorated to champion the subject ..."

PEDAGOGICAL MESSAGES TO BE FOUND IN PORTRAITS OF TEACHERS

An international conference, **New Perspectives In English And American Studies**, was organised by the Institute of English Studies at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków. It took place in April 2017 and provided an opportunity to bring together researchers working in various fields of English and American literature and culture. One of those researchers was Dr Brian Hanratty, who presented his paper titled **Imagining Education: Selected Representations Of Teachers And Teaching In Twentieth Century Irish Fiction And Memoir**.

Brian's paper 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 memoir. Secondly, it evaluated the models of pedagogy that are embedded in these portraits. The range of works selected for evaluation in the conference paper was quite broad, though, given the authoritarian structure of education in Ireland for much of the twentieth century and given, also, the counter-cultural instincts of most writers, and the tradition, therefore, in this regard of what Augustine Martin dubbed 'inherited dissent', many of the portraits were quite dark. However, there were also quite a few sympathetic and friendly portraits at the more benign end of the spectrum selected for the research paper. Furthermore, whether implicitly or explicitly, Brian believed that the pedagogical messages in these latter portraits still have important resonances for contemporary teachers, from primary school through to university level.



STUDENTS PRESENT RESEARCH ON CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

The annual student teacher conference, titled **New Approaches To Professional Learning In Initial Teacher Education**, took place during May 2017 in the College where final year students of initial teacher education presented their research projects on various education issues to their peers. They were joined by academic staff from Stranmillis University College and representatives from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) as well as the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), which kindly sponsored the conference.

Conference organisers in the College, including Martin Hagan and various academic and support staff, worked in association with members of academic staff from the University of Glasgow, which sent an additional fifteen students of initial teacher education to present their research work. Maggie Jago from the University of Glasgow opened the conference with a keynote speech that focused on the importance of reflective practice for teachers' professional learning. More than fifty students presented the findings of their research during the conference, which included a wide range of topics and issues pertinent to contemporary educational practice.

Seamus Hannah from the INTO presented the conference prize, which was awarded to two students. The first was Noel Bradley-Johnston for his research project titled ***LGBT Young People In Primary Education In Northern Ireland And The Experiences Of Teachers Towards Exploring LGBT Issues In The Classroom***. The second was Eimear Dynes, whose research was titled ***The Extent To Which Music Can Enhance Language Development And Engagement Of Newcomer Children Within The Early Years***.



Representatives from the INTO with the two Capstone Project prize winners

RESEARCH ON STUDENTS' SCHOOL EXPERIENCE IN ENGLAND

The annual Teacher Education Advancement Network (TEAN) conference was held in England in May 2017 and it focused on the theme of **Thinking Deeply About Teacher Education**. The conference facilitated paper presentations from delegates across the United Kingdom and beyond, with one of the papers co-written by Martin Hagan and Deirdre Cree. Their paper, ***'What's It Like To Teach In England?': Perspectives From Northern Ireland***, presented the findings of a study involving a group of twenty student teachers from Northern Ireland who undertook a two-week placement in schools in England during the final year of a four-year Bachelor of Education programme. Through an analysis of the students' interpretations of their experience, the paper aimed to provide some insight into a range of issues that may have an impact upon teacher recruitment, early-career satisfaction and teacher attrition in the English context.

The paper began by contrasting the different contexts for initial teacher education in England and Northern Ireland and explored issues around teacher status, motivation to teach, retention and partnership with schools. It then went on to outline the origin and development of the school-placement project and referred to the methodology underpinning the study, which involved interviews, a focus group and reflective accounts. Research data were analysed under three themes - motivations for participation, professional learning and issues around attrition.

Research findings indicated that the school principals were motivated to engage in the placement project to address their own issues around teacher recruitment. From the students' perspective, they wanted to explore teaching in a different context, enhance their Curriculum Vitae and possibly secure employment for the following academic year. All the students reported that they had gained significantly in terms of broadening their professional learning and understanding. Their reflective accounts provided insight into the contrasts between the Northern Ireland and English contexts in relation to curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, expectations, continuing professional development and the bureaucratic burden. Most significantly, the students interpreted the key issues of attrition as being: approaches to and the focus on assessment; the structure and organisation of the curriculum; a focus on standards, processes and outcomes at the expense of the pupils; and the bureaucratic burden on teachers.



PROVIDING A LITERACY ‘VACCINE’ FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

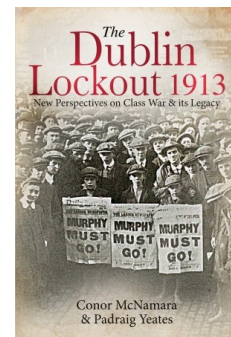
The Literacy Association of Ireland produced its own publication in May 2017, titled **Literacy News**, and it featured an article from Catherine Gilliland in which she considered what literacy ‘vaccine’ needs to be administered in classrooms to ensure potential is achieved. The article written by Catherine was titled **A Child Of Books** and in it she refers to a book by Judith Kerr, who Catherine felt was one of the people who really adds extra strength to the vaccine. Catherine argued that the potential of this text for language development was infinite and in her article she outlined a session she witnessed, where a practitioner wears her speech and language therapist hat to make the book into a five course gourmet language experience.



“... in which she considered what literacy ‘vaccine’ needs to be administered in classrooms to ensure potential is achieved.”

THE BELFAST VIEW OF THE DUBLIN LOCKOUT 1913

The Irish Academic Press published a book in July 2017 titled **The Dublin Lockout, 1913: New Perspectives On Class War & Its Legacy** edited by Conor McNamara and Padraig Yeates. One of the chapters was written by Dr Peter Collins, titled **A Tale Of Two Cities: The 1913 Lockout, The View From Belfast**, and it appeared towards the beginning of the book. In this collection, an exemplary list of contributors have registered the radical momentum within Dublin in 1913, its effects internationally, and its paramount example in shaping political activism within Ireland to this day. The book illuminated the pivotal class war in Irish history: inspiring, shocking, and the nearest thing Ireland had to a debate on the type of society that was wanted by its citizens.



SCHOLARLY LECTURES ON EDUCATORS’ ROLE IN ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS

Dr Gerard McCann was awarded research funding in May 2017, from the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS), in partnership with Rowan Oberman from Dublin City University for a project titled **Where To Now? Human Rights Education On This Island, These Islands And Beyond**. The project will involve an academic series of lectures for teacher educators to consider education’s role in promoting human rights.

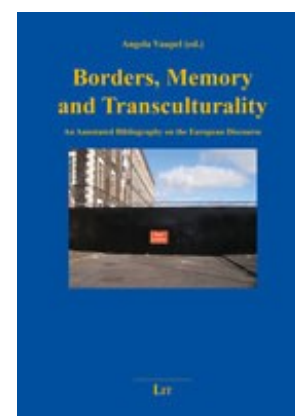
This series of research-informed lectures will take place during the 2017-2018 academic year and will explore the role of teachers and teacher educators in advancing human rights. Building upon the recognised position of human rights within the education systems North and South, the scholarly series will consider how human rights education can play a role in strengthening human rights frameworks and contributing towards meeting myriad local, national and global challenges. Insights related to the following three questions will be offered: What role can human rights education take in facing the challenges faced by communities in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland? What role can human rights education play in tackling inequality and discrimination and strengthening the pursuit of a just and equitable peace across the island of Ireland, and throughout these islands? What role can human rights education play in tackling the escalating global issues with which we are now faced?



RESEARCH LITERATURE ON BORDER STUDIES, MEMORY STUDIES AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Dr Angela Vaupel edited a new book titled **Borders, Memory and Transculturality: An Annotated Bibliography On The European Discourse**, which was published in July 2017 by LIT Verlag. The book provided a guide for grappling with border issues and offered an account of the research discourse on the interdisciplinary disciplines of border studies, memory studies and teacher education. The reviews contained in the book connected a variety of approaches such as education for diversity and inclusion; borders, memories and their representation in the media; as well as museum studies and pedagogy. It presented a wealth of information and material that referred to major socio-historical events that shaped European regions and dominated public debate.

The book also featured a chapter by Angela titled **Border, Memory And Education – Rationale**, which presented the rationale for the book, along with an outline of its contents. Angela co-wrote another chapter with Dr Tracey McKay titled **A Literature Review On The Concepts Of Borders And Memory With Particular Regards To UK And Irish Discourses**, which reviewed relevant academic literature that has significance to the disciplines of border and memory studies, as well as their educational aspects. The focus of the review of scholarly studies in this chapter took in the context of Northern Ireland in addition to evaluations of foundational texts of the key disciplines.



RESEARCH ON THE BREAKDOWN OF THE PRINCIPLE OF COMMON PURPOSE IN EUROPE

Dr Gerard McCann gave the opening keynote at an international conference titled **Across Borders: Cultures In Dialogue**, which was held in Estonia in April 2017. This was the seventh conference in the series that deals with aspects of culture, language and literature. The organisers felt the need to call for a debate, in an interdisciplinary context, on intercultural encounters accompanying the movement of individuals and groups. The conference aimed to investigate aspects of



Dr Gerard McCann with conference delegates

culture, language and literature in the context of a world made more mobile than ever before. Therefore, they invited researchers to a discussion on the broad subject of cultural neighbourhood including, for example, minority cultures and literature, migration and narration, communication styles, pragmatics of intercultural communication, humour and irony in cultural context, global learning, innovation in education, as well as contemporary culture and media.

Gerard's paper, titled **'Post-Truth Society' And The Case For Reconstituting Europe**, addressed the breakdown, in many regions of Europe, of the principle of common purpose and analysed the context within which this has occurred. Gerard concluded his paper by speculating on the need to reengage with the founding ideals of the European integration process.

ACADEMIC ASKS CONFERENCE DELEGATES, "WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HUMAN RIGHTS?"

Dr Birgit Schippers attended two research conferences in April 2017 to present her research. The first, under the theme **Critical Theory In The Humanities: Resonances Of The Work Of Judith Butler**, was organised by the interdisciplinary Research Institute for the Humanities CLUE+ at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Birgit's paper was titled **What's The Matter With Human Rights? Reading Judith Butler With And Against New Materialism**. The second research conference was the Political Studies Association's annual international conference, which took place at the University of Strathclyde. The theme of this conference was **Politics In Interesting Times** and it featured a panel organised by Birgit to include herself, Professor Moya Lloyd from Loughborough University and Dr Noirin MacNamara from Queen's University Belfast. Birgit's paper was titled **What's The Matter With Human Rights? Vulnerable Bodies And The Politics Of New Materialism**. For both papers, Birgit drew on Judith Butler's work, specifically her work on ethics and on the body, with the aim of harnessing it in the service of a materialist theory of human rights. Birgit has recently been appointed as a Visiting Research Fellow at the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice at the Queen's University Belfast for one year from September 2017 to August 2018.

PAPER ON HOW WAR IMPACTED ON THE NORTH OF IRELAND'S WORKING CLASS

Following on from a research-related event organised by the Local History Federations of Ireland in 2016, Dr Peter Collins had his paper selected for the publication stemming from this research seminar, which was published in March 2017. The publication, titled **Years Of Endurance: Personalities And Events And Their Impact On Irish Family Life 1912-1922**, contained papers by well-known historians on the radicalisation of women in both the North and South of Ireland and on how the war impacted on the working classes in the period. The organisers and publisher believed these papers could help stimulate a questioning attitude towards traditional interpretations of the events and personalities of the decade of revolutionary change 1913–1923, as well as a recognition that there is much more to be investigated on the often distinctive impacts at local and regional levels. Peter's chapter was titled **The Impact Of War And Its Immediate Aftermath On The Working Class In The North Of Ireland**.

YEARS OF ENDURANCE PERSONALITIES AND EVENTS, AND THEIR IMPACT ON IRISH FAMILY LIFE, 1912 – 1922



“... these papers could help stimulate a questioning attitude towards traditional interpretations of the events and personalities of the decade of revolutionary change 1913–1923 ...”

MIGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION HIGHLIGHTED IN JOURNAL ARTICLE

Issue 24 of the Centre for Global Education's peer reviewed development education journal, titled **Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review**, was published in March 2017 and the first article in the journal was written by Dr Gerard McCann. The title of Gerard's article, **Migration And Public Policy In A Fragmenting European Union**, reflected the theme of this particular issue, which was development education perspectives on migration.

The article assessed the manner in which the principle of free movement within the European Union (EU), with particular reference to vulnerable people, has been re-construed since mid-2015 and the Mediterranean migrant crisis. It also suggested a role for public policy, including education, which would positively engage with the migrant experience.

It looked at the migrant support framework as it has adapted to current geo-political changes and reflected on how the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers has been dealt with through diverging policy interpretations and racial stereotyping.

It also reviewed the changing system and policy architecture for the free movement of people with reference to the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, the Stockholm Programme, the Dublin Protocol, the New York Declaration and the controversial March 2016 EU-Turkey action plan. Finally, the article reflected on the manner in which public policy within the EU needs to react to shifting mentalities regarding the recent flow of people, by suggesting how the sensitive topic of forced migration, as well as the integration of the families and individuals who are subjected to this imposition, can be appropriately addressed through policy and institutional realignment.



RESEARCH CONFERENCE WITH A FOCUS ON LEARNING IN IRISH-MEDIUM SCHOOLS

Researchers from all over Ireland gathered in the College in May 2017 to attend a research conference organised by Denise McKee and her colleagues from the Irish-medium Research Centre. The theme of the conference was about **Leading Learning In Irish-Medium Schools**.

The conference included presentations of research findings by academic staff from seven universities in Ireland, including Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir, Dr Eibhlín Mhic Aoidh and Dr Seán Mac Corraidh. The keynote speaker was Dr Pádraig Ó Mianáin and during his address he challenged the audience to consider the role of Irish-medium education in relation to promoting the Irish language, as well as extending access to the richness of the language and to the centrality of the relationship with the language community. During the conference, pupils from St Francis' Primary School in Lurgan captivated the delegates with their performance of a play that they wrote, based on the novel 'Matilda' by Roald Dahl. Students from the College added to the atmosphere of culture and entertainment with their performance of traditional Irish compositions.

At the close of the research workshops and during the final part of the day's programme, the first ever 'Teach-Meet' for the Irish-medium sector was organised. Fifteen teachers shared examples of innovative practice in their classrooms with the audience of peers from Irish-medium schools and College students. During the 'Teach-Meet', the atmosphere was lively and stimulating, and professional presentations were interspersed with group singing, lively debate and awarding prizes.



Conference Organisers and Student Ambassadors, along with Professor Peter Finn (College Principal) and Liam Ó Flannagáin (Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta)

RESEARCH ON TRANSITION FROM IRISH-MEDIUM PRE-SCHOOL TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

An international conference on **Multilingualism In The Early Years** was held in the Dublin Institute of Technology in May 2017. The conference aimed to stimulate cross-disciplinary engagement and debate on multiple aspects of early years multilingualism and therefore provided an excellent opportunity for Dr Eibhlín Mhic Aoidh to present her research paper titled **Educational Outcomes Of Irish-Medium Pre-School Education In The North Of Ireland**.

In her paper, Eibhlín drew upon the research she collaborated on for the Department of Education in Northern Ireland. It explored the core components that lead to optimum readiness for transition to Irish-medium primary school and the extent to which these components are present in Irish-medium pre-schools in the statutory and voluntary sector in the North of Ireland. The research included an examination of the learning outcomes, set or expected, for Irish-medium pre-schools, the criteria used to establish outcomes and how they were assessed. Findings stemming from the research indicated that Irish-medium pre-school practice is different from monolingual English-medium practice in a number of significant ways including the immersion pedagogies employed to develop pupils' understanding and expression. The findings also showed that curricular guidance, assessment practices, transition arrangements and frameworks for evaluating quality in Irish-medium settings should all reflect the nature of immersion pre-school Irish-medium education experienced by pupils.



Multilingualism in
the Early Years
International Conference
Ilteangachas sna Luathbhlianta:
Comhdháil idirnáisiúnta



RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PRODUCES TOOLKIT

The STING – STEM Teacher Training Innovation for Gender Balance project took place between 2014 and 2017 and members of the project team, which included Joe Hughes, Dr Catherine Quinn, John Rafferty and Dr John Prenter, contributed to an online toolkit that was produced in June 2017. The title is the **STEM Teacher Training Innovation For Gender Balance Toolkit** and it is a teacher professional development programme, which provides teachers with tools to reflect on gender and the opportunity to change their practice to become more gender inclusive in their teaching of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects.

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HOW 'HEALTHY' IS SCIENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND CLASSROOMS?

The Association for Science Education's publication titled **Science Teacher Education** is for those concerned with the pre-service education, induction and professional development of science teachers. In May 2017, it featured an article by Dr Katrina Mulholland, Dr Catherine Quinn and Dr John Prenter titled **Science Education – A Northern Ireland Perspective**. For the article, the authors drew upon their level of experience that frames their perspective on current practices in initial and continuing teacher education. Although they provided a personal perspective, it was informed by government policy, curriculum initiatives and a critical evaluation of the 'health' of science in the classrooms of Northern Ireland.

Science Teacher Education

No 79 • May 2017



An ASE publication for all concerned with the pre-service education, induction and professional development of science teachers

STAFF PROFILE



Donna Hazzard has taught in St Mary's since 1999. She holds the post of principal lecturer, is Chair of the Masters-level programme team and the literacy course team. She is in her final year of doctoral study at the University of Glasgow. Her research draws on Bourdieu's conceptual tools as an analytical framework to explore the extent to which adopting a socially just literacy pedagogy that cultivates a critical perspective, might help student teachers understand the socially constructed nature of literacy.

Recent publications have included contributions to the 3rd (2014) and 4th (2018 pending) editions of **Learning To Teach In The Primary School**, edited by Professor T. Cremin from the Open University and Professor C. Burnett from Sheffield Hallam University. Donna was the Northern Ireland (NI) lead in a SCoTENS funded research project reporting on dyslexia in Ireland. The report was published in 2016 and findings disseminated at several conferences. Most recently, she produced a teaching resource for KS2-3 pupils titled, **Creating Young Newsreaders: The Irish News Critical Literacy Project** (2017). In January 2017, the resource was launched with a teacher conference on critical literacy, having had over 100 schools and over 4,000 pupils involved in the project in its first year.

Other research projects involving Donna include an art-literacy collaboration inspired by the Surrealist technique known as 'exquisite corpse'. Having conducted a pilot project on this topic in the 2016-17 academic year, Donna, Mary Flanagan and three colleagues from Dublin City University have decided to submit an application to SCoTENS in the 2017-18 academic year. In light of the current concern regarding media consumption and the proliferation of fake news, Donna has also agreed to write a series book on critical literacy for the United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA).

Donna has been the NI representative for the UKLA since 2005. She is the editor of the UKLA news and has planned and hosted eight regional literacy conferences in association with the UKLA since 2005. Recently, she has reviewed literacy articles for the Cambridge Journal of Education.