

Research Newsletter



St Mary's
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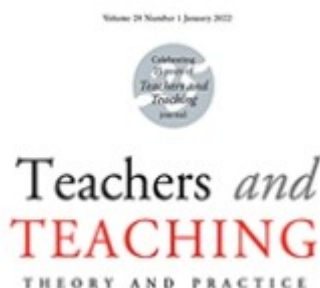
TEACHER PEDAGOGICAL WELLBEING AND SELF-CARE

Two senior lecturers in the College from the Physical Education department, Dr Elaine McLaughlin and Paddy Tally, teamed up with researchers from the University of Limerick to produce an article published in the academic journal, "Teachers & Teaching: Theory and Practice". It was published online during 2021 and is titled "The Being of a Teacher: Teacher Pedagogical Well-Being and Teacher Self-Care".

Their paper adopts a phenomenological-oriented approach to explore the perceptions of a small cohort of teachers about teacher pedagogical well-being, the experience of which is intimately connected with a teacher's sense of self-care. Existing Finnish research on this topic informs the design of semi-structured interviews across two schools.

The findings are analysed initially with reference to the existing research. It identifies management and collegial support, as well as student engagement, as cornerstones for teacher pedagogical well-being.

In order to extend the analysis beyond the existing research, the Foucaudian optic of governmentality is introduced, in particular, Stephen Ball's application of it for education. This highlights the extent to which the experience of teacher pedagogical well-being and teachers' sense of self-care can be impacted by the culture of performativity. Significantly, it also emerges that a teacher's capacity for self-definition and for reflexivity can offer a mantle of resistance for the being of a teacher, especially at a time when they are being subjected to governance by performativity.



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ARTICLE FEATURED IN DANISH JOURNAL

“Anglo Files: A Journal of English Teaching” featured an article by Professor Peter Finn, which was published in its third issue of the year during September 2021. One of the themes of its third issue was Sports and among the various articles, under this particular theme, was one written by Peter titled “Sport and National Identity: The Case of Ireland”.

Peter’s article refers to sport playing a major role in the nature and meaning of national identity throughout the world, and he pays particular attention to the cultural significance of the game of hurling in Ireland. He responds to the questions regarding how hurling has such an influence on the national identity of Ireland and how it achieves high levels of loyalty and cultural meaning from local to national teams.

This particular journal is published by the Danish Association of Teachers of English and it typically contains articles about different

themes, opinion pieces, book reviews and more. It is published four times a year, with researchers and teachers offering their views on the themes in question.



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RESEARCH FIELDWORK AT JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY

Academic staff in the College are supported in developing their research by conducting fieldwork in a specific environment and this was carried out by Dr Gerard McCann during December 2021.



Gerard grabbed an overdue opportunity to undertake research in the famous Berlin Archive of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. He was invited by the Dean of the Faculty of Philology, Professor Władysław Witalisz, to co-survey the extensive archives to highlight files important to Irish and British political and economy history. A long-standing Visiting Professor to the Jagiellonian, Gerard was given permission to trawl through documents by Daniel O’Connell and Roger Casement, among others, as well as to historically place letters from Benjamin Disraeli and William Gladstone. The files, numbering thousands of documents, were located in Kraków after the war and are only now being comprehensively surveyed for historic relevance. Academic staff within the Faculty of Philology are investigating the possibility of archive research funding to employ researchers to assist in a fuller inspection of this valuable record and to explore publishing opportunities emanating from the files.

JOINT RESEARCH PROJECT ON MASTER IN EDUCATION STUDY

A collaborative research project, titled “An Exploration of the Professional Learning of Teachers, Early Years Educators and Further Education Tutors through Master in Education Study in Ireland, North and South”, received funding recently from the International Professional Development Association (IPDA) in Ireland. The research that continues throughout 2022 involves Dr Martin Hagan and his colleague Dr Rose Dolan from Maynooth University, Kildare.

Their research seeks to provide answers to what the role of Master in Education (M.Ed.) study is, in relation to teacher professional learning in Ireland. The research objectives are to identify the profile of teachers engaging in M.Ed. study in Ireland North and South; to understand participants’ motivation for studying at master’s level; to explore the challenges experienced; to understand the extent to which M.Ed. study influences professional identity; and to understand the extent to which M.Ed. study influences their professional practice.

Teachers from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, who are currently undertaking or have recently graduated from Master-level study in the field of education, are participating in the research project. Data are gathered using a mixed methods approach in the form of an online survey and focus groups.



International Professional Development Association
Supporting professional learning since 1969

OFFERING N. IRELAND PERSPECTIVE ON CREATING CRITICAL CLASSROOMS

Based on the development of a significant resource related to the Critical Literacy Project and her corresponding research, Dr Donna Hazzard delivered a presentation at the launch of the United Kingdom Literacy Association’s Critical Literacy SIG during October 2021. This was one of its monthly forums, where leading academics and teachers share their research and teaching experiences, as well as engage in critical discussion. Donna’s presentation was titled “Critical Media Literacies and the Irish News”. This special interest group (SIG) provides a forum for the exploration of critical literacies in schools and universities, with a focus on how power works in and through communicative practices.

The group believes that fostering and developing children’s critical capacity are both vitally important at all ages, especially given current representations, constructions and challenges of truth both nationally and globally and the related challenges posed by the rise of fake news. Critical literacies are needed across educational systems and contexts to highlight and sustain the importance of challenge, critique and transformation through literacy learning and teaching. The group supports open conversations about the challenges as well as the many possibilities critical literacy can afford and aims to develop educators’ confidence to become transformative. The aim is to establish a network of critical literacy educators who share and discuss successes, problems and possibilities.

**Critical Literacy SIG
FORUMS**

Join our monthly forums where leading academics and teachers share their research and teaching experiences, as well as prompt critical discussions.

Session 1: Dr Donna Hazzard
Critical Media Literacies and the Irish News
Wed, 27 Oct 2021

Email nayan.govender@strath.ac.uk or jennifer.farrar@glasgow.ac.uk for the link!

UKLA
UK LITERACY ASSOCIATION

PRESENTATION AT EVENT ON CURRENT ISSUES AND AWARENESS OF DIGITAL HUMAN RIGHTS

A mixed format research event (face-to-face and online) featured a paper presented by Dr Birgit Schippers during September 2021. It was hosted by the Faculty of Law at the University of Coimbra, Portugal and Birgit's paper was titled "Algorithmic Inferences, Disinformation and Democratic Harms". Her research aimed to analyse the democratic harms generated by online disinformation practices and to examine the scope and limits of the legal regulation of online disinformation with respect to EU and Council of Europe rights frameworks. This research was conducted using a critical socio-legal methodological approach.

The theme of the event was on Current Issues and Awareness of Digital Human Rights, with academics having the opportunity to learn about current topics regarding digitization from legal experts and to share thoughts with each other. Throughout the event, current research contributions were presented and participants

were able to give feedback and ask in-depth questions. Legal scholars presented what had helped them in their own research and gave valuable tips on the stages leading up to publication. In addition to this, participants presented their own ongoing research projects and received advice and encouragement from international members of the network. During the event's conclusion, digital human rights were presented from a practical and professional perspective.

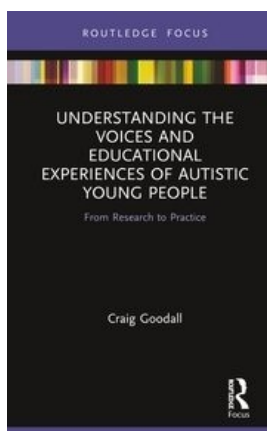


“... aimed to analyse the democratic harms generated by online disinformation practices.”

CONFERENCE PAPER ON MAINSTREAM INCLUSION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR AUTISTIC YOUNG PEOPLE

Dr Craig Goodall, who is an Associate Lecturer, presented a research paper at the Inclusive and Supportive Education Conference held at the end of the summer in 2021 and hosted online by the UCL Centre for Inclusive Education in collaboration with the National Association for Special Educational Needs.

Craig's paper was based on his recently published book, "Understanding the Voices and Educational Experiences of Autistic Young People: From Research to Practice", and was titled "Does Mainstream Inclusion Guarantee Social Justice for Autistic Young People?" It reported on the narratives of twelve autistic young people, who experienced multiple mainstream school placements, and their suggestions on how to improve educational experiences and outcomes. Based on a participatory rights-based approach, and on semi-structured interviews, autistic young people informed the researchers that mainstream education was a place they came to dread. They experienced inflexible teaching approaches, bullying, confusion and fear, along with overwhelming social and sensory overload, which exacerbated their feelings of exclusion and otherness. Asides from practical strategies within the classroom, smaller class sizes, and safe spaces to de-stress, the young people told the researchers that they want to be understood, supported, valued, respected and included.

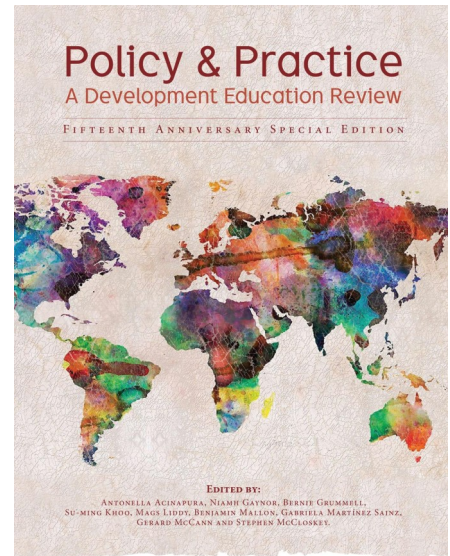


EDITOR AND CONTRIBUTOR TO SPECIAL EDITION PUBLICATION

Dr Gerard McCann was among a group of editors who helped to produce a special edition of a publication towards the end of 2021 titled “Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review”, which celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the online journal published by the Centre for Global Education. The journal offers articles on new research initiatives, methodologies and good practice, therefore providing opportunities for critical discussion by those associated with development education. It is available online, having an open-access capacity, and is an important resource for students, academic staff and researchers from a range of educational outlets. The anniversary edition highlights the incredible scope and quality of research-based articles available.

As well as being one of the editors, Gerard also contributed two pieces for this special edition. The first, titled “The Policy Environment for Development Education”, introduces a section containing three articles. In his piece, Gerard refers to how development education has been an influence on global awareness and social change. He also introduces the articles that relate to the unrealisability of the SDGs as they currently stand, the decoupling of international development from foreign trade and economic interests, and the evaluation and management of development education practice.

The second, titled “Migration and Public Policy in a Fragmenting European Union”, assesses the manner in which the principle of free movement within the EU, with particular reference to vulnerable people, has been re-construed since mid-2015 and the Mediterranean migrant crisis. It also suggests a role for public policy, including education, to positively engage with the migrant experience. It looks at the migrant support framework as it has adapted to current geo-political changes and reflects on how the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers has been dealt with through diverging policy interpretations and racial stereotyping. It reviews 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. The article reflects also on the manner in which public policy within the EU needs to react to shifting mentalities regarding the recent flow of people, and suggests how the sensitive topic of forced migration, and the integration of the families and individuals who are subjected to this imposition, can be appropriately addressed through policy and institutional realignment.



RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

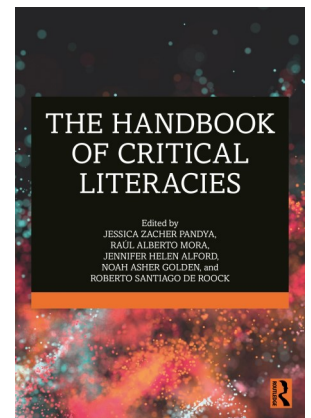
The College’s Research Seminar Series facilitates the dissemination of academic research, through presentation and feedback. Between October and December 2021, there were three research seminars, details of which are outlined below:

- ♦ Dr Birgit Schippers - “Faking It: Online Disinformation, Democratic Harms, and the Right to Freedom of Expression”.
- ♦ Dr Denise McKee - “Northern Irish Gaelgeoirí: An Investigation of Irish Speakers’ Identification with the Irish Language”.
- ♦ Dr Seán Mac Corraidh - “Aspects of Gaelic Literature Down Through the Ages”.

PICTURE OF CRITICAL LITERACIES WORK ACROSS THE UK

A new book, titled “The Handbook of Critical Literacies” and published by Routledge in September 2021, features a chapter by Dr Donna Hazzard, who co-authored it with Jennifer Farrar and Kelly Stone. Their chapter, “Critical Literacies Work in the United Kingdom”, provides an account of critical literacy, in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England, on which very little research has been explicitly conducted across the UK. The authors review scholastic educational policy and examine how it directs educators and learners to the idea of being critically literate in schools and beyond. This is something particularly close to the work of the authors who teach and research within the field of initial teacher education to equip students with the knowledge and practice of using critical literacies to teach in the future. The chapter provides an overview of the education system for each constituent country within the UK,

considers the status of critical literacies work within each policy setting, and concludes with a vision for increased critical literacies work across national and international borders. The authors recognise their social responsibilities as academics, which lie in supporting future teachers as they develop critically literate attitudes. They argue that this will require new paradigms of thinking about teacher education that not only meet the needs of students in relation to learning how to teach, but also provide experiences that are purposeful, emancipatory, and move beyond superficial approaches to literacy pedagogies.



“... authors review scholastic educational policy and examine how it directs educators and learners to the idea of being critically literate in schools and beyond.”

LECTURER AMONG INTERNATIONAL EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS TO A BOOK

The “Handbook of Business and Public Policy”, published by Edward Elgar Publishing towards the end of 2021, features a chapter by Dr Gerard McCann. This book provides an analysis of the key issues, accomplishments and challenges of research and practices related to the interactions between business and public policy. In it, international expert contributors explore how the organisational structures of government and business have changed as the world has become more globalised, and as researchers have accumulated insights into why and how public policy is influenced by, and in turn influences, business.



Gerard’s chapter, titled “Migration Policy”, looks at the link between economic adaptation, policies and the adaptability of labour in order to gain an appreciation of the role of migration in the process of socio-economic integration and development. It seeks to get an understanding of why countries need the movement of people to stimulate business growth and economic stability and surveys various aspects of the migration policy architecture. It looks also at the whole issue of the treatment and rights of people who move from their own country of origin to seek opportunity or refuge in other countries and questions xenophobia as a policy driver. In conclusion, the chapter argues the case for managed integration, while flagging up the need for humane policy frameworks cognizant of migration for sustainable economic development.

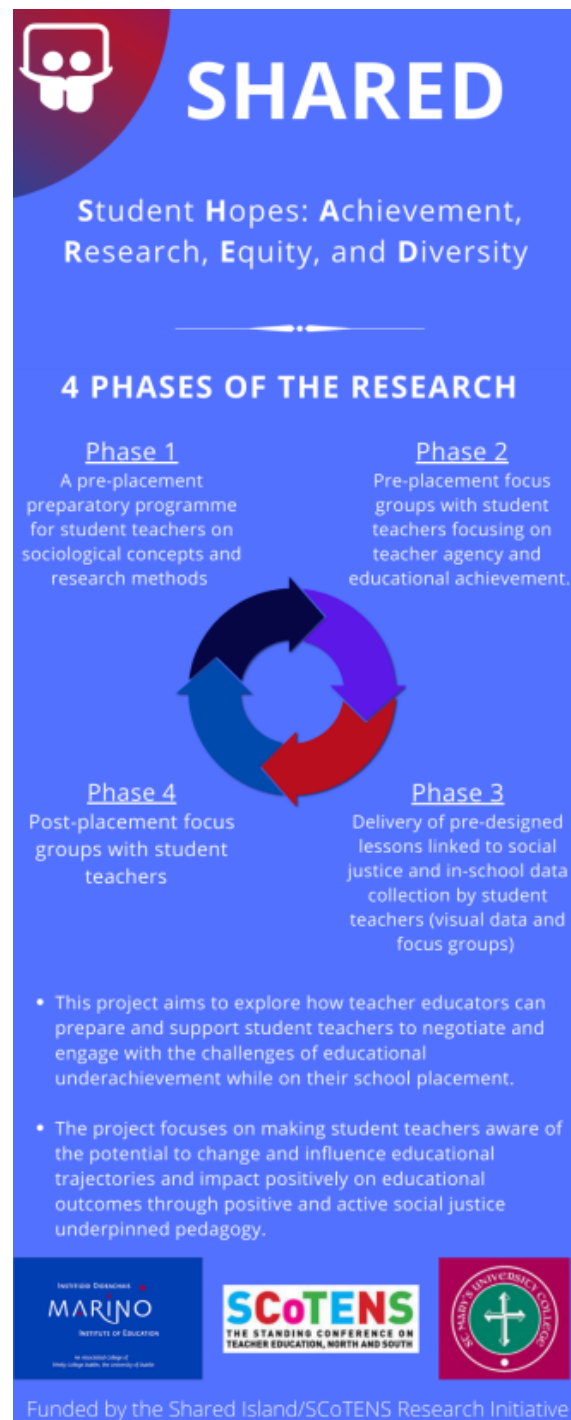
RESEARCH PROJECT ON STUDENT TEACHERS DEALING WITH CHALLENGES OF EDUCATIONAL UNDERACHIEVEMENT

The College is collaborating with Marino Institute of Education, Dublin on a research project that received funding from SCoTENS during December 2021 as part of the Shared Island Initiative. The project involves Julie Hamilton from the College, who is working with Dr Melanie Ní Dhuinn and Dr Julie Uí Choistealbha, and the title is “SHARED (Student Hopes: Achievement, Research, Equity and Diversity)”. The project was formally launched by Norma Foley (TD) Minister of Education at the Department of Education, Ireland, who offered congratulations to the research partnership.

This project aims to explore how teacher educators, North and South, can prepare and support student teachers to negotiate and engage with challenges of educational underachievement while on school placement. This is to make them aware of the potential to change and influence educational trajectories and to impact positively on educational outcomes through positive and active social justice that is underpinned by pedagogy.

The research is two-fold, utilising an action-research approach that explores the student teachers’ understanding of teacher agency, educational engagement, achievement and attainment. It also explores how agency can impact on levels of achievement and attainment. Within this strand of the research, student teachers are the participants who are guided by the research team. Within the second strand of the research, the student teachers act as researchers themselves who conduct research to explore the concepts within their practice, with their pupils being the participants.

It is anticipated that there will be multiple benefits for teacher educators, including how the findings may inform how student teachers are prepared for placement, focusing on making connections between the foundation elements of initial teacher education programmes and how this manifests itself in daily pedagogy and practice. In addition, it is hoped that the project will provide an example of how student teachers can be researchers of their own pedagogy and practice using age-appropriate methodologies that engage and enable pupils to articulate their views on various issues using a student voice approach. It is thought that the project will offer insights into the student teacher as a researcher, who uses observations, reflective diaries and research methodologies during placement, with the potential to integrate and bring to life elements of the foundations of education into practical teaching experiences.



REPORT ON TEACHER WELLBEING

Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir and Maria Stewart co-authored a report titled “Teacher Wellbeing: Report on a Review of the Literature”, which was launched in November 2021. It summarises research evidence pertaining to teacher wellbeing in a number of international contexts, identifying factors that positively and negatively contribute towards it and strategies that individually and collectively support it.

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TEACHING PROFESSION PROJECT

The College hosted a series of online seminars between November 2021 and February 2022, in relation to its recently launched Teaching Profession Project. The first seminar was titled “Teacher Wellbeing” and was led by Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir, along with fellow panelists Maria Stewart, Brenda Rankin-Sands and Geoffrey Cherry. The second was titled “Pedagogy in Irish-Medium Education” and involved Dr Seán Mac Corraidh, who was joined by colleagues Conall Ó Máirtín, Fionnuala Ní Mhealláin and Caitlín Ní Ruanaidh. The third of the series was titled “New Approaches to Teacher Professional Learning” and included Dr Martin Hagan, who spoke with John McCusker, Geri Cameron and Dominic Fryers.

STAFF PROFILE



Rev Dr Eddie McGee is a Senior Lecturer in the Religious Studies department and has been research active since the publication of his doctoral study in 2003, titled “The Sacrament of Baptism and Contemporary Trinitarian Perspectives”. Eddie has authored numerous articles, including “The Church and Salvation” in 2009, that was featured in volume 2 of “Theology for Today” and published by the Priory Institute.

He was also a contributor to the book “Ireland & Vatican II: Essays Theological, Pastoral and Educational”, published by Columba Press in 2015, which featured his chapter, titled “Towards a Fuller Participation in the Liturgy: Embracing the Mystery of God”.

Between 2014 and 2022, he has delivered conference presentations on a wide range of themes including “Science and Religion in the Classroom”, “Mission of the Churches in Northern Ireland”, “Ressourcement: Learning from the Church Fathers”, “Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church”, “St Columbanus: The Mission to Europe and Then and Now” and “Natural Law”. Eddie also presented at the College’s Research Seminar Series in 2016, focusing on “Voluntary Service Learning and the Reflective Practitioner”.

Since 2015, he has been the Director of the Catholic Schools’ Support Service in the Diocese of Down and Connor, where he has engaged with a broad range of educational agencies on Jointly Managed Church Schools and in the development of the RE Core Syllabus. As the director, he has co-ordinated and co-authored the “RSE Policy and Guidance for Primary and Post-Primary Schools”, published in 2021 and circulated to all schools across Northern Ireland.

Currently, Eddie is working on research examining the changing models of chaplaincy provision within post-primary schools across Northern Ireland. This research seeks to engage in a baseline audit of the effectiveness of current models of chaplaincy provision, examining the emergent needs and challenges faced in chaplaincy support today, with a view to informing future chaplaincy provision in Catholic post-primary schools across Northern Ireland.