

Research Newsletter

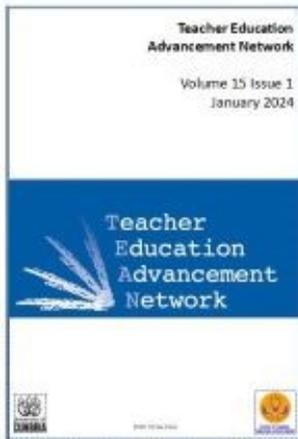


St Mary's
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PROJECT INVOLVING A LITERACY BOOK STUDY GROUP

A network of teacher educators from across Europe and beyond, known as the Teacher Education Advancement Network, is hosted by the University of Cumbria and it produces an academic journal specifically aimed at teacher educators, with the intention of advancing research and scholarly activity in teacher education. The issue that was published in January 2024 featured a research article by Dr Geraldine Magennis-Clarke, titled **“Investigating Teachers’ Professional Learning From Participation In A Literacy Book Study Group”**, and it examined a literacy book study group as a potentially useful vehicle for the delivery of teacher professional learning in a primary setting.

A small group of teachers, in conjunction with a university lecturer, participated in weekly workshop sessions centred around a chosen literacy-based text. The goal of this



project was to provide practitioners with a safe space in which to examine, reaffirm and extend their current knowledge base and classroom practices with the intention of engaging in ideas that may be unfamiliar or potentially daunting. At the core of its design was the desire to provide grassroots professional learning opportunities to recognise and honour the participants’ professional acumen and in turn, to build their confidence.

Data were gathered via the creation of voice files in response to a short post-project questionnaire. This was supplemented by the on-line discussion threads that took place during each weekly workshop session. Overall, the study was found to be affirming, while also bringing a sense of welcome camaraderie from across various schools. Encouragingly, it was found that the ideas explored were authentically applicable to the classroom, without the weight of extraneous paperwork or arduous study commitments.



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NEW PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER EDUCATION ACROSS THE UK

The annual conferences organised by the British Educational Research Association provide opportunities for educational researchers to present their research, connect with like-minded colleagues, investigate opportunities for potential collaborations, as well as learn about publishing and funding. Professor Martin Hagan took advantage of these opportunities during September 2023 at Aston University by becoming involved in a plenary session, along with R. Lofthouse, A. Beck, A.J. Davies and P. Jain, which was titled **“Challenging The Status Quo From Inside Teacher Education: A Chain Reaction Conversation Offering New Perspectives From Across The UK”**.

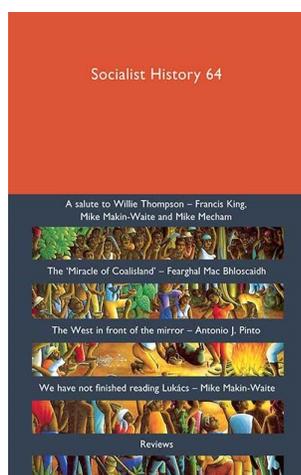
It took the form of a chaired chain reaction conversation with an invitation for reflective participation from the audience. The teacher educators in the plenary occupied a range of roles at universities in Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland, the policy contexts of which formed the backdrop. Each conversation in the plenary was a unique opportunity to explore how teacher educators themselves struggle with and challenge the status quo in their sector.



“...to present their research, connect with like-minded colleagues, investigate opportunities for potential collaborations...”

LOCAL HISTORICAL RESEARCH FEATURED IN ACADEMIC JOURNAL

Research conducted by Dr Fearghal Mac Bhloscaidh resulted in a journal article published in the autumn 2023 issue of Socialist History. Fearghal’s paper, titled **“The ‘Miracle Of Coalisland’: Class And Sectarianism In The Tyrone Coalfield, 1922-26”**, used the forgotten prospect of an industrial revolution in mid Ulster to examine the nature of the Unionist administration and deployed ‘history from below’ to examine and understand the tensions and contradictions at the intersection between class and sectarianism. The analysis centred on the ‘Coalisland Miracle’, when Unionist insider, Sir Samuel Kelly, purchased a coal mine and other local businesses in East Tyrone during the consolidation of James Craig’s Protestant Parliament. Ultimately, Unionist dreams of a new industrial revolution resembled fevered delusions as the new polity endured precarious finances and interminable economic decline.



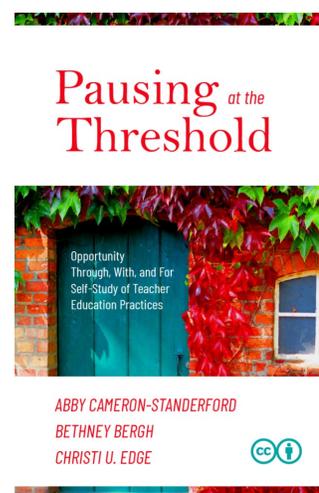
The paper also analysed how complex issues of class and sectarianism played out on the ground when Ulster’s leading capitalist confronted a majority nationalist workforce in an area whose constitutional future appeared to hang in the balance, demonstrating how workers struggled to secure their meagre slice of the pie, while employers, managers and the state strove to defeat organised labour. An analysis of four labour disputes linked to Kelly’s scheme revealed how sectarianism worked in employment practices, a subject much talked about but seldom supported by hard evidence. The paper concluded by examining an extraordinary lockout at the Tyrone Colliery itself and a subsequent and unprecedented display of working-class solidarity in 1926, when Protestant and Catholic workers united after the much heralded Coalisland miracle turned out to be little more than pie in the sky.

RESEARCH ON INTEGRATED ARTS IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN NEW BOOK

An international conference organised by a special interest group called the Self-Study Of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) featured a series of research papers, which were published during the autumn of 2023 in an accompanying book titled *Pausing At The Threshold: Opportunity Through, With, And For Self-Study Of Teacher Education Practices*. One of the research papers that was co-authored by Dr Frances Burgess, in collaboration with M. Flannery and M. Nugent, and titled “**Examining The Value Of Integrated Arts In Teacher Education From A Collaborative Cross-Border Cross-Institutional S-STEP Perspective**”, appeared within section three of this illuminating publication.

In light of the increased focus on curriculum interdisciplinarity, Frances’s collaborative cross-border and cross-institutional research paper investigated and evaluated the opportunities of integrated arts (IA) (cross-curricular learning within the arts alone) in preservice teacher education. Specifically, this self-study in teacher education practices examined IA practice and programme components in two higher education institutes, in terms of illuminating the possibilities and pitfalls of these practices. Key methods entailed thematic analysis of transcribed online meetings and related course materials using Gibbs’s reflective cycle and Brookfield’s four lenses of critical reflection.

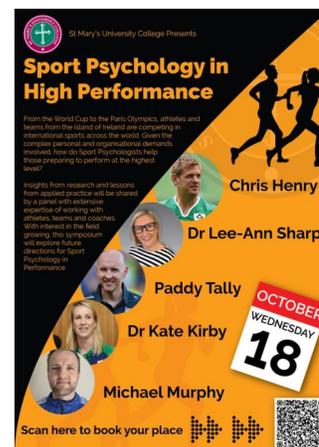
Findings culminated in four key themes from two self-study cases. Two emergent themes were concerned with the value of IA and the best methods. Another theme emerged that described and reconciled the conceptual, pedagogical and relational challenges encountered. A further impactful theme illuminated how IA lent itself to reflection on, and development of, one’s arts teacher education practice, permitting conceptual, theoretical and methodological reciprocity between the discrete arts disciplines. Subsequently, this yielded skills exchange and innovative co-planning opportunities that altered perspectives and practices for the betterment of students.



“...this self-study in teacher education practices examined IA practice and programme components...”

NETWORK AND ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH EVENT

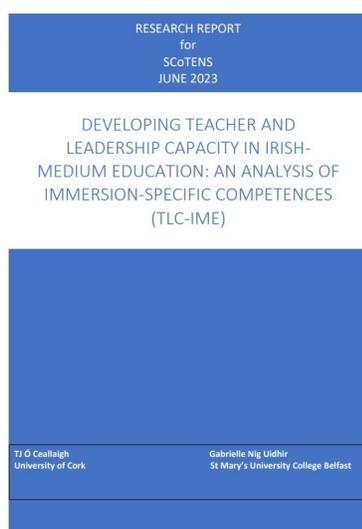
The College hosted a special symposium organised by Dr Ciarán Kearney in October 2023 that was titled “**Sport Psychology In High Performance**”. It involved a selection of expert panellists and like-minded delegates who came together to share their insights and practice. One of the questions discussed during the event related to how sport psychologists help those preparing to perform at the highest level. Research and lessons learned from working with athletes, teams and coaches were also explored in relation to the future of sport psychology. This symposium was a worthwhile contributor to the further development of Ciarán’s current research project.



REPORT ON IME TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES PUBLISHED BY SCOTENS

The Standing Conference On Teacher Education, North And South (SCoTENS) published a research report in September 2023 by Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir and T.J. Ó Ceallaigh. SCoTENS is a network of over thirty institutions with responsibility for and interest in teacher education and it facilitates teacher educators to work together on issues of common interest, which are rooted in the deepest commitment to quality teaching and learning for all. Their funded project, titled **“Developing Teacher And Leadership Capacity In Irish Medium Education: An Analysis Of Immersion Specific Competences”**, aimed to identify an ideal knowledge base of the distinctive professional competences that are considered essential to teachers in Irish Medium Education (IME) and to provide examples of these distinctive professional competences in practice.

Utilising an online questionnaire, a student teacher symposium, interviews and focus groups, data were collected from key stakeholders across the continuum of IME in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, e.g. student teachers, practicing teachers, principals, initial teacher education providers. Three broad themes emerged from data analysis, which included vision and values, teacher knowledge for immersion, as well as pedagogical skills and practices. A range of essential competences were set out under each theme in their report.



Findings from their research study have the potential to inform the design of an immersion-specific Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) framework in Ireland. Such a framework would enable IME teachers to engage in ongoing, in-depth, systematic and reflective examinations of their practice. The authors highlighted the fact that the core competences of the immersion teacher were not presented as a static, complete set of descriptors. Rather, they were integral to the reflective, evolving, generative identity of the IME teacher and should be revisited, reviewed and further developed, as appropriate. Progress towards that goal, the authors suggested, would depend significantly on a commitment by policymakers to anchor core immersion competences in qualification frameworks and to adopt TPL standards that guide the design, evaluation and funding of IME TPL initiatives, thus enabling IME teachers to manifest and develop these core immersion competences.

The project was also highlighted in two other ways, following the publication of the research report. The first was a research article, co-authored by Gabrielle and T.J. and based on the above research report, and it was featured in a special issue of the Irish Journal Of Education during December 2023. It was titled **“Unmasking Essential Irish-Medium Immersion-Specific Teacher Competences”**. The second was a presentation, again based on this research report, and it was titled **“Irish-Medium Teacher Competences: The Spectrum Of Change”**. It was delivered by Gabrielle at the International Congress On School Effectiveness And Improvement (ICSEI), which was a conference co-hosted by Marino Institute of Education and Trinity College Dublin during January 2024.

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CONFERENCE DELEGATES HEAR ABOUT RESEARCH PROJECT ON CRITICAL LITERACY

The annual conference of the Literacy Association Of Ireland took place in November 2023 under the theme Celebrating Languages And Literacies: Unpacking Practices And Exploring Possibilities. It was held at Marino Institute of Education and was attended by Dr Donna Hazzard and Dr Geraldine Magennis-Clarke. They gave a presentation based on a research project involving E. Kennedy and it was titled **“In Pursuit Of Critical Literacy: Understanding The Experiences Of Teachers In Northern Ireland”**.

Their research study adopted a qualitative research design, using methods that included questionnaires to participating teachers that were supported by several semi-structured interviews. Data were analysed and coded thematically, which reflected the impact of the Young News Readers Critical Literacy Project and its ongoing success. Since its conception in 2017, this Northern Ireland project has been taken up annually by numerous primary and post-primary schools, involving thousands of Key Stage Two and Three children and young people.



Although data showed varying levels of knowledge and understanding of critical literacy, the innovative critical literacy project was having a positive impact on teachers' engagement with the nebulous and complex concept that is critical literacy. The data signaled a philosophical assertion and commitment among some participants to transform pedagogy to empower children and young people by equipping them with the knowledge, behaviour and skills needed to recognise power relations in their everyday lives. Participants communicated the need for a curriculum and classroom practice that are grounded in the lives of students, are critical in its approach to the world, are hopeful, joyful and kind, as well as being academically engaging and rigorous. All of these, the presenters argued, are key attributes of having a critical literacy perspective. As a transformative pedagogy, critical literacy has the potential to develop tendencies and sensibilities that help create active and

critically conscious citizens. The goal of the research team was to develop and extend engagement with critical literacy across schools in Ireland and beyond.

The findings of this project were also presented by Donna at the International Congress On School Effectiveness And Improvement (ICSEI) held at Trinity College Dublin in January 2024.



“...to transform pedagogy to empower children and young people by equipping them with the knowledge, behaviour and skills needed to recognise power relations...”

REPRESENTATION FROM ACADEMICS AT INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Members of academic staff attended the International Congress On School Effectiveness And Improvement (ICSEI), which was a research conference co-hosted by Marino Institute of Education and Trinity College Dublin in January 2024. The theme of the conference was on international perspectives and approaches related to quality professional education for enhanced school effectiveness as well as improvement and it celebrated the synergy between initial teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers and school leaders. As well as the presenters, Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir and Dr Donna Hazzard, there was College representation from Rev Dr Eddie McGee and Julie Hamilton.



Eddie's paper, titled **“A Self-Reflective Framework For School Improvement In A Faith-Based Setting”**, examined the effectiveness of the Diocese of Down and Connor's self-reflective framework in taking forward school development in faith-based schools.

It began with an examination of the competency models of leadership and development that provided the foundations for the development of the self-reflective framework. Particular attention was given to how this process of self-reflection compared and contrasted with earlier inspectorial models of school development in faith-based schools. It then continued by outlining the structures of accountability within the self-reflective framework and considered how this relational approach provided new opportunities for engagement with schools, as they took personal ownership of self-identified areas for development. The research drew upon qualitative data gathered from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with practitioners in schools, school boards of management, educational trustees and diocesan support services to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of this new model of school improvement. The findings demonstrated how the self-reflective framework provided a particularly useful model in taking forward school improvement and its implications for existent support structures for faith-based schools and institutions. They also demonstrated how this relational approach towards staff development provided a viable and more effective alternative to inspectorial models that facilitated collaborative styles of leadership.

Julie's paper, titled **“Breaking Down Silos, Rolling Up Sleeves: Teachers' Perspectives On The Leadership Of Effective Professional Learning Communities”**, examined the characteristics of leadership that underpin an effective Professional Learning Community (PLC) in Northern Ireland and her research question focused on how leadership is manifested in an effective PLC.

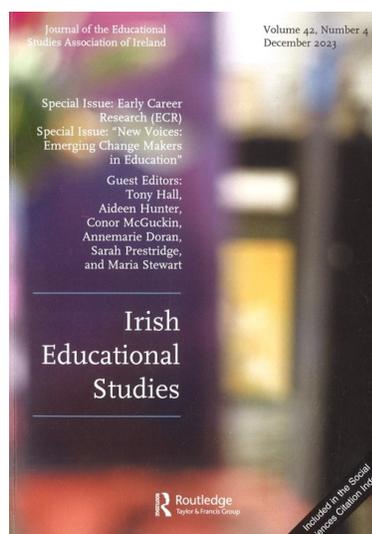
“...celebrated the synergy between initial teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers and school leaders...”

Julie's case study research used a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm. Semi-structured interviews with school leaders and teaching staff were conducted to elicit and to explore the particular characteristics that contributed to the effective functioning of a PLC in the school's context. The approach was one of looking for strengths and it sought a practical understanding of the nature of leadership within an effective PLC, while also recognising the need to examine critically a phenomenon that has often been overapplied. Results coalesced around several main themes, which were further structured into the why, the how and the what of effective leadership. The why was concerned with ethos and values, particularly the centrality of a service ethic among leaders. This emanated forth in the how, namely distributed leadership, collegial trust among staff, as well as between staff and leadership, and school structures that enabled professional learning to be dispersed across the staff body. Finally, the what examined the results of effective leadership of the PLC, i.e. powerful teacher professional learning, increased teacher agency, and, ultimately, positive impact on pupils.

RESEARCH ARTICLE ON CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS APPEARS IN IRISH JOURNAL

The September 2023 issue of the international journal Irish Educational Studies, which publishes research articles on topics relevant to education, featured a paper by Dr Thomas Rogan titled **“The Role Of Classroom Assistants: Perceptions And Challenges”**. Thomas's research study aimed to explore perceptions of the role of classroom assistants in supporting children's learning in the primary classroom.

Aligning with an interpretivist paradigm, a case study approach was used to explore the deployment of classroom assistants in one immersion primary school from multiple perspectives. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which aimed to gather the perceptions of senior leaders, middle leaders, class teachers, classroom assistants and children on the role of classroom assistants in the immersion classroom.



Five main themes emerged from the data collected. These were relationships, communication, training, language development and deployment. Results from this small-scale study indicated that classroom assistants carried out many duties within the case study school. Although the supportive role of classroom assistants was highlighted in the study, the role was, however, undefined and confusion arose surrounding the main duties of classroom assistants. There was evidence of a lack of clear policy and guidelines to focus the deployment of classroom assistants in the school, which meant that tensions could arise that led to frustration.

“...which aimed to gather the perceptions of senior leaders, middle leaders, class teachers, classroom assistants and children...”

RESEARCH JOURNAL HIGHLIGHTS PROJECT WORK OF ACADEMICS

A special issue of the Irish Journal Of Education was published in December 2023 under the theme of Teachers As Researchers: A Cross-Border Collaboration On The Island Of Ireland. It featured a selection of high quality, practitioner-led research articles from recent SCoTENS funded projects that covered a variety of topics, which were either empirical or reflective in nature. This special issue included papers co-authored by four members of academic staff from the College. Alongside Dr Gabrielle Nig Uidhir, were Dr Geraldine Magennis-Clarke, Dr Frances Burgess and Julie Hamilton.

Geraldine's paper, in collaboration with T. Concannon-Gibney, was titled **“An Exploration Of The Place Of Children's Literature In Early Reading Policy In The North And South Of Ireland”**. The article focused on a collaborative project related to children's literature, within educational policy, in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It explored the place, profile and prevalence given to children's literature in key curriculum and policy documents on the teaching of reading in the early years. The article began by considering the extent to which teachers in both jurisdictions are encouraged to use children's literature when teaching early reading. It then discussed the availability of continuing professional development to support teachers in this task. The findings of the desk-based exploratory study revealed implicit rather than explicit support for the use of children's literature in early reading instruction at curriculum policy level in both jurisdictions and they were used to inform a cross-border teacher education conference.



Irish Journal of Education
Volume 47

Special Issue
Teachers as Researchers: A Cross-Border
Collaboration on the Island of Ireland

Please cite as: Lewis, M., Delaney, E., Pitsia, V., & Clerkin, A. (Eds.). (2023). Teachers as researchers: A cross-border collaboration on the island of Ireland [Special Issue]. *Irish Journal of Education*, 47. www.eric.ie/IJESpecialIssues



Frances's paper, co-written with M. Flannery, M. Nugent and D. Elliot, was titled **“Evaluating Professional Learning From Integrated Arts Education Practices In Initial Teacher Education”** and was based on a self-study project of the possibilities and pitfalls of integrated arts practices in initial teacher education. Issues that were examined included most effective interdisciplinary methods, resolutions to issues encountered, professional development and lived experiences. Using Guskey's five levels of professional development evaluation model as a lens for critique, as well as data from the project, the article described the nature and quality of professional learning stemming from integrated arts education practices. Findings indicated that all five levels of professional development had progressed. De-privatisation of practice, reciprocal exchange and shared knowledge co-creation resulted in enjoyable and fulfilling differences to practice regarding methodologies, collaboration and reflexivity. Benefits to students included a superior learning experience, increased theoretical insight, a better learner-teacher relationship and increased modelling of practice. The model, though adequate in many respects, needed extending to account for the professional transformation experienced through engagement with integrated arts education practices and which encompassed other ways of perceiving, working and being.

“...a selection of high quality, practitioner-led research articles from recent SCoTENS funded projects...”

Julie's paper, that was co-authored with M. Ní Dhuinn, J. Uí Choistealbha and T. Kaur, was titled **“Meaningful Methodologies In Initial Teacher Education Practicum Research”**. It was based on an action research project undertaken by primary teacher educators in two higher education institutes in Ireland, North and South. Highlighting the value of action research in the school placement setting, the qualitative project generated a rich data tapestry from which key findings were extrapolated. Notably, for both teacher educators and student teachers, these included increased knowledge of research methods and how these can be applied to advance social justice principles in primary schools, as well as greater appreciation of ethical considerations required for the conduct of research and the development of teacher professionalism. The use of visual strategies, by children who took part in the project, emerged as a successful communication medium in social justice lessons, underlining the potential to achieve a more inclusive engagement by pupils in their own learning, both within, and possibly beyond, a social justice knowledge domain.

RESEARCH ON STUDENT TEACHERS USING READ-ALOUD METHODOLOGIES

The Literacy Association Of Ireland held its annual conference during November 2023 and it focused on the topic of celebrating languages and literacies by unpacking practices and exploring possibilities. It took place in Marino Institute of Education and Dr Geraldine Magennis-Clarke was in attendance to deliver her co-author paper, titled **“Communities Of Student Teachers As Readers (CoSTaR) Project”**, alongside C. Fiorentini.



The CoSTaR Project was an innovative, cross-border initiative between two Initial Teacher Education (ITE) institutions on the island of Ireland. A self-selected sample of students garnered from the entire first year student teacher cohorts in both jurisdictions took part in the study. The project's fundamental goal was to support, coach and guide student teachers from the beginning of their careers, in designing and utilising

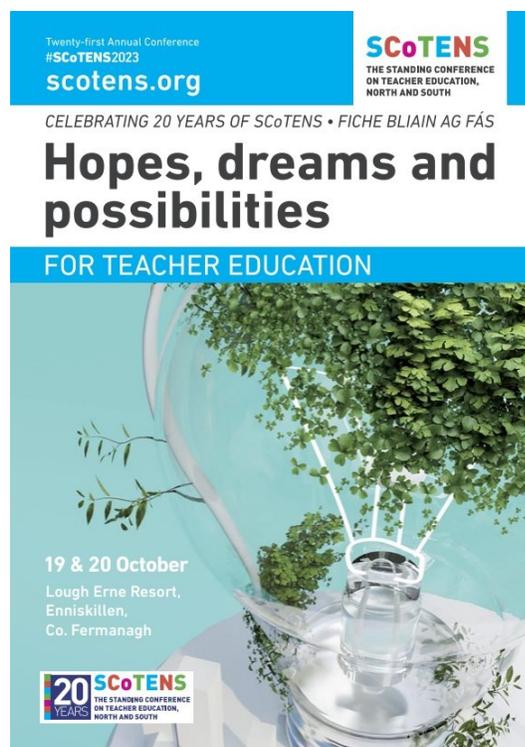
purposeful and effective read-aloud methodologies in the primary setting. It was anticipated that a community of practice could be built, wherein students' individual and collective reading teacher identities could be shaped and nurtured. A series of on-line dialogic workshops, student led drop-in clinics, and collaborative planning sessions were designed to this end. Practice was then embedded within school placements.

Data were collected via pre- and post-project questionnaires, as well as through journal and creative responses to the overall project. The researchers engaged in practices of self-study through the keeping of reflective journals. Results revealed that participants' conceptual understanding of the read-aloud methodology expanded to encompass a much more complex and dynamic interplay between teacher and pupils. Their read-aloud identities began to shift from being merely deliverers of stories to knowledgeable and skilled artisans. This transition, the presenters argued, necessitates wide and detailed book knowledge that allows for intentional planning and artful teaching using the read-aloud approach.

“...wherein students' individual and collective reading teacher identities could be shaped and nurtured...”

Firstly, a brief overview of the SHARED project was provided to the delegates. This was followed with a presentation of one key finding from the research and a shared reflection on a participant's initial response to the finding. The finding chosen for this session related to the need for greater exploration of teacher educators' understanding of social justice, to ensure that it permeates programmes and is not left to one department or school.

Another element focused on the use of prompt cards that participants could choose to stimulate discussion and reflection. Each prompt card included one of the SCoTENS conference themes from previous years. Participants chose a prompt card and explained why or how that conference theme prompted them to think deeper about the discussion topic. Participants were encouraged to focus on what they could aspire to in their own practice. The final element involved each participant being given a takeaway card with QR codes that linked to the project's research report, key literature, the SCoTENS conference reports and a live sharing page where participants could, post-session, document their key aspirations for social justice in initial teacher education.



The other two presenters, Dr Brian Hanratty and Padaí de Bléine, presented their research in the form of a roundtable that was titled “**Approaches To The Teaching Of Poetry At Third Level**”.

The presenters' conviction was that poetry should be firmly situated at the heart of the curriculum that is focused on deepening awareness of both language and literature, whether through English, Irish or other languages. By expanding on this conviction, the presenters believed they were reflecting the evolving philosophy and mission of SCoTENS over the last twenty years by focusing on research that suggested pedagogies should be informed and illuminated by a search for optimum ways to engage young minds and hearts. They argued that their research involved and re-imagined the centrality of poetry in Irish-Medium Education at third level in both of Ireland's jurisdictions and further afield.

Their presentation was predicated on numerous approaches. Firstly, they offered some definitions of poetry, mainly from poets and critics writing in English, but which they held as having universal resonances and implications. Secondly, they identified and explored a selection of poems which they believed exemplified the magic and wonder of poetry. Poems which can enrich the teaching of language and literature at third level and can provide inspiration for students' school-based pedagogy. Thirdly, they evaluated some right and wrong ways to teach poetry, not least their conviction of the memorization of poems to be an under used but highly valuable catalyst. Fourthly, their specific action research included questionnaires and focus groups with a selection of third level students and an interview with the Irish language poet, Cathal O'Searchaigh.

“...poetry should be firmly situated at the heart of the curriculum that is focused on deepening awareness of both language and literature...”

SHARING EDUCATION POLICY ON TEACHER EDUCATION AT RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Meeting global and local challenges through interdisciplinary partnerships and collaborations in education was the theme of the Scottish Educational Research Association's annual conference held in November 2023 at Queen Margaret University. During the conference, there was a symposium that focused on teacher education policy trajectories across the UK and Ireland, with Professor Martin Hagan delivering a paper, along with R. Dolan, titled “**Reflective Professionalism: Teacher Education Policy In Ireland, North And South**”.

Their presentation considered the extent to which professionalism is a key component of teacher education policy in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. In both jurisdictions, there is a strong regulatory requirement for entry to teacher education programmes and accreditation of such programmes.

In the Republic of Ireland, the Teaching Council is responsible for the professional registration of teachers and the promotion of high standards in teaching. The Teaching Council's Policy On The Continuum Of Teacher Education (2011) has been implemented through Cosán: Framework For Teachers' Learning (2016); Droichead: The Integrated Professional Induction Framework (2017); and Céim: Standards For Initial Teacher Education (2020), with professionalism as one of the guiding principles for each framework. Similarly, in Northern Ireland, the General Teaching Council oversees the registration and professional development of teachers using its competence framework, Teaching: The Reflective Profession (2007).



Scottish Educational Research Association Annual Conference

Both jurisdictions also recognise the importance of professionalism in areas such as ethics, values, and attitudes, and provide guidance and support to teachers in these areas through the Code Of Values And Professional Practice (2018) in Northern Ireland, and the Code Of Professional Conduct (2016) in the Republic of Ireland. The researchers examined how each jurisdiction's policies were developed and implemented. They considered the influence of stakeholders, both nationally and internationally, with a particular focus on the pattern of the relevant policies, what they build on or alter in terms of relationships, and what organisational and institutional changes or developments they necessitate.

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MUSIC JOURNAL INCLUDES PERSPECTIVES OF MUSIC TEACHER EDUCATORS

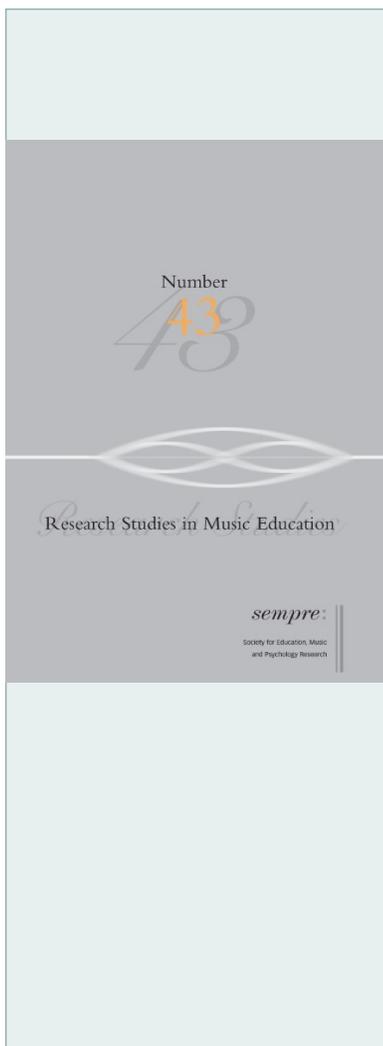
An internationally peer-reviewed academic journal, *Research Studies In Music Education*, which promotes the dissemination and discussion of high quality research in music and music education, featured an article in the second half of 2023 co-written by Dr Frances Burgess, in partnership with G. Moore, J. O'Flynn and J. Moore. The article, titled **“Challenges For Music In Initial Teacher Education And In Schools: Perspectives From Music Teacher Educators In Ireland And Northern Ireland”**, examined challenges for music in initial teacher education (ITE) and in schools from the perspectives of music teacher educators across two jurisdictions of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Spanning primary and secondary music ITE, music teacher educators from across both jurisdictions met to share practice and concerns. Findings from three focus group discussions revealed concerns regarding musical provision within ITE institutions and on a wider

systemic level, which acknowledged the diminishing status of music in both policy and curricular discourse, as well as in schools. In terms of identity, a shared concept of the music teacher educator as both advocate and confidence builder emerged.



As music teacher educators predominantly work in isolation within ITE institutions in Ireland and Northern Ireland, participants welcomed the opportunity to share knowledge and experience across jurisdictions. As such, the authors argued that emerging communities of music teacher education practice are of critical importance to combat the multiplicity of challenges that music teacher educators face at a time of turbulence in the status of music in state education systems.



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