

NOVEMBER 2015

# EDUCATION NEWS

*Newsletter of the Department of Education  
- passionate about all things educational!*

## WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION...



Through this and upcoming newsletters, we hope to give you a sense of some of the activity that goes on here at Maynooth, due in no small way to the collaborations we have with teachers, schools, and the broader educational community. You might even see yourself in some of the stories we are featuring in this issue! Casting an eye back over my first year in the position as Head of Department, I am struck by the energy, enthusiasm and warmth of my colleagues and, as these pages attest, we have had a very productive year together.



Professor Sharon Todd

You will see as you read through this newsletter that we have been busy on all fronts: in initial teacher education, post-graduate courses, professional development and research and scholarship. We have collaborated with the Froebel Department of Education and the Department of Adult and Community Education to build the first research institute devoted to education across the sectors: the Research Workspace on Educational Ideas for Responsive Change. As its name indicates, the Workspace is focused on creating opportunities for generating ideas with the various communities we work in. To this end, we will be holding events and seminars open to the public. Our first was on October 6th with a panel discussion on the topic of Transition Year and the second is a public lecture on Ethics and Internationalisation in Higher Education, given by Professor Vanessa Andreotti of the University of British Columbia. Watch our website for further updates!

In addition, we are now in our initial phases of our 2nd year of the Professional Masters of Education programme, which has posed exciting challenges for us as a community. One of the features of Year 2 is the focus we are placing on cross-curricular initiatives and enabling students to work creatively with their peers. To this end, we are hosting a number of Zoom Events, the first one being our Social Justice Event held in October. Our Educational Leadership programmes have seen unrivalled increase in enrolments and our students were central to the success of the 3U Symposium on Leadership that was held in March, which drew approximately 500 participants from our department as well as from the Royal College of Surgeons and Dublin City University. On the research front, the FASmEd project, headed up at Maynooth University by the Department's own Majella Dempsey, has just won a Sixth Scientix Resource Award for the development of the Prototype Toolkit in Science Education.

These are just some of the highlights, and I hope you find a lot more that piques your curiosity inside. Our doors are always open so feel free to get in touch with us about possible collaborations, research ideas, or if you want to discuss any courses that we offer. We're passionate about all things educational!

MORE UPCOMING  
EVENTS... (on page 6)

## School Placement – The Year in Numbers!

Many thanks to all our partner schools through Leinster and further afield for their support of our student teachers on school placement.

The school placement element is an integral part of all our courses as we prepare our students for a career in teaching and we greatly appreciate this partnership. The advice, support and collegiality of principals, deputy principals, co-operating teachers, other teachers and the wider staff of the school is invaluable while they are on placement. Our student teachers certainly benefit greatly from their time on placement in schools and we hope that they enrich your school community during the time they spend with you. In 2015-16, we have more than 300 student teachers on placement in schools, including:

Professional Master of Education (PME):

**105** Year 2 student teachers on placement

**108** Year 1 student teachers on placement

Bachelor of Science and Maths (with Education):

**30** Year 4 student teachers on placement

**25** Year 3 student teachers on placement

**39** Year 2 student teachers on placement

Post Graduate Diploma in School Guidance Counselling (PGDSGC):

**23** student teachers on placement

In total, they will receive approximately 1,300 visits from placement tutors and university tutors between September 2015 and April 2016!!

## Guest Lecturers' Presentations

Presentations by Tom Farrell and Andrina Wafer to the Postgraduate Diploma in School Guidance Counselling (PGDSGC) class were well received by students in October.

Tom, who designed Ireland's National Learners' Database, presented on the smart use of Qualifax and more broadly on how the guidance counsellor can maximize resources to navigate the flow of information available electronically.

Andrina, as Head of Access and Lifelong Learning in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) focused on access, transfer and progression to higher education and on QQI organisationally and in terms of its statutory functions and services.

Both presentations are integrated into an essential knowledge base for guidance counsellors working in a school context.



Pictured left to right: Mr. Tom Farrell (Qualifax), Dr. Grace O'Grady (Course Director MEd/PGDE School Guidance Counselling), Ms. Andrina Wafer (QQI) and Dr. John McGinnity (Assistant Registrar/Lecturer PGDSGC).

## Team Teaching Research Project

In spring 2015, the Department of Education of Maynooth University in conjunction with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) initiated a team teaching research project for a cohort of PME student teachers and their placement schools.

The project was undertaken in order to better prepare our student teachers to collaborate and team teach with their co-operating teachers in schools and also to support schools and teachers that were engaging in team teaching activities.

The project involved a series of 2 workshops for 14 participating schools in February and March 2015 in Maynooth University. During these workshops, both PME student teachers and their co-operating teachers were given the opportunity to explore different models of team teaching, to discuss their concerns in relation to team teaching, to plan a lesson or series of lessons to be team taught and to reflect on a team teaching experience.

The project culminated in a Team Teaching Seminar in Maynooth University in April 2015 where poster presentations were made by all participants in the project and a number of inputs were delivered to delegates on team teaching. A video about the project and a range of resources relating to team teaching are now available on [www.pdst.ie/teamteaching](http://www.pdst.ie/teamteaching).

Since the pilot phase of the project was completed, Angela Rickard and Thomas Walsh of Maynooth University have presented a research paper based on the project at the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER) in Budapest in September 2015. More recently, the PDST and Maynooth University jointly facilitated a poster presentation on the project at the Teaching Council's Féilte conference in October 2015.

Owing to the success of the pilot project, the team teaching research project is being expanded in 2015-16. All Year 2 PME students will be engaged in a

series of lectures, events, workshops and activities relating to team teaching. Moreover, all schools with a Year 2 PME student teacher on placement has been invited to nominate a teacher or teachers to participate in a number of workshops and a seminar relating to team teaching between October 2015 and February 2016. These workshops will be held in Maynooth University and in a number of regional Education Centres. We will keep you updated on developments in the next edition of the newsletter.

If you would like any additional information in relation to the team teaching project, please contact Angela Rickard ([Angela.rickard@nuim.ie](mailto:Angela.rickard@nuim.ie)) or Thomas Walsh ([Thomas.walsh@nuim.ie](mailto:Thomas.walsh@nuim.ie)) at the Department of Education, Maynooth University.



Pictured left to right: Dr. Marie Clynes, Dr. Thomas Walsh and Ms. Angela Rickard at the Féilte Conference 2015

## Former Education Minister Guest of Honour at Launch

Mr Richard Burke, Education Minister from 1973 to 1976 was guest of honour at the launch of *Transition Year in Action* in Maynooth University on October 6th 2015.

'I am delighted to see how Transition Year, which I initiated in 1974, has flourished. This book has filled in a lot of gaps for me as to how it evolved', he said. Professor Aidan Mulkeen, Deputy President and Registrar, Maynooth University launched the book which was written by Dr Gerry Jeffers of the Education Department.

The launch followed a lively seminar 'Learning from Transition Year' organised by the Education Department's Research Workspace for Educational Ideas for Responsive Change. Professor Sharon Todd chaired the seminar where speakers were Joanna Siewierska, Deputy President Irish Second-level Students Union (ISSU), Clive Byrne, Director, National Association of



Pictured left to right: Ms. Joanna Siewierska, Ms. Mairead Jeffers, Ms. Winifred Jeffers, Mr. Joe Jeffers, Mr. Richard Burke, Dr. Gerry Jeffers, Prof. Aidan Mulkeen, Dr. Anne Looney and Prof. Sharon Todd in the John Hume Building after the launch.

Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) and Dr Anne Looney, CEO, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

Through the voices of students, parents, teachers, co-ordinators, principals and researchers, *Transition Year in Action* provides a nuanced picture of the breadth and complexity of Transition Year. *Transition Year in Action* is published by The Liffey Press.

## European Language Label 2015

The European Language Label recognises creativity and innovation in improving the quality of language teaching and learning. This year the Language Label was awarded to six projects across a wide range of sectors and languages. These award-winning projects provide a potential source of inspiration and motivation for others who teach and learn languages.

The Language Ambassador Award is presented to individuals who have displayed exceptional commitment to the promotion of language learning through their excellent work and projects. The 2015 awards recognised the inspirational efforts and achievements of three recipients.

The award ceremony was held at Farmleigh House. The keynote address was by Manchán Magan who presented the prizes along with Dr Céline Healy, Jury Chair and Catherine O'Carroll, Steering Committee Chair.

Further details may be found on: <http://www.leargas.ie/programmes/languages/european-language-label/resources/>.



Pictured left to right: Dr. Celine Healy (Maynooth University), Mr. Manchán Magan and Ms. Catherine O'Carroll, Senior Inspector

## Visit by Swedish Teachers of English to Young Learners

An initiative by Maynooth University Department of Education and Uppsala University provided an opportunity for 10 Swedish teachers of English to young learners to come to Maynooth for a study visit.

During their week-long visit they attended seminars and workshops in Maynooth Department of Education, a day of classroom collaboration, observation and exchange in Scoil Bhríde and St. Patrick's National Schools in Clane and cultural visits to Dublin. The Swedish and Irish teachers and their pupils will continue their cultural and professional exchange through social media and Skype exchanges with further exchange visits planned for the New Year.



Swedish teachers from Uppsala University on the South Campus of Maynooth University

## Higher Education Funding Conference, September 2015

On September 30th the faculty of Social Science at Maynooth University – and its constituent departments of Economics, Sociology and Education – convened a one-day international conference to help inform the debate on how higher education should be funded. The presentations from the event are available at <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/economics-finance-and-accounting/news/higher-education-funding-conference>

## Groundbreaking CPD Event Hosted by Department of Education

Saturday, March 28th, heralded a new departure in modern foreign language (MFL) teacher education in Ireland! Maynooth University Department of Education, in collaboration with the Post-Primary Languages Initiative, organised a conference on the use of Tablets and Apps in MFL Teaching and Learning.

This was the first large-scale, non language-specific, continuous professional development (CPD) event organised for post-primary language teachers in Ireland. It brought together 200 teachers of Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and other languages to share their expertise. The conference centred around a bottom-up approach to CPD, with teacher-led workshops and a teach-meet, enabling teachers to share and learn from one another. For the first time, student teachers of languages from across the universities were invited to contribute and to join their experienced colleagues for professional development.

The event was supported by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) Technology in Education, the Association of Teachers of Spanish and the Association of Teachers of Italian. The keynote speaker was Joe Dale



(Network for Languages, ALL, BBC and host of TES MFL Forum). Following a warm welcome from Dr Céline Healy, on behalf of Maynooth University, the event was officially opened by Maria Lorigan, Senior Inspector with the Department of Education and Skills.

Feedback from delegates was very positive, as the Twitter stream on #Apps4MFL testifies, and can perhaps be summed up in the following Tweets: 'Best educational experience since I graduated, hands down' and 'Have so many new ideas I may never sleep again'. The conference programme may be accessed at [bit.ly/Apps4MFLProgram](http://bit.ly/Apps4MFLProgram)

Following the success of the 2015 conference, a follow-up conference will be held on Saturday 12th March 2016. Please visit <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/education/> closer to the time or email [Celine.healy@nuim.ie](mailto:Celine.healy@nuim.ie) for further details.

## Zoom Event on Social Justice

To mark Social Justice Week the Department of Education held a one-day zoom event on Monday 12th October focused on themes of power, agency and voice.

The day began with a presentation by artist Fiona Whelan and focused on the politics of story/voice and listening. After lunch in association with Guth Gafa International Documentary Film Festival, there was a special screening of *Dreamcatcher*; a documentary film by renowned British director Kim Longinotto.

The day culminated with a set of parallel workshops that offered important opportunities for students to engage with and respond creatively to the issues raised during the day. These enabled student teachers to reflect and act on their own stories of power, agency and voice in their classrooms and how they might represent these in various ways.



[www.dreamcatcherfilm.com](http://www.dreamcatcherfilm.com)

## Save the Date!

The 40th annual conference of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) will be held in Galway **from 31st March – 2nd April 2016**, at the Raddison Blu Hotel in Galway city and NUIG.



Find more information on the conference, and the activities of ESAI, including how to join the Association, here [www.esai.ie](http://www.esai.ie)

## 3rd International Irish Conference on Narrative Inquiry

Following the success of the Irish Narrative Inquiry Conference which was hosted in Maynooth University this year, our partner institute NUIG will continue to provide a space for a wide range of Irish and international scholars to share their research at Conference 2016.

This inter-institutional conference attracts academics, practitioners, educators, social workers, performing artists, narrative therapists, social policy makers and independent researchers whose work pushes at the boundary of inherited research methodology.

Irish Narrative Conference (INIC) 2016

**Date: 10th – 11th March 2016**

Venue: School of Political Science and Sociology, College of Arts, NUI Galway

Further information: Conference Programme will be available on our website in January 2016, <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/education>



Pictured left to right: Ms. Jackie O'Toole IT Sligo, Prof. Sharon Todd Head of the Education Dept., Maynooth University, Dr. Hilary Tierney Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University, Prof. Jean Clandinin University of Alberta, President Philip Nolan, Dr. Anne Byrne Head of School of Political Science and Sociology, NUIG and Dr. Grace O'Grady Education Dept. Maynooth University.

## From H.Dip.Ed. to P.M.E. Some Personal Reflections - Dr. Pádraig Hogan

Dr. Pádraig Hogan offers some personal reflections on post-primary teacher education as he retires from a 30-year career in the Department of Education of Maynooth University

Teacher education in Ireland has recently been subjected to change on an unprecedented scale. The lengthening of the initial teacher education courses has been accompanied by initiatives to provide a nationwide system of induction. The Teaching Council is currently seeking to establish a framework for professional learning over the duration of the teaching career. In addition to these moves to transform the experience of teacher education, government policy requires a major amalgamation of teacher education institutions to be completed by 2016: from nineteen in the public-sector down to six. It is ironic that so many reform policies should come so quickly, especially in view of decades of comparative inattention by policymakers to calls for the development and renewal of teacher education in Ireland. A few reminiscences from the more traditional routines of teacher education should illustrate the scope and significance of these contemporary developments.

In my final year as an undergraduate (1969-70) the conventional wisdom regarding our future was to “go on for teaching”. Advice on the following lines was readily available:

**“The Dip is your passport to a secure future. Within a year you’ll have a car under your backside and within another a roof over your head and a job for life.**

The second level system was still expanding in the years following Donagh O’Malley’s introduction of “free education” and teaching jobs were still fairly easy to get, particularly outside of the cities.

Enrolling for the H.Dip.Ed. course was simply a matter of joining the queues to the registration desks and paying the modest fee. The demands of the course were similarly modest, particularly if one was seeking mainly the “pass” needed to secure the passport to the future. Many who followed the conventional wisdom discovered within a few years however that the job for life could become something of a life sentence, sometimes requiring the adoption of an alien daytime persona to survive its pitiless demands. Many claimed, rightly, that they were let down by their teacher education courses. Occasionally one might also hear a more perceptive criticism of a long-prevailing order: How one could one be allowed to embark on a teacher education programme without ever asking, or being asked, the question of what a commitment to teaching and learning as a way of life might involve?

What makes conventional wisdom so influential - in all walks of life - is its routine obscuring of precisely such questions. Leaving aside such wisdom now, **we can identify a few key ingredients** in the deficient conception of teacher education that underlay the H.Dip.Ed. for many decades. This also highlights the contrast with features that can serve as a more appropriate and more adequate basis for the education of teachers.

**1<sup>st</sup>** The first of these ingredients was the notion of teaching placement as “hours” to be clocked up by individual student teachers. For decades the figure was 100 hours. School principals would do a student teacher a great favour by giving him/her “hours” for the H.Dip year. Often such arrangements meant that there were further undisclosed hours involved – sometimes involving payment, sometimes not, but requiring the student teacher to be absent from some university-based elements of the course. The contrast here could scarcely be more pronounced with the notion of teaching placement as a progression of experiences that need to be supported by colleagues in school and in university, working to a coherent and shared rationale.



Dr. Pádraig Hogan enjoys a coffee and treats with colleagues on his retirement day in September 2015!

**2<sup>nd</sup>** A second ingredient was the notion that the university-based elements of the course could be described as “theory”, and that such theory dwells in a quite different world from the “practice” that takes place in schools. This outlook became deeply ingrained in teacher education – and not only in Ireland – despite the fact that it beclouds the most distinctive demands of teaching itself as a practice. It bypasses in particular the kinds of insights needed to advance and sustain the practice. Such insights can of course be found in the field of educational research, but fruitfully so only if one approaches this vast field with the right questions, and seeks insights in the relevant quarters.

**3<sup>rd</sup>** A third ingredient in a widespread misconception of teacher education remained quite common in the lore of the profession until recently. It held that teachers need to be strong disciplinarians, as distinct from practitioners of the most subtle, most responsive and most insightful of communicative arts. “The only training needed for teaching is teaching itself,” as one principal once told me. My unvoiced riposte was “You mean an apprenticeship that daily mixes bad habits with good?” Nowadays I’d venture something that might take his point, but also recast it on a different and less dogmatic path: “Probably the most important ingredient of teacher education is the incisive interrogation by student teachers themselves of their own experiences in the learning environments where their teaching placements are carried out.”

On coming to work in Maynooth in the early 1980s I was glad to join a staff where the notion of examining one’s practice was already established as a central element of the H.Dip.Ed. course. “Interaction analysis” it was called then. Over the time I’ve been here this focus has strengthened, availing of a succession of developments in digital video technology and with increasing opportunities for teachers to take a stronger sense of ownership of their professional learning. Allied to this, the rationale for the course as a whole has been strongly enhanced, the cultivation of a capacity for critical analysis of the practitioner’s work being particularly important.

Using this kind of research-informed rationale we urged the Byrne Advisory Group on post-primary teacher education (2002) to provide a two-year time span for the postgraduate model of teacher education. In the event, we were to wait for a further decade. There’s much to be done to make this model more fully-fledged, including the tackling of the placement question in schools and the teacher supply question. These now need action at a national level, involving the statutory and other partners.

## Opening Conversations

Achieving equality for LGBT people in Irish schools. One-day event for second level teachers and school leaders.

Friday, 29th January 2016



The recent Marriage Equality Referendum debate has raised many issues with regard to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) experience in Ireland: not least among these, are issues that affect education. It has brought attention to many diverse and, at times, very difficult stories from schools. It has highlighted the need for new conversations and insights to be explored concerning equality and inclusion for LGBT pupils, teachers and parents in this country.

The Department of Education, Maynooth University proposes to host a one day event aimed primarily at second level school leaders, teachers, guidance counsellors and other education partners, to explore the ways schools are now creating or seeking to create, a culture of inclusion.

Working in association with a number of key organisations and arts based groups, the event will facilitate an open and creative conversation that will enable our partner schools to develop and enhance their policies and practices of inclusion. Through a range of informative, interactive and practical plenaries and workshops participants will explore the educational, ethical, mental health and legal issues that arise for LGBT people in Irish schools.

More information on the event will be posted on the Department's website, <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/education/>, closer to the date.

## Development Education 2015

“Global imaginaries and development education”:  
a Public lecture by Professor  
Vanessa Andreotti,  
University of British Columbia

Chair: Ms. Maria Barry

Wednesday 18th November  
09.15 – 10:30 am in Aula Maxima,  
South Campus.

This event is part of Development Education Week and is supported by UNI-DEV Project and the Department of Education Maynooth University.

For further information, see <http://devedweek.wordpress.com>



Professor Vanessa Andreotti

## Trócaire Study Visit to Nicaragua

### Trócaire

Trócaire's Study Visit is a professional development opportunity for teachers, and student teachers, to enhance their comprehension of climate change and the impact it is having on people's lives in the host country, while making connections to their own lives here in Ireland. They can then use this knowledge as a tool to mobilise their students and colleagues upon return to their school.

This year's ten day Study visit is to Nicaragua, Central America. The visit will take place **from Thursday 11th February - Saturday 20th February 2016**

The successful candidates (one student from the Education Department - PME Year 2 - and one from Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education) will join a delegation including three qualified primary teachers, three qualified post primary teachers as well as two Trócaire staff.

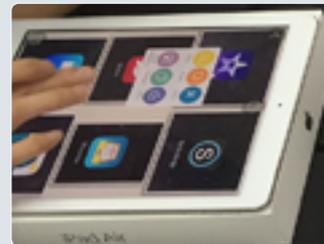
Throughout the study visit experience all applicants will be expected to design an action plan, with support from Trócaire staff, which may include development education, campaigning or fundraising activities. The action plan will be delivered on return from the overseas trip.

## iPad Learning Summit

The Department of Education is pleased to announce a two-day training and professional development summit for teachers and schools with iPad-based mobile learning programmes.

**This inaugural summit will take place during the Easter vacation** and follows a very successful technology professional development course, designed and delivered by two of our staff members who travelled to China in July 2015. Future summits will focus on other platforms to cover the breath of technology in use in schools, both today and in the future.

The theme of the summit is 'moving from consumption to curation and creation', a theme that will support educators who seek to enhance their own practice and the work of their students by adopting more active and creative approaches to teaching and learning. The summit will be suitable for teachers, ICT coordinators and school leaders.



The agenda will contain a range of workshops and featured sessions, allowing attendees to create a personalised timetable to match their interests and ambitions. Workshops will include managing information and thinking, content creation and assessment for learning. Featured sessions, which follow curricular or issue-based themes, will include English, Science and Reaching all Learners. Sessions on English and Science will enhance teachers' capacity to use technology creatively and effectively in the teaching of new curricula.

The iPad Learning Summit will take place in Maynooth University on March 21st and 22nd 2016. Further information is on our website <http://ipadlearningsummit.com> where bookings will open in late November. Be sure to join our mailing list and follow us on Twitter. Please email [keith.young@nuim.ie](mailto:keith.young@nuim.ie) for further information.