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Teacher Education in the South – Systems; Current Developments; Issues and Emergent Themes

(Draft Paper by Áine Hyland for the Invitational Conference for Teacher Education Professionals in Ireland – North and South. Belfast 18th – 20th May 2000.)

Introduction

I would like to thank the organisers of this conference for inviting me to present a paper on Teacher Education in the South and I look forward to a critical and constructive discussion on the issue of teacher education – north and south – during the next two days. This conference is timely, scheduled as it is at a time when the two Teacher Education Review Groups in the South are coming to the end of their deliberations and are shortly expected to publish their reports. From my point of view, I am in one way fortunate and in another way unfortunate, that this is the third major conference on teacher education in the south since the beginning of this academic year. The first was organised by the Irish Federation of University Teachers in Trinity College in October last, the second by the Educational Studies Association of Ireland in Rathmines in November. Many of the issues which I will raise to-day have already been aired at those conferences.

In relation to primary teacher education, I am grateful to Andy Burke for making available to me his excellent paper *The Devil's Bargain Revisited – the B.Ed. degree under review,* based on his presentation at the IFUT conference, which will shortly be published[1]. I am also grateful to Sheelagh Drudy and Elizabeth Oldham for bringing together and disseminating the papers of the ESAI Special Conference – *Educating the Educators*[2]. These publications are an invaluable record of two excellent conferences which left little unsaid about teacher education in Ireland. Hence I hope I will be forgiven if my paper here to-day says little that is new. However, the way in which we all, as participants, engage with and explore the issues raised, will, I hope, lead to new insights and fresh solutions to the challenges facing us in teacher education.

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[1] A. Burke *The Devil's Bargain Revisitied – the B.Ed. degree Under Review* , forthcoming.
[2] S. Drudy and E. Oldham (Ed.) *Educating the Educators; Proceedings of a Conference on Teacher Education.* Educational Studies Association of Ireland, April 2000.

Like many of the participants at this conference, I have spent most of my professional life in teacher education, in my case, in the south. It is over a quarter of a century since I first became involved in teacher education in my role as teaching practice supervisor in Trinity College Dublin. Since then I have worked in primary teacher education in Carysfort College, and in second level teacher education in University College Dublin and in University College Cork. While there are similarities in all teacher education courses in the south, building as they do on a similar model, there is no doubt that each course and each college has its own distinctive culture and approach. I would argue that we should not seek to introduce a uniformity of approach but that we should cherish the richness of our different traditions and build on and develop examples of best practices from different colleges.

Teacher Education in the South – the Current Situation

Pre-service education for primary teachers in the south is provided in five Colleges of Education. St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra is linked with Dublin City University; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick is a college of the University of Limerick; the Church of Ireland College, Froebel College and Marino College are linked to Trinity College Dublin. In addition to the students enrolled on the three year B.Ed. programme in these colleges, a relatively smaller number of students are enrolled on the 18 month graduate course. About 80% of all primary student-teachers attend either St. Patrick's College or Mary Immaculate College.

Pre-service education for second level teachers is provided through both concurrent and consecutive models of teacher education – the majority of teachers following the consecutive route. The one-year post-graduate Higher Diploma in Education is offered in U.C.D., U.C.C., NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth and Trinity College Dublin. The University of Limerick provides concurrent teacher education programmes for P.E. teachers, teachers of Wood and Metal Technology, and Science teachers as well as providing a consecutive model for Business Studies and Music teachers. St. Angela's in Sligo and St. Catherine's, Sion Hill provide a concurrent model for Home Economics

teachers; the National College of Art and Design in Dublin provides both concurrent and consecutive models for Art and Design teachers; Crawford College of Art and Design in Cork provides a consecutive model for Art and Design teachers, and Mater Dei College offers the concurrent model for R.E. teachers.

Teaching as a Profession

The approach to teacher education will be fundamentally different depending on whether one views teachers as professionals or as technicians. Thirty years ago, following the publication of the Report of the Commission on Higher Education, which recommended the introduction of a degree course for primary teachers, Tom Kelleghan wrote[3]:

> The decision regarding the future of the teacher as technician or professional is perhaps the most important one to be made in education today. If we opt for the technician's role, then we probably commit ourselves to a continuation of the education system we have. If, on the other hand, we opt for the professional role, we would be reasonably assured of having teachers who will be capable of dealing with the enormous changes in knowledge and conditions that are going to take place in the next fifty years. Given professional teachers, we might reasonably expect that this knowledge will be understood and accepted by them and assimilated into educational practice.

Thirty years after this was written, we can look back and be grateful for the vision of people such as Tom Kelleghan and John Coolahan, who championed the role of teacher as professional. They, and others who contributed to the development of the B.Ed. degree programme in the 1970s, played an important part in paving the way for the development of teaching as a profession in this country. The B.Ed programme recognised the need to provide an appropriate professional education for primary teachers. The Primary Curriculum of 1971 had challenged the teacher to act as a professional. It would no longer suffice to be technically competent – the teacher would have to make choices, she would have to respond to the differing needs of her pupils, she would have to be a facilitator of learning. Teachers today are rightly proud of their professionalism. Various publications of the I.N.T.O and the A.S.T.I. in the past two decades have saluted the

[3] T. Kelleghan, "The University and Education", in Academic Staff Association, UCD (Ed.) *Contemporary Developments in University Education,* 1971. Cited in A. Burke, op. cit.

professional role of the teacher. At the ASTI conference in Killarney this Easter, the outgoing President of the ASTI took as the theme of her Presidential address, the theme of teacher professionalism. The ASTI and the INTO see themselves as both trade unions and professional bodies and this vision has been central in preparing the way for the proposed Teaching Council, the legislation for which will shortly be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

However, the concept of teaching as a profession is not unproblematic. Professionalism is defined in many different ways by different people. During the next two days, we might spend some time teasing out our definitions of professionalism. What do we mean by professionalism in the context of teaching? How is this professionalism manifested on the ground? What implications does it have for teacher education? These and other questions will help us to clarify the concept and will help to provide a platform for exploring other elements of teacher education.

The Status of Teaching in the Republic of Ireland

In spite of some teacher-bashing in the media in recent months, there is evidence that the general public continue to hold teachers in the Republic in high regard. Various opinion polls show provide evidence of this[4]. The Irish government also recognises the importance of the contribution made by the teaching profession. The following quotation from the White Paper (1995) could hardly be more explicit in its recognition of the contribution of teachers:

> The quality, morale and status of the teaching profession are of central importance to the continuing development of a first-class education system in the decades ahead. Irish teachers are highly regarded and the profession continues to attract people of high calibre and commitment. … Teachers have made an enormous contribution to Irish society. The profession's standing has also been recognised internationally. It is important, therefore, that the career of teaching continues to attract talented people and that it proves professionally rewarding to those who follow it.

[4] e.g. See the Irish Times poll published on 24th April 2000.

More recently, writing in the Irish Independent on 1st May, Minister for State, Willie O'Dea, stated:

> No one would disagree with the opinion that a high-quality dedicated teaching profession is absolutely essential and there is no doubt that that is what we have had. Throughout our history, the teacher has always had an honoured place to the fore in our society.

High Calibre of Our Student Teachers

We are fortunate in the south that we continue to attract into teaching, students of a high intellectual and academic calibre. This is something we should not take for granted and is somewhat exceptional in a western context. At primary level, student-teachers are drawn from the top 10% of the Leaving Certificate cohort. In recent years, students entering second level teacher education programmes are also drawn from among the top stratum of academic achievers. For example, virtually all current student-teachers on H.Dip. in Ed. programmes hold an Honours degree – the majority at First Honours or Second Class Honours, Grade 1. Despite the scepticism of some commentators about using academic performance as the main (and sometimes the only) selection criterion for teacher education courses, there is evidence that academic performance is a good predictor of subsequent teaching performance[5]. This is true at both primary and second-level. While interviews may have a certain value[6], especially in the case of mature students, the practical difficulties of interviewing large numbers of applicants, especially in the context of inadequately resourced colleges and departments, has led to a discontinuance in recent years of interviewing, as a mechanism for selecting candidates for teacher education courses in the south. This is an issue we might like to discuss during the coming days.

Much attention has been focused in recent weeks on the reduction in the number of applicants for the H.Dip. in Ed. this year (from c. 2,400 to less than 2,000) and it has been suggested that this reflects a fall in interest in teaching among graduates. The outgoing President of the ASTI opined that this was due to the inadequate salary levels of teachers and the loss of status suffered in recent years by second-level teachers. I disagree with this view which I believe fails to take account of a number of other factors which are

[5] See A. Burke, op. cit.

much more likely to have caused the reduction in applications this year. Firstly, the application rules have been tightened up this year to exclude graduates who are not eligible for recognition by the Teachers' Registration Council. (Last year, applications were received from c. 200 applicants who were subsequently found to be ineligible for registration as secondary teachers in the south). This year, only graduates or intending graduates whose degrees are on the Registration Council's list of recognised degrees, or who had made application for such recognition before December 1999, were eligible to apply.

Secondly, most applicants this year are aware that the cut-off point for successful candidates last year was at a level between a 2.1 and a 2.2 degree award. And thirdly, the application fee this year has been increased to £60 – an amount which is likely to be a deterrent to candidates who reckon that their chances of success are virtually nil. An applicant with a Pass degree and no other relevant qualification or teaching experience would not have been offered a place last year. Applicants are familiar with the Leaving Cert. Points system and are aware that a course which has a high points requirement one year is unlikely to change significantly in a subsequent year. A student who expects to achieve no more than 300 points in the Leaving Cert. is unlikely to apply for a place in Medicine, where the cut-off point is 545. In the same way, a student who has barely passed his penultimate university examination or degree examination, is unlikely to "waste" the £60 fee applying for a place on the H.Dip. This theory is borne out by the fact that the academic level of applicants who have been offered a H.Dip. place so far this year, is similar this year to last year. Unless the take-up rate for H.Dip places is dramatically different to what it was last year, there will be no basis for the gloomy prognostications of the ASTI President.

The Changing Context of Teacher Education

Teachers have been pivotal in the changing scene of Irish education in recent decades. They have manifest this through their involvement on the National Council for

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[6] See the discussion on the predictive validity of interviews for third level selection in the *Final Report and Recommendations of the Commission on the Points System* Dublin: Stationery Office 1999, p. 57 – 59.

Curriculum and Assessment and its various committees; at the National Education Convention and the various Roundtable discussions in the mid 1990s; on various educational commissions and committees, and in the shaping of educational policies and programmes. They have been increasingly involved in the provision of in-service education for their colleagues and have taken their place as partners and often leaders in Irish education, to an extent which is unparalleled in other countries.

The last thirty years has been a period of enormous change – much greater change than was envisaged in the 1960s. The economy has grown exponentially; technological advances have been phenomenal; unemployment levels initially soared and then plummeted; and the present generation of young people have access to levels of wealth which were unimaginable thirty years ago. Public investment in education has far exceeded even the wildest dreams of educational planners of the 1960s[7]. Educational opportunities have grown significantly so that today, 80% of an age cohort complete the Leaving Certificate as against less than 25% thirty years ago. Of those who complete the Leaving Certificate, over 80% continue to some form of further or higher education. The numbers enrolled in third level education have grown more than ten-fold in thirty years.

At the other end of the scale, however, the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' of society has widened, and it has been argued that the education system has contributed to the widening of this gap[8]. The problem of early school leaving has proved to be more intractable than initially envisaged. In spite of the many initiatives introduced by government over the past five to ten years to combat early school leaving, over 20% of our young people leave school with either no qualification or an inadequate qualification. Functional literacy levels have not improved in the past twenty years. Crime and violence have increased, with drug abuse a contributory factor. Family life as we knew it thirty years ago is now much more tenuous than it was, and single parenthood is on the increase. Immigration is growing and Ireland has joined other western countries in facing issues of multi-lingualism, multi-ethnicity, multi-culturalism and multi-racism. All these

[7] Martin O'Donoghue "Investment in Education – Context, Content and Impact" in Administration, Vol. 44, No. 3, Autumn 1996.
[8] K. Lynch *Education and Equality* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1999.

issues pose immediate and ongoing challenges for a growing number of schools and teachers. Teacher education, both initial and in-service must respond to these challenges.

The nature of education itself has also changed. The dominant assumptions on which educational policy was traditionally based have been summarised in a recent educational paper as follows[9]:

- Intelligence was regarded as being largely innate, as was creativity.
- The older the child became the more significant would become his/her learning.
- Learning was seen as being dependent on instruction and extrinsic reward (behaviour).
- Learning was seen as being logical, objective and linear.
- Valid learning was seen as that which enabled people to become functionally literate within an industrial society.
- Valid learning was that seen as being formal and measurable.
- Basic skills were those of reading, writing, and calculation and the acceptance of formal discipline and control.
- Most people, it was assumed, would not need "higher order skills", as they were not expected to show any form of personal creativity.
- All life could be subdivided into separate disciplines, and only those appropriate to a child's potential status in life would be taught.
- Learning was dependent on the technology of the time: paper and pencil, and textbooks.

These assumptions have changed significantly in recent years. If one were to attempt to summarise how they have changed, one might come up with a diagram such as the following: (The left column refers to a traditional view of education and the right column refers to the current emphasis):

Traditional View	***Current Emphasis***
"Fixed-term" Schooling	Lifelong Learning
Focus on Teaching	Focus on Learning

[9] J. Abbott, *The 21st Century Learning Initiative*

Teacher as Instructor	Teacher as Facilitator
Teacher as Expert	Reflective Practitioner
Focus on Knowledge	Focus on Understanding
Knowledge as Truth	Constructed Knowledge
Individual learning	Collaborative learning
Rote learning	Active/reflective learning
Short answer tests	Authentic Assessment
Emphasis on right answers	Problem solving
Fixed, innate intelligence	Multiple intelligences

Teacher Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning

Since my time here to-day is limited, I intend to focus primarily on the first of these changing paradigms – the change of emphasis from what I refer to as "fixed-term" schooling to lifelong learning. I would like to spend some time considering the concept of lifelong learning, as I am convinced that we have not yet grasped the full implications of this concept, either for ourselves as learners or as teachers. The words "lifelong learning" have been bandied about for well over thirty years but there has been a tendency for these words to be used synonymously with adult education[10]. In my view nothing could be farther from what the term really means, i.e. learning throughout one's life - from the cradle to the grave. Hence life-long learning encompasses early years education, primary education, second level education, further and higher education, adult and continuing education, community education, various forms of work-based training, and leisure activities which lead to learning. Learning should be lifelong and continuous for everyone. The implications of this for teacher education are profound. If we truly accepted the concept of lifelong learning, it would not even occur to us to consider initial teacher education in a vacuum. We would automatically consider it in the context of lifelong learning or, to use the language of an earlier era, in the context of the three Is – initial, induction and inservice education. As a consequence, we would no longer be weighed down by a rucksack model of initial education, stuffed with more and more content. Rather we would recognise the futility of attempting to include everything in a teacher's initial education and we would plan teacher education in a lifelong context,

[10] Note for example the re-titling by at least one university of its Centre for Adult and Continuing Education as the Centre for Lifelong Learning, as if somehow the mainstream activity of the university itself has nothing to do with lifelong learning.

identifying what elements might most appropriately be provided at initial level and what might be provided at various stages of a teacher's career.

Learning to Learn

In considering lifelong **learning**, we should consider the implications of a focus on *learning* as opposed to a focus on *teaching* and the implications of this for teacher education. A focus on learning has considerable implications both for the pupil and for the teacher. Life-long learners need to understand how they best learn; they need to develop learning skills; they need to be flexible and creative; they need to be able to identify problems and to solve them. They need to know how to learn. In this context the development of metacognitive skills is crucial. A young person who develops metacognitive skills is likely to be a more effective learner than the person whose schooling has emphasised the acquisition of skills and knowledge to the detriment of metacognition. The realisation of the significance of learning as opposed to teaching, has major implications for educational systems and for teacher education and these implications have to be faced. In 1996, Jerome Bruner wrote as follows[11]:

> Modern pedagogy is moving increasingly to the view that the child should be aware of her own thought processes and that it is crucial for the pedagogical theorist and teacher alike to help her become more metacognitive – to be as aware of how she goes about her learning and thinking as she is about the subject matter she is studying … Equipping her with a good theory of mind … is one part of helping her to do so.

It is often said that the explosion of knowledge in recent decades has led to the increasing awareness that schools cannot teach children all they need to know. However, there is nothing new about the realisation that we cannot teach children and young people everything they need to know – it is much more important that they should become good learners. Over a hundred years ago, a U.S. commentator wrote: "Knowing that you cannot teach a child everything, it is best to teach a child how to learn".[12] Yet in spite of

[11] J. Bruner …. 1996.

[12] Brooks Adam, *Atlantic Magazine*, 1879 quoted in V. Perrone, "Why Do We Need a Pedagogy of Understanding?" in M.Stone Wiske *Teaching for Understanding; Linking Research with Practice.* San Farancisco: Jossey Bass, 1998.

the fact that a century has passed, western society has not yet found a satisfactory way of ensuring that schools promote learning.

For many years now, OECD documents have been drawing attention to the need for a focus on learning. For example, the OECD Review of Irish Education (1991) stated that

> A cognitive conception of the act of learning sees learning as a process of constructing and reconstructing meaning... it sees learning as requiring active involvement on the part of the learner. No longer can the student be regarded as a passive recipient of new information. The approach draws no sharp distinction between 'lower order' and 'higher order' learning tasks. Cognitive theorists today argue that all students should be challenged with problems requiring 'higher order' thinking, given their current level of understanding and skill. The cognitive conception of learning assumes no single learning strategy or mode but rather recognises that individuals differ considerably in the ways they process, assimilate and remember new information.[13]

Until relatively recently, it was assumed that higher order skills and basic skills were acquired seriatim and could not be effectively developed in tandem. It was also assumed that only the more "intelligent" pupils could acquire higher order skills or indeed would ever need such skills. The school curriculum was often devised in such a way as to provide opportunities for the development of higher order skills only for a select group of pupils. (The traditional approach to developing ordinary and higher level courses and to setting ordinary and higher level examination papers in this country was based on this assumption). John Bruer and many other cognitive scientists have shown that the development of basic skills and higher order skills are not contradictory but are actually developed in concert[14]

In the past decade there has been an unprecedented explosion of information on how the human brain works and how learning occurs. Much of the research in this area has been made possible by the increasing sophistication of medical technology, e.g. through the

[13] OECD, *Review of National Policies for Education - Ireland*, 1991
[14] John Bruer: *Schools for Thought: A Science of Learning in the Classroom.* London: MIT Press, 1993.

use of MRI scanners whereby the brain can be observed as it carries out various functions. Key findings of recent research might be summarised as follows[15]

- The brain changes physiologically as a result of experience. The environment in which a brain operates determines to a large degree the functional ability of that brain. Although a child's brain at birth has all the brain cells or neurons that it will ever have, the brain is not immutable or fixed at birth. In his book, *Inside the Brain* (1996) Ronald Kotulak writes[16]:

  > The brain gobbles up the external environment through its sensory system and then reassembles the digested world in the form of trillions of synaptic connections which are constantly growing or dying, becoming stronger or weaker depending on the richness of the banquet. …The environment affects how the genes work, and genes determine how the environment is interpreted.

- IQ (as traditionally defined and measured) is not fixed at birth. Early intervention programmes can prevent children from having low IQ scores and have been shown to raise the IQ scores of infants by 15% to 30%.

- Some abilities are acquired more easily during certain sensitive periods or "windows of opportunity". Research carried out at the UCLA School of Medicine suggests that a child's peak learning age occurs during the period from birth to age ten when the number of synaptic connections within the brain rise rapidly.

- Learning is strongly influenced by emotion. Emotion plays a positive role in that the stronger the emotion connected with an experience, the stronger the memory of that experience. If however, the emotion is too strong (e.g. if the situation is perceived to be threatening), learning is decreased.

[15] P. Wolfe and R. Brandt "What Do We Know from Brain Research" in *Educational Leadership*, November 1998.
[16] R. Kotulak, *Inside the Brain: Revolutionary Discoveries of How the Mind Works.* Kansas City: Andrews and MacMeeley, 1996.

- The brain's capacity for learning and change is limitless, depending on our willingness to seek new opportunities and experiences. Therefore education should continue for a lifetime.

While it is still early days to come to definitive conclusions, findings from the neurosciences provide us with important insights into how children learn. As well as offering new information to teachers and parents, brain research can provide guidance to policy makers in focusing their priorities.

What implications do these findings have for teacher education and for the beginning teacher? Firstly, we now have unambiguous evidence that there is no one "right way" to learn – consequently there can be no one right way to teach. Secondly, people learn in many different ways and different people have different learning styles. Thirdly, the link between emotions and learning has been established. A positive teaching environment leads to better learning, an unhappy or negative learning environment impedes learning.

We are all aware of the pendulum swings that have occurred among educationalists throughout the centuries in regard to favoured approaches to teaching. The Greeks and Romans favoured "drawing out" knowledge – "educare"- and a heavy emphasis was laid on questioning and logical deduction. The economic and practical imperatives of mass schooling in the western world in the 18th and 19th centuries resulted in an emphasis on didactic approaches to teaching. The best organised pedagogues of that period boasted that they could teach up to one thousand pupils in one schoolroom at any one time. It was a matter of packaging knowledge appropriately and transmitting it efficiently to the recipients. Payment by results was premised on the notion that a good teacher could achieve the desired results. And since the workforce at that time needed compliant workers to work on production and assembly lines, the educational emphasis (at least for the masses) was on conformity and obedience to authority, traits which would be best developed through a didactic approach.

During the last hundred years, different countries at different times have vacillated in their approaches to pedagogy, depending on their educational goals. In Ireland, the emphasis on a didactic approach in the last quarter of the 19th century was followed in the first two decades of the twentieth century by a more child-centred, heuristic approach. Following Independence in 1922, the emphasis in the south was on using schooling as a vehicle for reviving the Gaelic language and culture and this resulted in a reversion to a more didactic approach to teaching. The 1971 curriculum saw the pendulum swing back again with emphasis on the child as an active agent in his/her won learning. The recently revised Primary programme (1999) confirms the approach of the 1971 curriculum and states that[17]:

> An important goal of the curriculum is to enable children to learn how to learn, and to develop an appreciation of the value and practice of lifelong learning. The curriculum aims to instil a love of learning that will remain with the child through all stages of formal education and that will express itself in an enquiring mind and a heightened curiosity. … (The curriculum) accords equal importance to what the child learns and to the process by which he / she learns it. One of its essential features is a recognition of the principle that there are different kinds of learning and that different children learn in different ways.

Since the curriculum at both primary and second level recognise the importance of the learning process and the individuality of learners, teacher education programmes should reflect this. In his recent article, referred to above, Andy Burke summarised what he sees as the fundamental requirements of a graduating teacher as follows:

> …… at a fundamental level, what is required of graduating primary teachers today is a good knowledge of the content and pedagogy of the subject areas to be taught, along with a balanced and critical understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of different approaches to teaching – traditional / progressive, didactic / discursive, taecher-centred / child-centred. This will enable them to avoid the outdated polarities between these approaches which have dominated debate and damaged education for much of this century.

He goes on to state:

> Such understanding will help to engender a fuller realisation that any particular approach to pedagogy is rooted in a multi-disciplinary knowledge base and cannot be simplistically equated with any one set of teaching tactics or classroom arrangements but can be implemented effectively by different teachers in different

[17] Primary School Curriculum – Introduction. Dublin: Dept. of Education and Science, 1999.

> ways. The goal of teacher education is not merely the mastery of specific skills therefore, but, rather, the fostering of an ability to develop and be able to use multiple skills flexibly, consistently and appropriately in whatever situation taechers find themselves, whatever subjects they are teaching, and whatever pupils they are dealing with. In brief, the aim is to give student teachers "executive control" over the skills they exercise which only those who understand the underlying theory can command.

The Curriculum in Teacher Education

I do not intend in this paper to explore in any depth what a desirable curriculum in teacher education should encompass. I do however believe that this will be an important topic for discussion at the workshops. In his paper to the ESAI conference last November[18], John Coolahan stated that there is a large degree of commonality in the general content of teacher education programmes in most European countries. He grouped the content into four key elements as follows:

- Academic subjects e.g. science, history, languages etc.
- Studies in educational sciences e.g. psychology of education, sociology of education etc.
- Methodologies, subject didactics
- Teaching Practice.

In the south, these elements are included within the teacher education curriculum in various ways. In some colleges they are taught as discrete subject areas, in others they are introduced through a thematic or topic-based approach. Inevitably, given the time constraints of the consecutive model, the Education components of the course are considerably more curtailed in that model than in the concurrent model. As someone who has taught on both the consecutive and the concurrent models, I am conscious of how limited the time is for educational studies in the consecutive model. I am particularly aware of the difficulties of in-depth work on what I will loosely refer to as "Teaching Studies" – in which I include learning theory and teaching strategies, theoretical and practical elements of methodologies, aspects of curriculum development and assessment, etc. I have suggested in other fora that teacher education programmes in the south in the past have paid too little attention to the broader aspects of curriculum and

assessment at both primary and second-level[19]. A perusal of past examination papers of both B.Ed and H.Dip programmes will confirm that questions on assessment were rarely asked, even if assessment issues were included on the curriculum. In my opinion, this lack of a background in assessment theory and its application, has contributed to the reluctance of teachers on this part of the island to be involved in the assessment of their own pupils for certification purposes.

We accept the importance and the centrality of teaching practice in all teacher education programmes, and the proportion of time allocated to TP on the various programmes provides testament to its significance. Again, this is an area where different colleges have taken different approaches in recent years not only to organisational aspects, but also to the approach to supervision and its assessment. We can benefit from a sharing of experiences in this regard. What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of a "block placement" approach to teaching practice versus a "continuous placement" approach? In what way is TP supervision organised? How is placement organised? What is the relationship between the placement schools and the college / university in relation to Teaching Practice? What is our view on mentoring? If we incorporate a mentoring approach, what are the implications of this? Who are the teaching practice supervisors and what is their background? What is the role of the supervisor – adviser / guide or assessor? How are these two roles balanced? How many visits does each student have and how many supervisors? How is assessment carried out and what controls are in place to ensure consistency of grading between supervisors? What are the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to assessing teaching practice e.g. portfolio assessment; competency-based approach? These are issues about which we have much to learn from each other.

Providing Appropriate Professional Education for those involved in areas of education other than primary and second level e.g. Early Years; Further and Higher Education; Adult Education; Community Education.

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[18] J. Coolahan "Teacher Education in Ireland and Western Europe: a Comparative Analysis" in S. Drudy and E. Oldham, *op. cit*.
[19] Conference of Religious of Ireland *Inequality in Assessment* Dublin 1999.

To return to the context of lifelong learning, I suggest that we should seriously consider the role of university Education Departments and Colleges of Education in contributing to and/or providing appropriate and relevant courses for teachers, trainers and lecturers in areas other than primary and second level teaching. Francis Douglas and Mary Horgan have recently written about the pre-service education of early years educators in their article on "The Training of Early Years Educators in the Republic of Ireland" in *Educating the Educators*. In 1994, I raised the issue of training teachers in further and higher education and in adult education in a paper I read at an NUI sponsored conference - *The Role of the University in Society*[20]. I still believe that University Education Departments should be the anchor departments for professional development courses for teachers, trainers and lecturers in further and higher education and in non-mainstream education. There have been some recent developments in these areas in various institutions and I am concerned that Education Departments appear to have been by-passed in these developments.

It is expected that the forthcoming White Paper on Adult Education will recommend that all those involved in teaching adult and continuing education courses should have appropriate training and qualifications. In a recent interview, Minister O"Dea indicated that such a course would be " like a H. Dip in Education". Similarly, it has been suggested by the HEA that appropriate professional training be provided for teachers in higher education. In this regard, I am aware that a proposal has already been made by the Irish Universities Training Network to provide a Certificate / Diploma course – leading ultimately to a Masters degree - for university lecturers in the south. The outline for this course was drawn up by staff involved in staff training in universities - most of whom appear to have a Human Resources rather than an academic background. I am concerned that a HR approach to third level teaching would be influenced by a technicist rather than a professional model and I believe that this is something that should be avoided. Most of us would agree that a professional model of teacher education would ensure that best practice should be based on ongoing research findings, should develop and support

[20] A. Hyland "University Education in the General Context of Irisjh Education" in J. Nolan (Ed.) The Role of the University in Society. Dublin: National University of Ireland, 1994.

reflective practice, and should embed teacher education in a model of lifelong learning. If we accept these premises as a baseline for professional courses for teachers at other levels, then we either duplicate the expertise and resources available in Education Departments, or we provide these courses in or through Education Departments.

It has been argued that teaching adults (androgogy) is a different art to that of teaching children (pedagogy) and that because of this, courses for those involved in adult education might not be best provided by those involved in mainstream teacher education. I am not convinced by this argument, nor indeed do I necessarily accept that there is a clear-cut distinction between pedagogy and androgogy. Perhaps the theory of androgogy was developed by those who saw pedagogy as didactic and teacher-centred, rather than as heuristic and child-centred. If our focus is on learning rather than on teaching, we are challenged to look at each learner as an individual, whether he/she is an adult or a child. Different people have different learning styles – the challenge for the teacher of the 21st century is to provide appropriate learning opportunities for all pupils, whether they be adults or children.

Education as a Discipline within the University

The need for appropriate staffing and financing for Education Departments in Universities was adverted to by the Commission on Higher Education in 1967. While the status and financing of Education Departments has improved in the past decade or so, some universities have some way to go before Education Departments are accorded the same level of funding and support as other departments. I make no apology to the university sector when I say that I was shocked by the inadequacy of resources and facilities in Education departments of universities when I moved to the university sector from a College of Education in the late 1980s. In some universities the situation has improved somewhat since then but this is not true in all cases. How can student teachers be prepared adequately to become teachers in an Information age if they have little or no dedicated access to ICT during their pre-service training? How can we provide adequate individualised support for our student teachers if the student-staff ratio is twice the average university staff-student ratio – as it is in some universities? What factors justify

the fact that the unit cost of some Education Departments is the lowest in the university? In my view the issue of inadequate resourcing should be highlighted in the forthcoming Report of the Task Force on Post-Primary Teacher Education. It is also important that if additional resources are provided for Education in the universities in the south, mechanisms are developed to ensure that those resources are channelled into those Departments, and that they do not become dissipated throughout the university.

Education Departments should also look to the role they can play within their university, e.g. in areas related to Quality Improvement, including developments in curriculum and assessment. They should consider how they might contribute to improving the effectiveness of various practices within the universities, through undertaking research projects in relevant areas, e.g. on special Access programmes; non-completion rates; variations in assessment practices etc. By participating in the internal structures of the university, staff of Education Deopartments can demonstrate in a most effective way what the discipline of Education encompasses, and how it can contribute to improvements in teaching and learning at all levels.

Similarly at national and international level, staff of Education Departments should welcome opportunities to contribute to research and policy formulation. Historically, such input was very limited and as recently as the early 1980s, educational academics in the south were criticised for their failure to take an active part in educational policy debate. The Educational Association of Ireland has played an important role in changing this perception and such criticism could no longer be validly levelled at educational academics to-day. Virtually all recent educational reports and policy documents in the south have benefited from the involvement of educational academics.

Current Issues in Teacher Education in the South

A number of sessions to-day and to-morrow are set aside for workshops and discussions, and we will have an opportunity to share experiences and ideas about teacher education. It will be particularly valuable for those of us from the south to listen to our northern

colleagues and to learn from their experiences. It is to be hoped that this coming together of teacher educators, north and south, will lead to further such gatherings.

I do not intend to provide answers to the many issues which are currently being debated in teacher education in the south. Rather, I have posed some of the questions and I leave it to you, the participants, to come up with some answers. The issues which might be addressed could include the following:

- **Concurrent versus Consecutive Models of Teacher Education**
- **Course Structure and Duration – Primary and Post-primary**
- **The Curriculum in Teacher Education - The Balance between Theory and Practice**
- **University / School Collaboration and Partnership**
- **Mentorship**
- **The Role of the University / College of Education in Teacher Induction**
- **The Role of the University / College of Education in Inservice**
- **University / College of Education and Education Centres**
- **Ongoing Professional Development of the Teacher Educator – "Training the Trainers"**
- **The Role of Educational Research**
- **The Status and Resourcing of Education Departments**
- **Relationship between early years, primary and second level teacher education.**
- **The Role of Education Departments in the Professional Preparation of Teachers in Further and Higher Education and in Adult and Community Education.**