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"European Influences on Irish Education in the 19th and 20th centuries".

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Abstract:

This paper provides an overview of how the Irish education system may have been influenced by developments in other European countries in the 18th and 20th centuries. It sets the context and reviews briefly the broader historical scene in Ireland during the period. The paper includes references to primary, secondary, technical and university education during the three decades under review.

European Influences on Irish Education in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Paper submitted by Dr. Aine Hyland, University College, Dublin, Ireland, for the History of Education Conference in Liverpool, December 1991.

Historical Background - 17th and 18th centuries

To understand the development of Irish education from the 17th century onwards, one must set the context and review briefly the broader historical scene in Ireland during that period. Parts of Ireland had been colonised by English and Welsh settlers from the 12th century onwards. From then until the 17th century, there were sporadic clashes between the Irish and the colonisers. During the second half of the 17th century, Ireland was involved in the war between William of Orange and James II. In the European context, Ireland was an important theatre for a war between France and a league of lesser powers - a league that crossed religious boundaries. But in the Irish context, the war was a struggle between Protestant and Catholic, between the newer settlers and the older inhabitants. The defeat of King James at the Boyne in 1690 and the subsequent victories of William resulted in an exodus of Irish soldiers (some 14,000) to Europe following the signing of the Treaty of Limerick in 1691.[1]

In the 18th century Ireland was ruled by an Irish parliament which was entirely Protestant and which supported the Irish ascendancy. A comprehensive set of new anti-catholic measures was passed; these were subsequently referred to as the Penal Laws. Under these laws, Catholics were debarred from parliament, from holding any government office - high or low - from entering the legal profession and from holding commissions in the army and navy. They were also forbidden to buy land or to take long leases on land. A series of penal laws were passed between 1665 and 1709 to restrict the education of Catholics; in particular, Catholics were forbidden to teach; they were forbidden to send their children to "France, Spain or other foreign parts", or "to be conveyed or sent to parts beyond the seas ... to be resident, or trained up in any priory, abbey, nunnery, papish university, college or school, or house of jesuits or priests".[2]

In spite of the Penal Laws, a widespread and unofficial education system flourished in Ireland in the 18th century. A very large number of what became known as hedge schools were set up throughout the country.[3] By the early years of the 19th century there were about 9,000 such schools attended by almost 400,000 children. In spite of their name, only a small number of hedge schools were actually held in hedgerows; more often than not the pupils and assembled in the simple residence of the master, or if he were an itinerant, of a family. The quality of education provided in these schools varied considerably -

contemporary accounts suggest that some were very disorganised and that at best only the basic three Rs were taught. On the other hand, a small number of masters were highly-educated, ex-clerical students who had studied in the Catholic seminaries on the European mainland - in Louvain, Paris, Rome, Douai, Salamanca etc. - and had decided that they had no vocation for the priesthood. These "spoiled priests" - as they are known in Ireland - often became hedge schoolmasters and offered quite an advanced education, including the Classics.

Elementary Education in the early 19th century

At the end of the 18th century, the first of the Catholic Relief Acts was passed and the repeal of the Penal Laws began. With this development, a number of Catholic religious orders came to Ireland from the European mainland and new religious orders and congregations were set up in Ireland. The Irish Christian Brothers were founded in the early years of the century and their numbers grew rapidly as the century advanced. A number of female religious orders were founded - many for the education of the poor, e.g. the Sisters of Mercy, the Irish Sisters of Charity, the Presentation Sisters.

By the early 19th century, one can classify Irish educational establishments into 3 broad categories:

(a) Hedge schools or pay schools - here there was little European influence except in those run by ex-priests who had been educated in European seminaries.

(b) Schools run by Catholic religious orders - those providing for the sons and daughters of wealthier families had significant European influence.

(c) Schools run by Protestant societies - some of these were funded in part by sister societies in England and were influenced by educational approaches used by those societies. For example, in schools run by the London Hibernian Society, the Bible was the central focus of education and reading and writing lessons were based on the Bible.

The total number of young people enrolled in the above three types of school was in the region of a half a million - this in a country with a population of about 7 million people.[7] [14]

While there is little evidence that European educational thought was relected in the practices of the majority of teachers in these schools, the writings and work of the European child-centred educationists, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel had influenced a small number of people in Ireland at that time. About 1770, Emily, Duchess of Leinster, is said to have invited Rousseau to come to Ireland to act as tutor to her son. (Her grandson, the Duke of Leinster, was subsequently to become the first President of the Board of National Education in 1831.) At around the same time, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, father of Maria Edgeworth, who lived in Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford, tried to apply the theories of Rousseau to the

upbringing of his own son. (He did not continue the experiment however; as his son entered his teenage years, the father sent him away to school because he had begun to find him uncontrollable!) Nevertheless some years later, he and his daughter Maria, set up a school for local children on his estate in Edgeworthstown, which was based on child-centred principles. In Roundwood, Co. Wicklow, a school based on the principles and practice of Pestalozzi was run for a brief period in the 1820s by John Synge who became known locally as Pestalozzi John.

The setting up of the National School system, 1831

During the late decades of the 18th century and the early years of the 19th century, countries such as Switzerland, Holland, Prussia, France, Spain, Greece, Italy, Denmark, Sweden and Norway all experienced significant initiatives by the state in educational provision. England, influenced by its prevailing political philosophy of laissez-faire, was much slower to involve the state directly in education. However, a succession of government enquiries and commissions had recommended more direct government involvement in elementary education in Ireland. In 1831 a major initiative was undertaken by the Chief Secretary of Ireland, Lord Stanley when he indicated the government's intention to set up a national system of education in Ireland. The National schools were to be religiously mixed, aiming "to unite in one system children of different creeds". A clear distinction was to be drawn between "moral and literary" instruction and "religious instruction". For the former, children of all religions would be instructed together, for the latter they would be separated. Schools would not be state owned - they would be owned by local groups or individuals -the Patron - but tgrant-aid would be available from the National Board for salaries and for school building and furniture. Books and requisites would be provided at subsidised prices by the Board. Inspectors would visit schools regularly and state owned training colleges and model schools would be built.[5]

But the government's objective of developing a religiously mixed system of education was not achieved. The three main Churches - Catholic, Church of Ireland (Anglican) and Presbyterian - objected to the proposal that national schools be religiously mixed. The National Board, in spite of its stated objectives, gradually conceded to the demands of the churches for religiously separate education and by the middle of the 19th century, the system had become de facto denominational. It was common to find two or three small schools in villages throughout Ireland, one for Catholics, one for Anglicans and possibly one for Presbyterians. Moreover, there were often separate boys and girls schools and "the multiplication of small schools" was a source of continuing irritation to the British Treasury who saw them as uneconomic.[6] In 1833 there were about 800 schools "in connexion" with the Board with about 100,000 children on rolls and receiving a total grant of £25,000. In

1860 there were more than 5,500 schools catering for 800,000 pupils receiving a total annual grant of nearly £300,000.

The content of the moral and literary curriculum in National Schools was decided by the National Board and was contained in textbooks which were published by the Board. These textbooks were graded from First to Sixth Book and formed a logical, integrated sequence of instruction, taking the child from elementary literacy to fairly sophisticated lessons in geography, science and literature. They were Christian and moralistic in tone but they carefully avoided material that might be denominationally divisive. During the first 50 years of the National school system, the textbooks emphasised Ireland's place as part of the United Kingdom and of the British Empire. In the later years of the century, the books contained a growing volume of material on Ireland - its geographical features, its industrial and mineral resources, its poetry and literature. There was virtually no reference to countries on the European mainland in these textbooks. The textbooks published by the National Board achieved considerable acclaim throughout the English-speaking world and were used in schools in England and in the colonies as far afield as Australia and Canada.[11 7]

The Influence of other European countries on the curriculum of National Schools in Ireland, 1900

From 1872 to 1900 a system of payment by results was in operation in Irish national schools. Under this system, teachers' salaries were supplemented by results fees, paid on the basis of the results of pupils at an annual examination. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, there was a widespread feeling that the results system was no longer a suitable basis for primary education. This system had been discontinued in England and Scotland in the 1890's. In Ireland, the results system had been criticised by teachers, inspectors and others interested in education. During the same period, pressure was also mounting for a revision of the national school programme to include some element of manual and practical instruction.[12 8]

With growing industrialisation in England and other European countries, the industrial and economic argument in favour of introducing manual instruction in primary schools was voiced in Denmark, Germany and France. At around the same time, a different argument in favour of the same end was being discussed in Western Europe and the United States. It was argued that manual instruction ought to have an important place in the curriculum as a corrective to book studies, on the grounds that book learning alone tended to be a one-sided development of the child. Others went farther than this and contended that not only was manual training a necessary element of education, but that it should be an integral part of the education of primary school children.

In 1896 a commission of enquiry (the Belmore Commission) was set up to look into into the question of introducing manual and practical instruction into elementary schools in Ireland and this commission reported in 1898. The Commission was noteworthy in Irish educational history for the extent to which it researched the educational situation in other European countries and in the U.S. M.E. Sadler, Director of Special Inquiries and Reports to the Committee of Council on Education in England was asked to produce a "Memorandum on Manual Training for Boys in Primary Schools in Foreign Countries" and R.L. Morant, Assistant Director, produced a report on the situation in France. Detailed information on the situation in Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Austria, Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, France and the U.S.A. was provided. Following consideration of this information, the Commission concluded that a radical change was required in the curriculum of Irish national schools. It recommended the introduction, not only of Manual Training or Handwork but also of Drawing, Elementary Science, Singing and Drill into the curriculum of national schools.[9]

The Revised Programme for National Schools, 1900.

In 1900, payment by results was abolished and a Revised Programme for National schools was introduced in all national schools. The Revised Programme was flexible and within certain limits, managers and teachers were allowed to adapt the programme to the needs of the locality and the capacity of the pupils. The Programme not only incorporated all of the practical subjects recommended by the Belmore Commission, it also introduced changes which had not been suggested by the Commission. The syllabuses of the traditional subjects, such as Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Geography were revised and the emphasis was changed from the accumulation of a quantity of knowledge to the comprehension of the underlying concepts. The Revised Programme encouraged learning based on observation, activity and experience.[14 10]

Conceptually, the Revised programme was impressive. It was based on sound educational and philosophic principles. It was coherent in its planning and presentation. But from the start, it encountered difficulties in regard to implementation. Lack of resources, financial and material, contributed to the difficulties, and failure to consult inspectors and teachers prior to the introduction of the programme led to allegations that the expectations of the Revised programme were unrealistic. In 1905, the Programme was modified to take account of the realities of the Irish situation but the underlying approach remained unchanged until 1922 when the Irish Free State government came to power.

Intermediate (Secondary) Education in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Until 1878, there was no formal state intevention in Intermediate (Secondary Grammar) education in Ireland. A number of Protestant schools, many of them endowed, existed but in some cases the numbers of pupils on rolls were very low. Following the repeal of the Penal Laws, an increasing number of Catholic intermediate schools were set up. Religious orders and congregations such as the Jesuits, Dominicans and Benedictines set up schools for boys as also did the De la Salle Brothers from France. Female religious orders such as the Loreto and Sacred Heart sisters set up schools for the daughters of more wealthy families. These schools were relatively cosmopolitan and European in their educational approach. As the 19th century developed, some of these religious orders founded houses in France, Belgium, Germany, Spain and other countries and there was cross-pollination of educational ideas at this level. For example, girls from wealthier families learned some French in their convent schools and often spent some time in a sister convent in France or Belgium.

By the 1870s, there were 574 "superior" schools in the country - 252 for boys; 162 for girls and 160 mixed sex schools - and there was a total of 21,225 pupils on rolls. The Protestants were disproportionately represented in these schools in relation to their proportion of the population as a whole.[15]

In 1878, the government set up an Intermediate Education Board to grant aid intermediate education. The Intermediate Board was basically an examining board. It laid down examination syllabuses, administered an annual written examination and on the basis of the results of the pupils at the written examinations, results fees were paid to the schools which chose to enter their pupils for the examinations. The subjects were categorised in 7 divisions as follows: Greek; Latin; English; modern languages; mathematics; natural sciences; music and drawing. The subjects were not treated equally however, because subjects such as the classics and English received more favourable marks weighting and higher results fees.

In this way, the state managed to provide limited funds for intermediate schools without becoming involved in issues of control, ownership, and teacher appointments. The powers of the Intermediate Board were limited but in practice the Board strongly influenced the curriculum in Intermediate schools. Schools which wanted a share of the Board's funds had to follow the syllabus set down for written examination. In due course a degree of curricular uniformity developed in Irish intermediate schools - regardless of whether they were Catholic or Protestant. There is little evidence of a "European dimension" in the examination syllabi laid down by the Intermediate Board. History and Geography as such were not initially offered in the examinations but aspects of history and geography were included in the English syllabus and in the syllabi for the various European languages.

While official documents relating to Intermediate education during the period make little reference to developments in other parts of Europe (apart from England, Scotland and Wales), there was one interesting intervention by European experts in 1899, which helped to ensure that Gaelic language and literature (or Celtic as it was then referred to) would continue to be treated as a serious academic subject in Intermediate schools. (From 1879, it had been included under the modern languages division as an option). A government Commission of Enquiry which reported on Intermediate education in 1899 (the Palles Commission) had inter alia raised the question as to whether Celtic language was a serious academic subject worthy of inclusion in an academic programme, and evidence had been submitted by academics within Ireland which had questioned the academic standing of the Celtic language. Thanks to counter-evidence given by prestigious Celtic scholars from other European countries, notably Dr. Kuno Meyer from Liverpool; Professor Zimmer of Greifswald, Prussia; Dr. Ernest Windisch of Leipsig; Dr. Stern of Berlin and Dr. Holger Pedersen of Copenhagen, the Commission took the point of view that Gaelic language and literature should remain an option within the Intermediate examination programme.[16] 12

Technical Instruction in the 19th century

Ireland lagged behind many other European countries in industrial development in the 19th century. But even England which had been the early pacemaker in the industrial revolution, neglected for most of the century to build up a structured, co-ordinated system of technical education. However, there were signs at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, later confirmed at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, that British manufacturing products were being outclassed by the exhibits of some continental competitors, particularly Germany and France. Their success was popularly attributed to their more purposeful approach towards technical education. The Devonshire Commission in 1875 and the Samuelson Commission in 1884 surveyed developments in European countries as well as in England. They concluded that England needed to adopt much more serious measures to promote a developed system of technical education. Technical education had been equally neglected in Ireland, but since Ireland was relatively undeveloped industrially, the neglect was not as apparent.[17] 13

It was not until the turn of the century that steps were taken to introduce a systematic scheme of technical instruction to Ireland. In 1899 the Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act was passed and this resulted in the setting up of a Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. Under the terms of the act, the newly established local authorities (set up by statute in 1898) would be responsible for providing and administering technical instruction in their areas. Technical Instruction thus became the only area of education in Ireland where the administration and control was in the hands of an elected local authority. In

this respect, technical education was and continues to be much more in line with educational structures in other European countries.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, a number of efforts were made by the Westminster government to streamline the local administration of Irish primary and intermediate education and to introduce a local education authority structure based on county and borough councils, but these attempts were opposed by the Catholic church authorities who were determined to retain their control of primary and intermediate education at local level. To this day, the control of primary and secondary schools remains largely in the hands of the churches.[18] [14]

University Education in Ireland in the 19th century.

The oldest university in Ireland is Trinity College, Dublin which was founded in 1591 as part of the Tudor monarchy's policy of colonization and therefore it was a Reformation foundation. The original grant of Queen Elizabeth I made it clear that Trinity College was to be based on the Oxbridge model - "we license the provost and fellows of the said college that they may establish amongst themselves whatever well-constituted laws they may perceive in either of our universities of Cambridge or Oxford, provided that they shall consider them proper and suitable for themselves".[19] [15]

In 1795, Maynooth College was founded in Co Kildare to provide education for young men who wished to become Catholic priests. Following the spread of revolutionary ideas and fervour on the continent in the last quarter of the 18th century, political and ecclesiastical authorities became apprehensive about allowing Irish students to be exposed to the "contagion of sedition and infidelity"[20] [16] and in that year the government agreed to give direct funding for the establishment of a Catholic college at Maynooth.

The problem still remained of providing opportunities for university education for lay Catholics as the atmosphere and control of Trinity College remained essentially Protestant. It has already been mentioned that after Catholic Emancipation in 1829, the government supported a state-aided mixed system for elementary education. During this period in England, University College was established on Gower St. in London as an alternative university model to the Oxbridge tradition. This University which received its charter in 1836, was designed on more utilitarian lines than the earlier universities. Its curriculum incorporated much modern learning with a concern for its application to the contemporary social and industrial situation. London University was modelled on some of the new or reformed German universities, particularly Berlin University established in 1809 and the

universities at Bonn, Breslau and Munich.[21] These universities were subsequently to influence the development of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland - in Cork, Galway and Belfast.

In 1845 the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, introduced a Colleges Bill which provided for the setting up of the Queen's colleges. These colleges were to be non-denominational though religious facilities could be provided on a voluntary basis by private endowment. They were to be non-residential. The curriculum would be along modern utilitarian lines with three faculties - arts, law and medicine. The fees were to be low. But the Catholic Church opposed the new Colleges. Papal rescripts in 1847 and 1848 condemned the colleges as "harmful to religion". Rome at this time was very disturbed at the growing secularisation of European society and had hardened its position on mixed denominational education. In 1850, a third rescript was issued from Rome which condemned the colleges as 'detrimental to religion by reason of their grave and intrinsic dangers'. The rescript prohibited the clergy from taking up teaching appointments and urged the bishops to dissuade the laity from attending the "godless colleges".[22] 18

The opposition of the Catholic Church was effective, particularly in the case of the Queen's Colleges in Cork and Galway, where numbers never grew to the extent envisaged. The College in Belfast was more successful, located as it was in an area with a large Presbyterian population. In the 1850 rescript, the Pope had urged the Catholic hierarchy to set up a purely Catholic university on the lines of the University of Louvain in Belgium which had been reorganised in 1835. During the second half of the 19th century, there was ongoing pressure on the government to fund the establishment of a Catholic university in Ireland but the government refused to do so. The Catholic University in Dublin, whose first rector was John Henry Newman, never received government aid or support. It was not until 1908 that a satisfactory compromise was reached. Under the Irish Universities Act passed in that year a new National University of Ireland was set up. This was to be a federal university with the Queen's Colleges of Cork and Galway joined with the newly founded University College, Dublin. The National University was to be non-denominational and non-residential. While this solution was less than had been sought by the Catholic Church, the majority of the Catholic bishops felt that no more could be achieved and that because of their geographical situation and student intake the prevailing ethos of the colleges would be Catholic.[23] 19

It can be seen then that European influences were significant in the development of university education in Ireland. Trinity College, Dublin, which is currently celebrating its quatercentenary , was based on the Oxbridge model. The founding of Maynooth College resulted from the concern of government that young men educated for the priesthood in European seminaries might be tainted by revolutionary ideology following the French

revolution. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Queen's Colleges in Cork, Galway and Belfast were modelled on University College, London which was in turn modelled on the German Universities of Berlin, Bonn et. al.

Education in the Irish Free State after 1922.

After 1922, when the Irish Free State was founded and the six northern counties remained under British jurisdiction, education in the north and south of the country developed in very different directions. The Northern educational system came gradually into line with the system in the rest of the United Kingdom. Local education authorities were set up - as had been set up in England and Wales in 1902 - and the curriculum emphasis was influenced by developments in the rest of the U.K.[25 20]

In the Irish Free State, the education system was to be used as a tool for the revival of the Gaelic language, tradition, culture and history. In early 1922, on the eve of the transfer of power from British administration to the new Free State government, the new chief executive officer for education stated the following new direction for education policy:

> In the administration of Irish education, it is the intention of the new government to work with all its might for the strengthening of the national fibre by giving the language, history, music and tradition of Ireland, their natural place in the life of Irish schools.[26 21]

The new Taoiseach (Prime Minister) was clear that the role of the new Minister for Education would be "to mark the Gaelicisation ..... of our whole culture .... to make our nation separate and distinct and something to be thought of."[27 22] At primary and secondary school levels, the Gaelic language became a compulsory subject. History was taught from a nationalist viewpoint and subjects such as music and literature were taught from an Irish perspective.

While formally and constitutionally the new state recognised the separation of Church and State, in practice the views of the Catholic Church had a great deal of influence over the day to day lives of the population. After 1922, all national (primary) and secondary schools were under denominational control, the vast majority of them under the control of the Catholic church authorities. It is also of some significance that in the period from 1922 to the 1960s, many commissions and committees of enquiry on educational issues were chaired by Catholic clergymen. (Under British administration before 1922, the chairmen of such commissions were more usually members of the nobility or senior members of the judiciary).

During the early decades of the new Free State, the evidence would suggest that as regards primary and secondary curriculum, developments in the rest of Europe were ignored. The only report of the period in the area of primary and secondary education which refers to

practice in other European countries was the Report of the Committee of Inspection of Primary Schools in 1927.[23] The Chairman of this committee was Rev. Lambert McKenna, a Jesuit. As chairman of the committee, he produced a detailed statement on systems of Primary school inspection in other countries - Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany (Prussia and Bavaria), Holland, Italy and Scotland. However, educational practices in these countries were not to influence Irish education for many decades to come and the curricula of both primary and secondary schools until the 1960s were to remain firmly based in the ideology of cultural nationalism.

In the area of technical education, the situation was somewhat different. In 1926, a commission on Technical Education was set up "to examine fully how far trade and industry, including our main industry of Agriculture, are being kept back through lack of technical training and (to) advise as to how existing needs may be most effectively met".[24] The members of the Commission included Professor Rohn, President of the Federal Polytechnicum in Zurich, Switzerland and Nils Fredriksson a member of the Swedish Board of Education. The report reviewed practices relating to vocational and technical training and to apprenticeships in many European countries as well as in Australia and South Africa and some of the recommendations of the Comission were based on the experience of other countries. Following the publication of the report of the Commission on Technical Education, legislation was introduced to reform vocational and technical education in Ireland. The Vocational Education Act of 1930 gave a new boost to vocational and technical education and provided new structures and approaches for continuation (general) education for 14 to 16 year olds.

After World War 2, many European countries introduced major educational reform. Specifically, free post-primary education was introduced and the notion of equality of educational opportunity for all became more widely accepted. In Ireland in the late 1940s a number of reports were prepared which addressed the issue of free post-primary education for all, as had occurred in England under the 1944 Act and in Northern Ireland under the 1947 Act. However, no action was taken by the Irish government to introduce such measures until the late 1960s.

European Influences in the 1960s.

It was not until the 1960s that the situation began to change in Ireland. There is no doubt that our growing European involvement at that time was a major factor in helping to bring about change. The period saw Ireland increasing its links with international organisations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and OECD, and hopes of joining the EEC were high in the early 1960s. Irish representatives participated in international conferences and symposia on educational affairs which tended to give a wider perspective and

reduce insularity. Irish teachers also began to participate in organised educational visits to Europe and the U.S. and the Irish section of the European Association of Teachers was founded in 1962.[29 25]

Moreover, significant attitudinal changes were taking place in Irish society generally. The publication in 1958 of a government White Paper on Economic Expansion led to the First Economic Programme and to changed attitudes to economic and industrial development. Economists were now emphasising education as an economic investment rather than taking the traditional view of education as a consumer service. This approach was also evident in other European countries and economists such as John Vaizey in England had a considerable influence on economic and educational thinking in Ireland at that time.

A major landmark in Irish educational history in the 20th century was the publication in 1965 of the OECD sponsored report "Investment in Education".[26 30] It was a detailed analysis of the education system, fact-finding and analytical in character and was to lay the basis for informed decision-making in education. Many of its findings pointed to the need for radical reform of the system. For example, it found that over 55% of a cohort left before completing junior cycle post-primary. Other findings highlighted the extent of the social imbalance in the participation rates of pupils at both second and third level. The report also showed that the curriculum being followed in secondary schools was in the traditional secondary grammar tradition with little emphasis on aesthetic or practical/technical subjects and with very few boys taking a modern continental language at the Leaving Certificate - an exam taken at the end of secondary education. (Only 200 boys obtained an honours grade in a continental language at the Leaving Cert. in 1963).

Changes in Education in the past 30 years

Changes in second and third level education in Ireland in the past 30 years have been wideranging. Free post-primary education was introduced in 1967 - under this scheme, the majority of secondary schools no longer charged tuition fees and free transport was introduced for pupils who lived more than three miles away from the nearest post-primary school. The government, influenced by developments in other parts of Europe, adopted a policy of encouraging comprehensive education, particularly at junior cycle post-primary level. Some new state-owned comprehensive schools were built but these (and their successor community schools) still form only a small proportion of second-level schools. Interestingly enough, even the new so-called comprehensive and community schools are religiously controlled. Although built and owned by the state, the Catholic and Protestant church authorities respectively have a major say in the appointment of Boards of Management and in the appointment of staff.

A third-level grants scheme, based on family income and size of family was also introduced in the 1960s. New Regional Technical Colleges were built in a number of towns throughout the country and two new National Institutes for Higher Education (which were to emphasise technological subjects) were set up in Limerick and Dublin. The numbers of full-time students attending second and third level education increased dramatically during the subsequent 25 years as the following table shows:[27]

Number of Pupils in Full-time Education in Ireland

	1964	**1988/9**
1st Level	496,000	568,000
2nd Level	129,500	341,800
3rd Level	16,800	63,000
Total	**642,000**	**973,000**

In the area of curriculum, European developments were also to influence the situation in Ireland. Following the publication of the Plowden Report in England the 1960s, there was considerable debate in Ireland about changing the primary curriculum. From 1922 onwards, the curriculum had been quite rigid, with a compulsory written Primary Certificate examination at the end of primary schooling. (This examinations focussed on Irish, English and Arithmetic). In 1967, the Primary Certificate examination was abolished and in 1971 a radically reformed new Curriculum for Primary schools was introduced. This curriculum was based on a child-centred approach to education with much emphasis on experiential and activity-based learning. A major programme of school buildings was undertaken and the Irish school architecture of the 1970s and 1980s owes a lot to European and American influences.[32 28]

Recent Curriculum Review

More recently, again in line with developments in other countries, there have been calls for a review of the primary curriculum. Echoes of the "back to basics" movement of other countries can be heard in this demand, but a recently published (1990) Review of the Primary Curriculum in Ireland supports the emphasis and approach of the 1971 curriculum while making recommendations of a relatively minor nature in certain areas.[33 29] The more stringent "objectives" approach of the National Curriculum in England and Northern Ireland and the associated assessment at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16 have not been recommended. Those of us who had hoped that the Review Body would recommend the introduction of a modern continental language at primary level were disappointed. The Review Body decided against recommending this, stating that "the arguments relating to time and curriculum overload as well

as the demands of the two languages on the present curriculum were particularly influential in reaching this decision".[34] (It is disconcerting to realise that Ireland is at the bottom of the European league in terms of the percentage of people who can speak a language other than their own. By their own admission, 80% of Irish people cannot speak any other European language. 17% can speak one other language and 3% can speak two).[30]

At post-primary level, the issue of curriculum continues to be a live one in Ireland. The expansion of second-level education and participation by less academically-biased pupils meant that the traditional emphasis on an academic curriculum came under fire. While individual syllabuses were revised and some new subjects were introduced in the 1960s and 1970s to take account of the changing demands, there is still a conviction that further curricular change is necessary. During the past five years, work on revising the post-primary curriculum has been carried out by advisory bodies set up by the Minister for Education. The first of these - the Curriculum and Examinations Board - set up in 1984, issued a number of Discussion Papers and consultative documents and in 1987 made recommendations to the Minister. The deliberations of this Board were influenced by curricular developments in other European countries. Mentioned in particular were publications on curriculum from England, Scotland and Northern Ireland; France; Sweden (1980 Compulsory School Guidelines); Norway (Monsterplan) and Denmark.[31][35] The Curiculum and Examinations Board was replaced by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in 1987 and as a result of the recommendations of this Council, a new junior cycle curriculum and examination was launched in 1989 and will be examined for the first time in 1992. In the introduction to the Teachers' Guide to the Junior Certificate it is stated: [32]

> It is significant that the Junior Certificate will be awarded for the first time in 1992, a watershed year for Ireland and the European Community. The Junior Certificate is intended to play an important part in preparing our people for full and productive lives as citizens, both of Ireland and the European Community.

Elsewhere in the document, the importance of the European dimension in Irish education is highlighted:

> Ireland's membership of the Europan Community serves as a backdrop to the Junior Certificate and provides a wider context for its implementation. Teachers are encouraged to highlight the economic, social and cultural implications of this for all our people and to stress the challenges and opportunities which this provides. Subjects such as Modern European Languages, Technology and other technical subjects, Irish, Business Studies and History and Geography are particularly important in this sense but all subject-teaching should incorporate this European dimension. [33]

Ireland's commitment to the European Community has been strong since Ireland became a member of the EC and remains so. Various attitude surveys carried out on behalf of the Community show that the Irish people score highly in comparison to other countries. This may

not be unrelated to the fact that Ireland has been a net beneficiary from European funds in many areas. During the past decade many educational and training initiatives have been undertaken in Ireland with the aid of European funding. While the Treaty of Rome precludes the EC from intervening in the area of education and allows intervention only in the area of training the interpretation of training has been sufficiently broad to enable many schools to benefit from European funds. Pilot projects on Transition from School to Work, initiated through the community in the late 1970s and early 1980s, developed in Ireland in subsequent years to the point where in 1989 there were over 20,000 young people in our post primary schools following Vocational Preparation and Training courses funded by the European Social Fund. (There are about 65,000 young people in a single age cohort).

The vast majority of courses in our Regional Technical Colleges are supported from similar funds and in recent years a small number of selected courses at university have also benefited. Educational institutions in Ireland are involved in schemes such as Petra, Lingua and Erasmus as well as in shorter one off projects such as Tenet - a gender equality initiative in teacher education which was initiated and coordinated by an academic from an Irish teacher education institution. The recently introduced Tempus programmes to encourage cooperative initiatives with the former eastern bloc countries of Europe are also being supported by educational and training institutions here.

Conclusion

An overview of educational developments in Ireland during the past 200 years shows that the extent to which European developments influenced education varied from time to time. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the educational views of major European educationalists such as Rousseau, Froebel and Pestalozzi influenced the thinking of some individuals, but it was not until the end of the 19th century that these views influenced the national system of education. The curriculum changes which were introduced in 1900 were largely based on educational theories which had swept France during earlier decades. European influences can also be detected in the development of technical and university education in the 19th century. After Ireland became an independent country in 1922, educational policy was strongly influenced by cultural nationalist ideology and there is little evidence of European influences on either primary or secondary education during the early decades of independence.

It was not until the 1960s when Ireland became increasingly active in the European arena that major educational changes were to occur. Developments during the past 30 years owe much

to European influences. These can be detected at all levels of education – first, second and third levels - and the relatively recently introduced programs funded by the Commission will no doubt play a continuing role in building links between the Irish education system and that of the rest of Europe.

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