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Citizenship education in Irish secondary schools: The influence of curriculum content, school culture and stakeholder perspectives.

By

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B.Sc., H.D.E.

Thesis presented in fulfilment of the regulations governing the award of the degree of Ph.D.

Submitted to the National University of Ireland, Cork.

Department of Applied Social Studies,

College of Art, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences.

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Supervised by Dr. Cathal O'Connell and Dr. Shirley Martin

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Declaration

I certify that this thesis is all my own work. Where I have used the work of others, it is acknowledged/referenced accordingly.

Abstract

This research interrogates the status of citizenship education in Irish secondary schools. The following questions are examined. Within the school culture what value is accorded to citizenship education? What impact does school culture have on citizenship education? What value is accorded to each of the curricular subjects, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)? To what extent are the cognitive and non-cognitive subjects affirmed? This study posits the holistic education of students for their participation as citizens and, for their enhanced well-being, as important in determining the future direction of Irish society.

The importance of curriculum and school culture in fostering a school climate that is supportive of the social, ethical, personal, political and emotional development of the student is explored. This interrogation of citizenship education takes place within the context of the consideration of the concept of citizenship. This study understands the concept of citizenship as dynamic and constantly evolving in response to societal change. This is an understanding of citizenship that is increasingly concerned with issues such as: globalisation; cosmopolitanism; the threat of global risk; environment sustainability; socio-economic inequality; and recognition/misrecognition of new identities and group rights.

The pedagogical philosophy of Paulo Freire which seeks to educate for the conscientisation and humanisation of the student is central to this research. Educating for "conscientisation" enables students to engage in the "*act* of *being conscious* in relation to the world" (Lankshear, 1993: 110). Education for "humanisation" supports "humans [in their] ontological vocation to become more fully human" (Freire, 1972: 20, 21). This study is guided by Freire's philosophy of education to help formulate an approach for education for citizenship in Ireland today.

Using a mixed methods approach, data on the views and insights of students, parents, teachers and school principals was collected. In relation to Irish secondary school education, the study reached three main conclusions. (1) The educational stakeholders rate the subjects of the non-cognitive curriculum poorly. The priority is

primarily on the production of graduates in the mould of "rational economic actors" (Lynch *et al.*, 2007: 5). (2) The subjects Civic, Social and Political education (CSPE), and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) command a low status in the secondary school setting. The research found that these subjects are neither a concern nor a priority for the majority of students, parents, teachers and school leaders. (3) The day-to-day school climate is influenced by an educational philosophy that is instrumentalist in character. This is due to the dominance of the *points* system. Elements of school culture such as: the ethic of care; the informal curriculum; holistic education for life after school; and affirmation of school personnel, are not sufficiently prioritised in supporting education for citizenship. The research concludes that education for citizenship needs to be given greater priority and made more robust within the overall curriculum, and culture and ethos of the education system.

The thesis concludes with a number of recommendations for the re-imagination of citizenship education in Irish secondary schools.

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I sincerely thank my supervisors, Dr. Shirley Martin and Dr. Cathal O'Connell. Their kindness, understanding, patience, guidance, support and advice are deeply appreciated. The manner in which they shared their knowledge, academic expertise and experiences with me in relation to my research topic was particularly helpful in shaping my approach to this research. For me, the opportunity to work with both of them on this Ph.D. project has been, in itself, a most wonderful learning experience.

I offer my sincere thanks to all the students, parents, teachers and school principals for giving so generously of their time for the many interviews and providing a rich source of material for analysis. This research is a tribute to their willingness and co-operation in sharing with me their opinions, experiences and insights regarding aspects of Irish secondary education.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Anne. Her patience, kindness and words of encouragement were invaluable in helping me complete this study.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines the quality of education for citizenship being offered to students in Irish secondary schools. This topic is explored from the perspective of the pedagogical philosophy of Paulo Freire which seeks to affirm education for the humanisation and conscientisation of the student.

Over the past fifty years, the Irish educational system is transitioning from a traditional/classical influence, and becoming more guided by the values of neoliberalism and the marketplace (Limond, 2007; O'Sullivan, 2005). Neither influence definitively captures what education is for. In this context, this research seeks to interrogate how well education for the humanisation and conscientisation of the student is happening. That is, this study explores how well students are prepared for citizenship, in terms of their social and personal empowerment as democratic citizens, and for availing of opportunities for enhanced well-being.

1.2 Author Rationale and Biography

The author who has many years experience as teacher and school Principal at second-level education, recently returned to university to study in the School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork. These studies link with the knowledge and experiences gained as an interested participant in, and observer of, the Irish secondary school system. The author was afforded opportunities to explore many current issues relevant to the education field before undertaking this research. One such area of interest was an exploration of the quality of the socio-emotional relationships that exist between the school institution and students, parents and communities, and how such relationships impact on the quality of education imparted. A second topic centred on an analysis of the deficits of the Irish educational system through drawing on various theorists regarding the essentials of an "Ideal" education. Lastly, the author interrogated the influence of neoliberalism and its positing of education as a commodified product (Lynch and Moran, 2006).

These studies combined with the author's experiences of working in the school setting and, personal interactions with students generated a particular interest with

regard to the quality of citizenship education offered in Irish secondary schools. That is, this study examines how well the educational system prepares students for their general well-being and participation as citizens.

1.3 Focus of Research

This examination of the educational system explores how Irish secondary schools educate students to take their place in society as citizens. The understanding of citizenship education is perceived in this study as meaning the educating of students to enable them to be politically literate and, socially and personally empowered to both participate in the "practices", and acquire the "status" of citizenship (Isin and Wood, 1999: 4). Isin and Wood describe such "practices" as pertaining to the "cultural, symbolic and economic", while the "status" refers to "a bundle of rights and duties (civil, political and social) that define an individual's membership in a polity" (*Ibid*.). This thesis seeks to explore education for citizenship by utilising the work and pedagogical concepts of Paulo Freire that support an education that prioritises learning for "critical consciousness" (conscientisation) and humanisation (Freire, 1972). Freire has argued that both of these educative dimensions are essential and important elements of a holistic education that empower students to "engage in relationships with others and with the world" (*Ibid*., 1976: 3). Education for "critical consciousness" and humanisation fosters and nurtures the social, ethical, personal, political and emotional development of the student. It is an education that is essentially about facilitating the "becoming" of the student, "the gradual discovery of what it means to be human" (Ó Súilleabháin, 1986: 91 cited in Drudy and Lynch, 1993: 29).

Educating for critical consciousness is the teaching of students to become critical thinkers who are capable of "the *act* of practicing critical thought; in the act of *being conscious* in relation to the world" (Lankshear, 1993: 110; italics in original). Such a way of viewing the world reflects "the highest development of thought and action" and enables people to "think holistically and critically about their conditions" (Shor, 1993: 32). Education for humanisation is based on the belief that "humans have an ontological vocation to become more fully human" (Freire, 1972: 20, 21). That is, humans "live humanly to the extent that they affirm and express their distinctively

human powers" (Lankshear, 1993: 97). Humanisation is achieved through "dialogue" which is "the encounter between humans, mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (Freire, 1972: 61). The Freirean concept of "dialogue" is central to the achievement of humanisation. The emphasis is on the empowerment of the student for "being" in relation with the world and thus "becoming" more fully human.

The concepts of conscientisation and humanisation are intertwined in that one is dependent on the other. This research on education for citizenship places particular emphasis on the need to re-conceptualise the approach to the preparation of citizens in Irish schools. It is considered insufficient to examine citizenship education merely from the perspective of curricular content and pedagogy. The intention is to advocate for a different school culture in terms of fostering a school climate that prioritises education for conscientisation and humanisation. This approach to education is consistent with that of Sen (1999) who regards personal "development" of individuals as "a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy" (*Ibid.*: 3). The exercise of such "freedoms" confers on people the agency and capability for realising one's full potential as a citizen, and for a positive experience of well-being throughout the life course. This emphasis on the empowerment of students in schools seeks to prepare citizens to participate:

> in economic, social and political actions (varying from taking part in the market to being involved, directly or indirectly, in individual or joint activities in political or other spheres) (*Ibid.*: 19).

This research will explore the part played by school culture, and curricula in the preparation of citizens through fostering the empowerment of students in the school setting.

1.4 Education for Citizenship

Education for citizenship is one element that gives "stability to civil society by inculcating norms of trust and responsibility" (Olssen *et al.*, 2004: 275), as well as developing in individuals the abilities for "intervening in reality as makers and

transformers of the world" (Lankshear, 1993: 99). Lynch (2010) asserts that in contemporary Ireland, there is a need to:

> pose serious questions for the future direction of society. We need an engaged intellectual debate about what model of society we want to create, and what type of society we wish to avoid. . . . Most of us have become morally complacent, happy to live in our comfort zone with little serious commitment to altering the deep injustices at the heart of Irish society (*Ibid*.: 2).

This thesis considers one possible element of that "future direction" through the facilitation of a discourse and reflection on some of the essential elements of education for citizenship. Drudy and Lynch (1993) argue that Irish secondary schools are preoccupied with "the principles of human capital theory, informed by what might be called technological functionalism" (*Ibid*.: 214). Technological functionalism leads to educating both for the maximisation of grade accumulation in state examinations and the provision of utilities to support the economy. Limond (2007) argues that in Ireland, "the seemingly relentless juggernaut that threatens to bend all education to the neoliberal imperative of production, trade and consumption looks set to roll on" (*Ibid*.: 174). Neoliberal influences can be discerned in the Irish educational field through the prioritisation of: the market in solving educational problems; the expectation that wealth is derived from ideas generated by the "knowledge economy"; and the preparation of new workers and consumers to further advance the production of wealth (*Ibid.*).

Due to this overarching emphasis, it is difficult for many of the pertinent qualities of a holistic education to be imparted to Irish students. It can be argued that two essential qualities that matter for one's experience of citizenship are: (a) the ability to be an independent thinker thus being enabled to participate fully as a citizen in a democracy; and (b) social and personal development to support the experiencing of an enhanced well-being throughout the lifecycle.

1.5 Discourse on Citizenship

In April 2006, the Irish government established a taskforce to identify ways of supporting and encouraging active citizenship, and its outcome the "Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship" was published. The Report noted that contemporary Ireland is experiencing vast change as there is: "greater diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds"; generally better health and educational services; greater expectation on the part of citizens for information on rights; and economic prosperity and many opportunities for citizens to prosper in their personal lives (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007: 1). In hindsight, much commentary in Ireland questions this description of Irish society as Ireland has just experienced an intense period of economic growth (the Celtic Tiger period) which came to an abrupt end in 2008. The publication of the Report on the Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007) sought to advocate for a "genuinely embracing and inclusive vision . . . for the full realisation of democratic values . . . in a new Ireland" (*Ibid.*: 1). The Report is relevant to the work of this thesis as it makes specific reference to the role of education in cultivating values of active citizenship (*Ibid.*: 21). Specifically, the Report recommends the strengthening of "the status and role of the CSPE"[1], and the introduction of citizenship education at senior cycle (*Ibid.*). While the Report does not have an overarching view of the role of education for citizenship, it refers to the lack of engagement in the democratic process by particular groups:

> There is a clear and growing problem about the level of participation in the democratic process, in particular amongst younger people, including students living away from home and disadvantaged groups (*Ibid.*: 16).

This reference indicates an understanding of democratic participation as consisting only of electoral politics. The Report posits youth citizenship as a democratic deficit.

Education has a role to play in determining how citizens "rule as well as being ruled" (Freire, 1972). The quality of an educational system impacts on the level of civil involvement in society as well as the social and personal well-being of the

[1] CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education) is a subject taken by students for each of the first three years of secondary school.

members of that society. *Social Justice Ireland*[2] in a document outlining the future priorities for Irish society, exhorted policymakers that when drawing up an agenda for educational reform to be mindful that "the primary focus of education is to prepare students for life, not just for work" (Healy *et al*., 2013: 228).

Olssen *et al.* (2004) argue that an educational system that has "education for citizenship as its primary aim" is essential to "the maintenance of a robust form of participatory democracy" (*Ibid*.: 245). It can be argued that the realisation of a robust form of participatory democracy equally demands a robust form of education for citizenship. This research endeavours to signpost the critical elements of a robust education for citizenship. The fundamental elements of an education that seeks to educate for the empowerment of individuals enabling them to "think critically and analytically about the society they live in", will be examined in this study (Lynch, 2010: 14). The attainment of these educational objectives is dependent on "a vibrant, dynamic and creative educational system (Quinn, 2012b: 125), that enables educationalists to impart an education that is holistic and, proactive in the empowerment of students.

1.6 Reform Initiative in Irish Education

The Irish Department of Education and Skills published "A Framework for Junior Cycle" (October, 2012) which set out a new framework of study for Junior Cycle students (age range: 12 to 15 years). This initiative which was due to commence in September 2014, is presently stalled due to an industrial dispute between the teacher unions and the Department of Education and Skills. It was intended to introduce significant changes in curricular content and student assessment. There will be opportunities for individual schools to draw up their own school-based curricula for various courses with an emphasis on examination of students' progress through continuous assessment methods rather than the former system where much importance was attached to "rote learning and on rehearsing questions for the examination" (Department of Education and Skills, 2012: 1). This may be evidence

[2] As an independent think tank, Social Justice Ireland is a research resource in the area of social justice and public policy. The organisation seeks to provide accurate social analysis of the current situation on an ongoing basis and identify effective policy proposals and address challenges.

of positive and progressive change in the provision of Irish secondary education which seeks to educate for students' needs for employment, living, well-being and independent thinking. The new curriculum initiative is underpinned by eight principles and twenty-four learning statements.[3] While teaching for literacy and numeracy skills figure prominently, importance is also attached to the key skills of: Managing Myself; Staying Well; Communicating; Being Creative; Working with Others; and Managing Information and Thinking. This initiative is a promising indication of worthwhile change in the area of curricular development.

The Irish Minister for Education and Skills has signalled that there is "an appetite for real reform" and "hunger for radical change" of the educational system (Quinn, 2012b: 124). He acknowledges that education is not only about "boosting economic growth" but also about "helping students reach their potential and prepare for citizenship in a rapidly changing society" (*Ibid*.: 125). These sentiments expressed by a government Minister may indicate a willingness to examine the present education system.

The "values, priorities, assumptions and beliefs" of a society's citizens are fundamental to what an educational system should seek "to preserve, communicate and perpetuate [from] generation to generation" (Limond, 2007: 170). Therefore, it is appropriate to reflect on the Irish educational system and to interrogate how well the objective of education for citizenship is being achieved. A quality education for citizenship prioritises the affirmation and inculcation of values, ethics and competencies that enable young people to: participate meaningfully as citizens; avail of life-enhancing opportunities; possess a critical literacy for democratic participation; and to be sufficiently informed to interrogate on ethical matters (Freire, 1972; Noddings, 2005; Giroux, 2011).

1.7 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to examine how well Irish secondary schools educate students for citizenship. While it is acknowledged that education for citizenship

[3] See National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) website: http://ncca.ie/framework/doc/NCCA-Junior-Cycle.pdf

involves an input from many sources such as home, school, community, society, peers, etc., it can be argued that an education cannot be termed "holistic" unless it prepares students for citizenship. Accordingly, this study involves an analysis of particular aspects of school life that have a bearing on the successful accomplishment of a holistic education for students' development as citizens. These three key areas are: (1) the value accorded by educational stakeholders (students, parents, and teachers) to both the cognitive and non-cognitive curricula in Irish secondary schools; (2) the perceptions of stakeholders with regard to two particular subjects, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE); and (3) how the day-to-day cultural dimensions affecting students and teachers in the school setting impact on citizenship education. The study is based on acquiring the perspectives of key stakeholders: students, parents, teachers and school Principals.

The subjects, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) have been selected for particular examination as it can be argued that both their curricular aspirations and pedagogical methodologies seek to educate for the well-rounded development of the individual. This is not to deny however, that other school subjects also impact on citizenship education. The curricular objectives for CSPE and SPHE are commendable[4] as both subjects seek to educate for the social, personal, political and ethical development of students. This research seeks to interrogate how these subjects are experienced in the reality of the classroom.

A quality citizenship education impacts positively on building a strong democracy (Olssen *et al.*, 2004). Aspin (1997) asserts that schools must be places where students:

- gain the necessary knowledge for engaging in the "democratic form of life"
- are presented with opportunities for involvement and practice in democracy in the day-to-day activities of the school

[4] See website for Department of Education and Skills.

- experience the democratic organisation and administration of the affairs of the school (*Ibid.*: 254)

This study will examine other forces that influence the educational field, such as, the "pressurising agent" of the marketplace (Wilson, 1997: 340). Olssen (2010) refers to the influence of the market in relation to education as follows:

> . . . the operations of the market [prove] to be particularly pernicious . . . one is driven to reliance upon considerations of economic costs and benefits as criteria for the setting of educational goals . . . (*Ibid.*: 5).

The study looks beyond the current educational priorities whereby young people are predominantly educated as "rational economic actors" (Lynch *et al*., 2007). The study examines how well the political, social, personal and emotional development of students is prioritised in secondary schools. Educational theorists assert that a rigorous and comprehensive programme for citizenship education is underpinned by teaching for caring, critical consciousness and democracy in the school setting (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1988, 2011; Noddings, 2005; Lynch, 1999; Lynch *et al*., 2007; O'Brien, 2008). Therefore, the research seeks to probe the quality of the interactional relations among the members of the school community and their impact on imparting a quality education for citizenship.

1.8 Research Questions

This study attaches particular significance to listening to the voices of the key educational stakeholders. The voices of the students and parents are specially sought out as it can be argued that these stakeholders are rarely granted opportunities to contribute to educational debate. The quality of education for citizenship in Irish schools is examined through asking the following research questions:

- How do the educational stakeholders value the subjects of both the cognitive and non-cognitive curricula in terms of status?

- What are the perceptions of the stakeholders with regard to two particular subjects Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)?
- How do the day-to-day cultural dimensions affecting students and teachers in the school setting impact on citizenship education?

1.9 Summary of Methods of Data Collection

1.9.1 Overview of Methodology

In seeking to answer the research questions, the study adopted a mixed methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative data collection was undertaken through interviews with students, parents, teachers and school Principals. The quantitative research involved an online survey of first year students of University College, Cork. This survey was facilitated through the services of the IT department of the University in accessing first year students through the use of an email distribution list. The survey contributed to "methodological triangulation" (Cohen *et al*., 2011: 196) and consolidated the reliability of the data obtained through interviews.

1.9.2 Research Sample

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the respondents to be interviewed for the data collection. Four secondary schools were selected and the following stakeholders associated with each school were interviewed: two students; two parents; two teachers; and the school Principal. A total of twenty-eight respondents participated in the qualitative study. The school Principals identified the students, parents and teachers to be interviewed by the researcher. The quantitative online survey drew responses from 290 first year university students out of a total of 3000 students (10% response rate) of the first year cohort at University College, Cork, in the 2011-2012 academic year. All first year students received the survey via their student email.

1.10 Data Collection

Data Collection Stage 1: In-Depth Interviews with Students (n=8)

Four female and four male students were interviewed. The interview method used was standardised open-ended interview. The students, who were interviewed in the Autumn of 2010, had graduated from secondary school the previous June. At the time of interview, the average student age was eighteen years.

Data Collection Stage 2: In-Depth Interviews with Parents (n=8)

The interview method used was standardised open-ended interview. Each parent had children attending secondary school at the time of interview. Five fathers and three mothers were interviewed.

Data Collection Stage 3: In-Depth Interviews with Teachers (n=8)

The selection process of two teachers from each school ensured that one of the teachers had a particular interest in the non-cognitive curricular area and the other had an interest in the cognitive area of education. Four male and four female teachers participated in this fieldwork. The interview method used was standardised open-ended interview.

Data Collection Stage 4: In-Depth Interview with School Principals (n=4)

Three male Principals and one female Principal were interviewed. These Principals represent the following school types: vocational school (co-educational); community college (co-educational); all-girls secondary school under religious patronage; and an all-boys secondary school under religious patronage. The interview method used was standardised open-ended interview.

Data Collection Stage 5: Online Survey with students (n=290)

The decision to conduct this survey was taken to help consolidate the findings collected through student interviews and to further affirm the student voice. First year students of all faculties at University College, Cork were invited to participate online. The majority of these students had recently completed their secondary education.

1.11 Outline of Thesis

Chapter Two: Education for Citizenship: In this chapter, the essential elements of a holistic education are explored. MacIntyre (1987) proposes that most educational systems have two purposes, the first being to "shape the young person so that he or she may fit into some social role and function that requires recruits" (*Ibid*.: 16) and the second purpose of education is to teach "young persons how to think for themselves, how to acquire independence of mind [and] how to be enlightened" (*Ibid*.). This research concentrates on the second purpose and in particular on how that understanding of education impacts on preparing citizens. In this chapter, the case is made for a robust citizenship education in Irish schools supported by the writings of Dewey, Freire, Giroux, Noddings and Kelly. The research and work of contemporary academics is also discussed with particular focus on educationalists such as Gleeson, O'Sullivan, Trant, O'Brien, Lynch and Olssen.

Chapter Three: Citizenship Education in Twenty-First Century Ireland: This chapter reviews contemporary Ireland, and perspectives on the Irish educational system. The principles that underpin education and pedagogy in the secondary schools are discussed. The prevalence of market values in Irish society and the ensuing repercussions for the citizenship education in schools are explored. Lynch *et al.*, (2007) assert that the preoccupation of schools is with the facilitation of competition and individualism towards the production of "rational economic actors". The measurement of educational success through instrumentalist assessment methods such as grades, *points* accumulation and league tables is discussed (Gleeson, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2005; Coolahan, 1981). The assertion of Drudy and Lynch (1993) that the Irish educational system has been influenced by "the principles of human capital theory, informed by what might be called technological functionalism" is examined (*Ibid.*: 214). The works of Freire, Giroux and Noddings, in particular, provide the theoretical basis for signposting possible pedagogies for citizenship education that affirm education for well-being, and social and personal empowerment.

Some European dimensions are explored with regard to citizenship education. This is considered important as emerging discourses on citizenship challenge the Irish educational system in ways that demand that due recognition be accorded to

developments in citizenship education across European societies. The dimensions discussed are: the role of "communities of practice"; the impact of migration on national identity; developments in cross-curricular approaches; and the Eurydice report.

This chapter also examines the importance of the democratisation of the student voice in the school setting and how this affects education for citizenship. In this respect the relational culture of the school is discussed with a view to examining how it impacts on teaching for citizenship. This chapter seeks to discuss the secondary school not only from the perspective of educating for the promotion of economic development but also for the empowerment of students for coping with the demands of the modern world.

Chapter Four: Methodology and Research Methods: This chapter provides an overview of the research methods used. The rationale for using a mixed methods research design is discussed together with the efforts undertaken to consolidate the research findings through the process of triangulation. The specifics of the sampling procedures adopted are detailed. The approach taken for the collection and analysis of data is described. A profile account of each of the schools and respondents participating in the research is included. Information concerning the schedule of interviews and research questions is provided. Finally, limitations regarding the research design for this study are listed.

Chapter Five: Findings: Citizenship Education: How Curriculum Matters: This Chapter differentiates between the cognitive and non-cognitive curricula in secondary schools. The research findings show the level of value accorded to subjects of each of these curricula. The findings record the attitudes and opinions of students, parents, teachers and school Principals concerning the status of the various subjects. Further findings detail the insights of students and parents on their perceptions of how various subjects on the curriculum are valued by the school authorities. The findings of this chapter, also, examine the type of external influences that impact on the work of the school.

Chapter Six: Findings: Fundamentals of Citizenship Education: Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE); Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE): The findings presented in this chapter specifically refer to factors that impact on the standing of both SPHE and CSPE as school subjects. Arguably, there is the expectation that these subjects contribute to teaching for citizenship, an important element of a holistic education. The responses and reflections of the educational stakeholders aired in this chapter help clarify critical elements of education for citizenship in Irish schools.

Chapter Seven: Findings: School Culture: This chapter explores some of the cultural dimensions of the school setting and how these affect education for citizenship. This is important as McLaughlin (2005) asserts that school ethos impacts on the implementation of education programmes for citizenship and, personal and social development (*Ibid.*: 307). The findings on school culture presented in this chapter link with the findings on school curricula of Chapters 5 and 6. These links help in understanding a holistic school approach to education for citizenship.

The following are examined: school caring practices; extra-curricular activities; the concentration of the school resources on examination preparation; school leadership; teacher morale; teachers as "transformative intellectuals"; and teachers as "thoughtful students of education". The findings help identify how school culture supports education for citizenship.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Recommendations: This Chapter outlines the main conclusions drawn from analysis of the data collected in this study. A number of recommendations are outlined and discussed with regard to citizenship education in Irish secondary schools.

Chapter 2

Education for Citizenship

2.1 Introduction

In the Irish educational system[5], formal learning for citizenship takes place up to the third year of secondary school, as the subject known as Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) is taught to the junior classes only.[6] The historical context of the Irish educational system means that the system has developed largely as a segregated, denominational one, with the Catholic Church being the biggest manager of schools. It follows then that the educating of students in values takes place "in the context of leading faith-based lives" (Charleton, 2008: 193). Charleton describes this situation as an "educational gap" for both denominational and non-denominational students and affirms the importance of education for citizenship as it:

> is needed in particular to help integrate young people into society so that they do not feel disaffected and alienated. It is also needed to help integrate the many minority cultural groups now living in Ireland, some of which have their own allegiances and practices (*Ibid.*: 194).

In this respect, schools have an important societal role, they are the "critical agents of social cohesion, the common glue that binds society together" (Bricker and Greenspan, 2001: 4 cited in Fullan, 2003a: 4).

The critical pedagogy as espoused by Giroux (2011) argues that due to the instrumentalism of contemporary education systems, there is a failure to recognise that education is important:

> not only for gainful employment but also for creating the formative culture of beliefs, practices, and social relations that enable individuals to wield power, learn how to govern, and nurture a democratic society that takes equality, justice, shared values, and freedom seriously (*Ibid.*: 4).

[5] "The Irish Educational system" refers to the system of education in the Republic of Ireland, unless stated otherwise.
[6] Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 of secondary school.

O'Brien (2008) concurs and points to the relevancy of this assertion specifically to Irish education where students:

> no longer receive their moral education through religion and have little alternative sources of ethical or critical modelling except perhaps through the "value-free" machinations of the contemporary economic market (*Ibid.*: 121).

It is argued in this thesis that Irish educational authorities should adopt an approach to educating for citizenship that is guided by the pedagogy of Freire (1972), an approach that challenges the "banking" system of education. Freire argues that the banking concept of education does not confer on students the capability to interrogate the complexities of day-to-day living. The banking system of education prioritises "the act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (*Ibid.*: 45). A rigorous and robust education for citizenship affords students the opportunity to be educated in the core values for living, and participating in meaningful ways in society as citizens.

This chapter explores the essential elements of education for citizenship. The approach taken is Freirean which seeks to educate for citizenship in a manner that empowers students socially, emotionally and personally to:

> engage in the process of forging their own autonomy . . . [which is] the process of becoming oneself, a process of maturing, of coming to be (Freire, 1998b: 98).

For the purposes of this study, education for citizenship is examined from two perspectives, that of the conscientisation and humanisation of the individual (Freire, 1972). Both attributes of education for citizenship are expressed in the following definition of education proposed by O'Sullivan (1986):

> The essence of education is "becoming", the gradual discovery of what it means to be human, and the search for personal identity which brings

individual autonomy within a community structure (*Ibid*.: 91 cited in Drury and Lynch, 1993: 29).

This study posits an education for citizenship that prioritises educating students for a deeper understanding of democracy to facilitate their involvement in their communities and societies at large. Such a "discussion . . . [seeks to] become purposeful and effective in bringing about worthwhile social change" (Olssen *et al*., 2004: 269).

Prior to undertaking a discussion of education for citizenship, the concept of citizenship and its various meanings are first interrogated. This interrogation in the context of the needs and issues of contemporary society will help provide an insight to what the priorities should be for citizenship education in the Irish school setting.

2.2 The Meaning of Citizenship

2.2.1 Historical Context

The concept of citizenship can be traced back to the ancient Greek notion of the civic republican understanding of citizenship which demanded "loyalty and engagement from citizens who [were] expected to live according to shared values and rules" (Dwyer, 2010: 18). This citizenship was patriarchal in nature where the involvement in self-rule by the male citizen-warrior and male property owner took precedence, while women, slaves and outsiders were excluded. The civic republican tradition continued with the expansion of the Roman Empire where it was more inclusive than in the Greek states, but was used as a form of social control as power was concentrated in the hands of wealthy Romans (Faulks, 2000). Civic republicanism continued to influence significant thinkers such as Machiavelli and Rousseau until the 18th century. The legacy of civic republicanism is still to be seen in the communitarian tradition of citizenship which rejects the individualism of liberalism and emphasises instead the "importance of community in shaping individual identity and wider moral or political thinking" (Dwyer, 2010: 25). The communitarian understanding of citizenship stresses the importance of duties, obligations and responsibilities for citizens within the membership of a community. However, the

importance of civic republicanism as a vision for citizenship began to fade in the late 17th and 18th centuries when the liberal tradition of citizenship began to emerge (Dwyer, 2010).

The emergence of the liberal tradition of citizenship resulted from challenges to the "arbitrary and tyrannical power of the state and its then embodiment, the monarch" (Dwyer, 2010: 20). The French Revolution (1789) is an example of such a challenge where citizens asserted their political rights. The freedom for citizens to lead "their lives free from any interference of an overbearing state" is central to liberalism (*Ibid.*). The promotion of civil and political rights allowed citizens to participate politically and challenge the decisions of government. Liberal citizenship which emphasises the freedom for citizens to pursue their self-interests is linked to membership of the nation and the development of capitalism (*Ibid.*). Delanty (2000) notes that there are two strands within liberalism:

> a right-wing libertarian strand of thinking, which stresses rights to own property and to conclude contracts, and a left-wing egalitarianism which promotes a state-based model of liberal citizenship aimed at reducing certain market-based inequalities via the recognition and protection of certain rights to state welfare provision (*Ibid.*, cited in Dwyer, 2010: 24).

The egalitarian liberal approach to citizenship was outlined by T. H. Marshall in the late 1940s. However, the work of Marshall was preceded by the emergence of a discourse on citizens' social rights in Great Britain in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A paper entitled "The Future of the Working Classes" published by Alfred Marshall in 1873 was particularly notable as it advocated state-based education as being central to participation in citizenship (Dwyer, 2010: 31). Between 1870 and 1920, Britain and Western European nations became involved in the provision of welfare for citizens. This was a response to the "emergence of a newly enfranchised labour movement, sections of which were becoming highly organised (*Ibid.*: 34). The granting of extensive social rights to citizens coincided with the establishment of the welfare state in the late 1940s.

In 1950, T. H. Marshall published his work which linked citizenship to the inclusion of rights to welfare. This inclusion of the social element of citizenship sought to combat the inequalities "generated by the continuing operation of an essentially capitalist market system" (*Ibid.*: 41).

Marshall (1992) in his seminal work "Citizenship and Social Class" (1950) defined citizenship as:

> a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed (*Ibid.*: 18).

Modern democratic citizenship is divided into three sets of rights: civil, political and social. The safeguarding of each set of rights is upheld by particular societal institutions. Marshall defines each element as follows. The civil element which is supported institutionally by courts of justice is:

> composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom - liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice (*Ibid.*: 8).

The political element of citizenship accords importance to:

> the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of such a body (*Ibid.*).

The institutions of parliament and local government are the ones most associated with the upholding of these rights. The social element of citizenship involves the following range of rights:

> from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society (*Ibid.*).

Social rights are protected by the institutions of education and welfare. For Marshall the securing of social rights in the twentieth century was indicative of success in striving for an "egalitarian form of citizenship" (Bellamy, 2008: 50). However, Bellamy argues that this progress has become somewhat tamed due to "the economic downturn and restructuring of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s" (*Ibid.*).

2.2.2 Emerging Discourses on Citizenship

Marshall's concept of citizenship seeks to curtail the excesses of capitalism through a redistribution of resources that is based on the rights of the citizen. This caused a tension between democratic principles of equality and the "*de facto* inequalities of wealth and income that characterise the capitalist market place (Turner, 2001: 190). This conceptualisation of citizenship met with criticisms from many sources. Environmentalists criticise the ongoing emphasis on growth causing depletion of natural resources and damage to the natural environment. Feminists highlight the continued subordination of women's role in the work force. Multiculturalists decry the lack of progress around issues of ethnicity. Those that promote a cosmopolitan citizenship point to the over-emphasis on the nation-state. Marshall had much to say on class inequality, but had "nothing to say" on "[g]ender, race and ethnic inequalities" (Isin and Wood, 1999: 30). In fact Marshall conceptualised a "heterogeneous society in which regional, cultural and ethnic divisions were not important when compared to class divisions (Turner, 2001: 191).

Societies of different eras strive to develop "an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed" (Marshall, 1992: 18). In keeping with the understanding of the institution of citizenship as one that is continuously evolving, and with an awareness of the historical impact of each era in developing citizenship, a number of discourses will now be examined.

Cosmopolitan Citizenship

Delanty (2009) asserts that republicanism, communitarianism and liberalism as concepts of citizenship are inappropriate to the needs of the present, and advocates a concept of "cosmopolitan citizenship". Delanty (2009) promotes cosmopolitan citizenship as extending beyond the nation-state. Cosmopolitan citizenship is based on the assertion that citizenship has become separated from the nation-state, as at the present, there is a "shift from peoplehood to personhood" (*Ibid.*: 111). Personhood is about governments recognising the:

> integrity of the person, not as an abstract individual as in liberal political theory, but as an embodied being shaped by social struggles (*Ibid.*).

According to this definition, the citizen is "neither a passive entity nor a pre-political being but an active agent" (*Ibid.*). According to Delanty, key elements of cosmopolitan politics have grown in importance: "international law, the rights of minorities, global solidarities and global justice, and cultural rights of various kinds" (*Ibid.*).

Delanty concludes that the following citizen capacities are centrally related to participation as cosmopolitan citizens:

- The capacity for the relativisation of one's own culture or identity
- The capacity for positive recognition of the Other
- The capacity for a mutual evaluation of cultures or identities
- The capacity to create a shared normative culture (*Ibid.*: 112).

Faulks (2000), while using a different label ("postmodern citizenship") also advocates cosmopolitan citizenship and asserts that the association of citizenship with "one narrow aspect of identity, such as nationality, ethnicity or group membership" is inadequate for the global era. Diversity is maintained through the consolidation of individual rights as advanced by liberalism. In essence, citizenship for the 21st century demands that:

> the boundaries between political communities are not perpetually closed, either materially or culturally, and that many of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship extend beyond administrative boundaries (*Ibid.*: 168).

Faulks observes that due to contemporary societal changes, in particular those associated with globalisation, the present historical context is most opportune for an alternative understanding of citizenship for the following reasons: First, the defence of human rights by the international community is taken more seriously than before. Bellamy (2008) notes that there is an increasing tendency to define citizenship in terms of human rights, a development which dilutes the political aspect of citizenship. Second, new forms of governance other than the nation-state are emerging such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). This phenomenon is eroding the autonomy of the nation-state "without creating alternative political communities capable of providing a focus for (collective) participation" (*Ibid.*: 50). Delanty (2009) refers to the enlargement of the EU to include Central and Eastern European countries as the "transnationalisation" of the EU. This process, now at an advanced stage, presents challenges for "stronger forms of social solidarity" for all EU states including Ireland (*Ibid*: 259). Third, the threat of global risks such as nuclear and ecological disasters brings into question the capacity of the nation-state to adequately protect its citizens from such threats. Fourth, Faulks (2000) suggests that the weakening of the "link between military duty, masculinity and citizenship" heralds an era of "post-militarism" (*Ibid.*: 169) which paves the way for the development of "more care-orientated approaches to citizenship" (*Ibid.*).

Finally, the awareness of global economic inequalities and their repercussions for citizenship has been heightened by globalisation. Globalisation has facilitated the economic elites in being more mobile, making it more difficult to "control their activities and to tax them so they contribute to public goods" (Bellamy, 2008: 51). The advances in communication have informed the Western world of the increased risks that follow from the imbalance between the developing and developed worlds in terms of economic resources which in turn impacts on the understanding of citizenship. In the past citizenship was the product of "class struggle and war"; now due to the overarching influence of globalisation "the capacity for citizenship to be

shaped through processes of struggle may have declined" (*Ibid.*: 46, 51). Faulks (2000) proposes a concept of citizenship that affirms key components such as "rights, responsibilities and political participation" which is particularly suited to the global age and can be fulfilled by "breaking the links modernity has forged between citizenship and exclusive notions such as the state and the market" (*Ibid.*: 171).

Arguably, there is an onus on educators to incorporate discourses around cosmopolitan citizenship in school programmes as such a concept of citizenship:

> refers to new possibilities for participation and rights both within and beyond the state. . . . [and] the emergence of post-national forms of inclusion . . . in what might be called the enhanced interconnectivity of cultures . . . (Delanty, 2000 cited in Dwyer, 2010: 202).

In this context, Delanty (2009) argues for "cosmopolitan forms of interaction" involving "intercultural communication" which seeks through dialogue to not only understand the "perspective of the Other", but also, through reflection to seek to understand "the implications of the dialogue for one's own position" (*Ibid.*: 260, 261).

Environmental Citizenship

Faulks (2000) advocates an understanding of citizenship that takes cognisance of the natural environment as being central to any future understanding of citizenship. There is now widespread recognition that climate change due to the greenhouse effect together with the unsustainability of contemporary capitalism has given "environmentalism an apocalyptic urgency" (Newby, 1996: 209). Isin and Wood (1999) observe that various ecological groups have made the argument that "capitalism [has] led to exploitation and domination of nature that [threatens] the very survival of all species on earth (*Ibid.*: 1). Newby (1996) argues that the concept of "environmental citizenship" needs to be interrogated from the perspective of the rights and duties of citizenship as espoused by Marshall. Newby contends that Marshall's concept of citizenship can "be re-worked to apply on a global [and] not merely [on a] national basis" (*Ibid.*: *209*). Newby further argues that for environmental citizenship there are no institutions capable of voicing and giving recognition to such citizenship

rights or for "assigning appropriate duties (to these rights) and subjecting them to accepted and legitimate forms of control" (*Ibid.*: 218).

Newby in elaborating on the rights and duties of environmental citizenship makes a number of points. First, the devastating effects of global pollution can only be solved on a global scale, as "no one country acting alone can prevent or contain these impacts" (*Ibid*: 219). Second, the affirmation of environmental citizenship supports the contestation of the issue of "gross inequality . . . and demands for redistribution - whether between North and South, or, in the short term, East and West" (*Ibid.*). Third, the solution to the problem of damage to the environment cannot be met by science or technology alone. Concepts such as "scarcity, equity, management and development [which] lie at the heart of the social science enterprise" are much needed in environmental discourse (*Ibid.*). Therefore, Newby recommends that policy-makers and politicians must heed the social sciences if:

> they want to understand both the causes and the remedies. . . . The social science community will need to offer not only technical expertise, however, but a vision. Like Tom Marshall, they will need to be Utopian in the best sense of the word, combining rational, disinterested analysis with a passion for achieving a better world (*Ibid.*: 221).

Turner (2001) asserts that the theme of environmental citizenship has developed from "a sociological concern over the impact of industrial capitalism on the environment" which has had disastrous consequences for society (*Ibid.*: 14, 15). There is "anthropological concern" with regard to the removal of aboriginal society from the land (*Ibid.*: 15). The land is needed for the creation of global markets in beef, sheep and cereals. This disrespect for aboriginal cultures is linked by Turner to the debate on cultural justice regarding ethnic identity and group difference.

Radical Citizenship

Since 1950, many societal transformations towards the "postmodern condition" have challenged Marshall's understanding of citizenship. Isin and Wood (1999) recount that since the 1970s these transformations came about in four stages. The first stage

towards "advanced capitalism" is marked by the "production of images, sounds, experiences and knowledge [that has] become inseparable from the production of material commodities" (*Ibid.*: 155). The second stage of an "increasingly global culture" is noted for how "the rise of a space of flows of such images, sounds, experiences and knowledge has integrated and incorporated different places across the globe"(*Ibid.*). The third stage leads to:

> a postmodern politics where the struggles over wealth, political status and access that characterised bourgeois and working-class politics throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century have been displaced by struggles over race, ethnicity, sexuality and ecology, represented by movements rather than traditional parties (*Ibid.*: 155, 156).

The final stage of transformation is recognised by the "increasing aestheticisation of everyday life where consumption has become a constitutive aspect of identity formation" (*Ibid.*: 156). Olssen (2010) criticises Marshall's conception of citizenship due to its embodiment of "the central axioms of liberalism" (*Ibid.*: 126, 127). These axioms are named as universalism and unitarism (*Ibid,*). Universalism in this context of citizenship means the application of the same standards to all citizens irrespective of their varied life circumstances, while unitarism refers to the tardiness of the state in granting recognition to the "claims of different cultural groups" (*Ibid.*: 127).

Isin and Wood (1999) argue for an approach to citizenship that takes "into account plural perspectives and challenges", that is, an approach that prioritises an "ethos of pluralisation" over the "fear of fragmentation" (*Ibid.*: vii). Fragmentation results from the "transformations of modern capitalism" giving rise to "new forms of production, distribution, regulation and consumption" (*Ibid.*: 153). Isin and Wood propose a "radical citizenship" to cater for the ethos of pluralisation. That is, a citizenship that seeks to recognise diverse identities (*Ibid.*). The advances of liberal democracies of some nation-states in their commitment to justice through citizen participation and enactment of equality-based legislation, can serve "as masks to disguise forms of discrimination, oppression and misrecognition based on class, gender, race, ethnicity, age and ability" (*Ibid.*). Isin and Wood seek to go beyond the work of Marshall in addressing the new political issues coming to the fore. The argument is that

Marshall's articulation of the historical evolution of civil, political and social forms of citizenship, and of their connection to capitalism occurs in such a manner as "to oppress and silence such groups that interfered with the relentless pursuit of accumulation" (*Ibid*: viii). It is considered that the concept of citizenship as developed by Marshall is no longer suitable for taking account of the ethos of pluralisation. Accordingly, Isin and Wood examine citizenship in terms of group rights and identity through the exploration of "ethnic, sexual, cultural, cosmopolitan and technological forms of citizenship" (*Ibid.*: ix).

The fragmentation of postmodernity has generated many new social groups with particular social, political and cultural agendas, all of whom are seeking affirmation and identity. The emergence of new social groups can be regarded as "efforts to redefine and reconstitute identity through political and discursive struggles over group rights and values" (*Ibid.*: 154). The challenge for radical citizenship is to "harness the contradictory but democratising tendencies of advanced capitalism towards new political arrangements and recognition of group rights" (*Ibid.*: 155). Radical citizenship requires the citizen to embrace "discipline and principles . . . the hard work of activism and engagement . . . [and] the tedious but disciplined work of cultivating an ethos of difference/identity" (*Ibid.*: 161).

This alternative conceptualisation of citizenship challenges the understanding of citizenship as advanced by Marshall which was aligned to the Beveridge model of the welfare state, and is seen as being now outdated. It seeks to recognise "the rise of new identities and claim for group rights" (*Ibid.*: 4). This understanding of citizenship is similar to the thesis of Young (1990, 2000) who recommends a "group-differentiated citizenship". Young (1990) shifts the focus from the distribution of material and non-material goods to that of oppression and domination. This is necessary to affirm the development of both individual and group rights. The meaning of oppression here is not that caused by tyranny, but that caused by structural forces that are "embedded in unquestioned norms, habits and symbols" of everyday societal practices (*Ibid.*: 41). Young (2000), in arguing to counter the idea of a "formal and abstract equality [for] all members of the polity as citizens", sought a form of citizenship that means:

> explicitly acknowledging social differentiations and divisions and encouraging differently situated groups to give voice to their needs, interests and perspectives on the society in ways that meet conditions of reasonableness and publicity (*Ibid.*: 119).

Young argues that the unity that surrounds claims for redistribution to "special interests" in society for the "common good in ways that favour dominant social groups . . . position[s] women, or indigenous people, or Blacks, or homosexuals, or Muslims as deviant Other" (*Ibid.*: 81). In elaborating on Young's ideas of group-differentiated citizenship, Isin and Wood (1999) detail the importance of the "establishment of relationships of mutual recognition" (*Ibid.*: 43). These are essential for individual "self-realisation" through the "development of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem (*Ibid.*). Olssen (2010), in criticising the liberal model of "universal citizenship", advocates for the "group-differentiated citizenship" of Young as it ensures that group differences are not suppressed, rather, they are facilitated through the "institutionalisation of mechanisms of minority group representation" (*Ibid.*: 128).

Fraser (1997) is critical of the ideas of Young regarding "cultural recognition [as it] displaces socioeconomic redistribution as a remedy for injustice and the goal of political struggle" (*Ibid.*: 11). The critique refers to contemporary "postsocialist" politics where concern for cultural injustice predominates while that caused by socioeconomic injustice recedes. Examples of socioeconomic injustice include: exploitation of workers; citizens being forced to live on the margins of society; poor remuneration or none as an employed, under employed or unemployed worker; and suffering deprivation in living standards that impact on well-being. Examples of cultural injustice include: non-affirmation of one's own culture through the dominance of another culture; non-recognition or misrecognition of one's own culture; and being subjected to stereotypical, disparaging, and disrespectful experiences in everyday life due to one's culture. Fraser argues that both forms of injustices are "pervasive in contemporary societies" and "the two are intertwined" (*Ibid.*: 14, 15). These two injustices can, as suggested by Fraser, be ameliorated through redistribution, and recognition. Redistribution, as a solution to the problem of socioeconomic injustice, might involve "redistributing income, reorganising the division of labour, subjecting

investment to democratic decision making, or transforming other basic economic structures" (*Ibid.*: 15). Recognition, as a solution to alleviating the affects of cultural injustice, affirms "upwardly revaluing disrespected identities and the cultural products of maligned groups" (*Ibid.*). Fraser recognises the tension between "redistribution" and "recognition", and names this tension as the "redistribution-recognition dilemma" (*Ibid.*: 16). Unlike Young, Fraser proposes a political strategy that seeks to soften that tension through integrating the claims of both redistribution and recognition "with a minimum of mutual interference" (*Ibid.*: 13). In this way, no one solution for counteracting either socioeconomic or cultural injustices (that is, the solutions of redistribution and recognition) will displace the other.

2.2.3 Impact on Education

The previous discussion illustrates the complexity of conceptualising citizenship. This thesis argues that due to the undeniable erosion of the nation-state, and the impact of globalisation (Faulks, 2000; Turner, 2001; Delanty, 2009), there is an onus on teachers and students to critically interrogate new conceptions of citizenship in the classroom, including those discussed here: cosmopolitan, environmental and radical citizenships In this context, education for citizenship is important for many reasons. First, there are many understandings of the institution of citizenship. The discourse on citizenship has evolved since ancient Greek times to the 1950s when Marshall wrote "Citizenship and Social Class", and is still evolving. Second, education for citizenship supports democracy and promotes the well-being of citizens by giving "stability to civil society by inculcating norms of trust and responsibility" (Olssen *et al.*, 2004: 275). Such an education needs to be robust and rigorous, so that all aspects of citizenship are critically interrogated in the school setting. Third, this thesis proposes that the philosophy and pedagogy of Freire is appropriate for enabling teachers to critically interrogate the meaning of citizenship. Delanty (2009) stresses the learning dimension of citizenship which "mostly takes place in the informal context of everyday life and is also heavily influenced by critical and formative events in people's lives (*Ibid.*: 128). This perspective on learning for citizenship emphasises the importance of: "communicative situations" that arise out of "ordinary life experiences"; the connection of personal life stories with "wider cultural discourses";

and the need to understand the "cultural dimension to citizenship", that is, going beyond the dimensions of rights and participation (*Ibid.*: 129).

Taking these considerations into account, it is argued in this thesis that the Freirean perspectives on teaching for humanisation and conscientisation are most appropriate for teaching for citizenship in the modern era. This study endorses this approach for Irish schools as it ensures that citizenship education is imparted to students through: transformative teaching and dialogue in the classroom; affirmation of the citizenship curriculum; and democratisation of the student voice in the school setting. To illustrate this, a more in depth discussion on the teaching of citizenship based on the philosophy and pedagogy of Freire now follows.

2.3 Perspectives on Citizenship Education

2.3.1 Freire's Pedagogy

While working at the University of Recife in Brazil, Paulo Freire became involved in a literacy campaign for poor, marginalised people. In 1964 due to the military taking control of the Brazilian government, he was arrested and sent into exile. He returned in 1980 after the declaration of an amnesty. Through work on literacy programmes that spanned many countries, he advocated radical educational and social change. Now, Freire's pedagogical influence extends well beyond literacy education to areas such as economics, sociology, critical pedagogy and liberation theology. Freire views literacy as cultural politics where literacy is not only about numeracy and reading but related to the empowerment of people through the promotion of social and political change. Education is regarded as:

> a cultural action . . . related to the process of critical consciousness, and, as problem-posing education, aims to be an instrument of political organisation of the oppressed" (Torres, 1993: 124).

In this way, Freire argues that education is not neutral, all education is political. That is, an empowering education is based on forming "a democratic and transformative

relationship between students and teacher, students and learning, and students and society" (Shor, 1993: 27).

Recently in Ireland, Zappone (2007) directed a research project seeking to counter educational disadvantage. The outcome of this research articulated a "narrative of balance" viewing education as a "living system". Zappone's work is based on Freirean philosophy "reinvented" for Irish education. A living system:

- Supports common ways of learning
- Accommodates diverse capacities, cultures, learning paths and achievement outcomes
- Enables communal solidarity or "sticking together"
- Reduces inequalities of resources between social groups and geographical communities

So that every child's powers are released, directed and enlarged (*Ibid.*: 17).

These elements of a living system of education emphasise education for citizenship and well-being that enables students to respect diversity, participate in community and make judgements for the good of self and society. Zappone's research led to the development of a childhood initiative for Tallaght West, a disadvantaged and marginalised area of Dublin. The initiative produced a strategy ("A Place for Children. Tallaght West") for supporting positive holistic educational outcomes for children. This strategy is an example of Freirean philosophy being invoked to combat educational disadvantage.

Murphy (2007) explores the practice of "process drama" a radical pedagogical methodology for use in Irish schools. Process drama is based on central tenets of Freirean pedagogy, that is, problem-posing teaching methodologies and, the importance of student - teacher relationship. Process drama while retaining many of the elements of traditional theatre allows:

> participants to improvise with both form and content to explore fictional situations that have some thematic relevance to their lives (*Ibid.*: 309).

This approach encourages students in the classroom to explore social, political and personal experiences in their lives outside the school. Murphy argues that the interrogation of these issues through "engaging fictional contexts and challenges, which correspond to their reality" is a strong motivational influence on maintaining student interest. Murphy states that the recent support of the Department of Education and Skills for projects involving process drama is significant.

This thesis invokes the critical pedagogy of Freire which defines education as an experience which can empower or domesticate students. In seeking to educate students to think critically, Freirean pedagogy challenges both students and teachers "to empower themselves for social change, to advance democracy and equality" (Shor, 1993: 25). Education serves as an instrument for people becoming more fully human ("humanisation") through liberation from oppression.

2.3.2 Education for Citizenship

An educational system that prioritises success according to its ability to produce "rational economic actors" (Lynch *et al.*, 2007) is designated by Freire (1972) as reflecting the "banking" concept of education, a system of education that is assessed by measurement of the quantity of information transmitted to students. A banking education is one that:

> becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and "makes deposits" which the students patiently receive, memorise and repeat. . . . In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. . . . The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world (Freire, 1972: 46, 47).

In the banking concept of education students passively and patiently receive pieces of information to be memorised. Such a pedagogy is not conducive to empowering students to be critical and independent thinkers, thus impairing their participation as citizens. As an alternative to the banking concept of education, Freire (1972) proposes a pedagogy of the "dialogic" that facilitates the humanisation and the conscientisation of the student (*Ibid.*). This pedagogy educates for citizenship through affirming the social and personal development of the student to be an independent thinker.

2.3.3 Humanisation and Conscientisation

Education for humanisation and conscientisation is achieved through a pedagogy that affirms the "dialogical encounter" and the methodology of "problem-posing" in the classroom, that is, teaching "to engage in the process of becoming a citizen" (Freire, 1998b: 94) rather than teaching for the "bureaucratising of the mind" (*Ibid.*: 102).

Freire defines an education that is "humanising" as follows:

> a humanising education is the path through which men and women can become conscious about their presence in the world. The way they act and think when they develop all of their capacities, taking into consideration their needs, but also the needs and aspirations of others (Freire and Betto, 1985:14, 15 cited in McLaren and Lankshear, 1994: xiv).

A "humanising education" becomes a reality through a pedagogy that affirms the dialogical relationship between student and teacher, that is, a pedagogy at variance with contemporary classroom practice where the teacher transmits information and the student memorises (Freire, 1972). In the dialogical format, the parlance of "teacher of the students" and "students of the teacher" is replaced with "teacher-student" and "students-teachers".

> The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but the one who is (himself/herself) taught in dialogue with the students, who in their turn while being taught also teach (*Ibid.*: 53).

Freire (1972) describes humanisation as the "people's vocation" which is constantly:

> thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity (*Ibid*.: 20).

For Freire (1998b), humans due to their "unfinishedness" and "incompleteness" (*Ibid.*: 66) are "beings in the process of becoming" (Lankshear, 1993: 97). Freire refers to the "ontological vocation" of humans to "become more fully human" as:

> we are called upon continually by what we are to humanise ourselves - to express, nurture, and expand our humanness in permanent shared praxis. We are called to dialogue: to name the world in action-reflection with other humans (*Ibid*.).

The goal of Freire's pedagogy is for students to attain a state of humanisation through exercising a "critical consciousness", that enables people to think "holistically and critically about their conditions" (Shor, 1993: 32). The thinker is empowered to reflect and act on the situational power structures of society.

Freire names the "ongoing engagement in dialogue as the process of humanisation" (Lankshear, 1993: 97) with "dialogue" defined as:

> the encounter between [humans], mediated by the world, in order to name the world. . . . If it is in speaking their word that [humans] transform the world by naming it, dialogue imposes itself as the way in which [humans] achieve significance as [humans]. Dialogue is thus an existential necessity (Freire, 1972: 61).

In this meaning of dialogue, one person that is party to the dialogue cannot deposit "ideas" in the other, nor can "ideas" be exchanged by the participants to be "consumed" during the discussion. The dialogue encounter is one in which the "united reflection and action" of the participants addresses the "world which is to be

transformed and humanised" (*Ibid*.). The dialogic approach supports the process that affirms “treating students as responsible human beings who can address their world as thinking subjects rather than as manipulated objects” (Rivage-Seul and Rivage-Seul, 1994: 41).

The second aspect of Freirean critical pedagogy is conscientisation. This is the educative process of raising the critical consciousness of students to help lessen the obstacles to their humanisation. Freire (1998b) is mindful of the "material, social, political, cultural, and ideological conditions" that can thwart educational transformation (*Ibid*.: 55). Freire asserted that education for the conscientisation of students nurtures their "becoming" through according respect to their "dignity, autonomy, and identity" (*Ibid*.: 62).

> In truth, conscientisation is a requirement of our human condition. It is one of the roads we have to follow if we are to deepen our awareness of the world, of facts, of events, of the demands of human consciousness to develop our capacity for epistemological curiosity (*Ibid*.: 55).

The goal is to "instigate the students' inherent curiosity instead of softening or domesticating it" (*Ibid*.: 111). This seeks to bring about the conscientisation of the student through countering the banking concept of education which is "nourished by love of death, not life" as it is based on:

> a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialised view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads [humans] to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power (Freire, 1972: 51).

A pedagogy for conscientisation has significance for teaching for citizenship as it seeks to develop in students attributes for "reading the world" (Freire, 1996: 105). Shor (1993) lists four qualities of “critical consciousness” as theorised by Freire for reading the world: (1) Power Awareness - knowing what power is dominant in society and the ability to interrogate how that power is exercised; (2) Critical Literacy - having the capacity to analyse in depth any subject matter; (3) Desocialisation - being

enabled to critically examine any internalised values “such as racism, sexism, class bias, homophobia, a fascination with the rich and powerful, hero-worship, excess consumerism, runaway individualism, militarism, and chauvinism”; (4) Self-Organisation/Self-Education - having the confidence to reflect and take appropriate action to overcome the anti-intellectual nature of education and, to seek to bring about change through participation in social projects (*Ibid*.: 32, 33).

The Freirean pedagogy that educates for critical consciousness is "dialogic" in format; students and teachers are immersed in a classroom dialogue whereby education is not "done" to students, but they are "doing" it themselves (*Ibid*.: 33). The teacher-student dialogue combines academic subject matter with themes generated by students’ communities and cultures, and societal issues. Freire (1972) refers to this process of learning for critical consciousness through dialogue, as conscientisation (*Ibid*.: 15). Through conscientisation, one is enabled and educated to "perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (*Ibid*.).[7] For Freire (1998b), education is "that specifically human act of intervening in the world" which seeks radical societal changes in areas such as:

> economics, human relations, property, the right to employment, to land, to education,, and to health, and to the reactionary position whose aim is to immobilise history and maintain an unjust socio-economic and cultural order (*Ibid*.: 99).

McLaren (1999) refers to the current practice in schools whereby the teacher lectures in a monologue format as facilitating "a banquet of boredom" for the students (*Ibid*.: 219). The curricular contents of such lessons become "lifeless and petrified" while the practice of teaching students for the mechanical memorisation of facts causes "education [to suffer] from narration sickness" (Freire, 1972: 45). Therefore, it is incumbent on school authorities to reflect on how the lack of affirmation for the humanisation and conscientisation of the student impairs education for citizenship. Such an approach impacts negatively on students' ability to participate in democracy and, experience well-being.

[7] Translator's note in Pedagogy for the Oppressed (Freire, 1972).

These two elements of citizenship will be explored in the next two sections (2.4 and 2.5). Firstly, students are enabled to partake in democracy through a:

> problem-posing education, men [sic] develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation (Freire, 1972: 56; italics in original).

Students are educated in the attainment of these qualities through a pedagogy that prioritises the development of the capacity to be "critical thinkers" (*Ibid*.). Secondly, students need to be socially, personally and emotionally developed for "effective participation in a democracy . . . [and] laying the foundation for well-being and the pursuit of happiness" (Cohen, 2006: 202). In this respect, Freire (1998b) writing as a teacher referred to the "caring for the well-being" of his students as requiring an "openness" which means that:

> I am not afraid of my feelings and that I know how to express myself effectively and in an affirming way. It also means that I know how to fulfil authentically my commitment to my students in the context of a specifically human mode of action (*Ibid.*: 125).

The implications for education for citizenship programmes in educating citizens for their participation in democracy, and enhancement of well-being are examined in the following sections.

2.4 Citizenship Education as Support for Democracy

2.4.1 Schools and Democracy

According to Giroux, educating for the humanisation and conscientisation of students empowers them to be "more than simply players within the existing configurations of power of any given society" (Giroux, 2011: 144). Giroux argues that democracy is best supported by citizens who are educated to be:

> autonomous, self-judging, and independent, qualities that are indispensible for them to make vital judgements and choices about participating in and shaping decisions that affect everyday life, institutional reform, and government policy (*Ibid*.).

There is "little talk about schools and democracy" as much of the educational debate is centred on "how schools might become more successful in meeting industrial needs and contributing to economic productivity" (Giroux, 1988: 1).

The Crick Report[8] while drawing on Marshall's concept of citizenship places a more distinct emphasis on the civil aspects of citizenship (Olssen, 2010). The Crick Report placed considerable stress:

> upon the reciprocity between rights and duties . . . [and] on welfare not just being provided by the state, but also concerning what people can do for each other through the voluntary groups and organisations of civil society at the local or non-state level (*Ibid*: 126).

This emphasis on "duties and obligations" acts as a counterweight to Marshall's "theory of entitlement" (Turner, 2001: 191). The claim is that this understanding of "entitlement" encourages a "passive citizenry" through protection of the individual from "the uncertainty of the market through a system of universal rights" (*Ibid.*). The Report made a number of core observations. First, such an education executed with commitment helps in the moulding of citizens who are more likely to live and co-exist in their respective communities, in a manner that is harmonious and productive. Crick (2003) states that "[m]utual trust [is] an essential precondition for . . . the citizen state, without which opposition to tyranny and misgovernment in general [is] futile" (*Ibid.*: 17). Second, citizenship education is conducive to bringing about a situation whereby each citizen is more likely to possess the attributes of: personal fulfilment through social and personal development; a desire to contribute to the consolidation of

[8]A report published in Great Britain on "Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools" (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998). This report is known as "The Crick Report".

democracy; and the capability and confidence to be critical in thinking so as to be in a position to seriously interrogate ideas and issues in a manner conducive to a healthy polity.

However, Olssen (2010) takes issue with the conception of democracy as stated in the Crick Report as it "encourages an overly consensualist model of society" and ignores a "multi-ethnic society of diverse cultures, religions, beliefs and practices" (*Ibid.*: 128, 129). The Report exhorts ethnic minorities to respect "laws, codes and conventions as much as the majority . . . [in order] to foster common citizenship" (QCA, 1998: 17, 18). This portrays a limited view of citizenship as it does not give due recognition to cultural diversity. In teaching for citizenship, Olssen *et al.* (2004) advocate for schools to go beyond the purely curricular approach, to explore extracurricular ways and means for students to participate in decision making on whole-school issues. This means of empowering students which involves "a transformation of the culture of public schooling", encourages students to connect to the experiences of various diverse groups in the school setting (*Ibid.*: 277). In this way, schools help "sustain . . . democracy by developing thoughtful citizens who can make wise civic choices" (Noddings, 2005: 11).

The evolving nature of the concept of citizenship, as discussed in this chapter, challenges educators to seriously interrogate what kind of education for citizenship is needed to support the principles of democratic living.

2.4.2 Principles of Democratic Living

In seeking the affirmation of citizenship education in schools, it is first necessary to reflect on the issues of the present, and then on what kind of pedagogy supports interrogation of those issues. Citizenship is "more than voting and maintaining economic productivity" (Noddings, 2005: 12) as it extends to "the notion of rights to participation in the economy, the state, and other public spheres" (Giroux, 1988: 172). Therefore, it is appropriate to interrogate the meaning of democratic principles, so that schools can educate students to be committed as citizens to participate in this form of government and social living.

Kelly (1995) defines democracy as a concept that is both moral and political, and identifies four "essential principles of truly democratic living" (*Ibid.*: xviii). First, there is the concern that all citizens have "human rights", that is, an entitlement and a protection as individuals, which is above and beyond the authority of the state. Second, a democratic society promotes equality for all its citizens which is "fundamentally [about] the demand . . . for social justice, for fairness and impartiality of treatment (*Ibid.*: 35). Third, all citizens are involved in the "decision-making process", thereby making political freedom a reality (*Ibid.*: 44). Fourth, the cherishing of a nation's sovereignty is sacrosanct, that is, that the "people should rule" (*Ibid.*). Kelly asserts that in order for democracy to survive:

> . . . [it] must remain with the people, and that can only happen if the people, severally and collectively, maintain, guard and protect their possession of it. Apathy on the part of the populace, which can be deliberately induced and promoted in many ways, is one of the major threats to the maintenance of democratic forms of living (*Ibid.*: 47).

Therefore, there is an onus on schools to promote a concept of citizenship education that allows for "individual opinion . . . [and] cultural differences . . . [which are] of the essence of democracy, especially in the context of modern, complex and pluralist societies" (*Ibid.*: 96). To educate for citizenship in this manner, Noddings (2008) argues that schools should "stop stuffing facts into our students", instead, allow students to "investigate social/political issues, [and] share their findings with classmates . . ." (*Ibid.*: 36).

This counters the view of knowledge as being fixed and absolute. Democracy as a form of government is seriously undermined by the "adoption, or blind assumption, of rationalist, universalistic, positivist views of knowledge . . . which is essentially inimical to every one of the fundamental principles of democracy" (*Ibid.*: 49). An educational system that does not enable or empower students to participate actively as citizens in a democracy helps induce a state of "apathy and passivity" (Giroux, 1988: 171). It denies young people "the beauty of . . . existing in the world as historical beings, capable of intervening in and knowing this world" (Freire, 1998b: 35).

The principles of democracy as expressed by Kelly supports the Freirean approach to education for citizenship. There is awareness of the difference between teaching for a "critical understanding of the world" and providing a "purely technical training" (Freire, 1996: 131). With regard to the emphasis on the "training" of students that can neglect education for "critical consciousness", Freire states that:

> it is impermissible to train engineers or stonemasons, physicians or nurses, dentists or machinists, educators or mechanics, farmers or philosophers, cattle farmers of biologists, without an understanding of our selves as historical, political, social, and cultural beings - without a comprehension of how society works (*Ibid*.: 133).

For Freire, mere training and transmission of knowledge is reductionist and deprives individuals of opportunities for "reading the world". Teaching for the humanisation of students that enables their participation in democracy is enhanced through the dialogical encounter. Dialogue between student and teacher facilitates a "democratic relationship" causing the "agents in the dialogue, not only retain their identity, but actively defend it, and thus grow together" (*Ibid*.: 117, 119). The dialogic approach links the "critical thinking" of the teacher to the "curiosity" of the student in a manner that presents "the opportunity [for students] to open up to the thinking of others" (*Ibid.*).

2.4.3 Democracy - A Mode of Associated Living

Dewey (1966) posits democracy as "more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (*Ibid*.: 87), a form of "social life [that is] identical with communication" (*Ibid*.: 5). Dewey states that any involvement in communication and hence participation in social living is supportive of democracy as:

> [t]o be a recipient of communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience. One shares in what another has thought and felt and in so far, meagrely or amply, has his own attitude modified. Nor is the one who communicates left unaffected (*Ibid.*).

Democracy as a form of government is a "mode of associated living" that carries the expectation that decisions are made through the shared interaction among individuals (*Ibid*.: 87).

> The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men [sic] from perceiving the full import of their activity. (*Ibid*.: 87).

There are two elements to democracy as expressed by Dewey. Firstly, "[t]here are many interests consciously communicated and shared" (*Ibid*.: 83). Secondly, "there are varied and free points of contact with other modes of association" (*Ibid*.). It is the second criterion that is critical to Dewey's definition of democracy; that "full interaction" between "diverse communities is consistent with his claim that difference is not just to be tolerated" rather difference provides "a valuable opportunity for interaction, criticism and new construction" (Fishman and McCarthy, 1998: 62).

This advocacy of democracy as a form of "associated living" is central to Dewey's ideas on teaching and the transformation of students. The approach is such that students are encouraged to develop processes of inquiry, co-operation and communication that contribute to their understanding and shaping of their environment. Dewey argued that education must be supportive of democracy and challenge a situation that resembles that of the early twentieth century when:

> [t]oo large a part of our citizens . . . left our schools without power of critical discrimination, at the mercy of special propaganda, and drifting from one plan and scheme to another according to the loudest clamour of the moment (Dewey, 1935 cited in Fishman and McCarthy, 1998: 64).

Dewey proposes a school environment that affirms a process of instruction that involves the following five steps for the student: (1) the experiencing of a genuine

situation that holds the interest of the student, that relates to their "out-of-school" life; (2) the development of a problem from this situation that stimulates critical thinking; (3) the possession of the necessary information that is required for solving the problem; (4) the taking of responsibility for developing solutions to the problem; and (5) the clarification of meaning, and testing of the validity of the suggested solutions (Dewey, 1966: 163).

This pedagogical approach resonates with the philosophy of Freire in rejecting the banking concept of education, that is, for teachers to engage students in learning for participation in democracy, and activities that closely resemble democratic living. The classroom as postulated through the work of both Dewey and Freire is democratic in terms of how it is organised and structured, modelling the dialogue, communication and "associated living" of a democratic society. All the elements should be present in a school setting for both the "associated living" and the opportunities for "varied and free points of contact", for the enactment of Dewey's model of democracy to take place. Schools educate for citizenship by providing "the conditions of growth" for students through "a fostering, a nurturing [and] a cultivating process" (*Ibid*.: 10). In this way, students are acknowledged as full citizens of now, and not regarded as becoming citizens sometime in the future. Schools have a role in treating students as citizens through affording them opportunities for: participating meaningfully in the affairs of the school; developing their "self-efficiency"; and encouraging interest in "civic participation" (Gilleece and Cosgrove, 2012: 237).

The theories of Kelly, Freire, Noddings and Dewey on education, citizenship and democracy are pertinent to the challenges for democratic living in the twenty-first century. The various understandings of citizenship (as discussed in Section 2.2) impact on the teaching for citizenship. Freire (1998b) warns that the ethics of globalisation are the ethics of the marketplace and not "the universal ethics of the human person" (*Ibid*.: 114). In asserting that education is never neutral, and that current societal ideology has repercussions for classroom teaching and in particular for education for citizenship, Freire names globalisation as a theory that:

> cleverly hides, or seeks to cloud over, an intensified new edition of that fearful evil that is historical capitalism . . . its fundamental ideology seeks to mask

> that what is really up for discussion is the increasing wealth of the few and the rapid increase of poverty and misery for the vast majority of humanity (*Ibid.*).

In this context, Olssen *et al*. (2004) argue that good global governance is contingent on the strength and health of the democracies of nations as:

> a deep and robust democracy at a national level requires a strong civil society based on norms of trust and active responsible citizenship and that education is central to such a goal . . . to sustain democracy at the national level so that strong democratic nation-states can buttress forms of international governance and ensure that globalisation becomes a force for global sustainability and survival (*Ibid*.: 1, 2).

The contention is that only strong national democracies with systems of "public education that has education for citizenship as its primary aim" can act as a counterforce to the "emerging economic, social and political crises of global capitalism" (*Ibid*.: 245).

Delanty (2009) argues for a form of cosmopolitanism, in confronting "nationalism and market-driven globalisation", which is based on the principles of social justice (*Ibid.*: 259). This cosmopolitan form of interaction demands that citizens possess the capabilities to undertake "deliberative reasoning and the critical scrutiny of cultural and political standpoints" (*Ibid.*: 261). Delanty posits a number of characteristics for enabling inter-cultural communication to take place. The mode of communication: is deliberative, reflective and critical; involves "societal learning"; and "concerns a political practice that has a global relevance" (*Ibid.*). It can be argued that Freirean pedagogy is one means of educating citizens to participate in this "inter-cultural communication" (*Ibid.*) whilst the creation of a vibrant public sphere is another.

The quality of citizenship education in schools has direct repercussions for societal trust, democracy and ultimately for global governance. Schools require substantive citizenship programmes to be in place to educate students for supporting the building of "strong democratic nation-states" (Olssen *et al*., 2004: 1, 2), and participating more globally in "cosmopolitan forms of interaction" (Delanty, 2009: 260).

2.5 Citizenship Education as Support for Well-Being

2.5.1 Well-Being

Noddings (1995) argues that an education that follows a moral direction "recognises a multiplicity of human capacities and interests" in young people, it is appropriate for educational leadership to reflect on the following:

> Preparation for the world of work, for parenting, and for civic responsibility is essential for all students. All of us must work, but few of us do the sort of work implied by preparation in algebra and geometry. Almost all of us enter into intimate relationships, but schools largely ignore the centrality of such issues in our lives (*Ibid*.: 367).

Education that nurtures students for their enhanced well-being supports learning for citizenship. If schools marginalise the development of human capacities, then "a rationalistic, technicist model will continue to narrow students' learning and impact on their well-being" (O'Brien, 2008: 177). Freire (1998a) refers to this as a "serious" aspect of the work of teachers:

> We participate in [students'] development. We may help them or set them back in their search. We are intrinsically connected to them in their process of discovery (*Ibid*.: 33).

This approach to the social and personal development of the student is fundamental to preparation for citizenship.

Noddings (1995) advocates that the approach be based on six principles: (1) never lose sight of the fact that the "main aim of education should be to produce competent, caring, loving and lovable people"; (2) take time to build trusting and caring relations; (3) allow teachers and students more time and opportunity to "exercise judgement"; (4) afford all students irrespective of academic ability "genuine opportunities to explore the questions central to human life"; (5) organise the school day so that

students experience opportunities for caring; and (6) educate students to work to continually improve on their "competence" at caring (*Ibid.*: 368).

It can be argued that the philosophy of Noddings with regard to the development of the human capacities of young people is relevant to citizenship education for the Irish school setting. In this context, it is appropriate to refer to the work of O'Brien (2008) which seeks to explain the importance of education for well-being in the Irish post-primary sector, and its relevance for the preparation of citizens. While O'Brien's review of the literature observes that there is no agreement on a widely accepted definition of "well-being", this study uses Allardt's "welfare model of well-being" as being appropriate for school programmes that seek to enhance student well-being (*Ibid.*: 136). This model of well-being is described as:

> a state in which it is possible for a human being to satisfy his or her basic needs, and the indicator system (of well-being) takes account of both material and non-material conditions of well-being (*Ibid.*).

There are three categories of well-being that are fundamental to the understanding of the Allardt model. These categories are: "Having", "Loving" and "Being" (Allardt, 1993: 89). The first category "Having" refers to "those material conditions which are necessary for survival and for avoidance of misery" (*Ibid.*). The second category "Loving" refers to "the need to relate to other people and to form social identities" (*Ibid.*: 91). The third category "Being" is understood as "the need for integration into society and to live in harmony with nature" (*Ibid.*).

It can be argued that a pedagogy that is based on the conscientisation and humanisation theories of Freire educates for each of these three categories. "Having" refers to health, employment, education and material resources (*Ibid.*: 89). The category of "Loving" details the importance of relational attachments, both personal and in a community setting (*Ibid.*: 91). "Being" is an aspect that is measured by the level of participation in politics, society and in recreational activities (*Ibid.*). These categories of well-being resonate with the philosophy of Freire which emphasises the holistic development of the student. Arguably, for Freire, emotional, social, personal, physical and political development is contingent on the student experiencing well-

being as described by Allardt. Education for well-being is integral to teaching for citizenship in schools (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1998c; Cohen, 1999, 2006; Noddings, 2005; O'Brien, 2008). Accordingly, an appreciation of the relational dimensions of the school setting and in particular "the relational nature of teachers' work" (O'Brien, 2008: 179) is important. This has repercussions for citizenship education as without such an appreciation, "there is little space for experimentation and real enquiry" for developing the ability for "the critical cultural analysis of Giroux and Freire" (*Ibid*.).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) emphasise the importance of "relational trust" in the school setting. Relational trust is defined as a "social resource" that:

> facilitates the development of beliefs, values, organisational routines, and individual behaviours that instrumentally affect students' engagement and learning (*Ibid*.: 115).

Fullan (2003a) exhorts school Principals to lead educational reform, through the embracing of "moral purpose" in schools, through the development of relational trust. Education for citizenship is effective when educational authorities are actively involved in efforts to transform the culture of education through the fostering of relationships among school stakeholders that are guided by the principles of moral purpose. Fullan asserts that moral purpose of "the highest order" in the educational setting is consistent with:

> having a system where all students learn, the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced, and what people learn enables them to be successful citizens, and workers in a morally based knowledge society (*Ibid.*: 29).

It is difficult for that philosophy of education to gain space and time in a school environment that defines "treating parents as consumers, students as products and teachers as compliant workers who are expected to "teach to the test"" (Humphries, 2012: 7).

2.5.2 Social and Personal Development

Cohen (2006) argues for prioritising the nurturing of social, emotional and ethical competencies in students as such "skills, knowledge and dispositions" provide the fundamentals for learning, well-being, and "effective participation in a democracy" (*Ibid*.: 202). This emphasis enables students to ""read" themselves and others . . . [and] to solve social, emotional and ethical problems" (*Ibid*.). Cohen observes that the education system of the US endorses citizenship education that is predominantly about "civic-related knowledge", that is, the kind of knowledge that alone does not foster learning to enable individuals to be "engaged members of the community, the nation, and the world" (*Ibid*.: 203). Lynch (2010) makes a similar observation with regard to the Irish education system, that there is a lack of emphasis on enabling students "to think critically and analytically about the society they live in" (*Ibid*.: 14). Many theorists (Lynch, 2010; Lynch et al., 2007; Lang, 1998; Cohen, 1999, 2006) affirm the importance of teaching for affective relations involving "care, love and solidarity" (Lynch *et al*., 2007: 2). Lynch *et al*. (2007) criticise the "form of education [that] emphasises the mechanical memorisation of contents" (Freire, 1998a: 31) as it results in the neglect of affective education. This neglect is described as follows:

> The neglect of education for . . . love, care and solidarity (LCS) work arises . . . from the fact that the model citizen at the heart of liberal education is defined essentially as a rational citizen and a public persona; it is a person who is being prepared for economic, political and cultural life in the public sphere but not for a relational life as an interdependent, caring and other-centred human being (Lynch *et al*., 2007: 2).

This thesis adopts a two-strand approach to educating for citizenship in schools. One approach seeks to educate for critical consciousness, that is, conscientisation, while the other educates for the development of competencies and dispositions that lead to enhanced well-being, that is, humanisation. According to Cohen (2006), the development of social, personal and emotional qualities is closely linked to individual well-being.

2.5.3 Care in Schools

Noddings (2005) makes an important contribution to the project of embedding caring and affective aspects in the daily life of the school. Noddings argues for an approach to education that supports the pedagogical philosophy of Freire. The approach which is based on the "ethic of care" comprises of four elements: modelling; dialogue; practice; and confirmation (*Ibid.:* 22). For the ethic of care to pervade the school environment, the emphasis needs to be placed on "affective factors", that is, "on living together, on creating, maintaining, and enhancing positive relations" (*Ibid.*: 21). Noddings, in explaining that "caring is an ethic of relation" places particular emphasis on the relational aspect of care (*Ibid.*). The person that is cared-for has a role to play as well as the carer in completing the caring relation. The ethic of care perspective emphasises the quality of the relationship in the actual caring. The outcomes of the caring act are important, but not so important as to neglect the means for fostering the caring relationship.

The four elements of pedagogy for the ethic of care as detailed by Noddings are as follows:

(1) Modelling: The teaching of the "caring relation" cannot be accomplished through mastering of formulae as would be required for example in the teaching of Mathematics. Students need to see this modelled through their observations and personal experiences of relationships within the confines of the school. The practice of "telling" students to care should be reinforced by the example of school personnel in "creating caring relations with them" (*Ibid.*: 22). As Kelly (1995) points out: "we must practice what we preach"; students will not accept "moral preaching which is not backed by moral practice" (*Ibid.*: 101). Noddings argues that through observation of modelling, students who experience being "cared-for" tend to develop within themselves the capacity for caring in adult life.

(2) Dialogue: The experiencing of dialogue by students is regarded as an essential component of developing the caring relation. The term "dialogue" corresponds to the meaning as used by Freire (1972) when writing on critical aspects of teaching practice. Dialogue is:

> open-ended; that is, in a genuine dialogue, neither party knows at the outset what the outcome or decision will be. . . . Dialogue is a common search for understanding, empathy, or appreciation. It can be playful or serious, logical or imaginative, goal or process-oriented, but it is always a genuine quest for something undetermined at the beginning (Noddings, 2005: 23).

Being in dialogic situations brings a two-fold benefit to the student. Firstly, it contributes to the decision-making process. Secondly, it helps develop the capacity to seek information conducive and necessary to the acts of forming an opinion and coming to a decision. Therefore, dialogue fosters the capacity for critical literacy as well as providing relational caring opportunities.

The pre-occupation of Irish school authorities with the production of utilities to further national economic advantage (Tuohy, 2012), may cause the caring ethic in present-day educational discourse to be lost. Those involved in the dialogic act share opinions/beliefs, listen and show respectfulness. Education for critical consciousness and humanisation as theorised by Freire is dependent on the dialogic process, which in turn is supported by an ethic of care in the school setting.

(3) Practice: In affirming the ethic of caring in the school setting, it is important that students are afforded opportunities to partake in the "practice" of caring. Noddings cautions that such opportunities must be meaningful, and of appropriate quality and character. The caution refers to the calibre of the caring mentors involved and the quality of the experience provided:

> The practice provided must be with people who can demonstrate caring. We do not want our children to learn the menial (or even sophisticated) skills of caregiving without the characteristic attitude of caring. The experience of caregiving should initiate or contribute to the desired attitude, but the conditions have to be right, and people are central to the setting (*Ibid.*: 24, 25).

Noddings argues that education for caring which seeks to "induce certain attitudes and ways of looking at the world", contributes to the flourishing of societal relations, the robustness of citizenship and participation in democracy (*Ibid.*: 23).

Lynch *et al*. (2007) support the ideas of Noddings for the cultivation of strong affective relations, and seek to rationalise why education for social and emotional development struggles for recognition in present-day schools. Lynch *et al.* assert that:

> [c]artesian rationalism, encapsulated in the phrase "Cogito ergo sum",[9] has succeeded in embedding an understanding of "the person to be educated" as an autonomous and rational being, one who is prepared through education to achieve his or her potential in the public sphere of life while ignoring the relational caring self [10] (*Ibid*.: 3).

Noddings (2005) asserts that "[l]ove, caring, and relation play central roles in both ethics and moral education" (*Ibid.*: 27). The pedagogy of humanisation is central to the "individual, personal, interpersonal, social and spiritual development" of each student (Drudy, 2001: 372). Educators need to be competent in the "personal and social skills, and attributes" that are necessary to accommodate this educational outcome (*Ibid.*: 371).

(4) Confirmation: The fourth element for teaching that incorporates an ethic of care is primarily about "the act of affirming and encouraging the best in others" (Noddings, 2005: 25). The demeanour and disposition of the carer (the teacher, in this case) is critical to enabling the knowing, relating and caring of the student to be embodied as an innate part of the school's culture. It is through this ethos of school life that "confirmation" of the student takes place. Noddings asserts that there should be no attempt to impose a universal set of behavioural standards or expectations of academic outcomes on every student, rather, the uniqueness of individuality and personhood of every student should be nurtured and allowed develop and prosper. This is relevant for example, when a student is apprehended for engaging in a misbehaviour or an unsocial act. It is vital that the act or misbehaviour is separated from the self so that it becomes "clear that we disapprove of this particular act, but it will also be clear to the other that we see a self that is better than this act" (*Ibid*.: 25).

[9] "I think therefore I am" (Notes: Lynch *et al*., 2007: 15)
[10] The word "education" originates in the Latin verb "educare", meaning "to nurture and to develop through care", rather than the verb "educere" which means "to lead out".

The act of confirmation in the school setting is grounded in "a relation of trust" between teacher and student through: knowing the student; relating to the student; and caring for the student (*Ibid.*: 26). This approach encourages an "affective education" which is defined as:

> meaning a significant dimension of the educational process which is concerned with the feelings, beliefs, attitudes and emotions of students, with their interpersonal relationships and social skills (Lang, 1998: 4).

Neglect of this aspect of education has repercussions for society in general as:

> the disregard for affective relations . . . has public effects in the world of work and politics where the expression of care, in terms of relations of solidarity, is increasingly inadmissible as a public value (Lynch *et al.*, 2007:10).

The utilitarian objective of schools is to produce, first and foremost, actors that service the economy and in so doing neglect educating for affective relations (*Ibid.*). The over-emphasis on the academic "processing" of students to the neglect of the pedagogy for their social and personal development is "a quite unsatisfactory state of affairs and . . . the success of even the most utilitarian economic aim will be more likely if this imbalance is redressed" (Lang, 1998: 5).

Following from the discussion above (sections: 2.4 and 2.5), it can be argued that education for citizenship that supports democracy and well-being is dependent on school culture, that is, a school culture in which the democratisation of the student voice and, the ethic of care is firmly embedded. It is in this context that the following section will examine some aspects of school culture.

2.6 School Culture

2.6.1 Social Capital

It is important for schools to be effective in the "*creation* of new knowledge and . . . the *transfer* of knowledge between situations and people" (Hargreaves, 2001: 490; italics in original). Research shows that there is a strong relationship between educational attainment and social capital (Halpern, 2005). Social capital "inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors" (Coleman, 1988: 98). This section examines the connection between relations in the school setting, and social capital. Hargreaves (2001) defines social capital in terms of its "cultural and structural components":

> The cultural part is mainly the level of *trust* between people and the generation of norms of reciprocity (mutual favours) and collaboration. The structural aspect is the *networks* in which the people are embedded by strong ties. In a school rich in social capital, the high levels of trust generate strong networks and collaborative relations among its members and stakeholders (*Ibid.*: 490; italics in original).

It is argued by Hargreaves that high levels of social capital in a school setting contributes significantly to the work of creating and transferring knowledge. Therefore, a school that is rich in social capital fosters quality relationships among stakeholders, which impact positively on school culture.

It can be argued that social capital is fostered in the school setting through: positive interaction among the stakeholders; affirmation of the informal curriculum; due status accorded to both cognitive and non-cognitive subjects; trusting relationships; and democratisation of the student voice. These factors tend to be less valued and less understood in education systems that prioritise learning the skills and competencies to enter and perform in the labour market. Hargreaves (2001) asserts that "effective citizenship education will depend on a high level of social capital already in the school" (*Ibid.*: 495, 496). The prevailing view of school effectiveness emphasises the school role in supporting the knowledge economy (Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin, 2009). This causes mechanisms for the building of social capital to be less affirmed in schools. As a result, school authorities may be less enthusiastic about citizenship education due to lack of time, or its perceived interference with examination preparation.

Putman (2000) argues that social capital is valuable for the well-being of the individual, and for supporting community development. Schools, as places where individuals are constantly interacting, and as centres of communal action, mirror the social interaction in life after school. Therefore, the prioritisation of the building of trust and networks among the school community supports the building of social capital that enhances opportunities for citizenship education both inside and outside the classroom. It is in this context that school relations are now discussed.

2.6.2 School Relations

Cognisance needs to be taken of the fact that the students in schools are in fact already citizens. The idea that schools are preparing students for the institution of citizenship that will become available to them only at some point in the future, when they have left school, is considered to be mistaken. The role of students as citizens in the school setting is important for a number of reasons. First, research shows that school citizenship programmes are greatly enhanced if "supported by a school environment where students are given the opportunity to experience the values and principles of the democratic process in action" (Horvath and Paolini, 2013: 18). Secondly, Harris *et al.*, (2010) assert that while young people distance themselves from traditional political participation, they do have "social and political concerns" and they value "recognition by the state" (*Ibid.*: 28). They are willing to be involved in "more individualised and everyday practices in efforts to shape society" (*Ibid.*). Therefore, schools are challenged to be proactive in making time and space available for students "to act on their political and social concerns" (*Ibid.*). Thirdly, from a children's rights perspective, it is incumbent on schools to accord recognition to students as citizens. These rights are recognised in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 of the UNCRC asserts the right of children to be involved in decision-making regarding services and policies that affect their lives. Article 15 asserts the right of children to organise, and participate in associations. These articles imply a recognition of the role of the "student citizen" to be engaged in political processes. The values of the Convention challenge schools in many ways from "the conduct of day-to-day relationships to the curriculum, from governance issues to leadership practices" (Jeffers, 2014: 2).

This study accords particular importance to the impact of cultural/relational dimensions of the school setting on educating students for their social and personal development. Recent educational research findings have emphasised:

> the powerful connection between safe, caring, responsive, and participatory schools . . . and academic achievement and healthy student development . . . (Cohen, 2006: 218, 219).

A positive school climate supports recognition of the student as a citizen which reinforces the education for citizenship programmes of the classroom. Of central concern in this context is the "quality of the day-to-day relationships students experience with fellow students, with staff and with the school's leaders" (Jeffers, 2014: 9). This underscoring of school relations resonates with the Freirean theories of humanisation and conscientisation which are realised throughout the school environment by a relational ethos that does "not ignore anything that concerns the human person" (Freire, 1998b: 127).

Educating for citizenship is predicated on schools creating opportunities for democratic participation through meaningful dialogue in the school setting (Freire, 1972, 1998a, 1998b; Noddings, 2005; Giroux, 1988, 2011; O'Brien, 2008, Lynch *et al*., 2007; Jeffers, 2008, 2014). To achieve this, the relational dimensions within the school setting play an important part in shaping a supportive school culture. It is not sufficient to place emphasis only on curricular content and/or pedagogy. The approach to citizenship education needs to be truly holistic ensuring that:

> issues of respect, care, relationships, and love and emotions become part of the vocabulary of second-level education in a way that has not been usual within educational discourses of performativity and success (O'Brien, 2008: 171).

Freire (1998b) describes the development of these relationships as "essential" in giving "wholehearted and loving attention, even in personal matters . . . [to students] in need of such attention" (*Ibid*.: 128). Freire further argues that such approaches that foster positive school culture take precedence over indulging in "theoretical and

critical reflection on the subject of teaching and learning", because teachers are "dealing with people and not with things" (*Ibid*.). This Freirean philosophy exhorts teachers to:

> never treat education as something cold, mental, merely technical, and without soul, where feelings, sensibility, desires, and dreams (have) no place, as if repressed by some kind of reactionary dictatorship (*Ibid*.: 129).

The critical elements of educating for citizenship depend on the level of social capital that determines the quality of relationships in the school environment. Low levels of social capital among teachers "entails lack of trust and networking" which impacts on the sharing of pedagogic knowledge and skills within the school (Hargreaves, 2001: 492, 493). The role of the teacher in sustaining a school culture that supports the conscientisation and humanisation of students is now discussed.

2.6.3 The Teacher - A "Certain Sort of Person"

The conscientisation and humanisation theories of Freire assert the importance of school relational culture on the holistic education of the student. The role of the teacher in this context will now be examined. The teacher makes a significant contribution to the relational atmosphere of the school.

McLaughlin (2003) contends that for the modern era, the teacher needs to be a "certain sort of person":

> They [teachers] must interpret and implement the demands of balance, and ensure that concepts of moral texture and complexity are adequately dealt with. Teachers are required to resolve these difficulties and complexities at classroom level, deploying a form of . . . practical wisdom revealed in the kind of questions they ask of students, the timing and prioritisation of certain lines of argument, the extent to which neglected perspectives are reinforced at certain times, the extent to which certain individuals in the group are encouraged to participate, and other strategies (*Ibid*.: 158, 159).

The affective disposition of the teacher is critical to: the effective teaching of his/her curricular subject(s) in the "dialogic" mode (Freire, 1998b). Freire exhorts teachers to "take advantage of the students' experience of life" in shaping their classroom practice (*Ibid.*: 36). Teachers are encouraged to ask the following questions:

> Why not establish an "intimate" connection between knowledge considered basic to any school curriculum and knowledge that is the fruit of the lived experience of these students as individuals? Why not discuss the implications, political and ideological, of the neglect of the poor areas of the city by the constituted authorities? Are there class-related ethical questions that need to be looked at here? (*Ibid*.: 36, 37).

Hargreaves (2002) refers to teachers as being: "physically, socially and culturally removed from the communities in which they teach and they do not know where parents and students are coming from" (*Ibid.*: 10). Freire (1998b) argues that "the teacher can abuse students . . . by resistance to the worldview that the students bring to the classroom" (*Ibid*.: 109). This lack of recognition on the part of teachers of "the socio-geographical context within which [the] school is situated" (*Ibid*.: 121) limits their own "learning possibilities" (*Ibid*.: 109).

O'Brien (2008) draws attention to the importance of fostering a positive school climate through students having "informal contact with teachers through extracurricular activities, sport, and student councils" (*Ibid.*: 135). In a study undertaken by Hallinan (2008) in public and Catholic schools in Chicago to assess how teachers through their interactions shaped the feelings of students about school, it was found that teachers who provide "social and emotional support . . . increase students' liking for school, which in turn, improves students' academic and social outcomes" (*Ibid.*: 282). Through the findings of this study, Hallinan provides evidence that "learning is a social, psychological as well as a cognitive process" (*Ibid*.: 271).

For Dewey, the teacher "being" in the classroom supports the affording of opportunities to students, through school experiences, "to grow intellectually, ethically, emotionally, aesthetically, and spiritually" (Wirth, 1966: 54). The idea of

the teacher as an intellectual is centred on the premise that as professionals, teachers need "to apply the habits of critical thought to their work" and become "thoughtful students of education" (*Ibid.*: 56.). Dewey argues that:

> [u]nless, a teacher is such a student, he [sic] may continue to improve in the mechanics of school-management, but he [sic] cannot grow as a teacher, an inspirer and director of soul-life (Dewey, 1904: 8 cited in Wirth, 1966: 56).

It can be argued that if the latter aspect of the work of the teacher is not affirmed, and supported, "the function of the school is [merely] to teach and transfer contents - packages - to the students", and the professional work of the teacher is enfeebled (Freire, 1998b: 36, 37).

There are indications that many teachers are unknowingly compliant in educative practices that are "anti-humanist [in] character" due to "neoliberal pragmatism" (*Ibid.*: 127)). Such practices tend to promote an education system that is primarily for the production of competent economic units for deployment in the knowledge economy (O'Sullivan, 2005; Lynch *et al.*, 2007; Allen, 2007; Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin, 2009). In this way, teachers are distinguished "not by a desire to change the world but to accept it as it is" (Freire, 1998b: 126) as they are "reduced to presiders [and] mere functionaries" (McLaren, 1999: 113). McLaren argues that rarely, as ""senders" of meaning", do teachers "adjust their frequencies to the students" (*Ibid.*). McLaren defines the meaning of the term "frequency" in that it:

> does not just refer to pitch and rhythmical expertise in speaking or presenting information; a frequency also relates to the communication of particular information. This requires that the teachers become aware of the symbols and subject matter which the students find interesting and meaningful. Teachers must know what the students need to know (*Ibid.*).

Freire in pointing to the fact that all education is "non-neutral", it is always "political", elaborates on the work of educators:

> Progressive educators need to convince themselves they are not only teachers - this doesn't exist - not only teaching specialists. . . . Our job is not exhausted through the teaching of math, geography, syntax, history. Our job implies that we teach these subjects with sobriety and competence, but it also requires our involvement in and dedication to overcoming social injustice (Freire, 1998a: 58).

Shor (1993) in elaborating on the work of Freire states that the act of teaching is inundated with "political" overtones. Such political significances become evident through the following manifestations of school life: "the teacher-student relationship whether authoritarian or democratic"; the curricular subjects selected and excluded; "the method of choosing course content, whether it is a shared decision or only the teacher's prerogative"; the particular assessment tests in operation; "the quality of classrooms and buildings"; the status of "art, dance and music" on the curriculum; and the interaction between "local schools and businesses" (*Ibid.*: 27).

2.6.4 The Teacher - A "Transformative Intellectual"

Education for citizenship in schools requires much more than the transmission of curricular content to the student or the statistical measurement of learning outcomes, it requires foremost of all:

> a teaching profession whose members embody within their own practices the values and dispositions of democratic citizenship, and who have the capability to create democratic learning environments within their schools and classrooms (Olssen *et al*., 2004: 269).

Hence, it is appropriate at this stage to examine the work of the Freirean scholar, Giroux regarding the role of the teacher as a "transformative intellectual". Giroux (1988) recommends that "teachers should become transformative intellectuals if they are to educate students to be active, critical citizens" (*Ibid.*: 127). This perception of the teacher-role as being both transformative and intellectual reflects the assertion of Freire who describes "progressive" teachers as showing a "seriousness and a testimony to the struggle against injustice . . . [and contributing] to the gradual

transformation of learners into strong *presences* in the world" (Freire, 1998a: 33; italics in original).

Freire (1998b) argues that reducing the act of teaching to "a matter of simple technique is to impoverish what is fundamentally human in this experience: namely, its capacity to form the human person" (*Ibid.*: 39). The teacher personifies "involvement in and dedication to overcoming social injustice" (*Ibid.*, 1998a: 58). It is through this type of teacher personification that teaching for citizenship can be progressed through "a democratic and transformative relationship between students and teacher, students and learning, and students and society" (Shor, 1993: 27).

Giroux (1988) contributes to the discussion on both the role, and the professional work of the teacher. Firstly, there is an acknowledgement of the increasingly technicist nature of the day-to-day work of the teacher, described as "the proletarianisation of teacher work" (*Ibid.*: 122). Teachers are "implementing curricular programs rather than developing or critically appropriating curricula to fit pedagogical concerns" (*Ibid.*). Secondly, the need to affirm and harness the intelligence, expertise, knowledge and insight of teachers in the work of educating their students for social and personal well-being, as well as for participation as citizens in the democratic system, is noted. It can be argued that for these objectives to be effectively accomplished, the role of the teacher as a transformative intellectual is deserving of recognition whilst that of the technician-type teacher as undermining of the objective of the bestowment of a holistic education (Freire, 1998a). Central to this recognition is that the teacher is afforded opportunities to be deliberative and reflective. Given the importance of educating for citizenship through the humanisation and conscientisation of students, there is a need to resist reducing the status of teachers to that of "high-level technicians" (Giroux, 1988: 121). Teachers need to:

> reclaim schooling as an emancipatory project deeply rooted in the project of deepening and expanding the possibilities of critical thought, agency, and democracy itself (Giroux, 2011: 43).

This perspective on pedagogy is an essential element of an education for citizenship programme that can be termed as "that specifically human act of intervening in the world" (Freire, 1998b: 99).

There are three critical elements to the theorisation of the teacher role as that of a transformative intellectual: (1) the work of the teacher is "intellectual" as opposed to being merely about the transmission of facts which are assessed at examination time; (2) teachers need to be afforded the "conditions" and opportunities to grow as intellectuals in their respective educational communities; and (3) an awareness on the part of teachers that the work of teaching is not neutral, all teaching is political.

The assertion that the work of teachers is "intellectual" in nature recognises that "all human activity involves some form of thinking" (Giroux, 1988: 125). Giroux further elaborates that:

> [t]his is a crucial issue, because by arguing that the use of the mind is a general part of all human activity we dignify the human capacity for integrating thinking and practice, and in doing so highlight the core of what it means to view teachers as reflective practitioners (*Ibid.*).

Then as "intellectuals", teachers are regarded as "free men and women with a special dedication to the values of the intellect and the enhancement of the critical powers of the young" (Scheffler, 1968:11 cited in Giroux, 1988: 125). Viewing teachers as intellectuals affirms a teacher-role, that is, at variance from that of "performer", "deliverer", "executor" and "technician" , all of which are descriptors in keeping with an ideology of teaching that views students as ""objects" into which teachers pour prescribed knowledge" (Freire, 1998b: 4). As intellectuals teachers are called upon to take "responsibility for raising serious questions about what they teach, how they are to teach, and what the larger goals are for which they are striving" (Giroux, 1988: 126).

The other important aspect of the theoretical work of Giroux is that the teacher is not an "intellectual" only, but a "transformative" intellectual. This teacher-descriptor pertains to the "social functions" of teachers in the school setting (*Ibid.*). Schools are

not neutral in terms of the objectives of the education offered to students (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1988, 2011). Schools participate in the socialisation of students in forms of knowledge and culture. Schools are viewed as "economic, cultural and social sites that are inextricably tied to the issues of power and control" (Giroux, 1988: 126). There are many demands on the school institution to legitimate certain forms of knowledge. These demands and influences emanate from many sources: the state; the churches; minority groups; industry and business; environmental interests; political parties; and many others including international organisations and agencies. Many influences external to the school compete to exert leverage and control over what is transmitted to students. Teachers, as transformative intellectuals are aware that "standing back" is not an option as:

> schools are places that represent forms of knowledge, language practices, social relations and values that are particular selections and exclusions from the wider culture. As such, schools serve to introduce and legitimate *particular* forms of social life (*Ibid*.; italics in original).

Giroux supports the argument of Freire that schools are not apolitical, teachers cannot take on the mantle of being neutral; "teachers should become transformative intellectuals if they are to educate students to be active, critical citizens" (*Ibid.*: 127). The teacher as a transformative intellectual prioritises "making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical" (*Ibid.*).

In "making the pedagogical more political", the educational system takes seriously the work of inculcating in students the capacity for "reading the world" as well as "reading the word" (Freire, 1998c). That is, education for citizenship seeks to develop in students the capabilities for critical interrogation of social, political and economic issues. This critical evaluation of the practice of teaching is essential to the realisation of both the humanisation and conscientisation of students and, improvement of their "democratic and qualitative character" (Giroux, 1988: 127).

The teacher in "making the political more pedagogical" seeks to incorporate political objectives in the educative work of the classroom that upholds and affirms emancipatory ideologies. This entails placing the Freirean concept of the "dialogic" at

the centre of the practice of teaching. The students' identities, experiences, social class and communities are the starting point for emancipatory education. In making "the political more pedagogical", the pedagogies used seek to:

> treat students as critical agents; make knowledge problematic; utilise critical and affirming dialogue; and make the case for struggling for a qualitatively better world for all people (*Ibid*.).

This re-conceptualisation of the teacher-role seeks to promote a "language of possibility" (*Ibid.*: 128) in the classroom to facilitate questioning, dialogue and interrogation, necessary prerequisites to the attainment of a robust education for citizenship.

The positing of the teacher-role as that of a "transformative intellectual" by Giroux is analogous to Freire's reference to teachers as "critical progressives", that is, there can be "no teaching without learning" (Freire, 1998b: 29, 31). According to Freire, the fundamental principle for teachers working as "critical progressives" is that:

> although the teachers or the students are not the same, the person in charge of education is being formed or re-formed as he/she teaches, and the person who is being taught forms him/herself in this process. In this sense teaching is not about transferring knowledge or contents . . . Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning (*Ibid*.: 30, 31).

In the Freirean classroom, the emphasis is on the empowerment of both teachers and students where: questions are posed; subject matter is critically interrogated; and the curiosity of students about their lived societal experiences, the world and their own relationship with it, is encouraged and supported. Students are not "empty vessels to be filled with facts, or sponges to be saturated with official information, or vacant bank accounts to be filled with deposits from the required syllabus" (Shor, 1993: 26). It is arguably a responsibility of school leadership to support teachers in this re-conceptualising of the teacher-role.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter examined different theoretical perspectives with regard to education for citizenship in schools. First, the different understandings of citizenship were discussed. The evolving nature of citizenship as an institution was examined which is relevant for reform of education for citizenship in schools. Second, the critical pedagogy of Freire was posited as the methodology best suited to imparting a robust and rigorous citizenship education. In particular the concepts of humanisation and conscientisation (Freire, 1972) were presented as appropriate to educating students for "that specifically human act of intervening in the world" (*Ibid.*: 1998b: 99). Citizenship education as well as conferring knowledge on the student, also, seeks to enable the student to combine and synthesise that knowledge in a manner that generates new insights and original ideas. That is, the student is empowered to think independently beyond the acquired knowledge. Education of citizens is not achieved through amassing stores of knowledge through rote learning, and memorisation of given information. This instrumentalist form of learning that prioritises the accumulation of deposits of knowledge undermines the central tenet of citizenship education, which is developing the ability to think critically.

Third, citizenship education is set in the context of providing support for democratic living and enhanced well-being. All students, whether they be students of the humanities or the sciences, having received a robust education for citizenship, are not educated to technically apply a particular method to solve a problem, nor are they indoctrinated in subjects that follow a certain ideological rule; they are educated to have the ability to think their way through a moral dilemma and to critically interrogate matters that impact on their well-being, their community, and society both locally and globally. Fourth, the impact of school culture in educating for the holistic development of the student is considered. Particular attention is devoted to the role of teachers as "transformative intellectuals who combine scholarly reflection and practice in the service of educating students to be thoughtful, active citizens" (Giroux, 1988: 122). In this role, teachers contribute positively to the relational culture of the school.

The following chapter explores how the economy, culture, and value system of contemporary Irish society impact on education for citizenship.

Chapter 3

Citizenship Education in Twenty-First Century Ireland

3.1 Introduction

This chapter situates education for citizenship within the context of contemporary Irish economy and culture. In the recent past, the majority of Irish citizens derived their ethics and values from the precepts of nationalism and religion (Inglis, 2008). This has changed in recent decades and the Catholic Church now exercises relatively little moral authority as it has "stumbled from one scandal or crisis to another, all the time losing its legitimacy among the body politic" (Corcoran, 2006: 2). Coulter (2003) asserts that the modernisation process has caused nationalism to give way to what is essentially a post-nationalist culture that is not "introspective and chauvinistic but rather . . . cosmopolitan and inclusive" (*Ibid.*: 15). This move away from introspection and chauvinism has also led to the increased influence of the values of neoliberalism. The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins,[11] recently observed that in Ireland, traditional influences have been eclipsed by the "material considerations" and "skewed values" of neoliberalism and globalisation (Percival, 2012: 2). This chapter considers the influences, the priorities and policy direction shaping the field of education in contemporary Ireland. This reflection on contemporary Ireland, with the ideas generated from the review of the work of theorists from the previous chapter provides the context for a review of education for citizenship in Irish schools.

3.2 Contemporary Ireland

3.2.1 The Modernisation Process

In the fifty-year period prior to 2008, Inglis (2008) describes Ireland as having changed from:

> being a very isolated, insular, Catholic rural society revolving around agriculture, to a more open, liberal-individualist, secular urban society revolving around business, commerce and high-tech, transnational corporations. In the last 15 years, the pace of change became more dramatic

[11] Elected President of Ireland in October, 2011.

> and Ireland now is identified as one of the most globalized societies of the world (*Ibid.*: 7).

This "change" in social development is explained as being due to the influence of modernisation theory which defines development as:

> a movement from the traditional to the modern, [and] that this is progressive and beneficial to all, that it takes place through elites imbibing modern values such as individualism, entrepreneurship and achievement-orientation . . . (Kirby, 2010: 88).

Girvin (2010) argues that "Ireland has been deeply affected by this process of modernisation and has reacted and adapted in subtle ways over two centuries or more" (*Ibid.*: 118).

The modernisation process in Ireland is notable for the following characteristics. First, the process is marked by "accelerated change, especially in economic relations, but also in terms of politics and society" (*Ibid.).* Second, capitalism is the dominant feature of economic activity and seeks to shape the "world in its image" (*Ibid.).* Third, a "collision culture" is experienced as there are tensions:

> between the global and the local, between Catholicism and secular materialism, between rural and urban, between the moral orders and social institutions of traditional community and modern society (Keohane and Kuhling, 2006: 38).

The "accelerated transformation" (*Ibid.*: 35) of the Celtic Tiger years[12] which "demanded and articulated important changes in the ways in which Irish people think and act" originated in the modernisation process which commenced with the "fiscal prudence in the late 1980s . . . considered to have been essential in creating the conditions for the possibility of an economic boom" (Coulter, 2003: 11, 12). The resulting stable economic environment encouraged the "most dynamic multinational

[12] This refers to a period of economic boom and prosperity in Ireland, in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

corporations in the world" to invest in Ireland thus alleviating the problems of unemployment and emigration (*Ibid.*).

Over the past forty years of the modernisation project, Ireland has undergone vast economic and social change which has been mainly due to: the effects of globalisation; the influences of foreign direct investment (FDI), whereby technology and industry from outside Ireland provide employment opportunities; and membership of the European Union[13] (Girvin, 2010a; Kirby, 2010). Coulter (2003) argues that the signing of various "social partnership" agreements (the first of which was signed in 1987) "between the Irish government and the representatives of organised labour" had a significant bearing on the securing of the economic prosperity that flowed through the modernisation process (*Ibid.*: 11). With such agreements, trade unions were accorded the opportunity to have an input in the framing of government policy in return for harmonious industrial relations and restraint in wage demands.

Economic modernisation was successfully promoted by successive Irish governments who had become expert in using "state capacity"[14] to foster a free market economy. This led to the short-lived economic prosperity and newfound wealth of the Celtic Tiger. Emigration ceased to be a problem as employment was readily available for the young, educated and not so educated workforce. Fahey (2007) in connecting social progress to the subjective well-being of Irish people states that due to the Celtic Tiger "we are higher up the happiness scale than we would be otherwise" (*Ibid.*: 26). However, in spite of the positive effects of modernisation, there were also negative outcomes. One of the most negative was the creation of a society of consumption that over-valued materialism. Coulter (2003) refers to this phenomenon when observing that most social commentary during the period of the Celtic Tiger era focussed exclusively on the positive effects of modernisation. Such commentary was noted for: paying tribute to those who made "astute structural adjustments" at the level of government; welcoming the opportunity for people to "dispense with customary ways of being and acting and to adopt more flexible and energetic approaches to life and work"; acknowledging successful job creation programmes and the ending of emigration; and marvelling at increased opportunities and wealth for consumption

[13] Ireland joined the European Union in 1973.
[14] "State capacity" is defined as "the ability of a state to achieve its stated objectives" (Kirby, 2007: 1).

(*Ibid.*: 12, 13). Coulter finds that this exclusive focus on the benefits of modernisation overlooks the fact that "the act of consumption [had] come to be regarded as a rather grander ontological enterprise" (*Ibid.*).

This commentary is "deeply problematic" as such a construction "adheres to a model of social change that proves [to be] entirely inadequate" (*Ibid.*: 16). Over the past fifty years the pursuit of modernisation led to a culture of greed, materialism and consumerism in Irish society (Coulter, 2003). Cronin *et al*. (2009) express the view that "current Irish society displays many of the worst features of a system dedicated to the ruthless expansion of the self-interest of the powerful" (*Ibid.*: 7). This social change is characterised by "a sense of boundlessness: the expansion of desires, and the amplification of acquisitiveness to limitlessness and insatiability" (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004: 60). Contemporary Ireland as "an exemplar of the competition state, where social policy is subordinated to the needs of the economy" (Boyle, 2005: 16), embraces the free market economic philosophy and neglects the welfare of people (Lynch et al., 2007, O'Toole, 2010, Kirby and Murphy, 2011). Kirby (2009) while supporting the contention that the last two decades of modernisation are the result of a "determined political project" that "reconstituted elite power", observes that this resulted from Irish society being "seduced, sidelined, hoodwinked, fragmented, controlled and where necessary, disciplined to accommodate itself to this new Ireland" (*Ibid*:. 203). The domination by market forces became "ever more powerful . . . in configuring the nature of Irish society and Irish culture" whilst being "subjected to virtually no critical scrutiny" (Kirby *et al*., 2009: 205).

The transformation of Ireland's economy and the increased living standards that flowed from the modernisation process has now come to a sudden halt. Instead of the affluence and prosperity of the Celtic Tiger years, Ireland is now beholden to the policies and direction of the so-called Troika.[15] There is at present an air of despondency in Irish society, in the main due to the effects of a serious economic recession (Girvin, 2010a:136). Keena describes the Irish mood as follows:

[15] The "Troika" represents three institutions that are currently lending to Irish banks: The European Central Bank (ECB); The European Union (EU); and The International Monetary Fund (IMF).

> The citizenry is traumatised with enormous debts, declining incomes, increased taxation, huge unemployment and emigration. Ireland's banking crisis has been adjudged by the IMF[16] to be the costliest in an advanced economy since the Great Depression (Keena, 2012: 16).

O' Toole (2009) argues that this situation has resulted from poor moral and political leadership, flawed economic policies and the implementation of regressive taxation measures.

Coulter (2003) describes the societal attributes of this period of affluence as indicative of "rampant consumption", "devotion to self" and "arrogance and callousness" (*Ibid.*: 25) while Keohane and Kuhling (2006) equate this phase of Irish life as a purveyor of "a liberal culture that is shallow and vulgar" (*Ibid.*: 40). Kirby (2005) observes that Irish governments through their attentiveness to the ideology of market values "often treat social need as something to be managed, dismissed and contested, rather than being addressed by any commitment" (*Ibid.*: 41). That is, such authorities appear to be "seduced by the rhetoric of economists" that growth in the economy results in the creation of a "good and just society" (*Ibid*). This demonstrates the contradictory nature of the modernisation process where the emphasis was essentially economic.

Cultural change and the discourse around progressive values were resisted much more deeply. Girvin (2010a) argues that the Irish modernisation process is "not without its ambiguities" as in issues such as abortion, divorce, gender equality, etc., "Ireland maintains its position at the conservative end of the spectrum" (*Ibid.*: 136, 137). The fact that successive governments have been conservative in terms of the implementation of legislation is due to the influence of the Catholic Church on public and political opinion (Inglis, 2008; Girvin, 2008). However, there is evidence that Irish Catholics are becoming detached from the regulations of the Church. Despite the Church's condemnation of divorce, use of contraceptives, and homosexual behaviour, not only has "the state . . . made them legal, they have become acceptable among many if not most Catholics (Inglis, 2008: 148). Cultural and social change

[16] International Monetary Fund

has not impacted appreciably on political discourse in Ireland. Lynch (2010) argues for "an engaged intellectual debate" in order to seriously commit to "altering the deep injustices at the heart of Irish society" (*Ibid.*: 2). Lynch asserts that inequalities:

> between rich and poor, between women and men, between ethnic majorities and minorities, between the majority and minority worlds, between people with different abilities, between people of different sexual orientations, etc., have become normalised in Ireland (*Ibid.*).

President Michael D. Higgins suggests that in order to effect change for the good of society, Irish people must reject a culture of materialism where "citizens [are] being reduced to the status of disaggregated rational utility maximisers in our theories and policies".[17] Girvin (2008) notes that Irish public opinion has "become more liberal on a wide range of issues and even abortion is now seen as a public policy issue rather than in moral or ideological terms" (*Ibid.*: 470). However, Girvin (2008, 2010b) argues that the influences of institutions such as the civil service, the Catholic Church and the educational system are likely to ensure continuity in terms of political, social and cultural thinking for a considerable period into the future.

As the influences of market values impact on the quality of education imparted to students (Carroll, 2008; Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin, 2009; Inglis, 2008; Lynch, 2010; Sugrue, 2004; Trant, 2007), Irish schools find it challenging to educate students as socially and personally empowered citizens. Such influences bring "no necessity to ensure the fulfilment of intrinsic moral values, whether religious, communitarian or democratic" to the educational system (Strain, 1995: 11). Strain (1995) notes the increasing tendency to apply neo-liberal principles and, the "concept and instrumentalities of "markets" in [the] public education system" (*Ibid.*: 5). Educators are responsible for empowering people to shine a light on "the hidden corners of life . . . [to show] us how we came to be where we are and how we can move somewhere else (Lynch, 2010: 15). It is in this context of seeking "to shine a light" that the following section explores the effects of neoliberalism on educating for citizenship and democracy in contemporary Ireland.

[17] Remarks by President Michael D. Higgins at the Trinity College Economic Forum on Friday, March 3rd, 2012.

3.2.2 Citizenship and Democracy

It follows from Chapter Two, where the theoretical aspects of education for citizenship are explored, to now consider such topics in the contemporary Irish context. Hickey (2012) argues for the need to educate citizens of a "modern, diverse, (Irish) republic" in the following four key areas: the development of an ability to be involved in "minimal civic participation"; the nurturing of the "skills of contestation"; an appreciation of the interdependency of citizens; and a willingness and a responsibility to "share a political community with others, many of whom hold different reasonable comprehensive doctrines" (*Ibid.*: 95). These elements are in accordance with the pedagogical approaches of Freire, Giroux, Noddings and Dewey to citizenship education, as they attach significance to the link between the formal education of citizens and their ability to participate in democracy. Giroux (2011) emphasises the importance of this "link" in asserting that:

> formal spheres of learning . . . must provide citizens with those critical capacities, modes of literacies, knowledge, and skills that enable them to both read the world critically and participate in shaping and governing it (*Ibid.*: 137).

Arguably, this pedagogical approach to citizenship education is required to achieve a reinvention of Irish democracy, so that, there is "a strong democracy in Ireland based on "thick" participation rather than "thin" representation" (Powell, 2012: 167). This counters the mindset which articulates a singular role for education which is "to provide good workers, who will generate wealth and thus boost the national economy" (Trant and Ó Donnabháin, 1998: 87). Trant and Ó Donnabháin argue that the perception of work as a means of producing wealth and profit "sits comfortably in a capitalist society like ours [Irish society], where the laws of the market are supreme and untouchable" (*Ibid.*). Trant (2007) warns that the prevalence of marketplace values in Ireland results in a "frantic lifestyle" that is "taking an inevitable toll on relationships and health, and has serious implications for the education of our young people" (*Ibid.*: 12).

Powell's (2012) emphasis on "thick" participation by citizens raises a number of questions about contemporary Irish democracy and the quality of citizen involvement. Firstly, it can be argued that an alert and vibrant citizenry supported by a strong democracy provides the conditions necessary for the serious interrogation of regressive economic policies. O'Toole (2009, 2010, 2012) contends such policies in Ireland are not questioned by societal institutions such as the churches, government and business, as the "capacity of citizens to know what the state is doing is extremely limited" (O'Toole, 2012: 28). This reflects the highly centralised nature of the Irish state and "thin" democracy which pertains. This has "greatly weakened the idea of a powerful, engaged citizenry" (*Ibid.*). Secondly, it can be argued that rigorous education programmes in schools that seek to equip students with the critical capabilities to participate as citizens, contributes to providing the opposition, the contestation, and the capacities to question any undermining of democracy. Powell (2012) states that:

> [d]uring our enthralment to the imaginary Celtic Tiger . . . we became self-absorbed subjects (consumer citizens) rather than active citizens engaged in society (*Ibid.*: 158).

Kirby (2005) in interrogating Ireland's readiness to adapt to "today's form of corporate and neoliberal globalisation" (*Ibid.*: 49) raises two important points: (1) there is a lack of "forceful and organised opposition" to the capitulation of Irish society to "global capitalist forces"; and (2) the current recessionary phase of the modernisation process is severely testing the ability of people to manage the "stresses and strains being so predictably manifested throughout Irish society" (*Ibid.*: 49). Kirby suggests that a new kind of politics is needed to contest and challenge the consensus that supports this "rampant consumerist capitalism" (*Ibid.*). It can be argued that such a contestation begins with robust education for citizenship programmes in schools.

O'Sullivan (2009) argues that the prevalence of the "mercantile education paradigm" which aims primarily to prepare workers for the labour market at its core has succeeded in:

> modifying, diluting and narrowing dimensions of Irish cultural production, such as those relating to civil society, social morality, citizenship and democracy" (*Ibid.*: 131).

This confirms the need for an interrogation of citizenship education in Irish schools. O' Ferrall (2009), in advocating for "strong" democracy and active citizenship in Ireland, calls for a strengthening of "the nature and form of political participation" in order to combat the kind of politics that nakedly pursues "vested and self-interest" (*Ibid.*: 158). Recently, in Ireland, groups which call for citizens to become politically involved in the decision-making processes of government have proliferated, for example: We the Citizens, People before Profit, Direct Democracy, The Occupy Movement, Reform Alliance, etc. Powell (2013) explains this desire for public participation as:

> political rupture generated by bottom-up forces within civil society [which] points to the social Left as opposed to the political Left, as the driver of change in post-politics society (*Ibid.*: 169).

The initiation of such public discourses may result from the fact that "many Irish citizens are simply disengaged from the public realm and have no input to public policies" (O' Ferrall, 2009: 157). Byrne (2012) in asserting that there is a "lack of trust in Irish institutions" and an undermining of democracy notes that:

> Irish citizens are no longer remote from decision-making; they are completely removed from it because the representative function of democracy has been made redundant (*Ibid.*: 84, 85).

This indicates that Irish democracy is not as substantive or as healthy as it could be. O' Ferrall (2009) refers to the "erosion of democracy in the Irish Republic" (*Ibid.*: 155), observing that "Irish democracy is decayed and suffers from a loss of vision; it is operating sub-optimally" (*Ibid.*: 156). There is an apathy among young people regarding their "level of participation in the democratic process" (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007: 16). Another indicator of a "democracy [that] has been made

redundant" (Byrne, 2012: 84, 85) is that "injustice and inequality are now starkly visible" (O'Toole, 2012: 54).

The lack of identification on the part of citizens with Irish democratic institutions (O' Ferrall, 2009) does not bode well for the deepening of democracy. Trant (2007) explains why:

> We are bemused by the scandals that have come to light, but more so by the hypocrisy of some of our leaders who have tried to hide them. We are now inclined to treat statements from public figures with caution if not cynicism; spin is the in-thing and anyone who tells the unvarnished truth can be regarded as naïve (*Ibid.*: 267, 268).

The established churches are "in retreat", the family is "under siege" and the "modern state is at best an uneasy accommodation of adversarial interests" (Trant, 2007: 275). Murphy (2011) calls for "a new model of development" of Irish politics that has the qualities of: sustainability; balanced economic thinking; societal equality; and respect for the environment, at the core (*Ibid.*: 43).

3.2.3 Citizenship Policy Review

As evidenced by the broader political discourse on citizenship, viewed by many to have been initiated by the Putnam (2000) book *Bowling Alone*, many states have established initiatives aimed at exploring the discourse and application of citizenship as a strategy for social renewal. In the UK, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair advocated an agenda for social citizenship known as the Third Way. The core values of the Third Way combined an amalgam of discourses relating to rights and responsibilities such that:

> [a] modern notion of citizenship gives rights but demands obligations, shows respect but wants it back, grants opportunity but insists on responsibility. So the purpose of economic and social policy should be to extend opportunity, to remove the underlying causes of social alienation. But it should also take

> tough measures to ensure that the chances are taken up (Blair, 1996 cited in Dwyer, 2010: 75).

Influenced by Putnam, the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern and the Irish government were prompted to establish a Taskforce on Citizenship in April, 2006 to explore ways of supporting and encouraging active citizenship in Ireland. The terms of reference of the Taskforce were: to review existing present-day examples of active citizenship; to examine international trends; to review the influence of how "political, caring, community, professional and occupational, cultural, sporting and religious dimensions of Irish life" impact on citizenship; and to make recommendations to encourage greater participation in citizenship and voluntary work (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007: 29).

The Taskforce set out its vision of active citizenship as one that:

> transcends short-term structures, political philosophies and party political interests. It is based on a genuinely embracing and inclusive vision aimed at a full realisation of democratic values and community capabilities for sustainable well-being in a new Ireland (*Ibid.*: 1)

In a Background Working Paper (March, 2007) published by the Taskforce, the concept of Active Citizenship was defined:

> Active Citizenship refers to the voluntary capacity of citizens and communities working directly together, or through elected representatives, to exercise economic, social and political power in pursuit of shared goals.[18]

One outcome of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship was that it based the concept of "active citizenship" in the philosophy of civic republicanism. Civic republicanism emphasises:

[18] All information relevant to the work of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship is available at: www.activecitizen.ie

> the civic virtues of participation, democracy, liberty, equality and social solidarity. It acknowledges the mutual interdependence of all those who belong to a society or community, while recognising the possibility of different identities within societies as well as overlapping and multiple identities (O'Ferrall, 2009: 159).

This linking of active citizenship with civic republicanism is pertinent to the Irish understanding of citizenship. O'Ferrall (2009) asserts that in Ireland, the participatory involvement of citizens according to the ideal of civic republicanism is weak. This is caused by "the highly centralised Irish political system [which] has a deeply ingrained clientelist culture" (*Ibid.*: 161).

The report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship issued many recommendations for the facilitation of active citizenship. The particular recommendations in relation to education for citizenship will be recounted here. The report recommended the:

> expansion of education for citizenship in the school system and in the youth and adult education sectors, and in particular:
> - ensure that every Transition Year student has the opportunity to take part in an active learning community-based project . . .
> - strengthen the status and role of the CSPE programme in the junior cycle and introduce a citizenship programme as an exam subject at senior cycle
> - include workshops on Active Citizenship/Voter Education as a constituent element in Adult/Community Education Programmes (*Ibid.*: 21).

To date, there has been no evidence of implementation of these specific recommendations. The report states that "[a] healthy democracy relies on citizens who are well informed, interested and engaged" (*Ibid.*: 26). It can be argued that these recommendations for participation and engagement in democracy do not embrace fully embrace Freire's pedagogical theories of the humanisation and conscientisation of individuals. Such pedagogies enable students to combine "the language of critique with the language of possibility" which helps students to acquire "the knowledge and courage to struggle in order to make despair unconvincing and hope practical" (Giroux, 1988: 128). These objectives of citizenship education are

twofold: the development of one's capacity for active participation in society as a citizen; and the full realisation of one's potentialities throughout the life cycle.

These, it can be argued are positive outcomes for society, as citizens who possess keen critical capacities are empowered to question, debate, examine and interrogate matters pertaining to the overall societal good. The individual citizen also benefits as she is participating in, and contributing to, the decision-making processes, in a manner that is based on knowledge and critical faculties. This, it can be argued, has the effect of enhancing standards, values, rights and experiences in the day-to-day lived lives of citizens. In this way, the educational system serves "both individuals and the larger society" (Noddings, 2005: 11) as "active citizens help shape strong, healthy, inclusive societies" (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007).

However, there are a number of reasons to question the understanding and advocacy of citizenship as posited by the Taskforce on Active Citizenship:

(1) Over-emphasis on service: It is the contention of Honohan (2012) that the discourse "active citizenship" places an "*overemphasis on service* or the responsibility of citizens" rather than on their empowerment (*Ibid.*: 66; italics in original). When citizenship takes the form of making demands on citizens to be of service and show responsibility at the expense of "participation in political decision-making, citizens can end up being subject to increased domination" (*Ibid.*). This perceived focus of the Taskforce on Citizenship needs interrogation as this has "long been a tendency in formal citizenship education" in Irish schools (*Ibid.*).

(2) Institutional frameworks and education for citizenship: Honohan (2005) advises that there is more to promoting active citizenship than encouraging people to be involved in community work. The promotion of active citizenship requires the "creation of [the necessary] institutional frameworks" and the "provision of education and resources" in schools and communities (*Ibid.*: 176). For active citizenship to provide opportunities of genuine engagement, it is necessary to put in place opportunities and facilities for people:

> to participate more extensively in more deliberative forms of political practice, on the grounds that this would extend citizens' awareness of interdependence, give them a common experience, confront them with the views of citizens who hold different views, and engage them in deliberation with immediate implication for policy (*Ibid.*: 177).

A large proportion of the Irish population believe that "party political activism is a waste of time" (Hughes *et al.*, 2007: 585). Hughes *et al.* suggest that one reason for this decline in interest is due to the perception that "the policy differences between political parties have been reduced to almost vanishing point" (*Ibid.*: 586). It can be argued that this perception makes the facilitation of participation in active citizenship challenging as there is a "sense of growing unease about Irish democracy in the twenty-first century" (O'Ferrall, 2009: 156). Ongoing protests re: water charges, austerity, etc. demonstrate less engagement with political institutions by citizens. As Powell (2012) terms it: "we [are] self-absorbed subjects (consumer citizens) rather than active citizens engaged in society" (*Ibid.*: 158).

With regard to the provision of civic education, Honohan (2005) asserts that such education takes place "informally through practice and experience" as well as through the formal curriculum (*Ibid.*: 178). For this understanding of education for citizenship to pervade at second level education:

> The effects of school culture (hierarchical or participatory), size (large or small), and culture (orientation to exams/points or students development) need to be addressed (*Ibid.*).

Arguably, the recommendations of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship are not sufficiently comprehensive to support a deepening of citizenship education in schools. Citizenship education needs to go beyond the "conveying of knowledge" to developing appropriate "dispositions, attitudes and practice" in the school setting (*Ibid.*). Serious interrogation of curricular content and pedagogy is needed if education is to have a political dimension and empower students to intervene in the world (Freire, 1972). It is through "dialogue" and "problem-posing" that the humanisation and conscientisation of the student is accomplished (*Ibid.*).

(3) Contemporary discourse on citizenship: The Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship was published at a time when "[m]any Irish citizens are simply disengaged from the public realm and have no input into public policies" (O'Ferrall, 2009: 157). This is significant as it raises questions about the Report's efficacy in promoting active citizenship. O'Ferrall observes that the "erosion of citizenship" in the Irish Republic is due to:

> centralisation, clientelism, corporatism (as practised by our current social partnership arrangements and the very rapid growth of non-departmental public bodies) and corruption (*Ibid.*).

Powell (2012) contends that in "post-Celtic Tiger Ireland . . . [t]he line between politics and fantasy has become blurred in our contemporary reality" (*Ibid.*: 158). This challenges citizens to "reclaim political reality" by:

- discovering the "difference between truth and falsehood"
- exploring new narratives of republicanism
- adopting a "critical citizenship based on inclusion and participation"
- affirming "sustainable communities, populated by *real* people (*Ibid.*: 158, 159; italics in original)

A further obstacle to active citizenship is the influence of the ideology of "new public management" (NPM) on the administration of public services in Ireland. This ideology is known in Ireland as the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) and applies "market principles and terminology to the provision of public goods and services" (O'Ferrall, 2009: 162). The use of SMI for the administration of public services arguably runs counter to the principles of civic republicanism and active citizenship. Collins (2007) argues that:

> SMI seeks to emulate the private sector's use of market research, information technology and performance indicators to speed decisions and underpin policy, whereas democracy values deliberation, accountability and

> transparency, all of which impede the rapid response to change so valued in the private sector (*Ibid.*: 52, 53).

A lack of deliberation, transparency and accountability makes it difficult for citizens to participate in decision-making processes.

(4) Citizenship is an evolving concept: In Chapter Two (see Section 2.2), the evolving nature of the understanding of the concept was discussed. The discourse on citizenship continues to evolve from ancient Greece to the present. Cosmopolitan, environmental and radical understandings of citizenship were examined. It was argued that a robust programme for citizenship education needs to interrogate the different emerging understandings of citizenship in the classroom. The pedagogy of Freire was posited as a useful tool for critically interrogating the meaning of, and participation in citizenship. The Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship does not make reference to these aspects of citizenship.

Powell (2012) draws attention to another aspect of citizen participation. There is increasing evidence of citizens being involved in politics through non-traditional forms. Powell cites the action of The Occupy Movement as an example of the generation of "bottom-up forces within civil society [that] points to the social left as opposed to the political left as the driver of change in post-politics society" (*Ibid.*: 161). The Occupy Movement is a manifestation of an alternative expression of citizenship. Powell notes that it is "refreshing" that The Occupy Movement "link their political critique of capitalism to practical welfare initiatives aimed at the socially excluded" (*Ibid.*: 162). This Movement is an example of a new way of political and democratic participation that has evolved in contemporary times. The Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship is silent on such responses of citizens to the present political reality.

(5) Transformation of Irish political community: Delanty (2005) argues that the "transformation of the Irish political community" which results from globalisation presents: "far-reaching implications . . . both dangers as well as opportunities for democracy, citizenship and justice" (*Ibid.*: 13). This is because the nation as the traditional reference point for the Irish political community is no longer relevant. The

concept of nationhood has been eroded by: Europeanisation; reversal of emigration; significant immigration; and the lack of influence of Catholicism in society. Therefore, the current political community seeks its identity not in the nation state but in cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism results from adopting a position that "expresses a belief in a global or transnational civil society, which can exist beyond the state in regional or city based movements" (*Ibid.*: 20). The development of shifting identities and values in young people shapes "a potential cosmopolitanism" that is based on "environmentalism, gender politics and quality of life issues" (*Ibid.*: 18).

The Taskforce on Active Citizenship does not provide sufficient recognition of a "postnational political community" where one can be simultaneously "Irish, European and member of an ethnic community" (*Ibid.*: 21). The assertion by Delanty of the "transformation of the political community" in Ireland has repercussions for citizenship education. Citizenship education programmes in schools need to educate students to have the skills and capacities to "give citizenship substance in an age of flux, uncertainty and flows" (*Ibid.*: 18). This objective can be achieved through Freire's pedagogy which seeks to deepen and expand "the possibilities of critical thought, agency, and democracy itself (Giroux, 2011: 43).

The above discussion on the Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship critiques the central discourse on citizenship in Ireland under the following headings:

- an over-emphasis on voluntarism and community work
- a lack of recognition of the need to put in place the necessary structural frameworks and civic education
- no cognisance given to the "erosion of citizenship" as experienced by citizens in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland
- no interrogation of alternative, non-traditional ways of citizenship involvement
- the need for more awareness of the transformation of the political community in Ireland

- no definition of citizenship education, nor committed funding or teacher training
- the dilution of rights, but increased responsibilities

Therefore, it can be argued that the Report on Active Citizenship missed an opportunity to sign-post a robust and rigorous schools' programme for citizenship education. This study seeks to base education for citizenship in the work of critical pedagogues such as Dewey, Freire, Noddings, Giroux, etc. The ideologies of Freire on humanisation and conscientisation are essential pedagogical approaches for educating for the social and personal empowerment of the student. The following section examines the Irish educational system from a number of different perspectives.

3.3 Irish Education

3.3.1 School Culture

O'Sullivan (2005) has asserted that since the foundation of the state the education system has been preoccupied with an understanding of nationhood and citizenship in the context of an education that flows from the influences of Irish "cultural nationalism" and the "Roman Catholic Church" (*Ibid.*: 103, 104). This philosophy of education was considered to educate for: "the demands of religious education, the needs of the gaelicisation process and the scope of a "general education" suitable for clerical occupations, entry to professional training and dealing with the general problems of life" (O'Donoghue, 1999: 89). O' Sullivan (2005) refers to this portrayal of the work of schools as the manifestation of the "theocentric paradigm" of education[19] (*Ibid.*).

Since the late 1960s, the theocratic paradigm gave way to the mercantile paradigm of education. O' Sullivan notes that while the principles of the mercantile paradigm of education dominate in Irish schools (that is, the preparation of workers for the labour

[19] According to the "theocentric paradigm" of education, the "aim of education . . . [is] determined by unchanging principles based on a Christian view of human nature and destiny" (O'Sullivan, 2005: 112).

market), this does not involve "direct suppression" of citizenship education. However, what occurs is:

> more subtle, penetrating and silently non-discursive as citizenship itself becomes to be reconceptualised around the entitlements and expectations of individuals to mercantile competencies and subjectivities. (*Ibid.*: 188).

The mission of educating for citizenship in Irish schools has also been influenced by the "Catholic Church's historical antipathy" towards "citizenship education" (Gleeson, 2008: 89). The Roman Catholic Church does, however, intervene in curricular areas such as "life skills" and on "issues that pertain to sexual morality" (Drudy and Lynch, 1993: 83). This indicates the powerful influence of the Church on the shaping of social policy in Ireland (Earley, 1999). This influence was evident in relation to "sexual morality, the family and the position of women in Irish society" (Kiely, 1999: 2, 3). Secular values are not reflected in the Irish constitution as there is no separation of Church and state. Therefore, the Church exercised considerable influence as an "opinion former" in the delivery of educational services. Earley (1999) asserts that despite the waning of the Church's influence in recent years due to clerical child abuse scandals, it nevertheless remains a pressure group with regard to education policy. These influences of Church and state impact on the quality of citizenship education offered in schools.

It can be argued that the sentiments expressed by Giroux (1992) when writing about American schooling are relevant for those in educational leadership in the Ireland of to-day:

> . . . educational reformers need to expand the purpose and promise of schooling beyond the narrow interests of the marketplace, view multicultural education as central to living in a democratic society, refuse to equate nationalism with monoculturalism, and substitute the language of community, solidarity, and public responsibility for the current emphasis on choice and individual competitiveness. (Giroux, 1992: 4)

In this sense, Irish school authorities need to take cognisance of prevailing societal influences, such as: the undermining of the authority of the nation-state due to the effects of globalisation; the pressure on schools to produce "rational economic actors" (Lynch *et al.,* 2007); the evolving meaning of citizenship; the decline of nationalism; and the increasing emphasis on a discourse of multiculturalism. It can be argued that with the growing secularisation of Irish society, such societal influences need interrogation in relation to pedagogy and curricular content for citizenship education programmes in Irish schools.

The current *habitus* of the Irish school conflicts with the ideas of Oakeshott[20] who favours the idea of the school institution being a place "in which the initiation into the conversation of mankind takes place" (Williams, 2007: 45). This resonates with the pedagogical theories of Freire (1998b) which encourage schools to be places of "dialogue" and "problem-posing" where students:

> take on the role of "subject" in the process of production generated by their own encounters with the world to avoid becoming simply a receptacle of what the teacher "transfers" to them (*Ibid.*: 111).

As such, the school is insulated from "the activity of satisfying the desires of the world of practical experience" (Williams, 2007: 45). The benefit of the "conversation of mankind" as an educational metaphor lies:

> within the activity of conversing itself, i.e., in the pleasure, stimulation and enlightenment that it provides. This is why we can speak of conversation as valuable in itself or for its own sake, and this is what Oakeshott means when he speaks of the non-instrumental nature of educational pursuits (*Ibid.*: 33)

The traditional, didactic mode of teaching is very much the norm in Irish schools leaving little room for interactive, dialogue in the classroom (Trant and Ó Donnabháin, 1998). It is noted that the discourse relating to Irish education is "coterminous with the theme of education and the economy" (O'Sullivan, 1992: 464

[20] Michael Oakeshott (1901-1990) - philosopher and political theorist

cited in Gleeson, 2004: 107), which in turn results in the exclusion of themes on "cultural identity, language, civic competence and moral development" (*Ibid.*).

Education is very much presented in Irish life as a commodity to be purchased in the open market. This perspective is demonstrated by the growth of "new private schools" (i.e. "grind schools")[21] (Sugrue, 2004: 4; Lynch and Moran, 2006). Lynch and Moran (2006) point to the influence of neoliberal values to comprehend:

> the recent shifts in the Irish educational landscape, where the growth of grind schools is unchecked, where the newspaper frenzy implicitly endorses and adds to the profit-oriented sector, where the National Parents Council actively supports the state subsidisation of the fee-paying sector - where market choice, although officially outlawed at the level of the state in education, has slipped through the cracks to become an underground defining feature of the Irish educational landscape (*Ibid.*: 232).

Trant (2007) in arguing on how the values of the market have "invaded the world of education" (*Ibid.*: 14) asserts that this is manifested in Ireland through the promotion of "two prominent values . . . individualism and competition" (*Ibid.*: 12). Trant further contends that these values are evident in the manner in which the Irish Leaving Certificate examination allocates student places at third level, which is through the *points* system.

The *points* system is based on the accumulation of a *points* total that results from performance in the terminal examination of secondary school (Leaving Certificate examination). Each third level course has an entry requirement of a fixed number of *points*. In everyday discourse, this practice of seeking to accumulate *points* on completion of secondary school education is referred to as the *points* "race". Trant and others argue that the *points* race causes elements of competition and individualism to surface in the Irish educational system. It can be argued that the consequences of this mind-set is that curricular subjects that are examinable in the

[21] "Grind schools" refer to the increased prevalence of schools under private management, making available extra tuition (for payment) for students to gain advantage for examination success. Students avail of this private tuition outside of and apart from their daily attendance at state secondary schools.

Leaving Certificate examination are treated with respect while those subjects that are not examinable, (such as, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)) receive little attention. In this context, the education for the political, civil, social and personal development of students languishes in degree of importance.

The institutional impact of such competitive influences leaves a significant deficiency in the secondary education of students. It can be argued that it is through the education process that citizens can be prepared and enabled to provide a "determined counterforce" to "the takeover of Irish society by the market and the co-optation of the state to serve global market forces rather than the needs of its citizens" (Kirby, 2009: 203). This shortcoming in the Irish educational system is described by Drudy and Lynch (1993) as follows:

> If there is a lacuna in second level education it is in the field of the social sciences and indeed philosophy. No philosophy is taught in our schools, neither is there any sociology, political science, media studies, women's studies, psychology, or social policy. Yet these are immensely relevant disciplines, not only for employment but also for people's personal and political lives (Drudy and Lynch, 1993: 223).

Examples of "relevant disciplines" currently on the secondary school curriculum are: Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Religious Education (RE) and Physical Education (PE). For the purposes of this research, these subjects are classified as elements of the "non-cognitive" curriculum.

It can be argued that other aspects of a holistic education, such as: the school pastoral care system; special education needs provision; the importance attached to parent and student councils; the availability of music and art as curricular subjects; the addition of subjects such as philosophy, sociology and political science to the curriculum; and the value of the informal curriculum, all need to be seriously analysed by the educational stakeholders, so that second-level education can begin to focus not only on preparing students for employment but also for "that specifically human act of

intervening in the world" (Freire, 1998b: 99). Walsh (2012) asserts that in particular, the humanities are:

> increasingly presented as an indulgence, unconnected with productivity, as if we should not allow people to study those things which humanity deems significant, and thereby reinterpret, reinvigorate and internalise them, acting as carriers of cultural significance to the next generation (*Ibid.*: 224).

Charleton (2008) argues for the inclusion of Philosophy as a subject on the curriculum as "philosophical questioning and understanding" would help students to:

- build on their "natural curiosity"
- behave in "certain ways and avoid others"
- be motivated and committed
- make "wise choices . . . and be less a prey to consumerist or other pressure"
- think logically and systematically (*Ibid.*: 202).

It seems that at the present time, the education field is dominated by other priorities. These priorities are: satisfying the demands of the marketplace; encouraging individualism and competition; providing utilities for economic progress; and attending to the demands of third level institutions (Coolahan, 1981; Trant, 2007; Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin, 2009; Tuohy, 2012; Walsh, 2012).

The universalism, both in terms of the curricular content and evaluation methods, that is the norm in all Irish second-level schools, portrays quite a competitive representation of the Irish classroom (Trant, 2007). Students compete in the *points* race for examination results, while schools compete for places on the schools' league tables. Educational indicators are rationalist and instrumentalist in nature: grades, league tables, third level entry, *points*, school status, school social class, etc. These forms of performance measurement are referred to as "contractual accountability" which is "a surveillance based approach to performance in which trust and ambiguity is reduced to a minimum" (Walsh, 1994 cited in Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin, 2009:

27). It is suggested that the term "responsive accountability" is more appropriate to the educational setting as it focuses on:

> . . . character as well as performance, with social and emotional as well as cognitive learning, with personal and professional development as well as professional learning, with preserving continuity and security alongside promoting risk and change. It means developing social capital, laying the emotional foundations of democracy and creating the kernels of cosmopolitan identity (Hargreaves, 2003: 51 cited in Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin, 2009: 27).

Schools are compliant in the operation of the "contractual accountability" format of educational assessment in that they set out to "attract "motivated" parents with "able" children . . . to enhance their relative position in local systems of competition" (Apple, 2001: 413).

It can be argued that individualism, competition and commodification of education intrude in the school setting in a manner that impedes education for critical and independent thinking. Olssen (2010) asserts that education is not successful in getting students to "critically inform their minds" or to "engage in reflective practice", it is active in the work of promoting "middle class values" (*Ibid*: 162).

3.3.2 The Irish Educational System

While the Irish educational system has been the subject of diverse interventions and motivations over the years, the "needs of the market can . . . be seen to have predominated in educational policy" (Kirby, 2002: 151). "Economic imperatives" have been the main diving force of Ireland's education policy (Kenny *et al.*, 2009: 56). Carroll (2008) and Lynch (2010) have argued that the Irish secondary education system needs to change in order to adequately service the needs of present-day Ireland. Both authors contend that schools are overly focused on educating for the "rational economic actor" model of citizen and neglectful of education for the empowerment of students to be critical and independent thinkers. Gleeson (2010) observes that there has been a "noticeable shift away from the humanities towards technical and scientific subjects" (*Ibid.*: 34). In the opinion of Carroll (2008), this

shift in current educational policy is "based completely on unquestioned neoliberal thinking that reflects corporate interests rather than the interests of society-at-large" (*Ibid.*: 43). Evidence of this thinking is evident when representatives of the Irish business sector voice their dissatisfaction with what they consider to be inadequacies in the educational system. Representatives of organisations, such as, IBEC[22] (Gleeson, 2010) and of private sector companies such as, Microsoft, Google, etc. have expressed the viewpoint that the Irish educational system does not adequately educate students to be well-rounded individuals, a quality which these companies seek when recruiting employees (Gleeson, 2010; McDonagh and Quinn, 2012). However, responding to recent calls by such representatives to modernise the Leaving Certificate examination, Walsh (2012) points out that by ""modernise" they mean, of course, make more suited to the needs of corporate profit making" (*Ibid.*: 215).

It can be discerned that the educational system in Ireland is currently being guided by two different influences. One such influence, is a curricular one whereby the state has "changed the curriculum away from a classical education towards a more scientific and technological one" (Inglis, 2008: 18). The second influence resulting from the process of modernisation is that Ireland now abounds with the "signs, sounds and symbols of conspicuous consumption, market forces and materialistic secularism" (Sugrue, 2004: 1). Limond (2007) argues that Ireland "is awash in the values of neoliberalism", where:

> the market is expected to solve all educational problems and, in turn, education is expected to prepare new worker-consumers who will advance Ireland's collective wealth by their capacity to compete on its behalf in the international market (*Ibid.*: 174).

Lauder (1991) expresses concern that "neo-liberal theory severs the connection between education and democracy both conceptually and empirically" (*Ibid.*: 427). Olssen (2010), when writing on how free market influences impact on education, states that such influences are "particularly pernicious" as the planning for educational objectives are determined by the criteria of "economic costs and benefits" (*Ibid.*: 5).

[22] Irish Business and Employers Confederation

Olssen further warns that this mind-set causes "the determination of educational goals and objectives" to be "taken out of the education realm altogether" (*Ibid.*).

It is unlikely for educational discourse in Ireland to "gain attention for reasons other than as a provider of skilled workers for the economy, a mediator of unequal life chances, or a manifestation of inadequate public service funding" (O'Sullivan, 2005: xiii). To paraphrase Yeats, education for citizenship educates for the "lighting of a fire", that is, for the empowerment of students through their humanisation and the development of critical consciousness. Yeats' "filling of a bucket" mode of education is described by Freire (1998b) as the "banking or transmission theory of school knowledge" where "education as training dominates schools" (*Ibid.*: 4). This stands in the way of teaching students for "critical consciousness" (*Ibid.*). The Freirean perspective promotes education as a means of enabling "self-exploration":

> in which, through intellectual and affective encounters, the student attempts to discover her own subjectivity, now nearly all learning space is occupied by an elaborate testing apparatus that measures the student's "progress" in ingesting externally imposed curricula and, more insidiously, provides a sorting device to reproduce the inequalities inherent in the capitalist market system (*Ibid.*: 4, 5).

It can be argued that the "banking" concept of education is being accommodated in Irish schools due to "the cultural transformation experienced in Irish education" over the past fifty years (O'Sullivan, 2009: 123). O'Sullivan posits this transformation as "a transition from a theocentric to a mercantile policy paradigm[23] from one which had God at its centre to one with trade/exchange at its core" (*Ibid.*: 123).

3.3.3 Philosophy of Irish Education

Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin (2009), when discussing the accountability of the Irish educational system, assert that the efficiency of the system takes priority rather than "the quality of the personal, social, cultural and moral development of the community

[23] A "paradigm" is "an interpretative framework we use to make sense of the world" (O'Sullivan, 2009: 123).

being educated" (*Ibid.*: 28). It can be argued that the interests of the state and economy coalesce to legitimate values in Irish schools that are:

> in accordance with the perceived need to link education and economic planning even more closely and to shape the school curricula accordingly (preparing) for the higher visibility, status and take up of applied subjects and for the gradual erosion of the Humanities (Fuller, 1990: 172 cited in Gleeson, 2004: 108).

The workings of the Irish public service (including The Department of Education and Skills) is much influenced by the ideology of "New Public Management" (NPM), a management model more suited for assessing progress in the business sector (O' Ferrall, 2009; Collins, 2007). The reasoning of NPM develops from "a neo-liberal critique that portrays the public sector as inherently inefficient, self-serving and inhibiting rational economic strategies" (Collins and Cradden, 2001: 6). The Department of Education and Skills (like other government departments) promotes the "Strategic Management Initiative" (SMI) model of management (as discussed in Section 3.2.3) which in reality is a form of NPM. That is, business management performance standards are being employed in order to evaluate education. The SMI commenced in Ireland in 1994; it required that:

> departments of state be accountable for the effectiveness and value for money of their work, the intention being that they would thereby focus on service quality from the customers' perspective (Butler and Collins, 2004: 137).

This evaluative approach (SMI) to the educational field resides in the "introduction of performance indicators and a surveillance based approach to performance in which trust and ambiguity is reduced to a minimum" (Gleeson and Ó Donnabháin, 2009: 27). O' Ferrall asserts that the SMI ideology and its language being "about "customers" or "consumers" rather than citizens . . . has undoubtedly further weakened Irish democracy" (O' Ferrall, 2009: 162).

It can be argued that this ideology in the educational domain tends to lay emphasis on the efficiency of the system rather than the values that are conducive to the

personal and social development of students. This occurs through neglect of the fostering of "genuine community life" in the school setting (Trant, 1998: 34). Lynch (2010) further observes that in this societal context:

> [m]ainstream sociological, educational, economic and political thought devotes little attention to the issues of care . . . To speak or write of solidarity is to consign oneself to a class of people who are not in touch with the individualist spirit of the age. . . . (*Ibid.*: 15).

It is the contention of Trant (1998) that many of the present day societal issues that impact on citizenship education such as "solidarity, citizenship, care for the environment, respect for human rights and the fundamental principles of relating to each other as human beings" can only be effectively interrogated through dialogue in "some form of genuine community life" (*Ibid.*: 34). Trant further argues that the school is the ideal setting for the nurturing of such a sense of community (*Ibid.*). Such a school *habitus* helps act as a counterforce to a situation whereby the "ideas of public duty" are being substituted by "individually-structured incentive targets and performance incentives" for most people in "the public sector" (Olssen, 2010: 21).

O'Sullivan (2005) pinpoints the publication of the "Investment in Education" (IIE) (Department of Education, 1965) document in 1966 as the first signalling of a linkage between "schooling and the economy" in the Irish education system (*Ibid.*: 129). The publication of this policy document, which resulted from the work of officials from the Irish Department of Education in co-operation with experts from the OECD,[24] was a key moment in the history of Irish education. Gleeson (2010) alludes to the input of officials from the OECD as the "guiding role of the "cultural strangers" which was at variance with the "false clarity and optimism of the home protagonists" (that is, Irish educational voices) (*Ibid*: 39). The document centred on industrial planning, lending impetus to economic progress and educating for the provision of suitably qualified manpower (Kellaghan, 1989). Tovey and Share (2000) describe the report as being a "pragmatic rather than an ideological response to the educational challenges raised by a modernising society" (*Ibid.*: 165). This joint involvement of Irish and OECD

[24] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

authorities in analysing educational and economic policy in Ireland was marked by the "introduction of the human capital paradigm where education was seen as investment in people for economic gain . . ." (Gleeson, 2010: 40).

This thesis is concerned with the part played by secondary education in contributing to the "self and social empowerment" (Giroux, 1988) of students, and to the enhancing of their ability to participate in the democratic system as active citizens. The adoption by the state of the policies of the IIE report consolidated the mercantile educational paradigm through the promotion of education for the "knowledge economy", and the dissemination of the ideas of "marketisation of education throughout public thinking . . ." (Gleeson, 2010: 190). The emphasis of state educational policy began to develop "the technical base for the type of labour force necessary for rapid economic growth" (Drudy and Lynch, 1993: 214). Arguably, this overly instrumentalist approach to Irish education neglects other critical elements integral to the attainment of education for citizenship.

Fullan (2001) states that the concept of "knowledge society" is a more appropriate term than that of "knowledge economy" (*Ibid.*: 6). Fullan in elaborating on the meaning of the term "knowledge society" distinguishes between "information" and "knowledge". The "turning [of] information into knowledge is a social process, and for that you need good relationships" (*Ibid.*). Teaching and learning in a manner that promotes the "knowledge society" means that:

> students are learning why and how to share knowledge - something they will need as future workers and citizens. The more that educators model knowledge sharing themselves in their daily work, the more that students will learn to do so. (*Ibid.*: 104).

The premise is that "information" is mere data, and remains data; unless, the data becomes "knowledge" which only occurs through the social sharing of that data with others. The social interaction between teacher and student that is necessary for changing "information" into "knowledge" cannot be realised if the banking concept (Freire, 1972) of education is in practice. It occurs through the "problem posing" and "dialogic" pedagogy of Freire.

Gleeson (2004) refers to the increased prevalence of the "technical mentality" in Irish educational discourse. He notes that the following kinds of "technical language" are in frequent use in Irish educational parlance:

> "delivery" mechanisms, used in relation to INSET and curriculum; frequent reference to the "products of our system", "targets", "strategies"; "teacher *training*" rather than teacher education; the overriding concern with "covering the course" (*Ibid.*: 110,111; italics in original).

O'Sullivan (2005) describes this portrayal of the school as the personification of "commercial principles" whereby schools are assessed in terms of "efficiency, cost effectiveness, quality control and surplus and deficit in relation to market requirements" (*Ibid.*: 117). This prioritisation of market values in the school setting affords little opportunity for affirming the essentials of citizenship education, such as, teaching for the humanisation and conscientisation of the student. Lynch (2010) describes the education system thus:

> We have no culture of critical analysis in Irish education; we do not teach our young people anything about politics and the ideologies that underpin it. We do not teach them critical theory or sociology or feminist or egalitarian theories of how to promote more equal and socially just societies (*Ibid.*: 14).

This assertion confirms the view of Coolahan (1981) that in Ireland "[m]uch of the concern of pupils, parents and teachers at second-level is geared towards successful performance in the various examinations" (*Ibid.*: 206). Stakeholders tend to adjudicate on schools, on "how well they prepare people for entry to prestigious third-level courses, rather than on the human development of the student (Tuohy, 2012: 145). The emphasis in Irish schools is on the passing of informational content from teacher to student through "rote memorisation". Chomsky (2000) refers to this practice as a "socialisation process" that keeps students "from asking questions that matter about important issues that directly affect them and others" (*Ibid.*: 24). Thus, elements such as competition, rote learning, examination performance, *points*

accumulation, individualism, etc. all contribute to upholding the NPM model of education.

3.3.4 Influence of Market Values

The publication of the "Investment in Education" (IIE) report (Department of Education, 1965) "facilitated the introduction of the human capital paradigm where education was seen as investment in people for economic gain" (Gleeson, 2010: 40). These sentiments were echoed over 40 years later in the Annual Competitiveness Report (2008) which advised the government on the need for schools to provide a strong focus on:

> improving mathematics, science and ICT skills . . . to increase the quality and time spent teaching these subjects in Irish schools, to address the perceived disadvantages to studying higher level mathematics at Leaving Certificate level and to improve the learning environment for science education, including the quality of science laboratories (National Competitiveness Council, 2008: 5).

Representatives of the corporate sector have recently vented their concern with regard to the status of Mathematics in Irish curricula. Dr. Craig Barrett, former CEO, Intel, Ireland, advises that Irish education needs to aim towards the "goal to be number 1 in the PISA[25] rankings for maths." as Ireland's "future relies on a critical mass of maths and science skills" (Speaking to the Royal Irish Academy, February 8, 2010 cited in McDonagh and Quinlan, 2012: 3). Another corporate executive, John Herlihy, Head of Google in Ireland, is concerned that "Ireland is falling further and further behind in mathematics". This results in insufficient numbers of "good graduates coming through" and, third level lecturers having to spend considerable time "teaching remedial maths" (Sunday Independent, September 26, 2008 a cited in McDonagh and Quinlan, 2012: 3). The strong emphasis on the Mathematics and Sciences is reflective of a definite national strategy that seeks to promote these subjects as critical for

[25] PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment is an international study that was launched by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in 1997. See www.oecd.org/pisa/

economic development and progress in Ireland but not necessarily as academic subjects in their own right.

Lynch (1989) observes that in Irish education the emphasis is on "the technical knowledge sphere" as:

> schooling is not only oriented to the development of cognitive – intellectual individuals, but also that this intellectualism was increasingly directed towards the technical knowledge sphere – the word technical being used as a synonym for commercial, scientific and applied scientific or technological knowledge (*Ibid.*: 51).

Recent new initiatives - such as: extra (bonus) *points* for Leaving Certificate Mathematics[26]; the addition of "Project Mathematics"[27] to the curriculum; and more training and upskilling of teachers, have been introduced to satisfy the calls from business representatives (regarding the profile of Mathematics in schools) and to rectify the low performance of Ireland in the PISA Mathematics and Science tests. Arguably, these exhortations to, and responses of, educational interests support an educational direction that affirms the utilitarian, instrumentalist priorities of providing human capital in sufficient numbers with appropriate qualifications to further economic advancement. Many education theorists argue that this instrumentalist educational ideology is problematic, not that the pursuit of knowledge in the Sciences is problematic in itself, but this approach lacks balance. In contrast, a holistic model of education which is necessary for the preparation of citizens is neglected.

This indicates that the Irish secondary school system is influenced by an educational philosophy that places "increased emphasis on serving the needs of business and high-tech industry" (Walshe, 1999: 6). These influences, that is, the technological curricular orientation, and the exhortations of the corporate sector, contribute to the imaging of the Irish secondary school as a place where the

[26] The Minister for Education and Skills decided to award bonus points (i.e. twenty-five extra points) to students who take Higher Level Mathematics in the Leaving Certificate examination of 2012. This practice is likely to continue.

[27] "Project Mathematics" represents new syllabi for Junior and Leaving Certificate Mathematics. The objective of this initiative is to help students better understand Mathematical concepts and relate Mathematics to everyday experiences.

examination matters to the detriment of the social and personal development of students. This approach has "become the raison d'être of post-primary schooling to the detriment of the more humane concerns of education" (Coolahan, 1981: 206). Quinn (2012a) in a critical response to the recent plan outlined by the Minister for Education and Skills on the future development of Irish education, stated that "good results" in the Leaving Certificate examination are "achieved through grind schools and "cramming" - by focusing on regurgitation and not on deep knowledge" (*Ibid.*: 210). The fact that there is "little doubt that the points system dominates Irish education" tends to promote an educational philosophy that bears the hallmarks of individualism and competition, values that are first and foremost true to the philosophy of marketplace principles (Trant, 2007: 13). This confirms "Ireland's buy-in to the globalisation and commodification of education" (Tuohy, 2012: 144).

This thesis does not advocate a lessening of emphasis on the teaching of curricular subjects in the "technical knowledge sphere", rather it recognises the educational worth of such education for well-being and citizenship. Similar to Noddings (1995), this research questions the artificial barrier created between educating only for the workplace and, education for "civic responsibility" (*Ibid.*: 367). An education that is based on a "moral policy" and a "defensible mission" awards recognition to "a multiplicity of human capacities and interests" (*Ibid.*). This research in affirming the work of schools in providing a robust education for citizenship seeks a rebalance of current educational priorities.

3.4 The Student Voice in Irish Education

In this thesis, education for citizenship is considered from the Freirean perspective which seeks to enable students to "read the world" as well as "read the word". This section considers the place of the student voice in educating for citizenship.

The Irish education system affords limited opportunities to students to have a voice in educational matters (Gilleece and Cosgrove, 2012). The rights of students to participate in decision-making are recognised by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 of the UNCRC asserts the right for children to express their views freely and, to be afforded opportunities to be heard.

Those working in the education sector need to be aware that "Article 12 exists, that it has legal force, and that it applies to all educational decision making" (Lundy, 2007: 930). There is a legally binding obligation on schools to facilitate students in expressing their opinions and, engaging in decision-making processes. Lundy (2007) proposes that for effective communication of the implications of Article 12, the following four factors be considered:

> Space: Children must be given the opportunity to express a view
> Voice: Children must be facilitated to express their views
> Audience: The view must be listened to
> Influence: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate (*Ibid.*: 933).

Children must be provided the space, the opportunity to articulate their opinions. Student Councils, properly constituted, can afford such opportunities to students. Children must be facilitated to voice their views. For this, children are entitled to "receive guidance and direction from adults in the exercise of their Convention rights" (*Ibid.*: 935). The "audience" aspect of Article 12 requires due weight to be given to listening to children's views. It is widely acknowledged that adults need "training in the skills of active listening" in order to satisfactorily accomplish this aspect of Article 12 (*Ibid.*: 936). For the views of children to have influence in the school setting, it is not just sufficient to listen, these views need to be embedded into the decision making processes of the school.

For transformational change to occur in education, educators and policy makers need to be attuned to the voice of the student. Rudduck (1995) argues for schools to have structures in place that enable students to be genuinely engaged in decisions concerning their education. Taking "seriously the question of [student] "voice" and "participation"" is a necessary pre-requisite for educating for citizenship in the general school environment (*Ibid.*: 11). This recognition of students' voice encourages students to become acquainted with democratic practices while in school. Such an approach helps students to become engaged and informed citizens and, to interrogate different forms of democracy and, much more also. This approach to citizenship education regards students as being citizens of the here and now, not becoming citizens for some time in the future.

The adoption of Freirean pedagogy in schools is appropriate for the mediation of the student voice through the affirmation of dialogue between student and teacher. Freire (1998b) insists that educating for "technical efficiency" alone is not sufficient for engaging "in the process of becoming a citizen" (*Ibid.*: 94). Allowing students to voice their opinions and concerns in the school setting provides learning opportunities that supports their future engagement as citizens in society. Freire (1996) in addressing the "urgency of the democratisation of the public school" articulates the need for students to get "a taste for democratic practices" while in school (*Ibid.*: 21). Students need to be involved in dialogical encounters that interrogate political and social issues that are conducive to the "re-creation of a kind of society that is both humane and just" (*Ibid.*). Both students and teachers need to be aware that:

> open, curious questioning, whether in speaking or listening, is what grounds them mutually - not a simple passive pretence at dialogue (*Ibid.*: 81).

There is an onus on schools to strive to be "crucibles of democracy" (McQuillan, 2005: 641) that prioritise teaching for critical literacy through the provision of opportunities for listening to students and, affording them a voice.

In the opinion of Jeffers (2008), the present CSPE syllabus in secondary schools shies away from "overtly political components" and, ""power" as a key concept" has been omitted (*Ibid.*: 14, 15). It is generally concluded that the "Action Projects[28] focus on "safe" rather than controversial topics" (Wilson, 2003 cited in Gleeson, 2008: 85). Examples of such Action Project topics are: Recycling; The Irish Traveller Movement; Prisoners' Rights; Irish Politics; Local Community; etc.[29] While such topics are commendable, it is unlikely that from a critical pedagogical approach, they are interrogated by students at sufficient depth. The empowerment of students as citizens demands that the conditions for "true learning" be present in the school to enable "the discovery of truth" and not "the imposition of an official truth" (Chomsky,

[28] The "Action Project" is an active group assignment undertaken by students of CSPE as part of the CSPE examination.
[29] See CSPE Syllabus Guidelines: www.education.ie

2000: 21). The current mode of neutral teaching does not empower students with the critical literacy to:

> discover the truth and not to suppress information and insights that may be embarrassing to the wealthy and powerful people who create, design, and make policies about schools (*Ibid.*).

The ability to critically interrogate issues can be fostered among students in schools by adopting pedagogies that are based on the humanisation and conscientisation philosophies Freire (1972) (See Chapter 2). McLaughlin (2005) exhorts schools to be proactive in affirming the student voice through: "imitation, habituation, training in feeling, attention and perception, induction into patterns of action and habit, forms of guidance and experience, and exemplification" (*Ibid.*: 319).

Respecting the opinions of students as members of the school community is thus a critical element of education. That is, affirmation of the student voice in the school setting is necessary for the educational experience to be truly dialogical and supportive of the development of their critical literacies. Trant and Ó Donnabháin (1998), in their interrogation of the Irish educational system propose that the school of the future should:

> be a place not only where relevant and efficient learning happens but also a place where relationships can grow in a humane and civilised manner . . . the appropriate model for schooling should not be custodial or instrumental but familial and expressive. A school should not be an instructional factory but a learning community (*Ibid.*: 78, 79).

That is, the culture and relationships in the school setting have to be such that the hearing of the student voice is facilitated. Arguably, this facilitation can occur through the following: (1) the adoption of critical pedagogical approaches that affords opportunities to students to be part of an educational project that follows dialogical and problem-posing methodologies (Freire, 1972); and (2) the promotion of strategies for the democratisation of the student voice in the general school community.

Olssen (2010) promotes the view that education plays a fundamental role in the nurturing of democracy through facilitating "political and educational discourses . . . [which] challenge the hegemony of economics over social, personal and political life" (*Ibid.*: 7). While students may specialise in certain curricular subject areas for enhancement of employment opportunities, they also need "to learn how to learn, how to be, how to think, how to relate, how to critically examine, and how to understand and be part of society" (Carr, 2008: 83). These sentiments are fundamental to the work of teaching for humanisation and critical consciousness. In this respect, the teacher has a "key role in facilitating classroom discussions of social and ethical issues" (Kelly and Minnes Brandes, 2001: 438).

In Chapter Two, the teacher as a "transformative intellectual" (Giroux, 1988: 125) is proposed as the kind of "progressive educator" (Freire, 1998b: 58) who teaches in a manner that affirms the student voice. From a critical pedagogical perspective, it is important to bear in mind that:

> [s]chools are not apart from the wider society; they are themselves sites of struggle and social change. Both inside and outside schools, societal inequalities (based on class, race, gender, or sexuality) place limits on the actual practice of democracy. Teachers alone cannot overcome the social injustices that currently impede democracy, but they can play an important role in nurturing a more active form of citizenship among young people (Kelly and Minnes Brandes, 2001: 438).

Education for citizenship seeks to prepare students for participation in democracy by being practiced in the skills of analysis and communication. This occurs through according respect for the student voice in the classroom. In this way, students develop "capacities such as debate, reflection, and discussion across differences, criticism, persuasion, and decision making" (*Ibid.*). The facilitation of the student voice in this manner requires a re-conceptualisation of the *habitus* of the Irish classroom through: the embracing of Freirean theories of critical pedagogy; the teacher disposition being that of a transformative intellectual; and the use of dialoguing and problem-posing teaching methodologies.

The affirmation of the student voice can also be achieved through the democratisation of student participation in the school setting. This is facilitated through extending genuine respect and an ethic of care to students in the day-to-day practices of school life (Noddings, 2005) coupled with an invitation to them "to discover for themselves the nature of democracy and its functioning" (Chomsky, 2000: 28). What students experience, observe and participate in, in the school setting, has implications for their role as active citizens. The National Youth Council of Ireland in a document entitled "Educational Policy 2007-2010" acknowledges the importance of the school as a forum for affording students opportunities for familiarisation and experience in the ways of democracy (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2007: 9). One such opportunity for democratisation of student participation is through involvement in the Student Council.

The Education Act (Government of Ireland, 1998) provides for the establishment of a Student Council in each secondary school. The Act stipulates that:

> [a] student council shall promote the interests of the school and the involvement of students in the affairs of the school, in co-operation with the board,[30] parents and teachers (*Ibid.*: Section 27(4)).

The National Youth Council of Ireland endorses this legislation that: (a) provides for the establishment of student councils; (b) the facilitation of the involvement of young people in the life of the school; and (c) encourages a partnership with staff and management. However, the Council argues that "there is inconsistency in terms of the nature, scope and decision-making role Student Councils play in schools throughout the country" (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2007: 9).

The rights accorded to students in Irish secondary schools, as stipulated by the Education Act (1998), are termed "participation rights" which are defined as:

> those that incorporate civil and political rights, including, for example, the right of the child to be consulted and to be taken account of, and the right to

[30] The School Board of Management.

> challenge decisions made on his/her behalf (Lansdown, 1994 cited in Gilleece and Cosgrove, 2012: 226).

In educational settings young people "experience fewer opportunities to exercise their rights", and even when such opportunities are presented, "these may be considered tokenistic" (*Ibid.*: 226). Keogh and Whyte (2005) have concluded from their research that Student Councils have a low status in Irish schools. Therefore, despite the recognition of student voice in the Education Act (Government of Ireland, 1998), the form of democracy afforded to students in Irish schools is not conducive to them becoming "critical thinker(s) in the *act* of practising critical thought; in the act of *being conscious* in relation to the world (Lankshear, 1993: 110; italics in original).

Chomsky (2000) asserts the importance for school authorities to be aware that educating for citizenship and democracy is "not about instilling patriotism or rote memorisation of the ideals of democracy", it is about students discovering and practising the ways of democracy while at school (*Ibid.*: 28). Print (2007) argues that the most important influence in engaging young people in democracy after the home and the media, is the school curriculum. The effort to significantly engage young people in the ways of "democratic citizenship" is best attained through the "formal and informal curriculum" of the school (*Ibid.*: 336). Lynch (2001) notes that the preparation of citizens commences in the school as the "first public forum" experienced by students:

> If we are to educate students to engage in public life as democratic citizens, to become politically engaged as opposed to politically disenchanted and disinterested, it is essential that they learn how to be democratically engaged in the public domain. The first public forum where that opportunity arises for all members of society is in education (*Ibid.*: 405).

Teaching students to have the abilities, capabilities and skills to question, debate and interrogate issues, policies and politics, so necessary for sustaining a strong democracy is not to the fore in the Irish educational setting (Lynch, 2010). Yet such an education is imperative; both for the well-being of citizens and that of society. Seery (2011) warns against Irish schools becoming reductionist and technicist in

approach as education is "fundamentally an ethical and moral undertaking (*Ibid.*: 26). Carroll (2008) argues that “competent citizenship calls for a much more sophisticated set of skills than that of the instrumentally driven, competent producer and consumer” (*Ibid.*: 47).

The pedagogical approach adopted for citizenship education has consequences for all of society. Aspin (1997) asserts that education is not only for furthering economic growth, it is also for empowering students to cope with the demands of the modern era. This empowerment of students in the school is important in the context of education for citizenship as:

> . . . *learning about* democracy, [is about] *involvement in* democracy. . . [it] cannot be exclusively *curricular*, but must incorporate as well, the *extracurricular* focus on both *direct* and *indirect* learning through participation in the governance of the school . . . (Olssen *et al*., 2004: 276; italics in original).

This aspect of citizenship education needs serious interrogation as curricular and pedagogical approaches of this kind "have been under considerable challenge for many years" (Aspin, 1997: 249).

It is desirable that students graduate from schools with the "freedoms" necessary for their enhanced well-being throughout the life-cycle. The meaning of freedoms as used here is in the context of the ideas of Amartya Sen in "Development as Freedom" (1999). The concept of "development" as posited by Sen (1999) is that "[d]evelopment . . . can be seen as a process of expanding real freedoms that people enjoy" (*Ibid.*: 3). Schools play an important role in ensuring that these freedoms are attainable and within reach of citizens as they journey through life. This role of schools, through both formal and informal curricula, is critical to the social and personal development of students. Sen asserts that such freedoms only come through equipping people with the "capabilities" to live the kind of lives that they value (*Ibid.*: 18). These capabilities can be practised and developed in schools through educators creating and supporting a school culture that affirms education for humanisation and conscientisation. This in turn accords respect for the student voice. Freire (1998b)

argues for respect to be accorded to each student for "the dignity that is in the process of coming to be" (*Ibid.*: 62) and, for the basing of teaching for citizenship on a desire for "transformation of the world" (*Ibid.*: 74). This is achieved through the action of "denouncing the process of dehumanisation", while at the same time "announcing the dream of a new society" (*Ibid.*).

The foregoing sections clarify the place of the citizenship agenda in Irish schools. The Irish educational system, in terms of culture and philosophy, is strongly influenced by the principles of the marketplace. There is little space for the prioritisation of citizenship education in contemporary educational discourse. In particular, affirmation for educating students for their humanisation and conscientisation is lacking. The "Statement of Strategy 2015 - 2017" states that the mission for the Irish Department of Education and Skills is as follows:

> To facilitate individuals through learning, to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development.[31]

The rhetoric of this document promotes values of: learning as a public good; quality; the learner's place in policy development; collaboration with stakeholders; and commitment to civil service renewal. The development of policy regarding citizenship education is peripheral to the deliberations of this strategy. This can be perceived as a deficit when one considers the new emerging discourses on citizenship and the recent report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007). It is for this reason that the following section discusses various European dimensions regarding citizenship education. The manner in which citizenship education is viewed and valued in the pan-European context is relevant to the development of Irish educational policy.

3.5 European Dimensions

Some European dimensions relating to education for citizenship will now be examined. It can be argued that such aspects have a particular relevancy for

[31] See Department of Education and Skills website: www. Education.ie/en/The-Department/

contemporary Irish education policy. This is true in the context of: emerging discourses on citizenship; and Ireland's role as a member of the European Union. The following aspects of education will be discussed: "communities of practice"; the impact of migration on national identity; cross-curricular education; and the Eurydice report on citizenship education in Europe.

Communities of Practice

The research of Hoskins *et al.* (2012) studied the effect of "communities of practice" on education for citizenship. The study focused on five different countries within the European Union that represent "distinct social, political and educational traditions" (*Ibid.*: 426).[32] The concept of communities of practice was first theorised by Lave and Wenger (1991) and further developed by Wenger (1998). This concept which emphasises learning through social participation in different communities of practice, has four elements: "meaning-making = learning as experience; practice = learning as doing; community = learning as belonging; and identity = learning as becoming" (Hoskins *et al.*, 2012: 421). This theorisation of learning has relevancy for this study as it posits classroom learning taking place not just through "the acquisition of knowledge, but [through] the social practices of participation of both teachers and students in that broader learning environment" (*Ibid.*: 421, 422). This resonates with the Freirean philosophies of humanisation and conscientisation.

The research of Hoskins *et al.* concluded that the communities of practice approach to learning for citizenship, in schools across the different cultures of the four European countries, works well. This indicates that:

> strategies involving learning through dialogue, relationships and practice have a pan-European potential for developing the qualities needed for active citizenship (*Ibid.*: 443).

Therefore, it is incumbent on school authorities to motivate students to engage in "democratic learning experiences within the school" (*Ibid.*). Such learning for

[32] The countries are: Finland; England; Germany; Italy; and Poland.

citizenship follows from according due recognition to the school as a community of educational stakeholders.

The Impact of Migration

Following the earlier discussion on the conceptualisation of citizenship in the global era, and its impact on education, the importance of according recognition to the diverse identities now present in Irish classrooms was articulated. In recent years, due to increased levels of migration, there are new challenges for schools in educating for citizenship in a way that recognises diversity, and respects different cultures and identities. In 2009/2010, the total number of students enrolled in Irish secondary schools was 342,486, of which 7% were immigrant students from nearly 160 countries (Devine, 2011: 7). The challenge for schools is to incorporate elements of these diverse cultures into Irish curricula.

O'Connor and Faas (2012), in a study on "The Impact of Migration on National Identity in a Globalised World", compared civic education curricula in France, the United Kingdom and Ireland. The study seeks to examine the degree to which the identities of students of migrant origin are given due recognition in the curricula of these countries. The authors argue that for such students to be enabled to participate as global citizens, the status of legal citizenship, alone, is not enough. The recognition of the different migrant identities is also necessary to "underpin individual sovereignty in the contemporary globalised world" (*Ibid.*: 52). It is argued that the non-realisation of individual sovereignty by migrants results in their diluted participation in the global society when compared with other citizens. This presents challenges for citizenship education in Irish schools.

The differing underlying influences on the civic curricula of the three countries were researched in the O'Connor and Faas (2012) study. In the United Kingdom, education for citizenship adopts a multicultural approach which fosters "social cohesion . . . through commitment to the basic values of a liberal society" (*Ibid.*: 53). The French discourse on citizenship is assimilationist in approach where the idea of citizenship is regarded as "merely a tool for accessing rights" (*Ibid.*). Ireland's civic education programmes are based on interculturalism which seeks to "address all

children by emphasising cultural identity" (*Ibid.*). However, attaining the objective of interculturalism is limited by a public discourse that is dominated by the ""White, heterosexual, Irish, settled, Catholic" (WHISC) mentality" (Tracy, 2000 cited in O'Connor and Faas, 2012: 53). The key differences between the multicultural, intercultural and assimilationist curricula are summarised as follows:

> The emphasis of interculturalism on interaction and communication allows for unhindered participation of multiple identities, whereas communication space under multiculturalism can be aligned to the strength of present identities. . . . assimilationist curricula tend to restrict communication space to a single identity only. (O'Connor and Faas, 2012: 54).

The interrogation of the influences on the civic curricula of each country helps understand how well migrant citizens are facilitated to be part of the discourse on national identity. O'Connor and Faas examined the civic education discourse in each of the three countries to ascertain how the identities of migrant citizens are validated. The themes of human rights, democracy and religion were analysed because these areas of education can "offer opportunity for inclusion but can equally serve as mechanisms of exclusion" (*Ibid.*: 57).

The curricula of all three countries are similar in the promotion of human rights and democracy. However, it is argued that the predominant Eurocentric nature of these values limits discussion on "universal" concepts of human rights and democracy. This tends to minimise "the extent to which citizens of non-European migrant origin are included, particularly if they are associated with the seemingly incompatible "other"" (*Ibid.*: 58). A lack of recognition of other discourses on human rights and democracy can impact negatively on the experiences of migrant citizens in civic education classes.

With regard to the theme of religion, the curricula of each of the three countries differ considerably. Secularism is promoted in schools as "a core value of French republican identity" (*Ibid.*: 59). This value is normalised throughout secondary education. O'Connor and Faas assert that the embedding of secularism in the curriculum in contemporary France is problematic as it does not accord due

recognition to the country's large Muslim population. In Ireland, the teaching of religion is treated delicately reflecting the tensions that exist between Catholic and Protestant communities. Schools are encouraged by the Department of Education and Skills to reflect the religious denomination of the school in religion classes. This denominational approach while predominantly Christian has the potential to exclude non-Christian students. Nevertheless, "space for democratic iteration remains a substantial part of the Irish curriculum" (*Ibid.*). The religion curriculum in England "demonstrates almost no influence of Christian culture" (*Ibid.*). Instead, the curriculum seeks to educate for the understanding of the different meanings of being a citizen in the United Kingdom. In this way, ample opportunity is presented to enter into comprehensive and democratic discussion on a plurality of values. However, O'Connor and Faas critique the English approach to education in religion as it can be argued that the linking of the topic of diversity on the curriculum to a study on the British Empire and the Commonwealth impacts on discussion of identity. This, through non-recognition of the diversity of the classroom, may weaken opportunities for democratic discourse for students of colonial background.

This study of O'Connor and Faas gives an indication of the challenges posed to Irish educationalists in seeking to accord recognition of diverse cultures in schools and curricula.

Cross-Curricular Education

The Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) in a report on "Cross-Curricular Themes in Secondary Education" strongly asserted that subject-based curricula no longer serve the objective to "fully elaborate the forms of knowledge that a modern society needs" (CIDREE, 2005: 4). The report researched the teaching of cross-curricular themes in twenty-seven different European Union countries. The research sought to examine the factors that influence the progress of cross-curricular pedagogy. Savage (2011) defines a cross-curricular approach to teaching as characterised by:

> sensitivity towards, and a synthesis of, knowledge, skills and understandings from various subject areas. These inform an enriched pedagogy that promotes

an approach to learning which embraces and explores this wider sensitivity through various methods (*Ibid.*: 8, 9).

Savage emphasises that the teaching of curricular subjects is more than imparting "knowledge and skills" (*Ibid.*). Subjects contain "understandings" which could include teacher' "values, knowledge and understanding about a whole range of issues" which in turn shape their classroom teaching methodologies (*Ibid.*: 5).

The CIDREE (2005) report detailed obstacles to the cross- curricular approach:

- An overload of subject curricula and inflexibility of school timetables
- A lack of infrastructure, space and time
- The pressure of examinations and the entry requirements to third level
- Insufficient teacher training for cross-curricular pedagogy (*Ibid.*: 69).

It can be argued that a cross-curricular approach to education for citizenship has many merits such as: meaningful whole school collaboration among teachers benefiting their professional development; the promotion of students' "cognitive, personal and social development in an integrated way"; availing of learning opportunities across different subject areas; the facilitation of "shared vision amongst teachers . . . at all levels of curriculum design"; and the promotion of student learning "in conjunction with their wider life experiences" (Savage, 2011: 42).

The Eurydice Report on Citizenship Education in Europe

The European Commission, in recent years, is particularly interested in encouraging young people to develop the key competences to enable them to participate in social and political life at national and European level (Eurydice Report, 2012). Education has been identified as the principle means for progressing this objective. The Eurydice report details a study (which involved the Eurydice Network countries[33]) which sought to evaluate how citizenship education has progressed in recent years in these countries. In the context of this study, citizenship education is defined as:

[33] The Eurydice Network countries include the EU member states, Iceland, Norway, Croatia and Turkey.

> the aspects of education at school level intended to prepare students to become active citizens, by ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to the development and well-being of the society in which they live. . . . [This concept] encompasses not only teaching and learning in the classroom but also practical experiences gained through school life and activities in wider society (*Ibid.*: 9).

This definition of citizenship is closely aligned to that of Freire in that the existential experiences of students in the school setting and beyond are fundamental to their empowerment as citizens now and, later in adult life.

The Eurydice report made a number of significant findings. First, the report acknowledges that while citizenship education features in the curricula of all countries, it is more effective if "supported by a school environment where students are given the opportunity to experience the values and principles of the democratic process in action" (*Ibid.*: 13). Second, the report stressed the importance of providing students with opportunities for citizenship education outside the school. Some countries financially support programmes that seek to provide opportunities for students to learn citizenship skills through working with the local community in addressing topical issues. The report observed that countries had "political structures" within the school for students to "voice their opinions on matters affecting them" (*Ibid.*: 14). In some countries, these structures related to school life only, while in other countries they were related to any matter of direct concern to the students. Third, the report identified the need for proper assessment procedures to be devised for adequate assessment of citizenship education. Such assessment tools and instruments need to go beyond "measuring the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, to encompass skills and attitudes" (*Ibid.*). Fourth, the study identified that more concerted efforts are required to adequately train teachers to strengthen their abilities for teaching citizenship. It observed that due to the growing practice of adopting a whole-school approach to citizenship education, some countries are issuing specific recommendations on the role of school principals in citizenship education.

This discourse on citizenship education in the European context is relevant to the field of education in Ireland for the following reasons. First, there is an increased emphasis on educating for citizenship through interaction within communities. That is, learning takes place not only through the imparting of curricular knowledge but also through the living reality of day-to-day inter relational experiences in the school setting. Second, the Irish educational system is challenged to take cognisance of the increasing numbers of students of migrant origin in classrooms. Factors such as the erosion of the nation-state, globalisation and increased levels of immigration have repercussions for educating students of diverse identities for citizenship. Third, the advantages of cross-curricular approaches to citizenship education deserve consideration. The deliberations of CIDREE in this regard point the way towards a comprehensive whole-school pedagogy for citizenship education. Fourth, the Eurydice report emphasises a pan-European approach to citizenship education which prioritises the promotion of social cohesion and active citizenship. This project affords Ireland the opportunity to avail of research that identifies elements of best practice in educating for citizenship.

3.6 Conclusion

This Chapter sought to probe some of the many factors that influence education for citizenship in contemporary Irish society. First, the process of modernisation and its development over the past fifty years was examined. The values of neoliberalism and the marketplace are to the fore and replacing the traditional influences of nationalism and Catholicism. Ireland having enjoyed many years of economic prosperity is presently experiencing austerity resulting from the excesses of modernity. These histories, experiences, cultures and traditions impact significantly on education for citizenship programmes in Irish schools. Second, the Irish educational system is examined from the perspectives of: school culture; the current priorities of the "system"; the influencing philosophies; and the impact of neoliberal values. Third, the importance of the student voice in citizenship education is discussed. The affirmation of students and the democratisation of their voice in the contemporary Irish school setting are explored. The affording of such a voice to students both formally and informally in the school environment is considered as being critical to their social and personal empowerment. This recognition of the "student voice" was

explored through the Freirean perspective of a classroom pedagogy that extols "dialogue" and "problem-posing", while also, nurturing a democratisation of school life.

The aspirational rhetoric contained in curricular documentation of the Department of Education and Skills regarding citizenship education in Irish schools is different from the reality of classroom practice. Neoliberal thinking strongly influences educational priorities in Irish schools. It was for these reasons that various European dimensions of citizenship education were examined in this chapter. These dimensions included: communities of practice; the impact of migration; cross-curricular approaches; and the Eurydice report.

Overall, this Chapter examined the various influences impacting on Irish secondary schools. Later in the thesis, the analysis of the research findings will help formulate conclusions on how such influences affect education for humanisation and conscientisation. This in turn, will generate recommendations for reform of education for citizenship. The following chapter will detail the methodology and research methods used in this study.

Chapter 4

Methodology and Research Methods

4.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters reviewed the literature on citizenship education. Chapter Two discussed understandings and approaches to the institution of citizenship, then went on to review the literature of critical pedagogues such as Freire, Giroux, Noddings and others with regard to education for citizenship. The review bases the work of educating for citizenship on the pedagogy of humanisation and conscientisation (Freire, 1972). Other dimensions pertinent to the school setting are explored with regard to how the education of citizens can be best progressed. Chapter Three examined education for citizenship in the context of contemporary Irish society. The effects of modernisation juxtaposed with the declining influences of nationalism and religion are detailed. The influences of modernity, the values of the marketplace and economic policies on education policy in Ireland were discussed. It is from the perspective of these literature reviews that interrogation of the Irish educational system in terms of empowerment of students as citizens for participation in democracy is undertaken.

This chapter details the research design and approach used in this study. The research objective is detailed, together with information on the research questions. Elaboration on the rationale adopted for the research methods and methodology chosen is explained. Sampling details of the interviewees involved and the reasons for their selection are discussed. Consideration is given to the composition of the fieldwork questions as well as the major themes explored in the study. The collection, recording and analysis of data are described. Ethical issues regarding the methodology are examined and reflected upon. Finally, the limitations associated with this research are probed and placed on record.

4.2 Research Objective and Questions

This research objective seeks to examine elements of citizenship education in Irish secondary schools through hearing the reflections and observations of educational stakeholders: students, parents, teachers and school Principals. The research examines which factors support the implementation of a robust education for citizenship in schools and asks in which ways such an implementation is impeded.

The work interrogates elements with regard to educating students to be independent thinkers, and to be well developed socially and personally. Educating for critical consciousness, enables students to prosper as citizens and human beings as they confront the various opportunities and challenges throughout their life spans (Freire, 1972). The fieldwork conducted in this research seeks to record the insights, experiences and reflections of the actors in the educational field, to help deepen the understanding of how citizenship education is progressing in Irish schools at the present time and, to explore how this progress could be further enhanced.

Specifically, the following research questions are explored in relation to education for citizenship in Irish secondary schools:

1. How do the educational stakeholders value the subjects of both the cognitive and non-cognitive curricula in terms of status?

2. What are the perceptions of the stakeholders with regard to two particular subjects Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and, Social, Personal and Health (SPHE)?

3. How do the day-to-day cultural dimensions affecting students and teachers in the school setting impact on citizenship education?

For question 3, it is important to note that the particular culture within a school community affects school climate which in turn matters for the optimisation of conditions for learning (Cohen, 2006, 2007; Cohen *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, school culture impacts on citizenship education. The cultural aspects examined here involve the following elements that affect school climate: the quality of care; the informal curriculum; the impact from emphasis on accumulation of *points* in the terminal secondary school examination; preparedness for life after secondary school; the calibre of the leadership of the school Principal; the level of teacher-morale; and an examination of teachers as both "transformative intellectuals" (Giroux, 1988) and, "thoughtful students of education" (Wirth, 1966:56).

The research seeks to ascertain the quality of citizenship education in Irish secondary schools. The influence of factors external to the school setting on the education imparted in the classroom is examined, including: business and economic; civil society; government and political; employers; globalisation; and the effects of the modernisation process on the Irish economy.

4.3 Research Design

4.3.1 Methodology

Various research approaches were considered to see which best served the objective of this study. The objective of the research methodology is to gain an understanding of the insights, viewpoints and experiences of a range of educational stakeholders in relation to the research questions. This study requires a research methodology to interpret the stakeholders as they articulate their concerns, misgivings, aspirations and motives concerning the educational system. A qualitative researcher can be confident of achieving this objective as:

> [u]nderstanding people does mean that you have to deal with people's feelings, values and emotions as well as their behaviours, their attachments to place and people, their fears, hopes and motivations as well as their perceptions of the world, the organisations with which they have contact and their relationships with them (Newby, 2010: 117).

The qualitative methodology does allow for this "understanding" to take place. That is, it facilitates the necessary "sorting, evaluating, juxtaposing, contrasting and rejecting" (*Ibid.*) before arriving at a conclusion.

This particular outcome is less likely to be achieved by using a quantitative approach on its own. This is so, as a quantitative methodology tends to be experimental in approach and less used in educational research (*Ibid.*: 106, 107). The reason for this is that:

> people are much more variable and less easy to control than quantities of a chemical or defined measure of a physical intervention (*Ibid.*: 107).

Quantitative research is based on a positivistic approach where findings are clearly observable and measurable (*Ibid.*). Creswell (2012) lists the following characteristics of quantitative research: First, it describes trends by establishing "the overall tendency of responses from individuals" and notes the variation of this tendency among people (*Ibid*: 13). Second, the research questions are framed to be specific and narrow to obtain "measurable and observable data on variables" (*Ibid*: 14). Third, there is a specific instrument used to collect and analyse data. Examples of such instruments are: survey questionnaires and checklists. The use of such instruments helps in the generalisation of data. That is, applying the results of the data collected from a small number of people to a large number. Fourth, the data is analysed using statistical procedures. Fifth, research procedures are used to ensure that the researcher's "personal biases and values do not influence the results" (*Ibid.*: 15).

In seeking to determine which research methodology would best suit the purpose of this study, two pilot studies were undertaken. First, the researcher compiled a list of questions to form a questionnaire appropriate for each group of stakeholders. These questionnaires were then distributed to members of each stakeholder group to complete for the purposes of data collection. The second pilot study was conducted by engaging in a one-to-one recorded interview with members of each stakeholder group. In this instance, the researcher conducted the interviews using the same questions that were used for the survey questionnaire. Also, for the pilot interviews, follow-up, probing questions were asked of each respondent to seek a deeper understanding of the issues involved. The sample of stakeholders involved in the pilot studies did not participate as respondents in the final research fieldwork.

A Mixed Methods Approach

After the pilot studies, it was decided to conduct this research through the use of a "mixed methods" methodology. A mixed methods approach uses:

> both quantitative and qualitative methods, in combination, [to] provide a better understanding of the research problem and question than either method by itself (Creswell, 2012: 535).

This approach is considered helpful when making policy recommendations as it provides "both the "numbers" and "stories" about an issue" (*Ibid.)*. The particular mixed methods approach selected here is "the exploratory sequential design" (*Ibid.*: 540). This design involves the collection of qualitative data at first, which is then followed by the collection of quantitative information. Creswell asserts that the:

> purpose of exploratory sequential mixed methods design involves the procedure of first gathering qualitative data to explore a phenomenon, and then collecting quantitative data to explain relationships found in the qualitative data (*Ibid.*: 543).

Following the principles of this design of a mixed methods approach, this research:

- emphasises the qualitative data more than the quantitative data
- uses the quantitative data to reinforce the qualitative data
- collects data in a sequence, that is, the collection of the quantitative data follows the collection of the qualitative data
- leads to "detailed, generalisable results through the second quantitative phase", through building on the "initial qualitative exploration" (*Ibid.*: 544)

One advantage of this research methodology is that it affords the researcher the opportunity to identify themes from the collection of qualitative data to be further explored through quantitative methods

Rationale

The decision to adopt a mixed methods research approach was taken as it was deemed to be suitable for data collection for the research questions posed in this study. The

two perspectives (qualitative and quantitative) work at "a higher level to provide rich detail and to improve understanding" (Newby, 2010: 128).

There are a number of reasons for adopting a qualitative methodology in the first phase of this research. First, having analysed and compared the responses to both the qualitative and quantitative pilot research methods (i.e. the questionnaires and interviews), it was recognised that the qualitative approach provides a data collection that is rich in detail. It became clear to the researcher that with a qualitative research approach the emphasis is on:

> wholeness and detailed connections between our social worlds, emotional and cognitive processes and economic circumstances, all which have to be understood in order to recreate the meaning that we give to our lives (*Ibid.*: 116).

This observation affirms the assertion of Suter (2006) that research analysis emanating from a qualitative research design is "the best method for understanding the complexity of education in practice" (*Ibid*.: 327). Second, such a methodology supports the effort "to provide an in-depth description and understanding of the human experience" (Lichtman, 2006: 8) of the participants in this study. Also, it was noticed that this objective was more easily achieved through the posing of supplementary probing questions in the interview situation. It was considered difficult to garner such information through the use of quantitative measures alone as these are "likely only to yield comparatively superficial information about a school's culture" (Cohen *et al*., 2011:138).

Third, due to the fact that the researcher has experience of working for many years in the educational field, it was considered that in this case the qualitative researcher would be in a position to "bring understanding, interpretation and meaning to mere description" (Lichtman, 2006: 9). Also, quantitative research methodology tends to treat the research informants as "anonymous objects to be measured and observed" (*Ibid*.: 16). Lichtman further asserts that in qualitative research, the researcher's role is critical. It is essential that the researcher acts as the gatherer and the filter of information and, has "experience and understanding about the problem, the issues,

and the procedures" (*Ibid*.). Therefore, the exclusive use of a quantitative research process for this study would deprive this researcher of an opportunity to call upon relational expertise with the various educational stakeholders. This is an important factor as for qualitative research "to realise its potential it has to be in the hands of the right type of researcher" (Newby, 2010: 123).

4.3.2 Research Methods

For the qualitative phase of this study, the one-to-one standardised open-ended interview is considered as an appropriate research method to access the perspectives and perceptions of the stakeholders of the secondary school, that is, students, parents, teachers and school Principals. Careful attention was devoted to fully wording each interview question as well as to the follow-up probing questions. A pilot study, in which one member of each stakeholder group participated, was undertaken in order to test the efficiency of the standardised open-ended interview method. This helped to confirm which questions were purposeful and which were redundant. The intention is to facilitate each member of each stakeholder group in recounting their personal experiences, thoughts and expectations regarding key aspects of citizenship education in Irish secondary schools. The one-to-one interview with each respondent was adjudged to be more appropriate as a research method than focus group interviews as it facilitates the participants in responding "comfortably, accurately and honestly" to the fieldwork questions posed (Patton, 2002: 341). Patton justifies the use of the standardised open-ended interview for the following reasons: (1) the question lists are available for inspection; (2) the interviewees' time is used efficiently as the questions used are highly focused and to the point; and (3) analysis is easier in terms of finding and comparing responses (*Ibid.*).

A key component of this research is to facilitate the hearing of the voices of all the educational stakeholders. Relatively little research has been conducted in Ireland where all such voices are heard with regard to a particular topic at a specific time; the topic in this case being the interrogation of key elements pertaining to the imparting of citizenship education. The researcher wishes to understand these stakeholder voices by "listening to them, watching them interact, and thinking about the meaning beyond, beneath and around the words" (Lichtman, 2006: 32). The interview

questions were framed to elicit significant data from the stakeholders. It was expected that the one-to-one interview with each stakeholder in conjunction with an inductive approach would lead to an overall conclusion.

The one-to-one interview, as a research method is considered appropriate for this study for the following practical reasons: First, in each of the four school settings, participating in the research fieldwork, the school Principal facilitated the sourcing of the teachers, parents and students to act as respondents for the interview process. Second, the researcher (as the interviewer) through many years of employment in the educational field has a familiarity with interacting with the educational stakeholders. That is, the researcher/interviewer has experience in interviewing, listening, and learning from each of the different stakeholders in a manner that is patient, understanding, and conscious of the fact that each respondent is, potentially, a rich store of high-quality information. This point is all the more pertinent when one notes that "[t]he quality of information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer" (Patton, 2002: 341). Third, the one-to-one interview setting is comfortable for participants who are not familiar with educational matters. Two of the stakeholder groups participating in this research are education professionals i.e. teachers and school Principals while the other two groups are non-professionals in the area of education, that is, parents and students. The standard open-ended interview is considered best for both groups to respond meaningfully and confidently in a comfortable interview setting. People who may lack the confidence to vocalise their opinions can feel intimidated or remain passive in a focus group interview/discussion situation. Such respondents can be more at ease in a one-to-one interview. In this setting, the opportunity is afforded to researchers to "draw on insight and interpretation . . . [and] their subjective responses to evidence" (Newby, 2010: 116). The use of surveys, questionnaires, etc. in a quantitative research methodology hinders the sharing of rich and valuable information by respondents, as such research methods do not present the opportunity for follow-up probing questions.

The researcher is acutely aware that the voices of many who are intimately involved in the educational field either as service-givers or service-users are indeed seldom heard (Trant and Ó Donnabháin, 1998). This is particularly true with regard to the voices of parents and students. Therefore, it is incumbent on the researcher to

manage this research methodology in order to rectify this situation, by giving meaning to the articulations of these voices through airing and placing on record the valuable knowledge and insights contained therein. The unique perspectives and experiences of key stakeholders have remained unacknowledged and under-valued in much educational discourse. In this study, the interview as a research technique serves the following purposes: First, it is the "principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives" (Cohen *et al*., 2011: 411). Second, it is used as an "explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships" (*Ibid*.). Third, in this study, the interview is used "in conjunction with other methods in [the] research undertaking" (*Ibid*.).

The research method used for the quantitative phase of this study was a questionnaire administered online to first year students at University College, Cork. A Survey Monkey questionnaire was used for gathering and analysing the data. The questionnaire was compiled using specific themes identified in the qualitative phase of the study.

The qualitative methodology afforded the researcher the opportunity to identify "measures actually grounded in the data obtained from the study participants" (Creswell, 2012: 544). The measures so identified for further research in the quantitative study (online survey) are:

- The level of students' access to private tuition outside of their secondary school education
- The level of importance accorded by students to curricular subjects on the secondary school curriculum
- Factors taken into account by students when making a decision on what subjects to study in the senior cycle of secondary school
- The perceptions of students on the level of importance accorded by school authorities (school Principals and teachers) to curricular subjects on the secondary school curriculum
- The degree to which schools concentrate on the work of *points* accumulation by students for third-level entry

- The impact of secondary education on the holistic development of students
- The role of the Student Council in the democratisation of the student voice
- Students' views on the attributes of a good citizenship

These themes were used to design and develop a questionnaire for the second phase of the mixed methods approach, that is, the quantitative study. This questionnaire was administered, only, to student stakeholders.

Two categories of question were used: closed questions and open questions. Closed questions do not allow the respondent "any leeway in terms of a personalised input" (Newby, 2010: 298). In open questions, respondents are "given space where they can answer the question in their own words" (*Ibid.).* Researchers use open questions to do two things: (1) to obtain "a richer picture" of some area of research; (2) to provide information not normally forthcoming with closed questions (*Ibid.*).

4.3.3 Spheres of Analysis

There are four spheres of analysis in this study: students; parents; teachers; and school Principals. The focus of the data collection is on the participants' insights into and reflections on salient aspects of secondary education. These matters are explored through the stakeholders recounting of the lived experiences of their involvement with the Irish secondary school. Thus, each sphere of analysis provides invaluable data enabling the researcher to gain an insight into the values and determining issues of education for citizenship in twenty-first century Ireland. The spheres of analysis, while composed of different educational stakeholders, yet, are all interconnected as each one is uniquely interested in how students are educated in secondary schools in areas of: general education; well-being; political literacy; and the development of individual and unique talents. Therefore, each sphere of analysis "implies a different kind of data collection, a different focus for the analysis of data, and a different level at which statements about findings and conclusions would be made" (Patton, 2002: 228). The intention is that the completion of this research through the collection of data, and its subsequent analysis and evaluation will provide valuable information for policy makers, decision makers and the various educational stakeholders.

4.3.4 Study Schools

Two purposive sampling strategies are used in this research: "maximum variation sampling" for the selection of schools; and "typical case sampling" for the selection of respondents within each school setting (Cohen *et al*., 2011: 157). As "[q]ualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples . . . selected purposefully" (Patton, 2002: 230), therefore, the concentration of energies is on selecting schools and respondents that bear rich information. The maximum variation strategy is used for selecting a sample of non-fee paying second-level schools for research purposes. This strategy helped select four such schools which differ from each other in terms of ethos, management structure and tradition. The researcher selected the four schools for this study's sample. Former professional networks and contacts enabled the researcher to make personal contact with the Principals of the four schools. The selected schools are as follows (See Table 4.1):

School Number 1 (Kilmore College):

This school is a traditional-type, co-educational Vocational School managed by the local Education and Training Board (ETB). The school is situated in a rural Irish town with approximate population 7,000 that is surrounded by a prosperous agricultural hinterland. Uniquely, of all the schools participating in this research, Kilmore College as well as offering students a comprehensive second level education, also, offers a programme of third level courses. These courses of study at Levels 5 and 6 are accredited by "Quality and Qualifications Ireland".[34] Such courses of study, while not of degree-awarding status, enable graduates to gain qualifications suitable for immediate employment or provide a foundation for further study at third level. The current school enrolment is 499 boys and 415 girls. Data obtained from school personnel indicates that this school competes for student numbers with two other secondary schools in the town. Each of these other schools is single-gender; one all-girls and the other, all-boys and both are under the auspices of religious management. Traditionally, this school attracted a cohort of students mainly from the lower socio-economic sections of society who tended to be less interested in academic education

[34] See Quality and Qualifications website at www.qqi.ie

than students attending the other secondary schools in the town. However, in recent years, the profile of Kilmore College has changed. This school now out-performs the other schools in the catchment area in terms of enrolment numbers and ability to attract students of different academic levels. It offers a comprehensive curriculum and prepares students for both the workplace and the third level education sector. For the purpose of this study, this school is known as Kilmore College.

School Number 2 (Woodside College):

This Community College opened in 1997 and is situated in the suburbs of a major Irish city, under the management of the local Education and Training Board.[35] The school is co-educational with a current school population of 458 boys and 333 girls. The number of teachers on the staff is seventy-two. This is an example of the present-day, type of modern school being constructed through-out Ireland to cope with the educational demands of rising populations in suburbia. Vocational schools were first set up in 1930, to educate for employment in the trades and agriculture. The student enrolment in this school is representative of all socio-economic backgrounds. The education provided is comprehensive in that students are prepared both for entry to third level and the world of employment. For the purpose of this study, this school is known as Woodside College.

School Number 3 (St. Patrick's):

This is a city all-boys school traditionally managed by a Catholic religious order of brothers. It is now managed by the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Trust Schools (ERST). There are now no members of the religious order on the school staff due to the fall in religious vocations. In the past, clerical brothers from the religious congregation concerned formed the major part of the teaching staff, with always one of their members holding the position of school Principal. In recent years, the post of school Principal has been occupied by a lay person. The school has recently celebrated fifty years in existence. The ethos of the school in terms of what can be perused in official school documentation and as enunciated by school personnel is one of adherence to tenets of the Catholic faith, even though many stakeholders make reference to the fact that this is now waning due to the absence of members of the

[35] Formerly known as: Vocational Education Committee

religious congregation on the staff. The present school enrolment is approximately 600 boys. For the purpose of this study, this school is known as St. Patricks.

School Number 4 (Holy Cross School):

This is an all-girls school that formerly was managed by an order of religious sisters with a student cohort of 333. It is now managed by the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education, An Irish Schools Trust). In 2011, the school Principal, the last remaining member of the religious order on the school staff retired. She was replaced by a lay Principal. It is clear to the researcher from visits to the school and discussion with various school stakeholders that the ethos of this school is strongly Catholic. This school tends to attract students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and is in competition with schools in the immediate neighbourhood in seeking to attract sufficient students to maintain enrolment numbers. The school is in existence since 1954. For the purpose of this study, this school is known as Holy Cross School.

The schools selected show considerable variation: from management by Trusts set up by religious orders to management by Education and Training Boards; from single-gender enrolment to that of co-educational; from city to rural catchment areas; from large enrolment numbers to small; from catering for the needs of academically talented students to those that are less so; from the traditional vocational school to that of the newer community college known for comprehensive curricula and large enrolment numbers (in some cases, getting close to an enrolment figure of one thousand students); and from schools in existence for many years to those that are relatively new.

The central themes of this research are explored through interviews with key personnel from each of these school settings. This research notes: the common patterns that emerge; and the variation of responses across the selection of schools, which is of "particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central shared dimensions" (Patton, 2002: 235). The data collection and the follow-on analysis, emanating from this diverse sample of schools seeks to illuminate: (1) high-quality accounts and descriptions of each stakeholder which highlight uniqueness and

(2) “important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity” (*Ibid*.).

Table 4.1: Core Study Schools

Name	Location	Ethos	No. of Students	Gender	School Management	Socioeconomic Status
1. Kilmore College	Rural	Multidenominational	914	Co-educational	ETB[36]	Mixed
2. Woodside College	City Suburbs	Multidenominational	791	Co-educational	ETB	Mixed
3. St. Patrick’s	City	Roman Catholic	629	Male	ERST [37]	Mixed
4. Holy Cross School	City	Roman Catholic	333	Female	CEIST[38]	Mixed

4.3.5 Sampling Process for Respondents

The sampling strategy of "typical case sampling" (Cohen *et al.*, 2011: 157) was used for the selection of interviewees from each of the four school communities. Within each school community, it was decided to select the following for interview: the school Principal; two teachers; two parents; and two students who had recently graduated from the school.[39] In all, that represents a total of twenty-eight interviewees. In each particular school, the assistance of the school Principal was sought in identifying the interview participants. The Principals, in accessing stakeholder interviewees, were enthusiastic and co-operative in their support of the work of the researcher. The sampling strategy adopted here is “typical case sampling”. This approach is considered appropriate as the researcher seeks to interview personnel who are information-rich so that a determination can be made of what is typical in terms of the experiences, understandings and insights of stakeholders in, and around the various school settings. Therefore, each school Principal was requested to identify for the researcher, a sample number of respondents

[36] Education and Training Board
[37] Edmund Rice Trust Schools
[38] Catholic Education and Irish Schools’ Trust
[39] The interviews were conducted at the end of 2010; the students completed their secondary education in June of that year.

that are "typical" of the teachers, parents and recently graduated students, of that particular school community. This sampling format places emphasis on each school Principal selecting "typical" stakeholders for interview. No other criteria were submitted to the Principal for the sourcing of interviewees. Examples of other such criteria are: socio-economic origins; academic status of students; performativity of teachers; parental interest; and etc. Such strictures if imposed on the selection process may be open to leading to further "filtering" on the part of the "gatekeeper" Principal.

The Principal acts as an important gatekeeper in accessing respondents that are typical of that school community for this research. The researcher relied on the co-operation of the school Principal in making initial contact with the interviewees. Freedom of information regulations in Ireland do not permit a researcher to obtain contact details from school authorities to cold call teachers, parents or students. Therefore, the school Principal first made contact on behalf of the researcher and sought the permission and willingness of each respondent to participate in an interview before the researcher become involved.

Written details of the overarching research question of this study were communicated to the school Principal by the researcher, prior to the Principal's selection of respondents. In using this sampling strategy, the respondents are "not in any major way atypical, extreme, deviant or intensely unusual" (Patton, 2002: 236). In the case of both the teacher and student selection, a further selection criterion was requested of the school Principal by the researcher. This request was to identify two teachers; one experienced in the cognitive and the other experienced in the non-cognitive curricular domains of education. This method of selection of teacher interviewees is considered worth striving for, as insights into approaches surrounding these two areas of pedagogy are germane to this study. With regard to the student sample, the Principal was further requested to identify two students who are "typical" of the school's student community and who had graduated from the school in the past twelve months.[40]

[40] In practice, this means that the students interviewed had completed the Leaving Certificate examination in June 2010

The decision to interview past students rather than present students was taken for the following reasons. First, it was decided not to interview students in Year 6 (final year of secondary education) as at this time, such students are extremely busy with course work and under pressure to graduate with a good examination result. The researcher did not wish to intrude on student work at this time. Second, it was decided not to interview students in Year 5 (the penultimate year of the secondary school cycle). This decision followed the analysis of the results of a pilot study questionnaire distributed to students of Year Four and Year Five in one particular school. The pilot study indicated, that due to the fact that students in Year 5 had not yet experienced an involvement in the terminal examination of secondary school (Leaving Certificate) nor had they, for the most part, reflected seriously on their future plans (whether they be educational or otherwise), their contribution to this research topic would be limited.

Third, when students have actually graduated from secondary school, the probability is that they have experienced the following: serious study for a terminal state examination; decision-making with regard to the next stage of their lives i.e. further study or employment/unemployment; an opportunity for reflection on the past six years of secondary education in terms of positives and negatives; and the personal reality of coming face-to-face with options for career, emigration or non-emigration, and engaging in democracy as a citizen. In this light, it can be argued that such respondents are in a good position to reflect on their experiences and make recommendations towards what they perceive to be desirable for the enhancement of education for citizenship. Fourth, when students have graduated from secondary school, they are away from the direct influence of their class-mates. The relationships in the classroom setting are for the most part: close, supportive, collegial, fun-loving and positive. However, negative aspects such as bullying, anxiety and incompatibility with school life, can also be present in this setting. As past pupils, they are in a position to deliberate, reflect, and be a rich source of data in relation to the questions raised in this research.

The decision to take this approach to student sampling was guided by the following: (1) the researcher drew on experience of many years working with young

people in the education field; and (2) the experience of pilot interviews with students both from classes before and after the Leaving Certificate examination.

4.3.6 Data Collection

The following section provides details of the organisation of interviews for each grouping of educational stakeholders.

Data Collection Stage 1: In-Depth Interviews with Students (n=8)

Four female and four male students were interviewed. The interview method used was standardised open-ended interview. The students, who were interviewed in the Autumn of 2010, had graduated from secondary school the previous June. At the time of interview, the average student age was eighteen years. Each interview took place at a venue chosen by the student. One student was interviewed at the secondary school while the remainder were interviewed at their Third Level institutions. Each interview lasted from sixty to ninety minutes. (See Appendix 1 for Schedule of Questions).

Data Collection Stage 2: In-Depth Interviews with Parents (n=8)

The interview method used was standardised open-ended interview. Each parent had children attending secondary school at the time of interview. Five fathers and three mothers were interviewed - none of the parents are related to any of the other respondents. All parents were interviewed at a venue of their choosing - usually at their children's secondary school. Each interview was approximately of one hour duration (See Appendix 2 for Schedule of Questions).

Data Collection Stage 3: In-Depth Interviews with Teachers (n=8)

All of the teacher interviews took place at the secondary schools where they are employed. Interviews lasted approximately sixty to eighty minutes. The selection process of two teachers from each school ensured that one of the teachers had a particular interest in the non-cognitive curricular area and the other had an interest in the cognitive area of education. Four male and four female teachers participated in this fieldwork. The interview method used was standardised open-ended interview (See Appendix 3 for Schedule of Questions).

Data Collection Stage 4: In-Depth Interview with School Principals (n=4)

The Principal of each of the core study schools in this research was interviewed. Three Principals were male and one was female. These Principals represent the following school types: vocational school (co-educational); community college (co-educational); all-girls secondary school under religious patronage; and an all-boys secondary school under religious patronage. Each interview lasted sixty to seventy minutes. The interviews took place in each Principal's office at the school. The interview method used was standardised open-ended interview (See Appendix 4 for Schedule of Questions).

Data Collection Stage 5: Online Survey with students (n=290)

An online survey is the research method of the second phase of the mixed methods methodology used in this research. Particular importance is given to the student voice in recognition of the deficit of this voice in educational research. First year students of all faculties at University College, Cork were invited to participate online through student email. The majority of these students had just finished their secondary education. Therefore, they were well-situated to have a vivid recollection of their secondary school experiences. This presented an important opportunity to help neutralise any limitations caused by the use of school Principals as gatekeepers (See Appendix 5 for a copy of the Survey Monkey questionnaire).

The survey used for the collection and analysis of data was of the Survey Monkey format. The themes for the questions used were identified through interviews with students in the first phase of the mixed methods methodology used in this research (See Section 4.3.1 this Chapter). Both open and closed questions were used in the questionnaire. The advantage of such online surveys is that they can gather "extensive data quickly" (Creswell, 2012: 383). Sills and Song (2002, cited in Creswell, 2012: 383, 384) raise some concerns with regard to online surveying by educational researchers. These concerns consist of: low response rates; non-random sampling; technological problems; and security issues (*Ibid.*). However, in this research, the online survey research method follows sequentially the qualitative interviewing of educational stakeholders. The survey questions are based on themes raised in these interviews. Therefore, it is considered that the use of the online survey

in this research, as part of a mixed methods approach, consolidates the research findings obtained from the stakeholder interviews. In this survey, there was a 10% response rate.

4.3.7 Respondent Identities

The following are the names (fictitious) assigned to the interview participants from each of the four schools that are party to this study:

Kilmore College:

- Students: Senan and Mary
- Teachers: Gary and Jack
- Parents: Philip and Larry
- Principal: Daniel

Woodside College:

- Students: Jim and Tina
- Teachers: Anne and Muireann
- Parents: Finbarr and Patricia
- Principal: Paul

St. Patricks:

- Students: Joseph and Peter
- Teachers: Kieran and Emer
- Parents: Margaret and Maurice
- Principal: Jeff

Holy Cross School:

- Students: Sheila and Susan
- Teachers: Tracy and Lorna
- Parents: James and Maeve
- Principal: Sorcha

All of the above students having completed their secondary education by June of 2010 had commenced study at a third level institution at the time of interview. The parents interviewed are not parents of the student participants in the research. However, each

parent interviewed had student offspring attending secondary school at the time of the research fieldwork.

4.3.8 Triangulation

The researcher sought to improve further the reliability and validity of the data collection methods. This decision to consolidate the collection and analysis of data was taken by the researcher in consultation with the study supervisors on completion of all the fieldwork interviews. Triangulation is a process that seeks to improve the trustworthiness of qualitative research. It refers to "the use of multiple sources of data and collection strategies" (Suter, 2006: 328). In this study, two triangulation strategies are used. In one strategy, the interview questions posed are asked of four different sources of information: students; parents; teachers; and school Principals. This type of triangulation used here is known as “data triangulation” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 46) i.e. a triangulation that uses data from a variety of different sources. The second strategy involves a different data collection method with a different cohort of students to those involved in the one-to-one interviews. This is known as "methodological triangulation" (*Ibid*.). This strategy entailed the organisation of an online survey of all first year students at University College Cork, in the academic year 2011 - 2012. This quantitative methodology invited the students to complete an online questionnaire.[41]

4.4 Ethical Considerations

The researcher is aware that:

> consideration of ethical issues has to be embedded in the whole process of research and particularly it has to be reflected in a moral stance taken by the researcher (Newby, 2010: 49).

[41] See Appendix 5 for copy of Questionnaire.

This research complies with ethical guidelines of the Sociological Association of Ireland.[42] In this study the researcher availed of the co-operation of four school Principals to act as gatekeepers. A gate keeper is defined as:

> an individual who has an official or unofficial role at the site, provides entrance to a site, helps researchers locate people, and assists in the identification of places to study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995 cited in Creswell, 2012: 2011).

Each gatekeeper in each school setting identified two research participants from each of the following stakeholder groups: students, parents and teachers. In seeking access to interviewees through the school Principals, it was explained to each Principal the purpose of the research. Before each respondent was interviewed, their consent to participate in the research was requested. Their giving of this consent was based on the researcher informing the participants of the following: why they in particular were selected; the aims and objectives of the study; the previous involvement of the researcher in the educational system; how their responses and reflections will aid in the writing of the thesis; and how the conclusions of the research will be used. Permission was sought from each participant to agree to the use of a tape recorder for the facilitation of data collection. Before giving their consent for participation, each respondent was thoroughly briefed with regard to the purpose and possible outcomes of this research. Each interviewee was assured that confidentiality would be maintained in relation to their contributions in the one-to-one interview situation. At all points throughout the thesis, pseudonyms are used for schools and stakeholders to ensure that the anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of the participants are respected.

While the researcher did not interview any former students or staff, it is important to state that the researcher's former involvement as a teacher and school Principal may influence the narrative in this thesis. Equally so, it can be posited that the researcher's former role in education has been insightful with regard to: the workings of the school setting; the concerns of stakeholders; and current issues in the educational field. That

[42] Ethical Guidelines: Sociological Association of Ireland, see www.sociology.ie

former involvement is central to the researcher's interest in holistic education, and in the preparation of citizens through their humanisation and conscientisation. Aware of the potential for personal bias to deflect from the integrity of the research, the researcher has sought at all times to be cognisant of the fact that "[a] research report needs to be sensitive and respectful of people and places" (*Ibid.*: 277). The research endeavours to hear the stakeholder voices and accurately reflect their experiences, concerns and insights in the data analysis of this study.

4.5 Research Interview Schedule and Questions

This section details the interview schedule and questions. The interview schedule is composed of the questions to be asked of respondents to elicit the information necessary to achieve the research objectives. This research is seeking to point the way towards the implementation of a robust programme for citizenship education through the interrogation of three specific areas of school life. These three headings for investigation are: aspects of curriculum (cognitive and non-cognitive); the rigour of CSPE and SPHE as school subjects; and the impact of the relational culture of the school. In determining the interview questions, it is first desirable to specify by name the "variables" that the research process intends to measure (Tuckman, 1972 cited in Cohen et al., 2011: 415). The fieldwork questions for the stakeholder groups (students, parents, teachers and school Principals) are generated from the following principle variables that are pertinent to the school setting:

- Education for critical thinking and political literacy
- Status of various curricular subjects
- Attitudes towards the subjects CSPE and SPHE
- Democratisation of student role
- Education for citizenship
- Education for personal and social development
- The influence of the competition for *points* accumulation
- The affect of inter-relational experiences on school climate
- Teacher morale and teaching
- The teacher as a "transformative intellectual"

4.6 Analysis of Data

On the completion of the data collection, five distinct sets of data were available; four sets of interview recordings with each stakeholder group (i.e. eight students, eight parents, eight teachers and four school Principals) and one completed online survey of first year university students. Each of the twenty-eight stakeholder recordings was transcribed by the researcher. The analysis of the quantitative data derived from the online survey was completed on computer using statistical analysis software known as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

The analysis of data involved the reduction of copious amounts of hand-written transcriptions of recordings of interview responses in a manner that respected "the quality of *quality* of the qualitative data" (Cohen *et al.*, 2011: 559; italics in original). This was achieved by content analysis that reduced the data to more manageable amounts. This process coded the data under different category headings. The coding consisted of the ascribing "of a category label to a piece of data that is either decided in advance or in response to the data collected" (*Ibid*.). In this research, the key category labels are influenced by the themes identified in the literature reviews of Chapters Two and Three. In some cases category labels were generated by the intensity and extensiveness of ideas and experiences arising directly from the fieldwork. The final step in the data analysis is the identification of "key concepts that reflect the meaning" (Lichtman, 2006: 170) that the researcher wishes to attach to the collected data. This involves reflection, interpretation and identification of patterns with regard to the data. This eventually leads to decisions and conclusions.

4.7 Limits of Research

There are a number of limitations with regard to the research methods used in this study. The school Principal of each school involved in this study sourced each stakeholder respondent for that school. The students, parents and teachers were identified for the researcher by the school Principal. Each school Principal was asked, in the case of each stakeholder group, to select a respondent that in their opinion is "typical" of the school community. Sourcing a "typical" stakeholder means

identifying a stakeholder that is representative of that particular stakeholder group for that particular school community. There are factors that may affect the ability of the school Principal to select "typical" respondents for the research interviews. Examples of such factors may be: busy day-to-day schedule; the natural desire of a school Principal to showcase his/her school in a good light; pre-conceived ideas, notions, attitudes, etc. towards parents, students and teachers; opinions and regard for individual stakeholders, formulated due to experience (good or bad) of previous interactions with same; and the Principal's own views on what can be regarded as "typical".

All of the students partaking in this study are studying at third level institutions. All of the eight students identified by the school Principals are third level students. The student participants of the online survey were first year undergraduates at University College Cork. The limitation being suggested here is that virtually all students involved in this research have experienced at least a minimum successful outcome to the Leaving Certificate examination. This is indicated by the fact that all gained entry to a course of study at a third-level institution. A further study on citizenship education involving secondary students who did not access third level education would enhance the findings of this research.

4.8 Conclusion

This Chapter has elaborated on the research design and approach for this study. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies as described are deemed to be the most appropriate for seeking answers to the research questions of this study.

The collection and analysis of data will contribute to formulating proposals and recommendations for citizenship education in Irish secondary schools. Thus, this research seeks to contribute to the discourse on what is expected of education authorities in terms of offering students opportunities for the development of "freedoms" (Sen, 1999) to enable them to be inducted "into democratic practices and procedures" (Olssen *et al*., 2004: 276).

The next three chapters will elaborate on the findings emanating from the research fieldwork. Chapter Five details the findings with regard to the standing of both the cognitive and non-cognitive curricula. Chapter Six probes issues around the teaching of the curricular subjects CSPE and SPHE in secondary schools. Chapter Seven examines how the school relational dimensions affect education for citizenship.

Chapter 5

Findings:

Citizenship Education: How Curriculum Matters

5.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to present the findings of this research that relate to the value placed on different subjects of the secondary school curriculum. The opinions of the stakeholder respondents help clarify the extent to which education for citizenship is valued in Irish schools. This chapter presents findings regarding the current standing of both cognitive and non-cognitive subjects on the secondary school curriculum. In seeking to evaluate the efficacy of educating for citizenship in schools, inspiration is drawn from the previous chapters (Chapters Two and Three), where the work of various theorists is discussed to help signpost the pathway towards a quality citizenship education.

The findings pertaining to the attitudes of stakeholders towards the cognitive and non-cognitive curricula, explored in this chapter, contribute to the examination of education for citizenship in Irish schools. For the purpose of this research, the cognitive curriculum is considered to consist of school subjects that are "points-awarding" on completion of the Leaving Certificate examination, while the non-cognitive curriculum consists of subjects that are not assessed through examination.[43] This exploration will take the form of: (1) ascertaining the views of key stakeholders in relation to both sets of curricula; and (2) ascertaining the views of students in relation to their perceptions of how school authorities (teachers, Principals, etc.) actually affirm or do not affirm these two sets of curricula. In the following chapters,[44] further findings with regard to education for citizenship are explored. These findings will seek to cast light on: (1) aspects relating to the school subjects Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE); and (2) cultural dimensions of the school setting.

5.2 Curriculum Differentiation

For the purpose of this study, the curriculum that is presently prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills for the authorities of secondary schools will be

[43] A more complete explanation is given of "cognitive" and "non-cognitive" curricula in the next section (Section 5.2)
[44] Chapter Six and Chapter 7.

treated under two headings: the cognitive curriculum and the non-cognitive curriculum.

5. 2. 1 The Cognitive Curriculum

The cognitive curriculum is the subject area assessed by the Leaving Certificate Examination which is usually taken by students at the end of five or six years of secondary education.[45] The subject area includes: Mathematics, English, Geography, Chemistry, Biology, History, Construction Studies, French, German, Engineering, Art, Music, Physics, etc. These are the subjects that are not valued for their "affective or emotional side" (Kelly, 1995: 175). Kelly asserts that the discourse of "rationalism" in education places a "superior value on those subjects which are abstract, cognitive, [and] intellectual . . ." (*Ibid.*: 59). Another way of describing the subjects of the cognitive curriculum is as: "the subjects that lead to the awarding of *points*". Each student depending on the subject grades obtained in the Leaving Certificate examination (i.e. the secondary school terminal examination) is awarded *points* per grade achieved, for each individual subject. The accumulation of *points* awarded for each student's six best graded subjects gives that student his or her total number of *points*.[46] This total sum of *points* determines whether or not the student gains access to an under-graduate course of study in one of the many third level colleges, universities and institutions in Ireland or abroad. Great care and consideration is exercised by students (most often, carefully advised by parents, school guidance counsellors[47] and school authorities) in selecting (usually) seven subjects from the cognitive curriculum list, for study in the senior secondary school cycle.[48]

The criteria taken into account by students in making this choice of subjects include: third-level entry requirements in terms of what combination (choice) of subjects will afford the student the best opportunity of maximising the total number of "points" eventually achieved; the student's academic ability in the particular curricular

[45] The usual duration of secondary education in Ireland is six years. However, students who do not take the optional Transition Year Program (in Year Four) complete secondary education in five years. Students usually commence secondary education at twelve years of age.
[46] For more elaboration on the "points" system, see Central Applications Office: www.cao.ie
[47] Guidance counsellors are usually teachers in the school setting who have particular qualifications for offering career guidance and counselling services to students.
[48] Usually of two years duration.

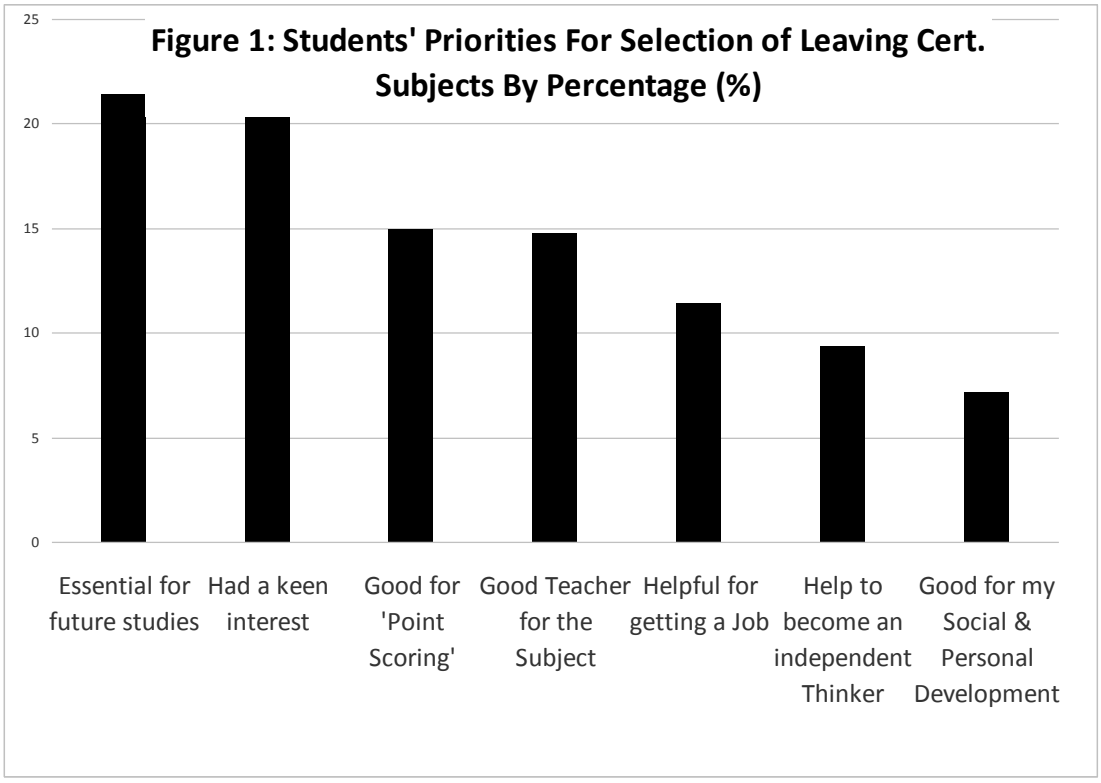
subjects; the calibre of the teachers teaching these subjects; and the particular academic qualifications that are specified as necessary requirements to gain entry to particular third-level institutions. Gleeson (2004) observes that:

> Students and teachers have become increasingly utilitarian in their attitudes to knowledge, with the former becoming adept at calculating the points-scoring capabilities of particular subjects and their utility in the labour market (*Ibid.*: 120, 121).

To complement the data collected through the interviewing of stakeholders, an online survey was conducted of First Year students at University College, Cork. This contributes to a clearer understanding of the thinking of secondary school students regarding their decision-making process in selecting curricular subjects.

5.2.2 Subject Choices: How Students are Influenced

Students were asked to indicate in order of importance their reasons for selecting curricular subjects for senior cycle of secondary school. Figure 1 shows these findings.



In the survey, the students were asked to "rate" the following reasons for their selection of Leaving Certificate subjects in order of importance: "essential for future studies"; "keen interest in the subject" "good for points-scoring"; "good teacher for the subject"; "helpful for getting a job"; "helps to become an independent thinker"; and "good for personal and social development". These findings support the assertion made above by Gleeson (2004) that Irish students are "utilitarian" in their approach to subject selection. Figure 1 shows how students are motivated in selecting secondary school subjects. The factors that could be considered helpful for entry to third level and hence conducive to significant *points* accumulation, matter most in the deliberations of the students. It is noted that aspects of education such as: acquiring the ability to be an independent thinker (9.33%) and, the progression of social and personal development (7.12%), matter least to students, while key factors conducive to *points*-scoring and academic progress at third level such as: the degree of essentiality for future studies (21.36%); a keen interest in the subject (21.06%); good for "points-scoring" (14.94%); and a good subject teacher (14.74%) - all matter considerably. In total, seventy-two per cent of the students surveyed place factors that are supportive of: *points* accumulation; entry to third-level; and progress at third level at the forefront of their considerations. Another perspective is that the consideration of future career opportunities matters significantly for students in their decisions regarding subject selection. This is shown by the fact that approximately forty-eight per cent of students answered that the following three factors figured as important for them in their subject selection: the degree of applicability for future studies (21.36%); easiness in terms of achieving high "points" (14.94%); and suitability for securing future employment (11.43%). These findings demonstrate the utilitarian and strategic considerations taken by students in the selection of subjects.

Students garner this expertise and information regarding subject selection in many ways. They can consult the school's guidance counsellor, who can advise on subject choice and *points* accumulation. Secondly, there is widespread public interest and comment through media outlets on the vagaries of the Leaving Certificate Examination and the attainment of *points* (Gleeson, 2010). In this pre-occupation with *points*, "to-day's students and teachers adopt increasingly utilitarian stances towards knowledge" (*Ibid*.: 275). The survey findings show that almost half (forty-nine per cent) of the First Year university students accessed "grinds" while in

secondary school. This is evidence that a large number of Irish secondary school students, who go on to attend universities avail of the "shadow education" system by paying for extra tuition outside of the school setting. The accessing of tutoring external to the school is further evidence of the substantial commodification of the educational system in Ireland (Lynch and Moran, 2006). This has implications for educational equality as one can argue that many students are excluded from the purchasing of educational advantage due to inability to pay. Lynch (1999, 2001) argues that this lack of economic resources causes educational inequality and leads to educational disadvantage, in particular, among lower socio-economic groupings in society.

5. 2. 3 The Non-Cognitive Curriculum

For the purposes of this study, the subjects of the non-cognitive curriculum, as prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills for school authorities, are considered to be: Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE); Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE); Religious Education (RE); and Physical Education (PE). It can be argued that these subjects are critical for educating for "the affective or emotional dimension of the moral life of every human being" (Kelly, 1995: 175). Kelly asserts that "rationalist epistemology" does not accommodate the non-cognitive or affective dimension of education as it is seen as an "unfortunate barrier to . . . a purely rational and cognitive process" (*Ibid*.).

The findings of this study indicate that this category of subjects is accorded less status than that accorded to the subjects of the cognitive curriculum. The attention of parents, teachers, students and school authorities is directed towards performance in the secondary school terminal examination (the Leaving Certificate). This indicates that for the stakeholders, an important remit of education is the development of the skills and competencies necessary for gaining entry to third level. The non-cognitive curricular subjects that can arguably be considered as being conducive to the holistic education of the student are poorly affirmed, as per the findings of this research. A holistic education promotes students' faculties for: critical thinking; personal and social development; political literacy; moral and ethical awareness; and participative citizenship. In schools, the emphasis is for the most part, on examination success in

career-based (cognitive) subjects. A parent suggests the following as reasons for this being the case:

> I think that those subjects (such as CSPE and SPHE) certainly (are not regarded as very important) because they are not exam subjects, there is no doubt about it and I don't think the school authorities have any choice in this. You know the way they are publishing league tables, the way parents (think) . . . and of course you have to get *points* if you want to get anywhere . . . pressure . . . is coming from various sources . . . (Margaret- parent).

The reasons as suggested by Margaret for the diminished status of subjects such as CSPE and SPHE is that these subjects are not taken into consideration for *points* accumulation and school league tables. Also, external interests such as those representing business, government, politics and civil society seldom articulate a concern about education in these subject areas. There are many reasons for this: societal values and norms; and the school as a site for the implementation of the state's mission to produce a suitably qualified workforce.

5.3 Stakeholder Rating of School Subjects

In the fieldwork for this research, teachers, parents and students were asked what subjects on the secondary school curriculum they considered to be "important" and what subjects they considered to be "not important". The responses lead to the following three main observations: (1) A high status is accorded to the cognitive curriculum by the stakeholders; (2) The non-cognitive curriculum is poorly affirmed; and (3) The influence of market values is discernable in the shaping of perspectives pertaining to schools and curricula.

5. 3. 1 Status of the Cognitive Curriculum

Certain school subjects are clearly ahead in "importance" considerations. Subjects that keep coming to the fore in terms of being considered "important" by the stakeholders are: Mathematics, English and the Sciences (Physics, Chemistry and

Biology). Students' perceptions of the status of secondary school subjects are examined by means of an online survey of First Year university students in the academic year 2011-2012. In the survey, questions are posed to students to determine the "importance" they attach to various subjects on the school curriculum. A selection of these findings is shown here in Table 5.1 (See also, Figure 2).

Table 5.1: Student Rating of Subjects (%)

Subject	Very Important	Important	Of Minor Importance	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Not Important
Mathematics	46.6	40.0	3.8	6.2	2.8
English	44.5	39.0	5.5	2.1	8.3
Science	52.1	37.2	1.7	7.6	0.7
Woodwork	1.7	19.7	20.3	46.9	10.3
Art	5.2	27.2	15.5	41.4	10.3
CSPE	3.4	22.8	31.0	17.6	24.1
RE	1.4	12.1	26.2	25.2	34.8
SPHE	11.0	26.9	23.8	22.1	15.9

The figures in Table 5.1 demonstrate that the cognitive subjects are regarded as extremely "important" by this student cohort. Also, the figures show that there is a hierarchical structure with regard to the profile of the secondary school curriculum. It can be seen that Art and Woodwork are subjects about which students are mostly non-committed ("neither important" nor "unimportant") or to which, they do not attach too much "importance".

The strong affirmation of Mathematics, English and the Science subjects in this survey is confirmed by the data obtained through the qualitative interview fieldwork. The stakeholders in interviews were asked to list the school subjects that they consider to be "important". Parents express their views as follows:

> I suppose things that are going to be used all through life; Maths and English are things that they are going to use everyday. Some of the languages . . . the way we are going European, they are important . . . I think the Science subjects are very important . . . (Maurice - parent).

> Well, I suppose the Maths and the Science. The three Sciences (Physics, Chemistry and Biology) would be very important (Philip - parent).
>
> I think Maths probably is very important because it is nearly Maths-based for anything at all . . . so Maths would be very important (Patricia - parent).

On the answering of a similar question posed to students, the same pattern emerged:

> Physics . . . I think Physics is the father of science, so I think it is a massive subject . . . Well, I think in our school, Maths and Science are very [important] . . . (Joseph - student).
>
> . . . the school that I was in, they kind of thought very highly of Maths and Science. They seem to put them ahead of everything else . . . even in Transition Year where they give everyone a taste of every subject, they gave more time to the Science subjects than say: Accounting or Business and then the numbers doing Science to Leaving Cert. were greater than the numbers doing Accounting (Peter - student).

It is interesting to note that the students' responses demonstrate not only the strong standing of certain subjects within the cognitive curriculum but also, there appears to be (in their view) a tiered hierarchy (in terms of status) of subjects within that curriculum. It can be argued that students and parents construct these ideas with regard to the status of curricular subjects from the following: the influence of the European Union (". . . the way we are going European"); the school profile (". . . the school that I was in . . . thought highly of Maths"); opportunities for career advancement; and societal expectations with regard to the understanding of what is "knowledge". Also, some school authorities (teachers and school Principals) actively promote Mathematics and the Sciences. Representatives of the corporate sector, such as Google and Intel actively promote these subjects as being critical for economic progress (McDonagh and Quinlan, 2012).

At second-level education, there is little attention given to the cultivation of philosophical thought. The apparent division of the Sciences and the Humanities in

present-day educational discourse is noteworthy as the origin of the natural sciences lies in the philosophical tradition of philosophers such as Galileo and Copernicus. MacIntyre (1987), when reflecting on the lack of philosophical thought in modern-day schools, argues that the affirmation of education for both occupational and social roles can only be realised if there exists in society an "educated public" (*Ibid*.: 16, 17). The argument can be made that the present "division" (as shown in this research) between the Sciences and Humanities is due to modernisation and neoliberal influences that seek to replace an "educated public" by "a heterogeneous set of specialised publics" (*Ibid*.: 25). This indicates a dis-integration of knowledge in second-level schools. The contention is that "modern society" (*Ibid*.) fails to produce an "educated public". MacIntyre asserts that the ability "to think for ourselves" and "thinking" in the Kantian sense has been "deformed into a professionalised activity" (*Ibid*.). This philosophical view of education by MacIntyre is articulated by Drudy and Lynch (1993) in relation to present-day educational priorities. Societal pressure guides the educational field in Ireland (this is also true of other European countries) towards the production of human capital for economic growth:

> Students are . . . socialised increasingly into a technical mode of consciousness without a complementary education in the social or political sciences or in philosophy. Yet these latter disciplines are crucial for the understanding of the socio-political and cultural order. It seems extraordinary . . . that we are quite prepared to send all of our young people out of school to rear children, make marriages, organise community life and run the socio-political system of the country without any rigorous education in these fields (*Ibid*.: 219).

The socialisation of students into a "technical mode of consciousness" refers to the high profile of subjects, such as, Mathematics and the Sciences in Irish secondary schools (as indicated in this research). These sentiments are graphically expressed by the following responses.

Tina (student) while clearly acknowledging the high profile of subjects such as Mathematics and English laments the fact that Art, Music and Home Economics are not accorded sufficient respect:

> Definitely, English, Maths . . . are totally [regarded] as very important . . . I think there is less of an emphasis put on the likes of Music and Art and . . . Home Economics . . . I have a genuine interest in Art and I loved doing Art for my Leaving Cert. It is a lot more interesting than what the likes of English would be for me anyway. But, there is that kind of "thing" put on the likes of these subjects (Tina - student).

The reference by Tina (student) to "that kind of "thing"" refers to the way in which curricular subjects are viewed by societal and educative influences. The same student regrets that "practical" subjects such as: Metalwork, Woodwork and Construction Studies, etc. are not regarded as "important". The reason suggested for this is that these subjects are not "sit-down subjects", that is, these subjects did not require students to spend considerable lengths of time studying at a desk.

> . . . they are not "sit-down" [subjects] . . . they are more practical . . . [like] Woodwork and Metalwork and stuff . . . like a few of my friends who totally hated school, hated studying and stuff, loved Metalwork, loved Woodwork, loved Construction [Studies] . . . (Tina - student).

Tina (student) makes the point that the student who studies the "practical" subjects is "intelligent" and that this fact should be recognised. Subjects such as Woodwork and Metalwork are creative subjects and afford the student an opportunity to contribute to the construction of knowledge (Freire, 1972). She discerns a perception from within the educational setting that if you study these subjects that "you are not intelligent . . . [and, that] is always going to be there in every school". This is a strong message emanating from the school institution regarding the status of subjects. This reflects the traditional fragmentation that exists in the Irish secondary system. There has been a divide between academic and vocational schools. The academic schools taught in the classical humanist tradition while the vocational schools concentrated on technical education, considered appropriate for workers to satisfy the labour market (Gleeson, 2010). Gleeson notes that:

> [t]he typical Irish provincial town had three post-primary schools - two secondary schools, one for boys and one for girls, and a "tech" or vocational school (*Ibid.*: 307).

Other research has found that this fragmentation further emphasised the divisions along socio-economic grounds. That is, those students from lower socio-economic groups tended to attend vocational schools, and in the main study the "practical" subjects (Lynch and Lodge, 2002; Gleeson, 2010).

Another student explains that a student is considered "book-smart" if studying certain subjects and "creative" if studying others:

> . . . I think that if a boy or a girl . . . got "A "s [grades] all the time in Maths, Irish or English, they would be looked upon as being very smart [as] opposed to somebody who got an "A" in Music. If you got an "A" in Music, you are very talented. If someone got an "A" in Art as well, it would be the same [as] if they got an "A" in Music - it is just: "Oh yeah, they are good at something" . . . If you got an "A" in Chemistry - you are smart. If you got an "A" in Home Economics, you are just [ordinary] . . . It is like you are "book-smart" or you are like . . . Art, Home Ec. and Music are kind of different, they are kind of creative and stuff like that (Susan - student).

Tracy (teacher) verifies that this perception of the hierarchal status of subjects is, in her experience, very true. It applies to Home Economics about which also, gendered assumptions are made. Speaking of her interactions with parents at a parent-teacher meeting, Tracy expresses her frustration as follows:

> Oh, Home Economics, unfortunately . . . there would be the parents who would say: "That's a bit of cooking and sewing isn't it?" "Is there an exam in that?" . . . you would be holding yourself down, not to go across the table to them (Tracy - teacher).

Therefore, the evidence indicates that within the cognitive curriculum of Irish secondary schools there is the following descending order of "importance": (1)

cognitive career-based subjects (such as the Sciences, English and Maths); and (2) cognitive, practical or "creativity-encouraging" subjects (such as Art, Woodwork and Music), as illustrated in Fig. 2.

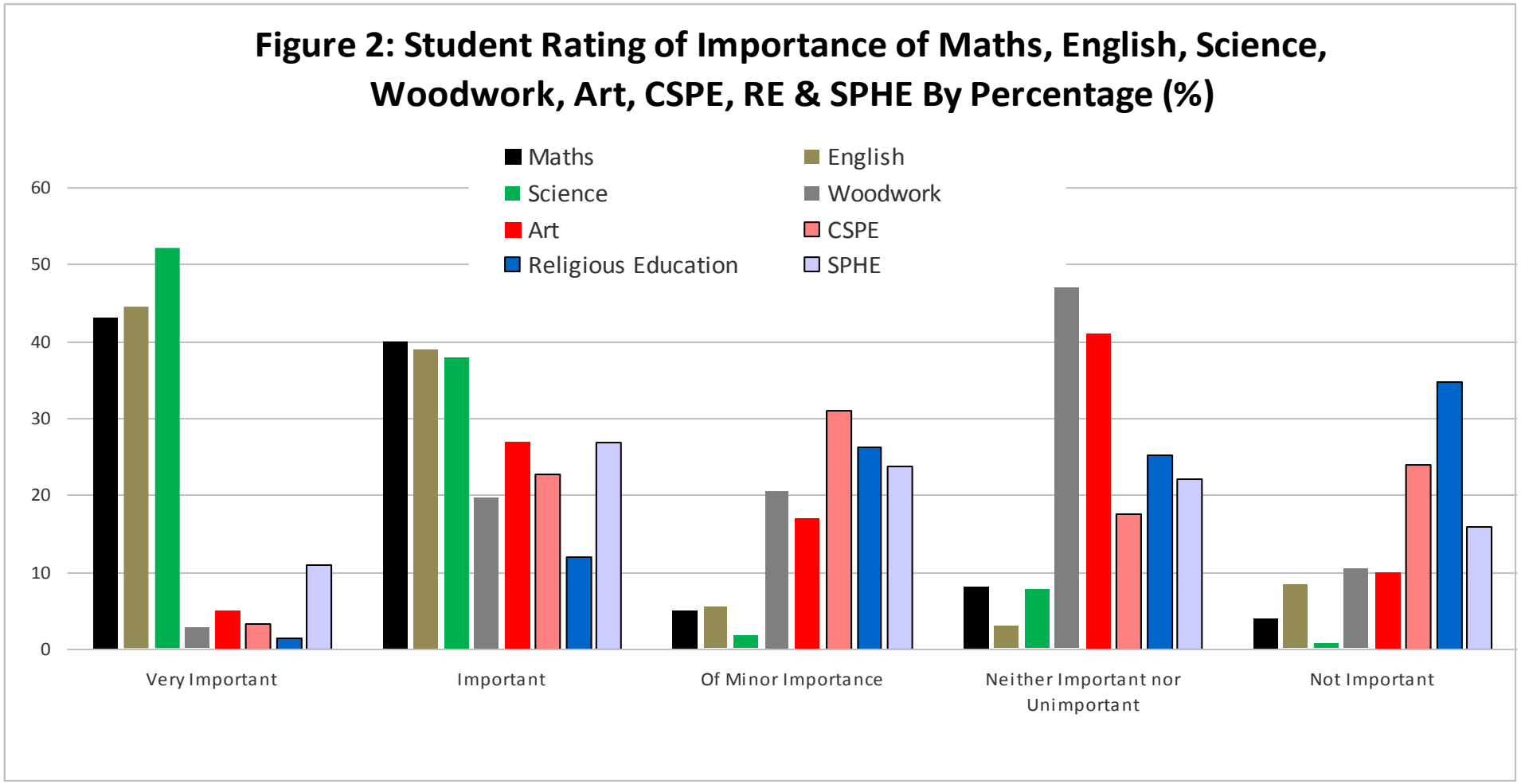


Figure 2: Student Rating of Importance of Maths, English, Science, Woodwork, Art, CSPE, RE & SPHE By Percentage (%)
Maths
English
Science
Woodwork
Art
CSPE
Religious Education
SPHE
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Very Important
Important
Of Minor Importance
Neither Important nor Unimportant
Not Important

5. 3. 2 Status of the Non-Cognitive Curriculum

The second observation arising from the fieldwork research regards the low status of non-cognitive subjects such as: Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Religious Education (RE). These subjects can arguably be considered important for enhancing the affective, character-forming, ethical and, civic and political awareness qualities of the young person. These are attributes that matter in the preparation of citizens (Noddings, 2005; Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1988). These subjects are not considered as "important" by the stakeholders. There is a view that these subjects almost hinder the accumulation of *points* and the attainment of "good" results in subjects of the cognitive curriculum in the state examinations. It should be noted here that CSPE,[49] Physical Education (PE) and SPHE are not examined in the Leaving Certificate examination, at the end of secondary school education. RE is at the present time being taken by a small cohort of students as a Leaving Certificate examination subject. In 2011, one thousand and eighty-five students took the Leaving Certificate examination in Religious Education. The total number of Leaving Certificate school candidates that year was 49,614.[50] The above indicates that RE does not figure significantly for points as only 2.2 per cent of the Leaving Certificate school cohort studied that subject for examination in the year 2011.

The evidence of low status accorded to the non-cognitive subjects is demonstrated by the results of the online student survey. The findings for CSPE, RE and SPHE are shown in Table 5.1 (and Figure 2). The figures in Table 5.1 show that, for students, the level of value accorded to non-cognitive subjects such as CSPE, RE and SPHE is significantly lower than that accorded to the cognitive subjects such as Mathematics, English and the Sciences (See Section 5.3.1).

To illustrate this outcome more clearly, the percentages for each of the category responses: "of minor importance" and "not important" are combined and allotted to

[49] CSPE is studied by all secondary school students only for the Junior Cycle i.e. in Years One, Two and Three. It is then discontinued as a curricular subject.
[50] For statistical information, see Department of Education and Skills: www.education.ie

the following curricular subjects: Science (2.4%); Mathematics (6.6%); English (7.6%); Art (25.8%); Woodwork (Construction Studies) (30.6%); SPHE (39.7%); CSPE (55.1%); and RE (61.0%) (See Table 5.2). The survey results for these eight subjects show the status that each subject commands among the students in descending order. Science and Mathematics are regarded as the most important subjects and, RE and CSPE as the least important.

Table 5.2 : Illustration of Students' valuations of School Subjects (n=290).

Subject	A. "Of minor importance" (%)	B. "Not Important at all" (%)	Combined (A+B) (%)
Science	1.7	0.7	2.4
Maths	3.8	2.8	6.6
English	5.5	2.1	7.6
Art	15.5	10.3	25.8
Woodwork	20.3	10.3	30.6
SPHE	23.79	15.86	39.65
Religion	26.2	34.8	61
CSPE	31	24.1	55.1

The survey findings confirm the findings from the qualitative fieldwork conducted for this research. The interview responses of all stakeholders validate the survey results; the non-cognitive subjects of the secondary school curriculum are poorly affirmed in terms of status and recognition. Also, the status accorded to secondary school subjects is hierarchically tiered; the cognitive subjects (e.g. Mathematics and the Sciences) are at the top of the "importance" spectrum, while next come the practical or creative subjects (e.g. Woodwork and Art), and the non-cognitive subjects (e.g. CSPE, RE and SPHE) are at the bottom. This clarity with regard to the value of various curricular subjects has repercussions for the imparting of citizenship education to the Irish second level students.

Parents seem to display a lack of knowledge and recognition concerning the non-cognitive subjects of the secondary school programme. One parent is unaware of the names of the subjects (CSPE and SPHE) and of their educational purpose. This parent expressed a wish that teachers with the "better qualification" would teach the "important" subjects:

> There are some subjects there . . . [CSPE? SPHE?] Something like that - I am not even sure what they mean . . . I suppose on those kind of subjects; if they have a good enough knowledge of it, I would be happy enough with that but for the important ones [subjects], I would like the better qualification [i.e. the better qualified teachers] (Larry - parent).

Clearly, this parent indicates that for him, the "important ones" (i.e. the subjects that are good for *points* accumulation) are so important that they should be taught by "better qualified teachers". This implies an indifference to subjects such as CSPE and SPHE and an indifference to the objective of achieving a more holistic education. This parent is satisfied that for these subjects, a "good enough knowledge" will suffice. The implication is that for the "important ones", his expectation as a parent is much higher in terms of the calibre of teacher assigned to the teaching of these subjects.

Another parent (Patricia) expressed a wish that the study of these subjects would end after the three years of Junior Cycle. Some parents pointed out that the ability of teachers to teach the subjects and the attitude of staff and the interest shown by them towards these subjects, matters:

> Maybe, subjects like CSPE wouldn't be regarded as high . . . That's down to the staff as well. Certain subjects can be treated as not as important but if the staff are willing to push it and willing to give it the importance that it deserves, then it will be taken on board (Finbarr - Parent).

Students tend to support this view that teachers do not give due attention to the teaching methodologies for CSPE, SPHE and RE:

> . . . like CSPE and SPHE . . . they are literally reading from a book . . . it is "winging" completely . . . and especially CSPE . . . you will end up just sitting there . . . like I could have taught the exact same thing they did . . . (Tina - student).

> . . . the teachers gave the impression that the core subjects are more important than Religion and PE (Physical Education) class because if we had to do any extra work for anyone . . . those are the classes that would have to be affected (Jim - student).
>
> Well, I think . . . in my experience anyway, the non-exam subjects - you can kind of miss (Senan - student).
>
> I don't think that [SPHE, Religion and CSPE], would be looked at as very important subjects at all . . . I even know myself, just my own personal experience; if I had failed CSPE for my Junior Cert., it wouldn't have bothered me that much . . . but if I had failed something like Maths or Irish, I would have been [worried] . . . that's the way people look at it (Susan - student).

These stakeholder expressions demonstrate that the non-cognitive subjects of the secondary school curriculum do not figure significantly in terms of status. This message becomes apparent to stakeholders through their observation of the following: giving time-off in these classes to facilitate study in the examinable subjects; the apparent lack of concern about the calibre of teacher; and the scant communication among the stakeholders regarding their educational remit. This demonstrates the "popularity of rational-technical models of curriculum and the prevalence of the neo-liberal agenda" (Gleeson, 2010: 176). It appears that these subjects are being "done to be done" (Mary - student) in order to comply with directives from the Department of Education and Skills. Also, if some time is needed on the school time-table for other various school activities, it is usually taken from the allocated time (on the school time-table) for the non-cognitive subjects. The following section examines how students identify signs of a lack of status being accorded by school authorities to subjects like CSPE and SPHE.

5. 4 External Influences on the School

It is the perception of parents and students that most school authorities (teachers and school Principals) are not actively engaged in promoting the non-cognitive curriculum. This is indicative of the school institution itself being affected by the

pressures and influences of society in general, market values and the modernisation process (Lynch and Moran, 2006; Kirby, 2002; Limond, 2007). Teachers admit to experiencing this "pressure" and at times being guided by it.

> I think, again, within the school authorities, nowadays, they are very much focused on what's coming from outside [the school], what sort of subjects are needed to give us a suitably skilled work force for the future and so on . . . (Muireann - teacher).

The competitive nature of education forces them as educators and school managers/leaders to go "with the flow". That is, there is the recognition that education is a commodity to be marketed to, and purchased by, the "customer" for economic benefit both to the "customer" and the economy, as well as a public relations benefit for the school (Tuohy, 2012). A parent sums up the situation through designating the school as:

> . . . a marketplace and that's what it is and all these school league tables . . . there are desperate pernicious influences getting at schools in their efforts to give a rounded education. . . . I am hoping with all this nonsense that has happened [recent economic downturn] and that's burst now that people might just kind of re- evaluate and say [that] we want the whole person [to be educated] (Margaret - parent).

This viewpoint reflects the impact of neoliberal influences on the school climate, whereby the pedagogical work of the school, namely the imparting of a holistic education is compromised by the "pernicious influences getting at schools". Used neoliberal language, this parent makes a strong statement.

Teachers on being asked to offer opinions on their perception of what subjects are generally regarded as "important" and "not important" by parents, support the views already expressed by both parents and students. Teachers are in a position to make insightful observations of the educational priorities of society. These views come to their attention through their day-to-day contact with both students and parents. The responses of teachers indicate that the educational priorities of parent stakeholders are

influenced by the agenda of neoliberalism. It can be argued that this agenda is reinforced by the passive responses of the teachers themselves. On listening to the teacher respondents in this research, one can sense that teachers feel as if they are standing by, almost powerless as they watch the essentials of an education for citizenship being diluted by the forces of market values. They see that the fundamentals of education are not about empowerment of the student, rather they are more about the instrumentalist transmission of information to the student in order to serve the functional needs of the economy. Teachers through their observations of parental educative discourse provide a montage of the current influences that are impacting on them as professionals and on the school institution:

> . . . most parents have the view that Maths is massively important. Maths, English and Irish are the three [important] ones and I think a foreign language like French . . . but, they don't take Religion as seriously, they don't take CSPE - we will say - as seriously . . . SPHE, the same, yeah. I don't think PE is [important] . . . (Kieran - teacher).

> Straight forward: Maths, English, possibly a modern language . . . I have heard parents verbalising and I have seen it by their attendance at parent/teacher meetings; not going to various teachers; your CSPE, your RE, your PE for example - they just fall off the reckoning, we are programmed I think through our traditional education to work on certain things . . . the school authorities, nowadays, they are very much focused on what's coming from outside [the school], what sort of subjects are needed to give us a suitably skilled work force for the future and so on . . . (Muireann - teacher).

> . . . I think . . . Religion, CSPE, and SPHE and maybe sometimes things like History can be disregarded. Art can be disregarded. A certain percentage of parents see something like Art as useless and [say]: "What are you going to get out of that?" I think it is the pressure from parents, [they] just feel it is going to be of no benefit to them to get points in the Leaving Cert . . . [for] a job down the road, they see it as useless but . . . you could learn an awful lot in SPHE or CSPE or Religion or Art . . . it's parents' perception really to

> see [matters like that] . . . it is seen [that way] in the schools as well (Emer - teacher).

Jack (teacher) says that this representation of education "worries [him] hugely" as what he terms the "periphery subjects" such as Metalwork, Woodwork, Art, CSPE and SPHE appear not to be acknowledged to be of value. This "worries" him because the imparting of a holistic education that seeks to prepare students for citizenship and well-being appears to be sidelined because the focus and concentration is mainly on academic subjects such as the Sciences and Mathematics. He confirms that this is the message that is "out there", emanating from the "media" and "school authorities" due to societal educational priorities.

The teachers through their interaction with parents and their appraisal of the education field have an unique understanding of the educational preferences of Irish society. They provide a revealing perspective on current attitudes to education. They are in a good position to discern the various nuances regarding educational priorities among the stakeholders and provide indications of how external societal influences impact on the work of the secondary school. These findings show the considerable effects of external influences on second level education. School authorities appear to be substantially focused on the influences "coming from outside" the school gate. These influences of the marketplace and neoliberalism impact on the educative work of the school. This causes the main focus of the school to be on the provision of workers, and the accumulation of *points*. This, in turn, has the effect of neglecting education for holism and the nurturing of students for their social and personal development. This educational direction has repercussions for citizenship education.

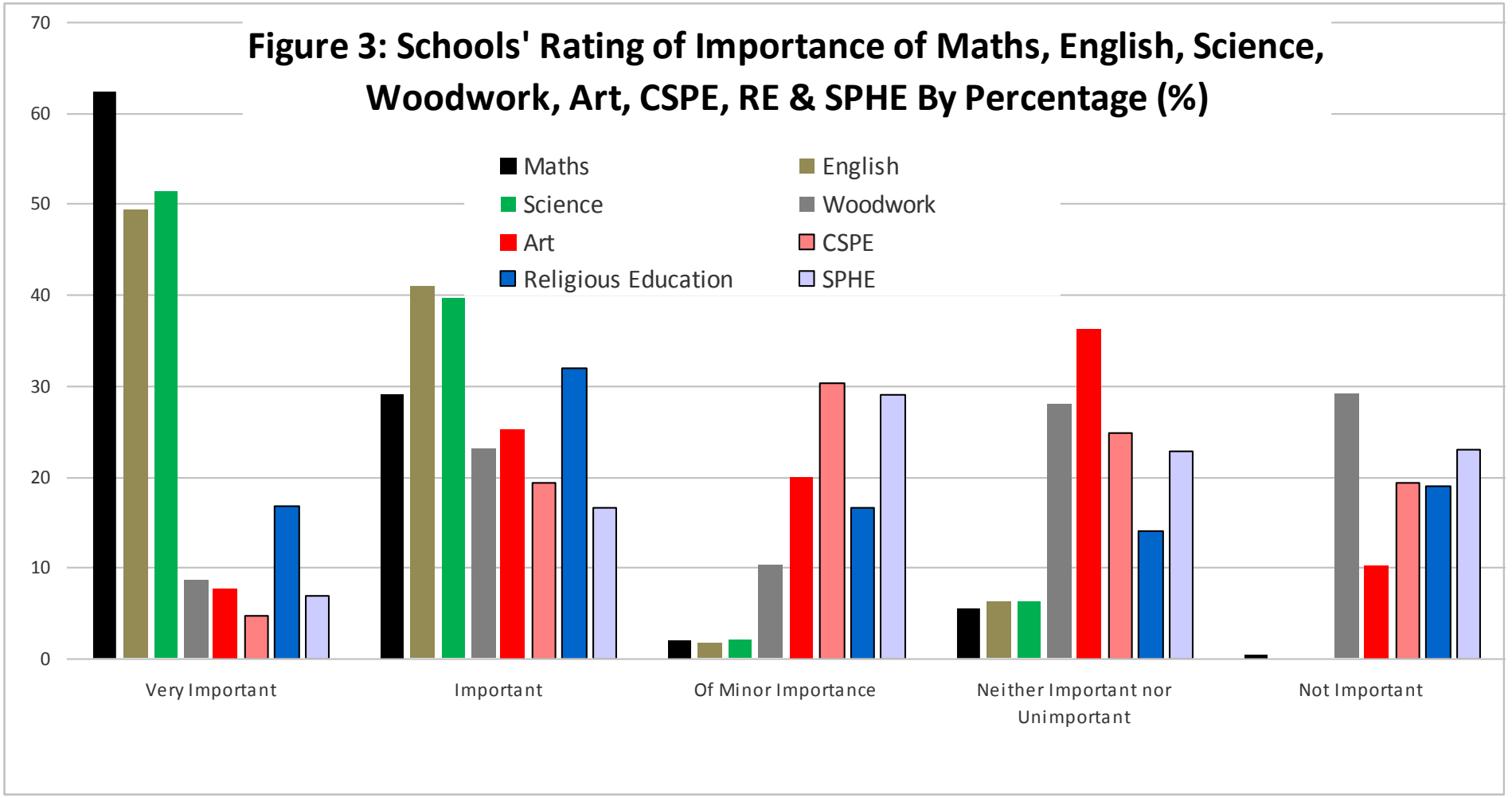


Figure 3: Schools' Rating of Importance of Maths, English, Science, Woodwork, Art, CSPE, RE & SPHE By Percentage (%)
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Maths
English
Science
Woodwork
Art
CSPE
Religious Education
SPHE
Very Important
Important
Of Minor Importance
Neither Important nor Unimportant
Not Important

5.5 Affirmation of Subjects by School Authorities

It is clear that certain attitudes, convictions and priorities pertaining to the "value" of the different subjects on the curriculum emanate from school authorities and school personnel. In this section of the study, students are asked to reflect on their perceptions of how school personnel (teachers, Principals, etc.) value various subjects on the curriculum.

First Year University students were asked to answer the following question: How important did your school (teachers, Principal, etc.) regard the following subjects? A list of subjects (both cognitive and non-cognitive) was supplied. The results obtained in response to this question are shown in Table 5.3 (and Figure 3).

Table 5.3: Student Perceptions of How Schools Value Subjects (%)

Subject	Very Important	Important	Of Minor Importance	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Not Important
Mathematics	62.4	29.0	2.1	5.5	0.3
English	49.3	41.0	1.7	6.2	0
Science	51.4	39.7	2.1	6.2	0
Woodwork	8.6	23.1	10.3	27.9	29.0
Art	7.6	25.2	20.0	36.2	10.3
CSPE	4.8	19.3	30.3	24.8	19.3
RE	16.9	32.1	16.6	14.1	19.0
SPHE	6.9	16.6	29.0	22.8	23.1

The findings of the student survey confirm those findings obtained from the interviews of the qualitative fieldwork. The research findings as shown in Table 5.3 show that the messages, the nuances and level of affirmation of the school authorities (i.e. teachers and Principals, etc.), as perceived by the students, are significantly in favour of the support and promotion of the cognitive subjects while the subjects of the practical and non-cognitive curricula lack a comparable support and status.

When one combines the percentages for the category responses "Of minor importance" and "Not important" for the eight subject surveys shown above, the following results emerge: English (1.7%); Science (2.1%); Mathematics (2.4%); Art

(30.3%); RE (35.5%); Woodwork (39.3%); CSPE (49.6%); and SPHE (52.1%) (See Table 5.4). This data demonstrates that only 1.7 per cent of students state that in their opinion, the authorities of the secondary schools which they attended regard English as either "Of minor importance" or "Not important", while a large cohort, fifty-two percent note that their school authorities regard SPHE as either "Of minor importance" or "Not important". This example illustrates how students perceive the way in which particular subjects (in this case, English and SPHE) are valued by teachers and school Principals. It can be seen from Table 5.4 that subjects (such as CSPE and SPHE) that arguably matter for the imparting of an education for citizenship are poorly valued in the school setting.

Table 5.4 : Illustration of Schools' Valuation of School Subjects

Subject	**A. "Of minor importance" (%)**	**B. "Not Important at all" (%)**	**Combined (A+B) (%)**
English	1.7	0	1.7
Science	2.1	0	2.1
Maths	2.1	0.3	2.4
Art	20	10.3	30.3
Religion	16.55	18.97	35.5
Woodwork	10.3	29	39.3
CSPE	30.3	19.3	49.6
SPHE	29	23.1	52.1

These results largely concur with the level of "importance" accorded to these same eight subjects by each stakeholder group (see Section 5.3, this Chapter).

Two further points need noting. First, the subjects Art and Woodwork score low in "importance" levels, both in the opinion of students (See Table 5.2), and according to the students' perceptions of the views of their school authorities (See Table 5.4). This raises questions with regard to the status of subjects such as these, in terms of recognition of their role in encouraging the creativity and craftsmanship of students. Second, in the combined percentage categories of "Of minor importance" and "Not important" for the subject RE, the students' views accounted for sixty-one per cent, while their perception of the views of school authorities accounted for thirty-five per cent (approximately). The low level of "importance" which students, parents and

school authorities attach to RE is confirmed by both the qualitative and quantitative research of this study. Such findings have repercussions for the Irish Church authorities and, the Department of Education and Skills in terms of curriculum development and the prudent use of state funds to provide high-quality ethical and moral education for young people. This is an area that needs further research and interrogation that is beyond this present study. The critical point being emphasised here is that there is a considerable body of evidence identified in this research that supports the contention that the non-cognitive subjects of the secondary school are not affirmed by the stakeholders, thus having repercussions for the preparation of citizens. For example, approximately fifty per cent of students who responded to the online survey assert their belief that the authorities of their secondary schools display little regard or respect for the subjects CSPE (49.6%) and SPHE (52.1%). The following chapter will examine separately the current standing of CSPE and SPHE from the perspective of parents, teachers and students.

5.6 Implications for Citizenship Education

In the above sections, both qualitative and quantitative evidence shows how students, parents and teachers value various curricular subjects. The following is a summary of the findings from the field work responses of students, parents and teachers regarding the status of the cognitive and non-cognitive curricula. The status of a curricular subject depends significantly on whether that subject is examined and figures in the accumulation of *points.* The non-cognitive subjects such as SPHE, CSPE, RE and PE rate poorly in degree of importance. Subjects, such as Art, Music, History, Woodwork and Metalwork are regarded as periphery subjects. Many parents are confused with regard to the curricular content of SPHE and CSPE. Subjects such as the Sciences, Mathematics and English are strongly affirmed by the stakeholders. This shows that in effect there is a three-tiered hierarchy with regard to the affirmation of secondary school subjects. Number one on that hierarchical scale is the group that make up the cognitive subjects such as the Sciences, Mathematics and English. Number Two on the scale is the list of the periphery subjects such as Art, Music and Woodwork. Number Three, that is, the subjects at the lowest, status-wise are the non-cognitive subjects such as SPHE and CSPE.

The lack of prioritisation for subjects such as SPHE and CSPE, it can be argued has repercussions for education for citizenship. These subjects specifically seek to educate for the social and personal empowerment of the student. It can also be asserted that all subjects on the school curriculum have a role to play in education for citizenship. However, it appears that due to the instrumentalist nature of the pedagogy and curricular content of examinable subjects in Irish secondary schools that the objective of educating for citizenship in a cross-curricular sense remains unrealised. Teachers suggest that this portrayal of the Irish secondary school is due to "other agencies" and influences in society. The concerns are with future employment opportunities and the "knowledge economy". Gleeson (2010) asserts that the "advance of the "knowledge economy" has . . . assured the place of the technical interest at the very heart of Irish education" (*Ibid.*: 35). Such concerns reflect current employment policies and government agendas. This has resulted in an Irish secondary educational system that is noted for "its technical orientation and the competitive individualism [that is] evident in the daily organisation of school life" (Lynch, 1989: 139). However, the teachers' perception of parents being uncertain about the value of subjects such as CSPE and SPHE is evidence that there is a "knowledge gap" between parents and school authorities with regard to the educative value of these subjects. This is a situation that contributes to the neglect of education for humanisation and conscientisation (Freire, 1972).

5.7 Conclusion

This Chapter set out to compare the subjects of the cognitive curriculum with those of the non-cognitive. The methodologies used were both qualitative and quantitative. The views of parents, students and teachers were sought. Also, students were asked to recount their perceptions of which subjects are affirmed by the school authorities. An effort was made to trace the influences external to the school that impacted on the education imparted. This was achieved through assessing the shared insights of the stakeholders. Lastly, some observations were made about how such "increasingly utilitarian stances towards knowledge" (Gleeson, 2010: 275) impact on the goal of teaching for citizenship.

Chapter 6

Findings:

The Fundamentals of Citizenship Education: Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE); Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on particular curricular aspects of citizenship education. Education for citizenship contributes to enhancing the quality of human lives; it impacts on the individual's health (physical and mental), social and personal development, access to information and ability to participate politically. Kelly (1995) argues that education that seeks to prepare citizens for democratic living cannot afford to ignore "the affective or emotional dimension of the moral life of every human being" (*Ibid*.: 175). In this study, education for citizenship is considered as an educative process that nurtures students for conscientisation and humanisation (Freire, 1972). Such an approach to the preparation of future citizens facilitates the "development" in them of "substantive freedoms" (Sen, 1999: 1) leading to a better "quality of life and to its flourishing" (*Ibid*.: 142). This resonates with the educational philosophy of Freire whose ideas on education for humanisation and conscientisation emphasise the importance of "being in the world" for individual human beings (Peters and Lankshear, 1994: 175). It can be argued that education for critical literacy and, personal and social well-being are important elements of an education for citizenship programme. Accordingly, findings pertaining to these aspects of education in Irish schools at the present time will be detailed here.

The status of two particular non-cognitive subjects of the secondary school curriculum, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is now examined in the context of their impact on citizenship education. The focus is on CSPE and SPHE as arguably these subjects have a particular importance with regard to educating for citizenship.

6.2 Critical Consciousness

This section examines the current situation with regard to the profile, success and satisfaction ratings of CSPE and its affects on the moulding of citizens. In particular, the findings seek to inform on how well the subject CSPE educates for "critical consciousness" (Freire, 1972). A person is in a state of "critical consciousness" when

she/he "feels empowered to think and to act on the conditions around her or him, and relates those conditions to the larger contexts of power in society" (Shor, 1993: 32).

6.2.1 Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)

There is an expectation that the subject CSPE plays a crucial role in educating for social and political empowerment through increasing the levels of critical literacy among students in Irish secondary schools. This subject is studied for the first three years of secondary education, by students, aged approximately from twelve to fifteen years. It is assessed by the marking of an "Action Project" which is school-based work undertaken by each student during those three years, combined with sitting for a one and a half hour state examination (Junior Certificate) at the end of the three years.

The aspirations of the CSPE syllabus are outlined in the document: "Aims and Objectives of Civic, Social and Political Education". The central theme of the CSPE programme is to provide an education that guides students towards an appreciation of participation in citizenship. The syllabus states that:

> [t]hrough active exploration and study of citizenship at all levels (personal, local, national, global) in the context of contemporary social and political issues, this course aims to:
> -- make pupils aware of the civic, social and political dimensions of their lives and the importance of active, participative citizens to the life of the state and all people;
>
> - encourage and develop the practical skills which enable pupils to engage in active, participatory social interaction, and to adopt responsible roles as individual, family member, citizen, worker, consumer, and member of various communities within a democratic society;
>
> - develop the autonomous potential of pupils as socially literate, independent and self-confident young people;

- encourage pupils to apply positive attitudes, imagination and empathy in learning about, and encountering, other people and cultures;

- enable pupils to develop their critical and moral faculties in agreement with a system of values based in human rights and social responsibilities;

- develop knowledge and understanding of processes taking place at all levels of society which lead to social, political and economic decision - making (Department of Education and Skills).[51]

Drawing on the literature review (see Chapters 2 and 3) on citizenship, it can be argued that these objectives dwell on an understanding of citizenship that is depoliticised. The narrative in these stated objectives is not strong in supporting a citizenship education that educates for practice in the "skills of contestation" and sharing "a political community with others" (Hickey, 2012: 95). For citizens to be proactive in building "a strong democracy in Ireland based on "thick" participation rather than "thin" representation" (Powell, 2012: 167), it is necessary to educate students "to both read the world critically and participate in shaping and governing it (Giroux, 2011: 137). This study seeks to interrogate education for citizenship from the perspective of the humanisation and conscientisation of the student (Freire, 1972).

School Principals, when questioned on their opinion regarding CSPE and the teaching for critical thinking, political literacy and citizenship in Irish secondary schools describe a situation that appears to be far from ideal. The Principal (Jeff) of St. Patricks secondary school states that the school is "totally deficient" in achieving those educational outcomes. He admits that there is "hardly any time given to that - in this school, anyway". In answer to the same question, the Principal of The Holy Cross School explains:

. . . you cannot have critical thinking if the course is about "packing" people to get *points*; you have to change it because it's all children getting "grinds". .

[51] This syllabus can be accessed at the website of the Department of Education and Skills; www.education.ie

> They are getting "grinds" all the time . . . it's really "packing" them, they never get an opportunity. The Leaving Cert. course is such that it provides very few opportunities to critically think and analyse . . . (Sorcha - Principal).

Paul the Principal of Woodside College when asked to comment on the status of CSPE in Irish secondary schools replied that "it doesn't have a very high status being very truthful". He describes how CSPE is time-tabled for one period per week and "often times it gets tagged on" to complete a particular teacher's time-table. These responses of these Principals indicate a low standing for CSPE in secondary schools. They portray almost a powerlessness on their part to alter this situation due to the fact that success in the Leaving Certificate examination entails "grinds" and "packing" of information for unpacking in the examination. That is, the focus of schools is on the subjects of the cognitive curriculum and not on subjects such as CSPE (See Chapter Five).

The situation pertaining to the remit of educating for citizenship in Irish schools is further clarified through the following student responses. The students were asked to elaborate on their experience of education for critical thinking and political literacy:

> There definitely wasn't much about politics. In Leaving Cert. - we just didn't have time for it, the odd time maybe teachers would take a break from the work and talk about what was going on . . . they would rarely talk about politics. . . . a lot of people just don't understand what's going on with governments and all that kind of stuff (Peter - student).

> . . . I wouldn't really know much about politics . . . maybe there should be a politics class or something like that. . . . Yeah, that's current, they do so much emphasis on History but they do nothing about the present . . . nobody teaches about politics, no school across Ireland teaches about politics. . . . There is no actual teaching of what the different [political] parties are about and things like that (Susan - student).

These responses portray the de-politicisation of the school setting. Such an approach to citizenship education is rather weak when compared with the writings of critical

theorists such as Freire, Giroux, Noddings, etc. The students are articulating a need for a rigorous political education in the school setting.

It is worth noting that many students pointed out that very often, depending on the teacher, the English class is the only real forum for interrogation of the issues of the day:

> . . . when you are talking about that kind of thinking, it comes back to English [the school subject, English] more so than anything and then that comes back to the individual teachers - some are focused in just getting you to learn off essays, some would prefer you to think about it. You could learn off an essay and reproduce it or you could think about it and make up your own mind. That depends on the individual teachers (Senan - student).

The students' responses reflect a situation whereby school authorities appear to ignore key aspects of educating students to think independently. The students voice opinions that such teaching may take place in certain classes, such as History or English classes and that, that depends on the teachers concerned. However, they do infer that the principles of "banking" education come in the way of teaching for "critical consciousness" (Freire, 1972).

Parents' Views: Parents on being asked about which curricular subjects they consider to be important for study in secondary school listed the cognitive subjects such as Mathematics, English and the Sciences. They attach little importance to subjects like CSPE.[52] Yet when further questioned on the role of the educational system in ensuring that their sons and daughters are in a position to be "good at thinking for themselves . . . to decide on the pros and cons of the policies and politics of the different politicians and parties" (Interview Question), they acknowledge that the present situation in this respect has certain deficits:

> That is where I think it [the educational system] lets itself down . . . I don't think it deals enough with critical thinking and decisions, and making

[52] See Chapter Five.

> decisions. There are aspects of it that I think has changed over the years that have helped. I think something like Transition Year has probably helped broaden and improved kids' ideas on aspects outside school and helped critical thinking but generally, I think it could improve on critical thinking (Finbarr - parent).
>
> . . . they have it here in the school, what do they call it? [CSPE - Civic, Social and Political Education?]. Yeah. It's fine but it's been taught probably not the best way . . . whether there is enough of it being done in the school, I don't know because I don't follow the programme they have in the school (Philip - Parent).
>
> . . . I have often spoken to my young fellow . . . and I would ask him about the likes of that subject [CSPE] now; we will say politics and what's going on in the country and "Do ye talk about it at school?" or "Do ye discuss anything about it?" and he would say: "Yerra, now and again" is the answer I might get . . . well, to-day [CSPE] is very important . . . [with the] way things are going in the world for them . . . (Larry - parent).

It is a recurring theme in the responses of parents that there is a lack of political education in Irish schools. It appears that students are "not prepared at all" (Margaret - parent) to acquire the necessary proficiencies and literacies to enable them to participate as citizens. There is a missed opportunity for listening to children's voices. It is positive that parents show goodwill and attach importance to political education. It can be argued that the present educational approach seriously inhibits students' preparation for participative democracy. It seems that schools do not value knowledge for "its importance in developing the mind of the learner" (Trant, 2007: 104). However, it is difficult for schools to focus on this form of learning as schools are primarily assessed by students and parents on how well students are prepared for "entry to prestigious third-level courses, rather than on the human development of the student" (Tuohy, 2012: 145).

One parent confused Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) with Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE). This confusion was noted quite frequently

during interviews. This is evidence of a "knowledge gap" in relation to these two subjects; a deficit that schools authorities can play a role in eliminating. Teachers indicated in interviews that it is their experience from observations at Parent - Teacher meetings, that many parents: (A) do not know what these two curricular subjects are really about; and (B) are not really interested in questioning teachers on their children's progress in these subjects. Parents are constructed by teachers as being disinterested. Maurice (parent) when asked specifically to comment on the subject CSPE, replied that: "I wouldn't be sure on that one". The following is an example of how a parent confuses CSPE with SPHE:

> Well, I suppose that is all done with the SPHE, isn't it? I couldn't actually answer that now truthfully for you. The way I am going to answer that is . . . I educated my own children, that, I made them watch the news every night because that was the only way that they would know what was going on. They had to watch the news (Maeve - parent).

SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) does not specifically educate for political literacy but for the social and personal development of the student. This parent confuses CSPE with SPHE. Further examples of confusion and uncertainty follow:

> I don't know what they actually do in the school - CSPE, or whatever that is. I don't understand the full concept of it . . . somebody says it is like "Civics" years ago and you understand what "Civics" was and they might take it a stage further . . . (James - parent).

This is evidence of parents' lack of knowledge regarding the curricular content of, and their students' progress in CSPE. This finding, together with the poor rating accorded to CSPE as a subject on the school curriculum by students, is a reason for concern with regard to the quality of citizenship education in Irish schools.

Students' Views: Students consider CSPE to be an "easy" subject, in which, there appears to be little difficulty obtaining an "A" grade in the Junior Certificate examination. It is their view that the subject CSPE does not afford them a worthwhile

opportunity to study and understand politics and related topics, such as, citizenship, social studies and political literacy in any great depth. They point out that in practice the subject merely deals with non-controversial issues, and serious contentious topics concerning local, national and international matters are not critically interrogated. This in their opinion contributes to their lack of knowledge of politics, politicians, political parties, government policies and democracy. The following are the comments of students in relation to their perception of CSPE as a subject on the secondary school curriculum:

> There was not much about the different political parties, very little to do with Irish politics (Jim - student).

> We took no importance to it really. It was maybe good to get to know the politicians, but there was only four, it wasn't really deep politics. It was general, the President, the Taoiseach [and so on] (Mary - student).

Mary, here speaks of getting "to know" the politicians - "only four" of them. She alludes here to her "four" local Dáil representatives [Members of Parliament]. She asserts that this encounter with parliamentary elected T.D.s is no substitute for "deep politics".[53] Tina is very critical and uncomplimentary of her experience of CSPE:

> . . . I think CSPE is fairly pointless . . . it might be intended to be good but it is not implemented like that, whatsoever . . . I did do it but looking back on it, I wish I didn't, it was a waste of time (Tina - student).

Tina (student) is critical here of the commitment both of the subject teacher and the school authorities for the manner in which the CSPE programme was "implemented", leading to an experience that for her was a complete "waste of time". It needs to be borne in mind that CSPE as a subject is only studied in Irish secondary schools for the first, second and third years - it is not taken as a subject at all in the senior secondary cycle. Both Senan and Susan (students) were questioned on opportunities for interrogation of different political philosophies:

[53] "T. D." is the abbreviation for Teachta Dála (Irish language) which translated means: "Member of Parliament".

> Political philosophies? [laughs] No, no, God no. It taught us to recognise the party leaders' pictures and you know, not hugely beneficial . . . what could have been fitted into a year of decent work was spread out over two or three years (Senan - student).
>
> I liked CSPE; I thought they could do more with the CSPE. I think there should be more in the course that would interest people more. . . . they tell you the political parties, but . . . there is not much investigation into what their policies are. You just have to know [for course completion] the different parties, not about - what they are about. . . . Who would you vote for? (Susan - student).

The students are critical and unaffirming of CSPE as a school subject. There are two aspects here. First, CSPE as a non-cognitive subject does not command the respect of the students in their comparison of it with the cognitive subjects on the curriculum. CSPE is not considered "important" - see Tables 5.3 and 5.4.[54] Second, students are not impressed, when they encounter CSPE in the classroom, in terms of: curricular content; pedagogical approach; and teacher and school commitment. Students do not engage seriously with CSPE in a curricular context. The study indicates that students are not taught with Freire's notion of conscientisation and empowerment (the ability to "read the world" as well as to read the word) in mind. CSPE as a secondary school subject commands a low status in the eyes of all the stakeholders in this study. It can be argued that this portrayal of the current situation in Irish schools produces passive citizens through the de-politicisation of education. Students' encounters with politics are dull, meaningless and apolitical which could negatively affect their attitude to democratic participation.

6. 2. 2 What Makes a Good Citizen?

In order to interrogate education for citizenship for schools, it is appropriate to seek the views of parents and students on what they consider to be a "good citizen". This

[54] See Chapter Five.

exercise will help in ascertaining present-day perceptions with regard to the good citizen and, and contribute to generating recommendations for education reform.

Parents' Views: When parents were asked to reflect on what they considered to be the attributes of a good citizen, they instanced the qualities of being "law-abiding" (James) and showing "honesty and respect" (Maurice). Others responded as follows:

> Someone who is concerned about his fellow citizens, their welfare and about their environment, their community (Finbarr - parent).

> I think that he would have a generosity of spirit towards other people and I think that he wouldn't be selfish, that he would have an awareness and . . . and that he would help his neighbour - that is a very simple way of doing it. That in his life he would do what he had to do well (Margaret - parent).

> A good citizen? Somebody that will get up in the morning, earn their keep, do the best they can in life, help anyone they can (Philip - parent).

The qualities associated with being a "good citizen" in the opinion of the eight parents interviewed show a strong sense of the "responsible citizen". These qualities are summarised as follows: (1) community consciousness, a concern for fellow citizens, an involvement in work for the community and a willingness to espouse charitable causes for and on behalf of the community; (2) the personal attributes of honesty, respectability, selflessness and generosity; (3) the capacity to live a life that is law-abiding; and (4) the capability to earn a living through work (employment) and being "successful". The parents did not refer to a "good citizen" as one who possesses "independence of mind" (MacIntyre, 1987: 16) that enables one to critically interrogate the issues of the day. Therefore, parental expectation of CSPE as a school subject is one that seeks to educate for: support of community; a willingness for volunteering; cultivating a responsible attitude; and developing respectability. There is little concern shown on the part of parents for an education for citizenship that seeks to empower students for critical thinking and analysis. This is a discourse on citizenship that is similar to that expressed in the Report of the Taskforce on Citizenship (See Section 3.2.3)

Students' Views: Students participating in this research were posed a similar question to articulate what they consider to be the hallmarks of a "good citizen". The ability to "care" for others emerged as a quality of good citizenship for these young people:

> . . . that they would look out for others . . . They would be doing things in their area to help the neighbours. I think just being good to people, always, being there for them (Sheila - student).

> I personally think it is all about how you treat others . . . being kind and generous, but to be honest with you, I think it genuinely is on being true to yourself and how you treat everybody else (Tina - student).

Again, similar to the parents, the students clearly valued working for the local community and showing empathy for others as identifiable traits of a "good citizen":

> . . . you see people getting involved in local organisations, like the Tidy Towns . . . I think [that] they are remarkable people . . . you should really "take your hat off" to them. I think [that] they are really great citizens, people who put their own time into just making the place - your street, your road or just your estate - cleaner or nicer, just more respectable to look at (Jim - student).

Just as the parents were keen on the citizenship qualities of showing "honesty and respect" (Maurice - parent), so too were the students interested in "common decency" (Senan - student), in being "honest [and] hard-working" (Susan - student) and "[that] you just have to be a decent person, be a genuine person" (Jim - student). These expressions emphasise the linking of "citizenship" with community and civil society, but not for linking "citizenship" and the state. It can be argued that this approach on its own de-politicises citizenship education and weakens the link to democracy.

However, unlike the parents, the students did point out that for them it was important that a "good citizen" would have the ability to "form your own opinions"

(Joseph - student), to critically think and to be aware of what is "going on in the world" (Susan - student). They stated these views as follows:

> A good understanding of the policies, rules and regulations in the local area [and] in the country (Jim - student).

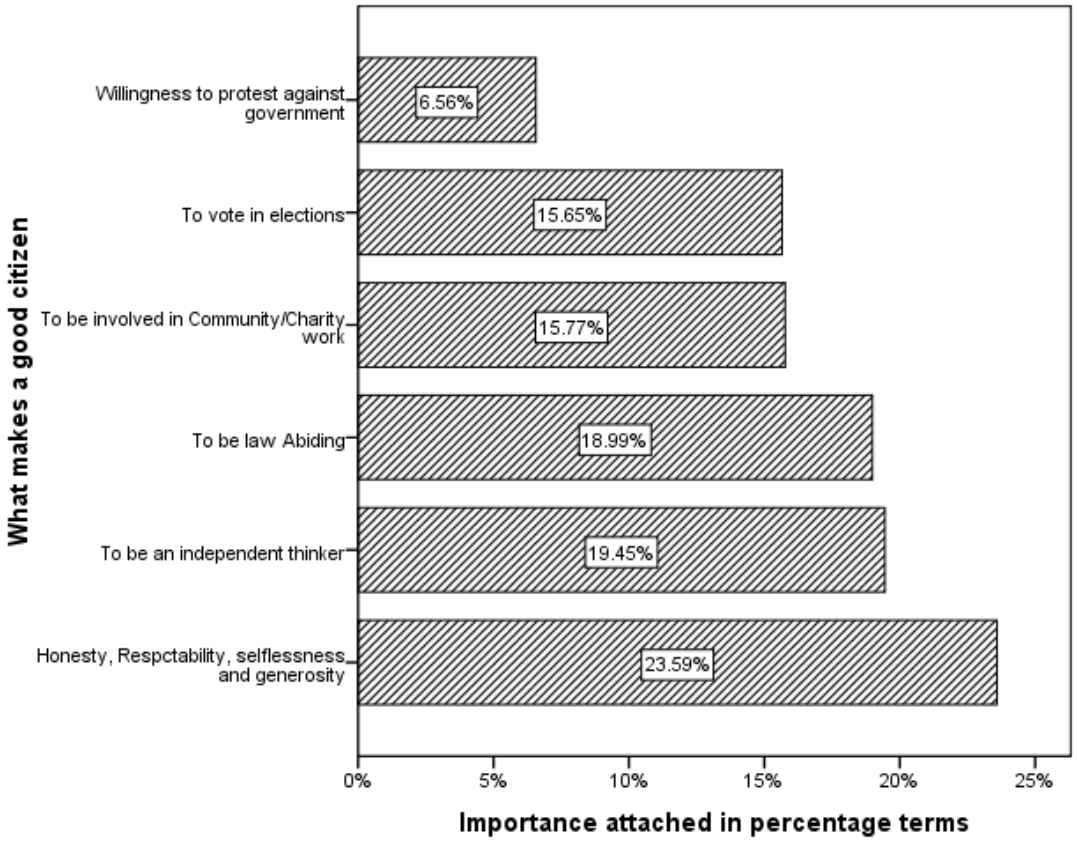
> One is informed about what is going on. They have to have opinions as well, strong opinions because I think everyone should have an opinion about what's going on whether it is agreed by most people or not and people who speak their mind, not just keep quiet, they have to take action (Peter - student).

The fact that students articulated that for them the qualities of good citizenship are: being aware of what is "going on" around them in society; being knowledgeable about the "understanding" of policies; and possessing the capacity to formulate opinions, is noteworthy for a number of reasons. Unlike their parents, who have identified certain qualities of citizenship, such as, community consciousness, honesty and respectability, a law-abiding disposition and a good work ethic, the students in adding to that list, are quite clear in stating that they consider the abilities to be a critical thinker and to be politically literate to be highly desirable qualities of a "good citizen". While they did not use phrases such as "critical thinking" or "political literacy" in their responses to the interview questions, they used figures of speech such as "understanding of policies", "have an opinion", "not just keep quiet" and "have to take action" which indicated their thinking on this matter. This kind of language implies their understanding of the meaning of critical thinking and political literacy. This is a positive sign that there is an awakening to the necessity of such competencies on their part. These findings may be evidence of a cultural shift in how some younger people view their relationship with the state (as a democratic institution).

Differences between parents' and students' views can be explained by examining previous research. Kellaghan (1989) reports on a survey of Irish secondary school students in the 1970s, on their perceptions of "the role of the "good citizen"". The results of his research showed the following "negative side":

students did not think that one should try to influence what happens in government. One in three thought that regular elections were unnecessary and one in five that it was wrong to criticize the government. One in four believed that people who disagree with the government should not be free to meet and protest; one in three thought that women should not have the same rights as men . . . (Kellaghan, 1989: 75).

The responses to the qualitative interviews conducted for this present research do indicate a different perspective on societal issues among youth of present-day Ireland. This contention is further supported by the results of the online survey of first year university students undertaken by this researcher. The survey asked students to list in order of importance what they consider to be the attributes of a good citizen from a supplied list. Figure 4 illustrates these findings.



<u>Figure 4:</u> Importance Attached to Various Citizenship Attributes [Online Survey]

As can be seen the attribute of being an "independent thinker" scored 19.45% in degree of importance among the students. This is significant as it shows a generational shift in thinking. That attribute did not figure at all in the interview responses of parents in this research, nor in Kellaghan's survey results for the 1970s. This also presents evidence that there is not a "deficit" in young people's understanding of citizenship. It is noted that students accord low scoring to the citizenship attributes of: voting in elections; and protesting against the government. The fact that 15.65% of the students surveyed asserted that "To vote in elections" is an attribute of a "good citizen" raises questions with regard to young people's view of voting in elections and their perceived value of representational politics. It may be an indication that this traditional manifestation of citizenship does not matter significantly for young people at this time. The Task Force on Active Citizenship (2007) alludes to the fact that young people are not engaging in sufficient numbers in electoral voting. Young people may view other aspects of expressing their citizenship as more meaningful to them. They are not entitled to vote until the age of 18. A comparison of the study of Kellaghan (1989) with the survey of first year university students together with the qualitative fieldwork of this research reveals evidence of some movement in social thinking with regard to young citizens making their voice heard.

This reflects the findings of international research on youth citizenship indicating that young people are more likely to protest and less likely to vote or participate in representative democracy. The research of Horvath and Paolini (2013) on political participation confirms that young people favour being engaged in alternative forms of political activities. Harris *et al.* (2010) assert that while young people do not "outrightly reject traditional representational politics, they value taking up "more individualised and everyday practices in efforts to shape society" (*Ibid.*: 28). Therefore, there is an onus on school authorities to cater for this type of different engagement by young people as citizens through a pedagogy that embraces the concepts of humanisation and conscientisation (Freire, 1972).

There are signs of some social movement around the idea of citizenship in that present-day students value participation in discourses that exercise their powers of critical thinking. However, there is a clear dissatisfaction expressed by these same

students with how education for citizenship is conducted in secondary schools. Citizenship school programmes are out of touch with how young people construct the meaning of citizenship. All the stakeholders are quite critical of the subject CSPE, in terms of: questionable status; time and space on the school curriculum (one class per week for the first three years of secondary school); and its apparently miniscule effects on the imparting of an education for the preparation of citizens. Therefore, it can be argued that the Irish secondary school is not educating for political literacy and citizenship in a comprehensive, painstaking and robust manner. There are new challenges for contemporary citizenship in the present era of the "opening up of national borders and the increasing globalisation of the economy and of mass communications technologies (Lawy and Biesta, 2006: 36). The responses to the interview question on citizenship show a strong sense of awareness of the "responsibilities" of the local citizen in that aspects such as "community", "caring", "honesty", etc., are uppermost in the minds of young people. However, this research indicates that the ability for rigorous interrogation of politics, policies and societal matters is absent from the skills-set of students graduating from Irish secondary schools. This has repercussions for their participation and engagement as citizens. A student elaborates:

> We learn nothing on politics or anything like that, schools don't really focus on that because they can't, because they have only a certain time and they have to cover what the curriculum is, and that is a load of Irish, English [and so on]. [There is] big competition for *points* (Sheila - student).

This research indicates that education for citizenship in Irish secondary schools occurs in a piecemeal, disorganised manner that is dependent on the uncertainties of home influences, school ethos, teaching quality and exposure to media outlets. Student respondents in this study indicate that they want to be politically engaged, and politically educated. There is an adult assumption, on the part of teachers and parents, that students are not interested in acquiring skills in political literacy.

Therefore, the situation with regard to CSPE in schools can be summed up as follows: (1) All stakeholders respond in a manner that indicates that the status, level of importance and interest with regard to the pedagogy and curricular content of

CSPE is low; (2) There is evidence of an awareness on the part of students of the need and necessity for political education in secondary schools that enables them to acquire the capabilities, capacities and competencies for their democratic, social and political involvement as citizens of their country and, of the world; (3) There is a recognition on the part of the stakeholders that the values of neoliberalism and the marketplace are encroaching on, and thwarting the honest endeavour of educationalists to be true to the objective of educating for this aspect of a holistic education. The assertion of Murphy (2011) is apt in this context, that is, that there are certain aspects of "social life [that] should remain outside market relations, because putting a market value on them destroys the very essence of what they are" (*Ibid*.: 46).

6.3 Humanisation

This section examines the status of affective education (i.e. education for the enhancement of one's well-being)[55] in Irish schools. Education for humanisation as advocated by Paulo Freire is an important element of education for citizenship. The process of humanisation helps human beings in the process of becoming, to expand their humanness through ongoing dialogue to "name the world in action-reflection with other humans" (Lankshear, 1993: 97). This study assesses the quality of education for humanisation, that is, education for the social, personal and emotional development of students in Irish secondary schools. This task is undertaken through an examination of stakeholder responses regarding the standing of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in schools. In the next chapter, the relational experiences of students in the school setting and, the impact of such experiences on educating for citizenship are explored.

6.3.1 Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

SPHE was introduced to Irish secondary schools as a Junior Cycle subject, on a phased basis in 2006. At the present time, all secondary schools are required to teach SPHE as part of the Junior Cycle curriculum. The objectives of the Junior Cycle SPHE programme are:

[55] Well-Being is defined in Chapter Two according to the Allardt model (Section 2.4).

> To enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities, to promote self-esteem and self-confidence, to enable students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making, to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion and to promote physical and, mental and emotional health and well-being.[56]

However, the slow progress in implementing the SPHE programme at Senior Cycle in secondary schools is unsatisfactory for the following three reasons: (1) The content of the Senior Cycle syllabus has only recently been completed; (2) Discussions with the educational partners on how best to introduce Senior Cycle SPHE are still ongoing; and (3) Schools who wish to teach Senior Cycle SPHE may access the syllabus on the website of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. This apparent lack of certainty and urgency with regard to the introduction of the SPHE programme for all Senior Cycle students in all schools is indicative of the diminished status accorded to SPHE as a curricular subject. This situation may be due to a lack of urgency on the part of stakeholders in demanding a holistic education and/or a lack of commitment on the part of policy-makers and school authorities in expediting the widespread introduction of SPHE as a curricular subject in Irish secondary schools.

6.3.2 Student Views of SPHE

The majority of students interviewed in this study expressed negative views about their understanding and assessment of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as a subject on the school curriculum. Seventy-five per cent of them indicated that they view SPHE as a subject of low status. Senan expresses the opinion that SPHE, as he experienced it, is "basically about a free class" and not really of "any benefit". He does not think that:

> SPHE would have been hugely beneficial really . . . it is all about flowery, lovey-dovey stuff . . . "love your friend" - to be honest, forty minutes of being told to love the person next to you . . . if you haven't at that stage already got

[56] Information regarding the SPHE Junior and Senior Cycle syllabi can be accessed on the website of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA); www.ncca.ie

> the concept of treating someone with respect . . . having just thirty minutes [of class time] of being told [that] you should respect someone or you should be friends or find out what your neighbour's favourite colour is, isn't really going to be of any benefit - SPHE was basically a free class (Senan - student).

The schools involved in this study did not teach the subject (SPHE) on a continuous basis from first year to sixth year. Many students encountered the subject on the school curriculum only in their early years of secondary education. Most students state that they had only had experience of SPHE in first or second year or both. Jim (student) thought that the introduction of basic sex education was "grand". Sex education is one section (Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)) of a comprehensive curricular programme of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

> We did that in first and second year. I wasn't a fan of it. Starting off basic sex education . . . was grand. It was taken more as a class off, that's how people thought of it - it wasn't taken seriously at all (Jim - student).

However, the students, while acknowledging that in their experience SPHE as a curricular subject is not "very important", indicate that a subject like SPHE would be of considerable value for them in the final years of secondary school:

> They should bring it in more to fourth and fifth year because I think SPHE would actually be more valuable then . . . when the topics coming up are very present in their [students'] lives (Joseph - student).

> I don't know: is that SPHE very important, to be honest? We only did that in the first couple of years in secondary school. It is important but it is very hard to teach, especially to young fellows, because in our school it was done in first year and second year and I think if it was done in sixth year, it might be easier to talk about, to the students (Peter - student).

These views showing the low levels of importance that students accord to SPHE are also reflected in the results of the online survey (See Chapter Five). Students are

dismissive of the style of teaching used for SPHE. They point out that the study of SPHE in the senior years of secondary school would have more relevance for them due to their increased levels of maturity. It can be argued that the non-availability of SPHE in senior cycle (for all the schools in this research) sends a message with regard to its status as a subject on the school curriculum. These deficits as articulated by students are significant as it can be argued that the objectives of the SPHE programme for the social and personal development of students are not being achieved. The pedagogy as interpreted and experienced by students does not facilitate the actualisation of Freirean philosophy in the classroom.

There are a number of reasons for the non-affirmation of SPHE by students. The reasons offered are similar to the reasons for the low status accorded to CSPE in the school setting (as already discussed). First, SPHE is not a subject that awards *points*, as students are not assessed in that subject through the means of a state examination. This constructs the subject as unimportant as students at second-level schooling are preoccupied with the competition for *points*, obtainable through the academic results achieved in the state examination (Leaving Certificate) of their final year at secondary school. This competitive race for *points* encourages and supports an air of individualism which results in the devaluing of the work of teaching for the well-rounded development of the student (Trant and Ó Donnabháin, 1998; Trant, 2007: Tuohy, 2012).

Second, this research has shown that the educational stakeholders poorly affirm SPHE as a school subject. These actors are guided and directed by pressures and influences that affirm the work of developing "work related skills and competencies" (Tuohy, 2012: 144). In many instances teachers are not interested in, and feel uneasy about, teaching SPHE. For example, Jeff (Principal) recounts that many teachers are not at ease while teaching the SPHE programme. In particular, "in the area of sex education, some teachers find it embarrassing; some teachers don't have the knowledge" (Jeff - Principal). This, it can be argued, is evidence of teachers not being adequately trained in the particular pedagogical competencies required to facilitate the teaching of SPHE in a non-didactic fashion.

Third, neoliberalism and market values direct and urge the school institution to divert its gaze from the intrinsically educational work of the social, personal and emotional empowerment of the student, to a brief that wholly supports the "production" of young people as human capital and economic actors (Lynch *et al.*, 2007). This educational direction is executed through the support of the various school stakeholders including that of parents. These three aspects of school culture work against the very important remit of any educational system which seeks to give consideration "to the ideas of truth and integrity in knowledge" (Seery, 2011: 8).

6.3.3 Teacher Views of SPHE

This section details teachers' perceptions of parental regard for SPHE. The teachers draw from their experiences of interaction with parents at formal parent-teacher meetings. The findings from Chapter Five (Section 5.3) illustrate that certain subjects (of the cognitive curriculum), such as, Mathematics and English dominate in terms of importance and educational worth while others (of the non-cognitive curriculum), such as, CSPE and SPHE are "never mentioned" (Gary - teacher). One teacher shows her impatience with what she views as a typical parental demeanour on parent-teacher meeting day:

> They don't even know what SPHE is. When they [parents] come into a parent/teacher meeting, they don't know the difference between SPHE or CSPE and some of the students don't even know . . . so, they can't explain it to their parents (Anne - teacher).

Another teacher from a different school tells of a parent who appeared uninterested and hastily moved on when she discovered that she was face-to-face with her daughter's SPHE teacher:

> This parent came [to me] . . . "You are down for SPHE: What is SPHE now again? Is there an exam in it?" [The teacher explained that there was not a state examination in that subject]: "No? - Oh sure listen and is she alright in it? That's grand" . . . and as fast as lightening, she was gone! (Tracy - teacher).

Parents, teachers argue are confused about the educative remit of subjects such as SPHE and CSPE; show little interest in students' progress in SPHE; are more interested in hearing about progress in the "examination" subjects; and, lack in understanding of the aspirations and objectives of the SPHE programme.

Kieran (teacher) makes the point that school Principals, "given their time-tabling constrictions" and the necessity of acceding to the demands of parents and societal influences with regard to what constitutes a quality curricular programme, would willingly "get rid of . . . subjects (such as SPHE) that are compulsory to do". He elaborates that this mindset reflects "the same way [of thinking] as parents"; that (school Principals) do "value . . . the personality development and . . . the whole SPHE kind of [teaching]", nevertheless, SPHE as a subject "is not prioritised in the time-table". Anne (teacher) advises that one must not forget that "the Leaving Cert. exam *points* are what parents value". Another teacher, Emer when questioned on the standing of SPHE in the school setting contends that subjects such as CSPE and SPHE:

> are part of our curriculum, as teachers, we have to teach them . . . teachers don't probably treat them as importantly as their Irish or their English [curricular subjects] . . . they are not examined as exam subjects, it is easy to let them fall into the background (Emer - teacher).

She also notes that the glaring and discernible "lack of interest from students that's doing them" does not help the cause of such subjects status-wise. These opinions reflect the views of students in raising the issue of how SPHE is taught.

Teachers also in their responses attest to the fact that unqualified teachers frequently end up teaching subjects such as SPHE and CSPE. Recently, there has been much media focus and concern on the qualifications of Mathematics teachers.[57] A survey conducted by the National Centre for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching and Learning (Ní Ríordáin and Hannigan, 2009) reports that forty-eight per cent of post-primary Mathematics teachers are unqualified to teach that

[57] See: "Half of Maths Teachers Unqualified" by J. Woulfe in Irish Examiner (Feb. 17, 2010)

subject. There appears to be no societal concern on how well qualified are teachers of CSPE and SPHE. Tracy (teacher) picks up on this in making the point that the non-cognitive subjects have not the same status as "the Sciences" and offers the explanation that "I suppose that comes from what we are hearing in the media . . . they [the students] would need to be good at the Sciences [and] the Honours Maths". The stakeholder interviews in this study indicate that many teachers of SPHE, RE and CSPE lack qualifications to teach these subjects. The case can be argued that these subjects matter significantly in the student's attainment of a holistic education, perhaps even more so than the subjects which allow students to attain *points* in the Leaving Certificate examination. It can be argued that the lack of teacher qualifications is a reason for students being critical of the teaching style encountered in the classroom.

Specifically with regard to the qualifications of SPHE teachers, teachers observe the following:

> I have done an awful lot of courses in it. But, still, anyone [any teacher, irrespective of qualification] is stuck in there . . . I wouldn't be asked to teach Maths (Anne - teacher (who is not a Mathematics teacher)).

> . . . as a parent, I would far prefer that . . . when it comes to something like SPHE, the nature and the content of it . . . [that it] must be delivered right. The consequences of not delivering it right are actually very, very, very serious . . . there is more time put into ensuring that certain subjects [i.e. cognitive subjects] are taught by appropriately qualified [teachers] and not in the other direction [i.e. with regard to the non-cognitive subjects]. So, I think, it would be a true statement to make (i.e. that unqualified teachers teach SPHE) . . . (Muireann - teacher).

It can be argued that the practice of assigning unqualified teachers to these curricular areas has serious consequences for the holistic education of students. Teachers also articulate the fact that when teachers are short of the number of teaching hours required by their contractual obligations to the Department of Education and Skills, they are frequently asked to make up the shortfall by taking on the teaching of

subjects such as SPHE, RE and CSPE. In other words these subjects are used as "fillers" on their individual time-tables provided "you are sort of presentable enough to do it" (Tracy - teacher). This is evidence of school authorities meeting subject time-tabling and staff needs rather than the educational needs of students. That is, such practice serves the institutional purpose of managing the school. It can be argued that the professional educators in the school setting acquiesce in according little importance to the holistic education of students.

In order for subjects such as SPHE to meet the learning outcomes set down in the syllabi of those subjects, it is essential that qualified, committed and interested teachers are involved in the teaching of such subjects using the recommended pedagogical methodologies. This research indicates a serious deficit in the availability of suitably qualified teachers.

6.3.4 Parent Views of SPHE

This section seeks to assess parents' views about SPHE as a school subject. Parental insights regarding the following were explored:

- the type of teaching methods employed
- their students' interest in the subject
- their perception of value accorded to this subject in the school setting
- the degree of communication between the school authorities and them regarding SPHE
- their knowledge of curricular content
- their perception of teachers' interest in SPHE

The findings identify a significant deficit in parents' knowledge of the SPHE programme.

Teaching Methods:

All of the parents interviewed had no knowledge of the teaching methods employed in the teaching of SPHE in the schools. The reason for probing of the "teaching methods" is because the teacher manual ("Guidelines for Teachers") sets out clearly the particular teaching methodologies required here. The methodologies advocated are different from the traditional didactic teaching style. In the booklet entitled "Guidelines for Teachers", the following critical elements of teaching methodology are encouraged for teachers of SPHE (Junior Certificate):

> An open and facilitative teaching style and participative and experiential methodologies are essential . . . The methods are focused not solely on the passing on of new information but on the processing of that information . . . The teacher needs to recognise that . . . significant learning takes place between the students themselves as well as between student and teacher (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, undated: 22).[58]

These aspects of teaching methodology resonate with the pedagogy of Freire in seeking to facilitate "problem-posing" and "dialogue" in the classroom. Such a teaching methodology presents challenges for teachers and students who are familiar with the banking concept of education. The same booklet recommends that for the teaching of SPHE to be successful, the parents of students need to be fully briefed, informed and consulted with regard to the crucial aspects of the programme, such as, curricular content, teaching methodologies, assessment of programme, and the overall developmental objectives and educative value of the programme. However, none of the parents involved in this study were reasonably informed with regard to the SPHE educative remit. That their level of knowledge was quite minimal indicates a lack of communication between home and school. However, the low valuation accorded to the subject SPHE by the stakeholders, as demonstrated in this research, also has a bearing on this gap in knowledge.

Students' Interest

[58] See www.sphe.ie

The communication between students and parents with regard to the SPHE programme is limited. Three out of eight parents stated that it was their understanding that their children had an interest in SPHE as a school subject. Other parents made the following observations:

"I would never hear them saying much about it" (Philip);

". . . it varies in how interesting the teacher makes it" (Margaret);

"He found it boring" (Patricia);

"Might be a bit awkward for some kids, I would imagine" (Finbarr).

One parent confused the subject (i.e. SPHE) with CSPE. It is clear that there is not much conversation in the home around this subject. Teachers have already indicated in their responses that they are aware of this situation through their observations at parent-teacher meeting, where parents "move along" quickly when meeting with their student's teacher of SPHE. It would appear that there are more "important" inquiries to be made, for example, concerning students' progress in the *points* scoring curricular subjects.

Status of SPHE in the School Setting

The responses of parents were vague, displaying an air of uncertainty, regarding their perception of the status of SPHE among school personnel. Their responses ranged from an expressed hope that the school authorities are valuing SPHE: "I would hope to think that they would be" (Larry); to one of certainty that SPHE is not a priority in the school: "Not much" (Patricia). A number of parents observed that due to the repercussions of the economic recession currently being experienced by Irish society, that the relevance of SPHE as a school subject might become more valued. This may cause a rethink on the part of stakeholders on the value of a holistic secondary school education:

> I think [that] there is [interest] here [in this school] . . . I think maybe with the situation being as it is, now - everybody is stopping and thinking about proper values . . . (Margaret - parent).

> I think they do, but the core subjects will always have more respect but that one [SPHE] is creeping up as important in to-day's society (Maurice - parent).

The perception of parents, of the standing of SPHE in the school, is one of a subject struggling for affirmation. There are many reasons why this is the case. Parents place a strong emphasis on the "core subjects", causing a diminution in status of the non-cognitive subjects. Margaret (parent) commented that this is due to the "pernicious influences" in society where students have to "scramble" for *points* to enhance their opportunities for acquiring rewarding occupational positions in the workforce. Parents cope with this reality in their day-to-day interaction with school authorities. The values of the marketplace intervene negatively in the actualisation of robust and rigorous citizenship education programmes.

Knowledge of Curricular Content

Parents, in this study stated that they received no communication from the school authorities, specifically in relation to the teaching of SPHE. The information and knowledge of the curricular content of the SPHE programme garnered by parents is varied, disjointed and muddled. The evidence points to the fact that there is no coherent, concerted effort on the part of school authorities to communicate information to the parents either about the pedagogy recommended for the SPHE programme or its curricular content. Traditionally, there is limited parental involvement, in matters pertaining to curricular content of all school subjects, not just for SPHE. This is so, despite the constitutional recognition of the role of parents in their children's education. The research of Hanafin and Lynch, (2002) relating to parents of Irish primary school children shows that parental involvement and participation in the work of the school is minimal. Both researchers attest to the fact that "real [parental] involvement in decisions about matters such as curriculum, discipline and school organisation is withheld" (*Ibid*.: 46). McNamara *et al*. (2002) in an analysis of whole-school evaluations (WSE) of schools in Ireland state that in

making this form of evaluation acceptable to teachers "there is no doubt . . . the concerns of other stakeholders were downplayed (including parents)" (*Ibid*.: 207).

In this research, all parents stated that there is no significant communication between them and school authorities concerning their students' education. There is a parent-teacher meeting organised once a year for each year group in each secondary school involved in this research. This affords parents a "once-a-year" opportunity to meet with teachers. Some parents point out that this is "not enough at all" (Margaret - parent). Parents say that parental membership of the school Board of Management or Parent Council affords other opportunities "of communicating with the school generally" (Finbarr - Parent). Other such opportunities that present themselves are in the area of extra-curricular and periphery activities: the school concert or musical; the Transition Year Fashion Show; "drug [information] night or something" (Maeve - parent); School Quizzes or fund-raising activities; and notes on the students' school journal. Despite the contention of Drudy (2001) that in Ireland, parents are "a significant force and interest group" (*Ibid*.: 370) in education, the level of meaningful interaction between parents and school personnel that deals specifically with educative matters (such as, teaching, pedagogy, curriculum, etc.) is minimal.

Parents rely on students for information regarding curricular programmes. There is no formalised practice of disseminating such information by the authorities of Irish secondary schools. Parents on being asked to indicate their knowledge of curricular content for the SPHE programme respond as follows:

> I don't [know] exactly but to a certain extent; I am only going on what the youngest fellow [my son] now would say to me . . . (Larry).

> I do hear the occasional thing - the boys are not great to talk, but you would hear: "Oh that came up to-day", so I do think some things, maybe the sexual things . . . that they can talk more easily than they can with Mammy and Daddy (Maurice - parent).

These responses indicate a distancing of parents from the school setting leading to poor dissemination of curricular information. The fact that little information is

disseminated by schools in relation to the teaching of SPHE is at odds with the guidelines laid down by the "Social, Personal and Health Education (Senior) Curriculum Framework" which obligate school authorities to work in collaboration with parents in the teaching of this subject. This curriculum framework exhorts school authorities to:

> work in partnership with parents and guardians by engaging them in ongoing consultation and providing them with information in relation to the school's SPHE curriculum and related policies (p. 9)[59]

At present, some parents acquire information through their children, not from the school authorities. The responses of parents demonstrate that this method of information dissemination can be fragmented, vague and disjointed. It is noted that parents appear not to be overly concerned with acquiring information on the pedagogy and curricular content of SPHE.

Level of Teacher Interest

Parents, in interviews convey their perceptions of teacher interest in the subject (SPHE). Three parents stated that their expectation is that teachers are interested in SPHE as an important subject that demands a professional pedagogical approach. The other parents were less convinced:

> I kind of feel for some teachers, it's a kind of "filler-up" of time or something like that. Oh, I think others take it very seriously (Margaret - parent).

> I think it requires a certain skill, communicating skill, of a teacher. I don't think anybody could be able to do it . . . you need to have a specially skilled teacher (Finbarr - parent).

Parents detect a lack of interest in some teachers. They identify the fact (to which teachers already alluded) that the teaching of SPHE can suffer from a lack of

[59] See website for National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) at www.ncca.ie

conviction, eagerness and energy on the part of the teacher due to it being a "filler-up" subject on the teacher's timetable. Importantly, parents pinpoint the requirement for teachers of SPHE to be of a certain disposition in order to effectively teach a subject like SPHE. It is the contention of parents that the teacher's role (particularly for teaching a subject like SPHE) is much more complex than that of facilitating the mere transmission of knowledge. Therefore, characteristics and qualities other than subject knowledge are also highly desirable in the personal make-up of the teacher. Parents articulate the belief, that for the successful teaching of SPHE, a facilitative teaching approach is required together with a supportive classroom climate.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter examined the status of CSPE and SPHE in relation to education for citizenship. The findings detailed the views of students, parents and teachers with regard to the impact of CSPE and SPHE on the preparation of citizens. A comparison was drawn between the stated objectives of the curricula for both subjects, and what the stakeholders assert is happening in the reality of the classroom. The stakeholders were asked to articulate their views on what makes a "good" citizen. This provided an insight into current understandings of stakeholders with regard to the meaning of citizenship. The methodologies used were both quantitative and qualitative.

The findings of Chapter Five showed that CSPE and SPHE compared unfavourably in terms of status with subjects of the cognitive curriculum such as Mathematics, English and the Sciences. The findings of this chapter show that CSPE and SPHE are not significant in terms of making a robust and rigorous contribution to citizenship education. Citizenship education in this study is based on critical pedagogies of humanisation and conscientisation (Freire, 1972). Many societal pressures impair the embodiment of these pedagogies in the daily work of the school. The following chapter will examine how the cultural dimensions of the school *habitus* can contribute to, or hinder the reinforcement of citizenship education.

Chapter 7

Findings: School Culture

7.1 Introduction

Three sets of findings are used to examine the state of education for citizenship in Irish schools. First, Chapter Five details findings that show the value accorded by the educational stakeholders to the different subjects on the school curriculum. Subjects of the non-cognitive curriculum such as CSPE and SPHE are low in value ratings in comparison with subjects of the cognitive curriculum. Second, in Chapter Six, particular attention is given to the subjects CSPE and SPHE. The opinions and insights of the stakeholders are recounted with regard to these two subjects. Third, this chapter examines the effect of school culture on citizenship education.

An education for citizenship that values teaching for conscientisation and humanisation is not realised by curricular content, and pedagogy alone. Teaching for citizenship is also dependent on good quality inter-relational experiences that impact positively on school culture (Cohen, 2006; Noddings, 2005; Freire, 1972, 1998a, 1998b; Kelly, 1995; Jeffers, 2008, 2014). In this context, this study seeks to examine the following factors that impact on school culture: the care ethic of the school; the informal curriculum; the focus on the accumulation of *points*; the level of preparedness for life after secondary school; and the influence of teachers and Principals. These aspects of educating for citizenship are important, as they facilitate the empowerment and democratisation of student involvement, and affirm the work of the teacher.

7.2 The Ethic of Care

Freire (1998b) urges educators to show an "openness to caring for the well-being of . . . students" and "to overcome the false separation between serious teaching and the expression of feeling" (*Ibid*.: 125). That is, teachers should overcome the pragmatism of neo-liberal education which is ant-humanist in character. In this context Freire urges educators not to:

> treat education as something cold, mental, merely technical, and without soul, where feelings, sensibility, desires, and dreams had no place, as if repressed by some kind of reactionary dictatorship (*Ibid.*: 129).

An education centred on the concepts of conscientisation and humanisation that supports a robust education for citizenship is based on the caring and well-being of students (Freire, 1972, 1998b; Noddings, 2005). Kelly (1995) emphasises the importance of relationships among teachers, students and management in the school community. Where these "relationships evince a mutual respect and tolerance", the effects on educating for citizenship are positive (*Ibid.*: 180). The study of Hoskins *et al.* on citizenship education in five European countries shows a strong relationship between social participation in school communities and the acquisition of citizenship knowledge. Where the internal school structures are "based on a strong form of stratification . . . a hierarchical view of society" is promoted (*Ibid.*).

Six of the teacher respondents for this study stated that from their observations of teacher-student relations in their own school, the majority of teachers are not in a position, in terms of time, training, empathy, etc., to either relate to, or to know and understand their students.

Emer (teacher) notes that when difficulties arise for students either within or external to the school, "they [the students] would be very aware of who to go to and who not [to approach]". She estimates that "there is probably only a minority [of teachers] that they [the students] would actually talk to". Tracy (teacher) indicates that there is a practice in some schools of letting the "caring" and "understanding" of students to "others" in the school community. She says that:

> there would also be the attitude: "Well, let the Home Economics or let the Religion [teachers] or let the women [take care of that]" . . . that's there, that would be somebody else's function . . . I just think of a teacher [who says]: "Well, let the "care-bears" look after that . . ." (Tracy - teacher).

Tracy refers here to teachers who consider their role as primarily that of getting "my [exam] results" and "they do get their results". Arguably, this is a very narrow

perspective of the work of the teacher. Solely concentrating on teaching for examination grades neglects the importance of educating for a holistic education. Tracy (teacher) through her contribution above indicates that the feminisation of caring is observable in schools, that is, "let the women" or the "care-bears" take on the caring role.

Lorna (teacher) argues that this apparent non-affirmation of the care- role of the teacher in the school setting results from the culture of the "boom times". She observes that in those "times" of non-stop economic growth, there was a tendency on the part of school authorities to recruit teachers according to the strength of their academic credentials to the neglect of other personal qualities that are arguably required for the work of relating, and being empathic to the needs of students.

Jack (teacher) observes that typically in interviews for recruiting teachers great effort and attention is:

> put into the process [i.e. the interview process] about the subject knowledge and classroom discipline. All the "care" seems to be put into that, but there should be a big, big percentage of the interview based on: Does this person care? Does this person care about the students? If you have a caring knowledgeable staff member, you have gone a long way to helping a huge amount of students . . . there are good teachers, they have good knowledge content and so on, they are good disciplinarians and so on, but: Do they care? (Jack - teacher).

Jack's observation with regard to teacher recruitment resonates with Lynch *et al.* (2007) who assert that the "model citizen" is educated for "economic, political and cultural life in the "public sphere" and not for "a relational life as an interdependent, caring and other-centred human being" (*Ibid.*: 2). The ethic of caring as postulated by Noddings (2005) is an important component of citizenship education. The gendered notion of caring as articulated in the responses of teachers betrays a patriarchal ideology in schools that ignores an education for citizenship that affirms the "understanding of affective relations" for the "underpinning [of] loving, caring and solidarity" (Lynch *et al*., 2007: 9).

The following section explores how affirmation of the school's informal curriculum provides opportunities for supporting and developing an ethic of care within school culture.

7.3 Informal Curriculum

7.3.1 Extra- Curricular Activities

The involvement of students in extra-curricular activities is conducive to their holistic development (Hallinan, 2008). These activities may consist of sport, drama, music, charity and voluntary work, social justice projects, etc., the range of activities is diverse and varied. Engagement in such activities helps students to "develop social skills, establish friendships, learn respect for adults and peers, and engage in co-operative behaviours" (*Ibid*.: 282).

While acknowledging the work of teachers in educating for good grades, Jack (teacher) argues for more attention to be accorded to the education that goes on "outside the classroom". He speaks of educating through involvement in extra-curricular activities:

> I would be quite content that the majority of teachers are doing the "nuts and bolts" of the job very well, in that they have very good content/knowledge, they do plan their lessons carefully and they do get through the curriculum and the vast bulk of students will ultimately get the grades that they deserve on the strength of good teaching, but there is a void that needs to be filled and that's the one outside of the classroom . . . an awful lot of the energies are spent at the curriculum which is fair enough but not enough time is given towards students outside of the classroom (Jack - teacher).

This teacher is concerned that the strong educative influences of the informal curriculum and extra-curricular activities are not duly recognised by education policy makers. Gary (teacher) concurs, as for him the idea of teaching as "just involving simply instruction in the classroom . . . [is] . . . a very limited view of teaching". He

suggests that it is in teachers' own interest to partake in projects external to the classroom as it helps to "build a rapport" with students which in turn facilitates and enriches the work of the classroom for both teacher and student.

These aspects of education matter significantly in education for social and emotional learning (Freire, 1998b). Anne (teacher) insists that the percentage of teachers in any staffroom involved in extra-curricular activities is "very small and getting less". However, Gary (teacher), from a different school, recounts that in his school there exists a positive ethos of extra-curricular involvement and he gives reasons for this enthusiasm:

> The reason why a lot of teachers do involve themselves in these [activities]: they are buying into an ethos in the school, maybe . . . I would say certainly in this school in the last number of years because . . . I would have noticed that this [voluntary input by teachers] would have gone to a higher level . . . in fairness to the management, to the Principal and the Deputy-Principal . . . the staff, the senior staff would have involved themselves in these programmes and would have driven them . . . (Gary - teacher).

This contribution underscores the importance of educational leadership and the relational ethos of the school in ensuring a quality educational experience for students. This highlights the need to focus on certain personal attributes in the personage of the educator such as: personality, leadership ability, initiative, and capacity for voluntary input, quite apart from academic prowess, as being important qualities when recruiting teaching personnel. That is, the disposition of the teacher as being that of "a certain sort of person" (McLaughlin, 2003: 159) is an important consideration to bear in mind when recruiting teaching staff.

Paul (Principal) is quite adamant that:

> in Ireland as a society, in terms of our secondary schools, we have no "meas" [value] at all on extra-curricular activities, none! . . . Because we don't actually resource it, nor do we give any credit to teachers who are willing to be involved in it. . . . fifty per cent of our staff have no engagement in extra-

> curricular activities on a weekly basis . . . they will do their nine to half three. They have no involvement at all (Paul - Principal).

A number of observations can be made here. First, school authorities[60] are aware of how little value some stakeholders attached to extra-curricular activities. (Daniel - Principal). This mind-set encourages school authorities to concentrate on the procurement of examination results. Second, the stakeholders in this research detail many inspiring examples of teachers making a significant worthwhile contribution to the education of students through involvement in the extra-curricular work of the school. This giving of time by such teachers is for the most part of a voluntary nature. Third, it can be argued that such voluntary extra-curricular involvement on the part of teachers results in many beneficial outcomes, such as: a more well-rounded education for students; an enhanced school reputation; and a happier and more amenable student body who are therefore more likely to comply with the teaching and learning demands of the school, thus contributing to a positive school climate for both teachers and students. Fourth, the work of committed teachers involved in meaningful extra-curricular activities, does not get due recognition from school authorities (Principals - Paul, Daniel). Such recognition would acknowledge that extra-curricular activities play an important part in the social and personal education of the student (Cohen, 2006, 2007; Noddings, 2005).

7.3.2 Social Interaction in the School Setting

While students accord a low value to CSPE and SPHE in educating for their social, political and personal development, they are positive about their experiences of the day-to-day social interactions of school life. In this research, students were asked to reflect on the role played by the school in their personal and social development. They responded positively in detailing how the normal routine social interactions with their peers in the school community and, participation in extra-curricular activities were of benefit to their development as well-adjusted, sociable and personable young

[60] In this instance, "school authorities" refer to those authorities in the school setting that seek to set the profile of the school. Such authorities are a combination of: Board of Management; Principal; Deputy Principal; and Teaching Staff.

men and women. Susan (student) recounts how the experience of secondary school helped her change as a person:

> . . . when I came to secondary school . . . I was still kind of quiet and shy. But, then, you start getting used to the people around you, you have no bother speaking in front of people and you start getting to know different personalities - these are going to be the different personalities that are going to be out there in the world (Susan - student).

Susan's acknowledgement of meeting and interacting with "different personalities" in the school community mirrors the "mode of associated living" as experienced in a democracy (Dewey, 1916: 87).

Tina (student) is positive about how the school operates as a social setting. She speaks well of the friendships made while in school. For her, the school seemed to be a happy environment:

> Because of Woodside College, I got extremely confident not only in my own abilities . . . academic-wise but . . . I got some friends out of that school that I will have for ever and I know that every teacher will be there for me and if I went back in the morning . . . I would be able to go in and have a chat . . . (Tina - student).

Likewise, Peter is positive regarding his interactions with all in the school:

> I have made some great friends . . . that I will have for the rest of my life . . . and definitely with the teachers and everything that helps you interact; you are just getting used to talking to people and you would be better at it then when you go out into College. You feel you can talk to the teachers and Principal if you have anything to say to them . . . (Peter - student).

Joseph speaks of the "group dynamics" and "the good mix of people" that he encountered at school:

> Well, it is obviously a social environment, so you learn a lot about group dynamics . . . if you help people, they will help you . . . Also, a school like [St. Patricks], it's a very mixed kind of school in the sense that people come from all different types of backgrounds whether it be [different] religions or [different social class] economically, so you get a good mix of people . . . (Joseph - student).

These student responses indicate the importance of the daily social interactions among students in complementing the citizenship education of the classroom. The relational culture of the school can promote learning for citizenship through the social and personal empowerment of the student.

For these students, informal interaction in the school setting is a valuable and rich educational experience. These "getting and maintaining of friendships is most vital for [the development of] young people during the years they spend in secondary school" (Lahelma, 2002: 379). This is a learning outcome that supports one's ability to participate as a citizen. Education for citizenship cannot be imparted through curricular content alone as the cultural milieu of the school in which students interact and engage with others is conducive to their humanisation and conscientisation. The school is a *habitus* for learning to be a citizen and member of the community.

7.3.3 Student Council

The observations, experiences and participation of students in the school setting have implications for their moulding and preparation for citizenship. Schools can be places where "young people experience democracy in action and where their participation in decision-making is supported" (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2007: 9). Students may experience democracy, and become aware of the practices, rules and ethics of citizenship through participation and involvement in the school's Student Council. There is an expectation that each school facilitates the setting up of a Student Council as directed by the Education Act (Government of Ireland, 1998). The schools in this study did not afford students opportunities for real and democratic involvement in the affairs of the school through the work and deliberations of the Student Council.

Student "involvement" has more to do with peripheral school activities[61] and less to do with deep political participation in structural and organisational aspects of school life.

Under the Education Act (1998), a school board of management is charged with establishing and maintaining:

> procedures for the purposes of informing students in a school of the activities of the school . . . to facilitate the involvement of the students in the operation of the school, having regard to the age and experience of the students, in association with their parents and teachers.[62]

The Act goes on to detail that the involvement of students should be facilitated by school authorities through the establishment of a Student Council. The wording of the Act is clear in asserting a role for the Student Council:

> A Student Council shall promote the interests of the school and the involvement of students in the affairs of the school, in co-operation with the board, parents and teachers.

This remit of a Student Council as stated in the Act has clear limitations in terms of educating for citizenship. The Student Council as presently constituted does not provide the space for political debate through the active involvement of students as citizens. The remit of the Student Council is concerned with the institutional support of the school rather than affording space and time for the democratisation of the student voice.

When questioned about their experiences of the Student Council, students present the following impressions:

[61] Examples of such activities are: fund-raising for charities; providing help for organising various school functions; lobbying for resources such as school lockers; organising sports activities; etc.
[62] Education Act (1998), Part VI, Section 27; See www.education.ie

> Well, in my school, they were allowed to make minor decisions but they weren't really given any power . . . People wouldn't really want to do the Student Council . . . some people have time constraints . . . especially when you get into Leaving Cert., nobody wants to do it because you are studying . . . I know that none of the top guys, like academically [speaking] went for it . . . (Joseph - student).

> I saw it as a kind of popularity contest to get votes and it didn't make much sense to me at the time because the students were bragging about being in it . . . they feel more popular and that's really why it never really interested me . . . I think most people just go in and they don't input . . . I can't see any great changes that the Student Council have made in our school. The school [authorities] . . . don't really take into account what they say then either. (Peter - student).

> I think it's there because it has to be there . . . the way it was done in our school wasn't good actually. I didn't even know there was a Student Council. It was the way that whoever was the class prefect was on the Student Council which I think is ridiculous . . . It actually could be good if it was implemented properly; it could and should be good. (Tina - student)

These responses reflect the perceptions of students with regard to the standing of Student Councils in schools. The students feel powerless and question the motivations of the student participants. There is little communication between the Student Council and the general student body. Students have no sense of being represented by the Student Council or being meaningfully involved in decision-making. This reflects low value being accorded to the student voice in the school.

For some, the activities of the Council are an intrusion into their study time. The potentially strong academic students ("top guys") regard such involvement as a distraction from the task of *points* accumulation. Others regard the Student Council as not having any "power" and therefore unable to make "any difference". If Student Councils have no power, then it is difficult to motivate students to participate. The perception of some students is that the Student Council is "there because it has to be

there". The Department of Education and Skills directs school authorities to organise the setting up of Student Councils. The responses of students indicate that the enthusiasm and support of school leadership, essential for the success of Student Councils as real fora of student democracy is not clearly apparent. It can be argued that school authorities, in not prioritising time and space for real and substantial democratisation of the student voice through the remit of the Student Council, are responding to societal influences. These influences do not value the promotion of dialogue, democracy and participation among students in the school setting.

The findings of this research indicate that students, parents and teachers are primarily interested in examination preparation leading to the desired accumulation of *points*. Keogh and Whyte (2005) detailed the factors that impact negatively on student democracy within the school setting. These included the following perspectives with regard to Student Councils: "little knowledge or awareness" on the part of Boards of Management or school staff; an unsupportive student cohort; and negative "attitudes of staff, and the Principal in particular" (*Ibid.*: 5,6). One student, in this research, (Peter) expresses the view that it is difficult for school authorities to "make changes just because the students want it". It can be argued that this mindset prioritises educating for occupational positions and, economic progress to the detriment of a holistic education. This demonstrates the difficulties associated with advancing student democracy within the school.

7.4 The Focus on Accumulation of *Points*

This research sought the opinions of students with regard to the focus of the Irish secondary school at the present time. The First Year university students surveyed were asked if they would agree that the main focus of secondary schools is on getting students sufficient *points* for entry to third level courses. The responses showed that 54.1% of students "strongly agree", while 32.8% "agree", that is, a total of 87% are in agreement with this assertion. This is confirmation that for students (almost 90%) who have just begun their First Year studies (at third-level), their second-level education was largely focused on the task of *points* accumulation. This finding supports the qualitative responses of the educational stakeholders.

The Principal of Woodside College expresses concern at the inadequacy of the Irish Leaving Certificate Programme in "preparing students to be independent learners". This school Principal states that:

> the Leaving Cert. dominates everything we do . . . [it] is a poor way really to prepare people either for University education or life in general . . . The Leaving Cert. is largely a memory test . . . that six weeks later, kids have forgotten huge chunks of it . . . and in a situation where we learn like that - I don't think we do nearly what we could do for social and personal development [of the students] (Paul - Principal).

The considerable focus by the school on the terminal examination causes other aspects of education to lose out, such as, the social and personal development of the student.

Teachers were asked to comment on the assertion that "the main emphasis of the present secondary education system is on preparing students for third level education". Emer (teacher) responds as follows:

> I have to agree with that . . . but, at the end of the day, also, that's my job; if I have a Leaving Cert. class and they all fail - I am going to have to answer those questions, nobody else, so, from that point of view I have a job, hence I am focused for exams all the time, but, I do think [that] you have time also to try and get the best out of them too in other regards, but, the honest answer: we are very much focused on exams, we are exam-driven (Emer - teacher).

Seven of the eight teachers interviewed agreed that the main emphasis is on "*points* only". It is clear that teachers are judged by their peers and educational stakeholders on how their students perform in examinations. This kind of assessment of teachers has repercussions for the quality of the citizenship education imparted to students. Such assessment practices support the banking concept of education leaving little room for the teacher to be transformative and intellectual.

Jack (teacher) confirms that the educational focus is reductionist as the main objective of a "good" secondary school is to aid and coach students to procure examination *points*. Emer (teacher) explains that this focus presents a dilemma for her: (a) "that's my job", that is what is expected of teachers; and, (b) if the *points* are not achieved among the student cohort, "I am going to have to answer those questions". This is acknowledgement that teachers primarily are judged, in terms of their professionalism, on the examination results of their students. Tracy (teacher) sums up the situation quite succinctly: "Well, it is really", she says, the focus is on *points*; she is quick to state that she herself does not agree with this being so but asks what other way can it be because:

> that's what parents want as well . . . If you ask the parents: "What do they want?" They do want them to be [prepared to gain entry to third level] (Tracy -teacher).

This research does not seek to undermine the importance of education for third level entry. However, it does interrogate whether the current system undermines citizenship education. The findings of this study indicate that there is an over-concentration in Irish secondary schools on acquiring the necessary *points* for third level entry. It can be argued that, that emphasis contributes to the neglect of educating students for citizenship. The work of educating for citizenship both in the formal and informal curricula becomes a peripheral activity. That is, the narrow focus on the terminal examination causes other important educational aspects to be neglected.

Students agree that the main focus of secondary education is on gaining entry to third level. Tina states that "it is all about *points*":

> . . . if you are not going to third level; it is almost like: "[The school authorities] couldn't be bothered with you" . . . [secondary education] is all about getting you into third level, so it is all about *points*, that's all you hear, it's *points*, *points*, *points*, all year long and besides that then, there is nothing else, it is not getting you ready for what happens after you get the

> *points* and getting in, there is nothing there, that's left to yourself (Tina - student).

Mary (student) agrees that the whole "way of being" in secondary school "is really, just to get into college" and "it should be about more [than that]". Joseph (student) states that while "College [third level] was huge on people's minds" [in secondary school], he "wouldn't blame the school" - it is not "an individual school's fault, it is just the system itself that's put in place". These students confirm that the strong emphasis on achieving *points* in secondary schools impacts negatively on educating holistically for their empowerment as citizens.

7.5 Preparation for Future Study?

All students interviewed placed particular emphasis on the lack of preparation for coping as students at third level. They argue that most of the energies of secondary schools are dissipated on aiding students "getting in" to third-level. This emphasis, they contend, impedes their ability to acquire the coping skills they need to progress satisfactorily once they have gained entry to such an academic setting.

Students observe that secondary education centres on a style of learning, different from that of third level. They contend that at secondary school the emphasis is on rote learning and memory work for "regurgitation" (Chomsky, 2000) in state examinations, while at third level there is more independent and self-directed learning and, assessment is more of the "continuous assessment" format. The observations of students resonate with the "correspondence principle" of education whereby schools concentrate on preparing students to have the personal characteristics, and skills suitable for the workplace (Lynch, 1999). That is, the values inculcated in the school correspond closely with those of the workplace. Senan (student) explains what he considers to be a major fault of the secondary school system:

> There is . . . a big push towards *points*, and *points* obviously with a view towards third-level . . . so you are trying to cram a lot . . . [there should be] a lot . . . more opportunity for independent thought, discussion and more current affairs . . . less text-book orientated and more individual response. At

> secondary school, you have your text-book, you read your text-book, you learn your text - you are grand, whereas in College, you have your text-book as a support and you have to go looking for this, that and the other thing in order to be able to have some kind of half-competent argument or understanding, so it is a complete jump [change] from that way [i.e. the way of secondary school]. There is a lot less requirement for independent study and independent thought in secondary school (Senan - student).

Peter (student) articulates the need for more "independence" being given to Leaving Certificate students:

> . . . I still think there should be more kind of independence given to Leaving Certs [senior secondary school students]; like, it's up to them whether they want to do the work [i.e. study] because when you come into College, there is nobody "holding your hand", you are just left to go on your own where[as] sometimes teachers [in secondary schools] can be a little bit too pushy and that makes the change harder then (Peter - student).

Tina (student) refers to the unhelpfulness of the secondary school experience in terms of studying and learning at third level. She describes the "hand-holding" pedagogy of secondary school as "completely different" from that of third level:

> . . . I still cannot figure out: "What am I doing wrong here"? [in the University], because . . . this [experience in third-level] is all kind of other people's studies that you have to go and get yourself . . . it is just not plonked in a book in front of you and I genuinely think they need to do something . . . bring it in [for secondary school] that you have to do research yourself, that it is not just in the book . . . when there is a right answer and there is a wrong answer, you can still develop your own opinion on it and you can still find other people's studies on it. I think even if there was one section that made you do that in every subject [in secondary school], it would at least give you an idea of what College is going to be like. There is literally nothing in place in any subject that I did, that prepared me for College (Tina - student).

The comparison, as described by the students, between the second and third level systems of education provides grounds for reflection. The concerns of students relating to secondary education are twofold: (1) the considerable effort (in terms of *points* accumulation) required to gain admission to third level; and (2) the disconnect between the pedagogies of the secondary school and those of third level institutions. It can be argued that these concerns of students regarding secondary education impact on the attainment of a robust education for citizenship. The student responses point to how the educational system diminishes opportunities for educating for conscientisation and humanisation, key elements of a holistic education (Freire, 1972). Students identify the need for more opportunities for independent learning in secondary schools. The responses of students provide evidence that the Leaving Certificate examination serves the purpose of institutions rather than that of the students.

7.6 Influence of School Personnel on School Culture

This section examines how the roles played by key personnel (school Principals and teachers) affect school culture. School Principals and teachers are in a position through their day-to-day interactions to contribute positively to the cultural life of the school and thus enhance the learning for citizenship experience of students.

7.6.1 The Role of the School Principal

The school Principal is central to setting the "relational tone" of the school environment. Parents, teachers and students in this research are invited to reflect on what they perceive to be important for school leadership in supporting a positive school culture. All stakeholders were asked for their views on how the "good" Principal supports a positive school culture.

Parents associate the attributes of a good Principal with that individual's capacity to cope with a wide range of responsibilities such as: "control"; "discipline"; having "teachers in the right frame of mind"; "dealing with the government"; and "involved

in statistics in the office". The qualities of a good Principal as perceived by parents are indicated as follows:

> . . . [he/she] would lead by example . . . you feel that they are actually interested in all the kids . . . they are out in the corridors, they would know the names . . . I would like to think that he [the Principal] may know his name [my son's name], that he would know his face . . . (Maurice - parent).

> A good Principal creates a positive ethic in the school which finds its way down to the staff and down to students. A good Principal is a motivator of students and teachers and it goes out into the broader community (Finbarr - parent).

Patricia (parent) likes the Principal to be somebody that you "just can pick up the phone to" as it "makes you feel [that] you are on a one-to-one with the school". Parents appreciate the personable, affective manner that the Principal brings to bear on the day-to-day interaction with both themselves and their children. The attributes of the "good" Principal articulated by parents are: approachability; ability "to connect with people"; involvement in teamwork; leading "by example"; showing interest; fostering a good "work ethic"; reaching out to "the broader community"; supervising and motivating teachers in their pedagogical work; and to be "all about the school". Parents appreciate the efforts of Principals in supporting a culture of care in the school setting.

When posed a similar question, the responses of teachers varied from those of parents. Parents focused on the ability of the Principal to connect, to relate, to empathise with, and to reach out to them as parents and to the students. The teachers focused on aspects that enhance their ability to be professional in their work.

Gary (teacher) relates his experiences of having encountered teachers "who are almost disillusioned" because of negative encounters with their Principals. A "good" Principal:

> facilitate[s] teachers being transformative, you need a transformative Principal and somebody who can articulate a vision for the school. I think [that it] is very important that you have an affirming leader . . . If for example a teacher has a particular project that they want to work with or even professional development . . . a Principal who provides opportunities to facilitate that, is hugely important (Gary - teacher).

While Gary (teacher) describes a Principal-role that is based on the fostering of a strong educational vision through professional interaction with teachers, Jack (teacher) focuses on the importance of the Principal's work on setting the "ethos" and "atmosphere" of the school through "leadership" and a sensibility towards "justice":

> The Principal must always show that justice is being done . . . leadership has a huge amount to do with how much staff get involved with students be it in the classroom or in co-curricular activities. It has a massive bearing [on] the school ethos and atmosphere (Jack - teacher).

Kieran (teacher) concurs by stating that the work of the Principal is "all about people's sensibilities" as it shows an awareness of the importance of "positive social relations in the functioning of a good school" in the building of trust throughout the school community.

Anne (teacher) speaks of the school Principal being a "good communicator", a good listener and possessing the ability to "empower" both teachers and students as this makes for a "happier environment and if you are happy you will work better". Muireann (teacher) elaborates on the effect of the Principal's "attitude" towards staff and others in the school setting, and how the Principal's personal disposition can have repercussions extending to the "community" external to the school. She says that even "how they walk down a corridor with a smile on their face" has a positive impact. Emer (teacher) also agrees that for her "their [Principal's] attitude to their staff" is critical in the building of collegiality in the school environment. She asserts that a positive attitude towards staff and students affects the inter-relational experiences of all in the school community.

The teachers emphasise the following key criteria with regard to the role of Principal: relationships and communication with stakeholders; vision for the school; attitude to staff; people management skills; leadership ability; a willingness to hear the voices of all stakeholders; the empowerment of teachers and students; and, the promotion and support of teachers' professional development.

The student responses primarily focused on the ways in which the school Principal helps build a safe, secure, happy and friendly school learning environment. This helps create a relational culture within the school that supports education for citizenship (Noddings, 2005; Freire, 1998b). Students place importance on the following with regard to the work of the Principal: showing an "interest" in, and "respect" for students; supportive of a good "atmosphere" and ethos in the school; being good at interacting and chatting to students; visible and active in the school setting; "friendly and approachable"; maintaining a check on teaching standards; and being the driving "force" of the school. These opinions are reflected in the following contributions:

> It obviously has a "knock-on" effect if he [the Principal] is going to show a genuine interest in the students, it will "knock-on" to teachers and if he commands the respect of the students and the teachers - it all has a "knock-on" effect. . . . [to] create the atmosphere in the school (Tina - student).

Peter, Jim and Sheila (students) are complimentary of their school Principals:

> . . . I mean, he . . . creates a good atmosphere in the school. It makes people feel more comfortable as well. [He is not] stuck in the office all of the time. It is just everyone then feels that they know him and if you have a problem, they feel that they can talk to him . . . (Peter - student).

> . . . I think it's great to have a Principal willing to talk to the students . . . it is great to have the connection with the Principal. . . . If he is in his office, his door would be open unless he had a meeting and most of the time, you would see him walking around the place. He is very active . . . During Sixth Year, he

> would call in fairly often, making sure the Year [Group] is going OK, make sure every student is happy . . . (Jim - student).
>
> . . . She would be watching out for the students as well, she always goes around the corridors at lunch-time and [is] talking to us . . . in Sixth Year, she always comes into our assembly area and be like: "Any problems?", "Are you OK?", "How are you finding it?", "Try and not to stress too much now, it will be OK". "Just do a little bit of work". She always gives us these helpful tips. (Sheila - student).

For the students, the Principal is somebody who: sets the school dynamic; is the "force of the school"; "imposes the school ethos"; is visible and approachable, is "in the yard, every lunch-time"; "chat[s] to all our students"; and sends out "a positive vibe". These students articulate their desire for senior school management to listen to them, and to actively promote an ethic of care in the school setting.

These insights of parents, teachers and students on the role of the school Principal reflect the thinking of Freire (1998b) in advocating that schools should not separate the "teaching of contents from the participation in the student's own process of becoming a subject in the learning of such contents" (*Ibid*.:112). The "process of becoming" means that education for conscientisation and humanisation extends well beyond the classroom to the relationships that encompass school life. A positive school culture causes students to like being in school which in turn results in students gaining "significant social benefits" (Hallinan, 2008: 282).

7.6.2 The Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher in creating a school culture that is supportive of citizenship education is examined under three headings: teacher morale; the teacher as a "transformative intellectual"; and the teacher as "a thoughtful student of education". It can be argued that the morale of teachers affects school culture and ultimately the rigour of the education imparted to students. It is posited in this thesis that the teacher as a "transformative intellectual" is best empowered to teach for citizenship (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1988). The teacher as a "transformative intellectual" rejects the

banking concept of education and, instead through the use of "dialogue" and "problem-posing" in the classroom "makes [students] critical thinkers" (Freire, 1972: 56).

Teacher Morale

Teachers in this study reflect on how their experiences impact on their morale, initiative and motivation. The teachers identified four factors that impact on their professional morale.

First, teachers feel harshly treated by "a lot of pay-cuts and things", and "budget cuts" leading to unwillingness on the part of some teachers to engage in extra-curricular activities. Emer (teacher) bemoans the fact that this is the case:

> . . . I think it is an awful shame . . . people [teachers] aren't prepared to do two minutes longer than previous[ly] . . . I suppose it is coming from society in general (Emer - teacher).

Second, teachers express concern about the "general perception [amongst the public] of teachers out there". Gary (teacher) instanced a recent newspaper article that portrayed teachers in a bad light. He said that such articles were typical of how teachers are treated in the media. He named a journalist who:

> . . . had an outrageous article last week; teachers only working so many hours and teachers out of school in the snow [referring to a period of school closure due to inclement weather conditions] - ridiculous! - a lot of it is sort of polemical stuff . . . Is there this perception of teachers as a cosy arrogant group, who are having to face reality and don't like it? That would trouble me a bit - the outside perception . . . (Gary - teacher).

Lorna (teacher) states that at the present time in Ireland where economic austerity and financial restraint are everyday realities "teachers are getting a few "wallops" [verbal onslaughts] like the public service [employees]". That is, teachers are getting signals

from society that their work is not sufficiently appreciated. Kieran (teacher) asserts that "it is a job that definitely needs affirmation, especially in the modern age".

Third, teachers are concerned about how societal change impacts on their work in the classroom. They note that:

> students have become more difficult to deal with and to handle and as a result no learning takes place . . . society doesn't back up the family unit . . . It would all come under the "value umbrella" . . . I don't know what values the present teenage - fourteen to sixteen year olds are getting from their parents (Anne - teacher).

This teacher identifies what she perceives to be the negative influences of the "modern age" which she asserts result from the following: increasing instances of student misbehaviour; the undermining of the stability of the traditional family as a societal institution; and uncertainty regarding the values transmitted to young people in the home.

Fourth, the school setting itself, its culture and sense of community are critical determinants that impact on the job satisfaction of the teacher. School culture is dependent on key elements such as: leadership and management; interpersonal relations; the disposition of the school Principal; empowerment of teachers; affirmation of teachers; the school as a community; and relations with external stakeholders. Teachers emphasise that the school is not just a "system", the affirmation of all in the school community is essential in ensuring that learning thrives.

> The school is central to that [promotion of high morale]. From management right down to those you work with, because the system is just a system, the school is how the system comes to life (Muireann - teacher).

The factors that impact negatively on teacher morale include: lack of educational resources due to budgetary constraints in tough economic times; cuts in salaries; a negative profile in the media; erosion of values in society and questionable standards

of parenting; the lack of affirmation for the professional work of teaching; and an unsupportive workplace (the school) culture. Low professional morale among teachers detracts from the focus on a holistic education that educates students to be socially and personally empowered in ways of "intervening in the world" (Freire, 1972). .

The Teacher - as a "Transformative Intellectual"

The opinions of school Principals and teachers, with respect to the idea of the teacher being a "transformative intellectual" (Giroux, 1988) are considered here. Giroux (1988) asserts that such a teacher-role prioritises education for humanisation and conscientisation. Prior to the posing of the fieldwork question on "the teacher as a transformative intellectual", the following passage was quoted to each interviewee:

> Transformative intellectuals . . . combine scholarly reflection and practice in the service of educating students to be thoughtful active citizens. . . . [That is, teachers are] viewed as free men and women with a special dedication to the values of the intellect and the enhancement of the critical powers of young people (Giroux, 1988: 125).

The reflections of teachers on the role of the transformative intellectual are as follows:

> I would agree exactly with what he [Giroux] is saying, there should be "more to us" than just the "A" or the "B" [grades] in the Maths or the Irish or whatever. . . . unfortunately, our education system here in Ireland is lending itself to just "the exam", you are under time constraints . . . big numbers in the classroom . . . You have pressure from the school, you have pressure from parents, the students . . . (Emer - teacher).

Emer notes that there is a definite "pressure" being exerted on teachers from many sources. This pressure causes the educational focus to be elsewhere and, makes it difficult for teachers to be transformative intellectuals. The dominant influences that guide the work of teachers are government, societal and business interests. Kenny *et*

al. (2009) claim that Irish education policy "has always been driven by economic imperatives" (*Ibid.*: 56).

Lorna (teacher) asserts that "[teachers] are not "free men and women" because we are all tied to the syllabus." She further indicates that she does not "like what has happened":

> . . . over the years the exam results became very important. . . . and the marking schemes [for each subject in the state examinations] came out so . . . we were correcting first of all to the marking schemes and then we were teaching to the marking schemes. We had . . . courses on . . . [how] we should teach a Maths question: 10 [marks], 20 [marks], 20 [marks] - lay out the marks; tell them [the students] where the marks are. Then it moved on, and now we are teaching to what the inspectors want; so we have . . . more and more paper work for the inspector. The focus becomes: inspector, inspector, inspector; rather than the children in front of us . . . (Lorna - teacher).

The task of complying with the "marking scheme", the "inspector" and "paper work" are examples of the many administrative and bureaucratic duties undertaken by teachers. This practice tends to deprofessionalise and deskill the work of teachers to that of "high-level technicians carrying out dictates and objectives decided by experts far removed from the everyday realities of classroom life" (Giroux, 1988: 121).

Kieran (language teacher) explains that while many teachers are experts in their respective subject areas - they are not in fact "teachers". He believes that he never "trained as a teacher", he was trained as "somebody who had a talent for languages". He studied for his primary degree for three years and then studied for a Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) for one year. He describes it thus: "they tagged a year on to me to do teaching, to do the "DIP" (the Higher Diploma in Education) and then they said: "Now you are a teacher!"". He asserts that this pathway to being a teacher makes it unlikely that one teaches as a transformative intellectual.

Gary, an English teacher is indeed "mindful" of teaching as a transformative intellectual as he goes about his work in the classroom. He cites the following example:

> Eavan Boland . . . is a poet . . . who talks about the impact of violence and explores the role of women in Irish history and the way in which women are marginalised and dispossessed . . . [these are issues] you would like your students to take on board. . . . That's just one observation about English. I think the students should be transformed intellectually, emotionally and in a civic way . . . I would be mindful of that . . . it is a good thing. (Gary - teacher)

This response lends credence to the conclusion, also expressed by other participants in this study, that the English class does in some cases, in some schools, some of the time, provide a forum for interrogation of matters conceptual and substantial, quite apart from the actual English syllabus.

The Principals agree with the understanding of the teacher- role as that of a transformative intellectual. Daniel (Principal) expresses the opinion that while one can "never underestimate the influence a teacher has on the development of a student" and that "giving the information out inside in the classes, is very, very important", but more important is "getting them to think critically". In his experience, it takes "good teachers" who are highly regarded by the students to successfully teach students how to think independently. This Principal highlights two aspects of teachers' work. First, by using the phrase "good teachers", he has intimated that he is referring to teachers who teach as transformative intellectuals. Secondly, he is of the view that such teachers are usually highly regarded by the students. These assertions support the contention that for education for citizenship to have substance and rigour in terms of curricular content and pedagogy, it is more likely to be provided by teachers that are "good", that is, transformative intellectuals who are capable of dialogical interaction with the students (Freire, 1972).

Sorcha (Principal) points out that for teachers to be "transformative", it is first necessary for school Principals to be "transformative", "you are not just keeping the

thing [school] going". She advises that acquiring the capability to be "transformative" and "intellectual" is first preceded by reflection:

> . . . as teachers, we don't reflect . . . we are feeding the stuff into them . . . I think that there is a possibility for . . . being a transformative teacher, if we ourselves . . . got [an] opportunity to reflect on what we are doing, reflect on our work, being reflective practitioners . . . (Sorcha - Principal)

This Principal notes that due to the pressure of "feeding the stuff into them" (similar to the banking concept of education), there is not sufficient time available for teacher reflection which in her opinion is a necessary prerequisite to being a transformative and intellectual teacher. Paul (Principal) is of the opinion that "there is an awful lot of ""super" teachers coming out [of training colleges]" and that many of them are in "transformative" mode but over time that enthusiasm wanes as there is a problem with how teacher "development" and "in-service" is conducted in Ireland. He notes that "there is not really a sense that we are continuing to examine what we do [as teachers]"

Jeff (Principal) observes that while "all teachers have great intentions", they are hampered in their quest for being "transformative" and "intellectual" due to the fact that "a lot of modern teachers . . . are limited by the limits of [their] own education." Three Principals were critical of the lack of appropriate in-service for teachers. They deplore what they consider to be weaknesses in the training of teachers to teach as transformative intellectuals.

Many factors impede teachers from working as transformative intellectuals in Irish schools. First, societal pressures demand that teachers teach primarily for examination success. Second, teacher training courses inadequately prepare teachers to teach as transformative intellectuals. Although continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities do exist, they do not encourage teachers to adopt a critical pedagogical approach. Third, forms of student assessment currently in place are not conducive to teaching for humanisation and conscientisation. This study notes that stakeholders did observe that some teachers of English do avail of opportunities to teach as transformative intellectuals.

Teachers as "Thoughtful Students of Education"

This section discusses findings with regard to opportunities available to teachers for reflection on their work as educators. Teachers involved in this study were asked: "In terms of your own professional learning as an educationalist (apart from in-service for your teaching subject area), have you in the past year, undertaken any study/reading/attendance at lectures, etc., dealing specifically with matters of a pedagogical nature?" Of the eight teachers interviewed, six answered "No" to this question. Therefore, it can be argued that many teachers in this study are not "thoughtful students of education" (Dewey, 1904, cited in Wirth, 1966: 56). This provides an insight into the type of professional development opportunities experienced by teachers. The lack of pedagogical reflection reinforces the image of the teacher in Irish schools as that of a "technician" who merely transmits syllabus content to students enabling them to serve as utilities in the workforce (Drudy and Lynch, 1993). There is "[n]o philosophy . . . taught in our schools, neither is there any sociology, political science, media studies, women's studies, psychology, or social policy" (*Ibid*.: 223). The Irish educational system rewards and recognises teachers who are expert in the banking concept of education. There is little time and space for teachers to explore the latest educational research. This deficit impacts negatively on the ability of teachers to be transformative in the classroom and, it impedes education for citizenship.

In a follow-up question, teachers were asked to elaborate on training/inservice opportunities presented to them within the confines of their own schools for "meaningful interaction" with members of their peer professional teaching group on matters of education/pedagogy. It was stipulated that inservice pertaining to the day-to-day running of the school is excluded from this particular discussion. The majority of the teachers interviewed, indicate that they do not study, reflect on, interrogate or explore matters to do with the sociology, psychology and philosophy of education nor are they *au fait* with the latest educational research developments:

> I suppose, we don't do enough of it as a group [of teachers in the school setting], we do it certainly in our subject areas but that's more about your

> individual [teaching] subject but not enough about how to bring the best out of a student . . . Now, we do have [curricular] subject . . . planning and things like that (Emer - teacher).

All teachers involved in this study intimated that none of their schools put aside time or space for the type of reflection and deliberation that would enable their development as thoughtful students of education. There is ample time for teacher in-service in the particular curricular subject areas, in terms of examination of syllabus content and coaching in teaching methodologies which is a different type of in-service to that being probed in the interview question. What is being examined here is the prevalence of the practice of presenting teachers with opportunities to reflect on and think about their professional work as educators.

Gary (teacher) acknowledges that teachers in Irish schools do not actively engage in the exploration of "what's the new research on teaching, on how students learn, that can really affect my practice as teacher". Jack (teacher) details how the culture in schools can be negative when teachers seek to promote thought-provoking discourses on education. He identifies the coping mechanisms used by teachers for "security": they are authorities in their own classroom; they rely on the "safety" of their own subject knowledge; they are content in their ability to achieve "good results" for their students; and they regard any further interrogation of educational issues as an intrusion. This culture works against the promotion of teamwork and leads to teacher isolation in Irish schools (Lynch and O' Riordan, 1996). The countering of such teacher isolation is "very difficult to achieve because almost everything in the culture of schooling conspires against it" (Trant, 2007: 4). Hargreaves (1994) describes this approach as the "balkanisation" of teaching whereby teachers feel secure in their own classroom with their own teaching subject (*Ibid.*: 18).

Another teacher notes that staff meetings tend to be about the mechanical, logistical day-to-day organisational "things":

> We might "bat the breeze" about a few things, but nothing beyond what is kind of relevant . . . mechanically relevant, like what are we going to do about,

> say, the fact that we have to give Metalwork an extra class in the year. But, in terms of a philosophical basis? - No! (Kieran - teacher).

Muireann (teacher) laments the fact that due to school busyness and time constraints, it is impossible for staff meetings to be conducted with any "sort of freedom". She explains that such meetings tend to have "always an agenda . . . quite a structured agenda" and that the deliberations of these meetings are about "nuts and bolts stuff". Typical staff meetings can degenerate into a forum where staff (teachers):

> just whinge and moan and "give out" and so on . . . which would be counter-productive; it [the meeting] would have to [have an air of] positivity . . . [where] you can say what you are worried about, but in a positive way . . . (Muireann - teacher).

When teachers congregate in a professional setting, many factors inhibit a "rich professional dialogue" (Goodlad, 1984: 186 cited in Fullan, 2007: 136). The organisation and setting of such meetings are often more conducive to "whinging and moaning" rather than "positivity". Similarly, a tightly structured "nuts and bolts" agenda is not conducive to a thoughtful exploration of educational issues. Ironically, Muireann (teacher), referring to the many discussion topics that were part of the interview process for this study, remarked on how little she and her teaching colleagues deliberate on such matters.

For schools to be places of reform, opportunities need to go well beyond the situation where "every now and again, there is a staff meeting [as a] "token thing"" (Gary - teacher). Such practices are no substitutes for genuine, educative discourse. A school Principal comments:

> . . . [as a teacher], you have a choice - whether it's thirty or forty years you are going to be in it. Are you going to teach one year and repeat it thirty times? Or, are you going to teach for thirty years? . . . I think [that] there is a certain amount of . . . [teachers], certainly, who teach for one year; they repeat that [every other year] (Paul - Principal).

Many teachers have little opportunity to reflect on educational philosophies and ideologies throughout their teaching career. This seriously inhibits the professional development of teachers in Ireland. In turn, this culture of teacher professionalisation inhibits learning for citizenship.

7.7 Conclusion

The impact of school culture on citizenship education was examined in this chapter. The following key aspects that help determine the cultural life of the school were examined: ethic of care; informal curriculum; focus on accumulation of *points*; preparation of students for future study; and influence of school personnel. The theorists Freire, Dewey, Giroux, Noddings and Cohen assert that school culture is an important element in citizenship education. This study pays particular attention to this aspect of school life. This research examines how the cultural dimensions of the school setting affect education for humanisation and conscientisation. The following attributes of a school are posited as being important in reinforcing education for citizenship programmes in the classroom: a positive ethic of care; an affirming inter-relational interaction among the key stakeholders; the provision of a proactive support-system which allows teachers to reflect on, and interrogate their role as professionals; and the provision of genuine opportunities for students to democratically participate in decision-making processes.

The findings of this chapter contribute to understanding how the work of the "whole school" (both formal and informal curricula as well as a positive relational culture) contributes to a robust and rigorous education for citizenship. The culture of the school strongly complements the role of curriculum in education for citizenship.

Chapter 8

Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore the present status of education for citizenship in Irish secondary schools. This examination of education for citizenship is based on the perspectives of Freire (1972) on humanisation and conscientisation of students. The education of students to be critical thinkers, and to be socially, personally and emotionally empowered is a necessary prerequisite to their active participation as citizens (*Ibid.*). The following research questions were central to this thesis:

- How do the educational stakeholders value the subjects of both the cognitive and non-cognitive curricula in terms of status?
- What are the perspectives of the stakeholders with regard to two particular subjects: Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) ?
- How do the day-to-day cultural dimensions affecting students and teachers in the school setting impact on citizenship education?

The conclusions are detailed in the following sections.

8.2 Conclusions

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 each focused on one particular research question and, this section brings the conclusions together. It can be concluded on the basis of evidence presented in this thesis that in the Irish educational system: (1) the subjects of the cognitive curriculum (Chapter 5) are accorded more affirmation by the educational stakeholders than are the subjects of the non-cognitive curriculum;[63] (2) CSPE and SPHE (Chapter 6) are accorded a low status among stakeholders; and (3) the cultural dimensions (Chapter 7) of the school setting are not sufficiently prioritised for educating for citizenship. These conclusions impact on the quality and robustness of education for citizenship in Irish secondary schools.

[63] For the purpose of this study, subjects of the cognitive curriculum are examinable by a terminal examination (Leaving Certificate), such as, Mathematics, English, etc., while subjects of the non-cognitive curriculum are not examinable by a terminal examination, such as, CSPE and SPHE.

8.2.1 Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Curricula

This study concludes that schools neglect to strongly affirm subjects of the non-cognitive curriculum. This is due to the influences of the marketplace and beyond which are conveyed to school authorities by parents and students. This research concludes that these influences result in the following:

- The increasing use of private tuition by students
- An increased focus on *points* accumulation
- The non-affirmation of school subjects that arguably help advance the holistic development of the student
- The active promotion of subjects, such as, Mathematics, Science, Information Technology (IT), etc. by neoliberal influences
- The lack of prioritisation of education for citizenship.

Irish school authorities concentrate on successful performance in examination in order to command public confidence (Coolahan, 1981). This prioritisation of instrumentalist learning restrains education for the preparation of students for citizenship.

The strong focus on the attainment of *points* and examination success means that education for personal and social development and, political literacy is not prioritised. Education for humanisation and conscientisation is not significantly affirmed as students are prepared for economic life and not for "a relational life as independent, caring and other-centred human being[s]" (Lynch *et al.*, 2007: 2). Noddings (2005) refers to this approach to education as a "form of reduction [that] is called automation, and it simply does not apply to interpersonal activities" (*Ibid.*: 8). This describes the overarching philosophy that guides the Irish educational system. Such a philosophy educates students for a type of citizenship that is passive and unquestioning. This study argues that in this educational scenario, education for citizenship is inadequate, unaffirmed, and lacks priority.

8.2.2 CSPE and SPHE

This study concludes that the subjects CSPE and SPHE command a low status in Irish secondary schools. These subjects are neither a concern nor priority for many students, parents, teachers and school management.

The non-affirmation of these subjects is due to:

- the low value accorded to their curricular content by many students, parents and teachers
- the importance accorded to the accumulation of *points* for third level entry
- the priority given to the task of providing workers for the economy and marketplace
- the lack of facilities, resources, time and space allocated to citizenship education
- the lack of pedagogical interest in citizenship education among many educators
- the lack of teachers suitably qualified and committed to teaching these subjects in an enlightening and interesting manner

These subjects, germane to educating for the humanisation and conscientisation of students, do not receive due emphasis in the school setting. The curriculum and pedagogy of these subjects lack affirmation due to the high profile of the subjects of the cognitive curriculum. Therefore, the rigour of education for citizenship becomes diluted because the priority of schools is elsewhere.

CSPE does not give "people the ability to interpret social change and to reflect critically on what is happening in their daily lives" (Apple, 1983: 325). Parents voice their concern regarding inadequate communication between school and home concerning the educative remit of CSPE (and SPHE) in educating for citizenship. This study concludes that CSPE fails to educate students to be proficient in the skills and capacities necessary for participation as informed and empowered citizens.

The research findings show that SPHE is poorly affirmed by educational stakeholders and is not significantly prioritised by school authorities. The societal perception appears to be that the objectives of the SPHE curriculum concerning the social, personal and emotional development of students are at variance with those that "explicitly [advocate] for human capital development that would enable students to enter and perform in the labour market" (Kenny *et al*., 2009: 20). However, according to O'Brien (2008) the areas of learning of the Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum: mental health; gender studies; substance abuse; relationships and sexuality education; and physical activity and nutrition, are of considerable value in tutoring and guiding students for enhanced well-being and, citizenship throughout the lifecycle.

It can be posited that SPHE seeks to endow the young mind with a freedom that is "a principal determinant of individual initiative and social effectiveness" (Sen, 1999:18). The subject seeks to nurture the social and personal development of the student. It can be argued that such curricular objectives confer benefits on society in a least two ways: the individual is endowed with the agency to flourish as a human being; and there is a societal reward in that democracy thrives from the meaningful participation of that individual as a citizen. These objectives are important elements in educating for citizenship. The curricular aspirations of SPHE focus on helping students develop as mature, contributing and participative members of democratic society.

8.2.3 Cultural Dimensions of the School

The third conclusion of this research concerns aspects of school culture. School culture is rarely interrogated with regard to its crucial role in educating for democracy and citizenship. A positive school culture, where the experiences of all in the school community are positive, leads to beneficial learning outcomes (Noddings, 2005; Freire, 1972, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). Students' experiences in the school setting, all help shape their views and perspectives on life (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2007). A positive relational school culture impacts on stakeholders by opposing a "culture of individualism, competitiveness and mistrust that is undermining of the effort of imparting a holistic education" (Olssen *et al*., 2004: 270).

This study concludes that the following elements are not sufficiently prioritised in Irish secondary schools: the ethic of caring; the informal curriculum; the lessening of the clamour for *points*; the holistic preparation of students for life after secondary education; and the affirmation of key school personnel. Conclusions on how these elements of school culture impact on citizenship education are addressed here.

Ethic of Care

The ethic of care is not given due recognition in Irish secondary schools. The work of teachers in relating, knowing and understanding their students is not a priority. Examination results matter significantly in how teachers are judged and assessed by the stakeholders. Some teachers (referred to as "care bears" in the school setting) do actively care in a pastoral sense for their students, others do not. Principals and teachers express the view that a narrow perspective on the teacher-role prevails, that is, most teachers teach very adequately for examination success. However, the affirmation of an ethic of care in the school setting is rather haphazard as there is confusion among teachers about their role in this area. The teacher recruiting process interrogates applicants more thoroughly on subject academic knowledge than on their ability to care. Current school structures and priorities work against providing an ethic of care. The lack of priority for caring in schools inhibits education for humanisation, and thus undermines education for citizenship.

Informal Curriculum

Two aspects of the informal curriculum are discussed here: extra-curricular activities; and the Student Council.

(1) Extra-Curricular Activities

There is little priority afforded to extra-curricular activities as a pedagogical approach to educating for citizenship. Due to a limited view of education, not enough time is devoted to the education of students through the informal curriculum. There is a perception among stakeholders that there is little educational value to be gained from

involvement in extra-curricular activities. The number of teachers involved in such activities in most schools is "very small and getting less" (Principal - Paul). The conclusion of this research is that such extra-curricular activities are not appropriately valued as a pedagogical support for educating for citizenship.

(2) The Student Council

Student Councils, as they currently operate in Irish secondary schools, are not fora of democratic participation for students in the affairs of the school. The Student Council should be a forum for the democratisation of students' voices in decision-making in the school setting. The Taskforce on Active Citizenship welcomed the "progress in rollout of Student Councils" and supported their "extension to all second level schools by 2009" (Taskforce on Active Citizenship, 2007: 21). The "welcome" was predicated on the assumption that such Councils would by 2009 have substantive influence in the "decision-making" processes of the school. The interview responses (conducted in 2010 - 2011) of this study show that this is not the case. The remit of Student Councils according to the Education Act (1998) in terms of democratisation of the student voice is in reality rather weak and tame. The school culture is such that Student Councils do not play a significant role in support of education for citizenship.

Focus on *Points* Accumulation

This study concludes that the focus on *points* accumulation is highly prioritised in Irish secondary education. The study shows that almost 50% of first year university students accessed extra tuition while in secondary school. Teachers state that their focus is on *points*, to help students to gain entry to third level. Teachers are keenly aware that this is how their performance as professionals is assessed. This emphasis on the accumulation of *points* detracts from the ideal of imparting a holistic education, necessary for the preparation of citizens.

Pedagogy for Future Study

This study concludes that for students, there is a disconnect between the educational experience of secondary school, and the requirement to engage in self-directed

learning at third level. Students state that in secondary school, the priority is on "getting in" to third level, and not on coping with the particular pedagogical approaches adopted at third level. The ability to be an independent thinker is not cultivated in secondary school due to over-concentration on the banking concept of education. This impacts negatively on students' ability to cope at third-level. The inability to think critically impairs the conscientisation which is necessary in order to actively participate as a citizen.

School Personnel

(1) The Role of School Principal

School Principals set the "tone for the social climate of the school" (Cuddihy, 2012: 205). This study concludes that the affective disposition of the school leader is critical to attaining a school culture that supports education for citizenship. The stakeholders articulated their perceptions of the school Principal's role in attaining this kind of school culture.

Each stakeholder group articulates the following criteria as important for the Principal in supporting a positive school culture:

For students, the Principal:

- nurtures and sustains the school ethos
- is visible and approachable
- speaks and listens to students
- sends out a positive vibe about the school

For parents, the Principal:

- is approachable
- has the ability to connect with people
- fosters teamwork
- sets good example
- displays good work ethic

- supports teachers
- reaches out to the local community
- shows interest in furthering the educational aims of the school

For teachers, the Principal:

- relates and communicates with stakeholders
- shares a vision for the school
- adopts a positive attitude towards staff
- possesses good people management skills
- has leadership ability
- hears the voices of all stakeholders
- empowers teachers and students
- promotes and supports teacher professional development

It can be concluded that quality leadership on the part of the school Principal is central to the attainment of a positive school culture. The disposition of the school Principal should ensure that the various educational stakeholders are empowered and affirmed. This relational aspect of the work of an educational leader is essential to sustaining a school climate that supports educating students for citizenship. However, it is difficult for this aspect of education to gain space and time in a school environment that is known for "treating parents as consumers, students as products and teachers as compliant workers who are expected to "teach to the test" (Humphries, 2012: 7). At the present time, students are subjected to a relentless pressure for the attainment of academic achievement.

(2) The Role of the Teacher:

It can be argued that education for citizenship, quite apart from curricular programmes, requires a committed and affirmed teaching profession. The following are conclusions regarding the teacher-role in educating for citizenship:

(1) Teacher Morale: Teacher morale is low at the present time in Irish schools. Some of the reasons for this are: cuts in educational funding to schools; an unsympathetic

media; societal difficulties impacting negatively on work conditions; and school environments which are unsupportive in terms of management and leadership.

(2) The Transformative Intellectual: This study concludes that in Irish secondary schools, teachers do not teach as transformative intellectuals. This hinders educating for citizenship in a robust and rigorous manner. The affirmation of the teacher-role as that of a transformative intellectual is impeded by:

- the instrumentalist configuration of Irish education
- the pre-occupation with *points* for third level entry
- the nature and priorities of both Irish society and the educational stakeholders.
- a lack of suitable teacher training and appropriate opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD)
- the lack of affirmation for a teacher-role that goes beyond the banking concept of education

Therefore, there is little encouragement or opportunity for the professional growth of teachers as "progressive educators" (Freire, 1998a: 58).

The role of the teacher as a transformative intellectual is in conflict with many of the pertinent attributes of Irish secondary education. These attributes include:

- the competitive nature of schooling in the quest for *points* for third level entry
- the corporate and neoliberal influences as well as those emanating from the apparatus of state that seek to satisfy the country's productive and economic demands
- few opportunities for teachers to reflect on matters pedagogical
- the universalisation of school curricula where curricula are formulated centrally in the Department of Education and Skills. These curricula are then disseminated to all schools for implementation by teachers. Teachers are not therefore afforded a meaningful opportunity to contribute their considerable and valuable input to the formulation and compilation of such curricula

- the lack of opportunity for, or desire by the school institution to gain awareness of the experiences, cultural identities, value-systems and challenges of its students and communities
- the inadequacies of pre-service and in-service opportunities for teachers to reflect on their role as "progressive educators"

The above inhibit the empowerment of teachers as transformative intellectuals. As transformative intellectuals, teachers are called upon to make a significant input to education through the nurturing of their students in the ways of good citizenship and, social and personal well-being. For teachers, it is in their "seriousness as professional people with a competence for political organisation that [their] strength as educators resides" (Freire, 1998b: 65).

(3) Thoughtful Students of Education: This study concludes that teachers rarely participate in the practice of being "thoughtful students of education" (Dewey, 1904 cited in Wirth, 1966:56). Teachers rarely participate in:

- meaningful reflection on matters pertaining to the conceptual and ideological aspects of education (for example, the concepts and ideologies of Freire)
- high quality continuous professional development (CPD)
- in-depth interrogation of advances in educational research in collaboration with their school peer group
- examination of sociological and philosophical thinking pertinent to pedagogy

In this research, teachers voice concerns that many of the meetings and deliberations within the school are to do with technical issues rather than on any substantial review or interrogation of education in a conceptual sense. Examples of technical issues are: time-tabling; student discipline; assessment procedures; curriculum; supervision; etc. All of these are important elements of the organisation of a school. However, teachers argue that they need more opportunities for in-depth analysis of substantive education issues for them to grow as professionals. Many teachers asserted that they had not previously reflected on the educational issues and questions discussed in this study in any other forum (either within or outside the school setting). It can be

concluded that this lacuna impacts negatively on the ability of teachers to teach for citizenship.

8.3 Recommendations

The analysis of the research findings, together with perspectives based on a review of the literature has led to specific conclusions as detailed above. These conclusions help generate ideas and recommendations with regard to citizenship education in Irish secondary schools. The recommendations for defining a robust citizenship education that emerge from this study are as follows:

(A) Empowerment of Students: Schools need to be proactive in the democratisation of the student voice

Those involved in education need to be cognisant of the centrality of the voice of children in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989). Jeffers (2014) argues that this Convention is a "relevant and practical lens through which our thinking about schooling might be re-evaluated and re-energised" (*Ibid.*: 2). It is essential that students be afforded real opportunities to be heard, not only from an entitlement and a rights perspective, but also from an appreciation and acknowledgement of the need to foster their democratic participation and understanding of citizenship. Gilleese and Cosgrove (2012), in referring to the "civic participation" of students in schools observe that despite legislation being in place regarding the rights of young people in Ireland, "in practice, there can be limited opportunities to realise these rights" (*Ibid.*: 237). Failure by schools to afford such opportunities to students "to discover for themselves the nature of democracy and its functioning" (Chomsky, 2000: 28) impacts on young people's early experiences of democratic participation in a key civic institution. Efforts must be made "to see students as individuals . . . [and not just] as deliverers of grades which enhance or diminish the school's reputation" (Rudduck, 1999: 42).

The effective working Student Council helps consolidate the classroom teaching for participation in democracy. Such participation helps students to:

> develop reflective cultural, national, regional and global identifications and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote social justice in communities, nations, and the world (Banks, 2008: 137).

Meaningful representational opportunities for students, through the auspices of Student Councils are not accorded due recognition in the school setting at the present time. This limits opportunities to hear the voices, the representations and opinions of students and, for them to gain practice in the habits and skills of democracy. It is important that schools promote the active democratic involvement of students in the day-to-day school activities. This calls for the immediate implementation of meaningful, effective and working Student Councils.

(B) The Teaching Profession: Teacher-Training Colleges to be proactive in training teachers to be transformative intellectuals.

The professionalisation of the teacher-role needs interrogation. Since the publication of "Investment in Education" (1965), the Irish state, in pursuit of economic advancement, has been strongly interventionist in the field of education (Walshe, 1999). There is a need to re-conceptualise the teacher-role from that of being "a skilled technician" involved in "managerialism and performativity" (Olssen *et al.*, 2004: 270), and administering an instrumentalist learning agenda, to one that is transformative and intellectual. For teachers to be successful as educators of citizens, they need to be "to some extent "philosophers" of their practice" (McLaughlin, 2003: 159). The task of the teacher is "to develop skills of analysis, advocacy, empathy and information discovery which can then be applied when knowledge of the ever-changing problems of the real world is needed" (Crick, 2003:20). In this way the teacher accords due attention to the humanisation and conscientisation of the student.

At the present time teachers struggle to reconcile the demand to teach for results with the need to teach holistically for the humanisation and conscientisation of the student. Teachers need to understand that their role is not only to be proficient in the

methodologies of classroom teaching. The teacher as a transformative intellectual is conversant with the "informing disciplines"[64] which also:

> serve the practice of education by providing languages and interpretative frameworks that can help a teacher reflect, analyse and understand more deeply what it is that they do and why they do it (Seery, 2011: 5).

This calls for a change of the culture within which teachers work (Fullan, 2007). Teachers need to confront ""managerialism", with its often crude focus on demonstrable performance targets" (Garavan, 2012: 14) so that they can "work under conditions that allow them to function as intellectuals and not as technicians or clerks" (Giroux, 1992: 9). The re-conceptualisation of the teacher role as a pedagogue who is both transformative and intellectual, is conducive to erasing many of the morale-sapping experiences as verbalised by the teachers in this research, as well as being essential for imparting a robust education for citizenship.

(C) Curricular Reform: Reform formal and informal curricula so that education for citizenship is affirmed.

Curricular reform in relation to education for citizenship involves taking the following into account. First, the evidence that emerges from this study showing a low status for the non-cognitive subjects among stakeholders is indicative of a shortfall in the holistic education imparted to students. There is an onus on teachers to reclaim secondary education from this situation and to prioritise the holistic education of young people so that they can actively participate in democracy and their well-being is enhanced. Second, the influence of market values on the educational field needs to be curtailed. The overarching language of the commodification of education as competitive and rationalist is alien to the holistic development of young people as citizens. Third, strong leadership at political and governmental levels is required to bring about a re-imagination of education in second level Irish schools to provide the "pedagogical atmosphere" (Deen, 1995 cited in Lang, 1998: 11) needed for citizenship education.

[64] The "informing disciplines" are: "[t]he philosophy of education, along with the sociology, history and psychology of education" (Seery, 2011: 5).

The ability to engage with democracy is predicated on the acquirement of a political literacy that empowers citizens to critically analyse, discuss and interrogate in order to further their own happiness, well-being and life-chances as well as those of their community. This calls for "a dedication to [the] full human growth" (Noddings, 2005: 12) of students. The Irish Department of Education and Skills needs to become seriously proactive in the advocacy for, and provision of a quality citizenship education for all students. This effort needs to go beyond the mere formulation of curricula with aspirational content. For such curricula (education for citizenship) to have real effect, they must be given status, place, time, resources and recognition and, must engage students democratically and meaningfully in the school setting.

Curricular reform may be achieved through:

1. Seeking a revitalisation and re-conceptualisation of curricula and pedagogies
2. Introducing cross-curricular teaching methodologies
3. Supporting schools to actively liaise with civil society and local communities

(1) A re-conceptualisation of the curricular content and pedagogy that supports an education that is not depoliticised but serious in the interrogation of political, social and personal issues:

It is imperative that a programme for citizenship education be implemented for senior cycle in secondary schools. It is recommended that Philosophy as a curricular subject be incorporated into an education for citizenship schools' programme. Since modern Irish society has become increasingly secular, it is important that Irish secondary schools offer an alternative to religious based instruction in order to educate students with regard to values and "their attendant value practices" (Charleton, 2008:194). Charleton contends that in a secular society moral philosophy should be included in the curriculum as it provides "sources for values and principles based on systemised rational thought" (*Ibid.*).

The recently proposed reform of the Junior Cycle curriculum, by the Department of Education and Skills, seeks to address "rote-learning and curriculum overload" (Quinn, 2012b: 130). This reform is welcome in the context of this research as it

indicates an initiative to promote learning for the social and personal empowerment of the student. It is recommended that this reform be supported and implemented by educational authorities.

(2) The imparting of education for citizenship programmes in cross-curricular mode:

With this approach, all teachers of all curricular subjects in the secondary school setting would officially undertake key roles in citizenship education within the teaching of their own subject areas. This pedagogical approach demands a close connectivity between the aims, objectives and aspirations of citizenship education and themes across the entire secondary school curriculum.

The cross-curricular mode of teaching as a means for developing critical thinking, political literacy and, social and personal empowerment in students has many advantages. Through cross-curricular teaching, education for citizenship becomes the concern of all teachers; it becomes a whole-school project. A cross-curricular approach would necessitate the incorporation of curricular material for citizenship education into the syllabus of every cognitive subject on the school curriculum. For example, curricula for subjects such as Physics, Geography, Mathematics, etc., would contain examinable syllabus material that would be pertinent to both citizenship education and the cognitive subject in question. Also, this curricular material on education for citizenship should be assessed by means of the state examination for each particular cognitive subject. Questions relating to citizenship and political literacy, on any examination paper, irrespective of the subject, need formulating in a manner that tests the students' powers of critical thinking, analytical abilities and judgement capacities. Cross-curricular mode teaching, demands that all teachers have the capacity to be both transformative and intellectually aware that education for citizenship is about the careful nurturing of the student in all her capabilities and abilities so as to fully participate in democratic citizenship.

Many research findings support cross-curricular pedagogy. A report on "Cross-Curricular Themes in Secondary education" by the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) states that:

> [t]raditional school subjects are no longer sufficient to fully elaborate the forms of knowledge that a modern society needs. Rigidly constructed subject-based curricula tend to create a gap between education and the emerging needs of society (CIDREE, 2005:4).

Savage (2011) asserts that the adoption of a pedagogy that engages with cross-curricularity opens up a whole new powerful method of teaching and learning. Cohen (1999) argues that teachers can educate very effectively for the social and personal development of their students through the incorporation and integration of such curricular and pedagogical elements within the teaching of their "own" subject area. This embodiment of curricular material, such as, the principles of citizenship and well-being, within the general school curriculum is to be encouraged and can be extremely effective as a pedagogical approach (Charney, 1992).

(3) Extra-curricular initiatives that promote liaison between the school institution and civil society/local community so that students can easily partake in experiential learning through involvement with key groups, individuals, organisations and businesses:

Such experiences encourage an awareness of the issues, causes and concerns of the local community. Putnam (2000) asserts that projects involving school and community "strengthen the civic muscles of participants" if aspects of community service are "woven into the fabric of the school curriculum" (*Ibid.*: 405). The activity that is designed around experiential learning must:

> be more than simply an exercise in social responsibility . . . [it must seek to develop] the skills and attributes associated with political literacy, the experience must involve reflection and deliberation. It must be linked with the teaching of democratic values (Lockyer, 2003: 12).

Experiential learning through school - community interaction enhances opportunities for students to participate in being the authors of their own well-being and ability to be independent thinkers through involvement in "new modes of political action -

neighbourhood assemblies, town meetings, interactive forms of referendum, workplace democracy, even types of national service" (Parry, 2003: 35). The school should actively seek out opportunities to involve itself with local communities. In this way local issues and concerns can be incorporated into the curriculum in a manner that supports learning for citizenship.

(D) Non-Cognitive Curriculum: Revitalise curricular content and pedagogy of CSPE and SPHE

There is a need to teach for citizenship in a manner that goes "beyond textbooks and rote-learning" in order for students to be "independent thinkers and problem-solvers" (Quinn, 2012a: 213). It is timely for Irish society to interrogate the present discourse concerning secondary education which is predominantly guided by "the points "game" based on untouchable exams based on ability to regurgitate, not on testing knowledge" (Larkin *et al*., 2008 cited in Gleeson, 2009: 13).

The curricular content and pedagogy of the non-cognitive curricular subjects, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) need re-evaluation with regard to the role of each curriculum in educating for citizenship. The subjects of the cognitive curriculum, alone, cannot achieve this objective. The curricular content of the cognitive, mainstream subjects has a place in the holistic teaching of a young person, but the pedagogy in place for the teaching of such subjects undermines their capacity to be empowering, liberating and emancipatory. This is due to the fact that the *points* system as presently constructed causes subjects like CSPE and SPHE to be undervalued.

There is an onus on school authorities to explore ways and means of remedying the lack of knowledge of, and regard for CSPE and SPHE, that is so evident among stakeholders. CSPE should be extended to include senior cycle students in secondary school. Print (2007) asserts that the most important influence in engaging young people in democracy after the home and the media is the school curriculum, both formal and informal. A revitalised, rigorous curriculum and pedagogy for CSPE and SPHE that commands respect among stakeholders should be introduced. For this to happen, "new models for a new kind of schooling" are called for, and "the pitfalls of

earlier decades" need to be avoided, when the concentration was on "new curricula utilising old teaching techniques or old content using new structures" (Keefe, 2007: 218).

(E) School Culture: Promote an ethic of care in the school setting.

Rigorous education for citizenship is not achieved through the interrogation of curricular content, alone (Noddings, 1995, 2005). A school culture that is based on an ethic of care strengthens education for citizenship. A caring school community affirms all stakeholders irrespective of class, community or background. This affirmation is seen when the stakeholders are afforded opportunities to have a "voice". In the caring school, teachers are transformational and intellectual and, adopt a pedagogy that is dialogic, communicative, interesting and stimulating. The school's informal curriculum is rooted in fairness, equality and educative value. This culture is firmly grounded in the act of caring as "a way of being in relation, not [as] a set of specific behaviours" (Noddings, 2005: 17). The school through its day-to-day interactions, practice, culture and ethos teaches a lesson far more powerful than any lesson taught within the confines of a classroom.

This study recommends a reappraisal of the pedagogical importance of school culture for citizenship education. Education for citizenship prospers in a school culture that takes seriously the nurturing of the "relation of caring" (Noddings, 2005) and the welcoming of opportunities that actively promote student democratisation (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1988). Accordingly, the relational dimensions that are embedded in the school culture cannot be ignored in citizenship education.

The neglect of the ethic of care in schools has repercussions for society in general as:

> the disregard for affective relations . . . has public effects in the world of work and politics where the expression of care, in terms of relations of solidarity, is increasingly inadmissible as a public value (Lynch *et al*., 2007:10).

This statement concurs with Lang (1998) who argues that the utilitarian objectives of the school institution in producing actors to support the economy as human capital comes in the way of educating students for citizenship and well-being. It should be noted that over-emphasising the academic "processing" of students works to the detriment of the pedagogy for their social and personal development. This is "a quite unsatisfactory state of affairs and . . . the success of even the most utilitarian economic aim will be more likely if this imbalance is redressed" (*Ibid.*: 5).

(F) Educational Policy: Give consideration to government initiatives that support education for citizenship.

This recommendation is achieved by:

- Increased liaison between the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and the Department of Education and Skills
- The researching of a "Crick - type" report on education for citizenship in Irish schools

Government Departments

In 2011, the Irish government appointed the first Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. This study recommends that there be close co-operation between this Department (Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)) and the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The Child and Youth Participation Unit of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs asserts that it is "government policy that children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight".[65] This assertion is based on: legislation of the Education Act, 1998; and Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Education Act, 1998, makes reference to including and involving students in schools with regard to development and planning (see Chapter Seven, section 7.3.3). The UNCRC seeks to ensure that young people have a voice in the design of policies that affect their lives (see Chapter 3, section 3.5). The DCYA is charged with responsibility for putting in place structures, policies and practices so that young people have a voice in organisations (such as schools) that provide services for young

[65] See website of Department of Children and Youth Affairs at www.dcya.gov.ie

people. These are important developments in linking education for citizenship with the wider society.

In order for citizenship education to be effective, it is important that there be close liaison between the DES and DCYA. For teachers to be transformative in their teaching there is a need for them to be guided by the policies of the DCYA with regard to the democratisation of the student voice. The aspirations of the Child and Participation Unit of the DCYA needs to be disseminated among the teaching profession to ensure that there is no equivocation with regard to the responsibility of all in the school setting to engage with students not as citizens of some future time, but as citizens of to-day.

A "Crick-Type" Report

In 1997, the British government set up an "Advisory Group on Citizenship". With regard to citizenship education, the following expected outcomes were included in the terms of reference:

> a statement of the aims and purposes of citizenship education in schools; a broad framework for what good citizenship education in schools might look like, and how it can be successfully delivered - covering opportunities for teaching about citizenship within and outside the formal curriculum and the development of personal and social skills through projects linking schools and the community, volunteering and the involvement of pupils in the development of school rules and policies (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), 1998: 4).

The Advisory Group published their report entitled "Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools (Crick Report)" in 1998. This Report contained detailed proposals for education for citizenship programmes in schools.

It is a recommendation of this study that a similar advisory group be initiated in Ireland to interrogate the key elements of good citizenship education for Irish schools.

The terms of reference should broadly reflect those of the Crick Report while also including the following elements:

- An interrogation of citizenship education from the perspective of the philosophy of humanisation and conscientisation as theorised by Freire
- An approach to citizenship education that has as its overarching principle, the personal, social and political empowerment of the student
- An affirmation of participation in democracy leading to political empowerment and enhanced well-being
- An understanding of the evolving nature of the institution of citizenship (see Chapter Two, Section 2.2)
- The incorporation of various existing works on citizenship and democracy in Ireland, such as, the Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship (2007), and Power to the People? Assessing Democracy in Ireland (Hughes *et al.*, 2007)
- The involvement of key government departments
- A willingness to examine and interrogate various traditional, cultural and neoliberal influences that impact on the imparting of citizenship education in the school setting
- An interrogation of citizenship education from the perspective of a pan-European approach (CIDREE, 2005; Eurydice Report, 2012)

8.4 Conclusion

The research concludes that Irish secondary schools do not educate in a robust and rigorous manner for citizenship. Education for citizenship is not rated significantly by the educational stakeholders. This is largely true because the values of the market and neo-liberalism have considerable impact on education. However, citizenship as an educational discipline was never treated with due diligence in Irish second-level schools (Gleeson, 2008). It has been observed that "from the beginning the Department of Education's approach to Civics was characterised by ambivalence" (*Ibid.*: 75). Garvin (2004) has remarked that "even in 2003, the Republic of Ireland has only a rather underdeveloped civic and political education programme for schools,

unlike most advanced democracies" (*Ibid.*: 7 cited in Gleeson, 2008: 90). The current second-level system is primarily focused on the production of graduates in the mould of "rational economic actors" (Lynch *et al*., 2007: 5).

The education system provides a scaffolding that supports the instrumentality and rationality of the marketplace. This strong emphasis on education for "training" has impeded education for citizenship resulting in low priority being accorded to educating students to: develop personally and socially; be critically literate; and improve their knowledge of ethics and values to cope with obstacles to their flourishing as human beings. A school culture that emphasises competition for *points*, is not supportive of learning for citizenship. This has consequences for democracy, social cohesion and, the health, happiness and life-chances of citizens.

This research advocates a re-conceptualisation of the work of the Irish secondary school in order to prioritise the self-actualisation of the young person. There needs to be a re-focusing on the personal, social, emotional, ethical, political and civic aspects of education for life. This calls for a different kind of culture where the day-to-day experiences of school life prioritise: developing leaders across the school community; supporting the professional development of teachers; encouraging a strong culture of interaction among school stakeholders; emphasising the enterprise of education as a moral one with far-reaching repercussions for society; and cultivating in students the insight and critical thinking that supports the knowledge society (Fullan, 2003a).

This kind of school would display a pedagogical atmosphere where education for citizenship would be embedded across the curriculum (both formal and informal) and, in the interactions between students and teachers. Fundamental to this revitalisation of the work of the school would be a willingness on the part of teachers and educators to go beyond the aspirational rhetoric often contained in syllabi and schools' promotional literature and, to adopt a solid pedagogical approach to education for citizenship in all aspects of school life.

A single institution, such as, the school cannot educate for citizenship on its own. It takes more than schools and curricula to educate for citizenship as neo-liberalism

pervades all institutions and, is all embracing. The challenge of resisting neo-liberalism and, of educating for critically aware, ethically grounded citizens, therefore, applies to all institutions - political, educational, religious and social. This thesis has considered the possibility of rethinking the role of one particular institution in the moulding of citizens - the school. It has challenged policy-makers to facilitate a re-conceptualisation of education for citizenship that enables all citizens to reach their full potential, beyond the instrumentalist logic of neo-liberalism.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Field Work: Interview with Students: Schedule of Questions:

1. The importance of secondary education in helping students to think for themselves, to be politically literate.
2. The role secondary education plays in the personal and social development of the student.
3. School subjects: rate their importance or non-importance.
4. School subjects: students' perception of how are they rated by school authorities.
5. Students' views on the qualifications of teachers to teach time-tabled subjects.
6. The amount of attention devoted to the following in the school setting: Critical Thinking; Personal and Social Development; Building Self-Esteem; Understanding Politics and Citizenship.
7. Education for coping with present day concerns of Irish society: the economy; the recession; unemployment; the banks; the government; politics; politicians; the churches; and leadership.
8. Reflection on the attributes of a good citizen.
9. Respond to the assertion that secondary education concentrates on preparing for third level and/or the world of work.
10. Suggest one reform for Irish secondary education.
11. Exploration of how well did secondary education help draw out and foster unique talents/abilities of students.
12. The role of the school Principal in the school.
13. Involvement of students in decision-making in the school. Role of Student Council.
14. Attendance at private tuition outside the school.

Appendix 2: Field Work: Interview with Parents: Schedule of Questions:

1. The qualities of a good secondary school.
2. Expectations of parents regarding their son's/daughter's education in terms of academic and holistic education.
3. Satisfaction with secondary education.
4. The importance of secondary education in helping students think for themselves, to be politically literate.
5. The importance of secondary education in the personal and social development of students.
6. Rating of school subjects.
7. Perceptions of rating of subjects by school authorities.
8. Qualifications of teachers to teach all the subjects on the time-table.
9. The amount of attention devoted to the following in the school setting: Critical Thinking; Personal and Social Development; Building Self-Esteem; Understanding Politics and Citizenship.
10. Education for coping with present day concerns of Irish society: the economy; the recession; unemployment; the banks; the government; politics; politicians; the churches; and leadership.
11. Reflection on the attributes of a good citizen.
12. Respond to the assertion that secondary education concentrates on preparing for third level and/or the world of work.
13. Suggest one reform for Irish secondary education.
14. Exploration of how well did secondary education help draw out and foster unique talents/abilities of students.
15. The role of the school Principal in the school.
16. Role of the student in decision-making in the school setting.
17. Frequency and quality of communication between parents and school authorities.
18. Consideration of the subjects Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).
19. The impact of influences outside the school on the education imparted to students.

20. Attendance at private, paid tuition outside the school.
21. Experiences of positive aspects of secondary education.
22. Experiences of possible defects in the secondary education system.

Appendix 3: Field Work: Interview with Teachers: Schedule of Questions:

1. Impressions of education system in teaching students for political literacy and, social and personal development.
2. Views of parents' perceptions of what subjects are important and not important.
3. Impressions of what subjects are regarded as important and not important by school authorities.
4. Degree of qualification of teachers to teach all subjects on school curriculum.
5. Level of attention devoted to educating for: critical literacy; personal and social development; building self-esteem; and understanding politics and citizenship.
6. Success of education system in equipping students to cope with contemporary societal issues and concerns.
7. Opinion on attributes of a good citizen; role of school in inculcating such attributes.
8. Degree of emphasis of secondary education on third level entry and/or the world of work.
9. Suggestions for reform of the secondary education system.
10. Willingness/ability of teachers to care for students in a pastoral sense.
11. Reflections on role of school Principal.
12. Level of democratic involvement of students in the affairs of the school.
13. Status of Student Council.
14. Degree of importance of the following in teacher training: holistic development of the student; relationships with school stakeholders; equality of educational opportunity; awareness of students' background and community; and education for citizenship.
15. Reflections on teacher role as that of "transformative intellectual".
16. Emphasis on *points* and examinations.
17. Assessment of teachers by the public at large.
18. Views on teacher morale.

19. Frequency and opportunity for professional development outside the school.
20. Frequency and opportunity for professional development within the school.
21. Opinion on deficits (if any) in the Irish secondary school system.

Appendix 4: Field Work: Interview with School Principals: Schedule of Questions:

1. Attention devoted in secondary schools to preparing students for their social and personal development and, to think critically.
2. Status of CSPE and SPHE in school setting.
3. Views on parental considerations when selecting a secondary school for their children
4. The emphasis of secondary schooling on entry to third level and the world of work.
5. Consideration of teacher as "transformative intellectual".
6. Degree of importance of the following in teacher training: holistic development of the student; relationships with school stakeholders; equality of educational opportunity; awareness of students' background and community; and education for citizenship.
7. Willingness/ability of teachers to care for students in a pastoral sense.
8. Reflections on how well secondary schools prepare students to cope with difficulties in adult life.
9. Suggestions for reform of secondary school system.
10. Role of student in decision-making in the school setting.
11. Views on how teachers are assessed by the public.
12. Impact of concentration on examination success.
13. Views on private paid tuition outside the school.
14. Consideration of deficits (if any) in Irish education system.

Appendix 5: Online Questionnaire

Section I
This set of questions asks you to provide some background information on yourself and on your school

Q1 Please provide the following information:

(a) Age:
(b) Gender: Male:[ ] Female[ ]
(c) Year of Leaving Certificate Examination: ----------
(d) Number of points achieved: ----------
(e) Course of study now being undertaken at UCC: ----------
(f) Mother's Occupation: ----------
(g) Father's Occupation: ----------
(h) Was your secondary school co-educational (i.e. had boys and girls)? Y [ ] N [ ]
(i) Was your Secondary School fee-paying? Y [ ] N [ ]
(j) Please indicate the type of Secondary School that you attended:

Vocational: [ ]
Community School: [ ]
Community College: [ ]
School managed by Brothers, Nuns, Priests: [ ]
Other (Please indicate): ----------

(k) Did you pay for grinds outside of school? Y [ ] N [ ]
(l) Are you in receipt of a Third Level grant from the local Corporation or Council? Y [ ] N [ ]
(m) Please indicate the type of Secondary School that you attended:

Vocational: [ ]
Community School: [ ]
Community College: [ ]
School managed by Brothers, Nuns, Priests: [ ]
Other (Please indicate): ----------

Q2 Please rate in order of importance from the following list what you consider to be important aspects of a "good" secondary school (Number 1 being the most important, Number 2 being the next most important and so on):

(a) Committed Teachers: [ ]
(b) Good Exam Results [ ]
(c) Caring Ethos/Support and Counselling [ ]
(d) Extra-curricular Activities [ ]
(e) Good relationships between teachers and students [ ]
(f) Friendships formed with fellow-students [ ]

Section II

This section asks you for your opinion on Teaching and Learning in your secondary school

Q3 (A) How important do you regard the following subjects: (Please tick a box for each subject)

	Very Important	Important	Neither Important Nor Unimportant	Of Minor Importance	Not Important
Mathematics	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
English	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Science	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Religious Education (RE)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
French/German	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Business Studies	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Woodwork	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Physical Education (PE)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Irish	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Geography	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Art	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Metalwork	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Home Economics	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Q3 (B) Please rate the following reasons for making a subject important for study in secondary school: (Number 1 being the most important, Number 2 being the next most important and so on)

(a) Good for points in Leaving Cert. Exam [ ]
(b) Essential for my future studies [ ]
(c) Good teacher for the subject [ ]
(d) Good for my personal and social development [ ]
(e) Helpful for getting a job [ ]
(f) I have a keen interest in it [ ]
(g) Helps me to be an independent thinker [ ]

Q4 (a) How important did your school (Teachers, Principal, etc.) regard the following subjects?

	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Of Minor Importance	Not Important
Mathematics	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
English	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Science	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Religious Education (RE)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
French/ German	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Business Studies	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Woodwork	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Physical Education (PE)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Irish	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Geography	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Art	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Metalwork	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Home Economics	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Q4 (b) Would you agree that the main concentration of secondary schools is on getting students sufficient points to gain entry to Third Level courses?

Strongly Agree	[ ]
Agree	[ ]
Neither Agree nor Disagree	[ ]
Disagree	[ ]
Strongly Disagree	[ ]

Q5 (A) Do you think that your teachers were:

	All	Very Many	Many	Some	None
(a) Uncommitted/Poor	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(b) Caring/Respectful of students	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(c) Expert in the knowledge of their subject	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(d) Involved in extra-curricular activities	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(e) Well prepared/Organised for class	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

(f) Approachable/Related well to students	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(g) Interested in me doing well	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(h) Notable for valuing my opinion	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(i) Understanding of my background and community	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(j) Passionate about their subject(s)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Q5 (B) Are you satisfied with how the problem of the underperforming teacher ("poor", "bad" teacher) is dealt with by the school?	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	Don't Know [ ]

Section III

The following questions relate to the wider influence of your secondary experience and links with home and community

Q6 My secondary education helped me to:

	Yes	No
(a) Think for myself:	[ ]	[ ]
(b) Develop socially and personally:	[ ]	[ ]
(c) Understand politics and the world we live in:	[ ]	[ ]

Q7 Did your school have a Student Council? Yes [ ] No [ ]

With regard to the Student Council in your school:

	Yes	No
(a) Did it have a real "say" in the work of the school?	[ ]	[ ]
(b) Was it representative of the student population?	[ ]	[ ]
(c) Was it respected by the students?	[ ]	[ ]
(d) Was its work respected and supported by teachers?	[ ]	[ ]

(e) Were you ever a member? [ ] [ ]

Q8 (A) During the years of my secondary education, the school engaged with my parents/guardians in a manner that was: (Please tick the appropriate box)

Very well/friendly/positive [ ]

Poorly/unfriendly/negative [ ]

Q8 (B) Were formal Parent/Teacher meetings organised by the school? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Q8 (C) If your answer is "Yes", were these meetings satisfactory and worthwhile in terms of good communication with your parents/guardians? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please comment on your answer to Q8 (C): ----------

Q8 (D) Do you think that students should be present at Parent/Teacher meetings? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Q9 Please rate the influence of the following on your experience of secondary school (Number 1 being the most important, Number 2 being the next most important and so on):

Sports/Athletics/Games [ ]

Co-educational [ ]

Transition Year [ ]

School reputation [ ]

Teachers that cared [ ]

Friendships [ ]

Student Council [ ]

Achievements were recognised [ ]

Religious ethos [ ]

Support and counselling [ ]

Home - School communication [ ]

Extra-curricular activities [ ]

Q10 If you were asked to suggest one positive change for Irish secondary education. What would it be? ----------

Q11 Do you consider yourself to be well-educated on leaving secondary school? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain your answer: ----------

Q12 List in order of importance what you consider to be the attributes of a good citizen (Number 1 being the most important, Number 2 being the next most important and so on):

(a) to be involved in community/charity work [ ]
(b) to be an independent thinker/form your own opinions [ ]
(c) To be law-abiding [ ]
(d) to vote in elections [ ]
(e) To be a good worker [ ]
(f) to protest against the government [ ]
(g) To possess the personal attributes of honesty, respectability, selflessness and generosity [ ]

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