

# **Teacher Preparation in Ireland**

History, Policy and Future Directions

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# Teacher Preparation in Ireland

History, Policy and Future Directions

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

We dedicate this book

to

Emeritus Professor Áine Hyland

Emeritus Professor John Coolahan

For their Outstanding Contribution to the History of Teacher  
Education in Ireland

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## 1

## Introduction

This opening chapter is an introduction to what is an eight-chapter work on teacher preparation in independent Ireland, the emphasis being on historical developments, recent policy and current directions. Overall, what is presented is a synoptic exposition based on a wide range of secondary sources. Regarding these sources, the most prominent researchers and writers in the field over the last 40 years have been Dr John Coolahan, Emeritus Professor at the National University of Ireland Maynooth, and Dr Áine Hyland, Emeritus Professor at University College Cork, and their corpus of work in the field has been widely drawn upon. If it were not for this work, it is difficult to imagine how this book could even have been conceptualised, not to mention completed.

The chapter is in four parts. The first part provides a general overview of teacher preparation in the country from 1922 to the present, drawing in particular on an account written by Coolahan for the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (ScoTENS), which was formed in 2002, which emerged from discussions between teacher educationists, the Department of Education and Science in the Republic of Ireland, and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland, and which aimed at promoting North-South co-operation in teacher education on the island of Ireland as part

of the ongoing peace process in Northern Ireland.<sup>1</sup> The second part of the chapter identifies the stimulus for engaging in the project on which this book is based. The third part of the chapter outlines the contribution of the book to the body of literature on the history of education, and particularly on the history of teacher preparation. Finally, the research approach upon which the project underpinning the book was based is detailed. Here also the structure of the book is outlined.

## An Overview of the History of Teacher Preparation in Ireland

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Prior to the establishment of the independent Irish State in 1922, initial preparation for teaching in primary schools was provided primarily in single-sex, denominational colleges. A two-year ‘training’ course operated to prepare teachers for well-defined roles.<sup>2</sup> The colleges were overseen by the Commissioners of National Education, who also oversaw the work of the primary schools.<sup>3</sup> To qualify to teach in a secondary school as a recognised teacher one first of all had to obtain a university degree and then continue one’s studies part-time for a Higher Diploma in Education (H.Dip. in Ed.) course offered by the education departments of the universities. The H.Dip. in Ed. became an essential qualification for recognition as a registered teacher in secondary schools in receipt of State funding following the establishment of the Secondary Teachers Registration Council in 1918. It also became essential for eligibility for receipt of an incremental salary from the new Irish State from 1924.<sup>4</sup>

In newly independent Ireland the promotion of the Irish language took centre stage in education policy as the State saw its revival and the promotion of Gaelic culture as essential for nation

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<sup>1</sup>See A. Burke (Ed.), *Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland: Retrospect and Prospect* (Armagh: The Centre for Cross Border Studies, 2004).

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4. See also T. J. O’Connell, *100 Years of Progress: The Story of the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation 1868-1968* (Dublin: The INTO, 1968).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* See also D. H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

building. The great majority of children throughout the land were, until now, receiving their formal education through the medium of English, their mother tongue. This situation reflected the fact that it had been a long time since Irish had been the dominant language in the country and, consequently, the dominant language of education and culture.

In accord with the new policy, it was compulsory to study the Irish language in school prior to being considered for entry to the teacher training colleges.<sup>5</sup> Also, in 1926, the Irish government established a series of 'preparatory colleges'.<sup>6</sup> These were boarding secondary schools at which selected children from Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) districts, and others with high standards in spoken and written Irish, received free secondary school education.<sup>7</sup> They then progressed to the teacher training colleges where they joined a number of those selected separately after graduating from 'regular' secondary schools, again with a high standard in the Irish language.<sup>8</sup>

The course of studies that evolved in the teacher training colleges in the early decades after Ireland gained national independence had three components: a general education in academic subjects, an optional course and 'education studies'. The latter consisted of 'principles of teaching' and 'practical teaching' organised in block-release periods of six weeks each year for every student. This took place in primary schools located close to the colleges.<sup>9</sup> Most lectures and examinations were conducted through the medium of the Irish language and senior inspectors from the Department of Education monitored standards of teaching practice.<sup>10</sup>

In 1974, following a request from the government of the day, the universities agreed to award Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) degrees to primary school teachers after a minimum of three

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<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.* See also T. O'Donoghue, *Bilingual Education in Pre-independent Irish-speaking Ireland, 1800–1922* (Ceredigion, Wales: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.* See also V. Jones, *A Gaelic Experiment: The Preparatory System 1926 and Coláiste Moibhí* (Dublin: The Woodfield Press, 2006).

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.* See also N. C. Johnson, 'Nation-building, language and education: The geography of teacher recruitment in Ireland, 1925–55', *Political Geography*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1992, pp. 170–189.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

years of study (four years for an honours degree in the case of the colleges associated with Trinity College Dublin).<sup>11</sup> 'Education' as a distinct field of study was the core subject of the degree. Also, a much less regimented approach to pedagogy and to student life both within and outside the colleges than had previously been adopted, began to be issued.

Regarding the preparation of secondary school teachers, a State commission on higher education argued in 1967 that the nation's university departments of education should be expanded and developed.<sup>12</sup> Soon, each university appointed new professors of education and additional full-time lecturers who specialised in various fields of scholarship. Also, facilities were improved and the H.Dip. in Ed. was restructured as a one-year full-time course, with more emphasis than previously being placed on psychology and sociology of education and on contemporary approaches to pedagogy being used internationally.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, from 1970, M.Ed. courses were introduced, while existing M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in 'education' were expanded. There was also an expansion of courses leading to the award of specialist postgraduate diplomas in education in such areas as guidance and counselling, remedial education, computers in education and education management.<sup>14</sup>

The evolution in the 1970s of the State-established Thomond College of Education in Limerick for the preparation of specialist second-level teachers, initially in physical education, and later in woodwork, metalwork and rural science, provided new degree-level courses in these curriculum areas.<sup>15</sup> The college also developed postgraduate teacher education diplomas. It was absorbed into the University of Limerick (UL) following the establishment of the latter in 1989.<sup>16</sup> The National College of Art and Design was also developed in the 1970s, and in 2011 it became a

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<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.* See also, J. Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981), p. 288.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.* For comments on the report see R. A. Breathnach, B. G. Alton, D. M. Larkin and P. Lynch, 'Higher Education in Ireland: Comments on the Report of the Commission on Higher Education 1960-67', *The Irish Journal of Education*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1968, pp. 3-31

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9. See also T. O'Donoghue, *The History of the PEAI* (Limerick: The PEAI, 1989).

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

recognised college of University College Dublin.<sup>17</sup> Here, art and design teachers are prepared through both an undergraduate four-year programme and a one-year postgraduate programme. Teachers of art are also prepared in non-university institutions, namely at Crawford Institute, Cork (which was incorporated in 1976 into what has since become Cork Institute of Technology),<sup>18</sup> and at the Limerick School of Art and Design, which is one of the five constituent schools of Limerick Institute of Technology.

St Catherine's College of Education, Sion Hill, Dublin, which until it was closed in 2007, was associated with Trinity College Dublin, prepared teachers of home economics.<sup>19</sup> St. Angela's College, Sligo, which is associated with the National University of Ireland, Galway, and which follows a concurrent model of teacher preparation only, is currently the sole institution preparing teachers of home economics in the country.<sup>20</sup> The Mater Dei Institute of Education, which was established by the Archbishop of Dublin in the 1960s for the preparation of teachers of religious education, also follows a concurrent model. It is now incorporated into the Institute of Education at Dublin City University.<sup>21</sup>

By the mid-1970s, regional teacher centres had been established to support continuing professional development for all categories of teachers.<sup>22</sup> From the mid-1960s, education research had been conducted to a significant extent, especially through the activities of the State-funded Educational Research Centre, which was established on the grounds of St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, in Dublin.<sup>23</sup> There was also a very significant increase in courses leading to the award of research-based masters and Ph.D. degrees.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), the Linguistics Institute, the Reading Association of Ireland (RAI) and the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI), became major contributors to both

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<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10. See also S. O'Connor, *A Troubled Sky – Reflections on the Irish Educational Scene* (Dublin: Educational Research Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin, 1986).

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

debate and to the growing corpus of research on Irish education.<sup>25</sup> From 1992, the State Department of Education, by now renamed the Department of Education and Science (and later to become the Department of Education and Skills), also began to make funding available to individual researchers and research teams through an education research committee.

As a result of the activities of all of the institutions mentioned above, a nationally produced knowledge base on education in Ireland began to emerge to inform initial teacher preparation and teacher professional development. In the 1980s, however, existing providers of teacher preparation came under major threat as a result of the country's economic difficulties. Our Lady of Mercy College, Carysfort, the largest college in the country for the preparation of primary school teachers, was closed in 1987.<sup>26</sup> Four years later, the government of the day decided to close three of the five university education departments offering H.Dip. in Ed. courses. Strong opposition by university leaders resulted in the decision being overturned. Instead, a quota system for intake to the courses, which still operates amongst former National University of Ireland colleges, was instituted.<sup>27</sup>

Against a background of an improving national economy, the pendulum began to slowly turn back. In 1991, the OECD published a report on teaching in Ireland which complimented both the quality of the nation's teachers and of the teacher preparation provided.<sup>28</sup> This led to much policy-focused discussion about the need to maintain quality initial teacher preparation programmes, to develop structured induction programmes and to expand programmes for continuing professional development.

Teacher preparation was one of many aspects of Irish society to benefit from a vastly improved economic situation in the 1990s.<sup>29</sup> In 1992, the In-Career Development Unit (ICDU) of the Department of Education and Science was established, resulting in a significant expansion in the provision of continuing

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<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.* See also [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carysfort\\_College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carysfort_College)

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.* See also OECD, *Review of National Policies for Education, Ireland* (Paris: OECD, 1991).

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11. See also C. Rees (Ed.), *Changes in Contemporary Ireland - Texts and Contexts* (Newcastle-on-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013).

professional development opportunities for practising teachers.<sup>30</sup> Also, the teachers' centres located around the country were upgraded and renamed 'education centres'.<sup>31</sup> In 2001, legislation was passed for the establishment of a national teaching council and in 2004 the first election to select its members was held.<sup>32</sup> Its remit is to lay down standards of entry to the profession, approve initial teacher preparation courses, promote induction and continuing professional development, commission research and offer advice to the Minister for Education and Science on supply and demand issues in relation to the composition of the teaching force. In 2002, pilot induction schemes were initiated for commencing primary and second-level schoolteachers.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the Department established a new section to deal with teacher preparation issues, and in 2003 it gave recognition to the qualifications of a new private institution, Hibernia College, which offers postgraduate qualifications in teacher preparation.<sup>34</sup> Major developments relating to the continuing professional development of teachers also took off in earnest, especially over the last 10 years.

## The Stimulus for Writing this Book

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The stimulus for the project upon which this book is based arose from considering claims that, historically, there has been resistance to the introduction of 'education' as a discrete area of study in some universities in England and the United States. Frequently, the argument has been that the opposition was to the teacher preparation component of courses. For example, as early as 1890, opposition was mounted at Oxford University to having anything to do with the professional preparation of teachers.<sup>35</sup> The position taken by those associated with the field in some other universities was to try to escape completely to 'the high

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<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup>R. Pring, 'Academic respectability and professional relevance', in P. Gordon (Ed.), *The Study of Education* (London: Woburn Press, 1996), p. 122.

ground of theory and respectability'.<sup>36</sup> This was unhelpful in promoting the status of courses in teacher preparation, as was the opposite position, namely that adopted by those who argued for the importance of becoming immersed in recent and relevant experience, uninformed by theoretical perspectives.<sup>37</sup> Associated tensions, it has been argued, hindered the acceptance of 'education studies', including teacher preparation, as a discrete area of study throughout much of England.<sup>38</sup>

A similar situation prevailed in much of the United States. For example, an attempt to establish teacher preparation at Columbia University met with great resistance because of a 'general underestimation of the work of the teacher' and the 'low regard in which it was held'.<sup>39</sup> As with the situation in England, the adoption of such a position more broadly has been attributed to the location of education departments between the demands of schools for relevance and those of academics immersed in the academic disciplines who argued that a substantial amount of research should be conducted.<sup>40</sup> One outcome was that some university education departments, especially in their early years, chose to concentrate solely on graduate training and research<sup>41</sup> and on the provision of training for school administrators.<sup>42</sup> It has been concluded, however, that in most cases, this was a short-lived experience, with university departments of education eventually accepting the need to incorporate teacher preparation into their activities.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup>J. W. Tibble (Ed.), *The Study of Education* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 125.

<sup>39</sup>E. Reinhardt, *American Education An Introduction* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1954), p. 170.

<sup>40</sup>D. Corrigan and M. Haberman, 'The context of teacher education', in W. R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1990), p. 206.

<sup>41</sup>S. Feiman-Nemser, 'Teacher preparation: Structural and conceptual alternatives', in W. R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, p. 215.

<sup>42</sup>M. B. Ginsburg, 'Teacher education and class and gender relations: A critical analysis of historical studies of teacher education', *Educational Foundations*, Vol. 2, 1987, pp. 4–36.

<sup>43</sup>S. Feiman-Nemser, 'Teacher preparation: Structural and conceptual alternatives', p. 215.

Some educationists in Australia also claimed that ‘education studies’, including programmes of teacher preparation, were marginalised for a long time within certain universities there.<sup>44</sup> In particular, it has been held that for decades teacher preparation was not accepted at the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne ‘in the same manner as the professional training courses such as medicine, law and engineering’.<sup>45</sup> This has been attributed to a legacy of an association of teaching with public service and apprenticeship training. Opposition to the establishment of a school of education at La Trobe University in Melbourne was made on similar grounds.<sup>46</sup> Gill<sup>47</sup> has also claimed that, more recently, some academics in the field of ‘education studies’ were made to feel like ‘imposters in the university sector’. In similar vein, Webster argued in 2004, that the study of ‘education’ was ‘becoming at best marginalised and frequently avoided’ as it came to be redefined by a focus on techniques, skills, methods and competencies as a result of an obsession with economic usefulness, accountability and performance objectives.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, Gardiner et al.<sup>49</sup> have demonstrated that this was not the situation in the case in the five universities in the State of Western Australia.

Overall, the observations noted above prompted the present writers to cogitate what the situation in other countries has been historically. This book, as has already been indicated, is a response to the matter in the case of Ireland for the period from

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<sup>44</sup>See for example, B. Bessant and A. Holbrook, *Reflections on Educational Research in Australia* (Victoria, Australia: AARE, 1995), p. 266.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>46</sup>R. Pring, ‘Academic respectability and professional relevance’, p. 122.

<sup>47</sup>J. Gill, ‘Having our work cut out! Reflections on the Australian Association for Research in Education and the current state of Australian educational research’, *The Australian Education Researcher*, Vol. 31, No.1, 2004, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup>R. Webster, ‘Is ‘education’ becoming irrelevant in our research?’, *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2004, pp. 1–9.

<sup>49</sup>See D. Gardiner, T. A. O’Donoghue, and M. O’Neill. *Constructing Education as a Liberal Art and as Teacher Preparation at Five Western Australian Universities: An Historical Analysis* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011).

Irish independence in 1922, to the present day. Also, it can be seen as a contribution to the international corpus of work on the history of ‘education studies’ as a discrete area of study within the academy. A significant expression of the importance that historians of education felt should be given to engaging in such work was made when it was chosen as the conference theme by the International Standing Conference of the History of Education for its annual conference in 1995. A wide variety of papers was presented at this conference, thus opening up a range of areas within the field worthy of investigation. Drewek,<sup>50</sup> for example, focused on certain time periods, while others focused on the contributions of particular individuals and education movements.<sup>51</sup> A number of works also took a broad sweep historically, with Aldrich and Crook<sup>52</sup>, for example, examining ‘education studies’ as a discrete area of study in England, and concluding that, historically, ‘university departments of education were engaged in low level work’ as a result of the association with teacher preparation.<sup>53</sup>

The latter point was later taken up by Richardson<sup>54</sup> who, in his account of the changing fortunes of ‘education’ as a discrete area of study in England from 1940 to 2002, argued that it was regarded with ‘academic disdain’ within the broader university community and that this resulted in the separation of research and scholarship from the practical aspects of education. On a less critical note, Coolahan concluded that, as conducted within third-level institutions in Ireland, the field had, for a long time, a

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<sup>50</sup>P. Drewek, ‘Educational studies as an academic discipline in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century’, *Pedagogica Historica*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1998, pp. 175–194.

<sup>51</sup>D. Waterkamp, ‘Robert Ulich: Ideal universalism. A German emigrant’s contribution to educational studies in the USA’, *Pedagogica Historica*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1998, pp. 311–332.

<sup>52</sup>R. Aldrich and D. Crook, ‘Education as a university subject in England: An historical interpretation’, *Pedagogica Historica*, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 122–138.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>54</sup>W. Richardson, ‘Educational studies in the UK: 1940-2002’, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 1, 2002, p. 8.

very low status and was seriously undervalued, largely because of its association with teacher preparation.<sup>55</sup>

In undertaking the research upon which this book is based we challenged ourselves to elaborate on this proposition with regard to various developments in relation to access to, the processes involved in and the structures available for programmes of teacher preparation in the country for the period from 1922 to the present. At the same time we are acutely aware that we have given little attention to the specialist preparation, where such preparation was available and availed of, for teaching the physically and intellectually challenged. Further, we recognise that this is a field that is badly neglected within the corpus of work on the history of education in Ireland, and one that sorely needs to be addressed.<sup>56</sup>

While of academic interest in its own right, studies like that upon which this book is based can be seen not only as being interesting in their own right as works in the history of education, but also as being useful for policy makers and practitioners. This is to take heed of Marwick's statement that 'a full understanding of human behaviour in the past makes it possible to find familiar elements in present problems and makes it possible to solve them more intelligently'.<sup>57</sup> O'Donoghue makes the same point when he states that historical studies in education have 'a crucial role to play because it is hardly possible to understand a present-day issue without a sound knowledge of its background

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<sup>55</sup>J. Coolahan, 'Education in the training colleges 1887-1977'. In Our Lady of Mercy College, Carysfort (Ed.), *Two Centenary Lectures, Carysfort College, 1877-1977* (Dublin: Our Lady of Mercy College, 1981), pp. 20-52.); J. Coolahan, 'The development of educational studies and teacher education in Ireland', *Educational Research and Perspectives*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 2004, pp. 30-47.

<sup>56</sup>This is also not to ignore the fact that teacher preparation programmes in 'special education' were introduced in the 1960s. In 1961, for example, St. Patrick's College Drumcondra offered a new one-year postgraduate diploma, with graduates being able to qualify as teachers who were recognised by the Department of Education for employment in special schools, or to teach special classes, other than those for blind or deaf students.

<sup>57</sup>A. Marwick, *The Nature of History* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1970), p. 18.

development'.<sup>58</sup> McCulloch makes a related case when he argues that 'the interplay between past and present has a special resonance when we are dealing with education. To augur the future we must try to understand the past'.<sup>59</sup>

Overall, then, the book should be of interest not only to Irish educationists, historians and policy makers, but also to their counterparts internationally, as well as to comparative educationists. It can be seen as providing an exposition which can be used by teacher educators in many parts of the world which they can use to sharpen their perceptions of their own situations through comparison and contrast, provoke ideas for critical discussion and provide stimulation to come to an understanding of the importance of considering contemporary developments within their wider historical contexts. In this way, it is a work that should contribute to the broad literature on teacher education internationally, which currently addresses some of the most pressing and topical issues in the field of education research.

Around the world there is great interest in how teachers are prepared, in the content of their education and 'training' programmes, in measurements of their effectiveness and in the role of the 'good' teacher in society. While many of the forces influencing the situation are common across many contexts, the direction of policy and how it is enacted vary considerably. Accordingly, there is a need for books like this one to be written on a wide variety of countries, and not just on the current situation with regard to teacher education within them, but also on how they have arrived there.

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<sup>58</sup>T. A. O'Donoghue, 'Clio and the curriculum: History and the true professional', *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 1992, p. 26.

<sup>59</sup>G. McCulloch, 'Curriculum history in England and New Zealand', in G. McCulloch (Ed.), *The School Curriculum in New Zealand: History, Theory, Policy and Practice* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1992), p. 249. See also B. M. Franklin, 'Review essay: The state of curriculum history', *History of Education*, Vol. 28, No. 4, 1999, pp. 459–476, and I. Goodson and C. J. Anstead, 'Behind the schoolhouse door: The historical study of the curriculum', *Curriculum and Teaching*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1995, pp. 33–44.

## The Research Approach

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The book is presented in the form of a traditional historical narrative. Three main features of teacher preparation are dealt with throughout in relation to a number of historical sub-periods. These features are access, structure and process.<sup>60</sup> Regarding the exposition on access, what is considered are strategies and measures that influenced, promoted, facilitated and hindered entry to, and participation in, programmes of teacher preparation. The expositions on structure relate to issues on how the provision of teacher preparation was organised and the mechanisms governing the links between the various approaches to provision. The third feature considered, namely process, relates to the curriculum and pedagogy.

While each of the three features are given somewhat even weighting throughout, and are considered in relation to each other, we hold that it is the matter of process which is of most interest since it relates to what went on in the heart of the teacher preparation system. In this regard, a central notion underpinning the study upon which the book is based rests on the premise that academic fields of study are sites of contestation, where different interest groups struggle for influence and power.<sup>61</sup> In adopting this notion, we took our lead from Hargreaves'<sup>62</sup> view that academic fields of study, including in the higher education sector, are 'more than groupings of intellectual thought. They are social systems too. They compete for power, prestige, recognition and reward'. While it is recognised that this position has been adopted in various ways in exploring the history of school subjects, it was considered that it could equally be applied to the study of the history of how such academic areas as 'education studies' as a distinct field of study, which usually includes teacher preparation, have been constructed.

Goodson's pioneering work over 20 years ago on the history of school subjects was particularly influential in our thinking. His

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<sup>60</sup>For an outline of why these features are appropriate for the purpose of description and analysis see T. O'Donoghue, *Understanding Contemporary Education: Key Themes and Issues* (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 56–58.

<sup>61</sup>I. F. Goodson, *The Making of Curriculum: Collected Essays* (New York: Falmer Press, 1987).

<sup>62</sup>A. Hargreaves, *Curriculum and Assessment Reform* (Toronto: OISE Press, 1989), p. 56.

position rejects the view of the written curriculum as a 'neutral given', proposing instead that it is 'a social artefact, conceived of and made for deliberate human purposes'.<sup>63</sup> As such, curricula can be seen as consisting of continually changing bodies of knowledge, skills and beliefs reflecting diverse interests of sub-groups and alliances. Furthermore, Goodson has asserted that the various interest groups are often in pursuit of an array of conflicting professional, ideological and political goals.<sup>64</sup> Franklin took up this same position while also suggesting that 'curriculum historians were not the progenitors of this viewpoint'.<sup>65</sup> He elaborated on this, arguing that ideas relating to the social construction of certain elements of reality probably emanated from traditions such as the sociology of knowledge, symbolic interactionism and other branches of social science.<sup>66</sup>

It was considered that Goodson's position on the historical study of curriculum would provide a useful starting point for engaging in the study upon which this book is based. From his perspective, it is not simply recapturing the past which is important. Rather there is a need to provide historical knowledge which can be used by policy makers and planners to make decisions about the present and inform future goals.

Goodson argued that in order to develop a historical perspective, curriculum history should be studied at both the pre-active and interactive level. To engage in the study of curriculum history at the pre-active level is to focus on the plans or syllabi that outline what is included in a course or programme. This is the same as arguing that, in the first instance, one should study what Labaree calls the 'rhetorical curriculum', or what should be taught.<sup>67</sup> It involves studying not only the structures and patterns within documents, but also identifying the various individuals and interest groups who were involved in their production, and the nature and extent of their influence.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, as in the

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<sup>63</sup>I. F. Goodson, *The Making of Curriculum Collected Essays*, p. 260.

<sup>64</sup>I. F. Goodson, *School Subjects and Curriculum Change* (London: Falmer Press, 1983), p. 4.

<sup>65</sup>B. M. Franklin, 'Review essay: The state of curriculum history', p. 457.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup>D. F. Labaree, 'Politics, markets and the compromised curriculum', *Harvard Educational Review*, No. 57, 1987, p. 485.

<sup>68</sup>I. F. Goodson, *Bringing English to Order: The History and Politics of a School Subject* (London: Falmer Press, 1990), p. 263.

work of Glegg, it was recognised that the analysis should be located within a context which incorporates the social, political, economic, philosophical and technological influences.<sup>69</sup>

A study of the interactive curriculum would demand a focus on the interactions which take place in classrooms, lecture theatres and other learning sites, thus examining how the curriculum was mediated by lecturers and students. This, it is held, is equally important work. From the outset, however, it was deemed that it could only be addressed in a very general way in this book and that it is worthy of a separate project to be undertaken at another time.

A wide variety of secondary sources was drawn upon in developing the associated narrative. Hopefully, as a result of reading it, scholars will be stimulated to engage in extensive projects on various matters addressed by drawing upon the extensive body of primary sources which can be located within the archives at each institution involved in teacher preparation, as well as in the national Department of Education and Skills. These include manuscripts, personal papers, printed material such as early faculty handbooks and course outlines, minutes of meetings, education reports, reports of committees of inquiry and oral accounts.

## The Structure of the Book

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The remainder of this book consists of seven chapters. Chapter 2 provides a broad background to the history of teacher preparation in Ireland. It details developments in schooling in Ireland from the early 1800s to the advent of Independence. It then provides an overview of general trends in teacher preparation internationally for the same period. This is followed by an overview of teacher preparation in Ireland up to 1922.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the preparation of primary school teachers in Ireland during the period 1922–1967. It opens by sketching out broad developments in primary school education over the period. The nature and progress of the preparatory college scheme which was overseen by the Department of Education and which was designed to supply well-educated

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<sup>69</sup>A. Glegg, 'Right-minded teachers: The influence of socio-political context on the preparation of teachers in British Columbia, 1872–2002', *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2005, pp. 19–37.

Irish-speakers for the primary school teacher training colleges, are then outlined. General developments in relation to the preparation offered in the colleges are also considered. An overview of situation regarding infant education and the training of teachers for this section of the primary school sector then follows. It includes an account of the practice of the State Department of Education throughout the period of recruiting untrained teachers for primary school teaching, the majority of whom taught at infants' level. Attention is then given to the provision of continuing professional development courses for teachers, which for much of the period were known as 'in-service education' courses.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the preparation of teachers for second-level schools in Ireland from 1922 to 1967. It opens with an overview of general developments in the two main divisions within the second-level sector, namely that comprised of the secondary schools and of the vocational schools. The preparation of teachers for the majority of subjects taught in the secondary schools is then detailed. This is followed by an outline of the approach to the preparation of teachers to teach vocational and technical subjects in both types of schools. An overview of the preparation of teachers of physical education and music is then presented. The chapter closes, just like the previous one, with attention being given to the provision of continuing professional development or 'in-service' courses.

Chapter 5 is concerned with developments in teacher preparation during the period from 1967 to 1990. The primary focus is on the years from 1967 to the late 1970s, when there were significant developments in the field. To contextualise these developments, the chapter opens with an outline of general changes in Irish society from the late 1950s to the late 1970s. Four sections follow on developments in teacher preparation during the 1960s and 1970s. These relate to changes in primary school teacher preparation, changes in the preparation of teachers through the university education departments, changes in the preparation of teachers in the non-university sector for teaching in the second-level education sector and the provision of continuing professional development. The final section considers the fate of teacher preparation during the economically depressed years from the late 1970s to the late 1980s.

Chapter 6 details developments from 1991 to 2011. During this period, the Irish economy went through both boom and bust phases. The years from 1995 to 2007 were ones of such high economic growth that many were led to call the country the Celtic

Tiger. However, the international financial crisis hit the country in the second half of 2007. Unemployment and emigration levels escalated greatly over the next few years, and were accompanied by severe government financial austerity policies. Against this background, discussion on, and developments in, education policy were underpinned by a view that what was needed in Ireland was an education system that would be responsive to the needs of a changing society and that this required change in the field of teacher preparation. Associated with this was a view that the approach to teacher preparation necessitated that it be seen as a continuum involving the provision of discrete, yet interconnected, phases of education at initial, induction and in-career levels.<sup>70</sup>

Chapter 7 deals with the period 2012–2017, during which an unprecedented level and rate of change took place regarding the initial preparation of teachers in Ireland. Furthermore, it was change that permeated all aspects of preparation, from its content, thrust and purpose, to its duration, configuration and funding. The chapter considers both the international developments and national influences which contributed to creating the conditions for such change to take place. Associated proposals and developments undertaken in relation to putting in place structures deemed to be conducive to enhancing the initial preparation of teachers for the future are also considered. Finally, Chapter 8 brings the work to conclusion, providing an overview by looking backwards, along with indicating possible directions for the future.

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<sup>70</sup>For an outline on the international body of literature on this view, see T. O'Donoghue, *Understanding Contemporary Education: Key Themes and Issues* (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 187–216.