Research and Development in Education

Projects 1994-2000

An Account of Projects Supported by the Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Science

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Ireland

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Contents

Contents (continued)

Foreword

This book presents accounts of research in the field of education, ranging from pre-school to third-level education, and from the education of pupils with special needs to adult education. The research projects included in the book also reflect the continuing commitment of the Department of Education and Science to the enhancement of provision in the areas of social inclusion and equality.

Education research projects, such as those outlined in this book, are vital for ensuring that the education system of this country continues to develop to meet the needs of our population.   Research achieves this through the influence of its outcomes on the development of effective policies within the education system. In addition, through informing education practitioners on improved methodologies and approaches to education, research can also directly influence the education received by our young people.   The challenges posed for modern education systems in the areas of social inclusiveness, school development planning, curriculum reform, quality assurance at school and systems levels, and literacy development are such that all involved in the education system, at whatever level, require access to the best possible research advice available.

The Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Science has prepared this book so as to provide information on recent research supported by the Committee in a readily accessible format. The researchers themselves in each case have provided the various abstracts, and further information on individual research projects can be obtained directly from them.

This is an innovative publication and I have no doubt that it will prove to be an important resource for researchers, teachers, school management interests and, indeed, the general reader.

Eamon Stack
Chief Inspector

Introduction

Origin of report

This publication arose from the research dissemination conference organised by the Department of Education and Science in October 1999, where the outcomes of research projects funded by the Department's Research and Development Committee were presented. The aim of the conference was to give researchers an overview of educational research funded by the Department, and also to provide members of the education community with an enhanced knowledge of current educational research.

Purpose of report

The objective of the Department in publishing this report is to reach a wider audience of the education partners and of the research community than was possible at the research dissemination conference. This publication also contains information on a greater range of research than was presented at the one-day conference, including further information on the outcomes of the research projects.

Reading this book

It is envisaged that this book will be the first in a series that will briefly describe completed research projects that have been supported by the Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Science.

The projects are organised under headings that reflect policy concerns of the Department of Education and Science: pre-school education, primary education, post-primary education, further and higher education, school effectiveness and leadership, and equality. For each project included in this report, a brief account is given of the project, of its purpose, and of the principal outcomes of the project. Information is provided on the researchers, on the funding allocated, on the duration of the project, and on how further information may be obtained about the project. In each section of the book, projects are described in the order in which their research proposals were received by the committee.

The appendix contains a list of the projects that are being supported by the Research and Development Committee at present.

All information on the projects in this report has been supplied by the researchers themselves. We would like to thank them for their co-operation in this venture.

Siobhán Broderick   Richard Coughlan
Inspector   Senior Inspector

September 2002

Research and Development Committee

The committee's remit

The Department of Education and Science is committed to strengthening the management of knowledge for the effective formulation of educational policy. A central strategy in achieving this aim is to make better use of existing data, both national and international, in policy development and decision-making. Ensuring an effective interface between educational research and strategic policy development is vital in the world of education today.

In addition to the large-scale and international research in which the Department is involved, such as that conducted under the aegis of the EU and the OECD, indigenous research also needs to be promoted. The Research and Development Committee is the principal agency through which this type of research is supported by the Department of Education and Science.

The committee has as its remit
- to identify relevant research priorities for the Department of Education and Science, in consultation with other sections and agencies of the Department
- to plan and manage the Department's research programme in the areas of first-level and second-level education
- to fund research institutes and individual researchers for specific educational research projects
- to monitor and evaluate the conduct of this research
- to organise and support the dissemination of the findings of this research and other relevant research through seminars, workshops, and publications
- to foster an active educational research community by maintaining contact with national and international research establishments, individual researchers, and other interested bodies
- to make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Department on all relevant aspects of educational research and related issues.

Composition of the committee

The Research and Development Committee is representative of the administrative and professional wings of the Department of Eductaion and Science. Administrative staff from the Evaluation Support and Research Unit of the Inspectorate supply the secretariat of the committee. The present membership of the committee is as follows:

Torlach Ó Connor, Assistant Chief Inspector (Chairperson)
Gabriel Harrison, Assistant Chief Inspector
Lorcán Mac Conaonaigh, Assistant Chief Inspector
Professor Damian Hannan (retired faculty member of the ESRI)
Maureen Bohan, Senior Inspector
Richard Coughlan, Senior Inspector
Harold Hislop, Senior Inspector
Antoinette Talbot, Administrative Officer (Policy Unit)
Orla Murphy/ Colette Murphy, Secretary

Further information on the types of research supported by the committee and on the procedures for applying for support can be obtained from: The Secretary, Research and Development Committee, Department of Education and Science, Marlborough St., Dublin 1.

1. Pre-school education

Overview of chapter

The mission of the Department of Education and Science is to support the growth of a high-quality education system that will enable individuals to reach their full potential as persons and to participate fully as citizens in Ireland's social and economic development.

During the 1990s, the Department of Education and Science strengthened its commitment to the idea that people learn from their earliest moment and continue to learn throughout their lives. The National Forum for Early Childhood Education was held in March 1998. The consultation process that operated during that Forum helped pave the way for *Ready to Learn: A White Paper on Early Childhood Education.* This document, published by the Department of Education and Science in 1999, outlines the main factors that brought early childhood issues to the top of the policy agenda in the 1990s. First, there was a "growing recognition of the benefits for all children of good quality early childhood education". Second, "the importance of early education in addressing socio-economic disadvantage and the contribution of education to economic development gave rise to demands for improved early education for all children". Third, "the needs of employers for increased numbers of workers, as well as increased participation in the labour force, simultaneously increased the demand for and reduced the supply of childcare places". It is against this background that the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAEEA) Pre-primary Project and the Cross-Border Rural Childcare Project, 1997–2000, should be viewed.

The IAEEA longitudinal project contrasts the early education needs of children in designated disadvantaged and non-designated disadvantaged pre-schools and primary schools over a six year period. The Cross-Border Rural Childcare Project concentrates on the needs of children in rural cross-border areas using an action research model. Ultimately, both projects resonate with the principal objective of *Ready to Learn*: "to support the development and educational achievement of children through high-quality early education, with particular focus on the target groups of the disadvantaged and those with special needs".

1.1 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAEEA) Pre-Primary Project

The IAEEA Pre-Primary Project was a large international, longitudinal investigation into the years before children's entry into compulsory education. The project examined the complex interactions between the child, the family, the teacher, and the environment at four and seven years. It was designed to assess the need for, and use made of, early childhood care and educational arrangements; the quality of children's experiences in these settings; and the growing role that various care and educational arrangements play in the development of the world's young children.

Phase 1: 1986–1992
Phase 1 produced profiles of national policies on the care and education of young children and used a household survey to identify and characterise the major early childhood care and educational settings used by families with four-year-olds. Ireland did not participate in this phase of the project.

Phase 2: 1994-1997
Phase 2 used extensive observational and interview data to examine the interactive and structural characteristics of the major early childhood settings and to explore the impact of expectation, curricular, and familial factors on children's development status at the age of four.

Fifteen countries, including Ireland, took part in Phase 2. The focus of Phase 2 in Ireland was on the experience of four-year-olds in designated disadvantaged (DD) and non-designated disadvantaged (NDD) primary schools and pre-schools. 396 four-year-old Irish children took part in this phase of the study.

Phase 3: 1997-2000
Phase 3 documented how early experiences affect children's development at the age of seven. Thirteen countries, including Ireland, took part in this phase.

374 (193 boys and 181 girls) of the original 396 children took part in Phase 3 of the study: a follow-up rate of 94%. The Phase 3 sample children, who were seven years old at the time of data collection, attended DD and NDD primary schools (196 in total) in twenty-three counties in Ireland.

Selected principal findings

Phase 2: 1994–1997
The findings indicated that there were a number of significant differences between children's experiences in designated disadvantaged (DD) and non-designated disadvantaged (NDD) pre-schools, such as the training of staff, adult-child ratio, and type and availability of materials and equipment. For example, the average adult-child ratios were 1:6 and 1:8 in DD and NDD pre-schools, respectively. Primary schools had an average ratio of 1:25 in DD schools and 1:26 in NDD schools. The widest variety of materials and equipment for fine-motor, gross-motor, imaginative play, and art activities was found in pre-school settings rather than in school settings. School settings had higher rates of availability of pre-academic materials, such as workbooks and letter games, and also much higher rates of availability of audiovisual and

technological equipment, such as televisions, videos, and computers. The observational data also indicated great variability between school and pre-school settings. Children in schools were more likely to be in whole (large) group structures than children in pre-school settings. Teachers in schools were observed more often in teaching activities, while teachers in pre-schools were observed more often in participation or shared and routine activities.

Phase 3: 1997–2000

The study found that the children attending NDD schools achieved higher scores on cognitive development, language development, mathematics, reading comprehension, and science than their counterparts in DD schools. However, children in DD schools scored higher on measures of social and emotional development, though the difference was not significant.

Average class size in DD schools was 24 children, while in NDD schools it was 30 children. An analysis of how time was spent by seven-year-olds in school, as reported by their class teachers, revealed that they spent more time on English (28%) than on any other subject area. When DD and NDD schools are compared, the findings indicate that children in DD schools spent less time on Irish (19%) than children in NDD schools (22%). 5% of time was spent on physical education.

Place of research	Centre for Social and Educational Research (CSER) Dublin Institute of Technology Faculty of Applied Arts 143 – 149 Lower Rathmines Rd. Rathmines, Dublin 6
Period	1994–1997 [Phase 2] 1997–2000 [Phase 3]
Grant	€37,700
Researchers	*Phase 2: 1994-1997* Nóirín Hayes and Julie O'Flaherty with Margaret Kernan *Phase 3: 1997-2000* Nóirín Hayes and Margaret Kernan
Contact information	Nóirín Hayes Phone: (01) 4023455 Margaret Kernan Phone: (01) 4027843 Fax: (01) 4023499 E-mail: Noirin.hayes@dit.ie Margaret.kernan@dit.ie
Availability of report	*National Report on Phase 2* Hayes, N., and O'Flaherty, J., with Kernan, M. 1997. *A Window on Early Education in Ireland*. Dublin: DIT. National Report on Phase 3 Hayes, N., and Kernan, M. (forthcoming) *Seven-Year-Olds in Ireland*. Dublin: DIT. *International Monographs: Phases 1 and 2* High/Scope Educational Research Foundation 600 N. River St., Ypsilanti, MI 48198 , USA

1.2   Cross-Border Rural Childcare Project, 1997-2000

The aim of this project was to conduct action research on childcare provision for children up to twelve years of age in border areas of Northern Ireland and the Republic. The programme supported the communities of St Johnston, Manorcunningham, and Newtowncunningham in Co. Donegal; Mohill in Co. Leitrim; Donemanagh in Co. Tyrone; Belleek in Co. Fermanagh; Augher, Clogher, and Fivemiletown in Co. Tyrone; and northeast Monaghan, by engaging them in the planning and development of services to meet their needs.

The objectives set for the project were
*   to look at current availability and access to early years' services in rural areas
*   to look at quality issues
*   to identify a range of unmet childcare needs within diverse rural communities and to identify their implications for policy
*   to test the belief that the locations selected could produce models of good childcare practice that could be replicated elsewhere in rural areas
*   to investigate and encourage cross-border use of early years' services
*   to develop networking within Ireland and Europe to assist in the development of early years' services and training and to promote the effective use of EU funding
*   to provide and disseminate information on rural early years' provision.

Principal findings
*   *Assessing childcare needs in rural areas*
    Primary research is needed to gather information about the demands for childcare services.

*   *Access to and availability of services in rural areas*
    The need for additional childcare spaces in rural areas must be recognised and addressed by parents, local communities, and statutory and voluntary agencies with an interest in childcare. Transport must be considered and budgeted for. The cost of providing integrated childcare must be met from one central funding source and include a parental contribution.

*   *Resourcing and supporting the development of childcare services*
    The development of innovative childcare services by local communities is a long process, requiring substantial project development and management support, supplied locally. There is a need for co-ordinated core funding for childcare services.

*   *Co-ordination and co-operation*
    Local communities can provide effective childcare models.

Place of research	Cross-Border Rural Childcare Project c/o Erne Hospital Enniskillen Co. Fermanagh BT74 6AY
Period	January 1997 to December 2000
Grant	€7,500
Researcher	Pauline Walmsley Senior Research and Development Officer
Contact information	Phone: (048) 66324367 Fax: (048) 66320298 E-mail: Cbrcp@hotmail.com
Availability of report	c/o Erne Hospital (as above).

2. Primary education

Overview of chapter

In 1999, the *Primary School Curriculum* was launched. This curriculum was not a completely new departure from what had gone before. Rather, it sought to adapt, interpret, update, and build on the successes of the 1971 *Curaclam na Bunscoile*, by incorporating current educational thinking and the most innovative and effective pedagogical practice.

The projects featured in this chapter deal with many of the principles of the *Primary School Curriculum*.

- "Peatlands and the Primary School Curriculum" seeks to engage children in integrated, environment-based learning and to cultivate their sense of wonder and natural curiosity about peatlands, through guided activity and discovery learning.
- "Socialisation of the Primary School Child into a Physically Active Lifestyle: A Public Health Perspective" assesses the extent to which lessons learned in school shape students' physical activities outside school.
- "Gender Differences in Patterns of Entry to Primary Teaching" highlights the need to factor gender in when examining aspects of the education system.
- "Primary School Library Services in Ireland: A Survey of Current Provision and Future Need" identifies future requirements for the in-career development of teachers and for the provision of library and information resources, so that pupils can become active agents in their own learning and can enhance their aesthetic sensibilities through personal reading.
- "Higher-Order Thinking in the Early Years Classroom Through Doing Philosophy" scrutinises the elements of higher-order thinking and problem-solving present in a specially developed series of lessons for junior and senior infants.
- "Evaluation of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme" assesses the introduction and implementation of a programme designed to nurture children socially and emotionally by using children's knowledge and experience as a base for learning.

These projects represent a resource from which all those with an interest in primary education can draw.

2.1   Peatlands and the Primary School Curriculum

The object of this project was to develop and publish an educational pack dealing with bogs for fourth, fifth, and sixth class pupils in primary schools.

A quick survey of the chapter headings in this educational pack ("Preparatory work," "A day on the bog", "Follow-up on the bog visit", "Taking action to save the bogs", and "Aonad na Gaeilge") reveals that the pack was not only designed as a resource for teaching specific lessons on bogs, but was also prepared as a springboard for bilingual and cross-curricular lessons.

Principal findings
"Peatlands and the Primary School Curriculum" remains one of the few resources in print dealing with peatlands: their history, wildlife, economic use, and conservation. It is an educational resource promoting knowledge, changing attitudes, and helping young people take action for wildlife and heritage.

Place of research	Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC) 119 Capel Street Dublin 1
Period	January 1992 to November 1994
Grant	€8,000
Researcher	Dr Catherine O'Connell
Contact information	Phone: (01) 8722397 Fax: (01) 8722397 E-mail: bogs@ipcc.ie
Availability of report	*Peatlands and the Primary School Curriculum* is available from the IPCC. Price €12.70.

2.2 Socialisation of the Primary School Child into a Physically Active Lifestyle: A Public Health Perspective

This medico-social study of the physical activity behaviour of a cohort of Irish children aged eleven to twelve examined the relationships between personal and social-environmental variables, physical activity, and well-being, and reviews the evidence linking physical activity to health measures.

Data was collected from a cohort of pre-adolescent children in fifth and sixth classes. 1602 children (810 girls and 792 boys) were interviewed by the author in 1996 in a nationwide random sample of 62 primary schools. The population study was designed to examine the nature and extent of children's habitual activity and its social context in the lives of young people. A prime objective of the analysis was to investigate the relationship, if any, between physical education experience and recreational activity outside school.

Principal findings

Irish children appear to be more extensively engaged in recreational activity outside school than many other pre-adolescent populations. Almost 85% of Irish children participate in physical activity four or more times weekly, and only 4.1% of Irish children are inactive, taking part in one hour or less of physical activity weekly. The findings are consistent with epidemiological evidence that suggests that this age cohort is the most active of the youth population. It is suggested that socio-cultural influences contribute to the high activity levels observed. The extensive playing of Gaelic games parallel to multicultural sports and the high levels of participation in activity by rural children are cited as contributory factors. Differences between the sexes are significant, girls being approximately 21% less active than boys, and there is a significant decline in girls' activity from fifth to sixth class.

A consistent pattern of association between social integration status and activity behaviour is observed. Children who are highly integrated in their social network are more active than those who have less contact with friends and are more active than those who have difficulty relating to others. There is also a significant relationship between parental support and activity status, but this is less striking than that of social integration and activity. Evidence of the effect of social class on behaviour is not convincing. Physical self-perception is positively associated with activity behaviour. Gender differences in physical self-perception are significant, boys scoring significantly higher than girls on six of seven self-perception indicators. Analysis of the combined physical education index scores and of the physical activity index demonstrates a significant and positive relationship between children's PE experiences in school and recreational activity outside school. No association is observed between self-assessed health and well-being and activity.

In regression analysis, gender (B, -.209, 95% CI -.277 to -.141, p < .0001), sports club membership (B, .201, 95% CI .131 to .272, p < .0001) and social integration status (B, .039, 95% CI .024 to .055, p < .0001) are identified as significant independent predictors of recreational activity. Parental support and physical self-perception are weak predictors. Primary physical education, as measured by the physical education index, is significantly and positively associated with activity (B, 0.016, 95% CI 0.012 to 0.021, p < .0001) and provides a marginal increment in the prediction of children's activity over and above the effects explained by demographic and sociometric variables.

From a public health viewpoint it is agreed that, while many of the health benefits of childhood activity are transitory, the main impact of physical activity in youth is likely to be the reduction of the risk of chronic disease in adulthood. The findings of the study suggest that the choice of an active lifestyle in the formative years is the product of a complex interweaving of biographical, social, and cultural threads. Lifestyle choice is also conditioned by the educational environment of the primary school and by the activity experiences offered there.

Place of research	Mary Immaculate College of Education South Circular Road Limerick
Period	September 1994 to September 1997
Grant	€7,620
Researcher	Dr Sylvia O'Sullivan
Contact information	Phone: (061) 204355 Fax: (061) 313632 E-mail: sylvia.osullivan@mic.ul.ie
Availability of report	Contact the researcher.

2.3 Gender Differences in Patterns of Entry to Primary Teaching

This report dealt with gender differences in perceptions of, and attitudes to, primary teaching among school leavers and students in the colleges of education. A comprehensive international literature review on teaching and entry to teaching was conducted. An analysis of patterns of entry to the colleges by means of statistical data provided by the colleges, by the Higher Education Authority, and by the Central Applications Office from the 1970s onwards was carried out.

A sample of sixteen second-level schools was drawn from the Dublin area, from Leinster, and from each of the three other provinces. The sample contained schools from the three main second-level school types (secondary, vocational, and community or comprehensive). It was also made up of boys-only, girls-only and co-educational schools. It included fee-paying and non fee-paying schools and one that was managed by a minority religion management body. Questionnaires were completed by a total of 1049 sixth-year students. The sample comprised 631 females (60%) and 431 males (40%). An appropriately adapted version of the questionnaire was administered to all second-year students in each of the five primary education colleges. Altogether 457 questionnaires were completed by student teachers. Of these, 90% were female and 10% were male. Interviews were also conducted with guidance counsellors and college administrators.

Sample of principal findings

- *Academic performance of school leavers*
  The school-leaver survey indicated that girls' academic performance was significantly higher than that of boys, mirroring the general pattern in student examinations as a whole. From the point of view of entry to teaching, the pool of suitably qualified boys is smaller than the equivalent pool of girls. Boys were significantly less likely than girls to take Higher Level Irish. This reduces the pool of qualified male applicants even further. Those who indicated that they would put primary teaching as their first preference (just over 6% of all students, almost all girls) had higher average academic performance scores than others.

- *School leavers' course choices*
  An examination of first-preference course choices for all areas of study showed significant differences between males and females. Male choices were significantly more often directed to technology, computers, and commerce, while female choices were directed to humanities, primary teaching, nursing, social science, medicine, and dentistry. In short, many course choices seemed to be stereotyped, with boys choosing from a narrower range of courses than girls. Significantly, more girls were attracted to teaching of all kinds. Parents emerged as having most influence in course and career decision-making.

- *Trends in intake to colleges of education*
  In the survey of second-year student teachers in the five primary colleges of education, it emerged that the great majority had entered the colleges directly from school, although the proportion of mature entrants (12%) was twice the national average for third level. With regard to place of origin of the student teachers, Munster and Connacht were over-represented. Half the student teachers

were from rural areas, with less than a third of the proportion that would have been expected from large urban areas, given the population distribution in the country as a whole. An even greater proportion of the male students were from rural areas. With regard to social class and occupational background, there was a disproportionate representation of students from middle-class and farming backgrounds. In addition, more than 60% of the students had a near relative who was a teacher.

- *Career-related attitudes of student teachers*
  As with school leavers, the career-related attitudes of the student teachers were explored. In comparison to the school leavers' average scores on the scales, both male and female student teachers were more strongly oriented towards altruistic values than were second-level pupils. This was particularly marked among the female student teachers. This stronger orientation towards caring among the student teachers confirms the links between caring and primary teaching already observed in this study. The data also suggested that men studying to be primary teachers are markedly different from other men in their attitudes to caring. Indeed, men going into primary teaching are much less oriented towards such considerations as pay and prestige and much more oriented towards caring and altruistic considerations than are men in general.

Place of research	Education Department University College Dublin and Education Department National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Period	March 1998 to December 2000
Grant	€43,165
Researchers	Prof. Sheelagh Drudy Education Department, UCD Dr Maeve Martin Education Department NUI, Maynooth Research Assistants Ms Máiríde Woods Mr John O'Flynn

Contact information	Prof. Drudy Phone: (01) 7168154
	                Fax: (01) 7161143
	                E-mail: Sheelagh.Drudy@ucd.ie
	
	Dr Martin Phone: (01) 7083731
	                Fax: (01) 7084610
	                E-mail: Maeve.Martin@may.ie

Availability of report	Contact the researchers.

2.4 Primary School Library Services in Ireland: A Survey of Current Provision and Future Need

This study, which was commissioned by the Library Association of Ireland in 1999, was the first comprehensive review of library provision for primary schools in Ireland. The aims of the study were to

- identify the current level of library and information resource provision within primary schools throughout the country
- identify future requirements for library and information resource provision and its management within primary schools
- ascertain the in-career development needs of primary teachers to enhance the use of information by pupils and teachers
- make recommendations for future access to library and information resources and for the utilisation of such resources.

A wide range of methodologies was employed in this study. More than seven hundred primary teachers were surveyed. A series of countrywide discussion groups was organised with teachers, parents, and librarians. The primary school library in both information and developing societies was reviewed. The present status of the primary school library in Ireland was also examined. Finally, relevant organisations and individuals were invited to make submissions for the report.

Selected principal findings

- *Classroom and school libraries*
  94% of all teachers surveyed had a classroom library. The main problems these teachers cited in relation to classroom libraries were lack of space, insufficient stock, inappropriate shelving or display unit, and unattractive surroundings. Slightly fewer than 40% of all teachers surveyed were in schools with a school library. Of these school libraries, many were used for several functions (e.g. remedial teaching rooms). Fewer than half the teachers were in schools that had school libraries that could comfortably hold all the children in a given class at the same time.
  Teachers of pupils with special needs and teachers in Irish medium schools had specific problems with class and school-library stock.

- *National standards for the provision of primary school libraries*
  The findings of the survey, the consultations, and the submissions for the study indicated that there was great variation in all aspects of the provision of primary school libraries.
  Almost 16% of all teachers surveyed reported that their school did not receive a service from the school library department of the local authority library.
  Of the teachers who reported receiving a school library service, almost 50% rated the supply of books provided by the service to the school as either "good" or "very good." However, almost 25% rated the book supply as "poor" or "very poor."

The great majority of librarians and teachers consulted in this study felt that the existing local authority school library service structure has, in spite of its very limited resources, served primary school children well. What is now needed is to build on the present service so that it can be established as a high-quality, sustainable, and equitable service.

- *Commitment of the Department of Education and Science*
  In relation to almost all aspects of primary school libraries, the present situation is unsatisfactory. A commitment to primary school libraries in policy, planning, and funding is crucial. The study findings indicate strong support for a statutory obligation to be placed on the Department of Education and Science to arrange for the provision of a library service for all primary schools.

Place of research	Library Association of Ireland 53 Upper Mount St. Dublin 2
Period	February 1999 to October 2000
Grant	€25,395
Contact person	Fionnuala Hanrahan (secretary of the project's consultative committee)
Contact information	Phone: (053) 24922 Fax: (053) 21097 E-mail: Fionnuala.hanrahan@wexford.coco.ie
Availability of report	Check with contact person.

2.5 Higher-Order Thinking in the Early Years Classroom Through Doing Philosophy

The purpose of this study was to ascertain, define, and analyse the elements of abstract thinking present in "Thinking Time," a session in the day when junior and senior infants were encouraged to think and interact philosophically.

Over a two-year period, the researcher recorded "Thinking Time" sessions: 27 junior infant contributions and 24 senior infant contributions. The children's conversations were then grouped under the following headings: reflection, compare or contrast, statement or offer explanation, clarify or give reasons or make distinctions, summarise, judgements or balanced evaluations, offer a question, analogies or examples, inferences or make connections, syllogisms or emerging hypotheses.

Principal recommendations
- Teaching philosophy is one way of implementing some of the objectives of the oral language curriculum.
- There is a need for further research in this area. It is recommended that a replica study with a junior or senior infant class be undertaken and the results compared with this study. A similar study with children at a later stage in the primary school would also be of interest.
- Comparing, summarising, and hypothetical thinking should be modelled by teachers and thus encouraged.
- If dialogue is to become a means of teaching and learning, then it will need to become an integral part of pre-service and in-service education.

Place of research	Bayside Junior National School Sutton Dublin 13
Period	September 1997 to July 2000
Grant	€1,271
Researcher	Philomena Donnelly-Uí Chionnaith
Contact information	Phone: (01) 8842071 Fax: (01) 8376197 E-mail: Philomena.donnelly@spd.ie
Availability of report	"Higher-Order Thinking in the Early Years Classroom through Doing Philosophy." *Irish Educational Studies* Vol. 20. Spring 2001.

2.6 Evaluation of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme

The RSE programme was introduced into primary and post-primary schools during the period 1996-2000. This study evaluated the introduction and implementation of RSE. It was based on several large-scale surveys of primary and post-primary teachers who participated in the RSE in-service training programme and of parents who attended meetings about RSE in their children's schools. The main areas examined were

- the need for an RSE programme
- the principles on which such a programme should be organised and taught
- the topics that should be included in an RSE curriculum
- the views of teachers and parents about the language for sexuality
- opinions on the provision of in-service training and information sessions
- the factors that influenced implementation of the programme.

Principal findings

- There was strong support for the RSE programme at both primary and post-primary levels, for the principles on which it was based, and also for the curricular topics included in the programme.
- Parents and teachers made judgements about RSE based on educational criteria.
- In general, there was also support for many features of the training that was associated with the launch of the programme.
- Finally, there was strong support for the idea that RSE was an important part of social, personal and health education.

Place of research	St Patrick's College of Education Drumcondra Dublin 9
Period	March 1997 to June 2000
Grant	€24,093
Researcher	Mark Morgan
Contact information	Phone: (01) 8842061 Fax: (01) 8376197 E-mail: Mark.Morgan@spd.ie
Availability of report	Stationery Office

3. Post-primary education

Overview of chapter

In 1991 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) produced a review of the Irish education system. To modernise Irish post-primary education, the OECD examiners recommended that the social partners be granted a greater degree of involvement in curriculum planning and decision-making, arguing that from such participation "there could be a greater recognition of the educational value for everyone of the industrial arts, the habits and practices of commerce, craftwork in wood and metal . . . and other forms of manual and technical activity. Finally, with this wider social orientation, due attention could be given to such cross-curricular themes as health education, environmental education, social and political education and others which, in the normal course of events, have to fight hard for recognition in schools" (*Review of National Policies for Education: Ireland*).

The projects featured in this chapter testify to the ever-broadening conception of curriculum planning recommended by the OECD examiners in 1991, and now at work in Irish post-primary education.

- "An Evaluation of the Implementation of Technology in the Junior Cycle Curriculum" reviews an "industrial arts" subject that did not exist in post-primary schools in 1991.
- "Poetry in the Junior Cycle: A Study of the Teaching of English Poetry in Irish Second-Level Schools" contributes to debates on the place of aesthetic education in the post-primary system.
- "The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme: 'My Own Place' Module" develops skills in tracing and recording place-names that feed into environmental education.
- "Analysis of Results of Feasibility Study on Practical Assessment for Leaving Certificate Physics and Leaving Certificate Chemistry" investigates the effects of valuing the "habits and practices" of laboratory work by combining practical assessments with written examination papers in Leaving Certificate physics and Leaving Certificate chemistry.

However, the projects featured in this chapter do not deal solely with *what* is taught in post-primary schools. A number of them also deal with *how* students are taught at second level.

- "Multiple Intelligence Learning" pilots a new approach to teaching in post-primary schools.
- "An Ghaeilge ag Obair sa Scoil" explores how the use of Irish for informal and formal communication in post-primary schools helps to enhance and expand the profile of bilingualism and of Irish.
- "Computer Technology for Special Needs Education" examines computer software designed for students with diverse learning styles or special educational needs.

The projects that feature in chapters 5 and 6 show that the social, emotional, and personal dimensions of post-primary education are also accorded considerable importance by the Department of Education and Science. Such projects could have been included in this chapter, but it was thought better to group primary and post-primary studies related to the affective domain of education together.

3.1 An Evaluation of the Implementation of Technology in the Junior Cycle Curriculum

The main aim of this investigation was to use data provided by teachers and principals to identify the factors that influenced the introduction and implementation of the subject Technology and to report on the experiences of those involved in this process.

Principal findings

- The subject is seen as providing a good preparation for life and as catering for a wide range of pupil ability.
- Technology is perceived as being more attractive to boys and examination statistics for the years 1992 to 1996 support this view.
- 90% of the schools surveyed are continuing to offer this subject and would wish to see it established as an optional Senior Cycle subject.
- High levels of satisfaction with the assessment of this subject in the Junior Certificate examination were voiced by the teachers, although there were some reservations about assessment policy for the design tasks.
- The aims and objectives specified for Technology have little influence on teaching.
- The Technology course is perceived as being too broad. Task-based teaching and the management and supervision of students' design tasks were found to be particularly demanding, although the teachers reported that they found this aspect of the course enjoyable.
- In the majority of schools, the subject Technology has no "home" in the form of a designated room.
- A training deficit in the preparation of Technology teachers is evident, given that two-thirds of those surveyed stated that they supplemented their initial training with other courses, and that three-quarters of those surveyed stated they were interested in attending further courses.
- Virtually unanimous agreement was expressed by both principals and teachers on the future development of the subject, with both groups expressing a strong desire for Technology to be offered as a distinct subject.

Place of research	School of Education Trinity College Dublin 2
Period	November 1995 to June 1997
Grant	€30,473
Researchers	Dr Séamus McGuinness, project director Liam Corcoran Fionnuala O'Regan
Contact information	Phone: (01) 6082466 Fax: (01) 6772694 E-mail: Pmcgnnss@tcd.ie
Availability of report	Contact the project director.

3.2   Multiple Intelligence Learning

This study had its origins in Cork in 1993/94, when the Presentation Family set up the Nagle-Rice project in nine of its schools in the city and county of Cork as one of a series of activities honouring the 150th anniversary of the death of Edmund Rice. The study was based in the South Presentation, Cork and formed part of the CFRC Education Office activities. The focus of this project was on students seen not to be thriving in the academic secondary system. Its aims were to explore effective approaches for teaching these students and to gather the findings of interested teachers. Its framework was that of action research as developed in the Marino Institute of Education.

By 1994, Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences had been adopted as the framework for the project. Over the next four years, the study incorporated the following activities::
- teachers enabling students to learn more effectively by using teaching strategies that engaged a wider range of intelligences
- students recognising and taking increasing responsibility for their own strengths and for their own learning
- parents exploring and developing ways in which they could foster and celebrate their children's talents and intelligences in their home environment
- the project members developing materials and flexible programmes suited to the Irish curriculum, so that interested teachers and parents would have a starting point for exploring multiple intelligences with young people
- the project director producing an annual newsletter, 1996–98, and organising end-of-year seminars in Dublin and Cork for participating students, teachers, and guests
- outreach seminars, workshops, staff days, and summer schools involving students, teachers, whole staffs, parents, groups working with youth or second-chance groups, curriculum planners, and TCD and Maynooth education students.

From 1993 to 1995 Sister Úna Collins (Marino Institute) was consultant to the project. In the spring of 1995 the Institute invited the project director, Anne Fleischmann, to set up a similar project in Dublin, to run in parallel with the one in Cork. Ms Fleischmann first spent one week a month, then two weeks a month, over three years, working with six Dublin schools on the project for at least one year.

Principal findings
The multiple intelligences framework
- enabled teachers to view their students in a more positive and complex light than before
- identified strategies that teachers can adopt to encourage student interest in and greater responsibility for learning
- dramatically improved students' self-confidence as they came to discover and name their strengths
- helped to establish a more democratic learning environment, where responsibility for learning is shared, as teachers and students explore together

- built a more tolerant atmosphere where all participants came to recognise and value different ways of learning and, indeed, the benefit of difference
- provided an effective link between the worlds of primary and post-primary education
- made immediate sense to parents. They found that their experience of their children illuminated multiple intelligences theory for them, and *that* in turn offered them new, positive points of communication with their children
- created a deeper level of parent-teacher co-operation
- raised the question of what constitutes curriculum and learning in its assertion that any concept can be taught or understood in multiple ways
- called for a reappraisal of assessment procedures, and indeed of our perception of an "intelligent" student.

Place of research	Marino Institute of Education Griffith Avenue Dublin 9
Period	1993-1998
Grant	€14,409
Researcher	Anne Fleischmann
Contact information	Phone: (064) 33942 Fax: (064) 33942 E-mail: annefleischmann@eircom.net
Availability of report	Anne Fleischmann

3.3   An Ghaeilge ag Obair sa Scoil

Rinne an tionscadal taighde fheidhmigh seo iniúchadh ar chonas is féidir stadas agus tionchar na Gaeilge agus an dátheangachais a fhorbairt agus a leathnú i measc pobal na scoileanna iarbhunoideachais. Go bunúsach, rinneadh cíoradh ar chonas is féidir an cur chuige cumarsáideach i dteagasc na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn i ngnáthimeachtaí laethúla na scoileanna sin.

Samplaí de na príomhthorthaí

- *An timpeallacht fhisiciúil*
  D'fhéadfaí atmaisféar agus timpeallacht fhisiciúil a chruthú inar léir go bhfuil an Ghaeilge in úsáid go forleathan i gcomhthéacs na scoile iomláine. Bheadh comharthaí i nGaeilge nó comharthaí dátheangacha, páipéar oifigiúil na scoile, agus spreagthaigh fhonnadhainte mar phóstaeir i gceist anseo.

- *Caidreamh agus cumarsáid*
  D'fhéadfaí clárfhógraí scoile, fógraí ar chóras fuaimchumarsáide na scoile, tionóil na scoile, ríomhphost, agus caidreamh leis an bpobal i gcoitinne a chur in oiriúint ionas go mbeadh eilimintí Gaeilge nó dátheangacha iontu.
  D'fhéadfaí ríomhphost agus eadarlíon a úsáid chun an Ghaeilge nó an dátheangachas a chur chun cinn i dtionscadail mar chónasctha (mar shampla, le scoileanna sa Ghaeltacht, le Gaelscoileanna, nó le scoileanna i réigiún Cheilteachta na hEorpa).

- *Acmhainní*
  Tá gá le treoirleabhair Ghaeilge nó dhátheangacha, le gluaiseanna, le samplaí téarmaíochta do chlárfhógraí, agus le samplaí de litreacha atá oiriúnach do riachtanais scoileanna a chur ar fáil. Chomh maith le sin, tá gá ag scoileanna le cláracha ríomhaireachta chun déileáil le próiseál focal as Gaeilge agus le bogábhar ar leith chun cáipéisí as Gaeilge a sholáthar. Ní foláir oiliúint fhoirne agus cúnamhlínte a chur ar fáil chuige sin.

Ionad taighde	Rhoda O'Connor agus a Comhpháirtithe Sliabh gCua Ballybane Baile Átha Cliath 22
Tréimhse	Márta 1996 go Márta 1999
Deontas	€25,394
Taighdeoirí	Rhoda A. O'Connor An Dr Seán P. Ó Conchúir
Eolas	Fón: 01 - 4570904 Faics: 01 - 4570904 R-phost: raoc@iol.ie seanoconchuir@eircom.net
Infhaighteacht na tuarascála	Dul i gcomhairle leis na taighdeoirí.

This action research project explored how the place and influence of Irish and of bilingualism in the post-primary school community could be enhanced and expanded. Essentially, the project examined how the communicative approach to the teaching of Irish could be translated into the mainstream daily activities of second-level schools.

Selected principal findings

- *Physical environment*
  A physical ambience and surroundings with high visibility for the use of Irish could be created in the whole school environment. This would embrace Irish or bilingual signage, school stationery, and motivational stimuli such as posters.

- *Contact and communication*
  School notice boards, announcements on the school communication system, assembly, e-mails, and contact with the community could also incorporate Irish or bilingual elements.
  E-mail and the internet could be used to promote Irish or bilingualism through twinning projects (for example, twinning with schools in the Gaeltacht, with Irish medium schools, or with schools in the Celtic regions of Europe).

- *Resources*
  Schools need to be provided with Irish or bilingual guides, glossaries, and examples of terminology for notice board announcements and for letters based on the school situation. Schools also need computer applications for dealing with word-processing in Irish, specialised software for generating documents in Irish, and staff training or helplines for these to be provided.

Place of research	Rhoda O'Connor agus a Comhpháirtithe Sliabh gCua Ballybane Baile Átha Cliath 22
Period	March 1996 to March 1999
Grant	€25,394
Researchers	Rhoda A. O'Connor Dr Seán P. Ó Conchúir
Contact information	Phone (01) 4570904 Fax: (01) 4570904 E-mail: raoc@iol.ie seanoconchuir@eircom.net
Availability of report	Contact the researchers.

3.4 Poetry in the Junior Cycle: A Study of the Teaching of English Poetry in Irish Second-Level Schools

This study begins by outlining a philosophy of literature arguing that young people's encounters with poetry, especially in the Junior Cycle, should be characterised by experience before analysis and recreative engagement before critical response. A review of the history of poetry in education is then presented, followed by a discussion of developments in the Irish educational scene that gave rise to the present Junior Certificate syllabus in English.

Finally, the study presents findings of a survey of 185 teachers of English. The survey sought to uncover the extent to which the philosophy and methodologies of the Junior Certificate English syllabus had been imported into the attitudes and actions of teachers of English poetry.

Principal findings

- *Attitudes*
  A positive attitude towards the teaching of poetry in the Junior Cycle existed among the group of teachers surveyed. 70% of teachers perceived poetry to be an area of the English course that facilitated pupils' engagement and enjoyment and some 65% felt that the time spent in teaching poetry paid off in terms of pupil enjoyment.
- *Open course versus some form of prescription*
  39% of the teachers surveyed indicated that the poems they taught varied little from one year to the next. This, coupled with fears expressed by a number of teachers in interviews that fewer poems are being taught in recent years, is a powerful argument in favour of a reappraisal of the present open course with a view to a return to some form of prescription.
  After a second survey was conducted specifically on the issue of the open course, by far the highest overall approval rating achieved was the option of retaining the open course in the context of approved anthologies.
- *The importance of variety and wide reading*
  Only 27% of teachers taught poetry more than once a week. For 35% it was a once-weekly event. The practice of teaching poetry in block sessions (which was common to some 40% of the teachers surveyed) did not facilitate wide reading of poetry.
- *Memorisation*
  Some 40% of the teachers surveyed asked their students to learn poems by heart, but for over 20% this was a rare occurrence.
- *Classroom activities*
  Students rarely got an opportunity to choose the poems studied. Even more rarely did they get the opportunity to "illustrate" their involvement with poems they had read by painting, drawing, mime, role-play, etc. Composition in verse by students was an occasional activity that was generally confined to first and second years. Thus, it appeared that while the poems had changed, and while the students were widely encouraged to voice their own responses to the poems, teachers retained a somewhat disproportionately high editorial voice in the reading of poetry.

- *Students writing verse*
  Just 13% of teachers surveyed indicated that they regularly encouraged their students to write poems of their own. For the great majority, it was an occasional experience and even then one that was confined almost exclusively to the first and second years of the cycle.
- *Visual presentations*
  25% of the teachers who responded to the survey never asked their students to explore poems by means of visual illustrations. For a further 35% it was at best an occasional activity.
- *Facilitating discussion in groups*
  The time given to "teacher questioning and class discussion" far outweighed the time allowed for pupils to discuss a poem in small groups.

Place of research	Department of Education University College Cork
Period	October 1996 to July 1998
Grant	€13,078
Researcher	Hal O'Neill Supervisor: Tom Mullins
Contact information	Phone: (021) 4294987 Fax: (021) 4292901 E-mail: haloneill@eircom.net
Availability of report	Contact Hal O'Neill.

3.5   Computer Technology for Special Needs Education

St Mary's Secondary School, Nenagh, has had a special class since 1982. A core team of St Mary's staff carried out this project. The project's objectives were
- to survey the vast array of computer software now available as aids to learning
- to identify the software most suitable for students with special needs and for those with specific learning difficulties at second level
- to provide an inventory with recommendations for the most appropriate software for students with special needs.

Principal activities
- Forty software titles relating to the following curricular areas were reviewed: mathematics, English, geography/ nature study, history, life skills, and typing/ computer education.
- Each software package was discussed under the following headings: PC requirements, publisher, price, age, curricular content, user interface, and evaluation.
- In most instances, sample print-outs were attached to each review, to illustrate the type of learner activity being offered by the package.
- The compilation of reviews was published on the school's website and was also publicised through the "Mol an Óige" initiative.

Place of research	St Mary's Secondary School Nenagh Co. Tipperary
Period	June 1997 to August 1998
Grant	€1,904
Researchers	Catherine Holohan, IT co-ordinator Virginia O'Dowd
Contact information	Phone: (067) 31450/ 31762 Fax: (067) 33896 E-mail: smssnena@iol.ie
Availability of report	Contact Catherine Holohan.

3.6   Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme: "My Own Place" Module

This project gave guidance and encouragement to LCVP students in relation to the collection of place-names in their locality. It continued work undertaken by Coiste Logainmneacha Chorcaí (Cork Place-Names Survey Committee), that will culminate in the establishment of a Co. Cork place-names archive in 2006.

The Cork Place-Names Survey Committee supplied street maps to urban students and townland maps to rural students on request. Teachers were not expected to undertake research or to correct submissions. Rather, the committee asked them to encourage students to participate in the survey and to collect the marked maps from students.

The names sought in the survey included everyday names, in Irish and English, such as the names of fields, rocks, hills, pathways, coastal features, fishing places, ruins, streams, wells, streets, archaeological monuments, old and new buldings, and other other natural or built features. The everyday names used by farmers, fishing folk, sports enthusiasts and local people in their daily lives and the stories and lore associated with those names were all gathered through this survey.

With the assistance of parents and neighbours, students were asked to mark a number on the Ordnance Survey map supplied to them, indicating the location of a name. The number and corresponding place-name were then to be written on the back of the map. A description of the feature or place named and any other pertinent information was also to be included.

At the end of the survey in a particular area, the Cork Place-Names Survey Committee would arrange the co-ordination of all data submitted and the presentation of that data in the form of a report, including individually drawn townland, parish, and barony maps.

Principal findings
The Cork Place-Names Survey Committee has:
* collaborated with the Cork and Kerry Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) trainers and students by providing resources, expertise, and a network of contacts with community groups, historical societies, local authorities, etc., to help students explore the "My Own Place" module of the LCVP
* actively promoted the survey to Transition Year and senior primary school students in counties Cork and Kerry
* awarded certificates of recognition to all schools that contributed to the survey.

Place of research	Coiste Logainmneacha Chorcaí (Cork Place-Names Survey Committee) Oifig Logainmneacha An t-Áras 13 Paráid na Díge Corcaigh
Period	August 1998 to June 1999
Grant	€1,270
Researcher	Dr Éamon Lankford
Contact information	Phone: (021) 4274110 E-mail: logaimneacha@yahoo.com
Availability of report	Coiste Logainmneacha Chorcaí

3.7 Analysis of Results of Feasibility Study on Practical Assessment for Leaving Certificate Physics and Leaving Certificate Chemistry

This analysis took place following a project that the Department of Education and Science carried out in 1997 to develop and evaluate the feasibility of a model for the assessment of practical work at Leaving Certificate.

The feasibility study was carried out between November 1996 and June 1997 in about 5% of the schools that offered Leaving Certificate physics and in about 5% of the schools that offered Leaving Certificate chemistry. In all, 473 physics students and 413 chemistry students participated in the assessment.

As part of that project, Leaving Certificate students were assessed on their ability to carry out practical work in physics and in chemistry. They were awarded marks based on the assessment. The objective of this study was to examine whether there was any correlation between the marks obtained by the students whose practical work abilities were assessed in the course of the feasibility study and the marks obtained by the same candidates on the questions that examined practical work in the 1997 Leaving Certificate physics and Leaving Certificate chemistry examinations.

Principal findings
- The candidates who participated in the feasibility study were representative (in academic ability) of the candidates who sat the 1997 Leaving Certificate Higher Level physics and Higher Level chemistry examinations.
- The marks obtained by candidates in the assessment of practical work as carried out in the feasibility study were higher than those obtained in the assessment of practical work as tested on the Leaving Certificate Higher Level physics and Higher Level chemistry examination papers.
- There was a low correlation between the marks obtained by candidates in the practical questions on the 1997 Higher Level physics and Higher Level chemistry examination questions and the marks obtained by the same candidates in the feasibility study.

Place of research	Department of Education University College Cork
Period	January 1998 to December 1998
Grant	€7,555
Researcher	Declan Kennedy
Contact information	Phone: (021) 4903469 Fax: (021) 4270291 E-mail: d.kennedy@ucc.ie
Availability of report	Contact the researcher.

4. Further and higher education

Overview of chapter

Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education (2000) defined adult education as "systematic learning undertaken by adults who return to learning having concluded initial education or training". By definition, then, adult education was taken to include aspects of further and higher education, continuing education and training, community education, and other learning by adults, both formal and informal. However, embedding the concept of lifelong learning in Irish educational policy and provision cannot be achieved by the Department of Education and Science alone: it requires the commitment and partnership of all - educational researchers, providers of adult education, government, business, trade unions, communities, voluntary organisations, and individuals.

The projects featured in this chapter reflect the broad vision of *Learning for Life*.

- "Euro-Delphi Survey: The Future Goals and Policies of Adult Education in Europe, 1995" identifies and analyses the goals and related policies that were needed to direct the development of adult education in member-states of the European Union and in Europe at large in the period 1993-1995. In effect, this study helped pave the way for *Learning for Life*.
- "Adult Basic Education and Technology" describes the development of a local infrastructure for the provision of training courses in technology to adult learners.
- "Patterns of Participation and Performance in Art College: The Field of Study Choices and Academic Performance of Art and Design Students in Relation to Their Aesthetic and Academic Ability, Age, Gender, Entry Status, and Social Class" investigates who attends art college in Ireland, how art students perform while at college, and how their performance is related to their artistic and academic ability and other background characteristics.
- Finally, "Analysis of the International Adult Literacy Survey for Ireland" establishes the background to current adult education priorities. *The World Development Report* (1999/2000) found that 23% of the Irish adult population was functionally illiterate. "Analysis of the International Adult Literacy Survey for Ireland" explains how this phenomenon is largely due to a "cohort effect."

4.1 Euro-Delphi Survey: The Future Goals and Policies of Adult Education in Europe,1995

The Irish Euro-Delphi Survey, completed in 1995, was a comparative adult education initiative involving sixteen European countries. It sought to identify and analyse the core elements of the goals and related policies that should influence the development of adult education in Europe.

The Delphi Survey Method was used mainly to elicit responses from policy-makers and decision-makers, practitioners, and commentators engaged in the formulation of goals and policies in specific fields of adult education. In Ireland, however, a group of adult learners were also invited to participate in the project, because it was agreed that adult learners – the participants – are and should be active partners in formal, non-formal, and informal learning activities.

This comparative survey took place between 1992 and 1995. Recent developments and innovations in policies and in the provision of adult education in Ireland and in the European Union have validated many of the research conclusions of the Irish and European Euro-Delphi Survey.

Principal findings

- An accessible, flexible, open, and transparent support system should be available at local, national, and European level to help learners and adult educators. This support system should include financial resources, expertise, access to educational counselling and guidance, and access to an accreditation process.
- Participatory research in adult education should be encouraged. This research should concentrate on the effectiveness and the efficiency of the learning activity.
- An international accreditation system (including a professional training programme for adult educators) should be initiated within the member-states of the European Union.
- As a priority, adult education must and can contribute to the development of information technology and job mobility.
- Adult education must urgently address the problem of social cohesion and the related specific areas of poverty, distrust in politics, restricted democracy, and population change (migration and ethnicity).
- Adult education enhances personal well-being and engenders a sense of belonging at local and national levels.
- All the participant countries in the Euro-Delphi project emphasised the need for education for active democratic citizenship. Education for democratic citizenship would imply a multifaceted and process-focused approach to democratic citizenship, encompassing political, legal, social, economic, cultural, local, national, European, and global dimensions.
- It is still necessary to initiate networks and other instruments to disseminate innovations and research findings in adult education.

Place of research	Centre for Adult and Community Education National University of Ireland Maynooth Co. Kildare
Period	January 1993 to April 1995 (European Report - 1996)
Grant	€25,395
Researchers	Rev. Liam Carey Anne Murphy
Contact information	Rev. Liam Carey Phone: (01) 4931417 Anne Murphy Phone: (0507) 31981 Fax: Same as phone numbers
Availability of report	Contact the researchers.

4.2 Adult Basic Education and Technology

This project, jointly conducted by the Town of Tralee VEC, Co. Kerry VEC, and Co. Clare VEC, addressed five questions:
- At what level will technology be used in adult basic education?
- What hardware and software are required at this level?
- What training and other supports will be needed by adult basic education workers?
- Will the use of technology improve communications within adult basic education?
- How can technology improve the assessment and accountability required in adult basic education?

Principal work done by this project team
- Designed training courses for adult literacy tutors in the selection and use of computers and in the use of educational software. These courses were then taught by two adult education tutors in Tralee, Ennis, and Dublin.
- Compiled a report on the internet and on its implications for adult basic education.
- Compiled a list of software resources for adult basic education.

Place of research	Kerry Education Service Maine Street Tralee Co. Kerry	Co. Clare VEC Station Road Ennis Co. Clare
Period	1993 to 1994	
Grant	€11,428	
Researchers	John Kennedy	Adult Education Officer Kerry Education Service
	Seán Conlon	Adult Education Officer Co. Clare VEC
Contact information	John Kennedy	Phone: (066) 7121488 Fax: (066) 7121531 E-mail: jkennedy@cokerryed.ie
	Seán Conlon	Phone: (065) 6824819 Fax: (065) 6820144
Availability of report	Contact the Adult Education Officers.	

4.3 Patterns of Participation and Performance in Art College: The Field of Study Choices and Academic Performance of Art and Design Students in Relation to Their Aesthetic and Academic Ability, Age, Gender, Entry Status, and Social Class

This study focused on all new entrants to the four third-level colleges of art and design in the Republic in the autumn of 1992. The art and design entrant group was first evaluated at entry according to gender, age, social class, background, and county of origin; in relation to artistic experiences and educational experiences prior to entry; and in relation to artistic and academic ability at entry. The field of study choices of these art and design entrants was then examined in relation to their pre-entry and background characteristics and in relation to their performance in first year at art college. Members of the 1992 art and design entrant group were again assessed at graduation. At this point, their final-year performance was considered. Differences in final-year marks were considered in relation to both students' pre-enrolment and background characteristics and in relation to their performance in years preceding the final year.

Before this investigation, little if anything was known about those who attended art college in Ireland, about how art students performed while at college, or about how their performance was related to their artistic and academic ability and other background characteristics. This study was the first of its kind to be undertaken in Ireland.

Principal findings
- Factors such as gender, age, social class, educational experiences, and first-year performance at art college influence the choice of field of study made by students attending art and design colleges in Ireland.
- First-year performance at art college is mediated by factors such as gender, age, entry status (direct entrant or non-direct entrant), performance in Leaving Certificate art, performance in Leaving Certificate mathematics, and college attended.
- The score awarded to each entrant's portfolio during the portfolio assessment stage of the selection process is not a good or reliable predictor of first-year academic performance at art college.
- The relation between gender and final-year performance is mediated by field of study and level of study (degree or diploma).
- Age at entry is predictive of final-year performance, but, like gender, its effect is mediated by field of study.
- The effect of entry status on final-year performance differed for fine art and design students.

- The impact of Leaving Certificate points on degree or diploma performance is mediated by field and level of study.
- Apart from the fine art cohort in one of the three colleges, portfolio score was negatively associated with the final-year performance of fine art and design students at both degree and diploma level.
- Performance in first year at art college was a strong and significant predictor of the final-year marks of degree and diploma fine art students but not of design students.
- The relationship between final-year performance and academic performance in the year prior to the final-year was clearly mediated by field and level of study.

Place of research	Faculty of Education National College of Art and Design 100 Thomas Street Dublin 8
Period	September 1995 to September 2000
Grant	€6,349
Researcher	Dr Dónal O'Donoghue Supervisor: Prof. Iseult McCarthy
Contact information	Dr O'Donoghue Phone: (061) 204522 E-mail: Donal.ODonoghue@mic.ul.ie
Availability of report	Contact Dr O'Donoghue.

4.4 Analysis of the International Adult Literacy Survey for Ireland

On the basis of recently published reports, it appears that Ireland has a relatively low level of literacy compared with many other industrialised countries. Most recently, the *World Development Report* reported that 23% of the adult population are functionally illiterate. This figure received national media coverage in which the educational system was criticised for failing to equip people with a basic level of literacy. Against this was the commonly held perception of Ireland as a country with an educated people attracting significant foreign investment because of the skilled employment pool. This apparent contradiction merited investigation.

Based throughout on the *International Adult Literacy Survey*, this project examined the reasons behind the relatively low level of literacy reported in the Republic. Specifically, it investigated whether the results as reported were due to some cohort effect (for example, is it a consequence of the older age group receiving less schooling than the younger age group, thus lowering the average literacy level of the whole sample?). The researchers also examined the effectiveness of the education system in converting schooling into literacy in comparison with the data for Northern Ireland and Britain. Finally, they estimated the effect of low literacy on the probability of being unemployed. Given that the Irish economy has experienced unprecedented growth over recent years, they examined whether low-skilled workers were being penalised in the labour market.

Principal findings

Education and literacy

- Education plays a dominant role in determining literacy levels. Each education level adds to a person's score, suggesting a clear role for schooling in improving literacy levels.
- The Republic is more effective in converting periods of formal schooling into changes in the literacy skill of individuals as compared with the United Kingdom.
- The relatively low literacy level of the Irish population is largely attributable to a cohort effect. Before 1966, people were obliged to pay fees to attend secondary school. This acted as a barrier to participation for many at second level. Consequently, the older age cohort has a lower level of educational attainment that is reflected in a lower level of literacy. However, the participation rates in education have increased dramatically since the 1970s, which produces a more favourable distribution of literacy scores in Ireland.

Employment, earnings, education, and literacy

- Numeracy has the dominant role in determining a person's employment. Low quantitative literacy reduces one's chance of finding employment and results in significantly lower earnings for those in employment.
- People's perception of their mathematical skills is a significant determinant of the probability of employment.

Place of research	Economics Department University College Dublin
Period	June 1999 to December 1999
Grant	€7,618
Researchers	Dr Kevin Denny (UCD Economics) Dr Colm Harmon (UCD Economics) Dr Dorren McMahon (UCD Sociology) Ms Sandra Redmond (UCD Economics)
Contact information	Dr Harmon Phone (01) 7068318 Fax: (01) 2830068 E-mail: colm.harmon@ucd.ie
Availability of report	Contact the researchers.

5. School effectiveness and leadership

Overview of chapter

Schools are highly complex organisations whose management requires a great deal of planning. In recognition of schools' need for a systematic approach to management and organisation, the Department of Education and Science has promoted parallel initiatives in school development planning and school self-evaluation over the past few years. Internationally, there is widespread acceptance among educationalists that school development planning and school self-evaluation are powerful means of promoting school effectiveness. They enable a school community to develop a clear vision of what the school is about and where it is going, a shared sense of purpose, a common set of goals, and consensus on the means for attaining them.

The projects featured in this chapter exemplify some of the challenges faced by schools today:

- "Equality and the Social Climate of Schools" gathers empirical evidence on the social climate of post-primary schools before detailing ways in which equality can and should be embedded.
- By using evidence collected in student teachers' classrooms, "Gender Differences in Classroom Interaction" draws teaching professionals' attention to the disproportionate time and attention often devoted to boys in classrooms.
- "School Bullying in Ireland: A Nationwide Survey" examines the state of discipline in the school system in the period 1993 to 1994. The study contrasts the level of bullying in schools (primary and post-primary) during the first school term in which schools would have received the *National Guidelines on Countering and Preventing Bullying in Primary and Post-Primary Schools* with the level of bullying in the same schools after they had developed a school policy on bullying, as recommended in the *Guidelines*.
- Among other findings, "The International School Effectiveness Research Project" puts forward and supports the theory that a principal who promotes a specific ethos or vision, who emphasises staff relations, and who maintains open contact with the body of parents, can have a profound impact on the effectiveness of a school.
- "Evaluation of the School Leadership and Whole School Development Programme" reviews a programme for school managers and teachers aimed at promoting school improvement and development.
- "Discipline in Schools" examines the state of discipline in primary and post-primary schools in the period 1996 to 1997. It then goes on to offer recommendations and guidelines to teachers, parents, and schools for more effective action in relation to bullying.
- "Positive Discipline: An Educational Appraisal and Practical Guide" describes positive approaches to discipline that could be used in schools.
- "Analysis of the Millennium Book: Children and Identity in Postmodern Ireland" presents students' views on their family lives, friendships, localities, futures, and concerns.

5.1 Equality and the Social Climate of Schools

This project compiled a substantive body of empirical evidence on the social climate of twelve second-level schools over a period of two years. The study examined the inside life of schools from an equality viewpoint.

A range of research methods and systematic sampling procedures was deployed to study all aspects of life in schools, including classrooms, staff rooms, and extra-curricular activities. In all, 162 classrooms were observed, 72 focus group interviews were undertaken, 1,202 essays about school were collected, and 370 teachers were surveyed.

Teaching staff were met as a group at the design and analysis stages in each of the schools studied. The second meeting enabled teachers to make a contribution to the interpretative frameworks being drafted for the study. Students' views on the findings were also solicited through focus groups. Finally, conceptual frameworks from political, egalitarian, and sociological theory were used to analyse the findings.

Principal findings

The research showed that promoting equality in education is both a matter of distributive and non-distributive justice. It involves (a) material redistribution, (b) recognition of difference, and (c) parity of representation in the exercise of power. The data indicated that while the distributive perspective is valuable for understanding social class and other materially-based inequalities, respect for differences is necessary to promote equality for groups that are culturally marginalised (ethnic, racial, sexual or religious minorities). Promoting equality in education also involves addressing the use and abuse of power. For young people in particular, equality in education involves parity of participation in the exercise of power.

Place of research	Equality Studies Centre University College Dublin
Period	Spring 1995 to 2000
Grant	€71,105
Researchers	Dr Kathleen Lynch Dr Anne Lodge
Contact information	Phone: (01) 7067623/ 104 Fax: (01) 7161107 E-mail: Kathleen.Lynch@ucd.ie
Availability of report	Lynch, K., and Lodge, A. 2002. *Equality and Power in Schools: Redistribution, Recognition and Representation.* London: Routledge/ Falmer.

5.2 Gender Differences in Classroom Interaction

International research suggests that boys typically have a disproportionate share of contributions in whole-class interaction, partly because of their being selected by the teacher more frequently than girls, and partly because of their ability to create conditions (positive and negative) that attract teachers' attention and that facilitate their participation and dominant position in classroom interaction. This "conversationally focal" position of boys provides them with an important learning experience (i.e. the confidence of being listened and responded to within the public domain, thus stimulating them to participate more). Girls may thereby be unintentionally pushed out of the centre of the action, learning to expect a lower participation level than boys.

This longitudinal study set out to establish whether internationally observed patterns of male domination of interactions were observable in Irish co-educational classrooms, and to relate patterns to a number of intervening variables. It took the form of an action research project among student teachers on a postgraduate professional course with an emphasis on teachers' self-analysis and reflection. Data was collected over six years from student teachers on teaching practice in a wide cross-section of co-educational schools in parts of Ulster and Leinster (including the Dublin metropolitan area). This action research project among student teachers was followed by a quantitative statistical analysis of aggregate patterns of interactions in classrooms taught by those student teachers in a variety of co-educational second-level schools.

Principal findings

In more than 136 classes taught by student teachers in second-level co-educational schools, boys received a disproportionate share of all interactions. Their average levels of interaction with their teachers were almost one-and-a-half times greater than those of the girls in the study. These differences were statistically significant.

In general, boys were praised more than girls were. Boys' contributions were more frequently accepted by teachers. They were asked more questions than girls and, of the questions asked, were posed more challenging ones. Although the level of criticism in the student teachers' classes was very low, boys were almost three times more likely than girls to receive it. In response, boys gave more answers than girls, and of these, more were at an analytical level. Boys were also more likely than girls to initiate interactions with their teachers.

The data from the student teachers' classes was then examined to establish whether patterns of classroom interaction were effected by four key variables: the sex of the teacher, the class size, the gender composition of the class, and the subject being taught. Of those four, the one variable that was strongly, consistently, and most significantly related to the patterns of classroom interaction was the gender composition of the class. Both boys and girls participated in more interactions where their own sex was in the majority in the classroom. However, the effect was somewhat greater for girls.

Place of research	Education Department National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Period	January 1991 to June 1999
Grant	€12,697
Researchers	Prof. Sheelagh Drudy Education Department UCD Dr Máire Uí Chatháin Education Department NUI, Maynooth
Contact information	Prof. Drudy Phone: (01) 7168154 Fax: (01) 7161143 E-mail: Sheelagh.Drudy@ucd.ie Dr Uí Chatháin Phone: (01) 7083731 Fax: (01) 7084610
Availability of report	Drudy, S., and Uí Chatháin, M. 1999. *Gender Equality in Classroom Interaction.* Maynooth: NUI, Maynooth.

5.3   School Bullying in Ireland: A Nationwide Survey

This project examined the incidence and correlates of bullying behaviour in Irish primary and post-primary schools during the period 1993 to 1994. The first stage of the study examined the prevalence of bullying in schools during the first school term in which the schools would have received the *National Guidelines on Countering and Preventing Bullying in Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. The second stage re-examined the level of bullying in the same schools after the schools had developed a school policy on bullying, as recommended in the *Guidelines*.

Principal findings
- One in twenty school children at primary level and one in fifty at post-primary level were subjected to frequent peer bullying.
- Verbal bullying (general name-calling) was the predominant form of bullying. Racist bullying, in the form of nasty names about colour and race, was also reported. Bullying by boys tended to be more physical in nature than bullying by girls.
- The self-esteem of children of both primary and post-primary age who were involved either as victims or as bullies or both was significantly lower than the self-esteem of children who had neither bullied nor been bullied.
- Significant findings on the influence of school organisation arrangements (e.g. co-educational or single-sex, mixed-ability or streamed) and of school contexts (secondary, comprehensive, vocational, or community school, and urban or rural) on bullying levels were also noted in this study.
- The strong unwillingness found among pupils to report that they were bullied and the reluctance of the peer group to intervene on the victim's behalf were other important findings of this research.
- Finally, the responsiveness of primary and post-primary schools to the launch of the *National Guidelines on Countering and Preventing Bullying in Primary and Post-Primary Schools* was also noted in this study.

Place of research	Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre Department of Education Trinity College Dublin 2
Period	October 1993 to 2000
Grant	€35,553
Researcher	Dr Astrid Mona O'Moore
Contact information	Phone: (01) 6081240/ 6082573 Fax: (01) 6777238 E-mail: momoore@tcd.ie
Availability of report	O'Moore, A. M., Kirkham, C., and Smith, M. 1997. "Bullying Behaviour in Irish Schools: A Nationwide Study." *The Irish Journal of Psychology* 18 (2), 141-169. O'Moore, A. M., Kirkham C., and Smith M. 1998. "Bullying in Schools in Ireland: A Nationwide Study." *Irish Educational Studies* 17, 254-71. O'Moore, A.M. 2000. Aggressive Behaviour. *Critical Issues for Teacher Training to Counter Bullying and Victimisation in Ireland.* 26, 99–111.

5.4   The International School Effectiveness Research Project

This study draws attention to important features of both effective and less effective Irish schools. As well as the significance of social class in mediating both the extent and nature of effectiveness that is open to change, the study identified the importance of the principal in increasing the effectiveness level of a school through the promotion of a distinct vision, an emphasis on positive staff relations, and open contact with the parent body.

Principal findings
One of the most important factors contributing to the effectiveness of a school was found to be a principal who actively promotes a particular ethos or vision, an emphasis on positive staff relations, and open contact with the parent body.

The study also found that many of the differences between pupils in cognitive outcomes and measures of social development could be attributed to individual-level factors such as students' social class, gender, and ability.

With respect to students' social development, effective schools were found to significantly enhance pupils' self-concepts and their perceptions of democratic practices in the classroom.

Place of research	Education Department University College Dublin
Period	September 1994 to July 1997
Grant	€6,505
Researchers	Dr Dympna Devine Prof. Desmond T. Swan
Contact information	Phone: (01) 7068338 Fax: (01) 7061143 E-mail: Dympna.Devine@ucd.ie
Availability of report	Government Publications Sale Office

5.5 Evaluation of the School Leadership and Whole School Development Programme

The School Leadership and Whole School Development Programme was initiated by the In-Service Council of the Secretariat of Secondary Schools to respond to school principals' requests for management education and was supported by the Department of Education and Science. The programme included courses for principals, vice-principals and other teachers and aimed at promoting school improvement and development. Schools from other sectors also participated in this programme, although in smaller numbers. Between 1991 and 1995, 175 schools took part in the programme. 40% of the schools in the programme were sampled in the evaluation in 1995 and 1996.

Principal findings
- The programme was of high quality.
- Schools were uneven in the degree to which they were succeeding in mounting effective change and development.
- Certain cultural and structural factors seriously inhibited change in schools (such as style of leadership, staff morale, school climate, and staff structures).
- Principals differed greatly in the approaches they took to effect change in internal management and to improve school effectiveness.
- Achieving outcomes of improved practice also required changes in school culture. The most successful schools were those that effectively addressed the social and cultural nature of the changes sought.

Place of research	Department of Education and Professional Studies University of Limerick
Period	1995 to 1996
Grant	€39,318
Researchers	Prof. Diarmuid Leonard Department of Education and Professional Studies University of Limerick Dearbhal Ní Chárthaigh, Director Centre for Studies in Gender and Education University of Limerick Patricia Dundon, Research assistant
Contact information	Prof. Leonard Phone: (061) 202719 Fax: (061) 202751 E-mail: Diarmuid.leonard@ul.ie
Availability of report	Contact Association of Managers of Catholic Secondary Schools Phone: (01) 2838255

5.6   Discipline in Schools

This project, commissioned by the Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach, was conceived as a preliminary inquiry by an individual researcher into the state of discipline in the school system. The researcher was asked to answer the following questions:

1.   Is discipline in schools an issue of national concern?
2.   Are there models of good practice in the system from which others could learn?
3.   What support structures are required to support good discipline?

The study surveyed the discipline situation of the time, made some recommendations, and suggested guidelines for improved action.

The study began by exploring the concept of school discipline. It analysed the contextual circumstances impinging on school discipline in Irish schools by grounding itself in observational data and in Irish and international research findings. What followed was an analysis of the data gathered from a questionnaire, from a series of structured interviews with representatives of the partners in education, and from a series of visits by the researcher to a selection of primary and post-primary schools in different settings and representative of the social mix. General recommendations for improvement were then outlined. Finally, case studies of best practice (i.e. schools that were meeting the challenge of creating well-disciplined teaching and learning environments) were detailed.

Principal findings

*   Discipline is a serious issue of concern to all the partners.
*   The majority of schools in the system are not plagued by persistent disruption, but all respondents report an increase in disruption.
*   A sizeable number of schools are greatly troubled by persistent disruption of a serious nature. Most of these schools are in areas of multiple disadvantage.
*   Many schools in multiply disadvantaged areas are responding very competently to the challenges posed. These schools invariably have quality leadership and a range of support structures.
*   The age of onset of disruptive incidents seems to be lowering.
*   Where parents are supportive of the school, disruption problems are minimised.

Place of research	Education Department National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Period	April 1996 to April 1997
Grant	€31,182
Researcher	Dr Maeve Martin
Contact information	Phone: (01) 7083731 Fax: (01) 7084610 E-mail: maeve.martin@may.ie
Availability of report	Department of Education and Science Communications Unit

5.7 Positive Discipline: An Educational Appraisal and Practical Guide

This project was a collaboration between Greendale Community School and the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University. It encompassed an intensive programme of research, development, implementation, and evaluation of a positive discipline approach to facilitate student learning.

First, a working party of Greendale Community School's staff reviewed the school's approach to discipline and analysed the academic literature on school planning and on discipline. An action plan was then prepared, and funding was obtained from the Department of Education and Science. Having identified positive discipline as a philosophy and practice that could facilitate learning, the working group developed a positive discipline programme that would first be used in Greendale, with a view to wider application. During the project, staff members and pupils were consulted extensively and collaboratively. There was also a significant contribution from the parents' association. Finally, the School of Education Studies of DCU conducted a detailed evaluation of the project.

Principal findings

- *Student interaction*
  Students showed interest and enthusiasm when given the choice of participating in a self-improvement programme. Negotiation with students of acceptable practices and behaviour proved a worthwhile and enlightening process. Students needed to be involved in regular discussions about their progress, on the re-evaluation of the programme, and on the programme's objectives.

- *Rewards*
  The programme offered students a graded selection of rewards. Over 80% of the junior pupils considered getting rewards for doing "good things" an effective way of changing their behaviour. On the other hand, less than 50% of the pupils (24.1% definitely and 24.1% probably) reported that they would be discouraged from a particular behaviour path by detention.

- *Approval by teachers*
  Teachers' approval was important to students. Almost 66% of students stated that they were likely to behave better if their teachers praised them.

- *Discipline as an interpersonal issue*
  81.4% of the year group felt that the way in which they did their work changed for the better. 70.3% (40.7% definitely and 29.6% probably) confirmed a general change in their relationship with their teachers, while exactly the same proportion of teachers confirmed a general change in how they got on with other pupils.

Place of research	Greendale Community School Kilbarrack Dublin 5 and School of Education Studies Dublin City University Dublin 9
Period	September 1996 to September 1999
Grant	€8,888
Researchers	Joe O'Hara (DCU) Stephen J. Byrne (Greendale Community School) Gerry McNamara (DCU)
Contact information	Phone: (01) 7005223 (DCU) Fax: (01) 7005222 (DCU) E-mail: Gerry.McNamara@dcu.ie
Availability of report	*Positive Discipline: An Educational Appraisal and Practical Guide* is available from the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University (Price €16.50).

5.8   Analysis of the Millennium Book: Children and Identity in Postmodern Ireland

In May 1999 the Millennium Committee invited young people in fifth class (primary) and Transition Year (post-primary) as well as pupils in special schools to write a single page about themselves, their hopes for the future, and their vision of Ireland both in the present and in the new millennium for the "Write Here! Write Now!" project. Students were also invited to use the back of the page creatively if they so wished. When the bundles of texts from the participating schools were returned to the Department of Education and Science, one page was selected at random from every participating class. These pages are now included in the Millennium Book, which consists of twelve bound volumes. The book was presented to President Mary McAleese in December 2000 and is now held in the National Library.

The objective of this study was to analyse a substantial stratified sample of the contributions written for possible inclusion in the Millennium Book. These texts provide valuable insight into young people's life experiences, giving their views and analyses on education, family, relationships, community, and leisure pursuits. The texts also illustrate young people's sense of citizenship, in terms of their appreciation of place, their awareness of heritage, their cultural focus, and their consciousness of a range of social justice issues.

Principal findings
The majority of contributors (85%) were primary school students in fifth class. The most important themes to emerge from the analysis of the sample were as follows:

- *Family*
  The focus ranged from a simple description or naming of family members to an expression of the significance of the love and support of family members for the writer. A small proportion of contributors described disruption to the family, such as the death of a family member.

- *Friendship*
  The focus again ranged from naming and describing friends to an expression of the importance of the companionship and support of individual friends. Friends fell into two general categories: some writers placed friends in an activity context while others focused mainly on the relational aspects of friendship.

- *Locality*
  Most contributors who wrote about their own area expressed pride in its beauty and friendliness. Some, however, were more critical, commenting on both social and environmental problems associated with their own place.

- *The future*

  Most writers had relatively positive expectations and hopes for the future, if at times rather unrealistic and based on science-fiction. Some, however, were more fearful, expressing concerns regarding war and environmental problems.

- *Minority themes*

  The less frequently explored themes included pupils' views on school, their own appearances, their hobbies and interests, and their awareness of current affairs.

Place of research	Department of Government and Society University of Limerick
Period	Autumn 1999 to December 2000
Grant	€1,904
Researchers	Prof. Pat O'Connor Department of Government and Society University of Limerick Dr Anne Lodge Education Department NUI, Maynooth Ciara Kane, final-year student Department of Government and Society University of Limerick
Contact information	Prof. O'Connor Ph: (061) 202286 Fax: (061) 202569 Dr Lodge Ph: (01) 7083472 Fax: (01) 7084610 E-mail: Anne.lodge@may.ie
Availability of report	Contact Dr Lodge

6. Equality

Overview of chapter

The following issues are at the core of *Learning for Life (2000):* the need to cater for teenagers in care, to provide appropriate education and training for people with disabilities, to battle obstacles to inter-culturalism, and to counter trends in absenteeism and early school-leaving. These issues, that Ireland has traditionally found most difficult to address because of its centrally organised education system, are at the heart of the projects featured in this chapter.

Three projects in this chapter deal with the plight of teenagers in residential care. "Learn to Listen: The Irish Report of a European Study on Residential Childcare" and "Safe Caring in Residential Childcare: The Irish Report of a European Study" depict the residential care system in Ireland and offer recommendations about national policy and practice. The third piece of research, "Left Out on Their Own: Young People Leaving Care in Ireland," collected data about the circumstances of young people six months and two-and-a-half years after leaving care.

Two studies in this chapter examine the educational needs of people with disabilities. "Independent Living for People with Cystic Fibrosis" gathered data on the issues and problems facing people with cystic fibrosis and proposed changes in education, training, employment, income support, health services, housing, and transport to enable such people to live independently. "Education Provision for Pupils with Severe and Profound Learning Disabilities" examined two interrelated issues pertaining to the education of pupils with severe and profound general learning difficulties: the location and organisation of provision, and the morale and turnover of teachers.

Refugees' and asylum-seekers' needs and experiences are explored in three studies in this chapter. "Meeting the Language Needs of Refugees," a report prepared by the Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College, investigated the question of language support for adult refugees from theoretical and comparative perspectives, before analysing the type of English-language training provided for such groups and elaborating recommendations for future action by the Department of Education and Science. The "Refugee Resettlement Research Project" examined the resettlement patterns of Vietnamese and Bosnian Programme Refugees and their family members in Ireland, with a view to designing appropriate services for refugee communities in the future. Finally, "The Experience of Racism among Ethnic Minorities in Ireland" gathered information on the perceptions and experiences of young members of ethnic minority groups.

The fourth research interest represented in this chapter is that of pupils at risk of leaving school before the completion of their formal education. The objective of the "Marino Early School Leavers' Project," for example, was to gather the views and experiences of a sample of early school leavers, to identify the process and possible reasons for early school-leaving. "Moyross Intervention Education Pilot Project" sought to bring about "sustainable improvements in the educational attainments of 75 infant children" in an area of high early school-leaving and unemployment. "The Pathways Project: A Follow-Up Study of 12-Year-Olds in Dublin and Belfast at Ages 17 and 27" considered the effect of socio-economic and "troubles-related" factors on early school-leaving trends. "Early School-Leaving and Educational Disadvantage in a Small Town" assessed the impact of school-based factors on early school-leaving trends in a small town. "Young People, Drug Use, and Early School-Leaving" investigated the effect drug use had on young Dublin people's decision to leave school early. Finally, "School Absenteeism in Clondalkin" investigated the causes of absenteeism among primary and post-primary pupils in north and south-west Clondalkin and proposed responses to the problem.

"Preventing Offending: A Stake in Civic Society" summarises the proceedings of a conference organised by the Irish Association for the Study of Delinquency to explore and propose responses to juvenile offending.

6.1 Marino Early School Leavers' Project

In 1994, the Department of Education and Science commissioned the Marino Institute of Education to investigate why pupils were leaving post-primary school after completing the Junior Cycle. In the research, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used with early school leavers, parents, principals, and teachers. The object of the research was to analyse the views and experiences of the sample and to gain an insight into the reasons for and the process of early school-leaving. Sixty people from north Dublin, Dundalk, and Edenderry participated in the study.

Principal findings
- Principals and teachers were very concerned about the problem of young people leaving school early.
- In general, principals and teachers believed that the reasons for and solutions to early school-leaving lay outside the domain of the school. The Department of Education and Science was seen as having the main responsibility for bringing about change.
- Opportunities for employment or for places on training courses act as an incentive to pupils to leave school.
- The members of the sample believed that the Senior Cycle curriculum fails to meet the needs of many pupils.
- From the viewpoint of the young people and their parents, the main reasons for leaving school early were associated with school factors, particularly the relationship between pupils and teachers.

Place of research	Marino Institute of Education Griffith Avenue Dublin 9
Period	April 1994 to December 1995
Grant	€12,697
Researchers	Scott Boldt Brendan Devine Pat Madigan
Contact information	Phone: (01) 8057700 Fax: (01) 8335290 E-mail: sboldt@mie.ie
Availability of report	Contact Scott Boldt.

6.2   Moyross Intervention Education Pilot Project (MIEPP)

In 1989, Mary Immaculate College invited PAUL (People Action against Unemployment Limited) to participate in a multi-agency, multi-dimensional initiative that would identify the critical educational needs of one of the partnership communities. The Moyross area was selected for the intervention and the project was sponsored by the Moyross community.

Personnel from Corpus Christi Primary School, parents of participating children in the Moyross community, the Curriculum Development Unit of Mary Immaculate College, PAUL, the Department of Education and Science, the City of Limerick VEC, the Mid-Western Health Board, and FÁS all agreed to participate in the project.

MIEPP began in September 1990. The project aimed to bring about "sustainable improvements in the educational attainment of seventy-five infant children" who began school at Corpus Christi School, Moyross, in September 1991. It devised, implemented, and evaluated a curriculum with a pronounced academic emphasis to meet the specific needs of those seventy-five infant children. It provided "intervention assistance" for the first four years of the children's school-lives. In September 1995 external evaluators were appointed and the summative evaluation of the project was begun.

Principal findings

* *Parents*
  Parents listed the following positive outcomes of the project: (1) getting to know the teachers of their children, (2) developing an understanding of the stresses of a teacher's life, and (3) becoming more aware of what their children were doing at school.
  The adult education classes provided during the project were valued immensely by parents, helping them become "far more assertive" and "conscious of the ongoings in education."
  Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the initiative was the way in which it empowered parents and increased their involvement in their children's education at every level, including classroom participation. This development showed that the principal requirement for combating educational disadvantage is the provision of opportunities for parents to exercise their right to direct and enhance the education of their children.

* *Teachers*
  There were indications that the project had not done enough in preparing teachers to interact with more active parents.
  The teachers emphasised the increased availability of materials and equipment during the project and considered this to be of positive benefit to the children.

- *Children*
  The majority of teachers noted an improvement in the children's linguistic and social competences.
  As the study progressed, it became evident that just as parents were becoming more aware of their children's education, so too were children becoming aware of their parents' education.
  When interviewed, the children participating in the project revealed high aspirations for their own futures.

Place of research	Curriculum Development Unit Mary Immaculate College South Circular Road Limerick
Period	September 1990 to September 1999
Grant	One seconded teacher (five years) €1,904 toward the evaluation of the project
Researchers	Zita Lysaght, Education Officer Dr Frank Flanagan, Project Chair *Project evaluators* Diarmuid Ó Donnabháin Dr Francis Douglas + Mai Sammon Dr John Breen
Contact information	Phone: (061) 204354 Fax: (061) 313632 E-mail: Frank.flanagan@mic.ul.ie
Availability of report	Curriculum Development Unit Mary Immaculate College University of Limerick

6.3   Meeting the Language Needs of Refugees

In March 1995, the Refugee Agency (now called the Reception and Integration Agency) approached the Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS), Trinity College, Dublin. The Refugee Agency wanted to establish a theoretical and practical overview of language support for refugees, with a view to laying down guidelines for future action. In response, the CLCS carried out the study "Meeting the Language Needs of Refugees" with funding from the Department of Education and Science. The project had four aims:

- to consider the question of language support for adult refugees from a theoretical viewpoint, illuminated by research into language learning and teaching
- to use the principles elaborated during the first part of the project to describe and evaluate English-language training for adult refugees admitted to Ireland at that time
- to gather information about the provision of language support for adult refugees in other countries
- to propose recommendations for future action by the Department of Education and Science and the Refugee Agency.

Principal findings
- There should be a specialised Refugee Language Support Unit with responsibility for co-ordinating the provision of language training for all refugees admitted to Ireland.
- Co-ordination should be based on a properly researched system of language proficiency benchmarks.

Place of research	Centre for Language and Communication Studies Trinity College Dublin 2
Period	January 1996 to September 1996
Grant	€18,591
Researchers	Prof. David G. Little Dr Barbara Lazenby Simpson
Contact information	Phone: (01) 6081505/ 2615 Fax: (01) 6772694 E-mail: Dlittle@tcd.ie Bsimpson@tcd.ie
Availability of report	Contact the CLCS.

6.4 Refugee Resettlement Research Project

The Refugee Resettlement Research Project was first proposed as a collaborative initiative between the Refugee Agency (now called the Reception and Integration Agency) and the Department of Psychology, Eastern Health Board. The aim of the project was to examine the resettlement patterns of Vietnamese and Bosnian programme refugees and of their family members in Ireland. It was envisaged that the research would inform policymaking and service provision, thereby facilitating the continuing improvement of services to refugee communities.

The initiative evolved into an interdepartmental project and received support and funding from the following Government departments: Education and Science; Environment and Local Government; Foreign Affairs; Health and Children; and Social, Community and Family Affairs.

Separate research designs were adopted for the adult and the under-18-year-old sections of the population. For the adults, the research was based on semi-structured interviews with a sample population. For the under-18-year-old population, the survey was confined to teachers' assessments of children's levels of social and academic adaptation in the school environment. The "Teachers' Report Form," a teacher's version of the Child Behaviour Checklist (Achenbach) was the instrument used to measure the children's levels of adaptation.

The study was not intended to provide a definitive account of the lives of the programme refugee population. Rather, it was conceived of as a statistical profile of some of the programme refugees' experiences, feelings, and plans for the future. It was hoped that the study would provide a reference point for future research into the refugee population in Ireland.

Principal findings
- Cultural differences and linguistic difficulties must be respected and taken into account in the development and provision of services for refugees.
- Service-providers need to continually enhance communication with members of the refugee communities.
- Positive measures aimed at enabling refugees to join the workforce are an essential part of refugee resettlement. Existing support should be further developed.
- Programme refugees' levels of psychological distress and psychiatric morbidity should continue to be monitored by the appropriate bodies, and services further developed.
- In the school environment, children of refugees appear to be adapting well academically and socially. However, it is possible that speech and language difficulties may have a role to play in cases where individuals are demonstrating behavioural problems.

- Service-providers dealing with refugees need to develop additional strategies to make their services more accessible. Groups such as older refugees, those who have not spent time in a reception centre, and those with poor English will generally require a more proactive approach from service-providers if they are not to remain isolated.
- As a group, refugees experience more barriers to employment than the general population. For this reason, the inclusion of refugees as a specific target group under the National Anti-Poverty Strategy should be considered.
- The most effective approach to resettlement is to encourage the integration, rather than the assimilation, of refugees in Irish society.

Place of research	Reception and Integration Agency (formerly the Refugee Agency) 72-76 St. Stephen's Green Dublin 2
Period	June 1996 to June 1998
Grant	€6,983 (part-funding)
Researchers	Cathal O'Regan
Contact information	Phone: (01) 4183200 Fax: (01) 4183217
Availability of report	Contact the Reception and Integration Agency

6.5　Independent Living for People with Cystic Fibrosis

The aim of this study was to gather facts and figures on the difficulties facing people with cystic fibrosis, so that social policies and strategies could be developed on independent living. The objectives of the project were:

- to create an awareness and understanding of the nature of cystic fibrosis
- to examine the issues and problems people with cystic fibrosis have in relation to education, training, employment, income support, housing, health services, and transport
- to propose recommendations for policy-makers and practitioners at local, regional, and national levels about the improvements that are required to meet the needs of people with cystic fibrosis and so promote independent living.

Various research methods were used in course of this study. Postal questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used for the collection of factual information from primary sources. Literature reviews provided an invaluable insight into the services available to people with disabilities. The study population consisted of adults with cystic fibrosis and relevant informants, such as cystic fibrosis nurses, liaison officers, and parents of people with cystic fibrosis.

Principal recommendations

- *Education*
  Information on cystic fibrosis should be given to all employers to ensure that they understand the condition and that they deal positively with employees who have it.
  Flexible employment schemes need to be more widely publicised. Often these jobs are part-time and allow people to retain their secondary benefits. This may suit many people with cystic fibrosis.

- *Training*
  All training schemes should move towards being modular and competence-based so that trainees are certified for the skills attained even if they do not complete the full course.

- *Employment*
  The National Rehabilitation Board should have a follow-up service for people with disabilities who are placed in employment. This would ensure that the employment is satisfactory and that, if not, the issues could be dealt with before they become problems.

- *Income support*
  Two types of payment need to be established for people with disabilities. First, supplementary payments should be made to meet the additional costs associated with the disability, irrespective of whether or not the person is working. Second, people with disabilities should be compensated for loss of income due to incapacity to work full time or to work to full potential.

- *Health services*
  Local and regional hospitals need improved facilities, such as the provision of temporary accommodation for parents of children with cystic fibrosis, a separate cystic fibrosis adult section, and more isolation rooms. Priority should be given to the building of the new cystic fibrosis adult unit in St Vincent's Hospital.
  Home help services need to be developed in each health board area.
  A lung transplant unit should be set up so that people with cystic fibrosis do not have to travel to Britain for transplant assessments, operations, and post-operative care. The Department of Health and Children should outline the steps and timeframe involved in the setting up of this unit.

- *Housing*
  People with cystic fibrosis should be put on the priority list for housing, as they require suitable accommodation and stability in housing.

- *Transport*
  Cystic fibrosis has limiting effects on a person's mobility. People with cystic fibrosis should be recognised as drivers with a disability and should be eligible for the same range of entitlements as other drivers with disabilities. The criteria governing eligibility for the mobility allowances and for the motorised transport grant should include people with hidden disabilities, such as cystic fibrosis.

Place of research	Cystic Fibrosis House 24 Lower Rathmines Road Dublin 6
Period	March 1996 to March 1998
Grant	€6,348
Researchers	Fiona Purcell
Contact information	Phone: (01) 4962433 Fax: (01) 4962201 E-mail: cfhouse@internet-ireland.ie
Availability of report	Contact Cystic Fibrosis House.

6.6 The Pathways Project: A Follow-Up Study of 12-Year-Olds in Dublin and Belfast at Ages 17 and 27

This was a follow-up study of two groups of subjects living in urban areas of social disadvantage in Dublin and Belfast when they were aged 17 and 27 (the same subjects had first been surveyed when they were 12). Data was gathered through a questionnaire that included self-evaluative measures of competence and self-worth.

The aims of the study were to establish the young people's opportunities, influences, and outcomes in education and employment; to determine their views about the social contract and their own future; to obtain an overview of the variety and range of personality variables and social attitudes within the groups; and to establish whether any predictor variables could be identified at the age of twelve. Information was also obtained on a range of independent variables, including the educational and occupational level of parents, the intactness of families, and the young people's attitudes towards religion. For the Belfast participants, information was also obtained on their experiences of Troubles-related violence and on their perceptions of the effects of the Troubles on themselves and on their families.

Selected principal findings

- *Education*
  47% of the Dublin group who were twelve in 1992 left school early (before the age of sixteen) compared with 36% of those who were twelve in 1982.
- *Employment*
  Males had lower educational qualifications but higher-paid jobs and worked longer hours than females.
- *Health*
  A slightly higher proportion of the Dublin respondents had experienced serious medical problems. The Belfast group's evidence suggested that Troubles-related experiences were significant factors for health status (alcohol, drugs, cigarettes).
- *Perceptions of self-competence*
  Perceptions of self-competence were significantly higher among the Dublin 17-year-olds in most of the domains tested. There were differences among the 27-year-olds only for job competence, where the Dublin group rated themselves significantly higher than the Belfast groups.

Place of research	Department of Clinical Speech and Language Studies Trinity College Dublin 2
Period	February 1997 to March 1999
Grant	€24,125
Researcher	Dr Jean Whyte
Contact information	Phone: (01) 6081551/ 1496 Fax: (01) 6712152 E-mail: Jwhyte@tcd.ie
Availability of report	Contact Dr Jean Whyte.

6.7 Early School-Leaving and Educational Disadvantage in a Small Town

The aim of this study was to research the social and institutional causes of early school-leaving and of educational disadvantage in a small town. The study identified the extent of early school-leaving in a town served by a vocational school, a girls' secondary school, and a boys' secondary school. A general profile of the achievement levels in the three schools was constructed, which provided a context for the qualitative interviews with early school leavers.

As well as reviewing the sociological literature on early school-leaving and under-achievement and presenting a biographical profile of the sample of early school leavers interviewed, this study also examined school-based factors (for example subject choices, subject take-up patterns, and achievement levels; school management procedures, pupil intake, streaming, learning-support and Home-School-Community Liaison policies; and the experiences of early school leavers in Youthreach, an alternative model of education). Finally, the study presented the reasons for early school-leaving as articulated by the sample population interviewed.

Principal findings
- Initial learning difficulties generally led to low academic achievement at school. Low achievers felt that their needs had been neglected at school, as only one of the three schools offered learning-support help.
- Subject choice was restricted. "Low achievers" in the vocational school could not study modern languages, while those in secondary schools could not study technical subjects.
- Streaming and labelling in school had a negative effect on pupils' self-esteem and personal development.
- The learning difficulties of potential early school leavers were often compounded by negative interaction between teachers and pupils.
- The inability of potential early school leavers to cope academically seemed to have precipitated disruptive behaviour among some respondents. In contrast, some found that in the work-place or in Youthreach they could ask for help and were treated with respect.
- Some of the respondents were victims of bullying at school.
- Few early school leavers made a positive decision to leave school. Instead, they drifted away, not returning after they were suspended, or after Transition Year, or after summer employment.
- Early school-leaving was often preceded by truancy. For low achievers, attending school only confirmed their failure to achieve, so they tried to find a life outside school.
- Early school leavers did not have contact with career guidance teachers, as these work mostly with students in the final years of school.
- Home-School-Community Liaison teachers put school leavers in touch with Youthreach programmes and other training opportunities. They were perceived by early school leavers as "approachable" and pupils trusted them. Home-School-Community Liaison teachers also helped keep low-achieving pupils at school. This seemed to be more effective where the school was able to offer continuing learning support and seemed more likely to help keep female low-achievers at school.

Place of research	Department of Sociology Trinity College Dublin 2
Period	1998 to 2000
Grant	€29,077
Researchers	Dr Evelyn Mahon Áine McGrath
Contact information	Phone: (01) 6082314 Fax: (01) 6771300 E-mail: Emahon@tcd.ie
Availability of report	Contact the researchers.

6.8   Young People, Drug Use, and Early School-Leaving

This project examined the nature and extent of drug use among young people in Dublin and its effect, if any, on their decision to leave school early. The prevalence of hidden opiate use among young people was estimated using the 'capture-recapture' technique. This statistical method was applied to data on hospital admissions, Garda records, and methadone treatment from 1996 and to the same data sources (excluding Garda records) for 1997.

The nature of drug use was examined by means of a survey of 112 early school leavers aged between fourteen and twenty-three years who had decided to return to education. This survey questioned the young school leavers on the types of drugs they had used before and after their decision to leave school. In addition, questions pertaining to their reasons for leaving school early and to their reasons for returning to education were posed.

Principal findings
A minimum of 1,528 young people, aged between ten and twenty years were identified from the raw data as using opiates in Dublin in 1996. The estimated prevalence from the capture-recapture method found that 4,081 young people aged between ten and twenty years were estimated to be using opiates in Dublin in 1996. (Details of the capture–recapture method are available in the main report.)

51.1% of those surveyed had tried drugs before leaving school and 73.5% had tried drugs at or before the age of fifteen. Of those who had tried drugs before leaving school, 46.5% noted that their drug use had affected them at least sometimes while they attended school. In addition, two respondents said that their drug use had had a definite effect on their decision to leave school early, while six said that their drug use had had a secondary effect on their decision to leave school early.

When asked if they were using drugs at present, 89 of the 112 respondents answered the question. Only 29.2% of the respondents said they were now using drugs. However, this contrasts with replies given by respondents about the types of drugs they were using at the time of the survey and about the frequency of their drug use. While the majority of the respondents said they were not using drugs, 70.3% of the respondents indicated that they had used cannabis, with 47.3% of these respondents using cannabis daily. That is a much higher figure than the number given in the earlier questionnaire and would lead one to believe that using cannabis is not considered to be using drugs. 16.5% of the respondents used ecstasy weekly.

2.2% of the population surveyed admitted to more serious drug use – a figure similar to estimates of opiate use derived by Comiskey in her multi-source enumeration of known opiate use among 15 to 54-year-olds living in Dublin in 1996 (1998). Comiskey found a known prevalence of 1% in 15 to 54-year-olds, rising to 2.5% in males aged 15 to 24.

6.9   School Absenteeism in Clondalkin

This project sought to investigate the causes of absenteeism among primary and post-primary pupils in north and south-west Clondalkin and to explore potential responses to this problem. The study was commissioned after a previous report written for the Clondalkin Partnership found the level of absenteeism in the area to be high. In three of the schools surveyed as part of that earlier report, the combined figure for absenteeism, both regular (attendance between 50 and 79%) and chronic (attendance at less than 50%), was as high as 41%.

Two methods were used to conduct this study: statistical review of the attendance rates in the relevant schools and structured, open-ended interviews with a wide range of relevant people. These interviews formed the basis for the research and were conducted over a period of three months.

It was decided to concentrate the research on second and fifth classes in primary schools and on first year classes in post-primary schools. These classes were chosen because they are crucial stages for the emergence of possible difficulties at school. All of the children and some of the parents in a particular class were interviewed, rather than isolating the children that were absent regularly. The class groups studied were picked at random by the principals of the six schools included in the study.

Other groups who were interviewed for this study were principals, teachers, Home-School-Community Liaison co-ordinators, counsellors, youth and community workers, and officers of the School Attendance Service. Finally, it was decided to include the voices of those who had dropped out of the educational system. Three training centres that cater for early school leavers were approached. A number of personnel and trainees at these centres were interviewed.

Principal findings

- *Pupils*
  Striking differences were noticed between the attitudes and experiences of the three groups of pupils.
  In second class (age seven to eight), most of the children responded positively to school. The few absentees all had serious problems at home.
  By fifth class (average age eleven), some children had become truants. Almost 25% of the sample of 55 children were absentees. School-related factors contributed to absenteeism, but home factors (such as unemployment, addiction, and family members in prison) were pivotal.
  Of the first-year sample (average age twelve), 25% were absentees. A significant element in absenteeism at this age was parents' willingness to keep children at home for family duties and to excuse them from homework.

- *School personnel*
  The people interviewed acknowledged the seriousness of the problem of absenteeism and recognised the interrelation of school and home. They identified unemployment, poverty, and low parental self-esteem as reasons why children were not coming to school. School personnel also acknowledged that the academic content and organisational structures of school did not meet the needs of poor and disadvantaged pupils.

- *Parents*

  It emerged from the interviews that parents were much more positive about primary than about post-primary school. They were much more involved and familiar with what goes on in primary schools.

  None of the parents interviewed had completed the Leaving Certificate, and only 6% had completed the Intermediate Certificate. More than half had left school after finishing primary school. In general, their own school experiences included literacy problems, "hassle", boredom, and "messing." In this light, it is understandable why these parents were much more positive about and more involved with their children's primary education. For them, post-primary school was an alien environment.

  All the parents interviewed wanted their children to work, and nine out of ten agreed that education was the key. However, only a minority perceived the link between regular attendance and educational achievement.

- *Youth and community workers*

  All the youth and community workers interviewed felt that poor pupil-teacher relationships and existing disciplinary systems contributed to absenteeism. All agreed, however, that problematic home environments were the main factor in poor school attendance.

- *Early school leavers*

  The early school leavers interviewed fell into two categories: those who had transferred from school to an alternative educational centre such as Youthreach, and those who had left school with no qualifications and no alternative plan.

  For most of the Youthreach group, the reasons for leaving school early were directly related to school. Positive factors, such as good teachers and practical subjects, were outweighed by poor relations with other teachers. Of those who had left school with no alternative plan, all but two were chronic absentees (i.e. with school attendance rates of less than 50%). All fifteen experienced multiple stress factors in the home, such as unemployment, separation, addiction, illness, prison, and death.

Place of research	Clondalkin Partnership Camac House 4 Oakfield Industrial Estate Clondalkin Dublin 22
Period	March 1996 to November 1997
Grant	€5,079
Contact person	Aileen O'Donoghue
Contact information	Phone: (01) 4576433 Fax: (01) 4577145 E-mail: Clonpart@indigo.ie
Availability of report	Contact the Clondalkin Partnership.

6.10 Left Out on Their Own: Young People Leaving Care in Ireland

"Left Out on Their Own" was the first national longitudinal study of young people leaving care in Ireland. It was commissioned by Focus Ireland because many of the young homeless people coming to the attention of Focus Ireland's services had previously been in the care of the state. The objectives of the study were:

- to describe the background to and recent developments in the foster-care and residential-care systems
- to carry out separate surveys of young people six months and again two years after leaving care, in order to monitor their circumstances
- to construct seventy case histories of young care leavers, based on information from the monitoring survey, from social workers and residential care workers, and from interviews with the young people themselves
- to analyse leaving-care policy and practice based on the monitoring survey; on documentary material; on focus group discussions with social workers, staff from special schools, residential childcare centres and aftercare services; and on discussions with the staff of Traveller Families Care (an organisation for Travellers in care), with members of the Irish Association of Young People in Care, with members of the Irish Foster Care Association, and with groups concerned with youth at risk in three Dublin communities
- to study the crisis intervention (out-of-hours) service of the ERHA by undertaking a one-week survey of the numbers, characteristics, and presenting problems of young people seeking the assistance of this service. This was updated two years later.

Principal findings

- *Homelessness*
  Six months after leaving care, 33% of the health board population had experienced homelessness, and 30% of the special school population had experienced homelessness. Two years after leaving care, 68% of the health board population and 33% of the special school population had experienced homelessness.
- *Prison*
  39% of young people who left the care of special schools were either in a place of detention or had been in a place of detention during the six months after leaving care.
  Two years after leaving care, 65% of the special school population had been in a place of detention or prison. During those two years many young people had been in a place of detention a number of times.
  The proportion of young people in the health board population who had been sentenced to prison increased from 10% six months after leaving care to 25% two years later.

- *Transition from care*
  Young people who made a successful transition from care were less likely to be abusing drugs or alcohol or to have been victims of sexual abuse. They were more likely to have a stable care placement, fewer placement moves while in care, and a planned transition from care that was not precipitated by a placement breakdown. They were also more likely to have consistent and stable support from a family member or from their foster-family.
- *Arrests*
  The probability of a young person being arrested was related to whether or not the person abused drugs, was male, and had a stable care placement.
- *Prison*
  The probability of a care-leaver being committed to prison was related to whether or not the person abused drugs. A young care-leaver committed to prison was three times more likely to be abusing drugs than one not committed to prison.
- *Employment and unemployment*
  Young care leavers who took up stable employment were more than twice as likely to have received support from a statutory agency or to have received formal preparation on leaving care.
  Young people not abusing drugs were six to seven times more likely to be in employment.
  Young people who were unemployed were four times more likely to be abusing drugs.
  Young people leaving care with a history of sexual abuse were three times more likely to be unemployed

Place of research	Kelleher Associates 49 Merchants' Road East Wall Dublin 3
Period	June 1998 to April 2001
Grant	€9,523
Researchers	Patricia Kelleher Carmel Kelleher Maria Kelleher
Contact information	Phone: (027) 73344 (Patricia Kelleher) Phone: (01) 6712555 (Pauline Costello, Focus Ireland) Fax: (01) 6796843 (Focus Ireland) E-mail: Pcostello@focusireland.ie Pkell@iol.ie (Kelleher Associates)
Availability of report	Oaktree Press.

6.11 Residential Care:
Project 1.   Learn to Listen: The Irish Report of a European Study on Residential Childcare
Project 2.   Safe Caring in Residential Childcare: The Irish Report of a European Study

Project 1

This project was part of a European study conducted by the European Association for Research in Residential Childcare (EUROARRCC). The study set out to depict the residential care system in Ireland and to make observations about policy and practice at a national level.

Data was collected and collated by the research team on the behavioural problems of these young people in residential care. Interviews were also undertaken with young people to explore their experiences in care. This data provided a valuable overview of how care is both provided and experienced. The study also collected information on the views of those responsible for the provision of services. Because of this three-dimensional approach to the collection of information, the researchers acquired a holistic overview of the provision of residential care in Ireland.

Project 2

This study compared safe caring policies and practices in four European countries - Finland, Ireland, Scotland, and Spain – and was the second major piece of research carried out by EUROARRCC. The report presented the research that was carried out in Ireland only.

The broad aim of the study was to examine the "safe care" of children and of young people living in residential care. Within this framework, the research concentrated on three areas: (1) how adequately safe caring policies, both at the national and organisation level, cater for children and young people living in residential care; (2) the "life space interview" (LSI) as an aspect of safe caring practice in Irish residential childcare; and (3) using an action research methodology to directly involve care workers in the research process, thereby making the findings of the research immediately applicable to practice.

Principal findings of Project 1

- *The child in care and his or her family*
  Children are coming into the residential care system with more severe problems and psychological difficulties than before. The study also showed that children in the sample were more likely to have gone through a series of placements in care. In addition, the study acknowledged the absence of children's voices in the development of childcare services in Ireland and recognised the central role played by the families of children in care and the importance of family links to the childrens' lives.

- *The role of the care worker*
  A crucial role is played by care workers in the lives of young people in care. Interviews with care workers emphasised the complexity of the care needed by children coming into care, and how this was putting pressure on the individual workers to respond positively and appropriately.
- *Design and provision of services*
  Significant changes have occurred in the last two decades in the design and provision of residential care. This research showed that there had been a reduction in the number of children and young people catered for and that they were increasingly being accommodated in smaller units and settings that were more homely, instead of the large-scale buildings of the past. Fragmented service was also identified as a crucial issue for residential care. The multiplicity of organisations and agencies had led to a compartmentalisation of service, where the needs of the child were being categorised according to the services that were available rather than what was needed to address them.

Principal findings of Project 2

- *Safe care issues*
  The research showed that, on paper, safe care policies were good, even though improvement was still required in many areas. The value of these policies needed to be questioned when they were being transferred into practice. This policy review showed that elements of the national legislative framework did not allow for the general protection of children. However, the European aspect of the research found that even where central directives or guidance existed, they were not always understood or implemented at local level. In addition, research into safe caring in residential childcare in Ireland was seriously lacking.
- *Research issues*
  Practitioners working directly in residential care work needed to be empowered to carry out research on their own work practices. Practitioners who were involved directly with this study identified a number of problems associated with having to carry out their own research. Obtaining the co-operation and the required level of involvement of practitioners proved a problem for some of the researchers.
- *The "life space interview"*
  It was found that all three residential childcare centres involved with this study supported the use of the "life space interview", having adopted the therapeutic crisis intervention (TCI) programme. However, while attitudes to the use of the LSI were good, the everyday practice of the LSI was found to be much poorer. It was also found that the use of the LSI in residential childcare practice was still very much at the early stages. Its adoption through the TCI programme, for instance, was limited in the sense that the LSI was only one aspect of the entire training programme. Monitoring by management of the use of LSI at the centres was generally very poor, and care workers were given very little feedback on how adequately or inadequately they were carrying out these interviews.

Place of research	Centre for Social and Educational Research (CSER) Dublin Institute of Technology Rathmines House Lower Rathmines Road Dublin 6
Period	September 1997 to July 1998 (Project 1) September 1998 to July 1999 (Project 2)
Grant	€34,283
Researchers	*Project 1* Sarah Craig (CSER, DIT) Michael Donnellan (Trinity House School) Gay Graham (DIT) Audrey Warren (CSER, DIT) *Project 2* Audrey Warren (CSER, DIT), with the assistance of Sarah Craig (CSER, DIT) Michael Donnellan (Trinity House School) Gay Graham (DIT)

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	           (01) 4027435/ 4023493 (DIT)
	
	Fax: (01) 8438932 (Trinity House)
	           (01) 4023499 (DIT)
	
	E-mail: trihse@indigo.ie (Trinity House)
	          CSER@dit.ie
	          Audrey.Warren@dit.ie

Availability of report	Contact Michael Donnellan.

6.12 The Experience of Racism among Ethnic Minorities in Ireland

This study examined the experiences of ethnic minorities in Ireland, particularly in relation to racism.

Using a questionnaire the researchers surveyed young ethnic minority members selected mainly, but not exclusively, through post-primary schools. In all, 121 people of African, Afro-Caribbean, South Asian and mixed-race backgrounds took part.

Various types of information were gathered using the questionnaire. The psychological well-being of respondents was assessed through use of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12). Their sense of identity was probed through the more open-ended "Who Am I?" set of questions. These young ethnic minority members' perception of racism among Irish people was also measured in a reversal of the Bogardus Social Distance Scale and the results compared with white Irish people's evaluation of their prejudice assessed in previous studies. Finally, demographic details were sought.

Principal findings

The results showed that there was widespread experience of racism among the sample, particularly among black males, usually manifested as verbal abuse but including threats and physical violence. There was also a high degree of psychological distress shown, and this was associated both with the experience of discrimination as well as with the brevity of time since arrival in Ireland. There was a widespread perception that white Irish people retained a high degree of racism, and, not surprisingly, this perception was heightened among those who had experienced more incidents of racism.

Place of research	Department of Psychology University College Dublin
Period	April 1998 to September 1999
Grant	€6,983
Researchers	Dr Michael O'Connell Sinéad Casey
Contact information	Phone: (01) 7067777 Fax: (01) 7061181 E-mail: Michael.F.Oconnell@ucd.ie
Availability of report	Contact the researchers.

6.13   Preventing Offending: A Stake in Civic Society

The Irish Association for the Study of Delinquency (IASD) promotes the reform, development, and effective operation of the Irish criminal justice system. It does so mainly by promoting study and research in the field of criminal justice, by promoting the highest standards of practice by professionals associated with the criminal justice system, and by providing a forum where experienced personnel can discuss ways of working.

"Preventing Offending - A Stake in Civic Society" was the inaugural conference of the IASD, held on 6 -7 November 1998 in the Stand House Hotel, Curragh, Co. Kildare. It was attended by eighty delegates from national and local government, public, voluntary and community organisations, and delegates from the IASD's sister associations in England and Scotland.

The aims of the conference were
- to examine theoretical and conceptual frameworks relating to offending behaviour
- to identify factors effecting offending, particularly social exclusion
- to explore responses to offending and social exclusion
- to seek to influence policy and decision-making by identifying what works and why it works.

Principal findings
- Any effective policy or programme to combat offending by young people must concentrate on prevention and, in particular, on alleviating the factors that predispose many young people towards offending.
- The causative factors of young people's crime are many and complex. A variety of such causative factors interact and reinforce one another. Those most at risk of offending are those exposed to clusters of these factors.
- Measures to counter youthful offending need to tackle the variety of "causes" of crime. It would be more productive to try to work on all or at least on as many as possible of the causative factors (i.e. take a multi-disciplinary approach).
- Measures to counter crime have to be aimed at those most at risk of offending.

Place of research	Irish Association for the Study of Delinquency Unit 9, First Floor Poppintree Mall Finglas, Dublin 11
Period	1998 to 1999
Grant	€5,079 (for publication of conference proceedings)
Researchers	IASD
Contact person	Geraldine Comerford Phone: (01) 8344467 (ext.561) Fax: (01) 8344888 E-mail: iasd@clubi.ie
Availability of report	Proceedings of conference available from the IASD. Cost €12.70.

6.14 Education Provision for Pupils with Severe and Profound Learning Disabilities

This study dealt with two specific but interrelated issues pertaining to the education of pupils with severe and profound general learning difficulties (S & PLD): the place and organisation of provision, and teachers' morale and turnover. The study formed part of a wider comparative study (involving researchers in England, Wales, and Ireland), whose aim was to identify factors that facilitate the provision of appropriate accommodation and curriculum for pupils with S & PLD.

Data was collected by means of a questionnaire sent to all principals of schools catering for pupils with S & PLD on the organisation of provision, and principals were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in the remaining aspects of the project. As part of the wider study, visits were made to schools providing for these pupils, representing the range of school types in Ireland. Principals and teachers responsible for pupils with S & PLD were interviewed in each of these schools, and time was spent observing the curriculum being delivered. In addition, interviews were conducted with individual teachers who were working or had previously worked with this group about their experiences and working situations.

Principal findings

- The picture that emerged from this research study was of teachers who generally enjoyed working with children with S & PLD but for whom working conditions and the level of support they receive are crucial.
- The majority of teachers interviewed were enthusiastic about teaching pupils with S & PLD, believed strongly in their pupils' right to education and in their ability to make progress, and found the challenge of helping these pupils to learn stimulating and enjoyable.
- However, the location and accommodation of many of the "classrooms" assigned to teachers of S & PLD pupils was considered unsatisfactory by many, given that many of those "classrooms" were in health service premises and that the rooms assigned were frequently too small to accommodate the teacher, assistants, and six pupils at one time. This poor working environment contributed to teachers leaving, since they felt isolated and sometimes demeaned by it.
- Support from the principal teacher and from colleagues working with similar classes was seen to contribute to teachers staying.
- Most teachers emphasised the need for support through training and mentoring during their first few weeks in the post, for written curriculum guidance, and for continuing training and support.

Place of research	Special Education Department St Patrick's College of Education Drumcondra Dublin 9
Period	April 1999 to November 2000
Grant	€2,539
Researchers	Dr Jean Ware Páid McGee Georgina Julian
Contact information	Phone: (01) 8842041 Fax: (01) 8842294 E-mail: Jware@spd.ie
Availability of report	Contact the researchers.

7. Appendix

Projects in progress in 2001

Music Education

Nomadic and Cultural Tradition of Travellers

Helping Adolescents Cope

Calculator Project

Technologies Subjects

Wellbeing and Adjustment in National Schools

Information Pack for Transition Year Mathematics Teachers

School Curriculum Development

Delivery of In-Service Courses in Irish Education

Needs of Under 15s Who Cannot Be Catered For In School

Study of Transfer Process from First to Second-Level Schooling

Feasibility Study on the Use of Communicative Irish Outside the School

Study of Science Assessment in Primary Schools

Costs of Seconding Teachers within the Education System

Irish Museum of Modern Art, Breaking the Cycle Project

Handbook of Physics and Chemistry

Survey of the Amalgamation Process/Experience of Amalgamated Schools

Attitudes to the Transition Year Programme

Arrangements for the Accreditation of In-Career Education and Training for Teachers

Comparative Study of Factors Influencing Retention in Second-Level Disadvantaged Schools

Ethnicity and Interculturalism in Irish Education

Junior Certificate School Programme