Politics, Pedagogies and Possibilities: Geography in the Irish Education System

Polaitíocht, Oideachas agus Féidearthachtaí: Tíreolaíocht i gCóras Oideachais na hÉireann.

Dr Susan Pike
Assistant Professor in Geography Education, DCU Institute of Education
**Educational prospects**

- **93%**
  - 93% of 5-14 year olds are expected to graduate from secondary school in their lifetime

- **46%**
  - 46% of 5-14 year olds are expected to graduate from university

**Investment**

- **€9,264 per student**
  - Ireland
- **€7,477**
  - OECD Average

- **6.2% of GDP**

**NEETS**

- **15-29 year olds neither employed or in education or training**

- **21%**
  - Ireland
- **15%**
  - OECD Average

**Early childhood**

- **42%**
  - 3 year olds participating in education
  - Ireland 42%
  - EU Avg. 79%
  - OECD Avg. 70%
- **97%**
  - 4 year olds participating in education
  - Ireland 97%
  - EU Avg. 89%
  - OECD Avg. 84%

Source: Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators
Primary Education
Years 1-8

Secondary Education
Junior Cycle (Years 1-3)
Transition Year (Year 4)
Senior Cycle (Years 5-6)

Further Education

Tertiary Education
Universities
Institutes of Technologies
Colleges of Education
NUI Colleges
Independent Colleges
What are the inherent purposes of schooling and how does Geography Education play to these?

How have the perceived inherent purposes of education been played out in the Irish Education system, with specific reference to Geography Education?

What impact have the changing purposes had on education, specifically Geography education?
Purposes, Influences, experiences

Purposes – children, teachers or others

Influence on purposes – children, teachers, others

Experiences – children, teachers, others
Geography Education at DCU

Core Geography Education

B.Ed1 (12 hours) focus on younger classes, teaching through enquiry and shaking up views of geography!

B.Ed2 (12 hours) focus on older classes and teaching within enquiry.

B.Ed3 (24 hours) SESE: Local Studies focus, completely on teaching and learning outside in the locality.

GEO Specialism

BEd2 (72 hours) Learning, Spaces, Places

BEd3 (24 hours) Participation

BEd4 (24 hours) Leading
‘Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his [sic] own powers for social ends ... education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.’

Dewey, 1897, p77
Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.
## Purpose of Geography

| Education | Geography underpins a lifelong ‘conversation’ about the earth as the home of humankind. Geography contributes to a balanced education for all young people. |
| Thinking | An essential educational outcome of learning geography is to be able to apply knowledge and conceptual understanding to new settings: that is, to ‘think geographically’ about the changing world. |
| Explanations | Geography is concerned with perceptive and deep description of the real world. It seeks explanations about how the world works and helps us think about alternative futures; it is ‘Living Geography’. |
| Participation | Young people themselves, working with their teachers and drawing from their own experiences and curiosity, should be encouraged to help shape the geography curriculum. |
| Enquiry | Geographical enquiry, so that students are active participants and investigators, not just the passive recipients of knowledge. |
| Experience | Fieldwork – that is, learning directly in the untidy real world outside the classroom – is an essential component of geography education. |

GA, 2009
TRUMP TO THE LEFT OF ME, BREXIT TO THE RIGHT

IRELAND

EIRE I AM, STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH EU.
ACTION PLAN FOR EDUCATION 2018

Our Strategy

GOAL 01: Improve the learning experience and the success of learners
GOAL 02: Improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs
GOAL 03: Help those delivering services to continuously improve
GOAL 04: Build stronger bridges between education & the wider community
GOAL 05: Improve national planning and support services

Themes for 2017

GOAL 01: Wellbeing
- Key competencies
- Better subject choices
- New Junior Cycle
- Embracing technology
GOAL 02: Early Years
- Inclusion
- Engaging learners
- Special Education
- Improving Access
GOAL 03: Building capacity
- Leadership
- Best Practice
- Innovation
- Inspection and Support
GOAL 04: Parents
- Communities
- Enterprise
- Greater career choices
- Innovation
- Entrepreneurship
- Vibrant Research Communities
GOAL 05: Action Plan 2017
- Sustainable funding models
- Infrastructure
- New ways of working
Secondary teachers say they will ballot for strike if primary teachers also hold ballot
ASTI says it wants to hold strike ballot in parallel with INTO

A child’s life: ‘So what if your ma isn’t a doctor or a solicitor?’
Kian Fitzwilliam, a student at the ‘Brunner’ in Dublin, says everyone should go to a Deis school

Substitute teachers may be hired on full salaries to ease ‘crisis’
Many schools now rely on unqualified or retired staff to fill posts, conference hears

One in four primary schools have homeless pupils, survey finds
Schools are acting as a safe haven for ‘exhausted’ homeless children, review says

Pharmacy students welcome removal of ban on being paid during placement
Increase in final year fees after course restructure still ‘major problem’, say protesters
A St Pat's lecturer brought her students to Tesco today to teach them about the strike

Workers at Tesco Drumcondra have been striking since Friday.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Context of influence and purpose</th>
<th>Context of curriculum</th>
<th>Context of practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Rawling, 2001
Universal education in Ireland emerged from the harshness of the Penal Laws.

Establishment of illegal ‘Hedge Schools’ (Walsh, 2018)

Did benefit students, who crucially gained knowledge beyond their immediate experiences.

Economic development of Ireland through the 19th Century and continued to operate up to the 1880s (Walsh, 2018).
It is the intention of the Government that the Board should exercise a complete control over the various schools which may be erected under its auspices, or which, having been already established, may hereafter place themselves under its management, and submit to its regulations. Subject to these, applications for aid will be admissible from Christians of all denominations; but as one of the main objects must be to unite in one system children of different creeds, and as much must depend upon the co-operation of the resident clergy, the Board will probably look with peculiar favour upon applications proceeding either from - 1st. The Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy of the Parish; or 2nd. One of the clergymen, and a certain number of parishioners professing the opposite creed; or 3rd. Parishioners of both denominations.
National Schools

Powis Commission. Obligatory reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic, with geography from age 9 (Walsh, 2012). ‘Payment by results’ (PbR).

Purposeful tasks such as younger children being aware of the immediate vicinity of the school. Older pupils having a knowledge of Ireland and the wider world (Fahy, 1981).

Intermediate Education Act of 1878. Negative impact on the purposes and realities of education. The curriculum narrowed to the 3Rs.

Examiners’ reports refer to the poor standard of geographical education (Hourihane & Keane, 2004). Described as a ‘mere collection of dry bones, without due order or arrangement, and wanting even the natural ligaments to connect them’ (CNE, 1867, p288).

Geography: rote learning of lists of places (Pike, 2015a; 2015b).
TWELVE PRACTICAL RULES FOR THE TEACHERS OF
NATIONAL SCHOOLS

1. The Teachers of National Schools are required – To keep at
least one copy of the General Lesson suspended conspicuously in
the School-room, and to inculcate the principles contained in it on
the minds of their Pupils.

2. To exclude from the School, except at the hours set apart for
Religious Instruction, all Catechisms and Books inculcating
peculiar religious opinions.

3. To avoid fairs, markets, and meetings – but, above all, politi
cal meetings of every kind; to abstain from controversy; and
to do nothing either in or out of School which might have a
tendency to confine it to any one denomination of Children.

4. To keep the Register, Report Book, and Class Lists accurately
and neatly, and according to the precise form prescribed by the
Board.

5. To classify the Children according to the National School
Books; to study those Books themselves; and to teach according to
the improved method, as pointed out in their several prefaces.

6. To observe themselves, and to impress upon the minds of their
Pupils, the great rule of regularity and order – a time and a place
for every thing, and every thing in its proper time and place.

7. To promote, both by precept and example, cleanliness,
neatness and decency. To effect this the Teachers should set an
example of cleanliness and neatness in their own persons, and in the
state and general appearance of their Schools. They should also
satisfy themselves, by personal inspection every morning, that the
Children have had their hands and faces washed, their hair
combed, and clothes cleaned, and, when necessary, mended. The
School apartments, too, should be swept and dusted every evening;
and white-washed at least once a year.

8. To pay the strictest attention to the morals and general con-
duct of their Pupils, and to omit no opportunity of inculcating the
principles of truth and honesty: the duties of respect to superiors,
and obedience to all persons placed in authority over them.

9. To evince a regard for the improvement and general welfare
of their Pupils, to treat them with kindness, combined with
firmness, and to aim at governing them by their affections and
reason, rather than by harshness and severity.

10. To cultivate kindly and affectionate feelings among their
Pupils; to discountenance quarrelling, cruelty to animals, and every
approach to vice.

11. To record in the School Report Book the amount of all grants
made by the Board, and the purposes for which they were made.

12. To take strict care of the Free Stock of Books granted by the
Board; and to endeavour to keep the School constantly supplied
with National School Books and Requisites, for sale to the
Children, at the reduced price charged by the Commissioners.

Maurice Cross,
James Kelly, Secretaries

[Appendix XVII to the Thirteenth Report of the Commissioners of National Educa-
tion in Ireland, 1846.]
Disused Schoolhouses of Ireland, Enda OFlaherty
The Revised Programme not merely prescribes certain new subjects and excludes some old ones; but also involves some radical changes in the methods of instruction’ (Commissioners of National Education, 1902, p7).

Described as embracing and promoting an ‘enlightened and child-centred agenda’ (Walsh, 2013, p182) the Programme for National Schools (1900)


A vast improvement on the ‘cast-iron and red tape’ characteristics of its predecessor (The Freeman’s Journal, 1900, p2).
Geography featured, but was not a specifically, as learning was to occur in an integrated manner (Commissioners of National Education, 1901).

Promoted the use of the local area across subjects, suggesting children be taught *not merely to take in knowledge from books but to observe with intelligence the material world around them* (INTO, 1995, 7).

Never fully implemented due to lack of finance, the attitudes of teachers, a lack of resources and the top-down nature of the proposals (INTO, 1995, p7).

Children experienced a greater *enjoyment of schooling and improved methodologies* (Walsh 2012, p66).
Free from British rule, the curriculum created by the government was nationalistic in nature.

Coolahan in line with the ‘assimilation policies typically pursued by colonial powers’ (1981, p21).

Political and social purposes of education, notably the promotion of the Irish language took precedence over other dimensions of learning (Walsh, 2012).
Dail debates for the half of the first half of the twentieth century only referred to debates about Geography being taught through Irish.

The issues of quality of teaching and learning were referred to at times (see for example: Seanad Éireann 1958).

In the curriculum, Geography was restricted to the study of Ireland and nature study, so was, effectively, removed (INTO, 1995; Walsh, 2012).
If geography, history and arithmetic, as such, are to be taught, and if Irish has to be taught in addition, it should be plainly stated. If we are to have history and geography taught in the schools I hold the aim should be to have that teaching as effective as possible, and through the medium found for the time being to be most effective.
"An ill-advised attempt was made by many teachers who possessed only a slight knowledge of Irish, and whose pupils had necessarily less, to teach history and geography through the medium of Irish. The programme was itself to blame, as it laid down that the history and geography of Ireland were to be taught in Irish, without stating that this could only be expected when both teachers and pupils had made considerable headway with Irish, and not in the majority of schools for some years."

DES, 1924
Bailiúchán na Scol

The Schools’ Collection

1937 - 1937 / 9

Approximately 740,000 pages
288,000 pages in the pupils’ books
451,000 pages

5,000 primary schools

Irish Folklore Commission
Department of Education
Irish National Teachers’ Organization.

Oral history, topographical information, folktales and legends, riddles and proverbs, games and pastimes, trades and crafts.

Parents, grandparents, and neighbours.
1. If you place a boot or a shoe on a table you would meet a disappointment.
2. If you put one of your stockings on a garment on a clothesline in the morning you would have good luck for the day.
3. If a cock crowing at the step of the door is a sign that someone in the house is going to die.
4. If a straw after a been is the sign of a funeral.
5. It is unlucky to leave the sign of milk on a bucket when going for water.
6. It is unlucky to visit a house on your way to mass.
7. A visitor to a house when leaving should turn over any iron tool, otherwise he will bring away the luck of the house.
8. If a visitor enters a house where butter is being made he must take a few turns out of the churn-barrel or otherwise it is believed the butter will not come out.
9. It is unlucky to meet a red-haired woman at any time of the day but particularly if she is the first person to meet in the morning.
10. If spill salt during the meal will bring seven years bad luck. If a pinch of the salt salt is thrown over the right shoulder the bad luck is turned aside.
11. If wine was spilled at a wedding the married pair would have bad luck during the year.
12. A whistling woman and a crowing hen.
   There is no luck in the house they live in.
13. If a cock crows in the night it is a sign that there is somebody dying.
14. When you hear an ass braying that a tinker is dead.
15. If you hear the caico before you see the swallow you'll spend the year with sickness or sorrow.
16. It is unlucky to throw out the ashes on a Sunday.
17. If you drop a knife during a meal it is a sign that a visitor is going to come to your house.
18. From labarano or each on convoy you should take
   Vito vo euro euro euro eunony uoe.
19. It is not right for a near relation of a dead person to carry the coffin or touch the clothes belonging to the wake.
20. If you saw a burnt paper flying out the chimney comes one would die in the house before the end of the year.
21. It is unlucky to go to a spring well after sunset of the evening.
22. If a picture fell off the wall it is a sign that someone in the house is going to die.
23. It is unlucky to put on your left shoe first but to put on the right shoe first is lucky.
never get tired because it is blessed. The reason it is blessed is when Our Lord was to be crucified the blacksmith was asked to make the nails, he refused. Ever since, a smith's right hand will not get tired. Owing to nights, a crowd comes to the forge to play cards. Sometimes in summer they play pitch and toss. The forge was never found in any history I have seen.

Kitty Kearns, Ballybrock, Bannmore East, to Wexford.

Clothes made locally.

There is a tailor in this district. These are not made at home. Long ago, people used to grow flax and make it for clothing for everyone. The cloth was not spun at home. It is bought in the shops. Nobody has a spinning wheel in the district. Black clothes are worn for six months, when a relative is dead, and black and white is worn for the other six months.

Sister John, community of sisters of the communicants.

Ballyncarrow, Bannmore East, to Wexford.
1960s

1960s and 70s were times of more changes in the importance of education in Ireland, for all citizens (Walsh, 2018).

Investment in Education report, highlighted shortcomings of the education system and recognized the purposes of education were remained economic and social rather than faith dominated (Walsh, McCoy, Seery and Conway, 2014).

As O’Connor (1968, p233) noted at the time the report ‘sign-posted the direction of educational reform and by highlighting our deficiencies, has offered a challenge that cannot be ignored’.
The principles of the curriculum 1971

The 1971 curriculum was based on a philosophy of education that incorporated the following five principles:

- the full and harmonious development of the child
- the importance of making due allowance for individual difference
- the importance of activity and discovery methods
- the integrated nature of the curriculum
- the importance of environment-based learning.
1970s

The focus on the economic purposes of schooling, revealed shortcomings in terms of investment being earmarked for 2nd and 3rd level (Frawley, 2014).

Primary School curriculum reflected this with a clear focus on the agency of children in their learning (DES, 1971a; b).

Substantial changes in the experiences of children in primary schools. Not implemented, minimal impact on the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Geography (Gash, 1984; Pike, 2006).
1980s

Gemma Hussey as Minster for Education.

Programme for Action in Education 1984-1987

• Providing for a future workforce was far more explicit - how education must ‘respond to…increased mobility in the labour force generally’ (p36).

• Needs of students - special provision for those at risk of leaving school early and / or in need of support (p33).

• Need to update the curriculum - make it ‘relevant to the modern world…to developments in technology, changing employment opportunities’ (p1).
The principles of the curriculum 1999

the child’s sense of wonder and natural curiosity is a primary motivating factor in learning
the child is an active agent in his or her learning
the child’s existing knowledge and experience form the base for learning
the child’s immediate environment provides the context for learning
learning should involve guided activity and discovery methods
language is central in the learning process
learning is most effective when it is integrated
skills that facilitate the transfer of learning should be fostered
higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills should be developed
collaborative learning should feature in the learning process
the range of individual difference should be taken into account in the learning process
assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning
Primary School Curriculum

• to develop knowledge and understanding of local, regional and wider environments and their interrelationships;

• to encourage an understanding and appreciation of the variety of natural and human conditions on the Earth;

• to develop empathy with people from diverse environments and an understanding of human interdependence;

• to encourage the development of a sense of place and spatial awareness;

• to develop an understanding of appropriate geographical concepts.
Culliton Report (1992) gave what OSullivan refers to as ‘pride of place to criticisms’ (2005, p110) - productive enterprise and economic objectives should be an issue of primary importance.

Green Paper 1992, noted that people lacked: technical, communication, interpersonal, critical thinking, problem solving and language skills.

2000 onwards further reviews and curriculum publication. Culture of the ‘announcement’ continues, with media coverage on launches in education and elsewhere a weekly occurrence.

Reality in classrooms remains mixed, with very innovative practices, tying learning in school to a range of purposes, to routine and meaningless work (DES, 2008; DES, 2016).

Digital Strategy notes: ‘the quality of our workforce – a nation of people armed with relevant knowledge, entrepreneurial agility and analytical skills’ (DES, 2015, p1). However, the increase in research and comment from colleges of education and elsewhere meant there is now more commentary and research on the curriculum, teaching and learning as well as the purposes of education.
TWELVE PRACTICAL RULES FOR THE TEACHERS OF
NATIONAL SCHOOLS

1. The Teachers of National Schools are required - To keep at
least one copy of the General Lesson suspended conspicuously in
the School-room, and to inculcate the principles contained in it on
the minds of their Pupils.

2. To exclude from the School, except at the hours set apart for
Religious Instruction, all Catechisms and Books inculcating
peculiar religious opinions.

3. To avoid fairs, markets, and meetings - but, above all,
political meetings of every kind; to abstain from controversy; and
to do nothing either in or out of School which might have a
tendency to confine it to any one denomination of Children.

4. To keep the Register, Report Book, and Class Lists accurately
and neatly, and according to the precise form prescribed by the
Board.

5. To classify the Children according to the National School
Books; to study those Books themselves; and to teach according to
the improved method, as pointed out in their several prefaces.

6. To observe themselves, and to impress upon the minds of their
Pupils, the great rule of regularity and order - a time and a place
for every thing, and every thing in its proper time and place.

7. To promote, both by precept and example, cleanliness,
neatness and decency. To effect this the Teachers should set an
example of cleanliness and neatness in their own persons, and in the
state and general appearance of their Schools. They should also
satisfy themselves, by personal inspection every morning, that the
Children have had their hands and faces washed, their hair
combed, and clothes cleaned, and, when necessary, mended. The
School apartments, too, should be swept and dusted every evening;
and white-washed at least once a year.

8. To pay the strictest attention to the morals and general con-
duct of their Pupils, and to omit no opportunity of inculcating the
principles of truth and honesty: the duties of respect to superiors,
and obedience to all persons placed in authority over them.

9. To evince a regard for the improvement and general welfare
of their Pupils, to treat them with kindness, combined with
firmness, and to aim at governing them by their affections and
reason, rather than by harshness and severity.

10. To cultivate kindly and affectionate feelings among their
Pupils; to discountenance quarrelling, cruelty to animals, and every
approach to vice.

11. To record in the School Report Book the amount of all grants
made by the Board, and the purposes for which they were made.

12. To take strict care of the Free Stock of Books granted by the
Board; and to endeavour to keep the School constantly supplied
with National School Books and Requisites, for sale to the
Children, at the reduced price charged by the Commissioners.

Maurice Cross,
James Kelly,
Secretaries

[Appendix XVII to the Thirteenth Report of the Commissioners of National Educa-
tion in Ireland, 1846.]
Proposals for structure and time allocation in a redeveloped primary curriculum: For consultation

December 2016
Influences, many!

From those promoting the Irish language to the churches and politicians, individuals and industry, there are many who think they know the purpose of education.

Despite appearances to the contrary, through DES events, NCCA clusters and online interactions, there remains little influence from teachers, parents and most importantly students in schools on policy, purpose and practices of education.

Research in classrooms and with both teachers and students reveal the most important aspect of planning in schools, the needs and wishes of the children, supported by teachers and families remains rare.

Despite featuring in our Revised Programmes over 120 years ago!
Acting as adults

Learn about their locality, country, the wider world, as adults.

- *It is impossible to foretell definitely just what civilization will be twenty years from now. Hence it is impossible to prepare the child for any precise set of conditions’* (Dewey, 1897, p77).

- ‘the notion of creating informed and critical students cuts across ideological lines’ and that it ‘should be attractive to anyone who believes that schooling is crucial to creating informed citizens’ (Girous quoted in Creasy, 2018).

- This can occur in Geography, ‘not in a partisan sense, but by moving such geographical investigations into active pupil engagement and into following through the findings of such studies by proposing community action.’ (Catling, 2005, p336).
Powerful statements:

*Through the study of geography, people are encouraged to appreciate the processes that shape their world and view global issues as ethical citizens. Geography provides a platform to analyse world events, empowering young people as informed, active citizens.*

Passive citizens…Resigned to react?

*Studying geography enhances students’ ability to engage with issues such as sustainable development, economic systems, hazard management and climate change. Students viewing events through a geographical lens are well placed to be part of a generation which can deal effectively with and mitigate global challenges, and can rise to related opportunities.*

NCCA, 2017
Shape and Space 12 - Spatial Awareness and Location

* Children should be given opportunities to demonstrate how the knowledge and skills gained in this strand can be used to link, reinforce and progress learning across the other four interconnected strands.

**Learning Outcome – Stage 1:** Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to develop a sense of spatial awareness and reasoning.

**Learning Outcome – Stage 2:** Children should be able to develop spatial reasoning and visualise and model location using symbolic co-ordinates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Learning Outcome Label</th>
<th>The child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding and Connecting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is present as expected to and experiences situations where movement and position are used and identified through multi-modal approaches.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communicates position and location through a range of media such as physical, verbal, visual, expressive and spatial ideas and drawings to show the position of objects within the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies parts of the body and location of objects in their classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies position, location and relative position of objects using descriptive language e.g., in front of, behind, next to, between, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies parts of the body and location of objects in their classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies position, location and relative position of objects using descriptive language e.g., in front of, behind, next to, between, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicating</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Describes location and relative position of objects using simple language e.g., in front of, behind, next to, between, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies parts of the body and location of objects in their classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies position, location and relative position of objects using descriptive language e.g., in front of, behind, next to, between, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communicates position and location through a range of media such as physical, verbal, visual, expressive and spatial ideas and drawings to show the position of objects within the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasoning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies position, location and relative position of objects in their classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communicates position and location through a range of media such as physical, verbal, visual, expressive and spatial ideas and drawings to show the position of objects within the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies parts of the body and location of objects in their classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies position, location and relative position of objects using descriptive language e.g., in front of, behind, next to, between, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applying and Problem-Solving</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Describes location and relative position of objects using simple language e.g., in front of, behind, next to, between, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies parts of the body and location of objects in their classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies position, location and relative position of objects using descriptive language e.g., in front of, behind, next to, between, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communicates position and location through a range of media such as physical, verbal, visual, expressive and spatial ideas and drawings to show the position of objects within the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spatial awareness and location**
Minister for Education Joe McHugh has told the Dáil that in the decade of commemorations “the time has come for history to take its rightful place”.

Asked during education questions about whether history would be restored as a core subject for the Junior Certificate, Mr McHugh said he did not wish to pre-determine the outcome of the review by the NCCA which will report by the end of March.

But he said that while Irish, English and maths are core subjects in the Junior Certificate cycle because they “benefit literacy and numeracy, no subject is of more benefit to one’s literacy than history. It is of benefit to one’s research skills and in analytical and critical analysis.” The Minister said that along with the review of history he had also asked for the curriculum to be looked at.

“Perhaps it could even include stair na teanga, the history of the Irish language, which takes us back 3,500 years and can open a lot of doors in respect of our place names and who we are as a people. I hope that now in the decade of commemorations, the time has come for history to take its rightful place.”
24 January, 2019 - Minister launches new Irish Sign Language Bachelor of Education programme for deaf students

Minister for Education and Skills Joe McHugh T.D. has today formally launched a new undergraduate programme in DCU that enables deaf and hard of hearing people who use Irish Sign Language (ISL) to enter primary teaching.

The programme is receiving funding from the Department of Education and Skills under the PATH 1 Inclusion programme. The objective of this fund is to increase access to initial teacher education for students from the target groups identified in the National Access Plan, including students with disabilities.

The new B.Ed. (Irish Sign Language) is the first programme of its kind in the history of the State. It is being provided by Dublin City University’s Institute of Education from this September, and applications are now invited through the current CAO process (closing date: February 1st 2019).