



2009-10-01

What should be the contribution of further and higher education in Ireland to the current global economic crisis?

Ann Conway

Dublin Institute of Technology, ann.conway@dit.ie

Follow this and additional works at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/tfschhmtcon>

 Part of the [Higher Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Conway, Ann (2009) What should be the contribution of further and higher education in Ireland to the current global economic crisis? Working paper submitted as partial fulfilment of the EdD at the University of Sheffield.

This Working Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Hospitality Management and Tourism at ARROW@DIT. It has been accepted for inclusion in Other resources by an authorized administrator of ARROW@DIT. For more information, please contact yvonne.desmond@dit.ie, arrow.admin@dit.ie, brian.widdis@dit.ie.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License](#)



What should be the contribution of further and higher education in Ireland to the current global economic crisis?

Ann Conway

Tutor: Prof. Gareth Parry

People are at the heart of the knowledge [society]. Success in the future will be strongly dependent on growing the skills of our population. (Ahearn, 2006: 2)

Introduction:

Twenty years ago in 1989 the world witnessed forms of globalisation with protests in Tiananmen Square, the downfall of a communist state in Poland led by dock worker Lech Walesa, and the pulling down of the Berlin Wall with the aid of two onetime cold war enemies and opposing states of USA and Russia and in some cases an opening up and relaxation of borders. Since then the world has watched on, sometimes in awe at the positive effects of making things global more local; such as e-learning on opposite sides of the world, and sometimes in dismay as the real effects of globalisation hit home such as the current global crisis. Today in 2009 as the world reels from the effects of a global crisis, Ireland is still contemplating how we can turn around our economy. As the McCarthy report on Public Services Numbers and Expenditures Programmes (July 2009) is launched and is debated in public, one area which can assist in the recovery of our economy and state is through further and higher education. With widespread recognition of the need for continual training of individuals in the workforce, and to help those who have lost their jobs since the recession hit to find other jobs, up-skilling and re-skilling through lifelong learning is being encouraged at all levels of education and society.

Re-skilling is enhancing your existing qualifications and retraining in skills required for modern businesses which can help gain employment for those made redundant. Up-skilling on the other hand is training people in companies in more skills areas which may help to prevent redundancies and increase skills and knowledge base of the workforce to gain competitive advantage, e.g. teachers and lecturers on an EdD course having already obtained masters and degree qualifications. This would seem the more appropriate policy however, in the current recessionary climate there are many people already signing on for unemployment benefits so re-skilling and re-training is a priority. This is being witnessed with the increase in numbers applying for courses in further and higher education around the country. Nevertheless up-skilling is being employed for sustainability by companies still in operation and applied for by those employed hoping for better future prospects, promotions or careers.

Education is expected to serve the needs of society and when that society is undergoing significant changes pressures emerge to improve the alignment of education and society. Participation in education is both for the betterment of the individual, society or community within which they live and/or work and eventually the economy (National Competitiveness Council (NCC), 2009: 9). Participation on lifelong learning courses bring with it the pride of gaining qualifications, and it can also contribute to new opportunities, access to better employment and ultimately an improved better quality of life. Lifelong learning can also provide the individual the autonomy to be able to shape their own educational programmes and subsequently their own lives (Usher & Edwards, 1994; Edwards et al, 2002). Qualifications are indispensable assets seen as cultural capital (Stevenson, 2001: 2; Hannam, 2003: 7) and passports into both education and work and out of state welfare dependence (Blair, 1998: 9; Martin, 2003: 567). Higher education, further education and community education are seen as a conduits to a better life as it is “a weapon against poverty.....the route to participation and active citizenship” (Kennedy, 1997: 4) and creative cultural responses to oppressive life circumstances, shame and social marginalisation (Warmington, 2003).

This paper will be in two parts; the first section will examine the current tertiary education situation in Ireland amid the global economic crisis and will review what should education’s contribution be to help alleviate the crisis. Through doing this both the state and the market, who have interests in the academy and their graduates produced, will become part of the review, as building stronger links with the academy and the economy to help raise skills, efficiency and productivity is becoming more important in ensuring global competitiveness and retaining equality and accessibility in the academy (see Gaffikin and Morrissey, 2003: 98). The second and final section will look at the merge of entrepreneurship and education. As the lifelong learning society is conceptualised largely in terms of maintaining a flexible and competitive economy in the knowledge society, the concept of an entrepreneurial society will be proposed to fill the gap which has emerged since the exit of many international companies for cheaper labour elsewhere. Within all levels of education entrepreneurship should be encouraged and embedded in the curricula from the earliest stages as a prevention rather than cure to the current economic crisis in Ireland.

Current socio-economic situation in Ireland

Ireland is experiencing a serious economic downturn resulting in job losses and renewed emigration (Barrett, Kearney & Goggin, 2009). Furthermore, the annual rate of inflation is fluctuating (Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2008), with a marked deterioration in the labour market, throughout 2008 which has continued in the early months of 2009 (CSO, 2009). The Irish economy is officially in recession and continues to contract sharply (Barrett, Kearney & Goggin, 2009). Consequently, consumer sentiment is in decline (Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), 2008) and the

international forecasting institution the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) projects that real domestic spending in the Irish economy will decline and forecasts a protracted economic slowdown in the United States, Japan¹ and the Euro area, giving the situation further prominence (OECD, 2008).

Unemployment in the OECD area is forecasted to be c. 10% by 2010 compared to just 5.6% in 2007 (OECD, 2009). Ireland's unemployment rate passed the 10% mark in February with economists forecasting that the rate could reach 14% by the end of the year (Slattery, Irish Times, 2009) and with an increase of 2.6% more unemployed in June (RTE, News at One July 1st, 2009) Ireland's government needs to implement plans immediately for a recovery through partnerships with all stakeholders within the economy.

Ireland needs to act fast if it is to retain any of its competitiveness gained throughout the Celtic Tiger years, by providing a highly skilled, productive and flexible workforce which will attract high-value inward investment and grass roots development of businesses and generation of employment. Healy and Slowey (2006) suggest that the Celtic Tiger boom had been dependent on the Irish human capital and of formal education including the mobility and return of highly skilled workers who had emigrated in the 1980's and early 1990's. They suggest that it was also in part to do with favourable incentives given to international firms willing to invest in Ireland (Healy and Slowey, 2006).

The OECD (2008a; 2009) recommends a greater reliance on education and training particularly for labour market needs and this is concurred with in the recent launch of the government strategy for sustainable economic renewal (Department of the Taoiseach, 2008) where it views the importance of Ireland's performance on a global scale as an 'Innovation Island'. This essentially requires our higher education system becoming the cornerstone to this development and an impetus to economic and social renewal through elements of lifelong learning (Green, 2006), research and development and partnerships with all stakeholders within the state as the strength of the educational system has been identified as a key factor in the recent economic growth during the Celtic Tiger boom period (Fitzgerald, 2000; Smyth, McCoy, Darmody & Dunne, 2007: 139).

The Academy as the Cornerstone and Impetus to Economic and Social Development

Tertiary education in Ireland, although having been underfunded for years (OECD, 2004), has provided the country's indigenous firms and multinational corporations located here with highly skilled graduates, facilitating the role it played in the boom years of the Celtic Tiger (Healy and Slowey, 2006: 7). Coupled with this is the evidence of the expansion of the educational sector during

¹ Japan has just announced it has come out of its recession (CNN News August 16th)

the past two decades, (Clancy, 1982, 1988, 1995, 2001, Higher Education Authority (HEA), 1995, 1995a) with students now coming from a wider range of social and cultural backgrounds (Clancy & Wall, 2000; Clancy and Goastellec, 2007). However, Ireland has comparatively low participation rates in continuing education and training (Hannan, McCoy and Doyle, 2003) and lifelong learning (National Competitiveness Council (NCC), 2009: 35) in comparison with other countries². In 2005 34% of the older cohorts of the working population had no more than lower second level education (Junior or Intermediate Certificate level) (NCC, 2008). While it could be viewed that the expansion in numbers in higher education is indeed positive³, when one sees the significant gap at mature sections of the population, who had not benefitted from earlier educational expansion (Healy and Slowey, 2006: 7, 9) and the Celtic Tiger years in relation to attendance at third level and subsequent skills and qualifications held, something needs to be implemented to significantly narrow this gap. The White Paper, Learning for Life, for example, had set a target to get 15% of mature students into higher education in the short term and to be raised to 25% in the longer term (DES, 2000). It is these low skilled individuals who are also most likely to find it more difficult to regain employment if made redundant.

Academies have significant power to help these learners and also to provide opportunities to areas sunk into unemployment and struggling with large social welfare provisions. As it stands Ireland is at the verge of not being able to meet the current rapid increase in welfare demands (Mottiar, 2009) where large social welfare provisions are the norm (O'Regan, Irish Times, 2009) but could in fact become a disincentive to work. This can be a difficult issue to tackle, however, if certain provisions were put into place not only will the social welfare supports be put to good use and the human capital involved will regain a sense of worth, but the economic capital can be regenerated for the future with the aid of the local community and academies (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 2003: 98, 101) moving the state from 'welfare' to 'workfare' (Hoatson, et al 1996; Martin, 2003: 567).

The commitment of the Irish government and the EU to standardise a qualification framework in order to facilitate mobility, accessibility, and flexibility throughout the member states is evident in the Bologna Declaration 1999 and the work of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) (The European Higher Education Area, 2001; NQAI, 2003; 2003a; 2005). Increased modularisation of courses, the provision of more flexible learning opportunities, and The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education, endeavours to encourage the broadening of entry routes to higher

² 7.6% of those surveyed aged 25 to 64 received education in the four weeks prior to the Eurostat survey in 2007 – still below the Lisbon target of 12.5%, the EU 15 average of 12% and way behind the leading countries

³ Admission rate in 2004 was nearly 55%, nearly twice that in 1980 (Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2004).

education to greater reflect the fundamental changes brought about through the implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications in Ireland (NFQ)⁴ (HEA, 2008).

The mission statement of the Department of Education and Science (DES) is directed towards an education system that will ‘enable individuals to develop to their full potential as persons and to participate fully as citizens in society and contribute to social and economic development.’ Our national recovery is dependent on being able to provide a supply of highly educated workforce, equipped with skills aligned to business needs (National Skills Strategy (NSS) (cited in the NCC Report, 2008: 27). The NSS proposes that 48% of the labour force should have qualifications at the NFQ level 6 to 10 (advanced higher certificate and above); 45% should have qualifications at NFQ levels 4 and 5 (Leaving Certificate or equivalent); and the remaining 7% will have NFQ at levels 1 to 3 (Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) first certification) but should aspire to achieving skills at higher levels (NQAI, 2003; 2003a).

Higher education institutions (HEI’s)⁵ in Ireland consists of a binary system of universities and non-universities, i.e., the institutes of technology (IoT’s), colleges of education, private colleges, each offering courses from levels 6 to 10 based on the scale of the NFQ and the Higher Education Training Awards Council (HETAC) certificates. Entry into the institutes and universities is traditionally through the Central Administrations Office (CAO) once the leaving certificate minimum grade and points for the course have been obtained. Some courses also require an aptitude examination and/ or interview. Non-traditional (entry not via CAO) and mature students (those aged 23 and over) may gain entry directly via the college and course of their choice based on the specific criteria of that course and college. In most cases the leaving certificate is still required which prevents many adult learners from attending, however in recent years this is changing with the acceptance of Accredited Prior (and/or Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L), Recorded Prior Learning (RPL) and work experience of specified duration (NQAI, 2005). Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) is also accepted and these are usually obtained through FETAC certified courses.

Further education is dedicated to education and training at post leaving certificate (PLC) level in Ireland since 1985⁶ and awards FETAC certificates at levels 1 to 6 of the NFQ. Most are Irish government validated certificate but other awards are granted via UK and international accreditation. PLC courses are full and part time, provided in public and private colleges and communities around the country and concentrate on core, work and technical skills development with a view towards

⁴ The NFQ is a ten level system of learning from the very early stages (first level certificate) to the most advanced (Doctoral degree). All Irish qualifications are included in the NFQ which was established to assist the notion of a ‘lifelong learning society’ (see also www.educationireland.ie , www.nfq.ie and www.nqai.ie)

⁵ HEI’s receive 80% of their funding from the state and are encouraged to seek further endorsements from private partnerships and scholarships.

⁶ Set up during a previous recessionary period in Ireland

employment. Fas⁷ and Failte Ireland⁸ are two semi-state bodies involved in providing training for industry at PLC and FETAC level. Pobal are developing an entry route for community college graduates into FETAC courses at the moment for non-traditional and adult learners (www.pobal.ie).

Adult education has only in recent years assumed a higher priority in policy as the concept of lifelong learning within the knowledge society has taken on more importance, through the year of lifelong learning in 1996 to policies embedding lifelong learning ethos through the HEA, NQAI, FETAC, HETAC⁹ and the more recent Back to Education Initiatives (BTEI). Much of Ireland's adult education caters for people who have fallen through the 'formal' education system as it continually failed them in various ways as they were ignored or deemed unimportant (Finnegan, 2008). Adult education today is delivered through community projects, public library schemes, literacy programmes, women's study groups and further and higher education institutions via short courses or more flexible open and distance learning.

As the nature of work continues to change, and the increase in unemployment does not dissipate, there is an increasing need for individuals to return to education throughout their careers to seek formal qualifications, or re-orientate their career paths through lifelong learning which is becoming a manager of the crisis. Lifelong learning in a learning society should be managed through structured partnerships (Parry, 2006: 409) with schools, colleges and universities and to include those IT companies providing broadband around Ireland as flexible learning can take place once internet access is available to everyone. But again this manages only to target those already in the 'system'.

What should be the contribution of Ireland's Further Education?

Those on long-term unemployment should be given incentives to return to work on a part-time basis initially in conjunction with supported programmes for up-skilling and for those recently made unemployed and now signing on for the first time in many years can be offered supports for re-skilling and/or changing careers, such as free courses through Dublin City Corporation libraries for setting up your own business. They may then find that they may no longer depend on the state, but become empowered through new avenues opened up to them. This would support Dewey's (1987: 218; Biesta et al, 2009: 9; Bergan, S. 2008: 282; Martin, 2003: 568) concept of democratic and

⁷ Fas – Foras Aiseanna Saothair, Ireland's Training and Employment Authority

⁸ Failte Ireland is Ireland's National Tourism Organisation and Training Agent in Tourism and Hospitality

⁹ The NQAI is soon to amalgamate with FETAC and HETAC under the last Budget guidelines for education (Budget (Ireland) 14/10/2008)

citizenship learning which empowers the learner for a sustainable future both socially and economically, where they would become more self sufficient, self interested and consumers again.

Fas should widen their programme of short courses designed to improve job search skills and provide more apprenticeship training with industry, which they are piloting in two locations of Clondalkin and Letterkenny (two high unemployment localities) (Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment, 2009). The Department of Social and Family Affairs (2009) is also encouraging a return to full-time education for those made unemployed through a Back to Education Allowance. This, together with the cut in jobseekers allowance, is aimed at motivating those unemployed back to education to improve their skills rather than becoming welfare-dependent from a young age (O'Brien, Irish Times, 2009; Wall, Irish Times 2009, 2009a; Molony, Irish Independent, 2009) and supporting the workplace rather than the welfare. The back to education initiatives should include all areas of interest but at the moment only provide access to courses in subject areas required for immediate employment.

Example should be taken from Dell's situation before more workers are made redundant. In Limerick and Dublin in Ireland¹⁰ Dell workers will benefit from European Union (EU) aid under the EU Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EUGDF) (2006) once those receiving their redundancy papers reach 500. Other supports are being given to these workers in Limerick by Fas and local Further Education College (FEC) courses on re-skilling as many of those laid off had worked for many years in factory positions which required specialised skills which have made them inflexible and unable to transfer their skills outside of the IT sector (Collins, Irish Times, 2009). Others still employed should be encouraged on BTEI's to up-skill and increase their prospects of staying in employment.

The increasing importance of a knowledge based economy has led to increases in the level of skills demanded by employers while the current economic climate forces firms to react to the rapidly changing market, with career jobs, or 'jobs for life' also becoming a thing of the past and individuals moving or being moved among jobs or sectors, therefore rendering 'skills life' shorter. Therefore there is a move away from an almost exclusive school-leaver focus for entry into third level education, to the provision of up-skilling and additional qualification courses (see LMAP outlined below). The concept of lifelong learning is a key issue. These factors have implications for further and higher education, as education and training is envisaged as achieving a flexible sustainable workforce (Deering, 1997; DES, 2000; National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, 2007). In such an environment non-traditional learners need to be facilitated to enter higher education, and avail of retraining opportunities throughout their lives, facilitated by the AP(E)L or RPL strategies which should be married with the alignment of part time fees with full time courses as

¹⁰ 1,900 workers out of 3,000 employed in both sites (mainly in Limerick)

this currently discriminates against those wanting to up-skill, or return to education while still working or re-skill having just after being made unemployed.¹¹

What should be the contribution of Ireland's Higher Education

Currently a programme for re-skilling, the Labour Market Activation Programme (LMAP), under the partnership of the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and the Higher Education Authority of Ireland (HEA) is advertising for candidates for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (levels 6-9 of NFQ) within the IoT's and universities in areas of study specifically required in business today and for business set-up. To qualify you must have been made redundant for at least six months and already hold some qualifications. This target those already in the 'system' should be open to all.

The IoT's

The recent (Keogh, Irish Times, 2009) Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) announcement of their intention to lead a €2.5m jobs initiative that will create 90 jobs over three years in border communities in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland. This is in partnership with the University of Ulster and the University of Glasgow, and with small to medium enterprises in the three regions to encourage and sustain their cultures of entrepreneurship and jobs creation. This is one example of a partnership programme within higher education which should help alleviate the current crisis in Ireland.

An example of an outreach programme and collaboration with employers through workplace learning is an initiative which was highlighted in the most recent Grangegorman campus announcement, '*Joining up the dots*', an integrated employment, education and training strategy within the new Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) campus where thousands of jobs will be created in the construction sector and in the new science and technology park on campus through the science and buildings faculties (see also <http://www.dit.ie/news/archivecurrentyear/joiningupthedots>). This new campus aims to greatly improve the social and economic benefits to the local community through both employment and education. However, there are recommendations for the Grangegorman development to be disbanded under the McCarthy (2009) report which I think is unacceptable, as it will only cause further unemployment.

¹¹ At the moment there are no fees for students of full time courses except for registration for exams, but this is currently being debated in Dail Eireann with a view to reintroduce student loans to cover fees planned for 2010.

Universities

Other schemes for up-skilling are currently available through higher education colleges around the country, for example Continuing Professional Development modules in the National University of Ireland (NUI), Galway recently advertised on May 29th (NUIG advert, Irish Times, 2009), to augment existing qualifications, and the access, success, citizenship initiatives of the National College of Ireland which began in 2007¹². The courses being offered at university level through the LMAP re-skilling programme are mainly of a ‘top up’ nature which is being offered to those who have qualifications of a lower NFQ level from FETAC, HETAC or any of the IoT’s. This is commonly referred to as the ‘ladder system’. All universities in Ireland are currently offering courses under this programme.

However, more should be done to highlight the programmes being offered in further and higher education for lifelong learning in partnership with secondary levels and businesses through workplace learning. Some of my friends who have been made redundant in recent months have contacted me for information and help indicating that they did not know of the many supports that are currently being offered. Only recently advertising campaigns have highlighted the LMAP’s offered in the tertiary sector. More should also be done taking example from DkIT on partnership and progress within research based concepts for businesses (see also McCarthy report recommendations 2009 on partnering for research grant assistance).

The HEA has also made some steps towards addressing the challenges for further, continuing and higher education in relation to lifelong learning and the non-traditional student. It is to further develop an integrated approach to higher education policy which addresses the changing, more diverse nature of the student body, including, in particular adult and part-time learners. These and other issues of access and equity are highlighted in their reports (HEA, 2004, 2005, 2008; DES, 2000). However, is this just ‘*training-as-panacea rhetoric*’ as suggested by Cruickshank (2002: 141; Martin, 2003: 567)? As a recent Goodbody report (O’Leary & O’Brien, 2009) suggests, unemployment will continue to be a problem for many years to come and Ireland needs more than just ‘policy discourse’ to solve Ireland’s growing crisis, rather what is required are ‘action plans’ to get things moving again.

State policies in the past have endeavoured to be policies of social inclusion and active citizenship (Ahearn, 2004) however Ireland is still rife with inequality (CORI, 2007). The current programmes provided through state and academies are positive, but not all potential students have equality of

¹² This can be found at the following url: http://www.ncirl.ie/Alumni_&_Foundation/NCI_Foundation (last updated 2009) (e.g. Develop Ireland’s workforce and Shape Regeneration Infrastructure).

access yet and all graduates will still be dependent on the availability of jobs in the market. This is subsequently dependent on an innovation and entrepreneurial economy where entrepreneurship and new business set up is encouraged and supported, both locally and nationally, with the help of academies and financial institutions, thus reducing a certain dependence on multinationals for the bulk of our employment and returning to grassroots businesses.

Ireland's 'market-state' and a partnership with education

The knowledge society has greatly emphasised the importance of knowledge skills and know-how in the population at large, apart from social justice, the current recession now emphasises the significance of learning throughout life and as a way of life in modern society. Therefore a more coordinated approach to align the higher education institutions and enterprises through up-skilling courses and research so that they can work together to exploit and develop our current and future highly skilled graduates and employees is imperative in the role of recovery of the economy, and development of one of a more efficient knowledge economy, innovation society and entrepreneurial economy (Prospectus Survey on Higher Education, 2007; OECD, 2004; 2005; Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation, (ICSTI), 1999; NCC, 2008; Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2002). The links between indigenous firms and the research departments of HEI's is vital. While 27% of foreign multinational firms link with HEI's, only 17% of Irish firms were linked (OECD, 2004).

Knowledge is power (Finnegan, CNN, 2009) that can empower society to move away from welfare dependency, through lifelong learning initiatives, flexible approaches to delivering lifelong learning and a more flexible workforce. You don't have to sit in a classroom to be a learner, in fact more and more of lifelong learning initiatives are work based learning programmes.¹³ All of these courses can be collected for APL or RPL for entry into further and higher education. The Enterprise Strategy Review Group Report *Ahead of the Curve* (2004) emphasised the importance of building upon the existing education and training systems, with a renewed focus on fostering continual acquisition of knowledge, up-skilling and competencies. Generic core transferable skills should be embedded in all curricula from early school right throughout learning and especially highlighted though the provision of lifelong learning and continuing professional development courses (e.g. www.Options4Adults.ie), such as those being offered en mass now on entrepreneurship and business set up.

¹³ See for example The Irish Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships set up in 2004, or community outreach programmes such as the highly successful Bridge to Education Programme with Dublin City University and Ballymun Outreach Project (DES, May 18th 2009).

Entrepreneurial Economy

The Irish have worldwide recognition and reputation for being successful in business and arts, (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), 2005) and this together with the resourcefulness of the 'new' Irish (foreign nationals who have made Ireland their home) can play a part in Ireland's survival. It is these non-traditional potential students who are entrepreneurial and create businesses, and in most cases employment for others, that we also need to focus on both in and outside of the academy. Kennedy (2009) illustrates that when Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) pulled out of Galway in 1993 and when Motorola pulled out of Cork after 25 years, both cities saw a wave of entrepreneurialism that boosted employment. Policies need to emphasise not only the support for re-skilling and up-skilling, but also for entrepreneurship.

Today entrepreneurship and small to medium enterprises (SME) are increasingly important parts of the global business world. The responsibility for entrepreneurship education and training does not rest entirely with the academies as pointed out by Garavan and O'Conneide (1994; 4). There is a need for creation of an atmosphere that will encourage entrepreneurship and recognize failures as all part of the learning process (Garavan et al., 1997). One common objective of entrepreneurship education and training is to stimulate entrepreneurial drive talent and skills and the success of an entrepreneurial economy is to encourage and reinforce attitudes towards entrepreneurship and both outline the importance of education and entrepreneurship as crucial factors for the continued success of companies (O'Brien, 2008, Morrissey, 2008). The education and training system must adapt to produce the skills to drive successful enterprise in conjunction with work-based learning and up-skilling.

Reports have highlighted the lack of educational supports for entrepreneurs in the past (Goodbody, 2002: 29), but have also suggested that the increase in business hubs in the IoT's and more recently some universities as more than helpful at overcoming the hurdles of accessing finance or other supports for start up businesses. Education was also seen as a key incubator for entrepreneurship and for future entrepreneurial success (Goodbody: 2002: 78) with students of a third level university requesting more start-up business type modules to be provided. Programmes in entrepreneurship and education for entrepreneurship must be developed and encouraged from an early stage in education but especially so in further and higher education (such as Bolton Trust Competition in DIT) as students ready themselves for business and enterprise development after their degrees.

The GEM report (2005) shows Ireland as having one of the highest start-up rates in Europe for new businesses and in many ways the reason for this is an attitudinal transformation away from 'failure' and towards 'learning'. The report also highlights the need for early adoption of entrepreneurship in education from as early as primary education, but to reinforce entrepreneurship across all levels if

indigenous enterprise is to flourish in the future and a culture of entrepreneurship is to be adopted and initiated as a career choice (Report of the Small Business Forum, 2006). Curricula and assessment mechanisms throughout education should promote critical thinking, entrepreneurship and innovation (NCC, 2009: 6). Together with this is are the LMAP's in areas of entrepreneurship and business set-up now being run across the community and FETAC colleges, the IoT's, and Universities highlighting the importance of not only the knowledge society but of a developing entrepreneurial economy.

Some graduates interviewed in the past year with the Irish Graduate Survey, (Webb, Sunday Independent, 2009) indicated that they were aware that times are hard and so they intend to '*ride out the recession*' by staying in college and studying. For these graduates it means attending another course, at undergraduate or postgraduate level, with 40% of respondents intending to go on to postgraduate studies. Others who may have earned work experience throughout their degrees felt more confident about getting a job. Some universities this year are seeing increases of between 50% and 80% in applications to postgraduate courses based on the same period in 2008. Only 16% of graduates said they would like to open their own business someday (The Irish Graduate Survey, 2009; Webb, Sunday Independent, 2009).

Conclusion:

Education should be viewed as an intelligent investment with accountable returns, i.e. employment for individuals and tax returns for government from those employed after graduating, rather than increasing costs and public spending. However, successive government budgets of the last year have seen policies introduced whereby funding for education is being further reduced. The state's focus on an annual budget process reinforces the weakness in long term development planning. The McCarthy report (2009) has also put a strain on the entire education system with its recommendations of 6,900 further job cuts (i.e. more unemployed) which it claims will save the economy 746 million. But what of those jobs lost and increase of those unemployed?

The economic advantage and aid to social mobility, derived from gaining educational qualifications, together with the barriers associated with gaining employment by unqualified school leavers, has impacted on the demand for further and higher education. Education and training is viewed as crucial to achieving the objective of an inclusive society, where all citizens have the opportunity and incentive to participate fully in the social and economic life of the country. It is suggested however, that the growth in the third level sector has not facilitated equal access to higher education, and the continuing social inequity has been frequently documented (Clancy, 1982; 1988; National Economic and Social Council (NESC), 1993; Clancy and Wall, 2000; HEA, 2009). Ireland historically has comparatively low participation rates in non-formal, non-compulsory, continuing education and training in comparison to other countries (Hannan, McCoy and Doyle, 2003) ranking one of the most

unequal out of 18 industrialised countries (United Nations Development Report, 2005). A national cohesive approach of widening access to higher education for traditionally under represented sectors, such as socially disadvantaged groups, is expected to promote equality of opportunity in higher education with a view to contributing to social cohesion and inclusiveness, and enhanced equality of opportunity (DES, 2000; Osborne and Leith, 2000; Skilbeck and O'Connell, 2000; National Development Plan (NDP), 2007).

The link between higher education and economic and social development is addressed in a plethora of national government commissioned reports (some of which were reviewed in this paper), which substantiate the view that education and training is perceived as a vital resource for a successful modern economy. Both have a crucial influence on economic performance at an individual and aggregate level. The previous market-state policies of expanding third-level education are based on the premise, that a highly skilled and educated workforce will enhance economic competitiveness, industrial growth, and increased levels of prosperity. What we are now witnessing since the global economic downturn hit Ireland and most countries around the world are more and more redundancies each (and every) day, and fewer jobs available. Of those advertised, most are seeking highly skilled workers for lower pay than what they would have been used to during the Celtic Tiger. Many made redundant are in the same locations such as the West (Dell and all the companies Dell affected), South (e.g. Waterford Wedgewood), East (e.g. SR Technics) and North (e.g. Euro Iompu Teoranta (the largest bus manufacturing company in Ireland)). The rationalisation and disbandment of certain IoT's will only have a more negative effect with more unemployed (see McCarthy, 2009).

I grew up during the 70's and 80's and I remember the long recession Ireland went through and witnessed many of our friends and neighbours emigrating for jobs to places like the UK, USA and Australia. Unfortunately as many other countries are experiencing the same kind of downturn in Ireland there are limited opportunities for people of low skills wishing to emigrate. Fortunately Ireland and its people have become far more educated since the 1980's, but there are still communities which have lost out both on employment for their communities and education for their people. Mobility is an option for very few but Ireland would prefer to retain its workforce and be able to provide jobs for them in the future.

In further and higher education empowerment through education and training initiatives, through courses on up-skilling (for those still lucky to be working), (re-skilling for those unemployed) and/or career projection, such as entrepreneurship, can help communities and society become more self-reliant and economically viable. State support would also be required for initiatives within the post-secondary education sector. By removing some of those unemployed off the social welfare and encouraging them back into education this would relieve a certain amount of strain on the state and so

it would become a win-win situation. The unemployed will become empowered to do something for themselves and their communities rather than being dependant on the state for welfare support. Education pursuit in this regard should be for the betterment of the individual and the society and community within which they live and/or work and then eventually the economy can improve slowly.

Future education and training should really be based on a system of learning not education, skills and competencies not just content, and providing graduates that are ready for employment and entrepreneurship rather than dependent on 'jobs' or 'social welfare' (see also Dale, 2005). At the OECD 2009 Forum (Crisis and Recovery, June 23rd – 25th) Belgian Minister Vincent Van Quickenborne noted that education systems were only measuring hard skills, maths, etc, but not creativity, and called for a change of European education systems.¹⁴

Ireland's future economic success is highly dependent on innovation, creativity and skills coming from the academy and the community. Investment by the state in education and training (currently HEI's receive 80% of their funds from the state), lifelong learning and research and development in partnership with the market and businesses (a further 20% of investment in HEI's is encouraged through private partnership but should be more) is also the cornerstone to success. The success examples of the Nordic countries model of knowledge economy and knowledge society (Green, 2006: 7) should be adapted into Irish and European education with partnerships across stakeholder groups in each state and high mobility among graduates and flexibility in work and educational forums. There should be a more transparent and fluid communication path amongst the state, market, the community and the academy when policies are being made for all to be involved and a proper partner system to exist.

We must move away from an almost exclusive emphasis on the state and rather move towards a system of multiple partnerships between the state, the academy and the market. A neoliberal state and higher education provision would seek to create an individual who is enterprising and a competitive entrepreneur which is what is needed in a world of high unemployment. State policies dedicated to education and training which raise the skills levels of the population, together with taking people off of welfare, and combining partnerships with academies, industry and society to try to become an innovative Ireland is now what the country needs. Not just policy and rhetoric, but also definite action and implementation. Higher and further education can help but the time now is to act not to pontificate.

¹⁴ The European Union has recognised the importance of creativity and has made of 2009 the "European Year of Creativity and Innovation".

Bibliography:

Ahearn, B. (2004) Neither neo-liberal nor socialist, but a balanced Constitution for Europe. *The Irish Times*, November 29th.

Ahearn, B. (2006) Speech by Mr. Bertie Ahearn, T.D. at the ICT Ireland Annual Member's Evening, 13th December, 2006. Accessed on 1/07/2009 from: http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Government_Press_Office/Taoiseach%27s_Speeches_Archive_2006/Speech_by_the_Taoiseach,_Mr_Bertie_Ahern,_T_D_at_the ICT_Ireland_Annual_Members_Evening_on_Wednesday,_13_December,_2006_at_6_30pm.html

Barrett, A., Kearney, I. and Goggin, J. (2009) *Quarterly economic commentary Spring 2009*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

Bergan, S. (2008) Book Review: *Dewey's dream: Universities and democracies in and age of education reform*.

Biesta, G., Lawy, R. and Kelly, N. (2009) Understanding young people's citizenship learning in everyday life: The role of contexts, relationships and dispositions. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 5-24. Accessed on 20/05/2009 from: <http://esj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/4/1/5>

Blair, T. (1998) in Department of Education and Employment, *The learning age: a renaissance for a new Britain*. London: Stationery Office. In Martin, I. (2003) Adult education and lifelong learning and citizenship: some ifs and buts. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 22, No. 6, 566-579.

Bologna Declaration (1999) *Bologna Declaración, Rome: SEPS*. Accessed on 27/10/2008 from http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf

Central Statistics Office (CSO) (2004) *Population and labour force projections 2006-2036*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Central Statistics Office (CSO) (2008) *Consumer price index: March 2008*. Accessed on 23/6/2009 from: <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/prices/current/cpi.pdf>

Central Statistics Office (CSO) (2009) *Live register: February 2009*. Accessed on 23/6/2009 from: http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/labour_market/current/lreg.pdf

Clancy, P. (1982) *Participation in higher education*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Clancy, P. (1988) *Who goes to college? A second national survey of participation in higher education*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Clancy, P. (1995) *Access to college: Patterns of continuity and change*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Clancy, P. (2001) *College entry in focus: A fourth national survey of access to higher education*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Clancy, P. and Goastellec, G. (2007) Exploring access and equity in higher education: Policy and performance in a comparative perspective. *Higher Education Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 2, April 2007, pp 136-154.

Clancy, P. and Wall, J. (2000) *Social background of higher education entrants*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Clark, B.R. (1983) *The higher education system: Academic organisation in cross-national perspective*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, pp136-145.

Collins, S. (2009) Tánaiste to apply for EU aid to support former Dell workers. *Irish Times, Business This Week Supplement*, May 29th.

CORI Justice (2007) Socio-economic review 2007: Addressing inequality: *Policies to ensure economic development, social equity and sustainability*. Dublin: CORI Justice.

Cruickshank, J. (2002) Lifelong learning or retraining for life: scape-goating the worker. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 140-155. In Martin, I. (2003) Adult education and lifelong learning and citizenship: some ifs and buts. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 22, No. 6, 566-579.

Dale, R. (2005) Globalisation, knowledge economy and comparative education. *Comparative Education*, Vol. 41, No. 2, May, pp. 117-149. Accessed on 20/05/2009 from: <http://www.informaworld.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/smpp/section?content=a713993298&>

Deering, R. (1997) *Higher education in the learning society*. London: The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education.

Department of Education and Science (DES) (2000) *Learning for life: White paper on adult education*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (2002) *Report of the task force on lifelong learning*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (2009) *Address by the Tánaiste on private members motion on rise in unemployment*. Dail Eireann, Tuesday 10th March 2009. Accessed on 30/06/2009 from: <http://www.entemp.ie/press/2009/20090311.htm>

Department of Social and Family Affairs (2009) *News release: Hanafin targets young jobseekers back into education and training*. Accessed on 30/06/2009 from: <http://www.welfare.ie/en/press/pressreleases/2009/Documents/pr180509.pdf>

Department of the Taoiseach (2008) *Building Ireland's smart economy: A framework for sustainable economic renewal*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Dewey, J. (1987[1937]) Democracy and educational administration. In Biesta, G., Lawy, R. and Kelly, N. (2009) Understanding young people's citizenship learning in everyday life: The role of contexts, relationships and dispositions. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 5-24. Accessed on 20/05/2009 from: <http://esj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/4/1/5>

Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) (2008) *Consumer sentiment index: June 2008*. Accessed on 23/6/2009 from: http://www.ersi.ie/irish_economy/consumer_sentiment/latest_consumer_sentiment/

Edwards, R., Ranson, S. and Strain, M. (2002) Reflexivity: Towards a theory of lifelong learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 21, No. 6, pp. 525-536.

Enterprise Strategy Group (2004) *Ahead of the curve: Ireland's place in the global economy*. Dublin: Forfas.

Eurostat, (2007) Populations and social conditions. In National Competitiveness Council (NCC) (2009) *Statement on education and training*. Dublin: Forfas.

Finnegan, A. CNN, (2009) *Road to recovery: Special report*, June 30th 2009 3-4pm, CNN International.

Finnegan, F. (2008) Neo-liberalism, Irish society and adult education. AONTAS publications.

Fitzgerald, J. (2000) The story of Ireland's failure – and belated success. In Nolan, B., O'Connell, P.J. and Whelan, C.T. (eds.) (2000) *Boost to boom? The Irish experience of growth and inequality*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute and Institute of Public Administration.

Gaffikin, F. and Morrissey, M. (2008) A new synergy for universities: Redefining academy as an engaged institution'. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 97-116. Accessed on 20/05/2009 from: <http://esj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/3/1/97>

Garavan, T. and O'Conneide, B. (1994) Entrepreneurship education and training programmes: a review and evaluation – Part 1, *Journal of European industrial Training*, volume 18 number 8.

Garavan, T., O'Conneide, B. and Fleming, P. (1997) *Enterprise and business start-ups in Ireland – Volume 1 an overview*. Oak Tree Press, Dublin.

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (2005) *The Irish report: How entrepreneurial is Ireland?* Forfas, Dublin.

Goodbody Stockbrokers (2002) *Economic Report 2002*. Dublin: Goodbody Stockbrokers.

Green, A. (2006) Models of lifelong learning and the 'knowledge society'. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, Vol. 36, No. 3, September, pp. 307-325.

Hannan, D., McCoy, S. and Doyle, A. (2003) *Expanding post-school learning opportunities: Nature and effects of growth in post-school education and training in the 1990's*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

Healy, T. and Slowey, M. (2006) Social exclusion and adult engagement in Lifelong Learning – some comparative implications for European states based on Ireland's Celtic Tiger experience. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, Vol. 36, No. 3, September 2006, pp. 359-378.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (1995) *Steering committee on the future development of higher education: Interim report of the steering committee's technical working group*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (1995a) *Report of steering committee on the future development of higher education: Based on a study of needs to the year 2015*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2000) *Report on symposium on open and distance learning*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2003) *The programme for research in third level Institutions (PRTLII): Transforming the Irish research landscape*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2004) *Achieving equity of access to higher education in Ireland: Action plan 2005-2007*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2004a) *Review and prioritisation of capital projects in the higher education sector: Report of the review group*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2005) *Achieving equity of access to higher education in Ireland: Setting the agenda for action in Ireland. Conference proceedings*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2006) *What do graduates do? The class of 2004*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2007) *What do graduates do? The class of 2006*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2008) *National plan for equity of access to higher education: 2008-2013*. Dublin: National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education and the Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) (2009) *Higher education: Key facts and figures 07/08*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Conference of Heads of Irish Universities (CHIUI) (2000). *The financial governance of Irish universities: Balancing autonomy and accountability*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Forfás (2007) *The role of the institutes of technology in enterprise development: Profile and emerging trends*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority and Forfás.

Hoatson, L., Dixon, J. and Sloman, D. (1996) Community development, citizenship and the contract state. *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 126-136.

Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ICSTI) (1999) *Technology foresight Ireland report*. Dublin: ICSTI and Forfás.

Kennedy, H. (1997) Learning works: widening participation in further education. Coventry: Further Education Funding Council. In Warmington, P. (2003) You need a qualification for everything these days. The impact of work, welfare and disaffection upon the aspirations of access to higher education students. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 24, No. 1, February 2003, pp. 95-108.

Kennedy, J. (2009) Entrepreneurs hope Greenhouse effect will undo damage of Dell cuts. *Irish Independent*, Thursday April 2nd, 2009.

Keogh, E. (2009) IT College to lead €2.5m job initiative. *Irish Times*, May 4th 2009.

Martin, I. (2003) Adult education and lifelong learning and citizenship: some ifs and buts. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol. 22, No. 6, 566-579.

McCarthy, Dr. E. (2009) *The Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes Vol I & II*. Dublin: Government Publications, The Stationery Office.

Molony, S. (2009) Dole cash may be used to subsidise three-day week. *Irish Independent* May 22nd 2009.

Morrissey, M. (2008; 2) Editorial *Irish entrepreneur: Business and life*, volume 6, issue 1.

Mottiar, Dr. Z. (2009) Entrepreneurship is not always about profits: identifying and explaining social entrepreneurship in Irish Tourism and Hospitality. *Paper presented at the Tourism and Hospitality Research in Ireland Conference (THRIC) Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)*, June 16th – 18th.

National Competitiveness Council (NCC) (2006) *Annual competitiveness report: Volume 1: Benchmarking Ireland's performance*. Dublin: Forfás and the National Competitiveness Council.

National Competitiveness Council (NCC) (2007) *Annual competitiveness report. Volume 2: Ireland's competitiveness challenge*. Dublin: Forfás and the National Competitiveness Council.

National Competitiveness Council (NCC) (2008) *Annual competitiveness report 2008. Volume 2: Ireland's competitiveness challenge*. Dublin: Forfas.

National Competitiveness Council (NCC) (2009) *Press release: Ireland's education and training system must continue to improve performance – even in the face of scarce public resources*. National Competitiveness Council, March 9th 2009.

National Development Plan (NDP) (1999) *National development plan 2000-2006*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

National Development Plan (NDP) (2007) *2007-2013 Transforming Ireland-a better quality of life for all*. Accessed on 20/05/2009 from: http://www.ndp.ie/docs/NDP_Homepage/1131.htm

National Economic and Social Council (NESC) (1993) *Education and training policies for economic and social development*. Dublin: NESC.

National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) (2003) *Labour market issues for older workers. Forum report No. 26*. Dublin: Government Publications, Stationery Office.

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) (2003) *A framework for the development, recognition and award of qualifications in Ireland: Policies, actions and procedures for access, transfer and progression for learners*. Dublin: NQAI.

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) (2003a) *National framework of qualifications*. Dublin: NQAI.

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) (2005) *Principles and operational guidelines for the recognition of prior learning in further and higher education and training*. Dublin: NQAI.

National Skills Bulletin (2007) *A study by the skills and labour market research unit (SLMRU) in Fas for the expert group on future skills needs*. Dublin: Fas.

National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (2007) *Developing a national strategy on education for sustainable development in Ireland: Discussion paper. November, 2007*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science, Department of Foreign Affairs, Government of Ireland, Comhar, Sustainable Development Council.

NUI Galway advertisement in the *Irish Times* May 29th 2009.

O'Brien, C. (2008) Igniting entrepreneurial growth. *Irish entrepreneur: Business and life*, volume 6, issue 1.

O'Brien, C. (2009) Over 50,000 young jobseekers to be advised of education, training options. *Irish Times*, May 18th 2009.

O'Connell, P., Clancy, D. and McCoy, S. (2006) *Who went to college in 2004? A national survey of new entrants to higher education*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

O'Leary, D. and O'Brien, D. (2009) *The rocky road ahead: Economic Report*. Dublin: Goodbody Stockbrokers.

O'Regan, M. (2009) Welfare 'disincentive to work'. *Irish Times*, May 29th 2009.

Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001) *The well-being of nations: the role of the human and social capital*. Paris: Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, OECD.

Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2003) *Beyond rhetoric: adult learning policies and practices*. Paris: OECD.

Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2004) *Review of Higher Education in Ireland*. Paris: OECD.

Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2005) *Education at a glance*. Paris: OECD.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1962) *Training of technicians in Ireland*. Paris: OECD.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1993) *Education at a glance*. Paris: OECD.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2009) *Unemployment in OECD countries to approach 10% in 2010, says OECD*. 25/06/2009 press release, accessed on 30/06/2009 from: http://www.oecd.org/document/57/0,3343,en_2649_37457_43136377_1_1_1_1,00.html

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2004) *Review of national policies for education: Review of higher education in Ireland examiners' report*. Paris: OECD.

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (2008) *OECD forecasts a protracted economic slowdown in US, Japan and Euro area*. Accessed 23/06/2009 from: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/55/17/41666279.pdf>

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (2008a) *Education at a glance 2008: OECD indicators*. Paris: OECD.

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (2009a) *OECD economic outlook No. 85*. Accessed 23/6/2009 from: http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en_2649_33733_20347538_1_1_1_1,00.html

Osborne, R. and Leith, H. (2000) *Evaluation of the target initiative on widening access for young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Parry, G. (2006) Policy-participation trajectories in English higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 4, October 2006, pp 392-412.

Prospectus (2007) *Survey on Higher Education*. Prospectus.

Report of the Small Business Forum (2006) *Small business is big business*. Forfas, Dublin.

Skilbeck, M. (2001) *The university challenged: A review of international trends and issues with particular reference to Ireland*. Higher Education Authority, Conference of Heads of Irish Universities. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Skilbeck, M. and Connell, H. (2000) *Access and equity in higher education: An international perspective on issues and strategies*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Smyth, E., McCoy, S., Darmody, M. and Dunne, A. (2007) Changing times, changing schools? Quality of life for students. In Fahey, T., Russell, H. and Whelan, C.T. (eds.) (2007) *Best of times? The social impact of the Celtic Tiger*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

The European Higher Education Area (2001) *Joint declaration of the European ministers of education, 1999 Bologna Declaration, Salamanca 2001*.

Graduate Careers Ireland (2009) *The Irish Graduate Survey 2009*. Dublin: Graduate Careers Ireland.

Usher, R. and Edwards, R. (1994) *Postmodernism and education*. London: Routledge. In Warmington, P. (2003) You need a qualification for everything these days. The impact of work, welfare and disaffection upon the aspirations of access to higher education students. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 24, No. 1, February 2003, pp. 95-108.

Wall, M. (2009) Welfare funding to be used for job creation. *Irish Times*, May 21st 2009.

Wall, M. (2009a) Talks on new deal including major jobs initiative 'positive'. *Irish Times*, June 12th 2009.

Warmington, P. (2003) You need a qualification for everything these days. The impact of work, welfare and disaffection upon the aspirations of access to higher education students. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 24, No. 1, February 2003, pp. 95-108.

Webb, N. (2009) Students seeking post-grad bolt-hole as job hopes fade. *Sunday Independent*, June 21st 2009.

Web Pages Accessed

http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf Accessed on 27/10/2008

http://www.ncirl.ie/Alumni_&Foundation/NCI_Foundation Accessed on 20/05/2009

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Forum7_Converging_competences/default_EN.asp#TopOfPage Accessed on 20/05/2009

<http://www.prospectus.ie> Accessed on 20/05/2009

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2009/0305/1224242304937.html> Accessed on 20/05/2009

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3593304> Accessed on 20/05/2009

<http://esj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/3/1/97> Accessed on 20/05/2009

<http://esj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/4/1/5> Accessed on 20/05/2009

<http://esj.sagepub.com/3/3/281> Accessed on 20/05/2009

<http://www.informaworld.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/smpp/section?content=a713993298&> Accessed on 20/05/2009

<http://www.irlgove.ie/departmentofeducationandscience/pressrelease> Accessed on 20/05/2009

<http://www.dit.ie/news/archivecurrentyear/joiningupthedots> Accessed on 20/05/2009

http://www.ndp.ie/docs/NDP_Homepage/1131.htm Accessed on 20/05/2009

<http://www.cso.ie> Accessed on 23/06/2009

http://www.ersi.ie/irish_economy/consumer_sentiment/latest_consumer_sentiment/ Accessed on 23/06/2009

<http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/index.asp?docID=265> Accessed on 23/06/2009

http://www.oecd.org/document/57/0,3343,en_2649_37457_43136377_1_1_1_1,00.html Accessed on 30/06/2009

<http://www.Options4Adults.ie> Accessed on 30/06/2009

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/press/pressreleases/2009/Documents/pr180509.pdf> Accessed on 30/06/2009

<http://www.entemp.ie/press/2009/20090311.htm> Accessed on 30/06/2009.

http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Government_Press_Office/Taoiseach%27s_Speeches_Archive_2006/Speech_by_the_Taoiseach,_Mr_Bertie_Ahern,_T_D_at_the ICT_Ireland_Annual_Members_Evening_on_Wednesday,_13_December,_2006_at_6_30pm.html Accessed on 1/07/2009.

<http://www.finance.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/PressReleases/2009/bl100vol2.pdf> Accessed on 22/08/2009.

<http://www.educationireland.ie> Accessed on 22/08/2009

<http://www.nfq.ie> Accessed on 22/08/2009

<http://www.nqai.ie> Accessed on 22/08/2009

<http://www.pobal.ie> Accessed on 22/08/2009

<http://www.irishtimes.com> accessed on various dates

Other Works Accessed

Action Group on Access to Higher Education (2001) *Report of the Action Group on Access to Higher Education*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Ahlstrom, D. (2008) Time to plan for an economic upswing, *The Irish Times*, October 9th 2008.

Anon. (2009) Jobless to get free college places. *Irish Times*, June 22nd 2009.

Ball, S. J. (2003) *Class strategies and the education market*. London: RoutledgeFalmer – Taylor & Francis Group.

Barnett, R. (1992) *Improving Higher Education: Total Quality Care*. Buckingham. Bristol, PA: Society for Research into Higher Education: Open University Press.

Barnett, R. (1992) *Improving higher education: Total quality care*. Buckingham. Bristol, PA: Society for Research into Higher Education: Open University Press.

Barrett, A., Kearney, I. and Goggin, J. (2008) *Quarterly economic commentary, Winter 2008*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

Barrett, A., Kearney, I. and O'Brien, M. (2008) *Quarterly economic commentary, Spring 2008*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

Barrett, A., Kearney, I. and O'Brien, M. (2008a) *Quarterly economic commentary, Summer 2008*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

Barrett, A., Kearney, I., Goggin, J. and O'Brien, M. (2008) *Quarterly economic commentary, Autumn 2008*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

Black, F. (2008) We have too many colleges, says UCC Chief. *Irish Independent*, December 3rd 2008.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992) *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. In Crozier, G., Reay, D., Clayton, J., Colliander, L. and Grinstead, J. (2008) Different strokes for different folks: diverse students in diverse institutions – experiences of higher education, *Research Papers in Education*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 167-177.

Brophy, M. and Kiely, T.M. (2002) Competencies: A new sector. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, Vol. 26, No. 2/3/4, pp. 165-176.

Carbery, G. (2009) *Young entrepreneurs are the business*. Irish Times, May 1st.

Casey, M. (2009) Talking up the prospectus of recovery may be just that – talk. *Irish Times*, June 12th 2009.

Central Statistics Office (CSO) (various reports from 2000 - 2009) Accessed on 23/6/2009, from: <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications>

Council of Europe (2008) *Forum on Converging competencies: Diversity, higher education and sustainable democracy*. Strasbourg, October 2nd – 3rd 2008.

Crossan, B., Field, J., Gallacher, J. and Merrill, B. (2003) Understanding participation in learning for non-traditional adult learners: Learning careers and the construction of learning identities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 55-67. Accessed on 20/05/2009 from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3593304>

Crozier, G., Reay, D., Clayton, J., Colliander, L. and Grinstead, J. (2008) Different strokes for different folks: diverse students in diverse institutions – experiences of higher education, *Research Papers in Education*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 167-177.

De Buitelir, D. (1999) *Report of review committee on post secondary education and training places*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

European Commission (EC) (2003) *Green Paper: Entrepreneurship in Europe: COM 2003 27 Final*, European Commission, Brussels.

Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2000) *The second report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs*. Dublin: Forfas.

Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2001) *The third report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs*. Dublin: Forfas.

Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2003) *The fourth report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs*. Dublin: Forfas.

Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2005a) *Language and Enterprise The Demand and Supply of Foreign Language Skills*. Dublin: Forfas.

Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2005b) *Skills need in the Irish economy: The role of migration*. Dublin: Forfas.

Fahey, T., Russell, H. and Whelan, C.T. (eds.) (2007) *Best of times? The social impact of the Celtic Tiger*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration (IPA).

Fitzsimons, P. (2000) Changing conceptions of globalisation: changing conceptions of education. *Educational Theory*, Fall, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 505-521.

Forfas (1999) *The First Report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs*. Forfas. Dublin.

Gibb, A. (1996) Entrepreneurship and small business management: Can we afford to neglect them in the 21st century business school? *British Journal of Management*, volume 7 number 4, pp 309-324.

Government of Ireland (2000) *Programme for prosperity and fairness: National agreement*. Accessed on 23/6/2009 from: <http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/index.asp?docID=265>

Hannam, Dr. K. (2003) *European mobilities, citizenship and multiple identities. Network of Intelligence*. Atlas/ University of Sunderland, November 6th 2003.

Hannon, P. D. (2006) Teaching pigeons to dance: sense and meaning in entrepreneurial education. *Education + Training*, volume 48, no. 5, pp. 296-308.

Henry, C., Hill, F. and Leitch, C. (2003) *Entrepreneurship education and training*. Ashgate, Aldershot.

Horsman-Hogan, F. (2009) Flexibility is just the job for our unemployment woes. *Sunday Independent*, 21st June, 2009.

Irish Times (2009) Hanafin urges unemployed to up-skill. *Irish Times*, May 18th 2009.

Jones, R. (2009) 350 jobs cuts every day in May. *Irish Times*, June 3rd 2009.

Jordan, D. (2009) Beware unintended consequences of innovation policies. *Irish Times, Innovation Supplement*, July 6th 2009.

Kaplan, J. M. and Warren, A. C. (2007) *Patterns of entrepreneurship, 2nd Edition*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. USA.

Kets de Vries, M.F.R., Carlock, R.S. and Florent-Treacy, E. (2007) *Family business on the couch: A psychological perspective*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd., West Sussex, England.

McLaren, P. (2000) *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the pedagogy of revolution*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

McLaren, P. and Farahmandpur, R. (2005) *Teaching against global capitalism and the new imperialism*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Nabi, G., Holden, R. and Walmsley, A. (2006) Graduate career-making and business start-up: a literature review. *Education + Training*, volume 48, no. 5, pp. 373-385.

National Competitiveness Council (NCC) (2003) *The competitiveness challenge 2003*. Dublin: Forás and the National Competitiveness Council.

National Competitiveness Council (NCC) (2005) *Annual competitiveness report 2005*. Dublin: Forás and the National Competitiveness Council.

Puckett, J.L., Harkavy, I. and Benson, L. (2007) *Dewey's dream: Universities and democracies in and age of education reform*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Puckett, J.L., Harkavy, I. and Benson, L. (2007) Philadelphia: Temple University Press. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 281-284. Accessed on 20/05/2009 from: <http://esj.sagepub.com/3/1/2815>

Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ) (2009) *News at One*, Wednesday 1st July, 2009.

Slattery, L. (2009) Number of jobless passes the 10% mark. *Irish Times*, March 5th 2009.

Stevenson, N. (2001) Culture and citizenship: An introduction. In Stevenson, N. (ed.) *Culture and citizenship*. London: Sage.

Tansey, P. (Economics editor) (2008) Largest annual increase in jobless since 1967. *The Irish Times*, Wednesday, June 11th, 2008.

The Council of the European Union (2004) "*Education and training 2010*": *The success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms*. Brussels: European Council.

The Irish Times (2002). *Universities: who goes where?* Tuesday 17th September 2002.

Appendix 1

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) proposed a vision of Ireland in 2020 that suggests, that a well educated and highly skilled population contributes to a competitive, innovative, and enterprise knowledge based participative, and inclusive economy (Forfas, 1998; Expert Group on Future Skills Needs 2000; 2001; 2003). A number of reports have indicated the importance of generic/transferrable or 'soft skills' as being of primary importance in maintaining an adaptable and flexible workforce (National Economic and Social Forum, (NESF), 2003; National Training Advisory Committee, 2003). The fourth report of the expert group has also recognised that 'soft skills' defined as interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are becoming more important for organisational success (see also NCC, 2009). As a consequence, the report recommends that soft skills which include communication, leadership, team work, personal development and effectiveness, and learning to learn need to be incorporated into the national education curricula including the third level sector (Forfás, 2003). A further report focuses on the availability of an internal supply of foreign language skills to enhance the attractiveness of Ireland for foreign multi-national companies. Ireland is a small open economy and linguistic ability is an important asset for indigenous business organisation if they are to survive in a global marketplace (EGFSN, 2005a).