

**19**

Professional Practice  
Cleachtas Gairmiúil

# 19 Professional Practice

Research, both nationally and internationally, has focused on the positive correlation between a practitioner's level of training and qualifications and the quality of care and education provided for young children. The work of the group devising the National Childcare Training Strategy will be of critical importance in guiding and informing the way to improve the levels of qualifications for all adults working in the early years and provide opportunities for ongoing professional development.

As an integral Standard in *Síolta*, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, this theme is comprised of 144 publications. Following a process of thematic analysis, the following sub-themes emerged:

- Training and Education [44]
- Qualifications and Practice [47]
- Continuing Professional Development [20]
- Guidelines and Supports for Practitioners [23]
- International Perspectives [10]

## Training and Education

Training and Education in the ECCE sector forms, unsurprisingly, the largest sub-theme of this section. The training and education of primary teachers that work in the infant classes of schools has formed the focus of a number of researchers, including Byrne (1999), Coolahan (2003), the DES (2002d; 2005a), the Gender Equality Unit (2006), and the INTO (1993b; 1995b). A number of organisations have completed or commissioned research in relation to the training needs of its constituents or the feasibility of establishing training and education courses (Bernard, 1998a; BCCN, 2003a; Cavan CCC, 2003c; Centre for Social and Educational Research, 1998b; Gilsonan, 2006; Kane, 2005b; Kavanagh and Healy-Magwa, 2005; 2006; Kelly, 1999a; Kildare CCC, 2006a; Unique Perspectives, 2004). Abbott (1999), Burns (2006), Dinneen (2003; 2006), Donohoe (2003), Dunphy (1999), Healy (1999), Horgan (2003), Horgan and Douglas (2000), Kearns (2006), Kernan (1999) and Ridgway (2004; 2006a) provide a variety of approaches to conducting education and training for early years practitioners. Issues of diversity within the training and education of early years professionals emerges in the research of a number of commentators, including Cooke (2001), Cooke *et al.* (2002), Murray (1995) and Murray and O'Doherty (2001).

# Cleachtas Gairmiúil

Dhírigh taighde náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta ar an nasc dearfach idir leibhéal oiliúna agus cáilíochtaí cleachtóra agus caighdeán an chúraim agus an oideachais a chuirtear ar fáil do leanaí óga. Beidh obair an ghrúpa atá ag dearadh na Straitéise Náisiúnta um Oiliúint faoi Chúram Leanáí ríthábhachtach chun treoir agus faisnéis a thabhairt faoi conas feabhas a chur ar leibhéal cháilíochtaí na ndaoine fásta uile ag obair i réimse na mblianta luatha agus conas deiseanna a chur ar fáil d'fhorbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach.

Mar Chaighdeán Iárnach *Síolta*, an Chreatlach Náisiúnta Cháilíochta d'Oideachas na Luath-Óige, cuimsíonn an téama seo 144 foilseachán. I ndiaidh anailíse téamaí, cruthaíodh na fo-théamaí seo a leanas:

- Oiliúint agus Oideachas [44]
- Cáilíochtaí agus Cleachtas [47]
- Forbairt Ghairmiúil Leanúnach [20]
- Treoirínte agus Tacaí do Chleachtóirí [23]
- Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta [10]

## Oiliúint agus Oideachas

Ní aon ionadh go bhfuil Oiliúint agus Oideachas san earnáil COLO mar an fo-théama is mó sa chuid seo. Bhain fócas roinnt taighdeoirí, lena n-áirítear Byrne (1999), Coolahan (2003), an DES (2002d; 2005a), an tAonad um Chomhionannas Insce (2006), agus an INTO (1993b; 1995b) le hoiliúint agus oideachas na múinteoirí bunscoile a oibríonn i ranganna naíonán scoileanna. Chríochnaigh nó choimisiúnaigh roinnt eagraíochtaí taighde ar riachtanais oiliúna a mball nó ar an bhféidearthacht cúrsaí oiliúna agus oideachais a bhunú (Bernard, 1998a; BCCN, 2003a; CCC an Chabháin, 2003c; an tIonad um Thaighde Sóisialta agus Oideachais, 1998b; Gilsonan, 2006; Kane, 2005b; Kavanagh agus Healy-Magwa, 2005; 2006; Kelly, 1999a; CCC Chill Dara, 2006a; Unique Perspectives, 2004). Míníonn Abbott (1999), Burns (2006), Dinneen (2003; 2006), Donohoe (2003), Dunphy (1999), Healy (1999), Horgan (2003), Horgan agus Douglas (2000), Kearns (2006), Kernan (1999) agus Ridgway (2004; 2006a) roinnt cur chuige maidir le hoideachas agus oiliúint a chur ar fáil do chleachtóirí na mblianta luatha. Tagann saincheisteanna maidir le héagsúlacht in oiliúint agus oideachas dhaoine gairmiúla na mblianta luatha chun cinn i dtaighde roinnt tráchtairí, lena n-áirítear Cooke (2001), Cooke *et al.* (2002), Murray (1995) agus Murray agus O'Doherty (2001).

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## Qualifications and Practice

The sub-theme of Qualifications and Practice is another large category under the theme of Professional Practice. Area Development Management (2002), Bernard (1997), Cox (2006), Hearn (1998), Murphy (2006) and Rhodes and Hennessy (2000) have focused on the relationship between practitioner qualifications and the quality of ECCE services provided. A number of government departments and agencies have produced policy guidelines and legislative frameworks that inform the levels and nature of qualifications necessary in the early years, including Coolahan (2003), the Department of Education (1994b), the DES (1999h), the DJELR (1998b; 2002b), the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (2001) and the Teaching Council (2006). Byrne (2006), Glockai (1995), the INTO (2006b) and Walsh (2006) have addressed, at practice level, the issue of teacher and staff qualifications within

## Cáilíochtaí agus Cleachtas

Is catagóir mhór eile faoin téama Cleachtas Gairmiúil é an fo-théama Cáilíochtaí agus Cleachtas. Dhírigh Area Development Management (2002), Bernard (1997), Cox (2006), Hearn (1998), Murphy (2006) agus Rhodes agus Hennessy (2000) ar an gcaidreamh idir cáilíochtaí cleachtóirí agus caighdeán na seirbhísí COLO a chuirtear ar fáil. Tháirg roinnt rann agus gníomhaireachtaí rialtais, lena n-áirítear Coolahan (2003), an Roinn Oideachais (1994b), an DES (1999h), an DJELR (1998b; 2002b), Údarás Náisiúnta Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann (2001) agus an Chomhairle Teagaisc (2006), treoirí beartais agus creatlaigh reachtaíochta a thugann treoir faoi leibhéil agus cineálacha na gcáilíochtaí ar gá leo sna blianta luatha. Thug Byrne (2006), Glockai (1995), an INTO (2006b) agus Walsh (2006) aghaidh, ar leibhéal an chleachtas, ar an tsaincheist maidir le cáilíochtaí múinteoirí agus foirne i mbunscoileanna. Bhain

primary schools. The challenge of providing accreditation for prior learning has formed the subject of a number of pieces of research, including that of Kelly (1994) and OMNA (2000e; 2002f; 2002g). The OMNA (2000a; 200b) project was also instrumental in documenting the core skills and knowledge essential to work in the early years sector and potential strategies to accommodate work-based training (OMNA, 2000c; 2000h; 2000k; 2000l, 2000m). Specific aspects of qualifications and practice, such as reflective practice (Banks, 2006), gender differences (Russell, 2004) and accommodating diversity (Willoughby, 2004) have also been researched in the Irish context.

roinnt píosáí taighde leis an dúshlán creidiúnú a chur ar fáil do réamhfhoghlaim, lena n-áirítear taighde Kelly (1994) agus OMNA (2000e; 2002f; 2002g). Chabhraigh an tionscadal OMNA (2000a; 200b) freisin le taifeadadh na scileanna lárnacha agus an eolais riachtanaigh chun oibriú in earnáil na mblianta luatha agus straitéisí poitéinsiúla chun freastal ar oiliúint obair-bhunaithe (OMNA, 2000c; 2000h; 2000k; 2000l, 2000m). Rinneadh taighde ar ghnéithe sonracha cáilíochtaí agus cleachtais, cosúil le cleachtas machnamhach (Banks, 2006), difríochtaí inscne (Russell, 2004) agus freastal ar éagsúlacht (Willoughby, 2004) i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann.

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### Continuing Professional Development

The critical importance of Continuing Professional Development for ECCE practitioners has formed the basis of a number of research projects in the Irish context. Barnardos and the INTO Professional Development Unit (2006a; 2006b) and Graham (2005) have reported on a specific continuing professional development programme

### Forbairt Ghairmiúil Leanúnach

Tá tábhacht na Forbartha Gairmiúla Leanúnaí do chleachtóirí COLO mar bhunús roinnt tionscadal taighde i gcomhthéacs na hÉireann. Thug Barnardos agus Aonad Forbartha Gairmiúla an INTO (2006a; 2006b) agus Graham (2005) tuairisc faoi chlár sonrach um fhorbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach d'fhoireann agus

for the staff and management of Traveller Preschools. Brennan (2005; 2006a; 2006b) addresses the importance of reflective practice and mentoring to developing the skills and knowledge of practitioners. Coolahan (2003), Fallon (2006b) and the Leadership Development for Schools (2003) project have examined continuing professional development for teachers and principals working in primary schools. An evaluation of the impact of continuing professional development on the quality of practice has been documented by Duignan (2005c), Marley (1996), Murphy (2004) and Smith (2006). International perspectives and strategies to deliver continuing professional development programmes have been published by Hayes and Vasconcelos (2005) and Hayes *et al.* (2006).

bainistíocht Réamhscoileanna an Luchta Siúil. Tugann Brennan (2005; 2006a; 2006b) aghaidh ar an tábhacht a bhaineann le cleachtas machnamhach agus meantóireacht chun scileanna agus eolas cleachtóirí a fhorbairt. Rinne Coolahan (2003), Fallon (2006b) agus an tionscadal um Fhorbairt Ceannaireachta do Scoileanna (2003) scrúdú ar fhorbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach do mhúinteoirí agus príomhoidí ag obair i mbunscoileanna. Rinne Duignan (2005c), Marley (1996), Murphy (2004) agus Smith (2006) meastóireacht ar thionchar na forbartha gairmiúla leanúnaí ar chaighdeán an chleachtais. D'fhoilsigh Hayes agus Vasconcelos (2005) agus Hayes *et al.* (2006) peirspictíochtaí idirnáisiúnta agus straitéisí chun cláir um fhorbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach a sheachadadh.

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### Guidelines and Supports for Practitioners

Guidelines and Supports for Practitioners to promote their Professional Practice have been published by a number of organisations and individuals. Barnardos (2006a), Childminding Ireland (2000b), Holt and Pugh (2004), the INTO (1997a; 1997b), the OMC (2006a), South Dublin CCC and Uí Ghrádaigh (2002) have produced general practical guidelines for practitioners to enhance their practice in ECCE settings. Guidance for managers of settings in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff has also been published by Barnardos and Area Development Management (1999) and Byrne (2002). Training manuals and guidance for specific aspects of practice have been published by a number of organisations and individuals, such as the Preschool Regulations (Canavan and Gibbons, 1998), dealing with children with social and emotional problems (INTO, 1995c) and diversity education (INTO, 2002; National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, 2001; OMC, 2006b; O’Reilly, 1993). Waterford CCC (2003b) and Doherty

### Treoirínte agus Tacaí do Chleachtóirí

D’fhoilsigh roinnt eagraíochtaí agus daoine Treoirínte agus Tacaí do Chleachtóirí chun cabhrú leo ina gCleachtas Gairmiúil. D’eisigh Barnardos (2006a), Feighlíocht Leanaí Éireann (2000b), Holt agus Pugh (2004), an INTO (1997a; 1997b), OMC (2006a), CCC Bhaile Átha Cliath Theas agus Uí Ghrádaigh (2002) treoirínte praiticiúla ginearálta do chleachtóirí chun feabhas a chur ar a gcleachtas i suímh COLO. D’fhoilsigh Barnardos agus Bainistíocht Forbartha Ceantair (1999) agus Byrne (2002) treoir do bhainisteoirí suíomh maidir le hearcú agus coinneáil foirne. D’fhoilsigh roinnt eagraíochtaí lámhleabhair agus treoir maidir le gnéithe sonracha an chleachtas, cosúil leis na Rialacháin Réamhscoile (Canavan agus Gibbons, 1998), déileáil le leanaí le fadhbanna sóisialta agus mothúchána (INTO, 1995c) agus oideachas ar éagsúlacht (INTO, 2002; an Coiste Comhairleach Náisiúnta ar Chiníochas agus Idirchultúrachas, 2001; OMC, 2006b; O’Reilly, 1993). Tháinig CCC Phort Láirge (2003b) agus Doherty (2003) eolairí faoi na cúrsaí oiliúna agus

(2003) have produced directories of training and education courses available, the former in the Waterford region and the latter documenting such provision nationwide.

oideachais atá ar fáil, leis an gcéad eolaire ag liostú an tsoláthair i réigiún Phort Láirge agus an dara ceann ag liostú an tsoláthair ar fud na tíre.

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### International Perspectives

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### Peirspictíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta

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