

L.O. 1810

**State policy on school physical education in Ireland, with special
reference to the period 1960-1996**

By

Patrick Duffy, B.A. M.S.

**Ph.D. Dissertation
Education Department,
St. Patrick's College, Maynooth**

Supervisor: Professor John Coolahan

January 1997

Table of contents

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| List of tables..... | i |
| List of figures..... | ii |
| Acknowledgements..... | iii |
| Definition of terms..... | v |

Introduction

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Purpose and scope of the study..... | 4 |
| Methods..... | 6 |
| The need for the study..... | 8 |

Chapter 1: Policy on school physical education prior to 1970

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction..... | 16 |
| Developments in school physical education at the turn of the century..... | 16 |
| Physical education within the new State..... | 21 |
| The emergence of a positive State policy on physical education..... | 30 |
| Physical education within the broadening concept of education during the 1960's..... | 40 |

Chapter 2: Sporting and physical education traditions in Ireland

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction..... | 51 |
| The sporting legacy..... | 51 |
| Traditions in physical education..... | 57 |

Chapter 3: The origins and establishment of N.C.P.E.

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction..... | 82 |
| Towards a national college of physical education..... | 83 |
| The decision to proceed with N.C.P.E..... | 85 |
| The location of N.C.P.E. in Limerick..... | 91 |
| The treatment of existing traditions..... | 93 |

Chapter 4: Physical education within N.C.P.E. and Thomond College

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction..... | 97 |
| Planning and early administration..... | 97 |
| Status and mission..... | 101 |
| Structures within the College..... | 108 |
| Academic and religious influences..... | 114 |
| The performance of the College..... | 119 |

Chapter 5: The registration of physical education teachers

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction..... | 136 |
| Early attempts at registering teachers of physical training..... | 136 |
| The re-awakening of official interest in physical education..... | 138 |
| The registration of teachers with qualifications gained in Great Britain..... | 145 |
| The case of N.C.P.E. and the degree/diploma discrepancy..... | 147 |
| The registration pattern of physical education teachers..... | 149 |
| The Registration Council as a microcosm of the policy process..... | 153 |

Chapter 6: Department of Education policy following the establishment of N.C.P.E.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction..... | 157 |
| Department of Education policy on school physical education during the 1970's..... | 158 |
| The move towards a curriculum framework..... | 160 |
| The role of the professional association in influencing policy..... | 164 |
| The move towards a legislative framework..... | 177 |

Chapter 7: The curriculum in primary and second-level physical education since 1960

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction..... | 188 |
| The primary school syllabus in physical education..... | 188 |
| Second-level syllabi..... | 193 |
| Physical education syllabi within academic and cultural contexts..... | 203 |

Chapter 8: The implementation of policy in school physical education

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction..... | 207 |
| Provision for primary school physical education..... | 207 |
| Provision for physical education at second-level..... | 210 |
| Specialist teachers and the time allocated to physical education..... | 216 |
| Grants for major facilities..... | 224 |
| Qualitative aspects of physical education provision at second-level..... | 227 |
| Actual gains in the context of stated policy..... | 238 |

Chapter 9: The link between sports policy and school physical education

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction..... | 243 |
| The early operation of the Sports Section of the Department of Education..... | 245 |
| A change of Government and the formation of Cospoir..... | 254 |
| Sports policy within the context of overall government policy..... | 262 |

Chapter 10: School physical education - key developments, influences and future directions

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction..... | 271 |
| Stages in the development of physical education..... | 271 |
| Key policy themes in the re-appraisal of physical education..... | 287 |

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Appendices..... | 297 |
| Bibliography..... | 301 |

List of tables

| Table | Title | Page |
|-------|---|------|
| 1. | Family and State responsibilities in the education of the child..... | 26 |
| 2. | Chronology leading to the enactment of the Constitution, 1937..... | 27 |
| 3. | N.C.P.E. and Thomond College graduates in physical education..... | 120 |
| 4. | Number of applicants for the physical education course 1981-1990..... | 121 |
| 5. | Main elements of the primary school syllabus in physical education..... | 191 |
| 6. | Facilities recommended for the implementation of the primary school physical education syllabus..... | 192 |
| 7. | Major stages of the 1987 physical education syllabus..... | 199 |
| 8. | Comparison of 1973 and 1987 syllabi in terms of facility recommendations..... | 202 |
| 9. | Facilities for physical education at primary school..... | 208 |
| 10. | Time allocation to physical education at colleges of education..... | 209 |
| 11. | Percentage of students taking physical education..... | 210 |
| 12. | Schools offering physical education at junior and senior cycle..... | 214 |
| 13. | Schools with qualified physical education teachers..... | 219 |
| 14. | Percentage of schools with qualified physical education teachers..... | 219 |
| 15. | Profile of the physical education profession..... | 220 |
| 16. | Physical education as part of school programme by age. | 233 |
| 17. | Perception of activities as 'male' or 'female'..... | 233 |
| 18. | Funding arrangements for physical education and sport 1970-1974..... | 249 |
| 19. | Summary of Sports Section funding and distribution 1986-1995..... | 259 |

List of figures

| Figure | Title | Page |
|---------------|--|-------------|
| 1. | Registration of physical education teachers 1965-1993..... | 150 |
| 2. | Male and female physical education teachers 1965-1993..... | 151 |
| 3. | Percentage of students taking physical education..... | 211 |
| 4. | Schools offering physical education to boys and girls/junior cycle.... | 213 |
| 5. | Schools offering physical education to boys and girls/senior cycle.... | 213 |
| 6. | Percentage of school offering physical education..... | 214 |
| 7. | School type and physical education at junior cycle..... | 216 |
| 8. | School type and physical education at senior cycle..... | 217 |
| 9. | Schools offering physical education at junior cycle - by gender..... | 218 |
| 10. | Number of class groups taking physical education 1975/76..... | 221 |
| 11. | Hours per week physical education 1975/76..... | 221 |
| 12. | Number of teachers required to deliver physical education 1975/76.. | 223 |
| 13. | Comparison of time provision for physical education 1977-1991..... | 223 |

Acknowledgements

The completion of this study has taken over six years and during that time I have been fortunate to have the kind assistance of many people. Access to primary source material was critical to the study. My thanks to the authorities of Thomond College of Education and the University of Limerick for their support in this regard, particularly in relation to the records of the National College of Physical Education and Thomond College from the 1970's. Grainne O'Donovan of the Physical Education Association of Ireland arranged access to the files of that association, while Margaret Sheridan and John Meehan were most helpful in relation to the Registration Council minutes from the 1960's and 1970's. Paddy Heffernan and Michael Kennedy arranged for the Cospoir files of the 1970's and 1980's to be at my disposal.

My thanks also go to Paula Rankin, Joanne Frost and Majella Burton for their assistance in locating key sources. In this, and other matters, the guidance and advice of Gobnait O'Riordan from Library and Information Services at the University of Limerick was invaluable. Deirdre Morrissey and Josephine McElhinney were very helpful in processing various stages of the draft and in generally backing up my research efforts. Tom Healy and Paul Gully of the Department of Education provided access to the Department of Education statistical record.

The input of John Logan and Michael Darmody was most useful at different stages of the study. The interviews and sources provided by Sister Bede Kearns, Edith Hudson and Michael McDonough were of central importance also. All those interviewed and those who completed questionnaires made an important contribution as well. I would particularly like to record my endless gratitude to my late friend, Liam Dugdale, who provided me with so much guidance and inspiration during the early part of the research and right throughout my career.

The guidance of my supervisor, Professor John Coolahan was always highly supportive and most illuminating. This input provided an invaluable perspective and balance to the study and made the whole enterprise rich and thoroughly rewarding. The Board of Management and staff of the National Coaching and Training Centre have facilitated the completion of the study in many important ways, for which I am truly grateful.

Finally, my sincerest thanks to all my family and friends for their support, interest and encouragement all along the line. Mam and Dad followed the study the whole way and their interest helped to sustain my efforts. My partner and friend, Deirdre was always there and gently kept me going when things got tough. Sean and Liam had to endure my absence, which they both did cheerfully. To everyone who helped, thank you a thousand times. I now hope that this study will make a contribution to our understanding of the way State policy on physical education has evolved.

Pat Duffy

January 1997

Definition of Terms

Policy

According to Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt¹ a policy is 'a set of values expressed in words, issued with authority, and re-inforced with power (often money or penalties) in order to induce a shift towards these values'. This definition is adopted for the purposes of the current study. By way of further refinement, all advances in school physical education will be considered from the perspective of *stated* and *actual* policy. Stated policy relates to formal statements or official documents. Actual policy refers to the quantifiable measures of policy implementation such as the spending of public money, employment of teachers and levels of provision for physical education in schools.

Physical education

Physical education has been defined by Duffy and Dugdale as a process which seeks to develop the following capacities:

- a. **A love of and appreciation of physical activity for its own sake**
- b. **An understanding and love of one's own body**
- c. **A mastery of the skills and capacities to participate safely and effectively to a chosen level**
- d. **Self reliance in decisions and choices concerning physical activity**
- e. **An appreciation of the place of physical activity in the balance of life²**

This definition was adopted for the purposes of the study, with an emphasis on physical education as a lifelong process which contributes to well-being, self-worth and autonomy. The physical education process is not necessarily linked to formal institutional contexts.

School physical education

School physical education relates to the experiences which are provided for students at primary and second-level as part of the formal curriculum. The subject seeks to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which are uniquely associated with physical activity. School physical education programmes are delivered by suitably trained personnel. Programmes consist of a broad and balanced range of activities, which ideally are reflective of the cultural context in which they are delivered.

Co-curricular activity

Co-curricular activity refers to all forms of physical activity which occur within the school and which supplement the curricular objectives of physical education. Co-curricular activities include competitive sport, games and recreational sporting activities which are organised by the school.

School sport

School sport is defined as sporting activity which takes place in a formal and competitive context, and which occurs between individuals and teams from different schools.

Games

The use of the term games refers to class periods and co-curricular activities which engage the students in individual and team games where the primary motive is the attainment of proficiency in the activity and/or enjoyment.

Sport

Sport has been defined by the Council of Europe as 'all forms of physical activity which through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels'.³

Competitive sport

Competitive sport involves activity where the primary motive of participants relates to the attainment of success against publicly measured criteria.

Recreational sport

Recreational sport involves activity where the primary motive of participants relates to enjoyment and/or re-generation and which may involve a striving towards the attainment of personal goals which are judged against personal criteria.

Physical Culture

Physical culture has been defined by the Physical Education Association of Ireland as 'the broad range of areas associated with physical activity. It includes physical education, sport, outdoor education, recreation, leisure and other related activities. It includes competitive and non-competitive activities'.⁴

References

¹ Marshall, C., Mitchell, D. & Wirt, F. *Culture and education policy in the United States*. New York: The Falmer Press, 1989, p.6

² Duffy, P. & Dugdale, L. Themes and issues for the 21st century. In P. Duffy, L. Dugdale, A. Hope, J. Kirwan & M. O'Sullivan (eds), *HPER - moving toward the 21st century*. Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1994, pp. 8-9

³ European Sports Charter, 1992

⁴ Physical Education Association of Ireland. Submission to the Department of Education on the Green paper on education, 1993, p.2

Dedication

To Deirdre, my friend

Introduction

Introduction

Ireland is a country which pulsates with interest in sport and physical activity. The nation's heritage is steeped in the richness of local events and in the excitement of great national and international sporting occasions. Scarcely a person in the country is unaffected by the influence of sport, either as a participant or spectator, while its economic impact is growing all the time.¹ As the State has modernised, participation in recreational physical activity has increased,² and the need to physically educate the school-going population has become more pressing.

However, physical education as a component of the curriculum, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Traditionally, the strong academic and examination orientation of the school system³ meant that subjects such as physical education were not prioritised.⁴ Furthermore, and despite long and established traditions in physical culture, *Bunreacht na hEireann*⁵ specifically excluded the State from playing a mandatory role in the provision of physical education.⁶ These circumstances had the effect that until the 1960's, schools were solely responsible for making provision for the physical development of their students.

This was often done through the medium of games, without any involvement from the Department of Education. In more recent times, the policies of the Department have mirrored the Constitutional position by stating that schools 'should' rather than 'must' provide physical education.⁷ Inevitably, significant variations have occurred in provision, depending upon school type, size and tradition. Primary and second-level schools have also had to face differing, though related, problems in the implementation of physical education policy.⁸

Since the early 1960's, renewed and detailed attention has been paid by the State to the educational infrastructure at primary, post-primary and tertiary levels. This has involved a major expansion in expenditure at second level alone, going from £9.7 million in 1965 to £861 million in 1995.⁹ As part of the provision of more open and comprehensive educational opportunities, school physical education has been included in an extensive range of policy initiatives. The goals of physical education have also been linked to the role which the State has taken on in sport,¹⁰ under the aegis of the Sports Section of the Department of Education.¹¹ Despite these advances, concern persists over the quality of physical education provision.¹²

Primary school physical education has been the focus of policy debate for many years, with the case being made that young children need the movement experiences and fun which the subject uniquely provides.¹³ However, provision for physical education in primary schools has progressed slowly and has been severely hampered by a lack of resources, the inadequate pre-service training of teachers and the politics associated with the non-specialist role of primary teachers.¹⁴

In recent times, the periodic supply of equipment grants and the inclusion of multi-purpose areas in newly constructed schools have occurred as part of a piecemeal and unconvincing Department of Education approach to primary school physical education.¹⁵ The long term neglect of this area of policy has had its effect and a number of studies have shown that primary school children generally receive an unsystematic physical education programme.¹⁶ The introduction of the new syllabus in 1971 has not led to the advances which were anticipated,¹⁷ mainly due to the lack of confidence and competence of teachers to deliver such a broad and specialist programme.¹⁸

At second-level, the presence of specialist teachers in approximately two-thirds of the schools means that many students pursue a course in physical education. However, the small amount of time devoted to the subject within the timetable undermines the value of these experiences in the context of a heavily loaded and examination oriented curriculum.¹⁹ While these circumstances are far from ideal,²⁰ a number of significant policy initiatives have occurred since 1960. The establishment of a national college for the professional preparation of specialist teachers; the appointment of a four person physical education inspectorate and the widespread employment of physical education teachers at second-level were all important advances.

The construction of physical education facilities within community and comprehensive schools was a recognition of the role of the subject in a more broadly based curriculum. Conversely, the absence of facilities and adequate specialist teaching input in some schools has resulted in implementation difficulties. Often, physical education teachers feel that they are in the impossible position of attempting to deliver meaningful programmes to large school populations single-handedly and with scarce physical resources.²¹

Despite these drawbacks, the current position of physical education needs to be considered in the light of the relatively recent awakening of the Department of Education to the value of the subject. It was not until 1960 that the first recognition was given to physical education teachers by the Registration Council for Secondary Schools.²² Eleven years later the subject was recognised in a formal way within the primary school curriculum,²³ around the same time that a syllabus for post-primary physical education was also adopted.²⁴ Following an initial and significant investment by the Department of Education during the early 1970's, which included the establishment of the National College of Physical Education (N.C.P.E.), many second-level schools responded positively to the physical education initiative.

The economic circumstances which were precipitated by the 1973 oil crisis stunted further heavy investment in the wider education system,²⁵ which in turn affected physical education.²⁶ Accordingly, the momentum which was generated during the early part of the decade slowed down, making the implementation of quality programmes more difficult. Cutbacks in education during the early 1980's further inhibited the consolidation of school physical education.²⁷ Many positive statements were made during the 1980's and 1990's concerning the value of the subject,²⁸ without any major change occurring in the position of the subject within the curriculum.²⁹

The recent progress of school physical education has not been to the satisfaction of many professionals involved in the area and, in particular, the Physical Education Association of Ireland (P.E.A.I.). This professional body, which represents specialist teachers, has persistently pointed to the need for improvements in provision for the subject at both primary and second-level.³⁰ Such representations appear to have had some effect with *Education for a changing world*³¹ signalling a stronger commitment to the subject, although the more significant *Charting our education future*³² was less forceful on the matter. Given this context, and as Ireland moves slowly towards the establishment of a legislative framework for education, it is opportune to investigate the nature and basis of State policy on school physical education.

Purpose and scope of the study

Studies of Irish educational policy have increased in number in recent years.³³ O'Donoghue has provided specific insights into the early development of physical education³⁴ and the origins and operation of the P.E.A.I.³⁵ During the course of this work it has become apparent that there has been an absence of concerted study of the position of physical education in an Irish context. This situation has not been helped by the absence of any serious treatment of Irish traditions and culture in physical education within the professional preparation of teachers of the subject.³⁶

The lack of research and cultural perspective on the nature and meaning of physical education in Ireland has left a gap in our knowledge concerning the social construction of the subject. Kirk³⁷ has argued that 'the physical education programmes in place in the school curriculum to-day are the outcome of contestation and struggle between a range of competing groups' attempts to define the subject'. Such struggles and the associated culturally specific definitions of school physical education have not been subject to any detailed research to date in this country. On top of this, the apparent mismatch between the societal value placed on physical culture and policies on physical education, suggest that a thorough investigation of the State's orientation towards the subject should occur.

This study focuses on the evolution of school physical education since the foundation of the Irish State, with a particular emphasis on the period 1960 to 1996. While the study concentrates on school physical education, the positioning of the research in the wider context of sports policy is central to a comprehensive understanding of the salient events and processes. A number of key issues are addressed as part of the study:

1. The charting of the major developments in school physical education since political independence, with particular reference to the period 1960 to 1996.
2. The identification of the main social, economic, educational and sports policy issues which have had a bearing on the priority given to school physical education.
3. The analysis of the main traditions and culturally specific characteristics of physical education in Ireland.

4. The evaluation of the roles played in the policy process by groups such as politicians, Department of Education and other government departments, churches, teacher unions, the professional association for physical education, school management, sports organisations, parents and other agencies and individuals.

Prior to a direct treatment of the issues relating to policy in school physical education between 1960 and 1996 a historical and contextual overview is undertaken. Particular attention is given to Irish traditions in physical education and to the establishment and workings of N.C.P.E. The study of the national college is central to a contemporary understanding of physical education and sport in Ireland and provides a unique opportunity to study the nature and effectiveness of such a major State initiative.

The training, recognition and employment circumstances of specialist physical education teachers receives detailed attention during the course of the study. Policies relating to the professionalisation of the subject provide insights into the perspectives of the State, the major churches, school management, teacher unions and other organisations. The role of these interest groups is a recurrent theme of the study and it is evident that there has been considerable temporal variation in their influence on the physical education policy process.

State policy on physical education has had many similarities in its application to the primary and second-level sectors. This research deals extensively, though not exclusively, with the situation in the second-level system. In reviewing policy at post-primary level, a key element of the study involves a comparison between the aspirational statements of the physical education syllabi³⁸ and the actual provision which has been made in schools. The scope of the research dictates that less exhaustive reference is made to the primary sector, although it is examined with particular reference to its interface with policy for second-level. In addition, an outline is provided of the role of the State in sport since 1969, when the Sports Section of the Department of Education was established. It is noted that the decision by the State to become involved in sport was initially related to policy on school physical education.

At that time, both politicians and officials of the Department of Education perceived that, while there was not a direct unity of purpose between physical education and sport, there was at the very least a strong degree of complementarity between these two components of physical culture. Special attention is given to the early work of Cospoir, the National Sports Council, which was established in 1978 and which played a key role in attempting to mediate the link between physical education and sport.

Methods

This research is concerned with the interpretive study of selected issues in contemporary social and educational history. The use of both qualitative and quantitative measures is employed to outline the evolution of policies in school physical education and sport. For the core elements of the study a heavy reliance is placed on the use of primary source material. This is particularly the case relating to the establishment of N.C.P.E. and the operation of Thomond College; the registration of physical education teachers; the early work of Cospoir, and the role of the P.E.A.I. Apart from the latter, these sources have not been previously subject to scrutiny. They provide a valuable insight into the nature and basis of policy initiatives in physical education and sport.

These sources were supplemented by a series of structured interviews which were conducted with key personnel associated with the progress of physical education and sport over the past thirty-five years. Apart from these sources, extensive reference is made to a mass of published material. In many cases, these secondary records have never been studied in the context of a longitudinal overview of the role of the State in physical education and sport.

Considerable emphasis is also placed on the quantitative analysis of data relating to the provision of physical education. Once again, while these data have been openly in the public domain they have not been the subject of detailed scrutiny as they relate to the evolution of policy. Such data provide evidence of stated and actual policies, and the following indicators are studied to assess progress between 1960 and 1996:

Indicators of stated policy

- a. Department of Education guidelines and regulations
- b. Formal policy statements
- c. Official documentation and publications

Indicators of actual policy

- a. The provision for, and nature of, pre-service training for primary and second-level teachers
- b. The number of schools offering physical education to students
- c. The registration pattern for physical education teachers
- d. The time allocated on a weekly basis to school physical education for each student
- e. Facilities in schools
- f. In-service provision for teachers at primary and second-level
- g. Departmental structures

Marhsall, Mitchell and Wirt³⁹ have suggested that it is possible to chart the various influences on educational policy in an empirical way because 'the world of state education policy is populated with elites who were elected or appointed to maintain a certain cultural view - a preferred way of structuring schooling to achieve a preferred set of values'. They further proposed a model of power and influence on educational policy making which charted five levels of influence: insiders, near circle, far circle, sometime-players and often-forgotten players. In an Irish context the role and influence of the Minister for Education, Department of Education, Sports Section, teacher unions, P.E.A.I., the Churches, managerial bodies, parents organisations and political parties can be mapped against such a model.

It is also possible to plot the evolution of policy on a temporal basis. Rose⁴⁰ has outlined four key stages of this process; the emergence of an issue on the agenda; policy formulation and authorisation; implementation; and policy termination or change. These four stages provide a useful framework and together with the Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt⁴¹ model of power and influence contribute to a template within which the current interpretive study operates.

The study, while drawing heavily on historical methodology, seeks to adopt an inter-disciplinary approach focusing on the analysis of a dedicated area of public and educational policy. Such a perspective has been advocated by Mulcahy and O'Sullivan who stated that:

...policy making as an area of inter-disciplinary enquiry remains neglected. It represents an anomaly that, despite considerable investment in the widest sense, the structures and processes involved in establishing priorities for educational development have not undergone sustained scholarly analysis.⁴²

The scrutiny of policy in school physical education demands that the constraints which might be imposed by the boundaries of academic disciplines are transcended. Accordingly, this study employs a methodology which utilises the strengths which have been accumulated in the historical, sociological, curriculum and policy analysis domains.

The need for the study

Following a period of extensive activity in the mid-1960's and early 1970's, the impetus behind the physical education initiative has faltered significantly. Ireland now lies at the bottom of the European league in the time provided to students for physical education within second-level schools.⁴³ The situation in primary schools is even less well developed, with serious under-provision noted.⁴⁴ In the context of a modernising Ireland, an understanding of the policy context for this situation merits scrutiny. The absence of systematic study of educational policy has been commented upon by a number of writers.⁴⁵ Coolahan commented forcefully on the issue as it relates to primary schools:

Thus, one could conclude that the Irish experience has been to shy away from policy statements or the issuing of public discussion documents on education. For much of the period under review one has to glean lines of policy from occasional speeches and circulars. The lack of educational policy statements, annual reports, up-to-date detailed statistical data and planning generally has been criticised by a variety of bodies including the Investment in Education Team, the National Industrial and Economic Council (NIEC), the National Economic and Social Council (NESc) and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), as well as by individual commentators but the performance by the Department has been unsatisfactory in this regard.⁴⁶

Physical education has been affected by this policy vacuum. Coolahan⁴⁷ has suggested that the commitment of the Irish education system to a liberal education has been 'more honoured in the breach than in the observance.' Coolahan further contended that the lasting effects of the Intermediate Education Act (1878),⁴⁸ the rural nature of Irish society, the many small school units and the strong emphasis on school sport within boarding schools have all served to constrict the development of school physical education.

In a society where the ideologies of capitalism, Catholicism, patriarchy and cultural nationalism are strong,⁴⁹ the reasons for the retarded position of the subject are both identifiable and intricate. It could be suggested that school physical education does not contribute to the competitive individualism which is associated with the academically-oriented examination system. Similarly, it might be argued that school physical education, with its emphasis on participation for all at an individually appropriate level, runs counter to the competitive and male-dominated ethic which prevails in sport and wider society. Recent events in Britain support this contention and Murphy⁵⁰ noted that a non-competitive focus within school physical education was condemned by parents, teachers and sporting bodies on the basis that standards, levels of participation and levels of fitness had, in their eyes, dropped.

The analysis of school physical education policy, therefore, is linked to fundamental ideological issues and their embodiment in practice. The study of these influences is made more difficult by the fact that their role is often less than explicit within the formal policy domain. O'Sullivan has suggested that the articulation of values has been deliberately eschewed by educational planners:

...when innovations, such as the comprehensive school idea which originated from a social as well as an educational critique were imported into Irish educational discourse, there was a conscious effort to jettison all elements of social reconstruction. In effect, therefore, by specifically attempting to avoid ideology (considered as social critique or reconstruction), Irish educational planners have acted ideologically, i.e. in the interests of those social groups who benefit from existing educational and social structures.⁵¹

Coolahan,⁵² in referring to the traditional Department of Education approach as one of 'pragmatic gradualism' also contextualised this *modus operandi* by saying that such an *ad hoc* approach to planning and provision had its advantages:

In a conservative, traditional society whose institutions are undergoing significant, and, for some, worrying changes this can sometimes be an effective way of moving things forward on a gradual path, testing responses, slowing down or speeding up as circumstances permit.

Given this incrementalist⁵³ approach and the absence of any clear statement of the ideological rationale for policy decisions, it is not surprising that the study of the policy processes and outcomes of the Department of Education has not been developed until relatively recently. The 1980's and 1990's have seen an important shift, however, in the direction of a more rational and open policy process. Several Department of Education publications and processes attest to this change in emphasis. These documents serve to highlight the need for a concerted study of the policy processes which are, and have been, in operation.⁵⁴ School physical education, while featuring in many of these more recent publications, has not been the subject of concerted study with respect to its position within the evolution of contemporary education policy.

Such investigation is an essential element in the construction of a culturally specific understanding of the nature and position of school physical education in Ireland. The meanings which have been placed on the subject merit analysis, bearing in mind that the orientations taken by Government have been crucial in shaping the educational landscape. State policy on school physical education should be considered in a context where, according to Harris, the ultimate responsibility for policies within any Government department rests with the cabinet itself:

Once a government decision is taken, recorded and transmitted to a department, the department is bound to operate strictly in accordance with the terms of that decision, whether they agree with it or not. A government minister, bound by the principle of collective responsibility, may find him or herself having to go from the cabinet room and announce and defend a decision which he or she had unsuccessfully opposed in discussion with government colleagues. Likewise, department officials may have to give effect to and defend government decisions which were made contrary to their advice. This particular hazard of the job of a civil servant often goes unappreciated by those who seek to vent their frustration against those whom they may erroneously believe to be responsible for some unpopular decision.⁵⁵

The workings of this multi-layered system of policy development and implementation have never been comprehensively explored as they relate to school physical education. It is easier to assume, perhaps, that the government has not had any policies relating to the area. As will be shown, this is far from the case, as the government has taken a strong interest in school physical education as well as community sport at a number of important junctures. Furthermore, any absence of policy decisions reflects a particular policy orientation which, in itself, deserves analysis.

Within the school system Mulcahy⁵⁶ has argued that the absence of a clear view of the purpose of education and the nature of the curriculum has severely inhibited the development of coherent policy-making. Certainly, the position of physical education within the system has not been helped by such a vacuum. The dearth of clear and comprehensive aims for education in general and the role of physical education in particular has made it easier for the system to remain the same than to change. The bureaucracy and conservatism of the education system in which school physical education has sought to establish itself was well summarised by Harris:⁵⁷ 'One hopes that, when files come finally to rest on desks where decisions are actually taken, the decision makers will not be unduly confused by the fog which may have been created around the issue on the way up'.

The formal position of physical education on the curriculum was addressed by the Curriculum and Examinations Board in 1986.⁵⁸ The general aim of education was defined by the Board as contributing to the overall development of the individual, including the physical development, in the context of a preparation 'for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure'. The Board followed through on this logic by suggesting that physical education should be a core area of experience at Junior Cycle. Ten years later this recommendation has not been activated, despite the forceful recommendations of a National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (N.C.C.A.) working group on physical education.⁵⁹

The recent White paper, *Charting Our Education Future*,⁶⁰ stated that one of the aims of education is 'to promote physical and emotional health and well being' and that all students should have experiences in physical activity at Junior Cycle, but did not address the issue of making such a recommendation binding on schools. While the White paper may not have made a forceful case for compulsory physical education, its overall emphasis was indicative of the changing role of such education in modern society.

The document highlighted the potential role of physical education in contributing to the overall well-being of the student in the context of health promoting schools. This broad view of physical education was further extended through a strong linkage with the continuation of participation in recreative and competitive sport in community contexts and in later life:

There is a close relationship between the physical education programme in schools and sports in the community....These links ensure that the games and activities, that are a part of community life, are integrated, in a suitable form, into the school programme. In this way the school can also be a factor in enriching community life. By identifying the relationship between school activities and life outside school, young people will have an opportunity of seeing physical education as a part of their lifestyle and not just a separate school activity⁶¹.

Importantly, as part of a key document which will set the basis for legislation in the education area, physical education and sport have been accorded a place. The inter-relationship between sports development and school physical education has also been recognised. This significant threshold brings about the demand that a thorough study of the evolution of policy in these areas be undertaken.

This study is the first detailed attempt to place the contemporary development of school physical education in the context of broader educational and sports policy. Firstly, a historical back-drop is outlined in chapters 1 and 2 . The recent history of school physical education is then dealt with, placing emphasis on the origins and operation of N.C.P.E. in chapters 3 and 4 and the registration of physical education teachers in chapter 5. Stated Department of Education policies on physical education following the establishment of N.C.P.E. are analysed in chapter 6, while the syllabi at primary and second-level are scrutinised in chapter 7. Actual policy and provision for physical education is charted in chapter 8. The position of school physical education is contextualised within broader sports policy in chapter 9. Chapter 10 summarises the major findings and conclusions of the study.

References

- ¹Department of Education, *The economic impact of sport in Ireland*. Dublin, 1994
- ²Department of Education and Department of Health, *A national survey of involvement in sport and physical activity*. Dublin, 1996
- ³Mulcahy, D. Official perceptions of curriculum in Irish second-level education in D. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan (eds) *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989
- ⁴Coolahan, J. The development of physical education in Ireland. Presentation to the National Conference of the Physical Education Association of Ireland, Galway, 1989
- ⁵Bunreacht na hEireann: Constitution of Ireland, 1937
- ⁶Keogh, D. The Irish constitutional revolution: an analysis of the making of the Constitution *Administration*, 35(4), 1987, pp. 4-85
- ⁷Council of Education, *Report of the Council of Education on the curriculum of the secondary school*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1962 (Pr. 5996)
- ⁸O'Donoghue, T., *The Physical Education Association of Ireland 1968-1989*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1989
- ⁹Department of Education, *White paper on education: Charting Our Education Future*. Stationery Office, 1995 (Pn 2009)
- ¹⁰Ibid.
- ¹¹Department of Education, *Green paper on education: Education for a changing world*. Stationery Office, 1992 (Pl. 8969)
- ¹²As evidenced by the number of references to this issue in the submissions to the National Sports Strategy Group, 1996. Submissions held at the Sports Section, Floor 11, Hawkins House, Dublin.
- ¹³Department of Education, *Notes on the teaching of physical education in the primary school*, Stationery Office, 1932
- Department of Education, *Curraclam na bunscoile Teachers handbook, Vols. 1 & 2*. Dublin: Brown & Nolan, 1971
- Physical Education Association of Ireland, Submission to the Department of Education, 7 February 1986. Unpublished document. Physical Education Association of Ireland files
- Duffy, P. Primary school education - spirit, mind, but what about the body? Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the National Parents' Council - Primary. Dundalk, April, 1992.
- Department of Education, 1992. Green paper
- McGuinness, S. & Shelly, B. Physical education in the primary school: an evaluation of programme implementation. *Oideas*, 44, 1996, pp. 46-64
- ¹⁴Deenihan, J. Physical education survey - report on physical education in Irish primary schools'. Unpublished survey, 1991.
- ¹⁵Duffy, P., 1992. Primary school physical education
- ¹⁶Deenihan, J., 1991. Physical education survey
- ¹⁷National Education Convention Secretariat, *Report on the National Education Convention*. Dublin: Cahill Printers, 1994
- ¹⁸McGuinness, S. & Shelly, B., 1996. Physical education in the primary school
- ¹⁹Darmody, M. 'Physical education in Co. Waterford'. Unpublished report, 1989
- ²⁰Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1986. Submission to the Department of Education
- ²¹Leonard, D. & Duffy, P. 'Re-appraisal of the physical education curriculum'. Unpublished notes from an in-service course for physical education teachers held at Thomond College in October 1987
- ²²Registration Council Minutes, 13 January, 1960
- ²³Department of Education, 1971. Curraclam na bunscoile
- ²⁴Department of Education, *Rialacha agus clar do leith meanscoileanna*. Stationery Office: Dublin, 1973 (prl. 3205)
- ²⁵Coolahan, J. Education policy for national schools in D. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan *Irish educational policy*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989
- ²⁶Coolahan, J., 1989. The development of physical education in Ireland
- ²⁷Letter from the President of the Physical Education Association of Ireland to the Minister of State at the Department of Education, 7 December, 1988. Physical Education Association of Ireland files
- ²⁸Curriculum and Examinations Board, *Issues and structures in education*. Dublin, 1984
- ²⁹Physical Education Working Party, 'Physical education: at a critical cross-roads'. Unpublished report of the working party on physical education, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1991

- ³⁰The Annual Reports of the Physical Education Association of Ireland from 1986 to 1996 have documented an extensive range of issues dealing with the provision and status for physical education.
- ³¹Department of Education, 1992. Green paper
- ³²Department of education, 1995. White paper
- ³³Coolahan, J., *Irish education; history and structure*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981
- O'Buachalla, S. *Education policy in twentieth century Ireland*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1988
- Mulcahy, D. & O' Sullivan, D. (eds) *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989
- ³⁴O'Donoghue, T. Sport, recreation and physical education: the evolution of a national policy of regeneration in Eire, 1926-48. *British Journal of Sport History*, 3(Sept), 1986, pp. 216-233
- ³⁵O'Donoghue, T. *The Physical Education Association of Ireland 1968-1989*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1989
- ³⁶Ibid.
- ³⁷Kirk, D. *Defining physical education*. London: The Falmer Press, 1992, p. 26
- ³⁸The second level syllabi of 1973 and 1987 are referred to in this context
- ³⁹Marshall, C., Mitchell, D., & Wirt, F. *Culture and education policy in the United States*. New York: The Falmer Press, 1989, p.16
- ⁴⁰Rose, R. Comparing public policy. *European Journal of Political Research*, 1, 1973, p. 1
- ⁴¹Marshall, C., Mitchell, D., & Wirt, F., 1989. Culture and education policy
- ⁴²Mulcahy, D. & O' Sullivan, D. (eds) *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989, pp.1-2
- ⁴³European Physical Education Association, Unpublished results of a survey of physical education in Europe, 1994
- ⁴⁴Deenihan, J., 1991. Physical education survey
- ⁴⁵Mulcahy, D. & O' Sullivan, D. (Eds), 1989. Irish educational policy
- O'Buachalla, S., 1988. Education policy in twentieth century Ireland
- ⁴⁶Coolahan, J. Education policy for national schools in D.G. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan *Irish educational policy*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989, p. 30
- ⁴⁷Coolahan, J., 1989. The development of physical education in Ireland
- ⁴⁸Intermediate Education Act, 1878. 41 & 42 Vict. Ch. 66
- ⁴⁹Clancy, P., Drudy, S., Lynch, K. & O'Dowd, L. *Ireland: a sociological profile*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1986
- ⁵⁰Murphy, S. Ideological trends within physical education and implications for the profession in Ireland. *Irish Journal of Physical Education*, 8(2), 1989, pp. 6-15
- ⁵¹O'Sullivan, D. The ideational base for Irish educational policy in D. Mulcahy & D. O' Sullivan (eds) *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989, p. 243
- ⁵²Coolahan, J., 1989. Education policy for national schools, p. 62
- ⁵³Lindblom, C. The science of 'muddling through'. *Public Administration Review*, 19, 1959
- ⁵⁴Department of Education, *White paper on educational development*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1980 (prl. 9373)
- Department of Education, *Programme for action in education, 1984-1987*. Dublin: Stationery Office 1984 (Pl. 2153)
- Department of Education, *Partners in education: serving community needs*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1985 (Pl. 3598)
- Department of Education, 1992. Green paper
- National Education Convention Secretariat, 1994. Report on the National Education Convention.
- Department of Education, 1995. White paper
- ⁵⁵Harris, J. The policy making role of the Department of education in D.G. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan *Irish educational policy*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989, p. 9
- ⁵⁶Mulcahy, D. *Curriculum and policy in Irish post-primary education*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981
- Mulcahy, D. Official perceptions of curriculum in Irish second-level education in D.G. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Institute of Public Administration: Dublin, 1989
- ⁵⁷Harris, J. The policy making role of the Department of education in D.G. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan *Irish educational policy*. Institute of Public Administration: Dublin, 1989, p. 11
- ⁵⁸Curriculum and Examinations Board, *In our schools*. Dublin, 1986

⁵⁹Physical Education Working Party, 1989. Physical education: at a critical cross-roads

⁶⁰Department of Education, 1995. White paper, p. 10

⁶¹Ibid., p. 112

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Policy on school physical education prior to 1970

Introduction

The twentieth century has seen the slow emergence of physical education on the policy agenda in Ireland. Following many positive signs in the first half of the century, the major and tangible gains for the subject have occurred within the last forty years.¹ This progress has transpired in the light of a number of key official publications since the turn of the century. These stated policies have had varying effects on the actual situation in schools. This chapter will examine official policy prior to the landmark decision to establish N.C.P.E., which was officially confirmed in 1970. In so doing, the context for the development of school physical education in recent decades will be provided.

Developments in school physical education at the turn of the century

Education in nineteenth century Ireland was strongly influenced by the social, economic and political climate of the country.² State involvement was focused on the development of structures for primary education, with private interests making somewhat sparse and exclusive provisions at second-level.³ Towards the end of the century, the structure of the national school system was the focus for official attention and, by 1904, 8,600 primary schools were in existence.⁴ Many of these schools were small and located in rural areas. Combined with the hardships of post-famine times, this scenario dictated that physical education did not become a policy issue until the later years of the nineteenth century.

The earliest form of physical education occurred under the heading 'physical drill' and was taught primarily to kindergarten classes.⁵ It appears that little formal instruction was given to pupils in more senior classes. This situation came under review through the work of the *Report of the Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction in Primary Schools* (the Belmore Commission) which was set up to look at the question of manual and practical instruction in primary schools in 1897.⁶ The report noted that only 357 out of 8,606 primary schools practised the Kindergarten system 'so that in the vast majority of National Schools, there is no official recognition of any kind of physical training'.⁷ Children in Kindergarten were engaged in action songs and callisthenics.⁸

The Commission made a number of important recommendations concerning physical training. It was argued that drill and physical exercises 'contribute largely to the health, the spirits, and the general well being of the children' and that they were 'no additional burden on school life, but rather a pleasant form of recreation; and the children return from them to their studies with renewed energy'.⁹ Emphasis was placed on the potential of the subject in making pupils orderly and in the improvement of posture. Town children and girls were singled out for special attention.¹⁰

Members of the Commission visited countries such as Sweden, Denmark and Germany and the case for a more structured form of physical training was stated forcefully:

We accordingly are of the opinion that it is most desirable that some simple form of Drill and Physical Exercise should be encouraged in all schools under the Board of National Education; and we think that such encouragement might be most effectively given in the form of a grant for discipline and organisation, one condition of awarding the grant being that some approved and systematic instruction in Drill and Physical Exercises is regularly and efficiently given.¹¹

The Report did not identify the need for teachers to have some expertise in order to conduct classes in physical drill. However, the proposal to link a grant in discipline and organisation to the provision of such classes was indicative of the seriousness with which the Commission took the issue. Even though this recommendation was not implemented it was an effort to link a formal statement of policy to incentives which would encourage schools to include drill and physical training on the curriculum.

The work of the Belmore Commission led to the inclusion of physical drill in the 1900 *Revised Programme for National Schools*.¹² The *Dale Report* noted that 8,439 primary schools had a programme in physical drill in 1901.¹³ In addition, the *Rules and Regulations of the Commissioners of National Education*¹⁴ pointed to an increased emphasis on, amongst other things, physical drill. It was suggested that boys should receive five lessons per week, to a total of ninety minutes and that girls should receive two lessons per week to a total of sixty minutes. Physical drill was to be compulsory in every school 'in which there are Teachers holding certificates of competency' and that the subject was to be introduced into schools without such teachers as soon as possible.¹⁵

The Commissioners of National Education had obviously taken note of the findings of the Belmore Commission in that the benefits of physical drill were deemed to be strongly associated with deportment, variety, improved performance in capacity for mental exertion and with the development of discipline, politeness and good manners. The *Rules and Regulations* again stressed the benefits of drill for town children and teachers were urged to take note that: '...the golden rule that should guide him (the teacher) in regard to these exercises is, that they should tend to help the normal development of the growing frame of the child, but not unduly to accelerate it or to retard it'. Teachers were further encouraged to exercise prudence in relation to the nature and duration of the activity undertaken and were advised that 'delicate pupils should not be asked to practise Physical Drill'.¹⁶

It was stressed that physical drill did not necessarily mean military drill, despite the concern in Britain over fitness levels arising from the Boer War.¹⁷ This view signalled a broadening of the notion of physical training.¹⁸ The Commissioners particularly mentioned the role which school games might play in the physical training programme - singling out cricket, baseball, croquet and handball for special mention. It was also suggested that for girls in higher standards drill might be substituted by callisthenic exercises.

The implementation of these recommendations proved to be somewhat difficult, however. Aside from the proposal that physical drill should be delivered by teachers with appropriate certificates of competency the Report urged that the subject should be taught out of doors whenever possible. The *Dale Report* found that only thirty-nine schools out of 168 in Dublin had a playground, thus severely limiting the promotion of physical drill.¹⁹ Dale also reported that the introduction of new subjects, which included physical drill had 'done something already to relieve the dulness of the curriculum'.²⁰ Convent schools received special mention for the quality of work which they were doing in physical exercises.²¹

The most striking element of the *Dale Report* was the increase in the number of schools offering physical drill between 1899 and 1901. According to the Report no schools offered the subject just prior to the turn of the century, while 8,439 did so by 1901. Although the basis for the collection of the data is not clear, this increase was related to the fact that the subject was now listed in the programme.²² Nonetheless, the figures indicate that the turn of the century brought increased awareness of the need for physical drill within national schools.

The *Dale Report* did not indicate that any special provision was made for the training of teachers in physical drill, whereas co-ordinating teachers were appointed in Elementary Science, Musical Instruction, Hand and Eye Training, Kindergarten and Cookery with a view to instructing other teachers in these subjects.²³ The Report did indicate however, that the introduction of physical exercises to the curriculum had been a most beneficial development and that the standard of instruction had improved.²⁴

If the turn of the century brought important developments in physical drill in the national school sector, the same cannot be said for secondary schools. The second-level system had become bound into an academic and examination-oriented curriculum which was instituted by means of the 1878 Intermediate Education Act.²⁵ The Intermediate Education Board was entrusted with the task of promoting intermediate secular education. Particular emphasis was placed on public examinations which could result in the award of prizes or certificates to students. The payment of fees to schools, which were dependent up results in examinations, was a central element of the Act.²⁶

Despite the academic orientation of the schools and the absence of any strong official push for the inclusion of physical training on the curriculum, there had developed some tradition and impetus within the schools. According to O' Donoghue, the reports of inspectors for 1909-10 indicated that from a survey of 126 girls' schools and 98 boys' schools the following was the situation:

Compulsory Games offered in 41% of boys' schools and 29% of girls'
Compulsory Drill offered in 52% of boys' schools and 82% of girls'
School indoor facilities present in 25% of boys' schools and 30% of girls'²⁷

These figures suggest that by early in the twentieth century secondary schools had included games and physical training to some degree, although the nature and quality of the programmes has not been documented. It is quite possible that the strong momentum which had built up for the inclusion of drill in the primary schools at the turn of the century was also influential at second-level. Certainly, the role of convent schools in promoting drill was again remarkable in the second-level statistics.²⁸

It is interesting to note also, that while Irish second-level schools were restricted by the payment by results system, Ireland's first college of physical training was opened in 1900. Ling College was founded in Dublin by Miss Studley who was a graduate of Dartford Physical Education College in England.²⁹ The history and tradition of the College will be dealt with in chapter 2.

In the early part of the century games had become established as part of the extra-curricular programme of private schools where cricket and rugby were played.³⁰ In some instances it appears that private schools provided the impetus for the formation of sporting associations. For example, school masters and past pupils from King's Hospital and the High School were instrumental in the establishment of the Irish Hockey Union.³¹ In this regard, the Irish second level education system had strong parallels with the public schools of England which offered strongly classical curricula supplemented by team games.³² The inclusion of a games and physical training element was, it seems, based on the initiative and culture of individual schools rather than on any central directive from the Board of Intermediate Education, which did not have a function in making such interventions.

The beginning of the twentieth century heralded an increased emphasis on physical training and games throughout the school system. Such a trend was reflective of international developments, with school physical education becoming well established in Europe and the United States³³ and the formal organisation of sport through national federations and the international Olympic movement taking shape.³⁴ By 1913 the effect of the international physical education movement on primary school physical education had become quite apparent and the *Rules and Regulations of the Commissioners of National Education* specifically referred to the Swedish system.³⁵ The recommendations of the Commissioners were based on the 1909 publication from the London Board of Education which had been written by Miss Dickinson, a physical education specialist.³⁶

By 1920 the influence of this work had become even more marked and Miss Dickinson published a new *Primer of Physical Exercises* which contained a list of commands in Irish by Dr Douglas Hyde.³⁷ The *Notes for Teachers in Connection with the Programmes of Instruction for National Schools*³⁸ contained an extensive section on how teachers should go about implementing the Swedish system, stressing that exercises should not simply be done by rote, but that 'the children should never know exactly what exercises they have to perform next'.³⁹ These

developments showed that, prior to political independence, there had been a number of positive advances in physical education, particularly at primary level.

Physical education within the new State

The period between 1916 and 1921 brought about important political changes which saw Ireland partitioned and the twenty-six counties gaining the status of a Free State. The winds of political change in the country were to have a marked effect upon school programmes, particularly within national schools. The *National Programme of Primary Schools* was issued following the National Programme Conference which had been initiated by the Irish National Teachers Organisation.⁴⁰ The document was critical of the existing programmes for instruction in schools on the basis that there were too many obligatory subjects; that the Irish language had been neglected and that 'the programme, generally speaking, was felt to be out of harmony with national ideals and requirements'.⁴¹

Significantly, the new Programme suggested modifications in physical drill, reducing the suggested time per week from one hour to half-an-hour. While the Swedish system was referred to there was reference to the use of 'other approved' systems.⁴² It was also recommended that all instructions in the subject should be given in Irish. By the time the second *Report and Programme* was issued in 1926 the thinking had shifted still further and physical training was excluded from the list of obligatory subjects. It was felt that the long list of compulsory subjects inhibited the development of the Irish language and that the experience of other countries indicated the importance of concentrating on the essential minimum number of subjects.⁴³ In addition, the absence of appropriate facilities and teaching power were cited as further reasons for excluding physical training from the list of obligatory subjects.

Despite this exclusion, there were a number of signs within the Report which suggested that physical training was to be harnessed in the move towards nation-building:

We have reason to expect that Physical Training, the importance of which for national health we fully appreciate, will be generally taught in our larger schools, especially urban ones, and also in a large number of other schools where the teachers are competent to teach it and have the requisite facilities.⁴⁴

Notably, facilities and teacher expertise were seen to be important factors in determining whether the subject was dealt with in primary schools. In addition, the medico-health role of physical training was evident, with particular emphasis on urban areas.⁴⁵ The authors of the Report recognised that a full review of the role of physical training should take place. The development of the health and physique of the nation was highlighted:

We recommend that the whole question of Physical Training should be considered at the earliest possible moment by the Departments of Education and of Local Government and Public Health in connection with the scheme for the medical and dental inspection and treatment of school children, with a view to the planning of a scheme of Physical Training calculated to improve the national health and physique by the application of simple systematic measures during the period of school life.⁴⁶

Such a systematic review did not occur, however. It was not until 1932 that *Revised Notes for Teachers - Physical Training* at primary level was published.⁴⁷ This extensive document reflected the nationalistic mood of the time and the importance of national traditions and games was strongly emphasised. This included specific references to Gaelic games and Irish dancing and to the role of physical training in occupying the country's youth. The behaviour of many young people left much to be desired, according to the guidelines, with the suggestion that: 'If their active participation in games has been limited, they are without initiative, and time hangs heavily on their hands'.⁴⁸

The notes re-affirmed the importance of the Swedish system, particularly because of the inherent moral training which it included and because individuals were taught to 'subordinate themselves to the common good'. This theme recurred throughout the document: 'The subordination of the personal identity to the honour of the group, which is required in many games is an excellent preparation for later life'.⁴⁹ Significantly, it was recommended that physical training should once again be taught twice per week, although there was no stipulation that it should re-appear on the compulsory list of subjects. Accordingly, while there were strong aspirations concerning the importance of physical training in building the new nation, there was little action of a concerted nature which would bring such a vision to reality within the primary school system.

Similarly, the early years of the Free State do not appear to have brought any major change in the development of physical training in second-level schools. This situation was exacerbated by the small size of many schools and the extensive calls on the resources of the newly established State. School sport continued to grow and an increasing emphasis was placed on Gaelic games and athletics.⁵⁰ The Vocational Education Act of 1930 stipulated that physical training should be included as part of technical education, indicating that there was at least an awareness of the importance of physical well-being within the realm of preparation for skilled and manual occupations.⁵¹ There is little evidence, however, to suggest that the vocational schools were either committed to, or resourced for, the delivery of such an aspiration.

During the early years of the 1930's the Army began to play an increasing role in the area of physical culture and extensive work was done by Commander Tichy of the Czechoslovak Army in the preparation of a national plan for the development of health and recreation for physical education in schools.⁵² Commander Tichy was commissioned by the Irish Army and spent two years in the country developing plans for a national system based on the Czechoslovakian Sokol system of physical education. This work was not implemented, however, as it was superseded by the appointment of an Inter-Departmental Committee which was set up in 1936 to examine the development of physical education.

The 1938 report on physical education

The Inter-Departmental Committee, which sat during the period when the new Constitution of the Free State was being drafted, was established by the Minister for Education Tomas Deirg. It was chaired by Labhras O Muirthe from the Department of Education and was given terms of reference which focused on the introduction of physical education to schools:

To examine the problems of Physical Education and after such examination and consideration as may be necessary to furnish the Minister with a report as to the system of Physical Education most suitable for introduction to the schools and a recommendation as to the methods by which a scheme of Physical Education based on that system may be introduced and developed.⁵³

These guidelines were taken seriously by the Committee and a number of important recommendations were made, including the setting up of a Central Institute of Physical Education. The Committee was aware of the need, not only to set up a college, but to define its subsequent work within a nationally planned system of physical education. It was hoped that the Central Institute would act as a catalyst by being 'a source of inspiration, guidance and encouragement'.⁵⁴ It went on to recommend that physical education be a compulsory subject in all schools with the stipulation that 'persons possessing a Diploma in Physical Education approved by the Central Institute will be required on the staffs of secondary and vocational schools'.⁵⁵

In a far-seeing recommendation it was proposed that teachers and university graduates might be granted 'special consideration by way of reducing the period of training'.⁵⁶ The vision in suggesting a type of conversion course (to physical education) for teachers of other subjects was matched by the consideration given to physical education as a potential Leaving Certificate examination subject.⁵⁷ Clearly, the Committee had identified the importance of contextualising physical education within the values of the academically-oriented examination system.

Despite these high ideals, the Committee was pragmatic in the way it presented its findings. The economic and health benefits which might accrue as result of the introduction of a system of physical education were consistently referred to and the link between physical education and public health was made:

The need for a properly organised system of Physical Education in the schools, a system based on scientific principles is now strongly advocated by competent medical authorities, not only in Europe and America but also by those in Eire who have a particular responsibility for matters relating to public health.⁵⁸

This medico-health orientation was backed up by the publication of extracts from the reports of six medical officers around the country, one of which suggested:

It is the duty of a public education authority not merely to apply the principles of the science and art of medicine to healing through medical inspection and correction of defects, but to direct and indirect prevention of disease, and to constructive conservation of the natural defences of the child's body...and so to encourage the operation of a way of life which would produce a strong and virile race.⁵⁹

The Committee also argued that a national system of physical education could contribute 'to the standard of health and physical fitness and the general moral tone of the nation'.⁶⁰ Despite the far-seeing nature of the Report, little action was taken. A further report on the promotion and revival of athletics and physical training was commissioned.⁶¹ This latter report, prepared by the Department of Defence and the Department of Education, was requested in 1942 by a cabinet sub-committee on economic planning. One of the recommendations of the Report proposed the greater involvement of Army personnel in the delivery of physical training in schools. The managers of secondary schools were to be encouraged to employ qualified teachers. In addition it suggested that vocational schools should promote activities for the general public.⁶²

It is not clear why a further report was deemed necessary and it seems that, like the 1938 report, nothing came of the recommendations, despite the fact that a letter went to the office of An Taoiseach on the matter. One of the main reasons for the cessation of progress was the State of Emergency which was brought about by the Second World War.⁶³ Such an explanation is only a partial one, however, in that during the course of drafting the Constitution of the Free State, the position of physical education had already been considered at the highest level in Government.⁶⁴

The Constitutional Foundation

While the momentum for the expansion of the State's role in physical culture in general and physical culture in particular gathered during the 1930's consideration was being given to the re-drafting of *Bunreacht na hEireann*, the Constitution of the Free State. This document was completed in 1937 and contained an article relating to education, Article 42.⁶⁵ The wording of the Article had significant implications for the position of physical education within the educational process:

The State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family and guarantees the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children.⁶⁶

The State, however, preserved the right to require that children should receive a certain minimum education. Significantly, this right did not extend to the religious and physical aspects of the child's education: 'The State shall, however, as guardian of the common good, require in view of actual conditions that the children receive a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social'.⁶⁷

According to Article 42, therefore, the State was required to intervene in the education of the child in the moral, intellectual and social areas, but not in the religious and physical elements. This position persists to the present day. Table 1 summarises the key differences between the role of the State and the rights of the family in the education of the child, as outlined in *Bunreacht na hEireann*.

Table 1
Family and State responsibilities in the education of the child
 (adapted from *Bunreacht na hEireann*)

| Family (Article 42.1) | State (Article 42.3.2) |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Intellectual | Intellectual |
| Moral | Moral |
| Physical | |
| Religious | |
| Social | Social |

To date, the exclusion of the word 'physical' from Article 42 has not been the subject of detailed study on the part of scholars of physical education. More generally, it has been commented on by one constitutional writer who noted that 'the state cannot require that any child must receive religious or physical education'.⁶⁸ It appears, however, that the word 'physical' was taken out of the draft Constitution in a pre-meditated way.

A closer analysis of the drafting process for the Constitution bears out this contention. Table 2 outlines the timeline which was followed in formulating the document. In the first 'revise',⁶⁹ Article 42 read: 'The State, however, as guardian of the common good, shall require in view of actual conditions that the children receive a certain minimum education, moral and intellectual, **physical** and social' (emphasis added). The manuscript shows that two hand-written amendments were made to the Article at that time, probably in the hand of Eamon De Valera.⁷⁰ Neither amendment effected the word physical, which remained in the document at that stage.

By April 7, however, things had changed. During the course of the second revise the word 'physical' was deleted from the manuscript, again in handwriting that is likely to be that of De Valera.⁷¹ Given that the draft constitution was printed on April 26, it can be seen that physical education came within three weeks of being accorded a firm place in the State's constitutional view of its educational responsibilities.

Table 2
Chronology leading to the enactment of the Constitution, 1937
 (Adapted from Keogh)⁷²

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Constitutional idea introduced to Dail | 10 March |
| Provisional draft (limited circulation) | 10-15 March |
| First draft circulated | 16 March |
| First revise circulated | 1 April |
| 'physical' taken out of 42.3.2 | 7 April |
| Second revise circulated | 10 April |
| Third revise | 23 April |
| Published and circulated | 1 May |
| Dail approval | 14 June |
| Enacted by the people (referendum) | 1 July |

The reasons for the change of heart between March 31 and April 7 are not clear. According to Keogh,⁷³ Eamon De Valera engaged in an extensive series of discussions with the Papal Nuncio, Paschal Robinson; the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Edward Byrne and Cardinal MacRory from Armagh between the third and fifth of April. While the main thrust of these discussions related to the proposed references to religion in the Constitution, it is possible that other elements of the document were discussed as well. These may have included a consideration of Article 42, given that a number of key references had been made to the teachings of the Church on physical education in the background papers to the Article.⁷⁴ However, further research is required to substantiate the hypothesis that there was direct Church involvement in the deletion of the word 'physical', an issue which will be returned to in chapter 2. Whatever the basis for the wording of Article 42, it was a critical point in the evolution of physical education in that the most powerful legal instrument in the State had placed a barrier to compulsory physical education within the school system.

The Commission on Youth Unemployment

Despite the provisions of the Constitution, debate concerning the position of physical training and of athletics continued, though with less intensity following the report of the 1942 Inter-Departmental Committee.⁷⁵ There were moves in the middle part of the 1940's to make provision for athletic grounds around the country and for a national stadium, as well as the appointment of a national athletic council.⁷⁶ These plans were not followed through and, following a change of Government in 1948, a major Church-State controversy took place over the provision of a scheme of public health for mothers and their babies. The Catholic

hierarchy opposed this scheme intensely, referring explicitly to the fact that it was the right of the family and not the State to provide for the physical education of children.⁷⁷

The Mother and Child scheme was never implemented and it seems that, amid the broader debate about Church-State roles, the position of physical education drifted. The inactivity of the Department of Education was notable, given that two major reports had suggested concerted action on physical education within the previous twenty years.⁷⁸ One possible reason for this may have been the establishment of the *Commission on Youth Unemployment* in 1943 by the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Sean Lemass. As well as looking into issues relating to youth unemployment and the welfare of young workers, the Commission was asked 'To make recommendations as to the most practicable and desirable measures for promoting the religious, intellectual and physical development of young persons'.⁷⁹

The Commission was chaired by the Primate of Ireland, Archbishop John Charles McQuaid and received the views of the Department of Education on the position of physical education in the form of a memorandum:

The position with regard to physical training has been receiving the special attention of the Department and proposals for its development with a view to making it an integral part of school life were framed a few years ago. These proposals include a scheme for the establishment of a Central Institute of Physical Training at which instructors and others could obtain proper training and qualifications, but it was found necessary to defer further action in connection with the scheme, for reasons of economy during the present emergency.⁸⁰

The Commission expressed satisfaction that the Department of Education was dealing with the matter and stressed the importance of physical education as a 'positive approach to physical and mental fitness and is a necessary complement to the school medical service'.⁸¹ In addition, the Commission referred to the potential for co-operation between the various sports bodies in providing opportunities for young people in outdoor sports and athletics and to the need to make provision for pitches and recreational facilities in urban areas. The recommendations of the Commission relating to physical education showed an unequivocal support for a greater emphasis on the area:

We recommend-

- (a) that the establishment of the Institute for Physical Training contemplated by the Department of Education, be proceeded with;**
- (b) that physical education be made an integral part of the curriculum of all schools;**
- (c) that assistance be given towards the establishment of classes in physical education in boys' and girls clubs.⁸²**

These clear and forceful recommendations were supported by the view that 'The contribution which physical education, which term we use to embrace instruction in hygiene, formal physical training and recreative physical training, can make is not fully appreciated in this country'.⁸³

It was perhaps such a lack of appreciation of the worth of physical education which made it easier for the Department of Education to remain inactive on the proposals of 1938 and which now had been re-activated in the somewhat unlikely forum of the *Commission on Youth Unemployment*. The Department of Education may not have made progress on physical education in the early 1950's, but the Catholic Church was certainly beginning to awaken to the importance of the area. The Dominican nuns established St Raphael's College, Sion Hill for female students of physical education in 1954. Such a development was almost certainly influenced by Archbishop McQuaid.⁸⁴ It is notable that the Archbishop was fully aware of, and supported, the idea of an Institute for Physical Training as early as 1951 and that he took an active part in initiating the establishment of the Dominican College at Sion Hill, Dublin over the following three years. The establishment and traditions of this college will be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Some of the inertia within the Department of Education may have been related to the fact that the *Commission on Youth Unemployment* was established in 1943 and took eight years to produce its report. Given that one of the three main terms of reference of the Commission related to the physical development of young people there was, perhaps, a justification for the Department to stand back and await the final report. When the Report was published it included a statement of support for the setting up of the *Council of Education*, which had been put in place the year before. The establishment of the Council and the lengthy period of time which it took to complete its work were the basis for further inertia within the education system. However, the case for physical education emerged on the policy agenda in a significant way within this conservative educational climate.

The emergence of a positive State policy on physical education

The *Council of Education*, established in 1950, proceeded to produce two reports, one on primary education⁸⁵ and the other on secondary education.⁸⁶ Both were to refer to physical education and in ways they contributed to keeping alive the dying embers of the vision of the 1930's, while on the other hand they served to further stall any immediate action. The proposals of the 1930's had seen a key role for physical culture within education and society, but its purposeful realisation had become entangled in the intricacies of a nation trying to establish itself. Despite the forceful recommendations of the *Commission on Youth Unemployment* the potential of physical education was not seriously addressed by the Department of Education during the 1950's.

The Reports of the Council of Education

Much comment has been made about the role of the Council of Education, most of a negative nature. The work of the Council has been described as sterile and irrelevant 'which may have reflected accurately the views of the educational establishment of the fifties and answered to the innate conservatism of most politicians'.⁸⁷ From the outset there was widespread criticism of the make-up of the Council with objections raised about urban bias, exclusion of trade unions and the by-passing of parents. This resulted in 'residual friction over role and composition'.⁸⁸ The period which spanned the life of the Council from its inception in 1950 to the publication of its second major report twelve years later was notable for the absence of major developments in education.

The first report to issue from the Council was in 1954 and related to the functions and curriculum of the primary school.⁸⁹ A turgid and weighty document, the Report pointed to the absence of physical training as a defect in the existing curriculum, supporting its claim by reference to the 1951 *Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment*.⁹⁰ While the Council identified the absence of physical training as a deficiency, recommendations for change were somewhat muted and it was suggested that a half-an-hour per week should be found for the subject. The proposals on content were such that physical training was seen to be closely related to health and hygiene. The overall appreciation of the Report for the role of physical education was limited and was reminiscent of the discipline and deportment orientation which had prevailed since the start of the century. However, it did state that the notion of drill was open to objections, because of the regimentation involved.

The recommendations and tone of the 1954 Report highlighted the dilemma which inhibited the development of physical education. On the one hand, the deleterious effects of a rigid and control-oriented approach were recognised, while on the other a strong link was made between physical education and moral behaviour in the child. In this regard, the Report articulated the need to consider the full development of the child within a Christian ethos:

Development of mind is not the sole function of the school. The child also has a body, the culture of which should keep pace with that of the mind. Physical training requires practical exercises and directions, though they may be few and simple. The child should be accustomed to stand, sit and walk properly; he should be taught to realise the importance of correct breathing, fresh air and exercise. Games should find a place in every school, habituating the child to self control and self reliance, obedience, co-operation and an easy, friendly disposition, as well as aiding physical growth. The school must also stress the care of the child's health and his training in habits of hygiene, personal cleanliness and temperance. Through this means of physical training, the child is disciplined in the care of his health, so that he may be better fitted to fulfil God's plan in his regard.⁹¹

Buried in the volume of the Council's first report this statement mirrored much of what had been said before about the value of physical education. It was also prophetic of much of what was to come in that it highlighted the health promoting component of physical exercise and games and unashamedly placed these activities in the context of God's plan.

One of the most significant elements of the Report lay not so much in the content of its recommendations, which were weak and ineffectual, but in the contribution to the process of generating debate within the community of those involved in physical culture. The Council issued press notices and letters of invitation to organisations and individuals seeking submissions. Two respondents to this initiative were Ms. Kathleen O'Rourke and Ms. J.M. Culhane of the privately run Dublin School of Physical Education, soon to be subsumed into St Raphael's College, Sion Hill.⁹² A submission was also made to the Council by the Sports Federation of Ireland.⁹³ So, despite the absence of impact arising from the Report on primary education, it was part of the slow re-emergence of physical education on the policy agenda.

Just as the Report of the Council on primary education did not make any major contribution to educational developments, the secondary report has been criticised for its blandness and failure to effect change within the system.⁹⁴ Despite this evaluation, the Report helped to re-awakening interest in the position of physical education on the curriculum. The development of the subject was seen by the Council as being related to the resources available to schools and stated that 'in remote areas it would be unrealistic that physical training should be given by a specially qualified instructor'.⁹⁵

This statement reinforced the non-essential nature of the subject, but nonetheless it was indicative of an understanding of the need for physical education on the part of the Council. Importantly, detailed consideration was given to the basis on which subjects were part of the school curriculum, an issue which was especially significant for physical education given its non-compulsory status within the second-level system. The Council reported that:

..the regulation is that the curriculum of each recognised school must include instruction in a syllabus approved by the Minister in a) Irish b) English c) History and Geography d) Mathematics e) Science; or a language other than Irish or English; or Commerce. The curriculum should also include provision for Singing, physical training or organised athletic games, and for Domestic Science in schools for girls.⁹⁶

The Council had highlighted the important difference which existed between compulsory and non-compulsory subjects, thus drawing into focus the relative roles of the Department of Education and individual schools in determining curriculum content. In seeking clarification on the matter from the Department of Education the Council found:

..that the terms of the 'must' clause are equally binding on the Department and on the school without room for compromise, whereas the should requirement is not so rigorous: the Department may grant exemption from any one or more of the subjects mentioned if it is satisfied that the circumstances are such to warrant it.⁹⁷

The Council did not seek to challenge the assumptions upon which the position of the Department of Education was based. The freedom of schools to choose was, in fact, re-inforced: 'The recommendations which we make in succeeding chapters are such, we hope, as may be of assistance to the schools without impairing their legitimate freedom'.⁹⁸

The Council re-affirmed the distinction between obligatory and optional subjects and supported the powers of individual schools in the provision or non-provision of physical education. It could be argued that schools had to justify the exclusion of physical training where 'circumstances warranted'.⁹⁹ However, given the underdeveloped nature of the subject at the time, its relatively weak position was amplified by the Council's approach on this matter. The Council indicated that 'the obligation (to teach physical training) could be waived in certain circumstances'.¹⁰⁰

This distinction between 'must' and 'should' has continued to effect physical education until the present day and reflected the earlier provisions of Article 42 of *Bunreacht na hEireann*.¹⁰¹

Despite the failure to address the issue of compulsory physical education, the Council made a number of important references to the subject. At various points throughout the Report the contribution of physical training, physical education, athletics and games to general education was recognised. The Council also reported that the Department had laid down no syllabus for the subject nor did it provide for inspection of the area in schools. It estimated that up to seventy per cent of schools provided for physical training and this was considered to be 'a reasonably satisfactory state of affairs considering the flexible character of the obligation to provide physical training and the difficulties of smaller schools in securing the services of competent instructors'.¹⁰²

While the basis for suggesting that such a high percentage of schools provided for some form of physical training is questionable, the above conclusion appears to have been founded on the overall organisational and social context of schools at the time. Many schools were small in size and were run privately, sometimes with strong games traditions. In rural areas, the need for physical education was not strongly apparent, particularly given the physical exertion involved in every day duties and, in many cases, travelling to school. The deleterious effects of sedentary lifestyle were not obvious or relevant in such a context and given the strength of the Gaelic Athletic Association (G.A.A.) in rural areas the need for formalised physical education on the curriculum, for boys at any rate, was clearly not a priority.

Such an assumption was valid given that the potential of physical education was not widely understood at the time. However, the most telling, and to some extent the most surprising, of the Council's statements on physical education stated:

Of set purpose we use physical education as a comprehensive generic term to include all physical activities calculated to build up sound and healthy constitutions: eg systematic physical exercises, athletic sports, swimming, dancing, games organised and unorganised. The aim of physical education is not merely to develop the health and strength of pupils but also to assist mental growth and the formation of character. Physical education, therefore, while directly influencing the body, should have improving effects on the mind, leading to the mens sana in corpore sano. The direct effect of such education should be evidenced in general physique and in healthy living, in such matters as correct breathing, ease and grace of posture and movement; mental results would be intellectual alertness, habits of discipline, obedience and self control.¹⁰³

The clarity and focus of this statement was somewhat out of context with the general tenor of the Report in other areas. At a time when the term 'physical training' was being used by the Department of Education the Council chose to specifically re-direct the terminology in the direction of education. Additionally, physical education was defined in terms of the activities which it included, with a coherent view of how the content of the subject should be broadened to include a wider range of activities to include swimming, dance and other activities.

As well as reviewing the position of physical education relative to other subjects on the curriculum, the Council also teased out the relationship between physical education and games. The Council was also aware of the distinction between games and physical education and noted the possible negative effects of competition and the imbalanced development of the body.¹⁰⁴ This was an impressively focused commentary, particularly from a group which did not have the services of a specialist in physical education at its disposal. The distinction between games and physical education was an important recognition of the need to establish a curricular physical activity component for students which would take into account a range of abilities. It also recognised the existing traditions which existed in many schools in games and athletics.

Credit must be accorded to the Council for identifying this issue, particularly given the previous absence of any recent debate or action on physical education within either the primary or secondary sectors. The approach taken by the Council was indicative of a growing awareness of the need for physical education teachers. The Registration Council, in 1960, agreed to the recognition of such teachers for the first time, an issue which will be addressed in chapter 5.

Despite the constraints imposed upon it by its own terms of reference and by the realities of the education system, the Council was unambiguous on the importance of physical education:

It is the unanimous conviction of the Council that physical education is a most important part of school education, and we look forward to the time when it will be an indispensable feature of the curriculum in all schools and under expert supervision. As the first step towards the realisation of that ideal and to raise the status of the subject, we recommend that the Department of Education should secure the services of an expert or experts in physical education in an advisory capacity and prepare suitable specimen syllabuses to be followed in the schools according to their needs and facilities.¹⁰⁵

In making this statement, the Council became the first agency to formulate an approach which would see the introduction of a physical education specialist within the Department of Education. Despite its own failure to recognise the need for specialist teachers, the Council had initiated an important first step in the chain of events which would eventually see the opening of a national college for physical education in 1973.

The McDonough report

The *Council of Education* made many significant references to physical education and instigated a recommendation which signalled the appointment of a Department inspector of physical education. The proposals of the Council were added to by the increasing involvement of the Department of Education in Council of Europe activities. This initiative, which was led by a Catholic priest, Fr. Lonergan, resulted in a number of short summer courses in physical education in the early 1960's.¹⁰⁶ Fr. Lonergan was nominated by the Department of Education to attend a Council of Europe meeting in 1962 which related to *Sport and PE, in school and out of school*. He formed a liaison with an administrator from the Council of Europe, Mr. Lewis, and together they drew up the idea of a 'mutual assistance programme' which sought to provide assistance to countries in the development of their physical education systems.¹⁰⁷

Following on from these developments, the Minister for Education, Patrick Hillery, agreed to act on the recommendation of the Council that an expert in physical education be available to the Department of Education, resulting in the appointment of an inspector in physical education. Michael McDonough took up this position in 1965. He had previously been a captain in the Irish Army with a background in

physical training.¹⁰⁸ The new inspector quickly set about producing a report on physical education which spelt out the major issues and directions as he perceived them.¹⁰⁹ This was an important task given that he was operating alone in a large Department which had not traditionally been receptive to the notion of physical education.

Michael McDonough framed the first serious internal document to address the position of physical education in over twenty years. Entitled *Physical education report*, it consisted of seven major sections and throughout twelve tightly typed pages attention was given to the status of physical education in primary, secondary and vocational schools. In addition, the philosophy of physical education was addressed and a series of recommendations put forward. The enunciation of a philosophy and definition of physical education was an important component of the Report, coming as it did at a time following the recognition of the potential of physical education by the Registration Council in 1960¹¹⁰ and the *Council of Education* in 1962.¹¹¹ Physical education was defined as:

..that phase of the total process of education which is concerned with vigorous muscular activities and related responses, and with the modifications or behaviour changes, in the individual which result from these responses.¹¹²

The source for this definition was not outlined but there were a number of noteworthy elements to the line that was taken. Firstly, physical education was clearly associated with 'vigorous muscular activities'. This view is worth noting as the 'physical' element of the subject became the centre of intense debate in later years. It also suggested a move towards the male-oriented physical fitness definition of the subject.¹¹³ The linkage of vigorous activities to 'modifications or behaviour changes' provided an interesting perspective on the potential role of physical education. What can have been meant by such changes? How could involvement in physical education have resulted in behavioural changes if the focus was on vigorous physical activity? Perhaps the answer to this can be found in the section of the Report dealing with the philosophy of physical education:

The end product of a sound programme with a sound philosophical background should be:- love and a realisation of the power of God, love of country and an appreciation of the beauty and challenges to be found in the country side. The pupil should be emotionally stable and balanced through behaviour changes experienced from the responses to vigorous physical activity.¹¹⁴

This view placed a love of physical activity in the context of the power of God, reflecting the significant link between the evolution of physical education and its congruence with a Christian and Catholic philosophy. Behavioural changes were seen as resulting from the physiological and psychological benefits of engaging in regular physical activity and were linked to the activities associated with an increasingly urban social context. The moral development of the child was also seen as a key element of physical education.

Although progress was noted under the Department of Education scheme for building gymnasias, five factors were identified as being the main reasons for the 'retarded position of physical education in Ireland':

- a. Physical education is not compulsory in Primary schools.**
- b. The Primary Schools Training Colleges have not had (some as yet have not) qualified PE teachers on their staff.**
- c. There are no qualified male PE teachers in IRELAND.**
- d. An inspector of PE in the Department of Education, has been appointed only since April 1965. Physical education is similar to any other subject, in that it cannot live and make progress without regular inspection by a qualified person.**
- e. The women teachers from St. Raphael's PE training college have had great difficulty in obtaining posts. These girls are the only registered PE teachers for Secondary and Vocational schools in Ireland. Most of them as yet have either to work after school hours or else travel from school to school to make up sufficient teaching hours for registration.¹¹⁵**

Primary schools were classified by McDonough into three categories; schools with no programme; schools which offered programmes of drill and games and finally those schools in which certain classes were 'lucky enough to have a teacher who is keen on PE' and were consequently provided with a physical education programme.¹¹⁶ McDonough decried what he perceived to be an over-emphasis on games and saw no place for drill, but pointed out that 'the PE teacher in a Primary school does not need to be a specialist'.¹¹⁷ The primary school proposals were the clearest of the whole report and suggested that physical education be compulsory, as well as the development of a syllabus and the provision of equipment. The appointment of qualified inspectors and the further development of physical education facilities in training colleges were also recommended.¹¹⁸

At second-level, a series of short term summer courses for physical education teachers was suggested 'to provide as quickly as possible sufficient teachers with a limited qualification in PE'.¹¹⁹ A similar recommendation was made with respect to vocational schools. Further proposals were made on the provision of suitable equipment to schools and the provision of a grant for this purpose was recommended as a matter of urgency. An extensive section on the role of the organising Inspector of Physical Education was included in the Report.

Evidently, the new inspector saw his role as overseeing teacher training, promoting physical education within the media and maintaining international contacts. The task was also to include school inspection, the motivation of school managers on the importance of physical education and the monitoring of developments in children's sport. Clearly, the development of physical education within the Department of Education had a long way to go.

It may be for these reasons that the issue of a national college received rather slight treatment in the Report. A clear vision of the importance of such a college and its relationship to the Department of Education did not emerge from the Report. McDonough had visited St Raphael's College where he noted: 'The staff are highly qualified and the work done is up to top international standard'.¹²⁰ In addition he noted that the graduates of Ling College were doing good work and that girls' schools stressed the value of activity itself in contrast to the competitive approach of many boys' schools.

McDonough focused primarily on the need to train male physical education teachers and suggested that six secondary school teachers be sent on a one-year diploma course, followed by a further year studying the systems of continental training colleges. He suggested that these six teachers would become the staff of the new training college, under the directorship of a top class senior lecturer. Although an explicit recommendation was not made to set up a college, five options were presented for the location of such an institution. These included attachment to a university or to St Raphael's College, Sion Hill as two of the alternatives.¹²¹ It was also suggested that the Director and staff of the college should be afforded one year 'to iron out their philosophies and plan their system'.¹²²

Considerable focus was placed on the establishment of a *Council for physical education and sport* which would have the aim of 'the development of PE and sport in Ireland.'¹²³ This was to be done through the publication of a report which would be developed by three working groups. In addition, the Council was to publish a magazine, the *P.E. Quarterly*. The membership of the Council was to be broadly based, cross-departmental and appointed by the Minister for Education. McDonough found it necessary to say that there would 'of course be a female representative' in each working group, at a time when the vast majority of physical education teachers in the country were female.¹²⁴ The inspector saw himself as being the Technical Director to this Council with the power of veto in certain circumstances.

McDonough also made the suggestion that the Department would have a monitoring role to play in relation to both school sport and physical education. This far-seeing and radical recommendation never came to fruition. Indeed, the Report highlighted the fact that 'some schools base all their programmes on one or two games. Here the training of an elite few to represent the school has priority. In certain schools I found a fanatical loyalty to ONE game to the exclusion of all other physical activity'.¹²⁵

The *McDonough report* was an important milestone for physical education and it is obvious that, by recommending the appointment of an inspector of physical education, the *Council of Education* had set in train a process which was to gather momentum over the ensuing years. It is unlikely, that the Department would have acted upon the recommendations of the Council to appoint an inspector of physical education in the first place without some prompting. According to Dooley, the work of Rev. Fr. Lonergan, who was Chairman of the Willwood Sports Foundation and President of Leinster and All-Ireland Schools Athletic Associations, was instrumental in moving the position of the Department forward.¹²⁶ This work brought progress¹²⁷ through the Council of Europe mutual assistance programme.¹²⁸ The involvement of Fr Lonergan in these developments was indicative of the strong interest which elements of the Catholic Church took in physical education following the establishment of St Raphael's College in Sion Hill in 1954.

The *McDonough report* was the first time in almost thirty years that the Department of Education was provided with specific recommendations on the way forward for physical education at both primary and second-level. The major shortcoming of the Report was the lack of detail on the implementation arrangements necessary for

progress within physical education. Such a vision might have been influential at a time when the basis for investment in education was being reviewed as part of move towards the comprehensivisation of the second-level education system. Interestingly, the Report was prepared without reference to the 1938 *Report on Physical Education*, which had long since passed into the vaults of the Department, only to be re-discovered much later. The recommendations from this earlier report might have provided the signal and support needed for a broad and long-term view of how physical education might develop. Nonetheless, McDonough had made his presence felt within the Department of Education and within the changing educational climate of the 1960's his views were soon to gain support at a very important level.

Physical education within the broadening concept of education during the 1960's

The 1960's saw the beginnings of a concerted move to broaden the range of educational experiences for students in second-level schools. This process of comprehensivisation, which was initiated by the Minister for Education, Patrick Hillery in 1963, provided physical education with an opportunity to make an increased contribution to a more rounded and student-centred curriculum.¹²⁹ These moves were rooted in the need to link educational investment to the production of a balanced and skilled workforce which could meet the needs of a diversifying economy.¹³⁰ Within the context of the *Second Programme for Economic Expansion*, the Department of Education commissioned a survey team which produced an extensive report, *Investment in Education*.¹³¹ This document was to prove most influential in the overall process of educational change.

Investment in education and the Commission on Higher Education

The *Investment in education* report has been hailed as a landmark in the history of Irish education in that it changed the way in which the Department of Education thought by placing the educational process strongly within an economic framework.¹³² The detailed document provided a structured analysis of the system and revealed deficiencies in planning and organisation. It also noted social and geographical inequities and suggested that the output of the education system should be more closely aligned with the likely demands of society in the future.

In this context, the restricted range of subjects available in smaller schools was noted, and it was suggested that physical training was less likely to be offered in such schools.¹³³ The recognition and training arrangements for physical education

teachers were also referred to as part of a general description of the system.¹³⁴ It was also put forward that efforts should be made to widen the number of subjects available in smaller schools, a recommendation which applied indirectly to physical education.¹³⁵

It is surprising to note, however, that the *Investment in education* report failed to address seriously the issue of capital expenditure for the provision of the facilities for physical education. The question of a national college to train teachers in physical education was not considered, even though there was a reference to the absence of a facility for the training of male physical education teachers.¹³⁶ Consequently, there was a failure to clearly signal potential manpower and resource implications related to the subject. Given that the Report aimed to 'explore the Irish educational system, to examine its component parts and to ascertain the extent to which the system seems able to satisfy the demands likely to be made on it in the light of the needs of the 1960's and 1970's', this was a notable omission.¹³⁷

It is surprising that *Investment in education* did not contain any definitive statements about a subject which was well established in many of the countries visited by the survey team. A bland projection for teachers of physical education, Froebel and Montessori for 1971 was included to the effect that a total of 250 students would be required.¹³⁸ There was no indication either within the Report that the subject physical education was likely to become a more significant part of the curriculum. This omission occurred despite references to the increasing role of leisure¹³⁹ and future employment prospects in sport.¹⁴⁰ This oversight may have been due to the manner in which the Team interpreted its task: 'It is not our function to say what the objectives of the education system should be or what weight should be given to particular objectives. Our role is an ancillary one'.¹⁴¹

This brief exonerated the Team from the task of analysing and evaluating curricular offerings and weightings, but it also highlighted the strong economic perspective which was taken. Such an orientation had important implications for the objectives of the educational system: 'A recognition of the resources needed to meet a given set of objectives may lead to changes in objectives or to a different set of priorities'.¹⁴² Thus, the Report accepted existing goals and priorities and laid the foundation for a policy of weighing-up the benefits of new initiatives against the resource requirements of such departures. This dual acceptance of existing value systems and a resource-focused frame of reference had significant implications for a new and expensive subject such as physical education.

The position adopted by the Team may be explained by the prevailing educational thought at the time. Dooley contextualised the position that the Department of Education found itself in relation to physical education. This explanation, although it does not refer to the *Investment in Education*, gave a valuable insight into the status of physical education at the time:

In fairness to the Department of Education it must be stated that one of the greatest obstacles to the development of physical education in Ireland has been the lack, among Irish educationists, of a philosophy of physical education in relation to education. Consequently down through the years there has been no organised or consistent pressure on the Department of Education to provide physical education as an integral part of the school curriculum.¹⁴³

This was a succinct summary of the ideological context which may have led the Team to overlook an area which would have major manpower and resource implications within eight years of the publication of its report.

While the Report had failed to anticipate the need for a physical education college, its overall provisions initiated a momentum which would eventually facilitate the development of a positive policy on physical education. This policy did not emerge easily, however, or in a linear fashion. The *Commission on Higher Education*,¹⁴⁴ for example, was indecisive on the issue on physical education at a crucial time. The brief of the Commission included the investigation and formulation of recommendations relating to higher education, with specific reference to the organisational and administrative arrangements which should pertain.

While not dealing with the area in any depth, the Report gave evidence of an awareness of the existence of physical education and referred to the Ling and Sion Hill colleges.¹⁴⁵ Despite this reference, physical education was treated under the general category of subjects to be taught in vocational schools,¹⁴⁶ reflecting its positioning in the Vocational Education Act of 1930.¹⁴⁷ The subject was alluded to on a number of occasions in the context of a proposal that a 'New College, in association with other institutions, could provide an advantageous approach to teacher training'.¹⁴⁸ The nature of this new college was not fully teased out, but there were clearly implications for existing training colleges, with the possibility that their work would be merged into a single institution.¹⁴⁹

However, the issue of physical education teacher training was only dealt with in a general way. This may have been related to the decision of the Commission to deal only with agencies which were funded by the State, leaving aside a consideration of the privately run teacher training colleges.¹⁵⁰ The Commission devoted time to the examination of third-level education provision in Limerick, but no mention was made of the need for a college to cater for physical education.¹⁵¹

The absence of closer attention to physical education in the Report was surprising for a number reasons. Firstly, it was noted that 'certain categories of teachers are in short supply' reflecting an awareness on the part of the Commission of the need for additional teachers in certain areas, albeit without singling out physical education.¹⁵² Furthermore, in assessing the educational needs of the community the issue of leisure time usage was raised:

Further, the opportunity for greater leisure which a developed society derives from continuous advance brings with it the need for a more highly educated community which can derive the greatest benefit from that leisure. These considerations suggest that more, rather than less, provision must be made for higher education - indeed for all education.¹⁵³

It is notable that the Commission having identified the need for the productive use of leisure did not expand on the implications for provision within higher education. Such an extension of thought would surely have brought with it the realisation that there was a growing and a future need in the area of physical education. On the positive side, the Report suggested that specialist teachers were necessary throughout the secondary school system.¹⁵⁴ Given that physical education was identified as a specialist subject, the need for a comprehensive overview of teacher training requirements in the area presented itself.

This opportunity was not taken up, however. The broad view of the Commission was that the separation of teacher training from other areas of higher education was not desirable. The rationale for this view was that 'The isolation of teacher-training colleges and training courses from the rest of the higher education system should end and the accumulated experience of the national teacher training colleges should be more widely available'.¹⁵⁵ In this context, the eventual establishment of a small, isolated college such as N.C.P.E. in 1973 ran against the grain. The Report certainly did not signal any policy lines which suggested the need for such an institution.

Momentum towards the establishment of a national college

Despite the somewhat indifferent treatment of physical education in *Investment in education* and the *Report of the Commission on Higher Education* the case for physical education gathered momentum towards the end of the decade. As has been seen, there was a growing interest in physical education at official level since 1960. This was added to by the work of Fr Lonergan and Michael McDonough's appointment to the Department of Education was a further boost to the subject. Contemporaneously, a greater awareness of the need for physical education was emerging, prompted in part by the work which was being done by the graduates and staff of the Sion Hill and Ling colleges. All of these advances took place within a changing educational and economic environment which presented the opportunity for developments in physical education.

During the late 1960's a number of summer courses for teachers was run, involving experts from the United Kingdom and these courses succeeded in gaining a degree of publicity which may not have been entirely welcome in the Department of Education.¹⁵⁶ However, Michael McDonough, who was behind these developments, persisted and in 1968 this impetus was further bolstered by the 11th World Congress of the International Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (I.C.H.P.E.R.) which was held in St. Patrick's College Drumcondra.¹⁵⁷ The interest of the Minister for Education, Brian Lenihan, had been aroused following a meeting with Sean O'Connor, Michael McDonough and John Kane. Kane was a leading figure in physical education from St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, and had been involved in delivering the summer courses. McDonough and Kane were requested by the Minister to prepare a report on the feasibility of establishing a national college for physical education. This report will be analysed in detail in chapter 3.

Of considerable interest in relation to the Report, however, was its timing. It was commissioned early in 1969 by the Minister and by September of that year the first group of male students (who were technically students of N.C.P.E.)¹⁵⁸ went to St. Mary's Strawberry Hill.¹⁵⁹ This train of events was rapid and seemed to run against broader policies. For example, the Chairman of the Higher Education Authority (H.E.A.) reported on 29 March 1969:

As the training of teachers is a wide national issue, we feel that we must concern ourselves with the problem generally rather than in relation to any particular group of teachers or any particular region. We have not yet had an opportunity to carry out the extensive examination of the matter which this approach calls for. We have, however, appointed from among our members a group to consider and advise us on the most suitable procedure in this regard.¹⁶⁰

The study group reported in 1970 stating that there was a need for further analysis of teacher training requirements. Such scrutiny would, the group suggested '...ensure that the expansion and the necessary educational and administrative developments would not happen in an ad hoc fashion but be carried out in the context of a well ordered plan'.¹⁶¹ The Report showed no awareness of the fact that there was a parallel planning process in physical education which had major resource implications. In fact, the question of physical education teacher training was not addressed at all.¹⁶²

The Report was more definitive in dealing with what it termed 'special subjects'. It suggested that the training of teachers in these subjects should be:

...rationalised and be concentrated in a single institution where they would form part of an educational complex for the training of these teachers. An obvious centre for such a complex is the Limerick Institute of Higher Education, with perhaps an arrangement for the Mary Immaculate Teacher Training College to provide the pedagogic content.¹⁶³

It is noteworthy, therefore, that as early as 1969 the planning process for N.C.P.E. had begun, without the H.E.A. Committee being aware of such a significant development. By the time the *Report on Teacher Education* had been published, the site for the new physical education college had already been identified. Such a situation may have been precipitated by the fact that a new section was set up within the Department of Education in 1969 to deal with sport and physical education and that the impetus towards the establishment of a national college was promoted through this section.¹⁶⁴ The decision to build N.C.P.E. was followed by the recognition of physical education as a subject on the curriculum and the development of a syllabus for the subject at second-level.¹⁶⁵ In the same year, the publication of *Curraclam na Bunscoile* also signalled a broader role for physical education within primary schools.¹⁶⁶ These changes were indicative of a growing and positive awareness of the contribution of physical education to a broadening education system.

This chapter has charted some of the major developments which preceded the decision to establish N.C.P.E., which was opened in 1973. The evolution of a practical policy for physical education has been slow, with many reports advocating a stronger role for the subject within primary and second-level education. It was not until the 1960's, however, that tangible progress was made in relation to recognition and provision for the subject, eventually leading to the establishment of the country's national college for physical education. The circumstances surrounding this major development will be outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. Prior to such an analysis, chapter 2 will examine the major influences and traditions in physical education and physical culture.

References

- ¹The indicators of this progress will be dealt with in chapters 3 to 8
- ²Coolahan, J. *Irish education: history and structure*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981
- ³Coolahan, J., 1981. *Irish education: history and structure*
- ⁴Board of Education on Primary Education (Ireland), *Report of Mr. F.H. Dale*. Dublin: H.M.S.O., 1904 (Cd. 1981) Par 228
- ⁵Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction in Primary Schools, *Final report of the commissioners*. Dublin, H.M.S.O., 1898 (C.-8923) and referred to as the Belmore Report
- ⁶*Ibid.*
- ⁷*Ibid.*, p. 51
- ⁸*Ibid.*, p. 51
- ⁹*Ibid.*, p. 4
- ¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 51
- ¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 57
- ¹²Board of Education on Primary Education (Ireland), *Revised Programme for National Schools*. Dublin, H.M.S.O., 1900
- ¹³Dale Report, 1904
- ¹⁴Board of Education on Primary Education (Ireland) *Appendix to the rules and regulations of the Commissioners of National Education*, H.M.S.O., 1903
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 17
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 26
- ¹⁷McIntosh, P. *Landmarks in the history of physical education*. London: Bell, 1965, p. 201
- ¹⁸Around this time also the physical training movement initiated by Per Hendrick Ling had a significant influence throughout the continent. Ling College of Physical Training was opened in Dublin in 1900
- ¹⁹Dale Report, 1904
- ²⁰*Ibid.*, par 201
- ²¹*Ibid.*
- ²²*Ibid.*
- ²³*Ibid.*
- ²⁴Dale Report, par 91
- ²⁵Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act, 1878 (41 & 42 Vict. Ch. 66)
- ²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 2
- ²⁷O'Donoghue, T. *The Physical Education Association of Ireland 1968-1989*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1989, p. 5
- ²⁸These figures reflected the earlier trend outlined in the Dale Report, 1904
- ²⁹McCann, P. & Byrne, S. Ling Physical Education College. *Bulletin of the Physical Education Association of Ireland*, 1, 1968, p. 58

- ³⁰O'Donoghue, T., 1989. The Physical Education Association of Ireland
- ³¹Wynne, T. *Ninety years of The Irish Hockey Union*. Naas: Leinster Leader, 1985
- ³²Van Esbeck, E. *One hundred years of Irish rugby*. Dublin: Gill & McMillan, 1974
- ³³Park, R. The second 100 years: Or, can physical education become the renaissance field of the 21st century? *Quest*, 41, 1989, pp. 1-27
- ³⁴Gafner, R. (ed) *The International Olympic Committee: one hundred years*. International Olympic Committee: Lausanne, 1994
- ³⁵Office of National Education, *Rules and regulations of the Commissioners on National Education*, Dublin: H.M.S.O., 1913, p. 105
- ³⁶Dickinson, E. *Primer of physical exercises*, London: London Board of Education, 1909
- ³⁷Dickinson, E. *Physical training*. Dublin: Educational Company of Ireland, 1920
- ³⁸Office of National Education, *Notes for teachers in connection with the programmes of instruction for national schools*, Dublin, 1920
- ³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 141
- ⁴⁰National Programme Conference, *National programme of primary instruction*. Dublin: Educational Company of Ireland, 1922
- ⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 3
- ⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 15
- ⁴³National Programme Conference, *Report and programme*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1926
- ⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 15
- ⁴⁵The medico-health rationale for physical training was strongly associated with the Ling movement and has been extensively documented in the United Kingdom context by D. Kirk *Defining physical education*. London: The Falmer Press, 1992
- ⁴⁶National Programme Conference, 1926, p. 15
- ⁴⁷Department of Education, *Revised notes for teachers - physical training*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1932
- ⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 10
- ⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 1932, p. 10
- ⁵⁰Reports of these activities appeared frequently in *Sport* and *An Caman* during the late 1920's and early 1930's
- ⁵¹Vocational Education Act, 1930 (No. 29)
- ⁵²O'Donoghue, T. The attempt by the Department of Defence to introduce the Sokol system of physical education into Irish schools in the 1930's. *Irish Educational Studies*, 5(2), 1985, pp. 329-340
- ⁵³Department of Education, 'Physical education report'. Unpublished internal report, 1938, p. 1
- ⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 10
- ⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 10
- ⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 9
- ⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 10
- ⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 2
- ⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 6
- ⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 12
- ⁶¹National Archives, Dublin. File SII 053A
- ⁶²*Ibid.*
- ⁶³O'Donoghue, T. Sport, recreation and physical education: the evolution of a national policy of re-generation in Eire, 1926-48. *British Journal of Sport History*, 3(Sept), 1986, pp. 216-233. O'Donoghue has suggested that it was the circumstances relating to the War which was the determining factor.
- ⁶⁴Bunreacht na hEireann, Constitution of Ireland, 1937
- ⁶⁵*Ibid.*, Article 42
- ⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 96
- ⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 96
- ⁶⁸Walsh, B. The Constitution and constitutional rights. *Administration*, 35(4), 1987, pp. 86-109. The issue has also been referred to in the 1996 review of the Constitution, following a submission by the Physical Education Association of Ireland
- ⁶⁹De Valera Papers, File 1079/3

-
- ⁷⁰Keogh, D. The Irish Constitutional revolution: an analysis of the making of the Constitution, *Administration*. 35(4), 1987, pp. 4-85. According to Keogh the hand-written amendments were those of De Valera
- ⁷¹De Valera Papers, File 1079/3
- ⁷²Keogh, D., 1987. The Irish Constitutional revolution
- ⁷³Ibid.
- ⁷⁴De Valera papers. File 1054 contains a direct quote from Pius XI *Divini Illius* which refers to the inclusion of physical education in Christian education. File 1092 states that 'it is implicitly expected that a child will secure good health and proper bodily development; that is a prime consideration'.
- ⁷⁵National Archives, File SII 053A
- ⁷⁶O'Donoghue, T. *Physical Education Association of Ireland 1968-1989*. Physical Education Association of Ireland: Limerick, p. 11
- ⁷⁷Whyte, J. *Church and State in modern Ireland*. Dublin, Gill & McMillan, 1974, p.377
- ⁷⁸The 1938 and 1942 Reports are referred to here
- ⁷⁹Department of Industry and Commerce, *Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1951 (Pr. 709) p. vii
- ⁸⁰Ibid., p. 33
- ⁸¹Ibid., p. 32
- ⁸²Ibid., p. 47
- ⁸³Ibid., p. 47
- ⁸⁴Keany, Sr. Jordan, interview on Friday 3 February, 1995
- ⁸⁵Council of Education, *Report of the Council of Education on the function and curriculum of the primary school*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1954 (Pr. 2583)
- ⁸⁶Council of Education, *Report of the Council of Education on the curriculum of the secondary school*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1962 (Pr. 5996)
- ⁸⁷O' Buachalla, S. *Education policy in twentieth century Ireland*. Dublin: The Wolfhound Press, 1988, p. 68
- ⁸⁸Ibid., p. 273
- ⁸⁹Council of Education, 1954. Report on the function and curriculum of the primary school
- ⁹⁰Ibid.
- ⁹¹Ibid., p. 98
- ⁹²These submissions were listed in the appendix to the 1954 Council of Education report
- ⁹³This submission was listed in the appendix to the 1954 Council of Education report
- ⁹⁴O' Buachalla, S., 1988. Education policy in twentieth century Ireland
- ⁹⁵Council of Education, 1962. Report on the curriculum of the secondary school, p. 88
- ⁹⁶Ibid., p. 68
- ⁹⁷Ibid., p. 94
- ⁹⁸Ibid., p. 92
- ⁹⁹Ibid., p. 94
- ¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 212
- ¹⁰¹Bunreacht na hEireann, 1937
- ¹⁰²Department of Education, 1962. Report on the curriculum of the secondary school, p. 214
- ¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 214-215
- ¹⁰⁴Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 212
- ¹⁰⁶The background to these developments were outlined in the 1965 report written by Michael McDonough when he became inspector of physical education
- ¹⁰⁷Department of Education, 'Physical education report'. Unpublished internal report, 1965
- ¹⁰⁸McDonough, M., interview on 8 January, 1992
- ¹⁰⁹Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report
- ¹¹⁰Registration Council minutes, 13 January, 1960. The minutes are located at the Department of Education offices in Athlone
- ¹¹¹Department of Education, 1962. Report on the curriculum of the secondary school
- ¹¹²Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report, p. 1
- ¹¹³The origins of this type of definition in the United Kingdom have been outlined by D. Kirk, *Defining physical education*, London: The Falmer Press, 1992

¹¹⁴Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report, p. 12

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 1

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 1

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 2

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 8

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 8

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 3

¹²¹Ibid., p. 9

¹²²Ibid., p. 9

¹²³Ibid., p. 6

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 7

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 3

¹²⁶Dooley, J. 'Physical education in Irish national and secondary schools, 1924-1965'.

Unpublished research paper, Trinity College, Dublin, 1974, pp. 45-6

¹²⁷Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report, p. 5: McDonough's report further elaborated on the role of Fr. Loneragan who was quoted verbatim: 'In 1963 we succeeded in getting our first experts from the council officially, but the council could not give financial help that year as the budget had already been decided. Williams and Wood Ltd., came to our aid as sponsors, paid all the travel costs and the maintenance costs of the experts who came. They also agreed to establish the "Willwood Athletic Foundation" to aid us with the council and to revive the TAILTEANN GAMES. In 1964 we got our first experts under "Mutual Assistance Programme Project" and completed the first two weeks of the Council's "pilot" course. This year with the same experts we completed the course for the Council's Diploma at "pilot" course level and twenty nine students received the Diploma. This diploma will be recognised officially in all the member nations of the council and it might happen that in the coming years the council may request that IRELAND send experts to some other nation doing this approved course. It is possible that our experts could be any of the 29 Diploma holders'.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 5: The terms of the mutual assistance programme of the Council of Europe were: 'Small population and lack of finance were to be the qualification and countries availing of it would receive experts from the highly developed nations to run courses. The nation sending the experts would continue to pay the salaries of the teachers (experts), the Council of Europe would pay travelling expenses, and the host country would be responsible for their accommodation and catering during the course'.

¹²⁹The details of these developments were announced at a press conference on 20 May, 1963 and were subsequently the subject of questions in Dail Eireann: Dail debates, 203, 1963, pp. 682-683

¹³⁰These moves were initiated through two important Government Programmes:

1: Government of Ireland, *Programme for economic expansion*. Dublin; Stationery Office, 1958 (Pr. 4796)

2: Government of Ireland, *Second programme for economic expansion*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1964, Part 1: (Pr. 7239) Part 2: (Pr. 7670)

The second programme made specific reference to the expansion of the primary school programme to include physical training and stated that 'a society which rates highly spiritual and moral values, and seeks to develop the mental and physical well-being of its people, will devote a substantial part of its resources to education', Part 2, p. 193

¹³¹Investment in Education survey team, *Investment in education: report of the survey team*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1965 (Pr. 8311)

¹³²Fitzgerald, G. Investment in Education, *Studies*, Winter, 1965, pp. 361-374

Lee, J. *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989

Coolahan, J. *The ASTI and post-primary education in Ireland 1909-1984*. Dublin: Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland, 1984

¹³³Investment in Education, 1965, p. 247

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 7 and p. 291

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 346

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 388

¹³⁸Ibid, p. 48

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 49

-
- ¹⁴⁰Investment in education, 1965, p. 460
- ¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 6
- ¹⁴²Ibid., p. xxxiii
- ¹⁴³Dooley, J., 1974. Physical education in Irish national and secondary schools, p. 49
- ¹⁴⁴Commission on Higher Education, *Presentation and summary of the report*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1967 (Pr. 9588)
- ¹⁴⁵Commission on Higher Education, *Report of the Commission on Higher Education Volume 2*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1967 (Pr. 9389) p. 12
- ¹⁴⁶Commission on Higher Education, 1967, p. 229
- ¹⁴⁷Vocational Education Act, 1930
- ¹⁴⁸Commission on Higher Education, 1967. Vol. 2, p. 231
- ¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 232
- ¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 3
- ¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 95
- ¹⁵²Ibid., p. 117
- ¹⁵³Ibid., p. 118
- ¹⁵⁴Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 238
- ¹⁵⁶McDonough, M., interview
- ¹⁵⁷According to Michael McDonough on 8 January 1992, the establishment of the Physical Education Association of Ireland was initiated by himself and others so that the organisation of the I.C.H.P.E.R. conference could be undertaken by a national body representing professional physical educators
- ¹⁵⁸Thomond College of Education, *Prospectus 1976-77*. Limerick, 1976
- ¹⁵⁹These details have also been confirmed by Michael McDonough, Michael Darmody and Liam Dugdale in separate interviews
- ¹⁶⁰Higher Education Authority, 1969, p.6
- ¹⁶¹Higher Education Authority, *Report on teacher education*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1970 (E/67) p. 5
- ¹⁶²Ibid., p. 25. The Report stated: 'We have not had an opportunity to study to any great extent the training of teachers of Domestic Science, Music, Physical Education and Rural Science. We recommend accordingly that these areas be examined by the proposed Foras Oideachais'.
- ¹⁶³Ibid., p. 24
- ¹⁶⁴McCann, P. Editorial, *Physical Education Association of Ireland Bulletin*, March, 1970, p. 2
- ¹⁶⁵Department of Education, *Rialacha agus clar do leith meanscoileanna*. Dublin, Stationery Office, 1973 (Pr. 3205)
- ¹⁶⁶Department of Education, *Curraclam na bunscoile: teachers' handbook, Vols 1 & 2*. Dublin, Brown & Nolan, 1971

Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Sporting and physical education traditions in Ireland

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the major policy developments which affected school physical education prior to 1969, when the decision to establish N.C.P.E. was made. This chapter will traverse a similar time span, but will focus on the major traditions and influences which have had a bearing on the nation's system of physical education. This will include reference to the establishment of Ling and Sion Hill colleges and to the cultural milieux from which they emerged. These colleges, along with the contribution of the Army tradition, have played a major role in the evolution of Irish physical education. The key issues in the evolution of sports policy up to 1969 will also be addressed.

The sporting legacy

Attitudes and behaviour relating to physical activity in Ireland have been understandably linked to dominant social, cultural and political influences. By tradition, Ireland has had a strong association with cultural pursuits involving physical activity. In pre-Christian times the *Aonach Tailteann*,¹ which arose from the ceremonies surrounding the burial of major personages, incorporated athletics, gymnastics and equestrian events in the form of *Cuiteach Fuait* or funeral games.²

The nature of these athletic events reflected the culture of the time and included 'bow and arrow contests, sword and shield activities and chariot racing. There were also cultural events and contests between trades persons such as goldsmiths'.³ The first games took place in 1829 B.C. and the last traditional form has been recorded as occurring in 1169 A.D.⁴ Apparently other similar festivals took place such as the *Fair of Carman* where 'games and races' and 'the sport of hurling' were given special attention.⁵

These activities persisted in less formal ways for many centuries and were supplemented by other traditional activities such as hurley and dancing. The strongly rural and agricultural base of the country's economy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries meant that cultural and leisure activities tended to be informal and referenced around the work patterns associated with the land.⁶

National Governing Bodies in sport and the G.A.A.

Sport also became an important manifestation of the tensions between the native and colonising cultures. Formal sport in Ireland began to emerge in the 1850's, with an account of the first athletics meeting occurring in 1857 at Trinity College.⁷ Ten years later, the Civil Servants' Athletic Club was formed and it ran a sports meeting in the grounds of the Leinster Cricket Club.⁸ There was growing interest in sporting pursuits and with the development of the body, leading to the establishment of the Irish Champions Athletic Club in 1873.⁹

In 1874 the Irish Football Union was formed at Trinity College with a view to overseeing the game of rugby.¹⁰ Association football established an organisation based on the English model in 1880.¹¹ The Irish Amateur Swimming Association was formed in 1893,¹² the same year that the Irish Hockey Union was founded.¹³ This proliferation of sporting organisations was linked to the earlier movement in Britain which had seen the establishment of several ruling bodies to oversee competitive sport.¹⁴ The formation of N.G.B.s in Ireland and the political climate in the country contributed to the momentum which saw the establishment of the G.A.A.

The G.A.A. was founded on the desire to promote indigenous cultural past-times and to establish a sense of national identity. In 1884 *The Irishman* carried an article advocating the establishment of an organisation which would address this issue:

No movement having for its object the social and political advancement of a nation from the tyranny of imported and enforced customs and manners can be regarded as perfect if it has not made adequate provision for the preservation and cultivation of the National pastimes of the people.....

The vast majority of the best athletes in Ireland are Nationalists. These gentlemen should take the matter in hands at once, and draft laws for the guidance of the promoters of meetings in Ireland next year.....It is only by such an arrangement that pure Irish athletics will be revived, and that the incomparable strength and physique of our nation will be preserved.¹⁵

A meeting was convened in Thurles, on November 1 1884, with a view to establishing the *Gaelic Association for the Preservation and Cultivation of National Pastimes*.¹⁶ According to Mandle, this reflected the need to counter the organisation of other sporting codes:

The timing of the G.A.A.'s foundation reflected fears that the new organised sports of the late nineteenth century would, if directed from England and integrated into a United Kingdom pattern, further weaken distinctive Irish culture.¹⁷

In addition, the new organisation had a strong nationalist agenda which was linked to the activities of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.¹⁸ Lee, in considering the role of the G.A.A. in the early part of the twentieth century, contextualised this link well:

The success of the Gaelic Athletic Association (G.A.A.), based on the co-option of intense local loyalties into a wider sense of national identity, reflected a capacity for organisation and a sense of communal coherence more developed than that in much of Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. The G.A.A. served not only as a recruiting ground for republican activists, but as an apprenticeship for national organisers.¹⁹

To the present day, the activities of the G.A.A. are strongly associated with club and inter-county competitions in Gaelic football and hurling. These events exemplify the binding of such 'local loyalties into a wider sense of national identity'. Initially, the Association saw itself as having a somewhat wider brief. When the G.A.A. was set up it assumed responsibility for overseeing athletic meetings in the country, which often included cycling events as well. This function was rivalled by the Irish Amateur Athletic Union which was set up in 1885. There was considerable tension between the two organisations, heightened by the strongly nationalist and ban-oriented approach which was taken by the G.A.A. Eventually, in 1923 the G.A.A. agreed to the formation of the National Athletics and Cycling Association which took on the responsibility for organising athletics in Ireland.²⁰

By the end of the nineteenth century, sport had assumed important political connotations, with the distinction between 'national' and 'foreign' games causing division within the G.A.A.²¹ This situation was precipitated, according to Rouse,²² by the decision taken by the council of the Association at a meeting on 27 January

1895. This resolution stated that 'any athlete competing under other laws than those of the G.A.A shall be ineligible for competing at any meeting held under the G.A.A'. This approach encouraged a divided model of sport development which extended into the twentieth century.

Despite the tensions which were undoubtedly generated by the wider political situation in the country, sport in Ireland prospered in the early part of the twentieth century. Interest in sport had been heightened by the re-juvenation of the Olympic Games in 1896.²³ *The Irish Review*, however, sounded a warning that while sport was an important aspect of the culture of the nation its development needed to be addressed more systematically:

In Ireland there is still a tendency to neglect the culture of the body. The Irish soil and climate favour the production of athletic material. Ireland furnishes a good framework of bone to her men as to her cattle and to her horses. But the discipline that should come with exercise of the frame has not reached its development.²⁴

Despite the rather pessimistic view which had been taken by *The Irish Review* in 1911, there was an increasing interest in enhancing the capacities of the body from the turn of the century onwards. The work of national sports bodies expanded from the start of the century and there were the beginnings of schools competitions. *The Irish Review* also noted that the period 1908 to 1911 saw the establishment of a significant number of gymnasia.²⁵

The development of discipline of the mind and body through gymnastic activities was reflective of the growing influence of the Swedish Ling philosophy of physical education during the early part of the century. The medico-health goals of this movement were somewhat different to the recreative and/or competitive goals which existed in sport. This distinction set physical education and sport apart in their respective orientations and organisation. The closest point of contact was in school sport which had begun to develop in Irish schools in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The development of school sport

School sport in Ireland developed along similar lines to the public school model which existed in Britain. Schools such as Blackrock College and Clongowes Wood promoted the game of rugby football from an early date.²⁶ In the 1890's and the early part of the twentieth century schools such as King's Hospital, High School, Avoca School, St Columba's College and Kilkenny College were involved in formal hockey competitions.²⁷ These activities were provided with a view to ensuring the balanced and all-round education of young gentlemen of station at the time.

This early form of education through the physical was based on a competitive model and was very often restrictive in the range of activities which were available to students (hence the development of notions of 'rugby' or 'hockey' schools). The sport of athletics was also associated with the private school model and in 1922 Blackrock College, O'Connell's, Castleknock, Portora Royal and Belvedere featured among the medal winning schools in the Irish Amateur Athletic Association Schools' Championships.²⁸

Gaelic games were also included in school sport programmes in a significant way. As early as 1885, the Carmelite College in Terenure formed a G.A.A. club and by 1933 there were seventy-four Leinster boys' colleges teams and twenty-nine camogie teams. In addition, there were 128 primary schools' teams in Dublin alone. The nationalist agenda in promoting these activities was clearly expressed in *An Caman*:

Our whole problem in this country is, as in the foregoing, to bring up the native undergrowth and to expel the decaying alien overgrowth. We are doing this effectively in the school games, with the co-operation of many excellent teachers.....Our games, too, are advancing, and they have penetrated into all the Catholic schools and colleges in Leinster, with the exception of Clongowes and Castleknock, the two that came first from England and Paris to adapt us to the Planter, and the two whose alien habit systems are therefore most deeply rooted.²⁹

Whether part of the public school tradition or linked to the more nationalist agenda, school sport grew apace from the start of the century and expanded its activity at a time when there was little formal physical education in second level schools. Games and sports periods were included in the curricula of some schools

and many schools adopted the practice of having compulsory games on a selected afternoon or on Saturday mornings.

The 1932 Department of Education notes for teachers on the subject of physical training underlined the increased importance which was attached to team games, and particularly the national games:

In games the child learns to be fair and honest, how to lose cheerfully and to win modestly, how to play for his side, how to strive his utmost even under disadvantageous conditions. In games, he is preparing to meet creditably the temptations and difficulties of maturity. The national teacher must handle the question of games capably and comprehensively, realising that the use of the leisure of the adolescent boy and girl is one of our present day problems in Ireland.³⁰

During the 1920's and 1930's many N.G.B.s linked the need for a system of school physical education to the promotion of participation and excellence in sport.³¹ This view was reflected in a Department of Education memo drafted by L O Muirthe in 1939. Mr O Muirthe, who had chaired the Inter-Departmental Committee on physical education, made a strong link between physical education programmes and athletic excellence:

Though the aim of Physical Education in Schools is not to produce champion athletes, it would appear to me axiomatic that champions of a higher standard in the different athletic fields would be forthcoming if physical education on sound lines was to be part and parcel of the educational system of the country.³²

It seems that much of the physical activity which was associated with schools during the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's fell into the realm of team games, a situation which was commented upon by the first physical education inspector, Michael McDonough.³³ In pointing to the core and different emphases of team games and physical education at the time, McDonough articulated an issue which was at the centre of an important historical confluence. Broadly based physical education programmes which espoused egalitarian type ideals were somewhat at odds with the more elitist school sport model. This presented the challenge of attaining complementarity on the one hand, and the potential for conflict on the other.

Traditions in physical education

As well as the significant cultural and sporting traditions which have played a role in Ireland's current system of physical culture, there have been a number of key traditions in physical education. These influences emerged later than, and subsequently in parallel with, sporting culture. The earliest of the physical education traditions to be established on a formal basis was associated with the Swedish Ling movement. It existed side-by-side with military practices in physical training, which were periodically linked to the work of schools. Later, a third strand of physical education emerged through the work of St. Raphael's College, Sion Hill. The origins of the military tradition will be dealt with first, followed by a treatment of the Ling and Sion Hill colleges.

The military tradition

The military tradition in physical education was in evidence soon after political independence. Following the formation of the Free State, the Army School of Physical Instruction was founded in 1922 at Keane Barracks, Dublin. It came under the control of the School of Physical Culture in 1930 and was subsequently based at the Curragh.³⁴ This unit trained physical training instructors who, as well as fulfilling roles within the Army, often played a role in schools. Thus, physical education came to be linked to the Army from an early stage, and the consequent associations with national security and fitness.

The *Report of the Department of Education for 1932-33* indicated that arrangements were to be made which would have 'an extensive course of Physical Training given by skilled Army Instructors to students in the Preparatory and Training Colleges, which are situated near the large Army centres'.³⁵ This was to be part of a wider move to increase the role of the military in physical education. Following liaison between the Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General Brennan, and the Department of External Affairs research was undertaken into the various systems of physical training in a number of countries including Germany, Czechoslovakia, France and Sweden.³⁶ By 1934 arrangements were put in place to have an instructor in the Sokol system of physical training seconded from Czechoslovakia. This expert, Lieutenant Tichy set about producing two schemes which were entitled *Education for Health* and *Scientific Recreation for National Development*.³⁷

The impetus generated by the Army initiative may have prompted the setting up of the Inter-Departmental Committee on physical education by the Minister for Education Tomas O Deirg in 1936. Ironically, this committee halted the momentum which had been generated by the Army. It seems that the approach taken by the Irish Army was countered on the Committee by a military influence of a different kind. Commandant Coote, formerly of the British Navy, argued against the introduction of the Sokol system. Coote had trained in the Ling tradition at the Royal Gymnastic Central Institute in Sweden, where he obtained a Teacher's Diploma.³⁸ He played an important role in the Ling Association in the United Kingdom and was a member of its advisory committee in 1909.³⁹ On his eventual return to Ireland he became a strong advocate of the Ling system.

Coote's commitment to the Ling system, in contrast to the Sokol approach, was evident when he spoke at a public meeting in Dublin in 1938.⁴⁰ In his presentation, he argued very strongly for a scientific approach to the teaching of gymnastics and for the rejection of mass methods of delivery, which had been inherent to the work of Tichy and the Sokol system. However, in his lecture there were strong hints of the development of a unilaterally fit population, regardless of individual differences and aspirations. He asked: 'Now where will you expect to find fine National physique', and answered:

In a country which takes the training of its teachers so seriously, or in one which accepts as sufficient a few months in a training establishment, or even a few weeks at a holiday course? In Germany the physique of children and young adults is a matter of national concern.⁴¹

It is sobering to reflect that Coote identified with a view of gymnastics which sought to eradicate the perceived physical impurities in society. This philosophy was embedded in Coote's view of education:

Everyone interested in education, at heart desires a sound system of gymnastics and games, so that the pupils for whom they are responsible, alongside their mental education, may develop active, healthy and beautiful bodies.⁴²

He went on to suggest that one of the functions of the school gymnastics officer was to implement 'such measures as would be necessary to counteract the adverse circumstances and restraints which are imposed by inheritance and environment'.⁴³

The association between physical education and militaristic purism, would certainly not help the case for physical education once the excesses of Fascism had become exposed.

Coote also reflected the strong medical orientation of the Ling system and put forward the view that the Departments of Education and Health should work in close co-operation. He received a good hearing in the Inter-Departmental Committee and displayed the type of enthusiasm and missionary zeal which has probably stayed with the profession to this day.⁴⁴ He believed that everyone should be subject to a structured programme of gymnastics and his naval background was undoubtedly influential in shaping his philosophy. It is likely that the strong stance taken by Coote played a part in thwarting the efforts of Irish Army to establish the Sokol system on a national basis.⁴⁵

In the end, the interest and plans of the Army bore little fruit and its influence waned in the 1940's and 1950's. Significantly, though, the first inspector of physical education, Michael McDonough had trained in the Army School of Physical Culture. Commandant Joe O'Keefe also left the Army and was employed to deliver physical education in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra as part of the training of primary teachers. Army personnel also had some inputs into the course at St Raphael's College, Sion Hill.

In his initial report as a physical education inspector Michael McDonough noted that within City of Dublin Vocational Schools 'great work' was being done in physical education and that the physical education teachers in boys' schools 'for the most part are ex-Army PT Instructors'.⁴⁶ In addition, Army personnel played important roles in the development of sport. There is evidence to show that there was military input into the formation of a number of N.G.B.s. These bodies included the Irish Basketball Association, the Irish Amateur Gymnastics Association, the Irish Volleyball Association and the Irish Orienteering Association.⁴⁷

With the proposals for the establishment of N.C.P.E. the military contribution and tradition was considerably diminished. Ironically, this trend seems to have been at least partly initiated by the former Captain McDonough. In his 1965 report he criticised the role which drill played on the primary school curriculum saying that such classes 'do nothing to implement the aim of physical education'.⁴⁸ As the plans

for a national college progressed, the role of the Army receded to the point where its input into developments within physical education became marginal. The genesis, rationale and effect of Army involvement in the development of physical education still remains relatively uncharted and merits further study. Such research is beyond the scope of this investigation, however.

The formality of the male-oriented military tradition was mirrored in the first of the female dominated physical education movements in Ireland. The Ling tradition, while it was propounded by Commander Coote in the Inter-Departmental Committee, had already gained a foothold in the country since the beginning of the century.

Ling Physical Training College

The establishment of Ireland's first college of physical education in 1900 drew its inspiration and roots from a European movement which found its way to Ireland via Great Britain. This movement, which was Swedish in origin, was based on the work of Per Henrick Ling. In 1885 Madame Osteberg, a follower of Ling's philosophy, established the first college of physical training in England at Hampstead. One of the students who trained at this college was Ms. Studley and she later founded the Ling Gymnasium at 24, Upper Mount Street, Dublin.⁴⁹

In describing the development of physical education in Great Britain Kirk⁵⁰ outlined the emergence of Swedish (Ling) gymnastics:

The Swedish system was invented by Per Henrick Ling in the early decades of the nineteenth century and consolidated into a system of physical training at the Central Gymnastic Institute in Stockholm which he founded. It involved mostly free-standing exercises set out in tables that sought to systematically exercise each part of the body through increasingly intricate flexions and extensions. It also involved some apparatus work such as vaulting. Teaching within the Ling system was highly formalised and in the beginning especially movements were performed to militaristic commands such as 'at the double!' and 'fall in!', and was easily practised with large groups in confined spaces.

The building which housed the Ling gymnasium consisted of three storeys and a basement. The first principal of the College was Ms. Hitchins and it is possible that the ideals of the College were linked to the promotion of women's rights, as was the case with the Ling movement in the United Kingdom.⁵¹ Significantly, the colours of the College were the blue and gold of Sweden and the green of Ireland. The motto of the institution was written in Swedish and translated to mean: 'grace and health leading up to character'.⁵² Ms. Hitchins remained as principal until the early 1920's and during the course of her tenure the gymnasium was more concerned with providing participation opportunities for clients than in the conduct of training courses. In its early years, the work at Mount Street was centred around medical gymnastics and massage, as well as gymnastics for children.

From 1923, a two-year course began at Ling. The course was later extended to three years and the College was overseen by Ms. A. E. Richards, an Englishwoman, who succeeded Ms. Hitchins in the early 1920's. Ms. Richards remained at the College until 1952 and the curriculum prepared students for teaching at second-level, with a number gaining employment within the private school and vocational sectors.⁵³ The fact that the Registration Council did not recognise their qualifications presented some difficulty, however, and it seems that a significant number went to England to seek employment.

Where graduates did gain employment in schools their work was very strongly linked to games and gymnastics. For example, Edith Hudson, who was later to become principal of the College, taught in Alexandra College between 1930 and 1940. The programme at the school consisted of hockey, tennis, cricket, netball and gymnastics. All students were involved in games and the physical education teacher was central in promoting such involvement. Ling College of Physical Training was staffed by three or four trained personnel at various stages and these were supplemented by part-time experts who came to lecture on specific topics. The qualifications of the staff derived from English colleges in the main, although in the 1930's Ms. Svenner from Sweden was employed. She returned home on the outbreak of the Second World War.

Around that time, considerable debate was occurring in Great Britain over the relative merits of formal, Swedish type gymnastics as opposed to educational gymnastics which had been inspired by the work of Rudolf Laban.⁵⁴ This new and freer form of gymnastics was to take considerably from the momentum of the Ling movement. It appears that a degree of tension arose between the principal of thirty years, Ms. Richards, and a member of staff, Ms. Hackett. Eventually, Ms. Richards left the College, following what she considered to be a 'take-over' and took up a position at Hillcourt School in Glenageary. Ms. Hackett took over as principal of the College in 1952.⁵⁵

According to Johnstone⁵⁶ the proponents of the Swedish system in Great Britain 'had a reputation for rather rigid thinking' and it is possible that some of the tension at Ling College arose out of the changing scene at home and in England, which sought to dilute the core principles of the Ling system of physical education. It seems that Ms. Hackett was very keen to establish a clear picture of what was happening in sister colleges across the water and she promptly visited the Ansty, Bedford, Chelsea and Dartford institutions. To her surprise she found that representatives of the Dominican Order had preceded her and was later quite taken aback when the Dublin College of Physical Education was subsumed into the newly formed St Raphael's College, Sion Hill in 1954.⁵⁷

Ms. Hackett served a four-year tenure at Ling College, to be replaced by Edith Hudson in 1956. Ms. Hudson had begun part-time work at the College in 1945. During her tenure, which was to last until the College closed in 1973, she set about preparing 'efficient, conscientious, hardworking teachers with an emphasis on reliability, punctuality, appearance, manners and voice production'.⁵⁸ The base of the College continued to be Mount Street, with increasing use of external facilities for games, swimming and other activities such as annual trips to the Crystal Palace in London. The Mount Street premises included a small gymnasium which had been built in the garden at the back of the house. This gymnasium was equipped with ropes, wallbars, window ladders, trampette, forms and a vaulting horse. The building also included lecture rooms, showers and a massage room.

A review of the syllabus of Ling College in the late 1960's shows that the original and somewhat limited Swedish approach had been modified significantly. The aim of the College was 'to provide a programme planned on broad lines. The curriculum includes theoretical and practical subjects designed both for personal

development of the student and for her training as a teacher'.⁵⁹ The three year course included the following subjects:

Theoretical subjects

Anatomy; Physiology; Hygiene; Theory of Physical Education; Theory of Games and Athletics; Remedial Gymnastics; Irish language classes for those wishing to continue with this subject.

Practical subjects

Educational Gymnastics; Swedish Remedial Gymnastics; Dancing, including Irish, Ballet, Folk, Character, Ballroom; Modern Educational Dance; Voice Production

Games including Hockey, Lacrosse, Netball, Tennis, Cricket, Rounders; Swimming.⁶⁰

The relatively strong emphasis on anatomy, physiology and hygiene as well as the role played by 'remedial' and Swedish Remedial Gymnastics were reflective of the medico-health origins of the Ling philosophy. The issue of menstrual disorder was dealt with under the heading of remedials. Kirk⁶¹ has noted that during the 1930's and 1940's physical educators regarded issues relating to sex education be part of their remit. In Ireland, there is no evidence to suggest that the Ling course went any further than dealing with 'menstrual disorders'. Per Henrick Ling had based his approach on four major considerations including pedagogical exercises in schools, medical exercises to correct defects and exercises of a military and aesthetic nature.⁶² On this basis, it seems that the origins of the College were not forgotten in constructing the course of study. It is clear, however, that amendments had been made with the passage of time to broaden the curriculum offered to students.

In this regard, the College appears to have taken a somewhat eclectic approach on the burning curricular issues which were being discussed in Great Britain at the time. A compromise seems to have been reached between the educational and formal gymnastics issues. The College formally affiliated to the Irish Amateur Gymnastics Association in 1968.⁶³ Significantly, there was no inclusion of elective subjects which could be taught in schools. Irish was offered with a view to assisting students in taking the *Ceard Teastas*, which was necessary for work in vocational schools.

Notably, in the games area a strong emphasis was put on activities which were prevalent in the female school sport system. These included hockey, netball, basketball and tennis. No mention was made on the curriculum of national team games such as camogie. The emphasis on the course was a preparation for teaching with the prospectus stating that 'Students are expected to attain an average standard of physical skill, but emphasis is placed more on the ability of the student to teach than on her personal performance'.⁶⁴ A strong emphasis was placed on teaching practice and it appears that there was a good response from schools to the placement of the trainee physical education teachers. Graduates of the College were also expected to have coaching competencies, recognising the linkage between the physical education programme and the co-curricular programme.

This involvement in games and co-curricular activity became a hallmark of the tradition of Ling Physical Training College. In response to a questionnaire issued for this study one 1968 graduate stated that Ling prepared students to contribute to these activities 'to such an extent that many believe they must participate regardless of their own commitments'.⁶⁵ The work of the College was referred to in the Report of the first physical education inspector, Michael McDonough, in 1965: 'Ling College of PE also trains PE teachers. Their course is a three-year one and although the teachers training them are not eligible for registration they are doing valuable work in schools'.⁶⁶ However, there was little official recognition of the College and its existence. To a lesser degree the same can be said of Sion Hill and neither college was seriously considered by the *Investment in Education* Team in the analysis of future requirements in education.⁶⁷ Ling College also suffered from a lack of recognition for its graduates by the Registration Council until 1965, an issue which will be dealt with in Chapter 5.

Ling Physical Training College closed its doors for the last time in June 1973. The building in Mount Street, which was owned by Edith Hudson and her husband Des, was sold to a firm of solicitors. This was the only financial return received by the proprietors of the College. The Department of Education, which had sought its closure, did not accede to requests to provide further compensation. A payment was made to the College in respect of the training of a group of students for one year while N.C.P.E. was being built, the first such payment to be made in seventy-three years of existence.

The durability of the College up to its closure is noteworthy, given that in Great Britain the popularity of the Ling approach to physical education began to wane in the 1930's and 1940's. Educational gymnastics, which drew its inspiration from the work of Rudolf Laban, began to gain ground in Britain around this time. This child centred and progressive approach to physical education was in contrast to the strong medical and health orientation of the Ling movement. One of the main criticisms of the Ling system was its mechanistic style which was overly dependent upon the 'string pulling' of the instructor.⁶⁸

It appears that the long tradition and experience of the College was somewhat set aside in the lead-up to the establishment of N.C.P.E. On the positive side, its Principal Edith Hudson played an important role on the Governing Body of the new college and was also a member of the country's first sports council, COSAC.⁶⁹ On the establishment of N.C.P.E., the graduates of the College were promised the opportunity to upgrade their diploma qualifications to degree level, a promise which was never fulfilled, leaving a significant and residual resentment in the system.

There was a strong degree of sadness at the closing of Ling College, particularly because of the perceived quality of the course and the tradition which had been established.⁷⁰ However, many graduates felt that such a closure was inevitable given the provision of a national college with appropriate facilities, something which Ling College had lacked. Despite this lack of facilities, Ling made an important contribution to the development of physical education and it had held to the belief that a fully specialist training in physical education was required without the inclusion of elective subjects. Its strong association with the Ling movement and with female physical education were important features and, in an Irish context, its link with the minority religious tradition was also significant.

Until its closure, the College still held true to its roots, maintaining the term *physical training* in its title. Ling Physical Training College established an approach to teaching which was highly professional and dedicated and which sought to marry the demands of the physical education programme with those of the co-curricular domain.

The establishment of St Raphael's College, Sion Hill

During the final twenty years of its existence Ling worked in parallel with a college which grew out of a different tradition. St. Raphael's College, Sion Hill was opened in 1954 by the Dominican Order. While the College was strongly linked to the Catholic tradition, it adopted a philosophy which aligned with the educational and progressive movement which developed in Britain during the 1950's.⁷¹

Within a pre-dominantly Catholic State it is not surprising that the influence of that Church's teaching set the climate for many social developments. The origins of the College at Sion Hill grew out of such influences. In order to understand the genesis of the institution, it is necessary to examine the position which was taken by the Catholic Church on physical education. The association between physical education and moral behaviour was very strong during the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's in two important ways. Firstly, the development of physical training had been closely associated with European military movements and was very often carried out in mass format. Pope Pius XI sounded a warning on this approach in a 1929 Encyclical:

It is well to repeat this warning here; for in these days there is spreading a spirit of nationalism which is false and exaggerated, as well as dangerous to true peace and prosperity. Under its influence various excesses are committed in giving a military turn to the so-called physical training of boys (sometimes even of girls, contrary to the very instincts of human nature)⁷²

Secondly, as well as being suspicious of the militarisation of physical activity the Catholic Church was concerned about issues relating to sexuality and the involvement of females in physical activity. Such an approach was reflective of the Catholic Church view in countries such as Spain and Portugal. In these countries, the Church sought to limit the participation of women in gymnastic activities and 'to condemn any movements which may have licentious associations, including rhythmical movements.'⁷³

A similar control oriented view of physical activity was adopted by the Catholic Church in Ireland. These values became embedded in the Constitution of the State. The exclusion of the word 'physical' from Article 42 was only partially congruent with the 1929 Encyclical. This had suggested that the right of the Church and the family preceded the right of the State in educational matters: 'Parents are under a grave obligation to see to the religious and moral education of their children, as well as to their physical and civic training, as far as they can, and moreover to provide for their temporal well being'.⁷⁴ Hence it was suggested that:

It must be borne in mind also that the obligation of the family to bring up children, includes not only religious and moral education, but physical and civic education as well, principally in so far as it touches upon religion and morality.⁷⁵

Despite this interpretation, theologians during the 1930's do not appear to have been totally in agreement with the emphasis which was subsequently taken by the Free State Government. According to Ryan, the 1929 Papal Encyclical had specifically referred to the important role which the State should play in the event of the educative function of the family being insufficient:

While the Pope declares that the State should respect the rights of the Church and the family, he also calls upon it to protect the educational rights of the children against neglect by their parents....It (the State) can demand that all citizens have the necessary knowledge of their civic and national duties and that amount of intellectual, moral and physical culture which is indispensable to the common good.⁷⁶

This interpretation was congruent with Article 47 of the Papal Encyclical which affirmed that 'the State can exact, and take measures to secure that all its citizens have the necessary knowledge of their civic and political duties, and a certain degree of physical, intellectual and moral culture'.⁷⁷

The reasons why the Free State Government and its leader, Eamon De Valera, chose to take a narrower interpretation of the Papal Encyclical and to exclude physical education from the State's responsibility under Article 42 are not clear. De Valera's close liaison with the Catholic Church in framing the Constitution was a significant factor. In addition, fears relating to the linkage between fascism and physical training may have contributed to the stance taken.

A later debate was revealing in relation to the Church's position. Physical education was frequently mentioned in the correspondence between Government Ministers and Bishops in the Mother and Child debate. During the course of that debate the Secretary to the hierarchy, Bishop Staunton, wrote to An Taoiseach, John A Costello informing him that it was the view of the Bishops of Ireland that:

The right to provide for the physical education of children belongs to the family and not to the State. Experience has shown that physical or health education is closely interwoven with important moral questions on which the Catholic Church has definite teaching.⁷⁸

This response was reflective of mainstream Church teaching, in a broad sense, but it also appears that the Irish hierarchy was particularly zealous in marshalling the realm of the physical. Such a response was also fed by a fear that the content of physical education programmes could not be adequately regulated in line with the teaching of the Catholic Church.⁷⁹ In this regard, the Church was mindful that the education provisions of the scheme would deal with sexual relations: 'Education in regard to motherhood includes instruction in regard to sex relations, chastity and marriage. The State has no competence to give instruction in such matters'.⁸⁰

Hence, physical education became embroiled in a wider debate and some clues as to the possible basis for the exclusion of the word 'physical' in Article 42.2.3 emerged. While in modern times the distinction between sex education and physical education has become more marked, such a gap does not appear to have existed in the 1930's, 40's and 50's.⁸¹ The Mother and Child Debate was one of the most marked and public interchanges between the Catholic Church and the State. It was indicative of the important link between school physical education and broader social issues in which the State and Catholic Church had major interests.

It was against this background that the somewhat surprising establishment of St. Raphael's College occurred in 1954. The Dominican Order, based at Sion Hill in Blackrock 'set about opening a college for p.e. in order to have a Catholic College for girls who wished to qualify in such a college'.⁸² This initiative was prompted, in part, by the concern of Archbishop John Charles McQuaid that no such college existed.⁸³ It seems that a part-time lecturer in physical education in the Froebel College in Sion Hill, Kathleen O'Rourke co-operated with the Order with a view to setting up a college of physical education.⁸⁴

Ms. O' Rourke had been running a small private college up to that time, the Dublin College of Physical Education. That college, which opened in 1947 with eight students, was initially based in the Cross and Passion College in Marino and later in a ballroom in Fitzwilliam Square. Ms. O Rourke had also been involved with the Women's League of Health and Beauty which was established in Dublin during the 1930's. She was noted for her openness to new ideas and was also involved in conducting pre-natal classes in the Coombe Hospital in Dublin and in working with Lady Goulding in the area of re-habilitation.⁸⁵

Such was the interest aroused in the possible establishment of Sion Hill that Kathleen O'Rourke and two Dominican nuns, Sister Jordan Keany and Sister Joseph Lemass, undertook a study visit to English and Belgian colleges of physical education.⁸⁶ Apparently, a period of up to two years planning and research was undertaken before the College eventually took on four or five students in 1954. A former student of Ms. O Rourke's, Mona Wren was employed to work at the institution. Ms. Wren had been teaching in Switzerland prior to her appointment.⁸⁷

It has been seen that the name of Ling Physical Training College was strongly linked to the rationale and tradition which underpinned its work. In the same way, the choice of the name St. Raphael's provided an important insight into the outlook of the founders of the College. St. Raphael, according to a leaflet published by the Dominican Order, 'is the Heavenly Physician, the Angelic Healer, God's Remedy'.⁸⁸ According to the same leaflet:

These titles are not given him by man but are the equivalents of the name conferred on this great Archangel by God himself - the name, Raphael. The Archangel has received from God the mandate to cure the bodily, the mental and the spiritual ills of men. What an assignment even for an angel!⁸⁹

By name and by philosophy the College was, therefore, strongly linked to the Catholic tradition and was, perhaps, to play a 'healing' role in relation to 'the bodily, the mental and the spiritual ills of men'. Gradual increases in the number of students taking physical education at Sion Hill occurred during the 1950's. Initially there were difficulties in securing permanent and incremental positions in schools due to the fact that graduates of the College were not recognised by the Registration Council. This situation was remedied in 1960 and will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 5.

Plans were put in place to build a gymnasium which was opened in 1961 by the Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid in the presence of the Minister for Education, Patrick Hillery.⁹⁰ The facility, which had been totally funded by the Dominican Order, was well equipped and was specially designed to provide observation facilities which were to be used in the training of teachers. It was designed by the architect Pierce McKenna and was regarded as being state-of-the-art at the time.⁹¹

It seems that the core staff of the College remained small, with a number of part-time lecturers providing inputs in a wide range of areas. During the 1960's such personnel were recruited from Ireland and Great Britain at various times and included John Horne in tennis, John Bullman in volleyball and Sgt. Tommy Cullen, formerly of the Irish Army who taught swimming. Other staff included Betty Neary, Imelda Tanhem and Ann Sweeny, who later took up a position in N.C.P.E.

The three year curriculum offered practical and theoretical elements in addition to games and other subjects, which included religion:

Theory

Anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, theory of education, theory of physical education, health education

Practical

Educational gymnastics, Olympic gymnastics, modern dance, outdoor activities, first aid, practical teaching

Games

Volleyball, basketball, hockey, tennis, swimming, athletics, trampolining

Other subjects

Religion, English, Irish, appreciation of art, appreciation of music.⁹²

There was a strong emphasis on educational gymnastics and educational dance, reflecting a contemporaneous trend. Formal gymnastics in the Swedish tradition had begun to lose ground in the United Kingdom and the pupil-centred approach of educational gymnastics and modern dance had come into vogue.⁹³ This approach was congruent with the Dominican ethos of education and its respect for 'the human person as a whole, mind spirit, body, emotions'.⁹⁴

Whatever the initial motivation for the setting up of St. Raphael's, its beacon-like quality in Irish education has been largely uncharted. In a conservative era, the College took on the job of promoting physical education and it went about the task in a thorough and enlightened manner. The initial research tour, which sought information from other European countries, provided a solid base from which to build and it seems that the College tapped into the key issues of the day in the preparation of physical education teachers.

Particularly remarkable was the strong emphasis which was placed on educational gymnastics and modern dance. These activities involved a great deal of creativity and self expression using the body as the medium. Such an approach suggests that the Dominicans were intent on fulfilling the need for physical education teachers in a positive and forthright way. This was despite the continuing rigidity within the Catholic Church which expressed 'grave disapproval' at the practice of 'permitting young women to compete in cycling and athletics in mixed public sports'.⁹⁵

The quality of the work which was carried out at Sion Hill has been widely commented upon, particularly by many its graduates.⁹⁶ In his report on the development of physical education Michael McDonough stated:

I visited St Raphael's (Sion Hill) girls PE College, saw the work in progress and was very impressed. The staff are highly qualified and the work done is up to international standard. Although they work mainly according to the British theme 'Time, weight, space and flow' they have experimented with Medau, which is currently very popular in Germany, and seem to have finished with a compromise that suits the character and physique of Irish girls.⁹⁷

The College promoted a view of physical education which aligned it with the work of Rudolf Laban.⁹⁸ It contrasted with the types of activity which had evolved through the male physical education movement in Britain and through school sport in Ireland. In this regard it had a link with the more regimented Ling approach, which also sought the development of individual students through activities which were not in the sporting domain. There the similarity ended, however, as the child-centred physical education movement stayed well clear of the formal and medico-health orientation of the Ling tradition.



The work of St. Raphael's continued to grow during the 1960's, with up to twenty-five students taking the course each year. First year students generally lived-in at Sion Hill and assessment tended to be on a continuous basis. The curriculum continued to promote educational and creative approaches to movement, a trend which led to some controversy in the late 1960's.⁹⁹ Apparently, a number of the students appeared in leotards on a Lenten Way production for RTE television, causing some embarrassment to the authorities of the College. It appears, however, that while the medium of movement was used in an expressive way, the discussion of physicality and related matters was rarely on the agenda and the reservations of the 1950's concerning the exposure of the body still persisted to some degree.¹⁰⁰

On the financial side of things, the College ran at a deficit and it was only in 1969, following the appointment of a Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for physical education that the State provided support:

After 1969, when I applied for deficit grant, Bobby Molloy, Tony O Dalaigh, Sean O Connor, held meetings with Sr Salena (Prowess) and me over a period of time. Eventually, they acceded to my request to increase the salary of the staff to the going rate, to give a salary to the Principal and her assistant and to continue the deficit grant, based on our audited expenses. Michael O'Kennedy continued this policy and gave extra finance for a much needed pre-fab Dance Studio.¹⁰¹

This interest and support from the Department of Education was in contrast to the policy adopted on Ling College, which received no State support. The relationship which existed between St. Raphael's and the Department was also in evidence when it came to considering the closure of the College in light of the proposals to establish N.C.P.E. Apparently, consideration was given to locating the new national college at Sion Hill and contact was maintained by the Department with the authorities there. According to Sr. Bede Kearns:

I had heard rumours of National College of P.E. from Capt. Michael McDonough (sic) and Mr John Kane (P.E. Dept. Strawberry Hill T. College, Twickenham) who were employed as advisers to the Department of Education. They were, initially, in favour of establishing the new National College in Sion Hill¹⁰²

It seems that Sr. Bede advised against this, given the range of facilities that would be needed for such a college and the space limitations at Sion Hill. The proposal to establish the national college was officially communicated to Sr. Bede by the Parliamentary Secretary himself, Bobby Molloy in 1970. Sr Bede welcomed the move on the basis that such a development would be to the benefit of physical education nationally and that provision would be made for male students in the new institution.¹⁰³

Staff from St Raphael's were invited to apply for positions in N.C.P.E. and Sr. Bede was appointed to the Governing Body of the new college. It appears, therefore, that the authorities of Sion Hill were at one with the idea that N.C.P.E. should be established. The only shadows cast on the new development were the failure to provide an opportunity for Sion Hill graduates to up-grade their diploma qualifications, as well as the regret of many of the graduates at the closing of the College. There were some longer term difficulties created also:

There was little/no consultation with the profession on the issue. Therefore, the full realisation, in relation to professional impact, was not debated or elucidated. I feel this was a considerable lack in the planning process and resulted in a wedge being placed between the 'old' and the 'new' which has never really been resolved.¹⁰⁴

So, after a period spanning almost twenty years, St. Raphael's College finally closed its doors in 1973. Together with Ling Physical Training College it had made a significant contribution to the formal establishment of physical education within Irish schools and the two colleges had a tradition and record which pre-dated any concerted commitment on the part of the State to the area. These traditions focused primarily on school physical education for females and developed in parallel with the strong sporting legacy which existed in the country. Notably, the significance of the linkage between physical education and co-curricular activity was recognised within both traditions. As the policy of the State developed on physical education and sport, the traditions of the two colleges were cast into the flux which characterised physical culture in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

The policy of the State on sporting activity

The State officially took on a role in sport with the establishment of the Sports Section in 1969. For much of the century, the State had assumed a distant role in the promotion of both school physical education and sport. Chapter 1 outlined the major orientations of the State towards physical education up to 1969. This section will deal with official involvement in sports policy up to that time. Combined with an understanding of the traditions which have prevailed in sport and physical education, this analysis will provide the background to the eventual opening of N.C.P.E. in 1973.

The national and international turbulence which characterised the years preceding the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 stunted the momentum which had developed around sport in Ireland in the early part of the twentieth century. The political and administrative changes following the Treaty led to a new context within which sport and physical education would have to develop. Also, leading figures such as Padraig Pearse and Michael Collins, who had seen the value of sport and physical activity, lost their lives before their philosophies were tested in a new Ireland.¹⁰⁵

The loss of such leaders may have contributed to the fact that the Government of the Irish Free State adopted a dual, and somewhat unclear, approach to sports policy. On the one hand, the development of the State and a sense of nationalism was sought through a strong emphasis in schools on the teaching of Irish. Physical training in schools suffered as a result of what teachers perceived to be an overloading of the curriculum, despite the recommendation that it was a subject which should be taught through the medium of Irish.¹⁰⁶ This situation was not helped by the fact that no specific structures were included for the promotion of sport or physical education within the newly established Department of Education in 1924.

On the other hand, there was an immediate recognition of the importance of sport in consolidating the identity of the newly formed State. Prior to the ratification of the Treaty, the De Valera-led government had initiated a scheme which was to consider the re-establishment of the Tailteann Games.¹⁰⁷ This function was carried out by General O'Duffy who, according to Guiney, immediately recognised the importance of sport in establishing a new nation:

With the ratification of the Truce with the British Government by Dail Eireann in early 1922, J.J.Keane, who, at this time was Chairman of the Athletic Council within the Gaelic Athletic Association, was summoned to a special meeting in Dublin by General Eoin O 'Duffy, then Director of Organisation in the Irish government.

O'Duffy, always deeply interested in sport, issued what was little short of an ultimatum to Keane. Without delay he was to devote himself totally to the unification of the various athletic bodies in Ireland and, of greater importance, he was to ensure that Ireland, as an independent nation, would be adequately represented at the VIIIth Olympic Games due to be staged at Paris in 1924.¹⁰⁸

Ireland was admitted to the 1924 Olympics following representations which were made by J.J. Keane to a meeting in Paris in June 1922.¹⁰⁹ Following this decision, the Irish Olympic Council was formed in 1923¹¹⁰ and its birth can be seen as a consequence of the intention of the Free State Government to utilise sport as a means of affirming a new national identity.¹¹¹ This policy was further re-inforced by the revival of the Tailteann Games which were staged in August 1924 with 'an impressive march past in Croke Park'.¹¹² The Games continued for a further two four year cycles, to coincide with the Olympic Games, in 1928 and 1932. They were an important testimony to the new Ireland and the State played a key role in initiating the momentum towards their re-establishment. The value of the Games was attested to by President Cosgrave at the initial opening ceremony in 1924:

..the purpose of the Tailteann Games is to give a new impulse to this necessary and valuable form of national life and to remind the Irish people, as Thomas Davis sought to remind them, that there is more, much more, in the life of a nation than politics and economics. In their endeavour to achieve this purpose, they have the good wishes of all who wish Ireland well¹¹³

In the late 1920's and early 1930's, the Olympic successes of Pat O Callaghan and Bob Tisdall helped to focus attention on the important role which sport could play in such national self expression. Despite these successes and the many statements to the effect that sport and physical culture could make a strong contribution to the development of the new State, the 1920's and 1930's were characterised by an absence of effective initiatives in the area.¹¹⁴

This was primarily due to the fact that the State did not see its role in the direct support of sport. In the lead-in to the 1928 Olympics, President Cosgrave made it known that he 'disapproved of the use of public finance for the promotion of sport'.¹¹⁵ The debate concerning the role of the State in sport re-surfaced on a number of occasions, without any change in policy. This was despite the fact that a cabinet sub-committee had considered the revival of athletics during the late 1930's.¹¹⁶ In 1948 the Minister for Health was asked if he would consider the setting up of a National Fitness Council 'for the purposes of improving the physical development of the youth of Ireland'. In reply, the Minister stated:

I doubt the advisability of permitting such matters to be organised or controlled by the State. It would be preferable that any such steps for the establishment of a body to deal with the question of physical fitness should be taken by the appropriate voluntary organisations.¹¹⁷

When pressed on the fact that other countries, such as Australia, had set up such Councils the Minister indicated 'that it is not advisable that such matters should be controlled by the State, however satisfactory that control may be in other countries'.¹¹⁸ General Mulcahy, Minister for Education, was pressed on the matter of State involvement in sport in 1955. He took the position that the State had a role in physical education but not in sport:

I fully recognise the importance of physical education and it is the constant endeavour of the Department of Education to make the maximum provision consonant with other requirements for this subject in the various schools which receive grants.

The provision of athletic facilities has naturally my full sympathy, but it cannot be held that such provision is or should be a ministerial responsibility.¹¹⁹

The stagnation which pervaded Irish society following the Second World War failed to provide the climate which would see any great interest or investment on the part of the State in physical culture. The non-interventionist position, which had been stated by William Cosgrave as far back as 1928, persisted well into the 1960's.

Despite the distant approach of the State, interest in sport remained strong and the national games in particular prospered. In athletics, the first summer school for coaches was established in 1953 and a number of very successful athletics meetings were held.¹²⁰ The success of Ronnie Delaney in Melbourne in 1956 re-kindled the view that Ireland could compete on the international stage, although his achievement was somewhat down-played at the time due to geographical remoteness of the event and on-going tensions within Irish athletics.¹²¹ Despite objections from the Catholic hierarchy women became increasingly involved in sporting activity.¹²²

It was not until 1969 that the Government took the step of establishing the position of Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for Youth and Sport, an issue which will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 9. This development seems to have been inspired by the growing recognition of the importance of physical education which had been augmented through contacts with the Council of Europe and by comprehensivisation within education, which had been initiated in 1963. There was also an increasing lobby from N.G.B.s for State support for their largely voluntary effort. These claims may have also received the support of industrialists who viewed the development of a fit workforce to be important for an expanding economy.¹²³

When the State did intervene, the Irish Olympic Council was the biggest beneficiary from the funding arrangements which ensued.¹²⁴ Other notable developments around this time included the funding of the recently established Association for Adventure Sports (A.F.A.S.)¹²⁵, the construction of forty swimming pools between 1968 and 1974¹²⁶ and the initiation of an amenity grant scheme through the Department of Local Government.¹²⁷

The establishment of a Sports Section was followed, by the appointment of an advisory sports council, *An Comhairle Sport agus Caitheamh Aimsire* (COSAC). This body had the brief of 'acting as a national watchdog in the whole field'.¹²⁸ The Council also had an important role to play in linking with N.C.P.E.¹²⁹ Thus, the late 1960's and early 1970's were a time when the State had awoken to its role in the promotion of sport and recreation. This new awareness was closely tied in with developments which were unfolding in physical education. The two policy areas were closely linked, especially in the minds of politicians.¹³⁰

These new State initiatives emerged, eventually, from a wealthy legacy and deep interest in the broad area of physical culture. The inter-face between this legacy, including the three main traditions in physical education, and the new State apparatus presented a challenge and an opportunity as the 1960's came to a close. It was in this varied and rich historical context that the decision to establish N.C.P.E. was made. The origin, operation and fortunes of this new college will be examined in chapters 3 and 4.

References

- ¹Egan, S. The 'Aonach Tailteann' and the Tailteann Games: origin, function and ancient association. *Cahper Journal*, May/June, 1980, p.4
- ²Stanaland, P. The Tailteann Games of Ancient Ireland: their origin, growth and continuity through centuries of unwritten history. *Proceedings of the North American Society for Sport History*. Eugene: North American Society for Sport History, 1977
- ³Griffin, P. *The politics of Irish athletics 1850-1990*. Ballinamore: Marathon Publications, 1990
- ⁴Egan, S., 1980. The 'Aonach Tailteann'
- ⁵Stanaland, P. Some commonalities of two ancient fairs: Aenoch Tailteann and the Olympic Games in *Proceedings of the North American Society for Sport History*. Eugene: North American Society for Sport History, 1982
- ⁶O'Maolfabhail, A. *Caman: two thousand years of hurling*. Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1973
- ⁷Griffin, P., 1990. The politics of Irish athletics
- ⁸*Ibid.*, p. 5
- ⁹*Ibid.*
- ¹⁰Van Esbeck, E. *One hundred years of Irish rugby*. Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1974
- ¹¹Mandle, F. Sport as politics: the Gaelic Athletic Association 1884-1916. In R. Cashman & M.McKernan (eds) *Sport in history: the making of modern sport history*. Brisbane: Queensland University Press, 1979
- ¹²Barron, F. *Swimming for a century*. Dublin: Irish Amateur Swimming Association, 1993
- ¹³Wynne, T. *Ninety years of the Irish Hockey Union*. Naas: Leinster Leader, 1985
- ¹⁴Mandle, F., 1980. Sport as politics, p.100
- ¹⁵A word about Irish athletics. *The Irishman*, October 11, 1884
- ¹⁶Recorded in Griffin, P., 1990. The politics of Irish athletics
- ¹⁷Mandle, F. The I.R.B. and the beginnings of the Gaelic Athletic Association. *Irish Historical Studies*, 20 (80), 1977, pp. 418-438, p. 421
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*
- ¹⁹Lee, J. *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 80-81
- ²⁰Griffin, P., 1990. The politics of Irish athletics
- ²¹*Ibid.*
- ²²Rouse, P. The politics of culture and sport in Ireland: a history of the GAA ban on foreign games 1884-1921. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 10 (3), 1993, pp. 333-360, p.339
- ²³Several Irish athletes achieved successes in the early Olympic games as documented by D. Guiney, *Gold, silver and bronze*. Dublin, 1989
- ²⁴*The Irish Review*, 1, 1911, p.54

²⁵*The Irish Review*, 1, 1911, p.55 noted that: 'Gymnasiums are coming into existence in our country towns. In every place where a hall is provided athletic appliances accumulate; the outfitters say that more have been sold in Ireland during the past three years than in the twenty years previously. They are growing up without direction, but in a programme of national culture, these gymnasiums might be taken into account'.

²⁶Van Esbeck, E., 1974. One hundred years of rugby

²⁷Wynne, T. 1985. Ninety years of the Irish Hockey Union

²⁸Griffin, P., 1990. The politics of Irish athletics

²⁹*An Caman*, 14, 1933

³⁰Department of Education, *Revised notes for teachers - physical training*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1932, p.10

³¹References to this phenomenon can be found in P. Griffin, 1990. The politics of Irish athletics; E. Van Esbeck, 1974. One hundred years of rugby; and T. Wynne, 1985. Ninety years of the Irish Hockey Union. O'Donoghue, T. *The Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1968-1989*. Physical Education Association of Ireland: Limerick, 1989 also refers to the work of the G.A.A., F.A.I. and the N.A.C.A. in this regard. The journals *Sport* and *An Caman* also contained many references to school competitions in a range of disciplines during the 1920's and 1930's.

³²O Muirthe, L. quoted in M. McDonough, 'The progress of physical education in Ireland'. Unpublished paper, n.d., p.36

³³This situation prompted Michael McDonough to state: 'It (physical education) is not considered a phase of the total process of education. Generally the PE programme is based on team games where the emphasis is on the development of strong school teams rather than the education of the individual boy or girl. This applies to the three branches of education'. Department of Education, 'Physical education report'. Unpublished internal report, 1965, p.1

³⁴O'Donoghue, T., 1989. The Physical Education Association of Ireland

³⁵Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education for the school year 1932-1933*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1933

³⁶O'Donoghue, T. Sport, recreation and physical education: the evolution of a national policy of regeneration in Eire, 1926-1948. *British Journal of Sport History*, 3 (Sept), 1986, pp. 216-233, p.221

³⁷Department of Defence, Parkgate Street, Dublin. File 2/39391, 1934

³⁸These details have been noted by M. McDonough in 'Progress in physical education'

³⁹Johnstone, J. The history of the Physical Education Association: a widening influence. *British Journal of Physical Education*, 15(2), 1984, pp. 50-51

⁴⁰Coote, B. *Science or sciolism in gymnastics*. Lecture presented to the P.N.E.U. in Dublin on 9 November, 1938

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p.3

⁴²*Ibid.*, p.1

⁴³*Ibid.*, p.1

⁴⁴The secretary of the Committee T.K. Whitaker in a letter to the author on 7 February, 1995 stated that there was contention within the group over the claims of the competing Ling and Sokol systems

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report, p.4

⁴⁷Correspondence to the author from these organisations has confirmed Army involvement.

⁴⁸Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report, p.2

⁴⁹Much of the detail relating to Ling College has been obtained in an interview with Edith Hudson, former principal at the College

⁵⁰Kirk, D. *Defining physical education*. London: The Falmer Press, 1992, p.55

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²McCann, P. & Byrne, S. Ling Physical Education College. *Bulletin of the Physical Education Association of Ireland*, 1, 1969, p.58

⁵³O'Donoghue, T., 1989. The Physical Education Association of Ireland, p.12

⁵⁴Kirk, D., 1992. *Defining physical education*

⁵⁵Hudson, E., interview

- ⁵⁶Johnstone, J., 1984. The history of the Physical Education Association
- ⁵⁷This account was provided by Edith Hudson
- ⁵⁸Ibid.
- ⁵⁹Ling Physical Training College. Dublin: Ling College, n.d., p.1
- ⁶⁰Ibid., p.1
- ⁶¹Kirk, D., 1992 Defining physical education, p. 136
- ⁶²McDonough, M., n.d. Progress in physical education, p.6
- ⁶³Champion, S. *Irish Amateur Gymnastics Association: history of the first twenty five years.* Dublin: Irish Amateur Gymnastics Association, 1989
- ⁶⁴Ling Physical Training College, p. 1
- ⁶⁵One hundred questionnaires were randomly issued to graduates of Ling, Sion Hill and N.C.P.E. to elicit their experiences in professional preparation and in the field.
- ⁶⁶Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report, p.4
- ⁶⁷Investment in education survey team, *Investment in education.* Dublin: Stationery Office, 1965 (pr. 8527)
- ⁶⁸Kirk, D., 1992. Defining physical education, p.57
- ⁶⁹Hudson, E., interview
- ⁷⁰Questionnaire response
- ⁷¹Kirk, D., 1992. Defining physical education
- ⁷²Encyclical of Pope Pius XI. *The Christian Education of youth.* December 31, 1929
- ⁷³According to research being undertaken by Manuel Carrizosa in the Universidad De Extremadure, Portugal and documented in a letter to the author on 16 October, 1995
- ⁷⁴Encyclical of Pope Pius XI
- ⁷⁵Ibid.
- ⁷⁶Ryan, J. The Pope's Encyclical on education. A Catholic interpretation. *Current History*, 31, 1931, pp 1087-1088, p.1087
- ⁷⁷Encyclical of Pope Pius XI
- ⁷⁸Letter from Bishop James Staunton, Secretary to the hierarchy, to An Taoiseach John A. Costello, 10 October, 1950. Reproduced in J. Whyte, *Church and State in modern Ireland 1923-1970.* Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1974, pp 424-425
- ⁷⁹Ibid.
- ⁸⁰Ibid.
- ⁸¹Kirk, D., 1992. Defining physical education
- ⁸²In a letter to the author from Sr. Bede Kearns, former principal of St. Raphael's, 27 January 1995
- ⁸³Keany, Sr. Joseph, interview on 10 February, 1995
- ⁸⁴Kearns, Sr. Bede, interview on 10 February, 1995
- ⁸⁵In a telephone interview with Lavinia McCarthy on 10 April, 1995. She is a former student of the Dublin College and finished her studies there in 1950. She has also conducted some unpublished research on the matter
- ⁸⁶Keany, Sr., interview
- ⁸⁷McCarthy, L., interview
- ⁸⁸*The Herald of St. Raphael.* Leaflet published by the Dominican Order, n.d., p.1
- ⁸⁹Ibid., p.2
- ⁹⁰Kearns, Sr., interview
- ⁹¹Ibid.
- ⁹²These details were included in a letter from Sr. Bede Kearns to the P.E.A.I. on 30 December, 1987
- ⁹³Kirk, D., 1992. Defining physical education
- ⁹⁴Kearns, Sr. B. *The Dominican approach to education.* Dublin: Veritas, n.d., p.10
- ⁹⁵*Lenten regulations for the diocese of Dublin in 1956.* Issued by Archbishop John Charles McQuaid, 9 February, 1956
- ⁹⁶In response to a questionnaire administered as part of this study
- ⁹⁷Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report, p.3
- ⁹⁸Laban, R. *Modern educational dance.* London: MacDonald & Evans, 1948

- ⁹⁹These details were supplied in interviews with Ann Donnelly and Maureen De Forge, former students of the College, 19 May 1995
- ¹⁰⁰Donnelly, A., interview
- ¹⁰¹Kearns, Sr., interview
- ¹⁰²Ibid.
- ¹⁰³Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴Questionnaire response
- ¹⁰⁵O'Donoghue, T. Sport, recreation and physical education: the evolution of a national policy of regeneration in Eire, 1926-48. *British Journal of Sport History*, 3 (Sept), 1986, pp. 216-233
- ¹⁰⁶This issue was raised in a Dail debate: *Dail Debates*, 44, 1932, p. 798
- ¹⁰⁷Griffin, P., 1990. The politics of Irish athletics, p.58
- ¹⁰⁸Guiney, D., 1989. Gold silver and bronze, p. 78
- ¹⁰⁹Ibid.
- ¹¹⁰Ibid.
- ¹¹¹The journal *Sport* reflected the key role which the Olympic Games could play in the establishment of national identity: 'The nations now look upon these quadrennial games in which they must be represented in defence of their racial vitality. It has become a token of physical health in the broadest aspect; and Ireland cannot, in justice to its past or future, neglect such a medium of self expression'. *Sport*, 4 (29), 1928, p.3
- ¹¹²Griffin, P., 1990. The politics of Irish athletics, p.73
- ¹¹³President William Cosgrave at the opening of the Tailteann Games in 1924 quoted in P. Griffin, 1990. The politics of Irish athletics, pp. 73-74
- ¹¹⁴As has been seen in chapter 1, efforts were made in the 1930's to develop a national system of physical culture through the Army, but these attempts did not materialise
- ¹¹⁵*The Catholic Bulletin*, 18 (11), 1928, p.1
- ¹¹⁶National Archives, file SII 052A
- ¹¹⁷*Dail Debates*, 113, 1948, p.167
- ¹¹⁸Ibid.
- ¹¹⁹*Dail Debates*, 153, 1955, p.524
- ¹²⁰Desmond, J., interview on 30 September, 1995
- ¹²¹Ibid.
- ¹²²According to Joe Desmond, John Charles McQuaid had written a 'stinging letter' to the athletics federation in the 1930's complaining of the involvement of women. Ronnie Long and Maeve Kyle have confirmed that this approach persisted into the 1950's.
- ¹²³Telephone interview with Bobby Molloy in June 1996
- ¹²⁴*Dail Debates*, 247, 1970, p.1248. The Irish Olympic Council received £10,000 from the first series of grants.
- ¹²⁵*Dail Debates*, 247, 1970, p.1248
- ¹²⁶Dugdale, L. 'Government aid to sport and recreation in the Republic of Ireland'. Unpublished paper, 1974, p.12
- ¹²⁷Outlined in a letter to Liam Dugdale from the Department of Local Government in January, 1974
- ¹²⁸Speech by Mr. Jim Tunney, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education on 23 January, 1973, p.4
- ¹²⁹This role was outlined in a speech by Mr. Jim Tunney, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education on 23 January, 1973
- ¹³⁰Ibid.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3

The origins and establishment of N.C.P.E.

Introduction

The closure of Ling Physical Training College and St. Raphael's College, Sion Hill was followed by the opening of N.C.P.E. in 1973. An analysis of the origins, establishment and development of the national college is of central significance to this study. The College, which was based on the Plassey campus in Limerick, was the first State institutional investment in physical education. To date, no detailed study has been carried out into the background and operation of the College. An examination of the influences leading to its birth can reveal much about the attitudes and policies which pertained within the Department of Education in the 1960's and early 1970's.

Bearing in mind that physical education had already attracted the interest of both Church and State in significant ways, the eventual establishment of N.C.P.E. was an important watershed. The scrutiny of the genesis, mission and structure of this institution provides the opportunity to gain insights into the manner in which its role was interpreted. The extent to which its mission was congruent with the cultural context and educational needs of the time can also be analysed.

Given the rich and diverse social and cultural background outlined in chapters 1 and 2, the positioning of the College within the system provided important challenges. The new College inherited a strong legacy in physical education from the Ling, Sion Hill and military traditions. It also had the opportunities and threats which were inherent in a system which placed a high value on sport. Gaelic games, rugby and track and field in particular were well established within the school structure for boys as were hockey and camogie for girls.

This chapter will suggest that N.C.P.E. was set-up within a fluid and uncertain educational climate, during which time the shape and purposes of primary, second level and tertiary education were under review. The emergence of the College, while congruent with the spirit of this review process, did not have the strong support of the reports on the system undertaken by the Department of Education in the 1960's.¹

In many ways, N.C.P.E. was a surprising and enlightened development. The effectiveness of the initiative ultimately suffered from a lack of planning and the absence of a long-term commitment from the Department of Education. In particular, the resource implications and timescale involved in the construction of a quality school physical education system was seriously under-estimated. These deficiencies were further amplified by the absence of a coherent view within Government concerning the nature of a modern and national system of physical culture.

This chapter deals with the circumstances leading to the setting up of N.C.P.E. Chapter 4 will examine the operation of the College and its subsequent absorption into Thomond College of Education in 1976. The fortunes of physical education within these two organisational environments will then be charted up to the point where Thomond College itself was merged into the University of Limerick in 1991.

Towards a national college of physical education

The 1938 *Physical Education Report* first raised the issue of a national institute for physical education.² At that time, it was suggested that a Central Institute be established either adjacent to Phoenix Park or at Colaiste Mobhi in Dublin. The Institute was to have a Director and two assistants as well as part-time, office, outdoor and domestic staff. The projected capital cost was £124,000 and with an annual running cost of £19,000 forecast.

As has been seen, nothing came of these proposals and the training of personnel in physical education was carried out by Ling Physical Training College; the Army School of Physical Culture and St. Raphael's College, Sion Hill. It was not until the Department of Education began to think about the notion of comprehensivisation that physical education appeared on the agenda again in a serious way.³ After a long lapse, Michael McDonough's 1965 report was the first step in placing the issue to the fore once again.⁴ The document placed a strong emphasis on the introduction of suitably qualified physical education personnel into the education system. In particular, the lack of male physical education teachers was seen as being a problem.⁵ However, one of the features of the Report was the absence of an explicit recommendation which called for the establishment of a national college. The need for such an institution was implied, however, and a number of possible locations was identified:

- (i) University with institute possibilities**
- (ii) Attached to Drumcondra Training College?**
- (iii) Attached to Sion Hill Women's College?**
- (iv) In the proposed New Vocational Training Centre?**
- (v) Attached to a Secondary College willing to administer such an establishment.⁶**

The uncertainty of the nature of the proposed college was highlighted by the diversity of these options - ranging from university to secondary college locations. It is also notable that the Report did not envisage that the college would be a stand-alone entity. While no specific directions were suggested on the purpose, administration and location of the college, reference was made to the planning process which was required:

(d) Advertise for a top class Senior Lecturer to act as Director of the PE College

(e) Allow a one year preparation and consultation period so that the staff and the director could iron out their philosophies and plan their system⁷

A three-year programme for trainee physical education teachers was envisaged. These teachers were to join a force of graduates of academic subjects who would have taken a one-year post-graduate course abroad in advance of the setting up of the college. The physical education teachers 'would qualify as P.E. teachers only and would be intended for work in large schools or as inspectors'.⁸ The key role of school management in opening the door to physical education was also recognised:

Before any plan of this nature could be put into operation, however, assurances would have to be given by the schools that they would employ these P.E. teachers as regular members of their staffs. The lady graduates at present being qualified are having great difficulty in finding employment. This is due to a lack of appreciation of P.E. and to the fact that P.E. is not an examination subject.⁹

This was an important recognition which focused on the standing of physical education within the context of the academically oriented examination system.

In framing his report, McDonough did not have sight¹⁰ of the 1938 *Physical Education Report*.¹¹ The lack of continuity between the two reports was unfortunate, though not surprising given the marginal position of physical education within the education system in the intervening twenty seven years.

McDonough's report provided a broad overview of the situation as he saw it soon after coming into office and highlighted the need for concerted developments in physical education across a broad range of areas. It was three years after the formulation of the Report that the question of a national college for physical education came on the agenda in a serious way.

The decision to proceed with N.C.P.E.

The decision to construct N.C.P.E. arose within the context of the rapidly changing educational environment of the 1960's. Within physical education, there were two key developments which facilitated the projection of the subject high onto the policy agenda. The first was the 1968 World Congress of the International Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (I.C.H.P.E.R.) which was accompanied by the establishment of the P.E.A.I. The second was the decision of the Minister for Education to commission a report on the feasibility of establishing a national college for physical education.

The World I.C.H.P.E.R. Congress

Shortly after the *McDonough report*¹² had been written I.C.H.P.E.R. decided to hold the 16th World Congress of the organisation in St. Patrick's College in Dublin. This decision acted as a catalyst for a number of subsequent happenings. According to McDonough,¹³ the setting up of the P.E.A.I. was directly related to the fact that Ireland was chosen to host the event. Apparently, during that period the I.C.H.P.E.R. conference occurred on every second occasion with a prominent primary teachers conference. Joe O'Keefe, who had also been in the Army before becoming employed in St. Patrick's College in Drumcondra, travelled to that conference in the United States during the mid 1960's. Whilst he was there he managed to persuade the I.C.H.P.E.R. organisation to hold their next Congress in Dublin.¹⁴

Given his recent appointment in the Department of Education Michael McDonough felt that his position could well be undermined if such a Congress were to go ahead without his involvement. Accordingly, he put the proposal to a number of school based colleagues that a physical education association should be formed. He subsequently succeeded in gaining the support of both I.C.H.P.E.R. and the Department for the notion that the newly formed national association should run the Congress.¹⁵ The P.E.A.I. came into existence in 1968 with Joe Lennon, a former Gaelic football star, as its first President.

The formation of the Association mirrored similar developments in other subject areas where teachers were taking an increasing interest in the educational changes of the 1960's.¹⁶ It was an important move in helping to solidify the increasing momentum which was developing around physical education. This was further helped by the growing European recognition of the role of physical education, resulting in the adoption of a resolution in 1970 that 'Physical education should be a part of every school curriculum'.¹⁷

The I.C.H.P.E.R. Congress, which was held in 1968 proved to be a very successful event. Members of the newly formed P.E.A.I. and the Executive Committee of I.C.H.P.E.R. met with President De Valera and the Minister for Education, Mr. Brian Lenihan. Around this time also, Michael McDonough and John Kane had a separate meeting with the Minister concerning the establishment of a national college. Arising from the meeting, Mr Lenihan suggested that a report on the possibility of setting up a national college for physical education be drawn up. This report was rapidly drafted by Michael McDonough and John Kane in London and was immediately submitted to the Minister for his consideration.¹⁸

The feasibility report on the need for a national college

The direct origins of N.C.P.E. are to be found in the *Kane-McDonough Report* which was entitled *National College of Physical Education - feasibility and recommendations*.¹⁹ The Report was explicit on the need to train teachers of physical education and stated that: 'There is a clear need for a procedure by which Physical Education teachers should be trained in Ireland to satisfy the growing national need for this aspect of education'.²⁰

The six page document addressed issues relating to course structures, administration, facilities, staffing and timescale. In addition, attention was given to the potential location of the College and to possible relationships with other colleges. The approach taken was pragmatic and sought to establish both short and long term solutions to the perceived under supply of physical education teachers:

...it would seem impossible to train and educate suitably qualified teachers in a purpose built Institute in less than six years from the present time. It is therefore the purpose of this report to elaborate proposals which will meet

(a) the long term need and

(b) to suggest possible ways in which as an interim measure the present and immediate future can be safeguarded²¹

Kane and McDonough considered their strategy carefully on this matter, given the short time that was available to them. They astutely suggested a phased lead-in to the development. This entailed an almost immediate commitment on the part of the Department if it was going to get involved at all:

In particular we feel that a possible two year programme of limited scope might be started in September 1970 with a small number of students geared to lead on to a completed and fully adequate specialist training when the new college facilities become available.²²

While this level of urgency existed, the authors did not provide any systematic analysis of the current situation or future requirements:

**Without a full and tedious survey, it would not be possible to make a precise estimate of:
(a) the present requirements; and
(b) the annual replacement requirement for physical education teachers but reasonably accurate assessments can be made on the basis of surveys by Departmental inspectors and the assessment of supply from existing women's training centres.²³**

The decision to eschew any detailed study of future requirements may have been related to time constraints and the pragmatic perspective of the authors. However, without such research and projections it is difficult to see how an informed decision could be made on the matter. It also meant that the future resource implications of committing to this policy line were not teased through. In fairness to Kane and McDonough, the absence of the required information was a further indication that *Investment in Education*²⁴ had not anticipated the resource implications for the development of physical education. Furthermore, the *Commission on Higher Education*²⁵ had not addressed the question of a teacher training institution in a specific way. Thus, Kane and McDonough had to operate without any strong or formal direction from the two major Department of Education reports of the 1960's.

Despite this uncertain framework, the key structural issues in the establishment of a national college were also outlined. These were identified as 'points of departure':

(a) A National College of Physical Education might well be regarded as an associate College of the Limerick College of Higher Education;

(b) The appropriate course length should be 4 years leading to a N.C.A.A. (sic) award of the degree B.Ed., which we would conceive as a 2 unit degree linking Education and Physical Education;

(c) The national College would be residential and cater for both men and women students pursuing preparation as specialist teachers in Physical Education;

(d) The national College would be linked with some other teacher training Institute and in particular the possibility of linking with the Limerick College of Mary Immaculate would seem suitable;

(e) That the structure and planning of the national College of Physical Education (sic) would not be compromised in any way by any existing procedures for the preparation of teachers entering the schools as Physical Educationists;

(f) The entry qualifications for students would not be less than that acceptable for entry to University but would be determined of course by the appropriate N.C.A.A. (sic) regulations.²⁶

Two of these six recommendations became a reality when the College was founded. Firstly, the suggestion that the structure and planning of the proposed College 'would not be compromised in any way by any existing preparation of teachers entering schools as Physical Educationists' was a circuitous reference to the need to close the existing training colleges at Ling and Sion Hill. Secondly, the entry requirements to the College were set at levels which met minimum University and National Council for Educational Awards (N.C.E.A.) requirements, a subject which was to prove contentious in subsequent years because of the strongly practical nature of physical education.²⁷

Of the other recommendations, the proposal that the physical education course should be four years in duration was realised, but it consisted of a three rather than a two unit degree. An additional 'elective' subject was added by N.C.P.E. The College was not residential and its links to the Limerick College of Higher Education and to Mary Immaculate College were less structured than suggested in

the *Kane-McDonough report*. On the question of location, the Report was in favour of siting the proposed college in Limerick, and a link was made to the earlier, more general work of the Higher Education Authority:

We considered it within our terms of reference to specifically consider ways in which a National College of Physical Education could be conceived of within the general framework of the proposed Limerick College of Higher Education (Memorandum B - Recommendation of the Higher Education Authority on the Provision of Third Level Educational Facilities at Limerick). We feel it clearly feasible that a College of Physical Education could fit into the proposed Limerick higher level educational provision and specifically consider that it might take the form of an associate or constituent college preferably separate from but administratively linked with and subject to the academic and administrative regulations of the parent institution.²⁸

Despite the suggestion that the College might be a constituent or associate of the National Institute for Higher Education (N.I.H.E.) Limerick, N.C.P.E. was set up as an independent college. There were, however, administrative links and a shared services agreement with the Institute which was less than one hundred metres away.

It was suggested that the new college might be built on a site provided by the authorities at Mary Immaculate, who had expressed their interest in the project, and that a 'planned academic association' should occur.²⁹ The idea was put forward that Mary Immaculate should have a role in helping to set-up the new college, albeit during a short term 'waiting' period. Added to the proposed location of the new college, this provided the opportunity for the continued input of the Catholic Church into the training of physical education teachers. Equally, the idea of dual usage of facilities made economic sense and such an arrangement would have provided possibilities for the further development of physical education within primary teacher training.

McDonough and Kane³⁰ also gave attention to the type of course which should run at the new college. They suggested a four-year course which would be a 'two unit degree linking education and physical education' which would lead to an award from the emerging N.C.E.A. (referred to in the report as the N.C.A.A.). The ratio between education and physical education was to be 1:1.5, which suggested that physical education would get sixty per cent of the time available. A Bachelor of

Education degree was envisaged 'provided that syllabuses and schemes of examinations satisfying the National Council for Academic Awards can be drawn up'. Such an approach, the Report suggested, was consistent with normal procedure in colleges of education in Britain at the time.

Despite the absence of precise data, it was estimated that the annual intake to the College should be thirty five per year, with a total student population of 140 enrolled over the four-year programme. This number was seen as being necessary to 'build up a satisfactory complement of specialist teachers and to cater for replacement requirements'.³¹ Arising from these projections an extensive list of the facilities was identified for construction as part of a purpose-built and integrated complex. This included a sports hall, two gymnasias, swimming pool, pitches, an athletic track, lecture rooms and laboratories as well as administrative and library facilities.³² With the exception of one of the two gymnasias much of this projection was realised. The eventual brief for the project, which was issued in 1971 also made provision for a one-hundred seat lecture theatre, library, two lecture rooms, additional offices and a cafeteria.³³

A staff of eleven was recommended by Kane and McDonough including a principal, six physical education tutors and four education tutors. The school based orientation of the proposed college was reflected in the view that 'We also feel that they (the staff) should have appropriate specialist qualifications from recognised institutions, should preferably be graduates and should have both school and teacher training experience'.³⁴

The establishment of the N.C.P.E.

Following the completion of the Report, considerable attention focused on the proposals for the establishment of a national college for physical education. In May of 1969 the Minister for Education, Mr Brian Lenihan told the Dail:

I am at the present time considering, in conjunction with the Higher Education Authority, the provision for teacher training including teachers of physical education, in this country. This includes the provision of a physical education college for the training of physical education. I am not yet in a position to go into greater detail about the matter.....I contemplate a college for physical education in the new higher education institute in Limerick.³⁵

By November 1969 deputies in the Dail were becoming increasingly anxious as to the date when such a college would be established. Deputies O'Leary and Byrne were informed by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Mr Molloy, that: 'This matter is under consideration at present and I would not be in a position to give the deputy a specific date now'.³⁶ A design team to develop a brief for N.C.P.E. was eventually appointed on 1 October, 1970 and this team was provided with a briefing by the Department of Education which proposed that the College be built in two stages. A fifty-one acre site was purchased at Plassey, adjacent to the proposed N.I.H.E. Following detailed consultation between the Department of Education and the architects a construction schedule was agreed.³⁷ Work began in late 1971 and a full schedule of completed accommodation was provided for the Department of Education on February 1, 1973.³⁸

Recruitment to the College had begun well before the completion of the building. In 1969, twenty male physical education students were sent to St Mary's College in Strawberry Hill, London. Five of these students were already registered teachers and they completed a one-year diploma course. The remaining fifteen students followed a four-year course which, it was later decided, was to be completed in Limerick when the new college was due to open in 1972. An agreement was also reached with Ling and Sion Hill colleges that students would be taken on in 1971 to complete a first year of study and that these students would then move on to N.C.P.E.³⁹

In the event, the College was not opened until January 22, 1973 and various interim locations were found, including the Crescent building in Limerick, the Brandon Hotel and a secondary school in Tralee.⁴⁰ The first meeting of the Academic Board took place in the Administrative Offices of the Crescent, Limerick on the day the College opened and was attended by nine staff members. The meeting was chaired by John Kane, who had been appointed as Acting Director.⁴¹

The location of N.C.P.E. in Limerick

The eventual location of the College in Limerick appears to have occurred as a result of the interplay between political forces and emerging policy in the third-level education sector. As has been seen,⁴² a number of locations was considered. The most likely location in the first instance was next to St. Raphael's, Sion Hill. This suggestion was advised against by Sr. Bede and alternative locations were researched.⁴³ The other options which had been referred to in the *McDonough report*⁴⁴ were not seriously investigated, however.⁴⁵

The first option outside of Dublin which was studied was Mary Immaculate College of Education in Limerick. There appears to have been two reasons for the consideration of this particular location. Firstly, it seems that the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education, Sean O Connor, may have had discussions with the Principal of the College at the time, Sr. Loreto, who was well known to him.⁴⁶ Secondly, the sixties had been characterised by a very strong lobby to place a university in Limerick. Even though it was decided to proceed with an institute of higher education at Plassey there was still considerable dissatisfaction at this outcome.⁴⁷ Further development in third-level education was therefore considered for the city. On top of this, the 1970 report of the Higher Education Authority on teacher training had suggested that Limerick might be a suitable location for a teacher training college which would draw together training provisions for teachers of woodwork and metalwork.⁴⁸

The Mary Immaculate location was given very close scrutiny and bore holes were drilled. However, it seems that John Kane felt that the site was inadequate.⁴⁹ This must have come as quite a disappointment to the authorities in Mary Immaculate who were offering land 'more or less free at the time' and who had employed their first full-time specialist in physical education a few years earlier.⁵⁰ Given the earlier consideration which had been given to Sion Hill as a possible location, these events show that there was considerable weight given to the possibility of locating N.C.P.E at a Catholic educational institution.

Just how N.C.P.E. finally came to be located at Plassey as an independent college is difficult to establish given the broader developments in third-level at the time. Despite the fact that N.I.H.E. and N.C.P.E. shared many facilities, the Higher Education Authority departed from its own logic of 'concentrating scarce resources' in allowing the establishment of two institutions on the same campus. This occurred despite its own recommendations which had suggested that the constitution of the proposed Limerick College of higher education 'should be sufficiently flexible to cope readily with future national and regional demands'.⁵¹ It is possible that the Department wanted to appease the proponents of a university for Limerick but were not ready to entrust the new N.I.H.E. with too wide a brief. Accordingly, N.C.P.E. was set up as an independent college under the caretaker directorship of John Kane, the co-author of the Report which had led to its establishment.⁵²

Given these circumstances, the position of N.C.P.E. in a longitudinal analysis of Department of Education policy is somewhat unclear. In the course of the debate to merge Thomond College into the University of Limerick in 1991, the Minister for Education linked the establishment of N.C.P.E. to *Investment in Education*:

In 1966, while reporting on the training of vocational teachers, the 'Investment in Education' survey team pointed to the inappropriateness of existing arrangements for the training of woodwork and metalwork teachers.....Turning its attention to physical education teachers the team noted the absence of any facility for the training of male physical education teachers and that a large proportion of the existing supply of female physical education teachers had not managed to satisfy registration requirements.⁵³

Whilst the Minister went on to note that 'Despite its dissatisfaction with the existing arrangements it did not propose any alternatives...' it is clear from the entire text of her speech that there was a perceived link between the establishment of both N.C.P.E./Thomond College and the *Investment in Education* report. This interpretation was further supported by reference to a press release which was issued on May 9 1991 which read:⁵⁴ 'Thomond College commenced operations as the National College of Physical Education in January 1973'.

Inherent in this statement was the notion that the establishment of a national college of physical education was always part of a broader and longer term strategy which related to teacher education. The available evidence suggests that this was not the case and the College was, in fact, set up with a specific and longer term remit in physical education. This mission was to be linked to broader developments within physical culture.⁵⁵ The speed with which the College was set up may have contributed to confusion within the Department on the matter. It is likely that the period 1970 to 1975 was given over to considerable debate within the Department of Education as to the eventual function and positioning of the College within the system rather than to the systematic pursuit of a grand plan.⁵⁶

The treatment of existing traditions

The establishment of N.C.P.E. in 1973 was a pinnacle in the history of State support for physical education. The *Kane-McDonough report* was the most significant document of its kind since the 1938 *Report on Physical Education*.⁵⁷ Yet it went well beyond the earlier Report in that the recommendations were swiftly acted upon with the construction of the purpose built N.C.P.E. If the

Report can be criticised it was in the narrowness of the view which it took of the potential role of such a college and its links with current practices, traditions and the rapidly changing educational environment into which it was placed.

The rapid pace from conception to implementation may explain why little account was taken of existing traditions in the new N.C.P.E. scenario. The Report had stated that: 'There is a clear need for a procedure by which physical education teachers should be trained in Ireland...'.⁵⁸ This statement seemed to disregard the contribution which was already being made to the training of such teachers by the Ling and Sion Hill colleges. The work of the Army School of Physical Culture seems to have been similarly discounted.

The impression in the Report was that existing courses might in some way 'compromise' the structure and planning of the new institution. With a strong eye towards practices in Britain the questions of continuity and change in the training of Irish physical education teachers were not considered. This omission was to have important implications for the future development of the profession in Ireland and for the neatness of fit of the new college into its social, educational and cultural context. The need for such a native orientation had been clearly evident in the 1938 Report:

From our consideration of the systems of Physical Education in operation in other countries, we are of the opinion that the system of Physical Education to be introduced and developed in the schools in Eire should be such as will meet the needs of Irish children and the conditions of life peculiar to our own country. It would be inadvisable in our view to adopt without modifications to suit our particular need any of the systems which prevail in other countries. We visualise a system of Physical Education in Eire which would incorporate the general principles underlying all approved and recognised systems and which grow to be a real national system embracing all national recreational activities.⁵⁹

Such a vision of a culturally specific national system of physical education was not reflected in the *Kane-McDonough report*. This omission had important implications for the mission of the College and its position in servicing the needs of the well established second-level school system. The potential leadership role which such a national college might play was not addressed either. The 1938 Report had seen the national college as acting as 'a source of inspiration, guidance and encouragement'.⁶⁰ A similar role might have been taken on by N.C.P.E. given

the increasing momentum which was developing in sport and recreation and the linkages which were proposed between the first sports council, COSAC, and the College.⁶¹ In the absence of such a leadership function, the viability and life span of the College was tenuous from the start, with a projected intake of 140 students.

Despite these reservations, the feasibility report achieved a spectacular success in winning a decision to build the College. The Report, when combined with the support of the Departmental Assistant Secretary and the Minister for Education, was a crucial catalyst in securing the green light to proceed with the project. Construction of N.C.P.E. began on the Plassey campus in June 1971. The College opened its doors for the first time early in 1973. The key developments in this new institution will be charted in chapter 4.

References

¹Investment in Education Survey Team, *Investment in education*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1965 (Pr. 8527)

²Department of Education, 'Physical education report'. Unpublished internal report, 1938

³During the late 1950's and early 1960's the issue of the position of physical education was raised several times in Dail Eireann. *Dail Debates*, 176, 1959, p.1187; *Dail Debates*, 181, 1960, p.1710; *Dail Debates*, 189, 1961, p.1342; *Dail Debates*, 194, 1962, p.498; *Dail Debates*, 201, 1963, p.468; *Dail Debates*, 215, 1965, p.1458

⁴Department of Education, 'Physical education report'. Unpublished internal report, 1965

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p.9

⁷Ibid., p.9

⁸Ibid., p.10

⁹Ibid., p.10

¹⁰This circumstance was commented upon by M. McDonough in 'Progress of physical education', Unpublished paper, n.d., p.59 : 'In March 1965 the first Inspector for Physical Education was appointed by the Department of Education. In October of the same year he submitted, being in total ignorance of any of the 1934 to 1939 developments...a physical education report'.

¹¹Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report

¹²The 1965 Department of Education Report will be referred to as the *McDonough Report*

¹³McDonough, M., interview on 8 January, 1992

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶O'Donoghue, T. *The Physical Education Association of Ireland 1968-1989*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1989

¹⁷Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, *Resolution (70) 7* - adopted by Ministers' deputies on 7 March, 1970

¹⁸McDonough, M., interview

¹⁹Department of Education, 'National College of Physical Education - feasibility and recommendations'. Unpublished internal report, 1969

²⁰Ibid., p.1

²¹Ibid., p.1

²²Ibid., p.1

²³Ibid., p.1

²⁴Investment in Education Survey Team, 1965

-
- ²⁵Commission on Higher Education, *Presentation and summary of the report, Vol. 1*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1973 (Prl. 3205)
- ²⁶Department of Education, 1969. National College of Physical Education - feasibility, p.2
- ²⁷ This issue was dealt with at a Cospoir meeting on 21 July, 1978: 'Council agreed with the proposals of the Advisory Committee as follows: 1. That greater consideration be given to physical achievement; 2. That the emphasis on academic achievements should be reduced, and all candidates with two honours should be interviewed; 3. That provision should be made for mature students'
- ²⁸Department of Education, 1969. National College of Physical Education, p.2
- ²⁹Ibid., p.5
- ³⁰Ibid., pp. 2-3
- ³¹Ibid., p.3
- ³²Ibid., p.4
- ³³Detailed in correspondence to the Department of Education from the architectural firm handling the project on 19 October, 1971. A copy of this letter is held in the files of the N.C.P.E. some of which are in possession of the author and soon to be transferred to the newly established archive at the University of Limerick
- ³⁴Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report, p.4
- ³⁵*Dail Debates*, 240, 1969, p.411
- ³⁶*Dail Debates*, 242, 1969, p.1517
- ³⁷These details were outlined in the correspondence from the architect for the project to the Department
- ³⁸Thomond College of Education, *Thomond College of Education Prospectus, 1976-1977*. Limerick: Thomond College, 1976
- ³⁹Dugdale, L., interview on 4 February, 1992
- ⁴⁰Ibid.
- ⁴¹Minutes of the Academic Board of N.C.P.E., 23 January, 1973
- ⁴²McDonough, M., interview
- ⁴³Kearns, Sr. B., interview on 10 February, 1995
- ⁴⁴Department of Education, 1965. Physical education report
- ⁴⁵McDonough, M., interview
- ⁴⁶Ibid.
- ⁴⁷Ibid.
- ⁴⁸Higher Education Authority, *Report on teacher education*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1970 (E/67)
- ⁴⁹McDonough, M., interview
- ⁵⁰Dugdale, L., interview
- ⁵¹Higher Education Authority, *Memorandum B13*, 1969
- ⁵²McDonough, M., interview
- ⁵³*Dail Debates*, 409, 1991, p.613
- ⁵⁴Press release issued by the Minister for Education on May 9, 1991
- ⁵⁵This policy line was clearly enunciated in a speech by Mr. Michael O'Kennedy on 23 January, 1971 on the occasion of the establishment of the National Council for Sport and Physical Recreation (COSAC)
- ⁵⁶An interview with Michael McDonough has supported this contention
- ⁵⁷Investment in Education Survey Team, 1965
- ⁵⁸Department of Education, 1969. National College of Physical Education - feasibility
- ⁵⁹Department of Education, 1938. Physical education report, p.8
- ⁶⁰Ibid., p.10
- ⁶¹A policy which was elaborated upon by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Michael O'Kennedy in 1973

Chapter 4

Chapter 4

Physical education within NCPE and Thomond College

Introduction

The previous chapter provided the background to the establishment of N.C.P.E. The opening of the national college was a landmark within Irish physical education and bridged a thirty-five year gap from the time that the need for such an institution was first suggested. The College was faced with a number of important questions: how would it define its mission? What administrative procedures would it put in place? What form would the course take? What validation procedures would apply and how would the students respond to the initiative? How would it articulate with external agencies? These questions, which were critical to the success of N.C.P.E. in fulfilling its national brief, will be examined in this chapter.

Planning and early administration

The *Kane-McDonough Report* which identified the need for a national college was written in the summer of 1969. The formal decision to establish N.C.P.E. was made the following year.¹ Just over two years later, the College had been built and the first students were on site in Limerick. Such a short time scale from conception to completion inevitably yielded administrative and logistical problems. The *Kane-McDonough report* had predicted in 1969 that it would take six years before the full project could be completed.² However, there was a degree of urgency at the time concerning the training of male physical education teachers. This was reflected by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education in response to a Dail question:

Due to the fact that there was no college for men in this country I was given special responsibility, as the Deputy (O'Donovan) knows, to bring about the further development of physical education. One of the greatest needs is to provide facilities whereby we can have trained teachers available to our schools. We do not have colleges for men in this country and I did not propose to wait six years to turn out trained male teachers. It was therefore arranged by the Department to send boys on a scholarship to England.³

The shortened time scale which ensued placed a great deal of pressure on the planning process, with some unsatisfactory results.

Difficulties relating to the N.C.P.E. building

The most striking evidence of planning difficulties was the main physical education building which was constructed to house the College. The architects for the project were briefed by members of the Department of Education, including representatives from the Building Unit.⁴ Within a short timespan a number of problems emerged:

- ..There appears to be insufficient provision of fire exits....**
- ..Dimensions of the squash courts are decidedly out....**
- ..In a number of places the headroom in descending and ascending stairs is insufficient (already one nasty accident has occurred)....**
- ..The staff social area is a complete waste of space..**
- ..The handball alleys have not been provided..**
- ..There is considerable shortage of storage space in the building and yet considerable areas of wasted space..**
- ..General finish inside the building is poor.**
- ..The material covering the outside wall of the gymnasium is falling off..⁵**

The external features of the building as well as its location in a hollow and flood-prone site also presented practical and aesthetic difficulties. Added to this, the dimensions of some of the sports facilities were designed to exclude competitive events, thus discouraging links with the outside sporting world.⁶

From the outset, there was considerable confusion about the brief for the building. Initially, the Department of Education issued a very extensive remit which was to be constructed in two stages. In December 1970 it was indicated that the Department of Education 'intend to add workshop facilities to the brief to accommodate a total population of 900 students, comprising wood and metalwork and commerce'.⁷ Within a month the architects were informed 'that the woodwork/commerce students would not be part of N.C.P.E.'⁸ Other difficulties emerged, with the N.I.H.E. commissioning a report which eventually led to a change in site for the building.⁹ All of these problems were amplified by the rapid pace at which the project progressed.¹⁰

Planning 'on the hoof'

These problems were compounded by the fact that the first students of the College began their studies in three separate institutions. A number of male students were taken on for the academic year 1971/72, some of whom were sent to Strawberry Hill to complete their first year of study.¹¹ Female students were recruited in 1971 to both Ling and Sion Hill colleges to take the first part of their N.C.P.E. course. Students attending all three colleges were to undertake a 'bridging' course from September 1972 until the projected opening date in January 1973.¹² The building was not complete on time, however, and it was decided to base the course in Tralee at the Brandon Hotel and a local school between Christmas 1972 and Easter 1973.¹³

This fragmented beginning was 'a start which was inviting serious problems' with planning for courses occurring 'on the hoof'.¹⁴ The new staff were drawn together for the first time in late 1972 and from the outset there was a degree of dissatisfaction over planning and management issues. This situation was further exacerbated by the fact that neither the first Director nor the first Chairman were resident close to the site of the college.¹⁵ At a special meeting between the Chairman of the Board of Management and the staff it was stated that:

..while there would always be problems associated with the foundation of a new institution, the staff feared that the accumulation of difficulties in their present situation had considerably affected the quality of work which could be produced. Plans should be made for the future, but day to day difficulties and crises are eroding this function. Indeed a complete 'seizing up' of the college was feared.¹⁶

These difficulties had also transmitted themselves to the student body and to a wider, more influential audience. The issue was raised in Dail Eireann in June 1973, when the Minister for Education was asked if he was 'aware of the grave dissatisfaction among the general student body attending the National College of Physical Education at the manner in which the College is being operated'.¹⁷ The emergence of these problems so early and in such a central policy forum did not augur well for the future.

The appointment of a Director

The role of the Department of Education in the management of the College and the appointment of a Director also proved to be contentious. There was a lack of clarity on the mechanism to be used and how such an appointment would link to the work of N.I.H.E. Communication problems between the Department and the authorities in Limerick soon became manifest, as evidenced by a heated debate in Dail Eireann:

Will the Parliamentary Secretary tell me, for the students sake where is the co-operation between the Department of Education and the School of Physical Education in Limerick because the Department seem to be doing things on its own without any liaison between themselves and the School of Physical Education in Limerick?¹⁸

It was not until May 1973 that the important question of leadership for N.C.P.E. was addressed in any concerted fashion. The issue came up for mention in Dail Eireann with the potential appointment of an Irish national to the post being raised.¹⁹ The reply of the Parliamentary Secretary gave out some hope for an Irish appointment and little chance of a female director:

It was not a condition of the competition for the post as advertised that candidates should be Irish nationals. I would, however be happy to appoint a suitably qualified Irish candidate should he be recommended by the selection board...

...The public advertisement did not indicate that the Director should have specific qualifications because it was felt that these should not be limited. It was stated that he should have experience of teacher preparation and be highly qualified. I think the Deputy will agree that it is essential that, as this is a new college and its academic standing is being established in its formative years, we should get a man of a very high calibre so that the college will have an internationally-recognised reputation.²⁰

A list of names for the position of Director was submitted by the Board of Management of N.C.P.E. to its Chairman Mr. Sean O'Connor.²¹ In the event, it was decided that there were no suitable Irish candidates. Dr. James Oliver, a retired lecturer in physical education from England, was asked to undertake a two-year term which began in the summer of 1973. This brought to an end the temporary directorship of Dr. Kane.²²

The new Director's task was a challenging one, considering the key national role of N.C.P.E. and the emerging Department of Education policy on school physical education. The articulation of the College with existing native traditions in school physical education and physical culture was a further issue to be addressed. The appointment, while signalling a somewhat short-term and caretaking tenure, ended a period of relative uncertainty which had seen the College begin on a shaky footing. During this period of uncertainty, the question of the core mission of the new venture received somewhat less attention than might have been expected.

Status and Mission

The appointment of a Director meant that N.C.P.E. could begin to devote attention to its mission and philosophy. This was a difficult task, complicated by the haste of the decision to establish the College. The lack of clarity on the relationship between physical education policy and wider educational developments, especially in the third-level sector, was a further unstable variable. In these circumstances, status and mission soon became problematic within the fledgling institution.

The institutional status of N.C.P.E.

The N.C.P.E., which opened in 1973, survived in that capacity for just over three years. By late 1975, there were signals that it was to cease existence and become part of a bigger entity, namely Thomond College of Education. Such a change in name occurred formally in 1976. At that time, the physical education teacher training function became linked to the preparation of teachers of wood and building technology, general and rural science, metal and engineering technology and of graduate diplomats in business studies. The first students in these new areas were taken on in the College in 1979 and the new entity was made a statutory agency under the Thomond College of Education Act (1980).²⁹ The work of this College continued until 1991 when it was merged with the University of Limerick and a new Department of Physical Education and Sports Science was put in place.

In both N.C.P.E. and Thomond College of Education the approach taken to physical education had many similarities. In particular, a primary role in the preparation of teachers of physical education as a second-level subject²⁴ was strongly maintained until the early 1980's. Over an eighteen-year period students were trained in the theoretical and practical aspects of physical education and

also studied education and an elective subject.²⁵ The areas of athletics, aquatics, dance, games, gymnastics and outdoor pursuits and more recently health and fitness were covered with a view to enabling graduates to provide a broadly based programme to students in second-level schools. Some specialisation in these areas was also encouraged.

Little attention was given to expanding the role of the College into the preparation of leaders for related areas such as coaching, outdoor pursuits, exercise and fitness, sports leadership and recreation management. Neither was any serious exploration undertaken of the ways in which the school physical education programme could link to co-curricular activities and the work of other teachers and individuals who did not hold qualifications in physical education.²⁶ It was only in the final years before integration with the University of Limerick in 1991 that Thomond College seriously addressed the possible diversification of its brief into the broader aspects of physical culture.²⁷

The Department of Education paid close attention to the development of N.C.P.E. in its early stages and this was, perhaps, a reflection of the uncertainty which surrounded the purpose and future direction of the College. The Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education, Sean O'Connor, chaired the first Board of Management. It would appear, however, that there was not unanimity within the Department of Education concerning the nature and scope of the College's functions.²⁸

The fluid educational climate at the time had a significant effect on the way in which the mission of the newly formed N.C.P.E. emerged. Broader third-level policy developments had highlighted the need for change in the training of teachers of practical subjects.²⁹ Statements made by the Minister for Education during the debate on the University of Limerick (Dissolution of Thomond College) Bill in May 1991 suggested that the origin of N.C.P.E. came directly from these events, as part of a planned process.³⁰ However, the available documentary evidence points to a scenario where N.C.P.E. was set up, albeit tentatively, as an independent entity. In a special meeting May 7 1973 the staff were told that:

The Chairman said that he had long hoped for the production of a 'declaration of intent' which would indicate the general direction in which the college should head. He felt that both Boards (i.e the Boards of N.I.H.E. and N.C.P.E.) might usefully undertake this exercise separately and then come together to settle a final policy.

He put forward the proposition that eventually there might be amalgamation between N.C.P.E. and the N.I.H.E. which would provide

- 1. Teacher training**
- 2. Technological training**
- 3. A free area leading to general degrees³¹**

This statement, made by Sean O'Connor, raised as many questions as it answered. The reference to a future possible amalgamation of the two institutions underlined the puzzling nature of the decision to site two related educational agencies on the one campus. The Assistant Secretary and Chairman of the Board of Management also indicated that the mission of N.C.P.E. had not been clearly defined. By 27 March, 1974 the position of N.C.P.E. seems to have strengthened somewhat in the context of plans for a larger teacher training institution. Members of the Board of Management met with the Minister for Education and his officials:

Mr. O'Connor (by now, Secretary of the Department and no longer Chairman of N.C.P.E.) said that the N.C.P.E. was an independent entity, subordinate only to the Minister. He continued that it was envisaged that a Teacher Training College would be established in Limerick which would probably be the principal such college in the country. He had not yet decided whether the N.C.P.E. should remain independent or whether it should become a Department of the Teacher Training College. In any event, the N.C.P.E. is the standard bearer for such a development.

Furthermore, he said it was accepted that initial training was not enough and needed to be 'topped up'. He felt that N.C.P.E. was ideally suited for such re-training.

The Minister said the name N.C.P.E. might then be changed perhaps to National Teacher Training College.

The Director said that this would cause no objection.

In the event of such a development Mr. O'Connor said that it was not yet decided whether the N.C.P.E. Board would continue as a subordinate Board within the Training college or whether a new composite Board would be created.

Dr. Kane said that it was originally envisaged that there would be a separate College within a Teacher Training Centre. It had not been finally decided whether an Education Department would serve all areas but concurrent training was agreed in any case.

Mr. Foley asked the Minister how he thought the N.C.P.E. should plan to take in the teaching of woodwork, metalwork, etc

The Minister replied that this was not the idea. N.C.P.E. would not be responsible for such areas.

Mr. O'Connor said that the original idea allowed for the teaching of a wide variety of subjects at a teacher training centre in Limerick. There was an urgent need for physical education so N.C.P.E. was built first. The other areas were already in view then; they were not a recent addition.³²

This record suggests confusion as to the initial view of the role and future of N.C.P.E. The Secretary of the Department seemed unsure if N.C.P.E. would remain an independent entity. There was also the suggestion that the training of physical education teachers and teachers of specialist subjects were always viewed as likely to have some relationship to one another. Documentation issued from the architectural firm for the project shows that the Department at first did, and then did *not*, intend that the training of teachers from other subjects would occur within the same institution as N.C.P.E.³³

If the Department intended that N.C.P.E. would be part of a larger teacher training enterprise, it is surprising it was set up with a title, Board and management structure which reflected its function in the preparation of physical education teachers. Clearly, though, the Minister for Education and the newly appointed Secretary were moving towards the view that N.C.P.E. would become part of a larger institution. This possibility seems to have generated some concern amongst the staff of the College. On May 29, 1974 the Director addressed the issue in the following context: 'the question was asked whether the College is a college of education or a college of physical education and the Chairman emphasised that it was the latter'.³⁴

No further elaboration was given to the staff, despite the fact that a detailed meeting had occurred involving the Director, the Minister and his senior officials only two months before. Thus, the shift in emphasis concerning the role of the College moved the institution in a direction which was not anticipated by its first employees.³⁵ Added to this scenario was the concurrent consideration by the government of third-level education and these circumstances caused ripples in the College. At the end of 1974, the staff sought clarification from the Chairman of the Board of Management on the effects of these broader events on the College.³⁶ Whilst staff concerns related primarily to validation procedures, there was unease over the status and direction of the College. This became manifest at the Board of Management meeting of January 14, 1975:

10.2.1 Dr. Kane enquired about a Director for the next academic year.

10.2.2 The Chairman replied that the close relationship with the new college now envisaged had changed the situation.

10.2.3 It was agreed that at the next meeting the Chairman will make a statement outlining the Department's thinking on the matter.

10.3.1 Dr. Kane urged an early Official Opening of the College.

10.3.2 It was decided that the time was not opportune for this.³⁷

This minute encapsulated the uncertainty at the time. Dr. John Kane, who had remained on the Board following Dr. Oliver's appointment, urged that N.C.P.E. be officially opened. The Chairman, on the other hand, pointed to the closeness of the relationship which was now envisaged with the new college. The Board of Management meeting of June 10, 1975 received a further confidential report on the matter, which was not minuted.³⁸

These developments seem to have been kept in confidence for some time and eventually a staff meeting was called for 5 December, 1975. This followed a meeting between the Director and the Secretary of the Department of Education the previous day. The Director reported that the new college (which was to be called Thomond College of Education) would have a student population of between 800 and 900 and that 'At the present physical education is not likely to grow beyond the 50 intake per year due to the job situation'.³⁹

There was considerable concern amongst the staff over the future status and mission of the College. The Director replied to questions from two members of staff:

6. ...the Chairman said that he did not see any change in the relationship between Thomond College and NIHE for a very long time.....

8. ...the Chairman said that he did not think the identity of the National College of Physical Education would disappear.⁴⁰

However, following the change in name to Thomond College of Education, the identity of N.C.P.E. disappeared. This signalled a shift in Department of Education policy, with the focus of the Limerick teacher training college moving from one specialist subject to four. The identity of the former national college continued to be an issue, however. An internal memo issued in 1977 indicated that the continued use of the term N.C.P.E. was damaging to the future development of the College.⁴¹ The physical education college, which had never been officially opened, was now in a broader and less supportive institutional setting. The early and sudden nature of this metamorphosis had precluded the formulation of a coherent mission.

On the establishment of Thomond College in 1976, N.C.P.E. ceased to exist. A member of the Education Department of University College Galway (U.C.G.), Kieron Woodman, was elected as Chairman of the new Board of Management. Soon after, he appointed a Director to replace Dr. Oliver, whose contract was complete. The new incumbent, James Christian was from the same U.C.G. department as Mr. Woodman, an institution which had no noted expertise in physical education. As a consequence, the key policy and managerial positions were occupied by individuals whose talents lay in areas other than physical education.

The mission of N.C.P.E.

Difficulties relating to mission, however, had emerged well before the establishment Thomond College. The viability of N.C.P.E. had been undermined by the narrowness of its initial base. The College had a projected student intake of 200 students, a staff of eleven and a specialised brief in the preparation of physical education teachers for work in second-level schools. Added to this, the uncertainties concerning the formal status of the College did not make for a climate in which a strong, relevant and resolute mission could emerge.

Early on it was decided that '..that the aim of N.C.P.E. (is) as follows: to educate teachers of physical education and other subjects'.⁴² This mission was further refined shortly afterwards: 'The aim of the college is 'to produce highly specialist teachers of physical education who have the ability to teach another area of the curriculum'.⁴³

This latter statement by the staff had made the addition of 'highly' to the specialist role of physical education teachers. This thinking was not reflected, however, at Board of Management level:

The NCPE is committed to an integrative and concurrent curriculum of teacher education based on the global formation of its students in two or more areas which are relevant to the school. We believe that any further expansion must mention this approach and safeguard existing structures.⁴⁴

This was a considerable dilution of the central goal which had been identified by the staff with the Board referring to 'two or more areas' and to 'further expansion'. The discord between the staff and the Board was later documented: 'Staff members, individually and collectively, expressed their surprise that this statement outlining the thinking of the Board of Management had not been made a matter of common knowledge'.⁴⁵ The key point of contention related to the centrality of physical education in the role of the College.

These problems were compounded by planning difficulties in advance of the opening of the College. Firstly, the lack of sound projections on the need for physical education teachers was raised in the early days of the Board.⁴⁶ The College, with some exceptions, did not engage in the type of research and development work which capitalised upon the initial Department of Education decision to put it in place.⁴⁷ Therefore, the agenda for determining its success was largely driven by school managers and the commitment of the Department of Education to shift its priorities in the direction of physical education. Such a commitment was unlikely to emerge in the absence of concerted leadership and research on the part of N.C.P.E. Interest groups such as the newly formed P.E.A.I. also had a role to play in this regard, but a meaningful synergy between the College and the professional association did not materialise.⁴⁸

Outside of school physical education, little consideration was given to the roles which N.C.P.E. might play in the development a national system of physical culture. This approach was somewhat removed from contemporary thinking. At the World I.C.H.P.E.R. Congress Sir Ronald Gould, President of the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession told delegates that:

In the United States, President Kennedy said in 1960: 'The President and all Departments of Government must make it clearly understood that the promoting of sports participation and physical fitness is a basic and continuing policy of the United States'.....The astronaut James Lovell who was appointed by President Johnson as Consultant on Physical Fitness said: 'I can't think of any occupation more important than persuading Americans to keep themselves healthy and fit.'

It would surely be desirable for all countries to make similar arrangements so that professionals could play a leading role in the development and implementation at all the different levels outlined.⁴⁹

Significantly, Sir Gould's paper was entitled *Developing leadership in health, physical education and recreation*. In addition, delegates at the Congress were told of the possibilities which lay open to physical educators in schools, the community and the workplace. Hindsight would suggest that more attention should have been given to the happenings of a conference which had been hosted on these shores and which had an important role in genesis of the College. In the event, the interpretation of the mission of N.C.P.E. was limited in scope,⁵⁰ an issue which will be returned to later.

Structures within the College

In considering the narrow interpretation by N.C.P.E. of its brief, it is important to understand the rapid and oftentimes uncertain climate which faced the first staff and students of the new enterprise. A national college of physical education was a radical departure in Ireland and the speed with which it was set up precipitated many problems. The task of laying the foundation for the delivery of the four-year teacher training course was a difficult one. The diffused context in which the first students were taken on, which has been referred to earlier, did not make for ideal circumstances for course planning.⁵¹

Students were quick to notice the difficulties which ensued and met with the Chairman of the Board of Management to discuss the matter.⁵² This was the beginning of a trend which saw the student body of the College articulate the problems and issues facing the institution in a clear and forceful manner. Similarly, staff members frequently voiced their concern about basic planning issues and a number of crisis meetings were held at their request.

The flux in relation to the status and purpose of the College was reflected in the organisational structures which pertained. Initially, an Acting Director was appointed who lived in England. This was combined with the dispersal of staff geographically at various times between London, Dublin, Tralee and Limerick. Early meetings tended to involve all of the staff and were often crisis driven. No clear organisational structure or procedure developed under the first full-time Director. A proposal on such arrangements was tabled at a meeting of the Academic Council of 21 May 1974.⁵³

The document was concerned with the establishment of what it termed 'a number of senior posts'. A complex flow chart confirmed the confusion over the mission N.C.P.E. Notably, physical education was moved to the periphery of the proposed structure, seemingly having equivalent status to areas such as scientific aspects, education, Irish, curriculum development and teaching. Such a structure was further evidence that the position of physical education was being rapidly eroded in the new institution.⁵⁴

Board of management and staff relationships

One of the strongest structural themes to emerge was the link between the work of the Board of Management and the staff. There was considerable tension between these two arms of the College and consistent difficulties occurred in relation to the representation of the staff on the Board. Staff also perceived that the Board was overly invasive in academic affairs. On top of this, there was a fear that the mission and aspirations to which they subscribed were not supported by the Board.

On the first of these issues, there was no staff representation on the Board until Thomond College was put in place in 1976. There were resultant communication problems between the policy-making level and the academic and administrative levels. The situation eventually came to a head and led to the *Woodman Report*, which was commissioned by the Chairman of the Board, Risteard O Foghlu.⁵⁵

In his report, Woodman suggested greater involvement of staff on the Board. He also made the suggestion that the College be organised into three faculties: physical education, professional education and education.

It was in the marked stand-off situation which existed between the staff and the Board that the *Woodman report* was most striking. Woodman reported that staff were resistant to the involvement of the Board of Management in course planning:

When I met the staff at the two group sessions, on each occasion a staff member proposed:

(a) that the occasion was not appropriate for the discussion of matters which were essentially and exclusively the prerogative of those who constituted the Academic Board of the N.C.P.E.

(b) that to discuss the Curriculum even in the spirit of an academic exercise might undermine existing college structures that were quite competent to deal with any problems which might arise.

There being no counter-proposal and since I had no standing other than that which was accorded to me by the goodwill of the staff I had to leave the matter there.⁵⁶

This extract highlighted the problematic nature of the relationship which existed from a very early stage between the Board of Management and the staff. Certainly, the staff were insistent on keeping a Board member such as Mr. Woodman at arms length from the process of course planning. The staff also affirmed that the Board had no role in the discussion of internal, curricular matters.⁵⁷ These events portrayed a high level of rigidity and conflict among the key players in the College at the time. They also suggested a lack of confidence and openness on the part of the staff in relation to teasing out the issues on a very new curriculum. This position was compounded by communication difficulties:

It was felt that there was a grave lack of communication between the Academic Board and the Board of Management. The Academic Board should be aware at all stages of the policy of the Board of Management and should be consulted before policies are adopted which affect the academic life of the college⁵⁸

Staff also felt that they should have a role in determining budgets. The *Woodman report* did not concur and put forward the view that staff were fortunate to be close to decision-making processes, with consequent power over their working environment. This difference in perspective reflected the controversial circumstances surrounding the commissioning of the *Woodman report*. The fact that it was written at all was a recognition of the difficulties between the Board of Management and the staff of the College. It was also important in that Mr. Woodman was later to become Chairman of the first Governing Body of Thomond College of Education when it was established in 1976.⁵⁹

The inclusion of a second subject in the training of physical education teachers

These planning difficulties were not helped by discord on the basic function and structure of the course which was to be offered. As has been noted, there were disparities between the views taken by the Board of Management and the staff in relation to the central purpose of the programme for physical education teachers.⁶⁰ To add to this disparity, the staff were insistent that their professional expertise should prevail in course planning, without the involvement of the Board. Nonetheless, Mr. Woodman proceeded in his report to deal with aspects of the curriculum and in particular drew attention to the fact that the Board of Management of October 18, 1972 had laid down certain stipulations regarding time allocation:

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Physical education | 50% |
| Education | 25% |
| Second subject | 25%⁶¹ |

The key issue here was the relative emphasis placed on physical education and the second subject. The *Woodman report* also pointed to the actual situation as outlined in the 1973 submission to the N.C.E.A.:

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Total hours of professional education (including teaching practice) | 42.5% |
| Total hours devoted to second subject | 13.1% |
| Total hours of physical education | 41.9% |
| General studies | 1.0% |
| | 98.5%⁶² |

The relevant section of the Report then concluded by stressing the importance of co-operation between the Board and the staff in making the necessary adjustments to course structures in the interest of the students of the College.⁶³ The initial position of the staff on this matter had been outlined as follows:

Basically, the plan envisaged 20 hours per week contact time with the students. Over 4 years this 20 hours would be equally divided between physical education and educational studies, but it would not be equally divided in each year.⁶⁴

Two important issues arose from this position. In the first instance, the question of a second subject was not addressed at all. Seemingly, the position of the Board of Management on this matter had not been communicated to the staff. Secondly, the detail of course planning seems to have proceeded without a common understanding among the key players of what the main objectives of the College and its courses were.⁶⁵

This was one of the most critical curriculum issues in the early years of the College. The relative emphasis between each of the three main areas of physical education, education and the second subject was a topic of on-going debate. The nub of the issue was drawn to the attention of both the Board of Management and the Academic Board by a member of staff:

I realise that at the moment we have three hours per week for content of second subject and many members of staff feel that this is not enough. I would argue that we are in danger of orientating our courses in a too rigidly academic way - imitating university courses.....

We all claim that we want our students to be accepted as teachers of physical education on an equal footing with other teachers in other areas in secondary schools. It almost appears now as if we are claiming academic respectability on the grounds of the second subject area. Is this what we want?.....

Might we consider the possibility of having a degree in physical education alone with a general educational background in cultural subjects - literature, art, music etc⁶⁶

This meeting of the Academic staff was one of the most crucial of the early years. Ms. Geraghty, who presented the argument, did not win the day, however:

3.1 Mr. Power stated that the HEA recommendation in 1971 was to the effect that a teacher should not teach a subject to senior cycle unless the subject has been studied in their degree (not to degree level)

3.2 After discussion it was agreed that 'We intend our graduates should be able to teach in their second subject area through the full range of second level education.'⁶⁷

The decision to enshrine the position of the second subject into the College curriculum was to have a number of effects. Firstly, it was a clear dilution of the type of course which was envisaged in the *Kane-McDonough report*.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the introduction of the second subject to the agenda immediately brought a change in the political make-up of the college. Henceforth, many of the debates would revolve around issues which were of cross-curricular interest with physical education occupying a partnership rather than a central role in these discussions. From a numerical point-of-view the relative strength of physical education was also diminished arising from the arrival of staff in second subject areas.

The *Woodman report* was strong in its dismissal of Ms. Geraghty's claim that the second subject was being used to legitimise the physical education element of the course:

Whatever the opinion of staff may be, it is worth pointing out that no one in the Board of Management ever entertained for an instant any concept of the NCPE that could give cause for believing in the words of the position paper that 'we are claiming respectability on the grounds of the second subject.'

Indeed the reverse is true. In a minute of the meeting of the Board of Management of September 1974, it was: 'stressed that the staff should be encouraged to take as broad an outlook as possible to avoid being restricted to the traditional university view of things.'⁶⁹

The issue for the Board and the staff was 'is the subject physical education valid in its own right as part of a teacher education programme?' History tells us that the answer arrived at was an emphatic 'no'. This response, as well as having major implications for the composition and political structure of the College, led

to demands upon students which made it difficult for them to become the highly specialised teachers which the staff of the College had aspired to.

The implications for graduates were less clear cut. On the one hand, the second subject made them more employable, while on the other the availability of teaching hours for physical education was to be effected by demands from the academic and examination oriented curricula in second-level schools.⁷⁰ The second subject provided an important source of diversification to physical education teachers who often had demanding schedules with large practical classes. Even if such diversification diluted the delivery of physical education in schools, the consequent benefits to the well-being and career opportunities of the teachers concerned should not be underestimated.

Academic and religious influences

Planning and organisational difficulties aside, N.C.P.E. and Thomond College had to operate in an educational system which had well-developed practices and values. The ideological positions associated with this context presented further challenges to the new institution, particularly in relation to the moral formation of students and the validation of degrees.

The moral formation of students

The absence of any clear and sustained debate or commitment to the central mission of N.C.P.E. might be contrasted to the considerable attention given to the religious and moral formation of the students. The previous chapter noted that the training of physical education teachers prior to the establishment of N.C.P.E. was partially organised on denominational lines. It is of interest, therefore, to note that the religious formation of students was often discussed at Board of Management meetings in the early days of the College. It appears, however, that a satisfactory resolution to the issue was never formally recorded, although a series of position papers were circulated to Board members. Edith Hudson, formerly the principal of Ling College, drafted the most cohesive of these:

The moral formation of our students, including an appreciation of high standards and honesty, integrity and the sense of real care and consideration for others may best be strengthened in three ways-

- (a) by carefully structured sociology lectures**
- (b) through good student/staff relationship**
- (c) by Department of Education and Board administration of College at a stable level in future years, not on a basis of constant changes and broken promises such as have occurred since the setting up of the college.**

Apart from these provisions I feel it is presumptuous and might be counter productive from members of the Board to try and impose their individual standards of morality on the students.....

...The majority of their contemporaries e.g. bank clerks, nurses and university students including many who will also qualify as post primary teachers are not subjected to interference by the Establishment in the course of their work as to their religious and moral practices.⁷¹

In contrast to this clear and forceful view on religious and moral education, an unattributed document circulated to the Board spoke of the need to distinguish between human and animal acts:

Human acts (unlike animal acts) are free. Man has control of his actions: he can accept or refuse: he knows a goal as a goal and recognizes the relation of suitability between the means to a goal and the goal itself.⁷²

This distinction between human and animal acts was further followed through in the references which were made to the will and the intellect:

- 1. The will follows the intellect.**
 - 2. The will seeks what is good.**
 - 3. Freedom is found chiefly in the act of choice.**
 - 4. Command (one's own) is the guiding force of the human act.**
- Will by itself is blind and consequently needs the enlightenment of the intellect and reason.⁷³**

The tenor of this anonymous document suggested that the functions of the body required conscious control and the shadows of earlier national debates on physical education began to emerge once more. There was, perhaps, the fear that the will and the animal instincts might get out of control. Later, the document spoke of the role of religious and moral education: 'Religious (and moral) education liberates man from the slavery of ignorance and of his own passions'.⁷⁴

The Department of Education and the Minister for Education, seem to have become aware of this debate. The Minister raised the issue on the occasion of a meeting with the Board of Management to inform them of the proposed expansion of the teacher training function in Limerick. He requested that:

..he be informed in due course of the philosophy of education and life in general which was imparted to students of the NCPE. He hoped that the attitudes in students would be compatible with the ethos of the country.⁷⁵

Later, in addressing the first Governing Body meeting of the newly formed Thomond College the Minister stated:

I would also invite you to consider the steps necessary to ensure that the teachers who emerge from this college will have received a sound moral and religious training which will enable them to carry out the exercise of their teaching role in a complete manner.⁷⁶

It is notable that the new Governing Body was asked to address a matter which had already been discussed by the N.C.P.E. Board. The attention given to this issue may have contributed to the position of the College on health education. The physical education syllabus for secondary school at the time included health education as one of seven major areas to be taught in schools.⁷⁷ During the same year the Academic Board of the College indicated that 'It was noted that there was no tutor for this course (health education). It was also agreed that it should not be an option at present in the programme'.⁷⁸ Health education never appeared on the College timetable.

Issues of validation

Just as the broader religious ethos and climate of the country impacted upon the N.C.P.E., so too did the academically-oriented culture in which it existed. Given that physical education was a new and somewhat peripheral subject, the conferring of degrees on students posed challenges to the system. The form of qualification to be awarded was contentious from the start. It appears that the decision to opt for degree status for the programme led to some unwanted attention for the new college within the Department of Education.⁷⁹ A letter written by the (unnamed) Secretary of the Departmental Steering Committee for N.C.P.E. to the Director of the newly formed N.C.E.A. outlined the context for seeking degree status:

The college will open for its first stage of development in January next. For the past four years (sic) a small Committee have been working on the plans for the setting up of this college, and some serious consideration has been given to the form that the professional and academic courses should take. The general purpose of the college would be to prepare graduate teachers with special ability in the teaching of physical education. The preparation is to extend over four full-time years of study, for about 100 men and women students in each of the four years.⁸⁰

The letter further indicated that: 'The course of study at the National College of Physical Education is intended to weight equally the studies in physical education and studies in education (including curriculum studies)'. The intention to pursue N.C.E.A. validation was outlined and on this basis, thirty-six students were sent to St. Mary's College, Strawberry Hill.⁸¹

The assumption was made that on their return these students would receive a degree from a validating body which had not yet been established. The issue was to come to light very early in the new college when the Academic Board of 30 April, 1974 noted that the situation of year three and four students in London was '...a matter of some delicacy as the N.C.E.A. were concerned about validating courses they have not examined in advance and which had been completed outside Ireland. A satisfactory outcome was hoped for'.⁸² A few days earlier the student representatives on the Academic Board stated that 'the third year students are extremely anxious about their position' to which the Chairman, replied: 'that if the N.C.E.A. accept the submission a classified degree will be awarded' (emphasis added).⁸³

Given that the Department of Education had taken the view in 1972 that it was '...anticipated....that these students would be graduated by the National Council for Education Awards', this was a somewhat unsatisfactory situation. Responsibility for resolving the matter rested with the Department and the newly formed Council. The student representative on the Academic Board claimed that '...at least some of the third years had received a letter from the Department of Education at the beginning of their course stating that the course would lead to a degree type qualification'.⁸⁴

The level of uncertainty surrounding the nature of the proposed qualification meant that it was a constant flash-point throughout the seventies. The situation was not helped by the fact that both N.C.P.E. and the N.C.E.A. were new institutions, with delays occurring in processing submissions for validation.⁸⁵ Perhaps it was the new nature of the course in Irish educational terms which caused such delays. The uncertainty of the staff on the nature of the qualification which should be awarded further complicated matters. Bachelor of Arts, Education and Science awards were all considered at various stages.

At the Academic Board of 18 September, 1974 it was conclusively decided that the award should be a Bachelor of Science.⁸⁶ At this stage it was clear that the staff were opposed to the notion of a Bachelor of Arts degree. Despite this stance, the first students of the College were awarded with such a qualification by the N.C.E.A. in 1975. This was followed by a change in validating bodies for 1976 and 1977 when Bachelor of Education degrees were awarded by the National University of Ireland (N.U.I.) through University College, Cork (U.C.C.). There was dissatisfaction at this outcome however, and the staff pressed for the restoration of the Bachelor of Arts.⁸⁷

The confusion within the College on the type of degree sought did not enhance the reputation of the fledgling enterprise. In addition, the advocacy of distinctive degree titles which placed the physical education graduates in a 'different sector of the school system' promoted a stance which sought to mark them apart from their teaching counterparts.⁸⁸ Because of the on-going difficulties with validation, no graduation ceremony took place in 1976. The authorities at U.C.C. issued a stern letter which prompted the following decision within the College:

Academic Council recognised that Governing Body may still have objections on grounds of principle to the awarding of N.U.I. degrees but Council felt that this should not stop awards going ahead as the alternative (awarding of degrees in absentia) was regarded by Council as extremely undesirable.⁸⁹

The confrontation and dissatisfaction which had preceded the graduation also pervaded the ceremony. This outcome was the culmination of a number of frustrating years for the students. They had displayed a high level of awareness of the issues which were most likely to effect their standing and salaries within the school system.⁹⁰ Their patience ran out when the issue of course structures and validation brought matters to boiling point. The result was a series of student

strikes which, motivated out of frustration and concern about the future, served to further undermine what little impetus and credibility the new college had built up.

On the matter of validation, the student body was clear on its position:

It is now clear that the whole general character and ethos of the Thomond College of Education is being endangered by an over hasty and badly thought out university link, brought about in the first place for doubtful reasons. The strongly academic ethos, the rigid structures and traditions of our university system, as well as its lack of experience with handling concurrent teacher education courses of the type handled in T.C.E., its downgrading of education as an area of study and its appalling and protracted failure to offer an adequate H.Dip. course do not augur well for our college.⁹¹

This well-articulated statement from the students provided evidence of their awareness of some of the issues facing the College. They seemed better able than their mentors to make clear and cohesive arguments about the ethos and courses which should be associated with the College. Such clarity and belief were ingredients which seemed to be lacking in the early years of the academic life of the College. The position of the students was pitched squarely against the academic orientation of the system. Later on, this idealism caused its own problems, given wider Department of Education policies on physical education and the inexorable drift towards the race for points within the context of the Leaving Certificate.

The performance of the College

The foregoing sections have shown that mission statement, staffing, buildings and facilities, organisational and course structures, the moral formation of students, student strikes and validation proved to be problematic issues in the development of N.C.P.E. and Thomond College. In some respects, these were the 'teething' problems of a new institution. However, the fact that the Limerick college had to 'cut its teeth' twice in the space of five years did not help. Not helpful either was the often public and contentious nature of the problems which emerged early on in the life of the College.

The performance of the graduates of the College

It is within this context that the central question of the performance of the College must be addressed. Any institution can expect problems in its early years and beyond, but it is its responsiveness to these problems and its ability to perform the core functions for which it was established which will ultimately determine its success or failure. N.C.P.E. was set up to train physical education teachers for the second-level system. Later, when the College expanded, this function was maintained within the context of a broader teacher education college. Between 1972 and 1991 the teacher education function was fulfilled consistently.⁹² The number of graduates emerging from the College in each year between 1975 and 1990 is given in Table 3.

Table 3
N.C.P.E. and Thomond College graduates in physical education⁹³

| Year | Male | Female | Total |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1975 | 25 | 12 | 37 |
| 1976 | 29 | 35 | 64 |
| 1977 | 34 | 34 | 68 |
| 1978 | 44 | 37 | 81 |
| 1979 | 12 | 21 | 33 |
| 1980 | 21 | 20 | 41 |
| 1981 | 20 | 21 | 41 |
| 1982 | 16 | 18 | 34 |
| 1983 | 31 | 27 | 58 |
| 1984 | 16 | 33 | 49 |
| 1985 | 15 | 32 | 47 |
| 1986 | 22 | 36 | 58 |
| 1987 | 9 | 38 | 47 |
| 1988 | 16 | 31 | 47 |
| 1989 | 11 | 33 | 44 |
| 1990 | 14 | 28 | 42 |
| | | | |
| Totals | 335 | 456 | 791 |

These figures illustrate two interesting trends. Firstly, a four-year cycle seemed to prevail in terms of numbers graduating. The figures increased steadily between the years 1975 and 1978, when a peak of 81 was reached. This was followed by a sharp decline between 1978 and 1982 (a period which saw an average of approximately 37 graduates per year). The number graduating rose to 58 in 1983, but with the exception of 1986 it fell in every year from 1983 to 1990. By

the time Thomond College merged with the University of Limerick in 1991 a total of 791 physical education graduates had qualified.

Secondly, following the initial four years, there was a downward trend in the number of males graduating and an upward tendency in the number of females completing their studies. A policy of maintaining a gender balance in each year was followed until the 1984 cohort. Once this policy ceased the percentage of females gaining acceptance increased significantly.

Another statistical barometer of the work of the College was the number of applicants seeking to take the course. In this regard, a strong interest was displayed by Leaving Certificate students. These figures are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4
Number of applicants for the physical education course 1981-1990⁹⁴

| Year | Applicants | First pref |
|------|---------------|------------|
| 1979 | 1874 | 731 |
| 1980 | not available | |
| 1981 | 2206 | 862 |
| 1982 | 2399 | 852 |
| 1983 | 2580 | 939 |
| 1984 | 2488 | 931 |
| 1985 | 2431 | 904 |
| 1986 | 2363 | 832 |
| 1987 | 2585 | 903 |
| 1988 | 1972 | 636 |
| 1989 | 1632 | 454 |
| 1990 | 1604 | 465 |
| 1991 | 2819 | 918 |

The extent to which N.C.P.E. was likely to succeed was certainly related to its links with, and performance in, the second-level system. In this regard, the development of good relationships with schools was placed high on the agenda and access for teaching practice purposes was consistently obtained. The true success in this regard, however, must be measured by reference to the extent to which physical education was adopted by the schools, an issue which will be addressed in chapter 8.

Much of the evidence which is available also suggests that the graduates of the College made a considerable impact in terms of their programmes and professionalism. However, they seem to have been unprepared for the rather low level at which physical education needed be pitched in schools, given the prevailing situation in terms of facility provision and teacher employment. In addition, the vexed question of the relationship between physical education and co-curricular activity caused difficulties. Thus, it appears that professionalism gave way to frustration and early burn-out in many cases.⁹⁵ Despite these circumstances, recent research shows that physical education programmes in second-level schools have had a positive and enduring impact on at least two-thirds of the school-going population.⁹⁶ In addition, the P.E.A.I. has maintained a vibrant professional presence, with a strong involvement of N.C.P.E. and Thomond College graduates from 1984 onwards.

The performance of the graduates of the College was, to some extent, a factor of the high demand for places and the consistently high Leaving Certificate entry requirements. This was counter-balanced by the effects of the uncertainty and turmoil of the 1970's, the establishment of Thomond College in 1976 and the subsequent passing of the Thomond College of Education Act in 1980. All of these events had a serious impact on the role of physical education in the College, an outcome which was encapsulated in the 1980 legislation. The primary function of the College was defined in the Act: 'to provide suitable degree level courses for the purpose of the training of teachers for service in such schools and institutions as may be determined by the Minister'.⁹⁷

Nowhere did the Act refer to the salience of the mission which had been ascribed to N.C.P.E. in 1973. This in itself may not have been a problem, but the late 1970's and early 1980's saw major changes in the organisational landscape of the College. The number of departments was increased significantly with the addition of wood and building technology, metal and engineering technology, general and rural science and business studies in 1978. The annual reports of the College for the early eighties portrayed of the diluted role which physical education played in this new framework.⁹⁸

By 1985 the demise of physical education had reached a new crisis point. Several difficulties emerged in relation to the B.A. submission to the N.C.E.A. An extra-ordinary meeting of the Academic Council noted:

- **-that health education was not part of the programme**
- **-that substantive changes had been made in terms of aims and objectives**
- **-that there was sex bias in relation to Gaelic Games and rugby**
- **-that there was a very low number of hours devoted to Basketball**
- **-that the programme seemed to enshrine stereotypes rather than seek to eradicate them**
- **-that Handball and Rounders were not included**
- **-that there was an inverse relationship between the hours given to activities in the college and the extent to which they were taught in the schools**
- **-that there were problems with the focus of the sociology of physical education course**
- **-that Olympic Gymnastics had been ignored⁹⁹**

These were serious shortcomings, many of which were to re-surface in later years. They were also symptomatic of the failure of the College to seriously engage in a syllabus development process which was relevant to Irish schools. Apart from these problems, the graduates of the College began to experience difficulties in gaining employment during the middle years of the 1980's.¹⁰⁰ The rigidity of the initial mission and the absence of dynamic interaction with its external environment left the physical education element of Thomond College particularly impotent in rapidly changing circumstances.¹⁰¹

The need for diversification and the winds of change

In the face of these changes, the physical education department remained uni-dimensionally focused on the preparation of teachers. A number of events occurred into which it might have made a stronger input. The National Certificate in Exercise and Fitness Instruction was put in place by the P.E.A.I. in 1987, in co-operation with the School of Graduate and Professional Studies at the College. This was the same year that Thomond College was designated a National Coaching and Training Centre, an initiative which had been spearheaded by personnel working within Thomond College, but outside the physical education department.

The shadow of the neighbouring N.I.H.E., by now on the verge of university status, loomed larger as the 1980's drew to a close. It was not until the extinction of Thomond College seemed likely that the broader mission of the institution in the area of physical culture was seriously taken on board by the College authorities.¹⁰² The move to have the College broaden its role did not come from the physical education department and the origins for the late diversification had come almost ten years previously. The 1980 *White Paper on Educational Development* had suggested that the facilities at Thomond College might be used in the development of sports persons. This White Paper never had a telling impact on educational policy but it seems to have set in train an important series of developments which inadvertently led to the breaking of the old mould.¹⁰³

In 1980 the first Head of Physical Education at the College, Dr. Paul Robinson left to take up a position in England. He was replaced by Dr. Ken Hill who came from what was then known as the Ulster Polytechnic at Jordanstown. Almost simultaneously a senior lecturer in the physical education department, Mr. Liam Dugdale, moved from that department to become Head of the newly formed School of Graduate and Professional Studies.¹⁰⁴

This new School quickly became involved in linking with Governing Bodies in sport and in running in-service courses for teachers. The challenge in the 1980 White Paper had been taken up. By 1984, Dugdale had established close links with a Department of Education inspector, Michael Darmody. Together they revived the notion of the National Physical Education Conference which led to the re-juvenation of the P.E.A.I. This Association subsequently made Thomond College its home, thus further broadening the perspectives which resided in the institution. Around the same time, the Government commissioned a study into the feasibility of establishing a National Sports Centre.¹⁰⁵ It was Liam Dugdale and the newly-appointed Sport and Recreation Manager Dave Mahedy who championed the cause. They set up a broadly based committee which involved many external interests from the Shannon region. Their work was instrumental in securing the designation of Thomond College as the N.C.T.C.¹⁰⁶

While these developments assumed a high profile, a national leadership role in physical education failed to seriously develop in either N.C.P.E. or Thomond College. A major contributor to this situation was the absence of a well-structured institutional framework which recognised the centrality of the area of physical culture. Ironically, the *Woodman report* had suggested that there be

three faculties in N.C.P.E., one of which should be physical education. A clearer structure such as this, with the influence of elective subjects contained, might have provided the embryo which could have spawned a more focused and vigorous organising framework for physical culture.¹⁰⁷

Alternatively, physical education might have formed a faculty within a larger institution such as the N.I.H.E.. This might have provided it with the institutional support to explore and fulfil its mission in a more vibrant way. As it transpired, a model very similar to this was ultimately adopted by the University of Limerick following the merger with Thomond College. The background to this, the most contemporary institutional evolution relating to physical education on the Limerick campus, will now be dealt with.

N.I.H.E. and the University of Limerick

One of the most noteworthy elements of the history of N.C.P.E. and Thomond College was the fact that they were set up as independent institutions on the same campus as the N.I.H.E. In the face of the *Report of the Commission on Higher Education* and the general trend towards the rationalisation of education it is surprising to find that two, and at times three, colleges were envisaged on the Plassey campus.¹⁰⁸

It is clear from internal campus records that there was at least a strong expectation within the N.I.H.E. in the early 1970's that the newly formed N.C.P.E. would form part of that college or at the very least there would be considerable cross-over in academic expertise - particularly in the delivery of elective subjects. The record of the relationships between the two institutions is, therefore, not surprisingly one of a strained and difficult partnership. During the early stages of the development of the campus there were many antagonistic memos sent between the Directors of both institutions relating to status, boundary lines and sport and recreation issues. Later, this trend was to become one of indifference and stand-off until the forced marriage which was brought about by the integration of the two institutions in July 1991, on the initiative of the H.E.A.

Early in the history of the campus a number of high-level meetings occurred. At one such meeting, held in October 1976, the N.I.H.E. suggested that the two institutions should be more closely associated: 'N.I.H.E. affirmed their hope that the two institutes would at some future point in time achieve a corporate identity that would be amicable to all the contracting parties'.¹⁰⁹ In contrast to this 'corporate' entity approach Thomond College:

..listened to the proposals for a greater coming together in the evolution of Limerick as a Third level centre. Thomond College indicated that a) its future had already been decided by the Minister's decision to associate the college with Cork...¹¹⁰

The mood for this type of interaction was almost certainly set very early on. Between October 9 and October 15, 1974 the Director of Thomond College, James Oliver rang the Director of the N.I.H.E. complaining of an unauthorised visit to N.C.P.E. by senior N.I.H.E. personnel and a representative of the Department of Education. Dr. Walsh seemed quite taken aback by Dr. Oliver's approach and in a letter of response wrote:

As you are aware I have attempted since your arrival in Limerick to work with you in making this campus an open place, where the barriers and petty actions that traditionally isolated the faculties of other higher educational establishments are avoided. It is therefore of some concern that in this and many ways the barriers have been raised¹¹¹

Dr. Walsh also indicated that he had arranged for a master key of N.I.H.E. to be made available to Dr. Oliver. This antagonistic situation seems to have had its origins in the lack of clarity which existed over the functions and structures pertaining to the two colleges. Dr. Walsh appeared to hold the view that the N.I.H.E. had some role in the servicing of the elective element of the N.C.P.E. On October 1 1973 he received a letter from Dr. Oliver stating:

I am sure that the wording of your memorandum of 26 September was inadvertent and that you had no intention of conveying to others the impression that your document had on me, namely, that I hold the position of Director (dean) of a department within the National Institute for Higher Education. I would hope that in the future you and I are not going to waste out time inadvertently 'stepping on each others toes'.¹¹²

Despite this plea, relationships between the two institutions steadily worsened. The H.E.A. report of 1974 addressed the issue suggesting that 'in principle' the possibility might exist for the two institutions to merge.¹¹³ Dr. Walsh was clearly in favour of this development, whilst Dr. Oliver and his successor, Mr. Jim Christian, maintained a staunchly independent role. This latter position was bolstered by the decision to locate Thomond College of Education on the campus as a separate entity. The situation was further solidified by the passing of the Thomond College Act in 1980. By 1982 Mr. Christian was in a position to sever the connection with the University of Limerick in relation to salaries and financial management. The eighties were a period when the distance between the institutions grew and where the N.I.H.E. outstripped its smaller neighbour in terms of profile, numbers of graduates and political influence.¹¹⁴

By early 1987 the question of a technological university was under consideration. The 'private and confidential' response of Thomond College to the Department of Education on this issue spoke volumes for the historical and contemporary context of both institutions. The letter seemed argued for the maintenance of the status quo - despite wishing its neighbours well. Furthermore, it stated that Thomond might seek to award its own degrees at some future date and that a 'wait and see' policy should be adopted.¹¹⁵ In 1989 the N.I.H.E. was conferred with university status and became the University of Limerick, over twenty years after the campaign which had first put the case.

By this time it seems that the Department of Education had realised that the policies of the late sixties and early seventies required revision. A letter from the Secretary of the H.E.A. outlined the intention to set up a Working Party to:

..consider and recommend to the Authority:

(1) An institutional arrangement linking Thomond College of Education and the University of Limerick which will facilitate Thomond College becoming a more cost effective institution in terms of its courses and activities

(2) How within the proposed new institutional arrangement:

(i) the primary functions of Thomond College - namely the training of teachers for service in schools and the provision of in-service training for teachers as determined by the Minister for Education can be discharged

(ii) other desirable academic programmes can be developed

(3) How within the proposed new institutional arrangements the human and physical resources of the College and the University can best be integrated to avoid unnecessary duplication of resources and at the same time provide maximum opportunity for students for both institutions

(4) What are the necessary and feasible arrangements to ensure that both institutions can maximise partnership arrangements in the Plassey campus bearing in mind their ethos and missions.¹¹⁶

Even now, the Department of Education seemed unable to openly address the question of integration. The letter gave the impression that two institutions might continue to exist as a result of the working group's deliberations. However, from the outset of the process it was made clear by the H.E.A. and the University of Limerick that integration was regarded as being the best solution. This position was soon endorsed by the staff of Thomond College.¹¹⁷

The University of Limerick had identified the main strengths of the smaller college saying that: 'The two key areas of Pedagogics and Sports Science will be afforded the same status as all other disciplines within the University of Limerick'.¹¹⁸ Despite the new language the central areas of physical education and education had been identified by the University as the two most potentially viable contributors to a new institutional context. Following a period of negotiation, the Department of physical education from Thomond College was re-constituted within an enlarged University of Limerick as the Department of Physical Education and Sports Science.

A new dawn had arrived. The area of physical culture had been accorded an important place in a university context. It was now one unit among twelve departments in the University and was strongly represented at key fora therein. By contrast, it had languished as a department with equal status to eleven others in the small institution that was Thomond College. While the College had played a key role in servicing the market for physical education teachers, it was hampered by the negative effects of internal politics and isolationist policies.

The early signs within the University of Limerick are promising. The Physical Education and Sports Science Department has mounted a new sports science degree and interest in the physical education programme continues to be high from Leaving Certificate applicants. Significant work has been undertaken in upgrading facilities and in the expansion of sport and recreation programmes for students, staff and the wider community. In addition, N.C.T.C. was established in 1991 under the broad aegis of the University, albeit with its own Board of Management. This has resulted in the further development of facilities and the promotion of extensive links with N.G.B.s.

Implications of policies on N.C.P.E. and Thomond College

This chapter has charted the fortunes of physical education within the context of N.C.P.E. and Thomond College since 1973. Both institutions had relatively short histories. N.C.P.E. had barely opened its doors when it was subsumed into Thomond College of Education. The strategic and planning deficiencies which were inherent in this approach must rest with the Department of Education. From the outset, the purpose and policy context of N.C.P.E. was tenuous.

The loss of the N.C.P.E. identity served to re-inforce the wider policy which had held back from making physical education mandatory in schools. A stronger line from the Department on this matter would have complemented and bolstered the work of the new College. Apparently, the Department neither had the commitment nor the necessary will to make such a resource-intensive departure. The changing economic climate of the 1970's added to the difficulties which the Department had in this regard, but the absence of a deep commitment to physical education and the dearth of any long-term view of its role within the education system did not help either.

The Department of Education had developed its policies on the structure and operation of N.C.P.E. through stronger reference to practices in Britain than to those which had evolved through the physical education traditions in Ireland. The initial and strong British input into the College provided a technical base and momentum which helped get the operation going. Much constructive work was done in putting the physical education course together in a very short period of time. However, as time progressed the inability of the institution to adapt to the demands of the Irish educational context became more obvious.

This situation was evident in the oftentimes poor relations which the College had with the Department of Education, the P.E.A.I. and Cospoir. Furthermore, the College took a distant approach to curriculum development and the conduct of applied research. Contact with key sporting federations was not high on the priority list either. The isolationism which resulted made it difficult for the institution to anchor itself within the well established systems of education and physical culture. In such a scenario, the College was unable to take on the mantle of leadership and build on the policy momentum which Michael McDonough had spirited out of the Department.

It is unlikely that the circumstances in N.C.P.E. and Thomond College were the consequence of any planned process. However, the neglect which became associated with the implementation of physical education policy indicated a lack of leadership and commitment on the part of both the Department of Education and the national college. The Department, having spawned the institution, was unable to sustain its commitment to the fledgling agency, which in turn never truly found its feet.

The task of mediating the physical education innovation fell to the graduates of the College and to the existing physical education traditions. The old and the new specialist teachers of physical education found themselves working in a system which displayed many welcoming signs, but which was also struggling to come to terms with the new subject. The circumstances surrounding the formal registration and employment of physical education teachers within this context will be dealt with in the next chapter.

References

¹ *Dail Debates*, 259, 1972, p.1569: According to Michael O'Kennedy the decision to proceed with construction was made in December 1970. A decision in principle had been taken in the summer of that year and was outlined by Mr. O'Kennedy to the Dail. (*Dail debates*, 248, 1970 p.1926)

² Department of Education, 'National College of Physical Education - feasibility and recommendations'. Unpublished internal report, 1969

³ *Dail Debates*, 242, 1969, pp. 1517-8

⁴ McDonough, M., interview on 8 January, 1992

⁵ N.C.P.E. internal document, 11 November, 1974 prepared for a meeting with Department of Education officials and representatives of the architectural firm. This and other internal documents are in the possession of the author and will soon be transferred to the University of Limerick archive

⁶ McDonough, M., interview

⁷ Letter from architect to N.C.P.E. authorities on 19 October, 1971

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰*Dail Debates*, 248, 1970, p.1927

¹¹These students were additional to the forty students who had been sent to Strawberry Hill in 1969 and 1970 as part of a scholarship scheme. This scheme had been initiated, amid some controversy over gender bias, by the Government. *Dail Debates*, 245, 1970, p. 803

¹²*Dail Debates*, 259, 1972, p.1569

¹³Much of the early detail relating to N.C.P.E. was provided during the course of an extensive interview with Liam Dugdale on 4 February, 1992. Liam Dugdale was initially employed in Mary Immaculate College in 1968 and was seconded from there to work with the students in Strawberry Hill in 1970. He was eventually employed in the N.C.P.E., was a central figure in its development and became Registrar during the 1970's. He was also a key figure in the re-generation of the P.E.A.I. in the 1980's and following the merger of Thomond College with the University of Limerick became Head of the Physical Education and Sports Science Department. Liam Dugdale had previously applied for the Directorship of Thomond College in 1976 and for the position of Head of Physical Education at the College in 1980. Though these applications were not successful, he continued to promote the idea of course diversification and a nationally relevant physical education system through the School of Professional and Graduate Studies at Thomond College. He was also Chairman of the Organising Committee for the 1991 World I.C.H.P.E.R. Congress which was held at the University of Limerick. He died on 30 August, 1994

¹⁴Dugdale, L., interview

¹⁵Dr. John Kane, who lived in England, was appointed as Acting Director and the Chairman of the first Board of Management was the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education, Sean O'Connor who was based in Dublin

¹⁶Minutes of a meeting between the Chairman of the Board of Management and members of staff held on 7 May, 1973

¹⁷*Dail Debates*, 266, 1973, p.1236. Mr. Bruton, replying on behalf of the Minister indicated that he was aware of such problems and that 'everything possible is being done at present to alleviate this position'

¹⁸*Dail Debates*, 259, 1972, p.1570

¹⁹*Dail Debates*, 265, 1973, pp 921-2

²⁰*Ibid.*, p.921

²¹The composition of the list included nominations from a diverse range of interest groups including the Department of Education, Ling College, St. Raphael's College, Tralee Vocational Education Committee, University College Galway and a number of nominees from England.

²²The details relating to this appointment process are contained in the early files of N.C.P.E.

²³Thomond College of Education Act, 1980

²⁴Summary of college information tabled at the Academic Council, 29 November, 1977

²⁵Thomond College of Education, 'Submission to the National Council for Educational Awards for re-approval of programmes. Vol. 2: Material specific to the B.A'. Limerick: Thomond College, 1985

²⁶This issue came up for discussion in 1986 when the P.E.A.I. attempted to raise the matter with representatives of Thomond College following the A.G.M. of the Association

²⁷Thomond College of Education Executive Committee, briefing documents on the future of the College, 28 September, 1989

²⁸McDonough, M., interview. It seems that there was considerable retrenchment within the Department of Education when it was realised that such an initiative had taken place

²⁹Higher Education Authority, *Report on teacher education*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1970 (Pr. 3726)

³⁰*Dail Debates*, 409, 1991, p.613

³¹Minutes of a meeting between the Chairman of the Board of Management and the staff of N.C.P.E., 7 May, 1973

³²Minutes of a meeting between N.C.P.E. representatives and the Minister for Education, 27 March, 1974

³³The architect recorded that at design team and client team meetings between 27 and 30 January, 1971 that 'It was stated by clients that the woodwork/commerce students would not be part of N.C.P.E.' The Department of Education, as the client, had earlier stated on 18 December 1970 that they intended 'to add workshop facilities to the brief to accommodate a total population of 900 students, comprising wood and metalwork and commerce'

³⁴Minutes of the Academic Board, 29 May, 1974

³⁵Dugdale, L., interview

³⁶Letter from staff members of N.C.P.E. to Risteard O Foghlu, Department of Education and Chairman of the Board of Management on 10 January, 1975

³⁷Minutes of N.C.P.E. Board of Management meeting, 14 January, 1975

³⁸The following minute was recorded at the Board of Management meeting of 10 June, 1975 under the heading 'new college': 'The Chairman reported in confidence on the latest developments'.

³⁹Minutes of a meeting between the Director and staff of N.C.P.E. on 5, December, 1975

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Memo from the Secretary of Thomond College of Education to all staff members, 3 February, 1977

⁴²Minutes of the Academic Board, 3 October, 1973

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Minutes of the Board of Management, 7 January, 1974

⁴⁵Woodman, K. 'Report'. Unpublished internal report, December 1974. This report will be referred to as the *Woodman report*.

⁴⁶Edith Hudson, former principal of Ling College consistently raised this matter. Her interest extended into attending the Academic Board meeting of 26 June, 1973 where the nature of the physical education course was discussed

⁴⁷One exception to this was the work which was done by Mike Sleaf who researched the position of physical education in schools with the assistance of a student of the College, Andy Kavanagh. The results of this study were published: Sleaf M. A survey of physical education in Irish post-primary schools. *The Irish Journal of Education*, 12(2), 1977, pp. 107-118

⁴⁸Michael Darmody reported that, as President of the P.E.A.I. he received 'a cool patronising reception from staff and a fiery reception from students'. Letter to the author on 15 July, 1996

⁴⁹International Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, *Proceedings of the 16th World Congress*. Dublin, 1969, pp. 4-5

⁵⁰The issue of diversification into other areas of physical culture was raised by the Board of the College at an early stage. The motivation was not, however, based on any clear understanding of the national needs in the area, but to the realisation that the number of physical education teachers needed to service the demand would not justify the continuation of the College in its initial form. As early as 13, May 1975 the Board agreed that the field of recreation management should be introduced as soon as possible. This proposal did not materialise. However, such a course was set up some years later in Waterford Regional Technical College - a development which was surprising given the size of the country and the potential relationship which existed between courses in physical education and recreation.

⁵¹Minutes of the Academic Board, 7 February, 1973. The following was recorded: 'Dr. Kane congratulated the Academic staff on their efforts to launch the N.C.P.E. in the face of serious difficulties associated with dispersion, communication and facilities'.

⁵²Reported by the Chairman to the Board of Management meeting of 16 July, 1973

⁵³Document presented to Academic Board on 21 May, 1974 entitled 'Administrative structure for N.C.P.E.'

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Woodman, K., Report. Kieron Woodman came to Limerick and stayed for a week in which time he interviewed all members of staff at least once. In addition, he met with the staff in two separate group meetings. The result was a forty-four page report which dealt with the philosophy of the College, communication, the future of the institution, liaison with agencies such as the N.C.E.A. and N.I.H.E. and the student perspective. The document spoke volumes for the problems which existed at the time. There was clear evidence of discord and miscommunication between the Board and the staff. According to Woodman the staff were unaware of the thinking of the Board of Management in relation to the central purpose of the course. The level of

confusion may have been due to an inability for at least one of the partners in the communication process identify clearly what the College was really about. This was not helped by the attempts of the Report to outline what the students were being trained to do: 'Students of Physical Education learn in order to perform to know why and how and for whom to perform so that those whom they may teach may in turn be performers.' Later in the Report the issue of decision making and communication was addressed: 'I think that the taking of decisions can be inhibited by the presence of interests that by their very nature do not use the same currency in communication. I believe that every voice should be heard, but not at the same time and, even less, in the same place'

⁵⁵Edith Hudson, former principal of Ling College consistently raised this matter. Her interest extended into attending the Academic Board meeting of 26 June, 1973 where the nature of the physical education course was discussed

⁵⁶Woodman, K., Report

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Minutes of the Academic Board, 7 June, 1974

⁵⁹As a Board member, Mr. Woodman became impatient over the involvement of the Department of Education in the work of the College. In 1975 he indicated that he would be resigning from the Board. However, this never happened and within a year he was elected as the Chairman of the first Board of the newly established Thomond College of Education. Woodman's appointment ended the direct involvement of the Department of Education in the College. The Governing Body over which he presided was certainly reflective of the change in thinking about the functions of the College with an increased representation from what could be termed the 'vocational sector'. This was a trend which was to continue throughout the life of the College until, eventually the number of Board members with a background in physical education was down to two out of twenty four when the college was dissolved in 1991

⁶⁰Minutes of the Academic Board, 3 October, 1973

⁶¹Minutes of the Board of Management, 18, October, 1972

⁶²Woodman, K., 1974. Report, p.19

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Report from the Curriculum Planning Committee minuted at the Academic Board on 21 June, 1973

⁶⁵It was not until 3 October, 1973 that this issue was dealt with by the Academic Board and at that time the question of producing highly specialist physical education teachers was brought to the fore

⁶⁶Document submitted to Academic Board on 2 December, 1974

⁶⁷Minutes of the Academic Board, 2 December, 1974

⁶⁸Department of Education, 1969. National College of Physical Education - feasibility

⁶⁹Woodman, K., 1974. Report

⁷⁰The effects of this situation were outlined in the submission from the P.E.A.I. to the Department of Education on 7 February, 1986

⁷¹This paper was prepared by Edith Hudson in 1975 and was the focus for discussion at a number of Board of Management meetings

⁷²This anonymous document appears in the papers of the Board of Management for 1975

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Speech by the Minister for Education at N.C.P.E. on 27 March, 1974

⁷⁶Speech by the Minister for Education on the occasion of the first meeting of the Governing Body of Thomond College of Education, 1976

⁷⁷Department of Education, *Rialacha agus clar do leith meanscoileanna*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1973, (Pr. 3205) pp. 253-4: 'Good health is a necessary base for individual well-being and is a definite requirement for satisfactory physical development. Health education during physical education might be catered for under the following headings:

- (i) Know your body - preserve a good constitution
- (ii) Food - good and bad eating habits
- (iii) Cleanliness
- (iv) Disease - how infection spreads and how to take precautions
- (v) Safety - in the school, the home, and outside'

-
- ⁷⁸Minutes of the Academic Board on 1 October, 1974
- ⁷⁹McDonough, M., interview
- ⁸⁰Letter to N.C.E.A. on June 1, 1972 from the Secretary of Departmental Steering Committee for N.C.P.E.
- ⁸¹Minutes of the Academic Board, 1 October, 1974
- ⁸²Minutes of the Academic Board, 30 April, 1974
- ⁸³Minutes of the Academic Board, 25 April, 1974
- ⁸⁴Minutes of the Academic Board, 7 June, 1974
- ⁸⁵At the Academic Board of the College on 1 October, 1974 one member of staff was... '...anxious to know why it had taken so long for the N.C.E.A. to decide on the submission which had been given to them almost a year earlier'. A response was not forthcoming from the N.C.E.A. until November of that year
- ⁸⁶Minutes of the Academic Board, 18 September, 1974
- ⁸⁷A further poll at the Academic Council of 11 May, 1978 showed that eleven were in favour of a B.A. degree and three in favour of a B.Sc. award. A letter from the President of U.C.C. on 26 April, 1977 had already severely criticised the Governing Body, the Director and the staff for their indecision in relation to the degree title which they were seeking. This letter offered a unique insight into the confusion which seemed to exist at the time
- ⁸⁸A position adopted by the Chairman of Thomond College Governing Body and referred to in a letter from the President of U.C.C. on 26 April, 1977
- ⁸⁹Minutes of the Academic Council, 2 October, 1977
- ⁹⁰For instance, student representatives had raised the issue of equivalence to the Higher Diploma in education on several occasions and were told at the Academic Board of 18 November, 1974 that 'the N.C.E.A. are taking up this question with the Registration Council'.
- ⁹¹Statement by the Student Union of N.C.P.E. on the issue of validation, 15 March, 1977
- ⁹²In 1987 the H.E.A. indicated that the market for such teachers had been filled to the point where it was necessary to reduce the intake of physical education students from fifty to thirty per year
- ⁹³These figures were provided by Ann Hickey, former Admissions Officer at Thomond College
- ⁹⁴Ibid.
- ⁹⁵These issues were addressed consistently by the P.E.A.I. See for example the President's address to the Annual General Meeting of the Association on 3 October, 1987
- ⁹⁶Department of Education and Department of Health, *A national survey of involvement in sport and physical activity*. Dublin, 1996
- ⁹⁷Thomond College of Education Act, 1980
- ⁹⁸Thomond College of Education, Annual Reports for 1983 and 1984
- ⁹⁹Minutes of Extra-ordinary Meeting of the Academic Council, 17 December, 1985
- ¹⁰⁰Registration statistics for second-level schools will be dealt with in chapter 5. Thomond College statistics, presented to the Governing Body on 27 November, 1987, showed that eighty-eight per cent of College graduates had gained employment in the previous year. These figures referred to all degree courses at the expanded college.
- ¹⁰¹Cospoir unsuccessfully attempted to make links with the College as did the Olympic Council of Ireland and several Governing Bodies in sport. These efforts are referred to in chapter 9
- ¹⁰²Submission by Thomond College of Education to the Higher Education Authority Committee on inter-institutional links, 5 October, 1990
- ¹⁰³Department of Education, *White paper on educational development*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1984 (pl. 2153)
- ¹⁰⁴These details emerged from interviews with Liam Dugdale and Michael Darmody > The latter interview took place on 22 October, 1993
- ¹⁰⁵Department of Education, 'Recommendations on the location of a National Sports Centre'. Unpublished Cospoir report, 1985
- ¹⁰⁶Dugdale, L., interview
- ¹⁰⁷Woodman, K., 1969. Report
- ¹⁰⁸Commission on Higher Education, *Report of the Commission on Higher Education*. Stationery Office: Dublin, 1969 Vol. 2 (Pr. 9389)
- ¹⁰⁹Minute of a meeting between the N.I.H.E. and N.C.P.E. 15 October, 1976

¹¹⁰Minute of a meeting between the N.I.H.E. and N.C.P.E. 15 October, 1976

¹¹¹Letter from Dr. Walsh to Dr. Oliver, 15 October, 1974

¹¹²Letter from Dr. Oliver to Dr. Walsh, 1 October, 1973

¹¹³Higher Education Authority, *Progress report 1974*. Dublin, 1974, p.64. The Report stated: 'A matter of moment for future relations between the National Institute for Higher Education and the National College of Physical Education is the need for a well-defined locus of authority between them as sharers of a single campus (a theme to be returned to later). This situation merges, of course into the larger question of whether the policy should be for the two institutions to develop side by side but independently or, in principle at least, to form a single whole (to include perhaps also the training of teachers of Woodwork, Metalwork and other such subjects). These and some allied problems are at present under discussion between the Minister for Education and ourselves, so that it would not be for us to comment on them here. We have no doubt, however, that satisfactory solutions can and will be found for them'.

¹¹⁴Dugdale, L., interview

¹¹⁵Thomond College of Education, letter to the Higher Education, Authority, 1989

¹¹⁶Letter from John Hayden, Secretary of the H.E.A. to the Director of Thomond College, 1990

¹¹⁷This position was endorsed at a staff meeting

¹¹⁸University of Limerick submission to H.E.A. working group on inter-institutional links, 1990

Chapter 5

Chapter 5

The registration of physical education teachers

Introduction

Previous chapters have focused on broad policy initiatives, traditions and major lines of development in physical education. Attention has also been given to the teacher training arrangements which have pertained in private and State institutions. Chapters five to eight inclusive will address the implementation of policy since 1960 to the present day. One of the main measures of the progress of physical education within the second-level system is the number of physical education teachers employed to teach the subject, an issue which will be addressed in this chapter.

The fortunes of physical education within secondary schools are strongly reflected in the work of the Registration Council which is a Statutory Body, set up in 1914. Since that time, the Council has had an official role in the recognition and registration of teachers. It is comprised of representatives from the various sectors involved in secondary education. The meetings of the Council have devoted considerable attention to physical education and the associated teacher qualifications.

The minutes of the Council's meetings, and those of its sub-committees, provide valuable insights into the factors which have both supported and impeded the development of physical education within secondary schools. The proceedings of the Council reveal important evidence concerning the orientations of some of the main policy-influencing agencies towards the subject. This chapter will outline the position taken by the Registration Council in relation to physical education between 1942 and the present, with special emphasis on the period from 1960.¹

Early attempts at registering teachers of physical training

Until the 1960's the climate for the acceptance of physical education as a subject for registration purposes was inhibited by the academically-based traditions which prevailed. As early as 1918 the Council had considered the need to make special provision for teachers of practical subjects and 'transition conditions of registration' applied to these areas.² This situation persisted until 1924 when the Association for Secondary School Teachers (A.S.T.I.) moved to have non-registered teachers declared ineligible for employment. This move was successful and effectively

precluded teachers of physical training from gaining recognition during the 1920's and 1930's.

According to Turbidy,³ 1942 was the first occasion when there was a concerted attempt to deal with the registration of teachers of physical training. Apparently, the Department of Education wished that the matter be dealt with, a desire which was flatly rebuffed by the Council: 'That Physical Training be not a recognised qualification for the purpose of the Regulations for the Register'.⁴ Department of Education interest in the issue was almost certainly related to the proposals of the late 1930's and early 1940's to establish a national institute for physical education.⁵

The decision of the Registration Council may have tempered the enthusiasm of the Department of Education towards the promotion of physical education in the ensuing years. By 1949 there were only six whole-time and twenty four part-time physical education teachers working in the vocational sector. This figure remained relatively unchanged during the 1950's and in 1962 the Minister for Education reported to the Dail that thirty-two out of 288 vocational schools employed the services of a physical education teacher.⁶

The number of secondary schools employing physical education and games teachers during this period is difficult to determine, with the main sources of such teachers up to 1958 coming from Ling College of Physical Training and the Army School of Physical Culture. The employment of such teachers tended to be sporadic and often on a part-time basis.⁷ From 1958 the graduates of the recently established St. Raphael's College began to become available for appointment and by 1962 it was reported that 'Physical instruction is being given in 358 out of 542 secondary schools'.⁸ The basis for this figure is unclear as it seems there was no reliable measure of the number of specialist physical education personnel working in such schools. Given the circumstances which prevailed within secondary schools, it is likely that a significant proportion of these 358 schools delivered programmes in games which were overseen by non-specialist personnel.

The re-awakening of official interest in physical education

The development of physical education was not a priority of the Department of Education during the 1950's despite the claim of the Minister for Education in 1955 that:

I fully recognise the importance of physical education and it is the constant endeavour of the Department of Education to make the maximum provision consonant with other requirements for this subject in the various schools which receive grants.⁹

The Minister's somewhat ambiguous statement highlighted the drift in the position of the Department of Education at the time. The development of St Raphael's College, Sion Hill was instrumental in re-awakening the Registration Council's awareness of the need for the recognition of physical education teachers. In addition, the Sion Hill initiative may have prompted the Department of Education to reconsider its dormant stance on physical education just as the 1950's came to a close.

The registration of the graduates of St. Raphael's College

Graduates from St. Raphael's College, Sion Hill were accepted for the purposes of registration by the Registration Council at its meeting of 13, January 1960. In making the case for the acceptance of such a motion, a representative of the Catholic Convent Secondary Schools, pointed to the fact that physical education was a compulsory (sic) subject on the curriculum, but that its progress was curtailed by the absence of suitably qualified teachers.¹⁰ This advocacy of physical education was striking in its clarity and bore similarities to the language used by later by the Council of Education.¹¹ It was stated at the Registration Council that:

... it was essential that a new and scientific approach be adopted towards Physical Education and that it be given its proper status. In other countries its value had long since been recognised but until now the approach to it had been haphazard and unscientific.¹²

The motion on physical education was supported by the representative of the Department of Education who put forward the view that: 'No alternative method had however been considered satisfactory and accordingly the proposal before the Council was regarded as the only feasible and practicable arrangement in all the circumstances'.¹³ The A.S.T.I. representatives were not enamoured with this

position. They felt that the registration of physical education teachers was not a bad thing *per se*, but that it had important implications for the status of the teaching profession as a whole:

The Association of Secondary Teachers was not at all opposed to promoting Physical Training, it was in favour of it, but was most decidedly opposed to giving the same salary scales to Physical Training Instructors as to teachers on the normal register. It was for this reason that the proposal was being opposed. While the Registration Council was not concerned with salaries it was or should be concerned with the status of secondary teachers and in fact status could not be dissociated from salaries as there was a strong connection between the two.¹⁴

Despite these objections the Council agreed to the registration of physical education teachers and to the inclusion of the Teacher's Diploma in Physical Training of Sion Hill, and the Diploma of Loughborough College for Physical Education, Leicestershire on the confined register. This decision put recognition arrangements in place for both male and female teachers.¹⁵

The matter did not end there.¹⁶ A protracted period of correspondence ensued between the A.S.T.I. and the Department of Education. This correspondence focused, not only on the inclusion of physical education on the confined register, but on the role of the Registration Council itself. The A.S.T.I. felt that it was the Department of Education representatives at the Registration Council who had forced the issue. According to the Union, these representatives had insisted that the proposal before the Council was the only feasible option.¹⁷ The A.S.T.I. was disappointed that their suggestion, which proposed a special grant to schools in order to promote physical education, had not been taken on board either by the Council or the Department of Education.

The incident was revealing in that the attitudes of key agencies towards physical education were brought out in the open. The opposition of the A.S.T.I. was galvanised by its concern about the admission of non-graduates to the confined register. The underlying academicism of this position was symptomatic of the kind of powerful forces which physical education would encounter within the system in the years that lay ahead. According to Coolahan the teacher union 'at that time, regarded academic subjects, for which university courses existed, as the appropriate ones for secondary education. It tended to frown on other subjects and those of an applied character as being unsuitable'.¹⁸

The incident also highlighted the strong view which the Department of Education had formulated in relation to physical education in schools. Despite resolute follow-up by the A.S.T.I., which included a meeting with the Minister for Education, the Department of Education stood firm on the issue.¹⁹ The position of the Department was only partially influenced by its view of the value of physical education, however. The issue had broader implications concerning the access of non-graduates to the confined register and the role of the Department in implementing Registration Council decisions. Putting these qualifications aside, however, the 1960 controversy provided evidence that the Department of Education had, in fact, re-awakened to the importance of physical education even before the Report of the Council of Education.²⁰

Reverberations from the precedent of 1960

In many ways, the worst fears of the A.S.T.I. were soon to be realised following the events of 1960 and 1961. The Department had stood firm on the access of non-graduates to the confined register. Less than one year after the 1960 decision, a submission was made by the Central Association of Irish School Mistresses to the effect that graduates of Ling Physical Training College be admitted to the confined register. The case was made that Ling College was non-denominational. The fact that its graduates were not eligible for registration, it was claimed, resulted in many of them having to emigrate 'as they were unable to get posts with adequate remuneration in secondary school'.²¹

Interestingly, the issue was raised on the basis of remuneration rather than on gaining positions within secondary schools. The linkage between qualification and salary had been made by the A.S.T.I. during the course of the 1960 controversy. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Union representatives on the Council opposed the application on the basis that they were 'opposed to the confined register and any additions to it'. In the event, the proposal was turned down because the course did not have a Leaving Certificate or equivalent entry requirement.²²

The matter, it seems, lay dormant for some time. The following two years was the only period of the decade where physical education was not a major point on the agenda of the Council. In 1964, Ms. Edith Hudson, the principal of Ling College, renewed the application, which was considered by a special sub-committee. Once again, however, the application was turned down on the basis that the Leaving Certificate was not a condition of entry. During the course of discussion it was

revealed that twelve out of eighteen students graduating from the College had, in fact, a Leaving Certificate prior to entry.²³

There seems to have been some confusion concerning the basis for the Registration Council decision to reject the application, however. In January 1965 the minutes recorded that:

Mrs Hudson, Ling Physical Training College, would like to have further information regarding the requirements for acceptance of the Diploma of the College. The Chairman stated that, until such time as the Leaving Certificate examination or its equivalent was an essential requirement for entry to the course for the diploma, the Council would not be prepared to accept the qualification. Mrs Hudson had been so informed by the Secretary.²⁴

While the Registration Council minutes suggested that the delay may have been on the part of Ling College, it also appears that the reasons for the initial refusal to accept the application may not have been clearly communicated to Ms. Hudson.²⁵

The registration of graduates of Ling Physical Training College

The issue was returned to on 12, January 1966.²⁶ The application of Ling College was successful on this occasion and was championed by members of the Registration Council who represented the minority religious tradition. Thus, even though Ling College was technically referred to as a non-denominational college, the proceedings of the Council in the 1960's suggest that there may have been denominational influences at work in the promotion of physical education. The reasons for the time-lag in recognising the graduates of Ling are hard to understand, particularly given the apparent hardship which the absence of registration was causing for graduates of the College.

The Department of Education, it must be said, remained consistent throughout by insisting that the Leaving Certificate be a condition of entry to the College. When the Council was finally satisfied that this was the case, registration status was granted to those students who had just entered the College, once their course was complete.²⁷ This provision excluded the second and third year group, as they had entered in advance of the Leaving Certificate being a requirement of entry. As will be seen, this decision was to cause much further discussion at the Council.

Despite the efforts of Ling College to satisfy the criteria of the Registration Council there appeared to be lingering doubts about the status of the College. In particular, the fact that it was privately run was a cause for concern:

...Ling College was a private business undertaking and that there was no other such Institution which awarded a qualification that was approved for the purposes of registration. It would be difficult to ensure that the College standards would be maintained and the question of the continuity of the College would present further difficulties.²⁸

This was an important intervention. The Department of Education representatives were not to be deterred, however, from securing recognition for the course. Their position on the matter was based on two major premises. Firstly, the 'recently appointed Inspector would have the college course under review' and it was indicated that Mr. McDonough had visited Ling. Following discussions with Ms. Hudson he was happy with the course. Secondly, it was stated that 'in the near future many more teachers of Physical education would be required in secondary schools because more emphasis would be placed on the teaching of the subject'.²⁹ Clearly, the resolve of the Department of Education was beginning to harden as far as the promotion of school physical education was concerned. For Ling College, however, the decision of January 1966 was not indefinite. Doubts about the durability of private colleges resulted in the Council putting an important proviso on the resolution:

..that 'the Diploma in Physical Education of Ling Physical Training College, Dublin, awarded in respect of course commenced in 1965 or subsequently (as long as recognition is continued by the Council with the approval of the Minister)' be included in Schedule D for the purposes of the Regulation for the Register.³⁰ (emphasis added)

This decision made it easier for the Department to proceed when the plan for N.C.P.E. was conceived at the end of the decade. The registration for Ling graduates could now be reviewed at any time. There was also the stipulation that recognition would only be given to graduates from the course who had commenced their course in 1965 or subsequently. This ruling was to occupy the collective mind of the Council for a number of years.

The case for retrospection for Ling graduates

The 1960 controversy had been the first occasion when the registration of physical education teachers was a contentious matter. The case of Ling College, as a private college, also ensured that a new precedent was set in 1966. Rather than ending the succession of rulings on physical education, it was only the beginning of a further series of events which was to continue up to the mid 1970's. Strong representations were made to the Registration Council to make its 1966 decision retrospective to include all Ling graduates who had a Leaving Certificate before commencing study at the College. This case was strongly supported by Department of Education representatives to the effect that:

..Inspectors from the Department had inspected Ling College and had made certain suggestions for widening the course which he understood were being adopted. He considered the same conditions existed in the College ten years ago as at present and accordingly he considered that if the Council were prepared to accept the qualification to-day, they should also be prepared to accept it in the case of those who qualified in the past.³¹

The fact that the Council was swayed by the Department's line of argument meant that decisions pertaining to Ling College, which had been made between 1961 and 1965, were overturned. The reasons behind this about-turn are not clear, but it can only be speculated that they were related to the need for physical education teachers within the system. This diminution of earlier Council decisions was opposed by the A.S.T.I. representatives.

In an unusual submission to the Council on 10, January 1968 the Department of Education sought to have the following motion adopted by the Council: 'That the recognition at present accorded to teachers of Physical Education who hold the Diploma of Ling Physical Training College be extended to include all holders of the diploma'.³² This motion was essentially proposing that retrospection be extended to all graduates of Ling College, regardless of whether they held the Leaving Certificate or equivalent on entry to the College. Once again, a Department of Education representative made a supporting statement on the basis of the growing need for trained teachers of physical education:

..there were three matters to be considered in this (ie the motion) regard:

- 1. The teaching of this subject (physical education) is increasing rapidly and there is an unusual demand for teachers.**
- 2. Regarding the question of ensuring standards, the standards were now ensured. It is now only a question of providing for those who had qualified in the past.**
- 3. On humanitarian grounds the existing teachers who did not know on entry to the course in Ling that they would need to have Leaving Certificate for recognition should be considered. By accepting these people we do not lower the standards we have already set.³³**

Obviously, the demand for female physical education teachers had reached quite a high level by the mid and late sixties. The appeal based on humanitarian grounds further suggested that there were a number of teachers working at reduced rates of pay due to their lack of status.³⁴ The verve of the Department in promoting the registration of physical education teachers, even in such unusual circumstances was countered by strong A.S.T.I. opposition on this occasion. The Union argued that there was a need for real academic qualifications within the teaching profession and that the acceptance of such a motion would have an effect on future salary negotiations. On this occasion the opposition of the A.S.T.I. won through convincingly on a ten-two vote.³⁵

The fact that the matter did not end there emphasised the close attention which was being given to the development of physical education at the time. On July 4, 1969 a special meeting of the Council considered the following draft resolution: 'That all teachers of Physical Education holding the Diploma of the Ling Physical Training College be admitted to the Register'.³⁶ For some reason the climate at the Council had changed considerably and the proposal was accepted. It was argued that only twenty-nine teachers in all were involved and that fourteen of them were working in the country. Furthermore, it was felt that standards had been assured at the College since 1965/1966.³⁷ The Council's deliberations on Ling brought to an end an important decade for physical education which had begun with the acceptance of qualifications from Sion Hill and Loughborough College.

The registration of teachers with qualifications gained in the Great Britain

During the 1960's, the existence of Ling and Sion Hill meant that there was a supply of teachers for the limited market which existed. Apart from the work at the Army School of Physical Culture, however, no provision was made for the training of male physical education teachers. This situation forced the Department of Education to turn its attention to Great Britain.

Policy for the registration of male physical education teachers

Throughout the recent history of physical education in the Republic of Ireland the influence of our nearest neighbour has been very strong. This influence was reflected in the work of the Registration Council. The simultaneous treatment of Sion Hill and Loughborough College by the Council was a precursor to the policy which was to pertain until the early 1970's. This policy followed the line that female teachers of physical education could be prepared in Ireland and that male physical education teachers could be trained in England. The Registration Council dealt with an increasing number of applications from teachers who had gained qualifications within the United Kingdom, including applications from graduates of colleges in Northern Ireland.

Department of Education policy on the matter emerged in 1967 when the issue of recognition for graduates from Strawberry Hill was raised:

The Department's representatives in proposing and seconding the resolution stated that it was essential that a supply of fully qualified teachers be available for teaching physical education in second level schools. At present the only qualification acceptable is the Diploma from Loughborough College (sic).³⁸

Apparently, the Department was beginning to realise the need for physical education teachers and was now actively seeking recognition from graduates from colleges in England. The same meeting of the Council went a step further in solidifying this policy by setting up a sub-committee to investigate a proposal, which had been tabled by representatives of the Department of Education:

..that the Diploma in Physical Education from an approved College of Physical Education in Great Britain obtained after a course of training of not less than three years duration be accepted for the purpose of the Register.³⁹

The sub-group agreed on six colleges in Great Britain from which the qualifications were deemed to be acceptable for registration purposes: Borough Road College; City of Cardiff Training College; Carnegie College of Physical Education, Leeds; St Luke's College, Exeter; St Paul's College, Cheltenham, and Chester College. By 1969 this issue had been analysed further and was brought to a successful conclusion when the Council agreed that:

..qualifications of an appropriate level in Physical Education awarded by Colleges Certified on the British Department of Education and Science list 172 as being specially designed for intending specialist teachers in secondary schools be accepted for Registration purposes.⁴⁰

A facet of this policy was that it recognised that physical education teachers should be specialists, a direction which had important ramifications for events which were to follow.

The position of non-specialist teachers trained in Britain

The issue of specialist physical education teachers arose in 1971 when a sub-committee of the Council was joined by Michael McDonough, John Kane and Roy Groves to consider an application from a candidate who held the Teacher's Certificate from the University of Leeds Institute of Education.⁴¹ The applicant had made the case that the course which he had undertaken was equivalent to the courses available at specialist colleges in England. Mr. Kane and Mr. Groves argued, however, that specialist colleges had additional facilities and that, in the case of the non-specialist colleges, teachers would be trained for work in primary and junior secondary schools. This meant that teachers graduating from such colleges would need to be re-trained if they were to work in second level schools.

This defence of the notion of the specialist physical education teacher came at an important time. N.C.P.E. was under construction and consideration was being given to the nature of the course which would run there. The Registration Council elected to support the case made by the physical educationists and rejected the application of the Leeds University graduate. In so doing, the earlier decision to follow British procedures on the recognition of physical education teachers was re-enforced. Of most significance was that the door was shut on the option of combining physical education with a more general training for the teaching profession.

The issue was to emerge on a number of subsequent occasions when applications were received by the Council relating to the recognition of the qualifications of graduates from non-specialist physical education colleges in Britain. In each case the Department of Education argued against the registration of such teachers. In one case, which came before the Council in May 1972, the applicant had a combination of physical education and health education. Interestingly, a Catholic Church representative argued for acceptance of the application for registration on the basis that physical and health education were related subjects. The Department of Education was concerned about the precedents which might be set:

..the acceptance of this application would create a precedent. Because of the large numbers of Teacher's Certificate courses available in England we could get other applications in Physical Education and other subjects.⁴²

Once again the Department's fear of combining physical education with other subjects was apparent. Despite such opposition, however, the Council accepted the application. The strength of the Department's view on the matter, though, was illustrated when the Minister for Education turned down the application and thus over-ruled the decision of the Council.⁴³

The case of N.C.P.E. and the degree/diploma discrepancy

The question of the registration of the graduates of N.C.P.E. emerged in the early 1970's. The Council had already given consideration to the issue of concurrent teacher training programmes before the College opened. The idea that teachers of specialist subjects could be on the open register was debated and the major elements of the education course in specialist training was outlined:

- 1. Theory of education (philosophy of education)**
- 2. History of education**
- 3. General teaching methods**
- 4. Special teaching methods**
- 5. Curriculum theory**
- 6. Educational psychology**
- 7. Educational sociology**
- 8. A minimum of 60 hours teaching practice under supervision⁴⁴**

This was the template around which the N.C.P.E. education course was built. When the registration of graduates of the College came up for mention finally in January 1975 it had a relatively easy passage. In January of that year, on the first occasion when the issue came before Council, a decision was deferred due to the uncertainty concerning the role of the N.C.E.A., which was to be the validating body for the new college. The Council returned to the issue in June of 1975 and agreed that 'the qualification be accepted as equivalent to a primary university degree and Higher Diploma in Education for the purposes of the Council'.⁴⁵

There were a number of issues arising from this decision. Firstly, the reference to equivalence to a primary degree and a Higher Diploma in Education was to become a bone of contention among graduates of the Limerick college.⁴⁶ The second interesting element of the decision was the strong support given to the registration of physical education teachers by the A.S.T.I. representative, in contrast to the strong opposition which that teacher union had displayed during the 1960's.

The Council was not finished, however, with unusual cases relating to physical education. N.C.P.E. had applied for recognition for a diploma which would be awarded to a small number of students who did not succeed in obtaining the B.A. degree. This situation arose as a result of the disruption of the course during the transition from Strawberry Hill to Limerick. While the Council agreed that a diploma should be awarded, and that recipients of such an award would be eligible for the closed register, the A.S.T.I. was insistent that such a decision should not set a precedent and that the trend towards having graduate teachers of physical education be maintained.⁴⁷

Around the same time the Department of Education had clarified its position in relation to what the position of diploma holders would be in the future:

In reply to a query, the secretary said that holders of three year specialist diplomas in Physical Education, Home Economics etc. specialised in these subjects in their course and did not study other subjects to a high level. These specialist qualifications would not be comparable to a Bachelor of Education graduate taking a semipractical subject and an additional subject to degree level.⁴⁸

This view was a sign of things to come for the graduates of Ling and Sion Hill who were to become increasingly frustrated at the inequity in status which was created for them on the advent of degree holders in physical education. That no

opportunity to address this imbalance from the day that N.C.P.E. opened its doors was a significant oversight. The degree/diploma discrepancy only served to amplify inevitable differences in tradition and orientation within physical education. In 1973 the Department of Education indicated that it is proposed to organise a one-year course for teachers of physical education.⁴⁹ Such a course never took place, however.⁵⁰

The work of the Registration Council also provided corroborative evidence on the decision to reconstitute N.C.P.E. as Thomond College of Education. Conflicting cases have been referred to in chapters three and four. One theory suggests that the Thomond decision was part of a long-term strategy. This study has argued that it was not so much a grand plan as a case of the Department feeling its way to a resolution. The latter seems to have been the case.

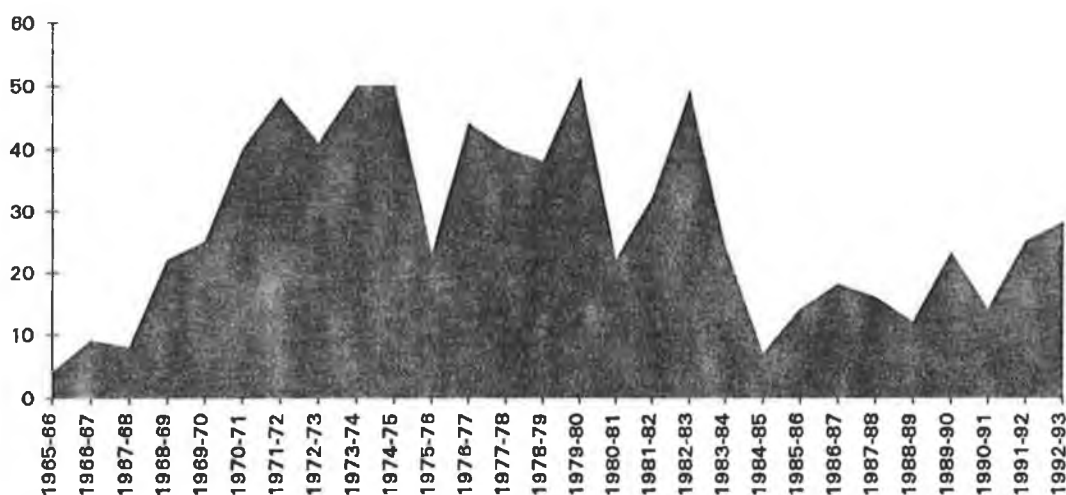
On several occasions in the late 1960's and early 1970's the need for an up-grading of the qualifications of woodwork and metalwork teachers was raised. The minutes of the Registration Council confirm the view that it was 1975 at the earliest before the Department made a decision on the matter. As late as January 1975, the A.S.T.I. representative sought clarification on the position of these subjects saying that 'he understood that there was some proposal to transfer these courses (woodwork and metalwork) to the National Institute of Higher Education in Limerick'. The Department of Education representative replied by saying that 'he understood this question was under review at present'.⁵¹

The registration pattern of physical education teachers

The workings of the Council provide insights into the complex and oftentimes competing interests which shape the curriculum in schools. Further evidence exists in the actual registration statistics for physical education teachers. Like the minutes of the Council these statistics provide one of the most reliable measures of actual policy directions in the promotion of physical education. The process of registration is preceded by a teacher working in a school for a full year and having the necessary qualifications in the relevant subject area(s). While the work of the Council does not deal with vocational schools, an analysis of the pattern of registration provides an important indicator of the trend of employment for physical education teachers.

The Department of Education figures on the registration of secondary school teachers between 1965 and 1993 are summarised in Figure 1. The breakdown of the statistics is presented in Appendix 3.

Figure 1 Registration of physical education teachers 1965-1993



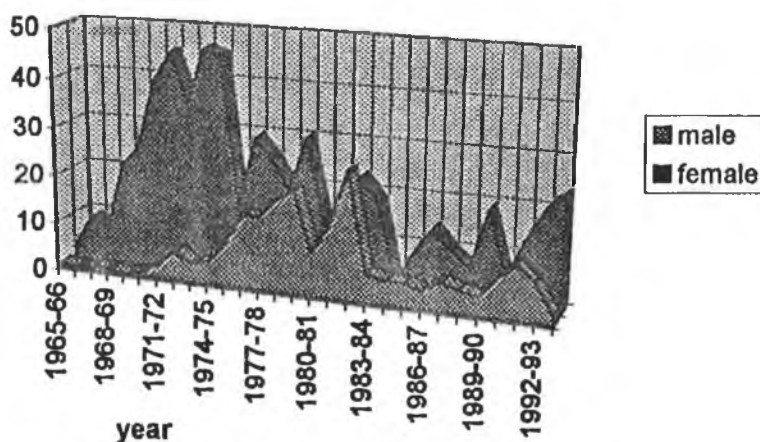
Between the period 1965 and 1993 a total of 777 physical education teachers was registered, with well over half of these being female (564 female teachers compared to 213 male). During that time four major phases of registration can be noted and these will now be outlined.

Phase 1: The Ling and Sion Hill foundation

Spanning from 1965 to 1975, this phase showed the longest and strongest trend of registrations in the twenty-eight years leading up to 1993. It was characterised by a sharp increase in registrations from the year 1968-69 onwards, reaching a peak between 1973 and 1975. A total of 297 registrations occurred between 1965 and 1975, representing an average of almost thirty new teachers for the system each year. Such statistics highlight the solid foundation which was set for physical education in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

There was an upward trend of registrations occurring among females from the mid-1960's, reflecting the strong influence of the Ling and Sion Hill colleges (see Figure 2). This trend was replicated to a lesser degree among males between 1970 and 1975, and was evidence of the Registration Council policy to recognise the qualifications from a number of colleges in Great Britain.

Figure 2
Registration of male and female physical education teachers 1965-1993



A striking feature is the temporal distribution of the registration figures. Between 1968 and 1975, there were 256 registrations among female teachers. The following sixteen years yielded only 255 registrations. This trend draws attention once more to the manner in which existing traditions were cast aside in the wake of the establishment of N.C.P.E. One of the main reasons put forward for closing Ling and Sion Hill, namely that the graduates of these colleges found it difficult to get jobs, is somewhat undermined by these findings.⁵²

It might be argued that the momentum for registration was speeded up significantly following the decision to establish a national college. However, evidence from the minutes of the Registration Council suggest that there were other factors at play. For all but two years, the question of the registration of physical education teachers was on the agenda. On balance, it would seem that N.C.P.E. came in on the crest of a wave rather than originating such a wave, as far as the school system was concerned.

Phase 2: The emergence of graduates from N.C.P.E. (1976-1983)

The establishment of N.C.P.E. was an important watershed in the development of physical education in Ireland. Surprisingly however, following the establishment of the College the pace of registrations slowed somewhat. The number of female registrations showed a significant decline from 1975 onwards, following a period of growth which began in 1968. It may be the case that the graduates from Ling and Sion Hill had already filled many of the positions in girls' secondary schools.

On the other hand, there was a marked increase in the number of male registrations between 1976 and 1984, reflecting the relatively low-level of provision which had been made in boys' secondary schools up to that time. However, the growth in male registrations was never to match the spectacular progress made by females between 1965 and 1975, reflecting a somewhat less enthusiastic response to the introduction of curricular physical education in boys' schools.

Many boys' schools had a strong games tradition which was often impermeable to the subtleties of physical education, a situation which merited careful analysis and planning on the part of N.C.P.E. Nonetheless, a significant number of male graduates gained employment in boys' secondary schools and there was also a demand in the vocational and community/comprehensive sectors. The graduates from this seven-year period comprised the strongest numerical input of male physical education teachers into the system in the history of the State.

Phase 3: The slump of the mid 1980's (1984-89)

Physical education faced into difficult times during the middle and end years of the 1980's. For the first time in seventeen years registrations fell below twenty in one year when, in 1984-85, only seven teachers were registered. A further four years followed which yielded the meagre total of sixty registrations. This trend was the first major sign that the physical education innovation was not only slowing down, but was losing ground. It could be argued, however, that schools had reached saturation point (687 teachers were registered between 1965 and 1989). Such a position is difficult to sustain, however, given the number of schools in the system and the likelihood that many physical education teachers either diversified or taught their second subject to varying degrees.

Phase 4: The recovery of the nineties

In 1987, the Higher Education Authority indicated to Thomond College that physical education student numbers should be reduced. The shortsightedness of this position was soon to become apparent. Awareness of the trend of registrations outlined in Figure 1 might have alerted the policy-makers to the changing profile of the physical education profession and to the obvious need for re-generation. The major bulge in the registration of physical education teachers had occurred in the 1970's, which placed many teachers between their tenth and twentieth year of teaching by 1990.

Most of all, the Department had been made aware on several occasions during the 1980's that there was not a sufficient number of specialist teachers within the system to meet its own stated policy; namely that students should have two hours physical education per week. Intent on forcing the issue of rationalization on the Plassey campus the Department failed to anticipate the inevitable pick-up in the registration of physical education teachers which began, albeit weakly, at the turn of the decade. Ninety teachers were registered in the period from 1989 to 1993, signalling an end to the valley-period of the late 1980's. The overall picture presented by the registration figures suggest that, despite setbacks along the way, major developments have occurred in physical education, particularly since 1968. The registration of 777 specialist teachers signals a major investment on the part of the State in physical education and points to an important educational policy departure.

The Registration Council as a microcosm of the policy process

The work of the Registration Council has been shown to provide valuable insights into some of the forces which were at play in determining the progress of physical education within schools up to 1975. The composition of the Council provided a microcosm within which some of the major influencers of policy could state their views on the development of the subject. Of great interest in the minutes of the Council in the sixties and up to the mid-1970's was the strong and positive orientation which Department of Education representatives took to the promotion of the registration of physical education teachers. This support even extended to circumstances where the Department was forced to stand firm against the strong and concerted opposition of the A.S.T.I.

On other occasions the Department took a close interest in matters of detail relating to physical education teachers. Of note in this regard was the support given to the idea that physical education teachers trained in England must have done so in specialist colleges in order to qualify for registration. That N.C.P.E. was soon to insist on the combination of physical education with one other subject may appear somewhat contradictory to this position and suggests that the College did not live up to the pure ideals which may have been germinating in the Department of Education.

There were times when the Department quite clearly put itself out on a limb on the question of physical education. Its support for retrospection for all graduates of Ling College was a case in point. It remains to be seen if the enthusiasm of the Department came from within or was motivated by external forces. It would appear that in the late 1950's and for much of the 1960's the Department was prompted by representatives of the Catholic Church on the issue of the registration of physical education teachers. It is also apparent that similar denominational forces were at play in the case of Ling College. No doubt, though, the Department was also responding to its own moves towards a more comprehensive curriculum. Considerable attention was also given by the Council to the registration of woodwork, metalwork, music and art teachers.

The work of the Council also reflected the various roles which the key policy players enacted in a broader context. The Catholic Church was strong and vociferous in its views. The minority religious tradition was also steadfastly determined in promoting its interests at Registration Council and such interest also extended to recognising the important role of physical education at school level. The A.S.T.I. adopted conservative and traditional views which sought to block the registration of physical education teachers for a long time. Such opposition was linked to the wider issue of whether the teaching profession should be totally degree qualified or not. This resistance was also reflective of the conservative and academically-oriented values which prevailed within the education system as the 1960's began. Later, the Union supported the case for the registration of the degree-holding physical education graduates.

The decisions of the Council were of the highest import for physical education. The initial move to register physical education teachers was critical to its development in schools as was the later decision to support the notion of specialist training for physical education teachers. On the other hand, the failure to propose any workable formula to overcome the degree/diploma discrepancy following the establishment of N.C.P.E. was a significant oversight.

All in all, however, the record of the Registration Council shows that important progress has been made in the recognition of physical education teachers within the system. Within fifteen years of a contentious and difficult debate over the registration of such teachers, physical educationists became an accepted part of the teaching community. The circumstances which teachers found in the school system will be examined in chapters seven and eight. An analysis of contemporary Department of Education policies will be undertaken in the next chapter.

References

¹Much of the evidence used in drafting the chapter has been obtained from the minutes of the Registration Council itself, particularly for the period 1960 to 1977. Prior to 1960, the work of R. Turbidy, 'The origin and development of the Registration Council for secondary teachers 1914-1960', unpublished master's thesis, University College Dublin, 1984, has been referred to. In addition, the archives of the P.E.A.I. provided valuable supplementary material from 1972 to the present.

²Ibid., p.97

³Ibid.

⁴Registration Council minutes, 1942, p.407. The Council minutes are located in the Department of Education offices in Athlone

⁵As has been seen in chapters 1 and 2 serious consideration was given at that time to the introduction of various European approaches to physical training into Ireland. In addition, the production of the 1938 'Physical education report' by the Department of Education was indicative of the extent to which both the Department of Education and the Department of Defence were giving attention to the area.

⁶*Dail Debates*, 194, 1962, p. 498

⁷This was particularly the case up to the end of the 1950's, based on information supplied by Edith Hudson in an interview

⁸*Dail Debates*, 194, 1962, p.498

⁹*Dail Debates*, 153, 1955, p.524

¹⁰Registration Council minutes, 13 January, 1960. The conditions of access to the minutes preclude the naming of members of the Council in this research

¹¹Department of Education, *Report of the Council of Education on the curriculum of the secondary school*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1962 (Pr. 5996)

¹²Registration Council minutes, 13 January, 1960

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵It is not clear where the emphasis on the Loughborough qualification derived its origin, a subject which merits further research. One possible hypothesis is that, in parallel with the female religious community, the male religious orders were also investigating ways in which qualified physical education teachers could be introduced into schools

¹⁶Turbidy, R., 1984. The origin and development of the Registration Council

Chapter 6

Chapter 6

Department of Education policy following the establishment of N.C.P.E.

Introduction

The recognition of physical education teachers by the Registration Council and the establishment of N.C.P.E. marked the consolidation of Department of Education policy on school physical education in the second level system. The adoption of the physical education syllabus provided formal recognition for physical education on the curriculum of second-level schools.¹ At primary level, *Curraclam na Bunscoile* recognised the need for a comprehensive physical education programme for all class groups.² This chapter charts the policies of the Department of Education on school physical education since the early 1970's, taking the establishment of N.C.P.E. as a starting point. The chapter will deal, in the main, with official documents and formal policy statements. Chapter eight will deal with actual provision in schools.

The 1960's and 1970's were a time when significant changes occurred in the Irish education system. The introduction of free second-level education and an extensive school transport system marked an important point in opening the education system up to a greater percentage of the population. These developments were accompanied by the broadening of school curricula at primary and second-level. In the tertiary sector, the work of the *Commission on Higher Education* led to the establishment of nine Regional Technical Colleges before the end of the 1970's. Two National Institutes for Higher Education were established in Dublin and Limerick, while Thomond College of Education was made a statutory agency by the end of the decade. The H.E.A. was formally established in 1971 and a year later the N.C.E.A. was put in place.³ All of these developments signalled important changes and were part of the broadening of education, a movement which included physical education.

Department of Education policy on school physical education during the 1970's

The main thrust of Department of Education policy on second-level school physical education during the 1970's related to the training of specialist teachers and the provision of facilities and equipment for schools. The work of N.C.P.E. proceeded with the direct support of the Department and 286 students had graduated before the end of the decade. By 1978 there were 416 physical education teachers working in a full-time capacity within the second-level system.⁴

The Department adopted a somewhat active approach in the promotion of physical education at second-level. The physical education inspectorate was expanded to four in the mid-1970's while equipment grants were available for specialist equipment in physical education, a scheme which prevailed until 1986.⁵ During the 1970's extensive work was done on the construction of community and comprehensive school facilities. Such facilities were provided with the support of the World Bank and were designed to service school physical education and sport as well as the recreation needs of the community. During the 1970's the policy in relation to the provision of facilities for secondary schools was linked to the size of the school and the availability of financial resources.⁶ The economic difficulties of the mid-1970's resulted in a change of policy however, as outlined by the Minister for Education:

Because of the over-riding need to reserve available capital resources for the provision of essential classroom and laboratory accommodation in post-primary schools, it has been found necessary to suspend for the present the scheme of grants towards the cost of sports halls or gymnasia in post-primary schools.⁷

This policy relegated physical education teaching space to the 'non-essential' category. It also marked the end of a significant period of building which had been to the benefit of school physical education.⁸ This policy was reversed in 1979 with the re-introduction of a more limited building programme for secondary, vocational, community and comprehensive schools. This scheme once again linked the size of the facility to the number of students in the school, causing protests from the P.E.A.I.⁹

At primary level, the main emphasis during the 1970's was on the provision of equipment grants and the construction of multi-purpose rooms as part of school developments. Some in-service work was done with teachers.¹⁰ However, the

quantity of this work fell short of what was required to help primary school teachers respond to the demands of the wide-ranging physical education element of *Curraclam na Bunscoile*.¹¹ Consequently, primary school teachers felt ill-equipped to deliver a comprehensive programme to their students.¹²

While the Department of Education did not insist that physical education should be compulsory in second-level schools, it adopted a policy which delineated physical education from games. The Department stated that games hours could not be included in the teaching hours of non-specialist physical education teachers. This provision had a particularly negative impact in vocational schools, where student numbers were low and where there were few physical education teachers.¹³ Many vocational schools lost out on both games and physical education as a result.

As will be seen in chapter nine, Department of Education sports policy was based on the dual approach of developing physical education in the school and sport, recreation and health within the community. Such policies occurred in the context of the economic expansion which had prevailed during the 1960's and early 1970's, and culminated in the establishment of a section for youth and sport within the Department. There was also an increasing awareness on the part of the Department of Local Government concerning the need to provide amenities for recreational purposes. The early 1970's saw an extensive programme of provision of swimming pools,¹⁴ while the end of the decade saw an unsuccessful attempt to involve physical education personnel in the development of community employment and fitness schemes.¹⁵ This attempt did not succeed, apparently because 'The enthusiasm for it in some quarters is lukewarm'.¹⁶ The P.E.A.I. was concerned about the effects of the scheme on the role of physical education teachers and stressed the centrality of professional involvement in the proposal.¹⁷

In 1971 a Sports and Recreation Council was established by the Parliamentary Secretary, Michael O'Kennedy. This body, *An Chomhairle Sport agus Caitheamh Aimsire* (COSAC) was seen as 'an earnest example of the Government's concern and intention to pursue a positive policy in sport, physical education and recreation for the benefit of the whole community'. It was envisaged that the graduates of N.C.P.E. would be a 'potent force in the implementation of the recommendations' of the Council.¹⁸

The Council lasted for only three years and had gone out of existence before the first graduates were to emerge from N.C.P.E. *A Policy for Youth and Sport*, which was published in 1977, also suggested strong links between school physical education and sport and recreation in the community.¹⁹ *Cospoir*, the national sports council, was formed in 1978. The new Council made further attempts to build links between physical education and the mainly volunteer work of sport and recreation within the community. These efforts were largely unsuccessful, however.²⁰

So, while the Department of Education operated a dual policy on the development of school physical education and sport and recreation in the community during the 1970's, the main areas in which tangible progress were made related to the provisions for second-level school physical education. In particular, the increasing number of schools offering physical education and employing specialist teachers was evidence of such advances. Following the initial move away from drill-related activity, primary school physical education had advanced little during the decade, mainly due to the pre-and in-service issues surrounding the teaching of physical education at that level.

The move towards a curriculum framework

Following the extensive moves towards the comprehensivisation of education in the 1960's and 1970's, the 1980's saw the beginning of moves towards the establishment of legislative and curricular frameworks in education. The Thomond College of Education Act (1980)²¹ established the College on a legal basis and in the same year the *White Paper on Educational Development* was published.²² This paper was the beginning of a process of educational debate which was to continue right throughout the 1980's and into the 1990's.

The *White Paper on Educational Development*, sought to provide guidelines for the development of education 'over the immediate period ahead' and a series of measures were outlined for implementation within a five-to-ten year period.²³ These measures included making provision for increased student numbers, the expansion of the teaching force at primary and second-level, the replacement and expansion of facilities and the establishment of a curriculum council. Other areas dealt with included the arts, administration of primary, second-level and tertiary systems, in-service education, adult and community education, industrial relations and sport and recreation. The implementation of proposals was tempered by reference to the high levels of expenditure which already prevailed in education:

Between 1970 and 1979 expenditure on education increased by 100 per cent in real terms: the increase in money terms was, of course, much greater - from £78 million in 1970 to £443 million in 1979. One measure of the burden represented by State expenditure on education is that at present such expenditure is the equivalent of £9 per week per head of the working population. The likely financing problem which the educational services as at present constituted will pose for public funds in the future for demographic and other reasons cannot be ignored and must be taken into account in considering the pace at which proposals for further development may be pursued.²⁴

This was a significant contextual statement by the Minister of the day. Increasing student numbers and a depressed economic climate were to become strong constraining factors in the early 1980's, making the implementation of progressive policies difficult.

School physical education was identified in the 1980 document as requiring a new and increased emphasis in both primary and second-level. At primary level, 'disappointingly uneven' progress had been noted in the implementation of the New Curriculum in both music and physical education.²⁵ It was recommended that the relevant professional bodies should be consulted with a view to ensuring that an appropriate balance be attained in the delivery of these subjects. However, there is no evidence that such consultation took place with the P.E.A.I. In fact, it appears that the inspectorate took more control of in-service education for primary teachers as the 1980's began.²⁶

At both primary and second-level, an expansion of the physical education curriculum was envisaged 'to allow for the greatest diversity' while the number and nature of in-service courses was to be augmented.²⁷ These developments were to occur as part of a five-year programme which was to be implemented in the following areas:

- 1. schools**
- 2. school and community co-operation in the sharing of facilities**
- 3. youth and sports organisations**
- 4. the provision of facilities on a national basis**
- 5. the provision of outdoor pursuits centres**
- 6. the improvement of coaching and training facilities**
- 7. intensification of the programme of publicity and promotion of sport and recreation²⁸**

This programme was part of the overall goal of establishing 'positive attitudes towards sport and physical recreation and to develop habits of regular and active participation' in the context of an 'urgent need to cater in the widest sense for recreational outlets so that leisure activities for all will be channelled into wholesome and positive outlets'.²⁹ In addition to these measures, a potential role for Thomond College in the provision of facilities for 'exceptional sportsmen' (sic) was outlined.³⁰

While there were recommendations in the document on the development of school physical education, sport and recreation there was little attention given to how this could occur. No reference was made to the need for additional teachers of physical education at second-level, while at the same time the need for 'an accelerated programme for the provision of specialist teachers, particularly Woodwork and Metalwork teachers' was identified.³¹ Similarly, the requirements for physical education did not figure at all in the building projections for the decade ahead.

One of the key issues which was to emerge from the 1980 White Paper was the need to establish some form of curriculum council. The Curriculum and Examinations Board (C.E.B.) was established in January 1984 with the task 'of reviewing curricula in both primary and post primary education and of examining the need for reform in examinations and assessment procedures'.³² This body soon provided significant hope for physical educationists by recommending that the subject become a core element of the proposed new Junior Cycle.³³ This was welcomed unreservedly by the P.E.A.I.³⁴

There was a concerted series of responses from physical education interests to the new curriculum initiative. The re-juvenated professional association corresponded regularly with the C.E.B. and was supportive of proposals on senior cycle,³⁵ assessment and certification and the arts in education.³⁶ The Board also received support for its definition of education which recognised the importance of physical education as part of the wider education process.³⁷ The Department of Education inspectorate, in a submission to the curriculum body, stated that 'physical education appears to suffer because of the perceived importance of structured examinations'. The document went on to say that 'when the subject was introduced officially a programme of teacher preparation was established but there was no parallel support within the educational system of primary and post-primary schools' (emphasis added).³⁸

This was an important analysis on the part of the Department's own inspectors and highlighted an imbalance in policy on school physical education. The inspectors also referred to the under-developed nature of primary school physical education and proposed that children at primary level should have daily physical education.³⁹ A response was also made to the C.E.B. by the physical education department at Thomond College. This document took issue with the instrumental and vocationally-oriented view which had been adopted by the Council.⁴⁰

The P.E.A.I. welcomed the core status which was intimated for physical education and went on to make a series of recommendations which it regarded as being practical, cost effective and applicable. These included a minimum time allocation for physical education of three periods per week, the certification of physical education at Leaving Certificate level and 'a full scale revision and improvement of physical education at primary school level'.⁴¹ The Association further proposed a phased programme for the employment of physical education teachers at second-level which would see every school having at least one physical education teacher by 1995. In concluding its submission, the P.E.A.I. requested that it should have a 'central role in curriculum development and change in the area of physical education'.⁴² This position signalled the growing professional confidence of physical education teachers in their ability to identify the elements which should make up school physical education in Ireland.

Parallel to the formation of the C.E.B., the Government published the *Programme for Action in Education 1984-87*.⁴³ This document was formulated following consultation with relevant parties and it provided the opportunity for further debate among educational interests. Once again, the main provisions of the document were contingent upon overall resources with the suggestion that 'the harsh reality of the present Exchequer difficulties must be faced'.⁴⁴ The Programme re-iterated the aim of education which had been provided by the C.E.B, stating that there 'should be a development of all the individual's qualities - spiritual, moral, intellectual, aesthetic and physical'.⁴⁵ This broadening view of education also emphasised the rights of individuals to fulfil their potential and the importance of responding to modern developments and increased leisure time.

The strengthening of the position of physical education in primary schools was regarded as 'highly desirable' and special attention was proposed for the physical education element of pre-service teacher training. At second-level, however, the proposal that 'the need to maintain an adequate level of P.E. in the schools should be borne in mind in deciding the utilisation of teacher resources at school level' was unlikely to galvanise school principals to include the recommended two hours per week for the subject.⁴⁶ On the contrary, the document pointed to the need for an expanding range of initiatives in schools. These included new technologies, languages, computers, civics and religious education. The resultant curriculum squeeze made it even more difficult for physical education to secure its place.

The lack of forcefulness on school physical education in the *Programme for Action in Education 1984-1987* contributed to the absence of progress in policy terms during the 1980's. This situation was compounded when the decision was taken to re-constitute the C.E.B. as the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (N.C.C.A.) in 1987. As a consequence, the developments which had been promised in 1984, and which were enthusiastically supported by the P.E.A.I., did not come to pass.

The role of the professional association in influencing policy

The policies of the Department of Education in the area of physical education and sport had been followed closely by the P.E.A.I.. Founded in 1968, the Association is the representative body which provides a voice for the many professional physical educators working in the system. Interaction between the Association and the Department of Education has provided a good barometer of the way in which policy has been viewed by the profession. A pre-dominant view within the Association has been that physical education at second-level has been restricted by the absence of a clear commitment from the Department of Education. The failure to insist on compulsory physical education has left the decision-making processes to individual schools. Consequently, many of the submissions of the P.E.A.I. to the Department have been concerned with fundamental issues of provision. These include time allocation, facilities and the employment of an adequate quota of specialist personnel.

P.E.A.I. policy on issues relating to school physical education

O'Donoghue noted that during the late 1970's there had been considerable discussion within the Association concerning the conditions under which physical education classes were being delivered.⁴⁷ Although no formal position was taken by the Association at the time, the issue emerged forcefully in the mid-1980's. A delegation from the P.E.A.I. met with Department of Education officials and made an extensive submission covering eleven key issues. This submission crystallised the problems which had gone before:

1. **Physical education syllabus**
2. **Implications of the syllabus in relation to staffing, facilities and time**
3. **Building policy and physical education**
4. **Transition year and Vocational preparation and training programmes**
5. **Grant system**
6. **Degree and diploma discrepancies**
7. **Diversification within physical education**
8. **Graduate unemployment in physical education**
9. **Free book scheme**
10. **In-service education**
11. **Primary school physical education⁴⁸**

The submission was critical of the approach which the Department had taken in relation to physical education in general during the 1980's and to the P.E.A.I. in particular:

Physical education as a subject has not been accorded appropriate recognition within the education system, bearing in mind the advent of the technological society. The Minister has recently reminded us of the need to turn our attention to the requirements of such a society.

Recent Department of Education documents have presented a view of physical education which neither reflects the views of practising professionals nor recognises the growing body of research pertaining to the function, teaching and contribution of physical education to modern society (e.g. Programme for Action in Education, 1984-87; Progress Report on Programme for Action; Physical Education Syllabus). It is suggested that greater consultation with the P.E.A.I. might alleviate some of these difficulties in the future. The P.E.A.I. is ready and willing to act in such a consultative role.

The lengths to which the Association had to go to secure this meeting ought to be noted.⁴⁹

The tone of the introductory section of the submission was indicative of a frosty atmosphere between the Association and the Department. This was precipitated by the perceived lack of consultation on the part of the Department of Education with the professional body. The Department could have argued, however, that in the absence of a strong Association in the early 1980's it was difficult to engage in any meaningful consultative process.

The P.E.A.I. welcomed the introduction of a comprehensive syllabus for physical education in 1984, but believed that the draft syllabus would be amended following further consultation. This had not happened and it was claimed that physical education teachers were resentful of having to implement a syllabus which was incomplete and which was being imposed upon them.⁵⁰ In considering the implications of the syllabus, the P.E.A.I. was hard-hitting on the inadequate provision which was made for implementation:

The syllabus has made some very clear stipulations with respect to the conditions which need to exist if programmes are to be carried out. These include the presence of adequate facilities, increased time allocation and the employment of at least one physical educationist in every school We have been lead to believe that the Minister has signed this document. Will these conditions now be provided? If they are not, there must at least be the suggestion that the Minister has been a little dishonest in signing what would become little more than a 'PR' document.⁵¹

While this may have been the situation as the Association saw it, such a forceful assertion was unlikely to win favour with the Department of Education officials. The P.E.A.I. went on to re-iterate many of the points which it had made earlier to the C.E.B. The Association was critical of the Department policy on capital expenditure claiming that such policy suffered from two main 'ailments' - there was very little expenditure and the policy of funding under-sized halls was not cost effective. It was further suggested that the funding of facilities was based on unknown criteria. The following examples were given:

**Bandon Vocational School 500 pupils - no hall
Baldoyle Community School 800 pupils - no hall
as opposed to:
Carrigaline Community School 2 halls within half a mile
Macroom Vocational School 200 pupils - new hall⁵²**

A centralised survey and inter-school use of facilities was suggested. The P.E.A.I. offered to discuss cost-effective and suitable physical education facilities with the Department. The Association also took up the question of the perceived discrimination against physical education teachers in three areas relating to status and remuneration:

At present p.e. teachers appear to be discriminated against on three levels:

- a) Diploma holders**
- b) Degree holders**
- c) Unclassified masters degree holders⁵³**

In the case of diploma holders, the status of Ling and Sion Hill graduates was raised, whereby no provision was made to up-grade the qualifications of the graduates from those colleges. In the case of degree holders the fact that physical education teachers did not obtain a higher diploma allowance was a continued source of annoyance for the Association. Neither of these issues had been pursued with any great vigour by the teacher unions up to that time. Diversification within physical education was also raised at the meeting. It was argued that the changing age-structure of the population demanded that some re-training of physical education teachers be undertaken, with particular reference to working with adult populations. The need for diversification was also linked to the fact that, according to the P.E.A.I., some graduates were finding it difficult to get jobs. Three solutions were proposed to solve the problem of graduate unemployment:

- 1. Diversification in possible qualifications at Thomond College**
- 2. Phased programme of employment of physical education teachers; presently understaffed to the tune of 800 teachers**
- 3. Development of in-service courses for practising p.e. teachers in the areas of continuing physical education and leisure. Plant and personnel will need to be adaptable as the population structure changes.⁵⁴**

Other issues raised by the Association at the meeting with the Department were the extension of the Free Book Scheme to include physical education gear and the low level of provision which was being made for in-service education. The final item raised was that of primary school physical education and once again the high level of frustration felt by physical educationalists was articulated:

Physical education teachers feel most strongly that the benefits accruing from physical education are seriously restricted by the inadequacies of the primary school structure. By the age of twelve many pupils have built up inhibitions to physical activity which are impossible to surmount in one period a week in second level schools.

Recommended:

- 1. That the Department of Education seek to increase the time allocated to the training of primary school teachers in physical education**
- 2. That the Department of education consider the limited introduction of specialist physical education teachers into primary schools to act as innovators, educators and exemplars.⁵⁵**

The 1986 P.E.A.I. submission to the Department of Education pin-pointed the areas that were in need of development. Many of the issues which were highlighted have been the focus of considerable attention since that time. However, in the immediate aftermath of the meeting, the P.E.A.I. became frustrated at the lack of a structured response to their submission and to the meeting.

Physical education links with Cospoir and the Minister for Sport

Despite this, the P.E.A.I. had already decided to widen its campaign for the development of school physical education. Eleven days after the meeting with Department officials, representatives of the Association made a presentation to the full council of Cospoir. The P.E.A.I. outlined seven main areas of concern:

- 1. Promotion of mass participation in physical culture, incorporating the notions of Width, Equality and Excellence**
- 2. Recognition of the role of physical education in promoting mass participation in physical culture**
- 3. Fragmentation of organisation, effort, focus and expertise within physical culture**
- 4. Physical education and the preparation of professionals to meet the needs of the future**
- 5. Certification of courses and the maintenance (sic) of acceptable standards**
- 6. Maximum use of existing facilities coupled with rational planning of new facilities**
- 7. Promotion of relevant research in the area of physical culture⁵⁶**

The newly appointed Minister of State at the Department of Education soon took a strong interest in the work of the P.E.A.I. Steady progress was made from 1987 onwards which resulted in the Association making extensive submissions to the Minister. Substantial funding for the work of the P.E.A.I. followed. Initiatives such as the National Certificate in Exercise and Fitness (N.C.E.F.)⁵⁷, the production of an insurance booklet⁵⁸ and the completion of the research study *Girls and Boys Come Out to Play*⁵⁹ all owed their origin to this new level of co-operation. In addition, the Sports Section of the Department of Education agreed to fund a Development Officer for the Association.⁶⁰

Despite these positive moves, the vexed questions relating to the situation in schools remained. They reached a peak in 1988 when the President of the P.E.A.I. voiced concern at the composition of the Working Party on physical education which had been put in place by the N.C.C.A. The Irish Press reported on December 6 1988 that:

P.E.A.I. has accused the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment of appointing 'an exclusive non-representative, non-specialist working party on physical education'.

The President has told the Council that his executive committee 'could not even countenance corresponding with or contributing to a group whose composition was a direct affront to the positive and supportive input which we have adopted since the formation of the Curriculum and Examinations Board'.

The President states in a letter to the Council's Chief Executive, that the PEAI 'would be happy' to continue 'our previously positive' role in curriculum re-appraisal, should the working party be re-formulated.⁶¹

The incident drew a quick response from the Minister. He telephoned the P.E.A.I., annoyed at the fact that the *Irish Press* article had pointed to the low levels of time allocated to physical education in schools. This drew a further response from the Association which assured the Minister that his interest in the work of the P.E.A.I. had been 'second to none' and a source of 'inspiration' and that it had not been the intention of the P.E.A.I. to be critical in any way of his work.⁶²

The letter further pointed out that the meeting of February 1986 had taken place with Department officials and that a number of key events had occurred since 1984 which had contributed to the deteriorating position of physical education. These issues are reproduced in full here as they summarised the position which had existed since the 1970's and which prevailed in the 1980's:

1. **The amount of time devoted to the teaching of physical education has been significantly curtailed due to cutbacks in the numbers of teachers in schools. Hence, physical education teachers are reaching less physical education due to the pressure imposed on the school by these cutbacks.....**
2. **A recent study carried out at I.C.H.P.E.R. Europe indicates that Ireland has the lowest time allocation for physical education in Europe.**
3. **Full time physical education teachers leaving teaching or going on career breaks are only being partially replaced in many instances and not at all in some others.**
4. **The in-take of students in physical education to Thomond College of Education has been reduced by 60 per cent and to 20 students per year. In four years time this will precipitate an even further reduction in the time allotted to physical education.**
5. **The new Department of education grant scheme for schools has given physical education a ZERO rating.**
6. **Because physical education teachers are a relatively new phenomenon, many of them are at or near the bottom of school staff lists. This has made them more vulnerable in relation to redeployment and consequently P.E. programmes have been severely hit in some instances.**
7. **There are fewer hours devoted to P.E. in primary teaching training colleges than ever before.**
8. **The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment views physical education as being sufficiently trivial to appoint an exclusive, non-specialist group to make recommendations which will be of fundamental importance to the future of the subject. This situation would be unacceptable in more traditional subjects.⁶³**

This letter, combined with the 1986 submission to the Department of Education, focused attention on the implementation difficulties which were facing physical education. The policies of the Department of Education had brought the subject so far, but there was clear dissatisfaction among professionals concerning the actual situation in schools.

The re-establishment of the N.C.C.A. working party on physical education

The Minister, though his remit within the broader Department was somewhat limited, was quick to recognise the significance of the N.C.C.A. Working Party issue. Following his intervention the Working Party was significantly expanded and the P.E.A.I. succeeded in having four of its members appointed in various capacities. The Department, the N.C.C.A., unions and management groups were all involved in the re-launched process. The report of the Working Party was aptly titled *Physical education: at a critical cross-roads* and it took a thorough and direct look at the position of physical education within the system. It stated that 'Almost universally, however, time, personnel and facility allocations have not been sufficient to allow the State's objectives in physical education to be realised'.⁶⁴

At the same time the Report insisted that physical education was a fundamental part of any balanced education for living. A cogent rationale for the inclusion of physical education on the curriculum was made with a notable shift towards the concerns of the late twentieth century. Educational aims, health awareness, leisure, lifestyle and economic considerations were all cited as central ingredients in the rationale for the inclusion of physical education on the curriculum. The Report emphasised that:

While in the past stress has rightly been laid on the educational factors underpinning a rationale for physical education in the curriculum, this report stresses the enormous contribution which physical education can make to personal, social and economic well-being as we enter the twenty-first century.⁶⁵

A number of key issues were identified including the low level of time allocated to the subject; the effect of redeployment on physical education; the desirability of assessing and certifying students in physical education; the variable level of physical education at primary schools; the relationship between physical education as a timetabled subject and co-curricular activities and the shortage in the supply of qualified teachers to deliver physical education in the context of the Junior Certificate programme.⁶⁶

It was no surprise that, in 1993, when the P.E.A.I. came to formulate its response to the Green Paper in education that the recommendations of the N.C.C.A. report were extensively alluded to, pointing out that 'physical educators have consistently called for the implementation of these recommendations'.⁶⁷ For this reason, the recommendations are outlined here in full:

- 1. The Working Party recommends that physical education be an integral part of the core curriculum.**
- 2. As a matter of urgency, provision for physical education needs to be raised to an acceptable threshold in the following areas:
time allocation
teacher allocation
facilities (indoor and outdoor)
equipment and class material**
- 3. The minimum time allocation for physical education at Junior Certificate should be 200 hours over 3 years. A weekly allocation of 2 forty minute periods should be an absolute minimum. Over and above this provision schools should be afforded the flexibility to make up the balance of the time.**
- 4. Rationalisation and redeployment schemes must take into consideration the unique position of physical education within the curriculum.**
- 5. A developmental strategy for physical education should be undertaken in the context of the national curriculum framework to be drawn up by the Council, taking due regard of the needs of other curricular areas, the overall time available in the school week and school year and other such issues which may arise.**
- 6. A steering Committee should be established by the N.C.C.A. to draw up and oversee the developmental strategy for physical education at primary and post primary levels in the context of this report. This committee should include representation from the Department of Education, Teachers' Unions, Management Bodies, P.E.A.I., Teacher Education, Cospoir, Health Promotion unit and other bodies as necessary.**

7. **The terms of reference for this committee should be as follows:**

General

***to devise and oversee a developmental strategy for physical education at primary and post-primary levels in the context of current and projected pupil numbers, school size and physical education teacher supply and deployment;**

***to advise on how current facilities in school and in the community can best be deployed, and to identify current deficits**

***to liaise with the Department of Education and with teacher training authorities in planning suitable pre-service and in-service courses so as to ensure an adequate supply of teachers qualified to teach the physical education programme**

Specific

***to review and revise the syllabus and provide teacher notes as required;**

***to specify a minimum common course at junior and senior cycles;**

***to define the relationship between physical education and extra-curricular activity;**

***to devise modes and techniques of assessment (reference to be made to the ASSIST project and its evaluation);**

***to investigate and advise Council on issues of certification.⁶⁸**

These recommendations arose from the first major coming together of all interested parties in charting the way forward for physical education. For the first time in twenty years a firm appraisal of the policies of the Department of Education in the development of physical education had been carried out at an official and public level. However, it seems that the N.C.C.A. viewed the implementation of the recommendations as being a target for the end of the decade, due to the resource implications of what was proposed.⁶⁹ In the short term it was decided to establish a Course Committee for physical education at second-level and two committees to deal with the issue at primary level.

The work of the second-level committee was based on the position of the N.C.C.A. as stated in *Curriculum and assessment policy towards a new century*.⁷⁰ This document highlighted the need to include physical education at both stages of the second-level cycle. The Course Committee was set up in 1994 to:

advise the N.C.C.A. on the structure, format and content of a syllabus or syllabuses for Physical Education at post-primary level and, also, on issues related to the assessment and certification of pupil progress and achievement in relation to such a syllabus or syllabuses.⁷¹

Once again the Committee had strong teacher representation including the part-time secondment of a former president of the P.E.A.I., as education officer. In setting about its work the Committee referred to the need to implement the time recommendations of the earlier Working party and stated that 'an opportunity now presents itself to improve beyond recognition the physical education provision for future generations of Irish children. This opportunity must be seized without hesitation'.⁷²

A key aspect of the work of the Committee, which is on-going, has been the re-definition of the syllabus and a practical and theoretical dimension has been proposed. The practical dimension includes aquatics, adventure, aesthetic/artistic, games/athletics and kinaesthetic activities. These areas are underpinned by scientific, artistic/aesthetic and humanities theoretical perspectives. The Committee further considered that physical education should become a core subject at all levels in the post-primary sector. On the issue of certification and examination four options have been proposed:

- Physical education might:**
- a. **form a compulsory part of the certification process at Junior Certificate for all pupils.**
 - b. **be an optional part of the certification process at Junior Certificate.**
 - c. **comprise an optional component of the certification process at Leaving Certificate level in addition to the core physical education programme at senior cycle.**
 - d. **continue its present status as a non-certifiable subject at all levels.**⁷³

The desirability of assessment has been a subject of debate within the profession for a number of years. According to the P.E.A.I., certification should be available to students in second-level, a position which has only recently been confirmed,

although the nature of the assessment associated with such certification remains a point of contention.⁷⁴ It appears that in the light of the on-going work of the Course Committee of the N.C.C.A. the issue of certification and assessment will remain on the agenda. The Course Committee has suggested that a pilot project be initiated to assist in the development and implementation of a new syllabus in physical education. Assessment and certification issues are to be examined as part of this process.⁷⁵

The N.C.C.A. has also proceeded with the inclusion of a leisure and recreation component as part of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme, although the relationship between this initiative and the work of the Course Committee is unclear.⁷⁶ Similarly, modules in sport and recreation have been developed as part of the work of the National Council for Vocational Awards (N.C.V.A.) reflecting the increasing importance of physical culture in the vocational education of post-leaving certificate students.⁷⁷

All of these developments indicate a gradual move towards the consolidation of school physical education within the overall curricular framework. The physical education profession has become increasingly involved in the initiation and implementation of key developments, while at the same time the core issues relating to resources and delivery remain problematic. The move towards a legislative framework has also provided the opportunity to re-state the case of physical education in the context of the formulation of *Education for a changing world*⁷⁸ and *Charting our education future*⁷⁹, which will be returned to later.

Developments in policy on primary school physical education

At primary level, physical education continued to receive policy attention during the 1980's and 1990's, though there was little progress in implementation. The *Primary education review body* gave specific attention to the need for specialist teachers and noted that 'Individual teachers, of course, will have particular aptitudes and expertise in the teaching of certain subjects while feeling less confident in others. Music, art and crafts and physical education are examples of such subjects which can cause problems for some teachers'. Ten years after the *White paper on educational development* the issue of teacher confidence had raised its head again.⁸⁰

The Review body addressed the matter and made a very clear statement of policy ruling out the employment of specialist teachers at primary level:

We have considered the appointment of subject specialist teachers on a part-time or whole-time basis for the teaching of particular subjects. Apart from the uncertainty of their value in the context of an integrated curriculum, the financial commitment involved in the employment of a range of subject specialist teachers would not alone be prohibitive but could not be justified in relation to the many other demands for additional expenditure on the primary system.⁸¹

The Review body recommended instead 'that the particular aptitudes of the ordinary class teachers be developed through well-organised and systematic in-service training' which would be supported by additional Department of Education inspectors and advisory teachers from the second-level system.⁸² It was further suggested that 'when teachers are being appointed cognisance be taken of the necessity to select teachers with skills related to areas of need in the school'.⁸³ The *Review body on the primary curriculum* also addressed this issue and proposed enhanced pre-service and in-service training for teachers.⁸⁴

This overall policy position was welcomed by the P.E.A.I. although the professional association continued to seek 'the phased introduction, on a regional basis, of specialist teachers into the primary system'.⁸⁵ Such a view appeared to confuse the roles which physical educationists could play as either teachers or advisors within the primary system. It also disregarded the resource implications which had been forcefully pointed out by the Review body.

Following the work of the *Review body on the primary curriculum*, two curriculum committees were established in physical and health education in 1992 and 1993. The P.E.A.I. was not included in the membership of these committees, despite making representations to the Minister for Education. The position adopted by the Minister was to the effect that the committees had been established by the N.C.C.A. and 'it would not be appropriate for the Minister to override the Council's decision'.⁸⁶ It was further indicated that the Department of Education intended to include one of its physical education inspectors on the physical education sub-committee. The position of the Department and the N.C.C.A. went against the grain of the recommendations which had previously been made to the effect that any solution to the primary school physical education issue would have to include structured links with specialists and schools at second-level.

The work of these committees is on-going and the production of detailed objectives and syllabi is under consideration.⁸⁷ The question of in-service training for primary school teachers in physical education is also receiving attention, with concerted action on this matter still to occur some sixteen years after the problem had been identified in the *White paper on educational development*.⁸⁸

The move towards a legislative framework

The formulation of legislation for education had been signalled at various stages through the 1980's and the momentum in this direction quickened in the early 1990's. The publication of a Green paper, *Education for a changing world*,⁸⁹ saw this process begin in earnest with positive signs for school physical education. In the context of a document which identified six key aims for education, physical education was regarded as an important element in the broadening of education at both primary and post-primary levels.

The Green paper: Education for a changing world

While the aims of the 1992 Green paper were not explicit about the role of physical education the subject was regarded as being central to developments right throughout the school cycle:

The curriculum includes a range of activities to develop students' potential and to promote their moral and spiritual values. The aim is to provide a broad general education up to the end of the senior cycle, including the areas of language, mathematics, science and technology, the human environment, the arts, physical education, and political and social awareness.⁹⁰

In pursuing this goal the document proposed a 'new momentum' in physical education at primary level which was to be linked to diet, hygiene and health related fitness. Research which would identify the specific needs of Irish schoolchildren was suggested. In addition, a balanced programme involving motor skills and aerobic fitness was proposed with a daily period of thirty minutes to be given over to these activities. The development of a suitable syllabus which could be implemented with limited facilities was also proposed and the assistance of specialist physical education teachers was to be made available to primary teachers. The N.C.C.A., inspectors in physical education and the physical education staff in the University of Limerick were identified as the agencies to develop and oversee the implementation of these developments.⁹¹

Continuity between the physical education programme at primary and post-primary level was seen as being important, with an emphasis on fitness as a foundation to all sporting activities. Notably, physical education was not identified as a core subject at second-level. The Green paper treated physical education and religious education together, reflecting the structure of Article 42 of the Constitution:

Religious education should form part of the available programme for all students, with due regard to the constitutional rights of parents related to the participation of their children. Physical education should also form part of the curriculum and will receive increased emphasis as a continuation of initiatives at the primary level, and in the particular context of fostering the 'Health Promoting School'.⁹²

The failure to confer the status of 'core' subject was a disappointment to the P.E.A.I.⁹³ Indications were given by the Secretary of the Department of Education, at a public meeting in Athlone in 1993, that this omission may have been related to the provisions of Article 42 of the Constitution as well as to the resource implications of having physical education available to all students within the second-level system.⁹⁴

The Green paper stressed the role of schools in the promotion of health and well-being. The 'health promoting school' was seen as having three important features: a favourable school climate, a willingness to involve and consult and a willingness to intervene positively to promote the physical and mental welfare of students. This latter component included 'A Physical Education programme, beginning at the early stages of primary education, that would promote the physical well-being of all students in a non-competitive way and linked, where appropriate, to education on hygiene and diet'.⁹⁵ This approach was welcomed by the P.E.A.I., with the need to distinguish between health education and physical education highlighted by the professional association.⁹⁶

The Green paper continued the policy of linking the goals of the school physical education programme to the development of participation and fitness levels among the adult population. It was also suggested that a 'concerted effort' to be made 'to improve the provision for extra-curricular sport at school level through greater integration of school and community-based programmes'. In addition, it was suggested that high levels of coaching would be required for schools games programmes which, it was stated, were 'normally developed separately from the physical education programme'.⁹⁷

While the recommendations of the Green paper did not meet all of the aspirations of the physical education profession, the strong affirmation of the subject at both primary and second-level provided an important boost in policy terms. In addition, *Education for a changing world* highlighted the challenges which faced physical education both inside and outside the school. Within the school, the relationship of the physical education programme to a health promoting ethos would have to be teased out as would the linkages between the physical education programme and co-curricular activities. Contacts with outside agencies and individuals would also have to be considered, with physical educationists increasingly having to deal with personnel who had gained qualifications in specialist areas such as coaching, exercise and fitness and outdoor education.

Consultation and the National education convention

These and other challenges were evident also following the publication of the White paper on education *Charting our education future*.⁹⁸ This document was published after a consultation period of three years, which included the *National education convention* in 1993. The Convention had been a major forum involving key educational interest groups which:

set out to encourage participants to clarify viewpoints; to question, probe and analyse varying perspectives; to foster multi-lateral dialogue and improve mutual understanding between sectoral interests; to explore possibilities of new ways of doing things and to identify areas of actual or potential agreement between different interest groups.⁹⁹

This brief was reflective of the widening expectations which have come to be associated with the Irish education system in terms of values, content and structure. The Convention, which was strongly focused on issues relating to the control of education, did not include a submission concerning the role of physical education within schools and the P.E.A.I. was not formally invited to attend the convention. This was related to the fact that 'Curriculum, though a crucial element of the educational system, was not a major discussion issue at the convention'¹⁰⁰ and because the on-going work of the N.C.C.A. was seen to be dealing with many curricular issues'.

Notably, the Report of the Convention found that there was no real dissent from the goals of the Green paper as they related to primary school physical education and it was suggested that 'consideration should be given to the development of specialisms among staff through inservice education, the use of peripatetic

teachers, and the use of facilities in post-primary schools and community resources'.¹⁰¹ The case for physical education within the second-level programme was recognised but along with other areas including art, health education and social and political studies the Report concluded that 'problems exist as to how satisfactory provision is to be made'.¹⁰² This was a succinct summary of the policy sticking-point which had been reached in physical education.

The White paper: Charting our education future

The eventual publication of the White paper reflected the increasing pluralism within Irish society and the scale of the demands which were now placed on the education system.¹⁰³ It set out 'a framework for the development of education into the next century' which would have to be supported by 'carefully planned implementation strategies'.¹⁰⁴ The significance of education in contributing to economic prosperity was highlighted and the role of the State in promoting and protecting individual rights in the context of the common good and the Constitution was emphasised. Clear markers of progress were provided through spending, teacher-pupil ratios and participation figures which portrayed significant advances since 1965. These data also highlighted a relatively underdeveloped position in comparison with many other European countries at primary and post-primary levels.¹⁰⁵

Once again, the position of physical education was referred to within the context of the health promoting school. This concept was to include 'a physical education programme, beginning at the early stages of primary education, which will promote the physical well-being of all students and which will be linked to education on hygiene and diet'.¹⁰⁶ At primary level the health promoting school was seen as implementing 'a broadly based programme of physical and health education which will promote the well-being of its students and incorporate a new emphasis on diet, hygiene, safety, and relationships and sexuality education'.¹⁰⁷ At second-level, physical education was included in the list of subjects which schools would be expected to provide, but was excluded from the core at Junior cycle.

This core was defined as including 'Irish, English, Mathematics, a science or a technological subject, and at least three further subjects from a wide range of full courses and short courses. All students should have access to the study of a modern European language and to a recognised full course in at least one creative or performing art'.¹⁰⁸ Taking into account the requirements relating to languages and the arts, there was little room left for physical education to be included in the

core. In addition, since the publication of the White paper it seems that two additional subjects are to be added to the core: civic, social and political studies and social, personal and health education.¹⁰⁹

Sport was provided with a separate chapter within *Charting our education future*. This chapter echoed previous policy concerns relating to school and community linkages with the assertion that 'there is a close relationship between the physical education programme in schools and sports in the community'.¹¹⁰ Particular mention was made of the role of sport and leisure in the context of the increasingly important transition year programmes.¹¹¹ It was further suggested that sports policy should 'build upon positive attitudes to physical well-being cultivated in formal schooling', further highlighting the dual school-community element of Department policy.¹¹² The promotion of sport for all, sporting excellence and research and development were also identified as areas requiring attention.

For physical educationists, the document proved to be somewhat of a disappointment as far as tangible recommendations were concerned. The earlier proposed daily physical education at primary level was not included and gone were references to 'a new momentum' in physical education which had been referred to in the Green paper. The retraction of the strong commitment to physical education in primary schools which had been evident in *Education for a changing world* may have been related to the sheer scale of the problem in providing quality physical education in 3,396 schools. Forty-two per cent of these schools had three teachers or fewer. Questions relating to teacher competence and facilities may have been too much for the Department to address notwithstanding the fact that its own policy stated that 'Educational quality will continue to be the main criterion in considering primary school size'.¹¹³ In addition, the question of time was referred to the N.C.C.A. to make recommendations on the 'allocations necessary to achieve the stated objectives for each subject taught'.¹¹⁴

The White paper glossed over the major concern which has existed about the competence of primary school teachers in teaching of physical education following their pre-service training by stating that 'pre-service education now lays special emphasis on the development of a broader range of competencies within an integrated curriculum, particularly in the teaching of the arts, European awareness, health promotion, music, physical education and science and on catering for children with special needs'.¹¹⁵

This was an evasion of the issue of the competence and confidence of the teacher to deliver a quality and foundational programme of physical education. The position adopted by the Department of Education further highlighted the huge demands which would now be placed on primary school teachers across a range of areas, making it more difficult for them to deal with the demands of a highly specialised area such as physical education. However, the suggestion that selected primary school teachers might become 'curriculum leaders in their subject specialisation' may provide an avenue through which the physical education issue could be partially addressed at primary school level.¹¹⁶

The position of physical education within the White paper was all the more disappointing given the strong support which the Minister for Education had given at the Annual Conference of the P.E.A.I. in 1994: 'The part which physical education must play in the education of all our young people is central to the concept of the health promoting school. Physical education must be seen as an important and essential part of the educational experience of all students'.¹¹⁷ The Minister concluded her address by stating:

We share concerns. These concerns are well summarised in the conclusion of your submission to me in preparation for the White Paper on Education and I quote: 'Our primary concern is that the forthcoming White Paper on Education and subsequent Education Acts, must ensure that physical education is available to all of the children of this nation, irrespective of sex, ability or disability, ethnic origin, social class or religion and that access to quality physical education, is firmly established as a right and not a privilege.' This is a daunting challenge. But in taking steps to meet it, I am encouraged by your sustained support.¹¹⁸

Following statements such as this, the Report of the *National education convention* and the consultative meetings which were held around the country, the weakness of the commitment to physical education in *Charting our education future* was notable. It would appear, that at both primary and second-level, the Department of Education balked at the prospect of physical education for all. Whether such a position was related to a lack of belief in the strength and weight of the arguments which have been made or to the resource implications of delivering physical education on such an all-inclusive scale is not clear. The latter issue certainly appears to be a major consideration and is one which physical educationists would do well to comprehend with a view to making realistic proposals for future development.

In the absence of a strong State commitment to the subject it is evident that the challenges facing physical educationists relate to their ability to construct and deliver quality physical education programmes. Such programmes will have to contribute to the promotion of 'all dimensions of human development' in the context of the underlying principles of pluralism, equality, partnership, quality and accountability which underpin *Charting our education future*.¹¹⁹ These programmes will have to be increasingly promoted within the context of regional education structures and individual school plans. In addition, there will be an increasing need for physical educationists to interact positively with voluntary and professional personnel working in the sport and leisure industry given the need for 'anchoring of educational institutions and structures in the wider communities they serve'.¹²⁰

The early 1990's has seen the formal recognition of the P.E.A.I. by the Department of Education as an organising agency for in-service courses and is further evidence of the gradual assimilation of physical education professionals into the system. Such acceptance has become inevitable given the enduring involvement of the P.E.A.I. in its own policy-making and appraisal. The professional association has also applied consistent and measured pressure on the Department of Education.

In many ways this pro-active approach has helped to buttress the position of school physical education during a period when the commitment of the Department of Education to the subject was shaken through economic circumstances and increasing demands on the system. Through its initiatives the P.E.A.I. has helped to maintain a strong sense of professional identity and belief among its members which has helped to sustain the subject through difficult times. Such professionalism will now have to turn its attention towards the realities of the modern day educational context and to embrace the challenges which face the subject. Through such a re-appraisal the Association can assist the Department of Education in realising an objective which appears to have support in theory but falls somewhat short in practice. The next chapter will examine the prescribed syllabi for physical education. This will be followed by an analysis of physical education provision in schools, thereby providing a framework for considering the troublesome relationship between stated and actual policies.

References

- ¹Department of Education, *Rialacha agus clar do leith meanscoileanna*. Dublin, Stationery Office, 1973 (Pr.3205)
- ²Department of Education, *Curraclam na Bunscoile: Teachers' handbook Vols. 1 & 2*. Dublin: Brown & Nolan, 1971
- ³Department of Education, *White paper on educational development*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1980 (PrI. 9373)
- ⁴*Dail Debates*, 303, 1978, p.379
- ⁵McDonough, M., interview
- ⁶*Dail Debates*, 275, 1974, p.56
- ⁷*Dail Debates*, 297, 1977, p.5
- ⁸By 1977 forty-three per cent of schools owned their own gymnasium according to M. Sleaf, A survey of physical education in Irish post-primary schools. *The Irish Journal of Education*, 12(2), 1978, pp. 107-118
- ⁹Physical Education Association of Ireland, Submission to the Department of Education, February 7, 1986
- ¹⁰*Dail Debates*, 311, 1979, p.1692
- ¹¹This was part of the broader resource and implementation problems which affected the 1971 Primary school curriculum. These issues are outlined by J. Coolahan, Educational policy for national schools in D. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan, *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Dublin: Institute for Public Administration, 1989
- ¹²The effects of this situation have been referred to extensively. For example see P. Duffy, Physical education in the primary school: spirit, mind...but what about the body? Paper presented to the annual conference of the National Parents Council - Primary, Dundalk, 1992. Also, McGuinness, S. & Shelly, B. Physical education in the primary school: an evaluation of programme implementation. *Oideas*, 44, 1996, pp. 46-64
- ¹³*Dail Debates*, 278, 1973, p.10
- ¹⁴Mahedy, D. 'An investigation of national policy for the provision of indoor aquatic facilities in Ireland - past, present and future'. Unpublished master's thesis, Institute of Public Administration, 1996
- ¹⁵*Dail Debates*, 313, 1979, p.907
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*, p.907
- ¹⁷Physical Education Association of Ireland, Executive committee minutes, 3 May, 1978
- ¹⁸Speech by Mr. Michael O 'Kennedy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education speaking at a press conference on 23 January, 1971, p.5
- ¹⁹Department of Education, *A policy for youth and sport*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1977
- ²⁰Meetings were initiated in 1978 on this issue, but without any great success in terms of co-operation. These meetings are referred to in the minutes of Cospoir on 20 October, 1978 and 18 November, 1978
- ²¹Thomond College of Education Act, 1980
- ²²Department of Education, 1980. White paper on educational development
- ²³*Ibid.*, p.iv
- ²⁴*Ibid.*, pp iii-iv
- ²⁵*Ibid.*, p.26
- ²⁶Correspondence from a former President of the P.E.A.I. suggests that this was the case. On 11 September, 1996, Pat Stanton recorded: 'I was involved in giving summer courses with other P.E. specialists during the period 1973-1983. However, the Department of Education then decided to use personnel from the inspectorate'.
- ²⁷Department of Education, 1980. White paper on educational development, p.99
- ²⁸*Ibid.*, p.102
- ²⁹*Ibid.*, p.98
- ³⁰*Ibid.*, p.100
- ³¹*Ibid.*, p.12

-
- ³²Department of Education, *Programme for action in education, 1984-1987*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1984 (Pl. 2153)
- ³³Curriculum and Examinations Board, *Issues and structures in education*. Dublin, 1984
- ³⁴Physical Education Association of Ireland. Submission to the Curriculum and Examinations Board, October, 1984
- ³⁵Curriculum and Examinations Board, *In our schools*. Dublin, 1986
- ³⁶Curriculum and Examinations Board, *The arts in education*. Dublin, 1986
- ³⁷Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1986. In our schools, p.10. The aim of education was defined as 'To contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development, for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure'
- ³⁸Department of Education. Submission from the physical education inspectors to the Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1984
- ³⁹*Ibid.*, p.3
- ⁴⁰Thomond College of Education. Submission by the Physical Education Department to the Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1984
- ⁴¹Physical Education Association of Ireland. Submission to the Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1984, p.5
- ⁴²*Ibid.*, p.6
- ⁴³Department of Education, 1984. Programme for action in education
- ⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p.2
- ⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p.3
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p.13
- ⁴⁷O'Donoghue, T. *The Physical Education Association of Ireland 1968-1989*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1989
- ⁴⁸Physical Education Association of Ireland, Submission to the Department of Education, 7 February, 1986, p.11
- ⁴⁹*Ibid.*, pp1-2
- ⁵⁰*Ibid.*
- ⁵¹*Ibid.*, p.6
- ⁵²*Ibid.*, p.7
- ⁵³*Ibid.*, p.12
- ⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p.14
- ⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p.17
- ⁵⁶Physical Education Association of Ireland. Submission to Cospoir, the National Sports Council, 1986, p.1
- ⁵⁷Physical Education Association of Ireland. *The National Certificate in Exercise and Fitness Instruction*. Limerick, 1987
- ⁵⁸McFadden, C. & O'Donovan, G. *Teachers and insurance: aspects of insurance for teachers*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1993
- ⁵⁹Jones, T., Duffy, P., Murphy, G. & Dineen, J. *Girls and boys come out to play*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1991
- ⁶⁰Department of Education, *Annual report of the Sports Section*. Dublin, 1993
- ⁶¹*Irish Press*, 6 December, 1988
- ⁶²The author was the President of the P.E.A.I. at the time of these events
- ⁶³Letter from the President of the P.E.A.I. to the Minister for Sport on 8 December, 1988
- ⁶⁴Physical education working party. 'Physical education: at a critical cross-roads'. Unpublished internal report to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1989 p.1
- ⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p.2
- ⁶⁶*Ibid.*
- ⁶⁷Physical Education Association of Ireland. Submission to the Department of Education on Education for a changing world, 1993, p.7
- ⁶⁸Physical education working party, 1989, pp.5-6
- ⁶⁹Physical education course committee, Interim report to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1995, p.11

- ⁷⁰National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. *Curriculum and assessment policy towards a new century*. Dublin, 1993
- ⁷¹Physical Education Course Committee, 1995, p.5
- ⁷²Ibid., p.1
- ⁷³Ibid., p.13
- ⁷⁴At its 1996 Annual General Meeting the P.E.A.I. voted overwhelmingly in favour of seeking to have physical education included as a certifiable subject within the State examination system. This was a strengthening of a more conditional position which had been adopted in 1987
- ⁷⁵Physical Education Course Committee, 1995
- ⁷⁶National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. *Leisure and recreation (P.E.)*. Dublin, 1995
- ⁷⁷National Council for Vocational Awards. *Course Guide*. Dublin, 1995
- ⁷⁸Department of Education, *Education for a changing world*. Dublin: Stationery Office 1992 (Pl. 8969)
- ⁷⁹Department of Education, *Charting our education future*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995 (Pr1 2009)
- ⁸⁰Department of Education, *Report of the primary education review body*, Dublin, 1990
- ⁸¹Ibid., p.49
- ⁸²Ibid., p.49
- ⁸³Ibid., p.49
- ⁸⁴Department of Education. *Report of the review body on the primary curriculum*, Dublin, 1990
- ⁸⁵Physical Education Association of Ireland, submission to the Department of Education on Education for a changing world, 1993, p.6
- ⁸⁶A decision which was communicated to the P.E.A.I. in a meeting with N.C.C.A. officials and is documented in the N.C.C.A. file of the Association
- ⁸⁷Physical and health education curriculum committee, 'Re-drafting of physical education'. Unpublished internal document, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Dublin, 1996
- ⁸⁸Department of Education, 1980. White paper on educational development
- ⁸⁹Ibid.
- ⁹⁰Ibid., p.86
- ⁹¹Ibid., p.90
- ⁹²Ibid., p.96
- ⁹³Physical Education Association of Ireland. Submission to the Department of Education on the Green paper in education, 1993, p.6
- ⁹⁴Department of Education public consultation meeting on the Green Paper, Athlone, 1993
- ⁹⁵Department of Education, 1980. White paper on educational development, p.130
- ⁹⁶Physical Education Association of Ireland. Submission to the Department of Education on the Green paper
- ⁹⁷Department of Education, 1980. White paper on educational development, p.222
- ⁹⁸Ibid.
- ⁹⁹Secretariat of the National Education Convention. *Report on the national education convention*. Dublin: Cahill Printers, 1994, p.1
- ¹⁰⁰Ibid., p.69
- ¹⁰¹Ibid., p.71
- ¹⁰²Ibid., p.74
- ¹⁰³Department of Education, 1995. White paper
- ¹⁰⁴Ibid., p.ix
- ¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 37-39; pp. 68-70
- ¹⁰⁶Ibid., p.162
- ¹⁰⁷Ibid., p.23
- ¹⁰⁸Ibid., p.49
- ¹⁰⁹Reported by John Walsh in the *Irish Independent* on 6 June, 1996, p.12
- ¹¹⁰Department of Education, 1995. White paper, p.112
- ¹¹¹Ibid., p.51
- ¹¹²Ibid., p.111
- ¹¹³Ibid., p.35
- ¹¹⁴Ibid., p.20
- ¹¹⁵Ibid., p.123

¹¹⁶Department of Education, 1995. White paper, p.123

¹¹⁷Address by the Minister for Education to the National Physical Education Conference, Galway, October, 1994

¹¹⁸Ibid., p.12

¹¹⁹Department of Education, 1995. White paper, p.6

¹²⁰Ibid., p.7

Chapter 7

Chapter 7

The curriculum in primary and second-level physical education since 1960

Introduction

This chapter will examine the curriculum for physical education at primary and second-level since 1960. Such an analysis provides the opportunity to assess the impact of broader policy issues and value systems on the prescribed syllabi. As well as this, the match between official aspirations and the reality in schools provides a point of comparison between stated and actual policies of the Department of Education. Accordingly, this chapter will be followed by an analysis of the provision which is made in schools.

Initially, the chapter will outline the major syllabus developments which have occurred at primary level. Particular emphasis will be placed on the major changes which occurred following the adoption of *Curraclam na Bunscoile* in 1971.¹ This will be followed by a study of the different syllabi which have been in place at second-level since 1960. The analysis of developments at both primary and post-primary levels is desirable given the fundamental relationship which exists between these two parts of the education system. Furthermore, the physical education profession and the wider sporting community² have emphasised the importance of primary school physical education in laying the foundation for experiences at second-level.³

The primary school syllabus in physical education

At the turn of the century, the *Belmore report* made important recommendations concerning physical drill in primary schools.⁴ Six years later, the *Dale report* reported significant increases in the number of primary schools providing some form of drill as part of the curriculum.⁵ The syllabus at that time was largely geared towards marching and regimented exercises⁶ and physical drill at primary level became an accepted part of the school week in the early part of the twentieth century. Following the establishment of the Free State in 1921, however, this position changed. In 1926 the National Programme Conference recommended that the number of subjects on the curriculum be reduced, given the need to emphasise Irish culture and language.⁷ Physical training suffered from this development and was no longer a compulsory element of the curriculum at primary level.

Despite this, work was initiated on *Revised notes for teachers* which was published in 1932.⁸ This document outlined the background to the development of the Swedish system of physical training and stressed the breadth of the curriculum - including references to national games, dancing and health education. This emphasis marked a shift towards the construction of a national system of physical education in the aftermath of British rule. Despite these initial moves, however, the syllabus and teaching of physical training did not advance to any great degree during the 1930's and 1940's.

The *Council of education* addressed this problem and stated: 'From the beginning of its deliberations, the Council regarded the absence of Physical Training as a defect in the existing curriculum. The evidence received by us tended to strongly support this view'.⁹ In seeking to redress this situation, the Council proposed that the subject be re-named *Physical training, health and hygiene* and that the overall aim should be to promote 'the development of carriage and physical alertness, good posture in sitting and the general cultivation of health'.¹⁰ The Report also pointed out the dangers of a regimented approach to drill and recommended the organisation of games on a formal and informal basis in single sex settings.

Despite these recommendations, there was no action taken on amending the primary school syllabus for physical education until the publication of *Curraclam na bunscoile* in 1971. The background to this document was one in which change within the primary sector had been slow. Traditional approaches to the education of the child prevailed.¹¹ The climate for educational change which began to emerge in the 1960's provided the impetus which led to a comprehensive review of the syllabus right across the primary level.

Physical education benefited from the child-centred and progressive nature of this review. Over fifty pages of syllabus material and guidelines were provided for the primary school teacher.¹² For the first time within the primary school curriculum a strong focus was provided for the overall purpose of a *physical education* (as opposed to a drill or physical training) programme:

The aims of Physical Education are to promote the organic well being of the child, to develop a suitable range of motor skills, to develop him to adapt himself to his immediate environment and to cultivate desirable social attitudes. It also makes a valuable contribution towards the aesthetic, emotional and moral development of the child. Physical Education, then, should have an important place in a balanced school curriculum.¹³

The physical education syllabus was rooted in the educational philosophy of the time and divided the primary school years into four progressive stages. These are summarised in Table 5. There was a strong emphasis on the needs of the child, reflecting the influence of the Plowden Report which had stated: 'The best preparation for being a happy and useful man or woman is to live fully as a child'.¹⁴ This child-centred ethos was manifested in the content of the syllabus where educational gymnastics and dance were accorded an important position. In addition, athletics, games, outdoor pursuits, combat sports, first aid and health education were included.

The syllabus provided an interesting mix involving new approaches to physical education and traditional, native activities. The strong gymnastics and educational dance emphasis was reflective of the British influence on Irish physical education during the 1960's and early 1970's. A significant amount of the detail of the syllabus and notes for teachers was devoted to these areas. This emphasis was reflective of the child-centred approach which was inherent to the syllabus as a whole. However, in proposing such a radical departure from the previously drill-oriented system the Department of Education was presenting a strong challenge to the primary school teaching profession. Significant changes in the core philosophy of the curriculum were being proposed. As well as this, the skills of the teacher in delivering the varied and specialist syllabus were immediately brought into focus.

Table 5
Main elements of the primary school syllabus in physical education
 (Adapted from Department of Education, 1971)¹⁵

| Stage | Movement | Games | Athletics | Other activities |
|-----------------|---|--|--|--|
| Infants | Educational gymnastics and dance Free play and activity | Play with objects, equipment, balls | Basic running and jumping | Basic hygiene and safety |
| Classes 1 and 2 | Emphasis on quality and skill Themes of what, where, how and with whom developed in educational gymnastics and dance | Throwing, catching, bouncing games Improvised games | Jumping with individual variations Throwing a small ball for height and distance | Tracking/treasure hunt Crossing obstacles Swimming Food, clothing and hygiene |
| Classes 3 and 4 | Linking isolated actions into sequences National dance | Striking games (hurley, bat, ball) Throwing and catching games (football, basketball, volleyball) | Sprinting, jumping, throwing, hurdling | Walks, crossing obstacles, tracking Knowledge of camping Swimming Health, posture, home safety |
| Classes 5 and 6 | Separate movement training for boys and girls Boys: rolls, head springs, agility, balances Girls: Flight, shape, style and grace National dance and international folk dance | Games with adult recreational value Limited inter-school competition | Coaching in specific athletic events Sports meetings and inter-school competitions with handicapping and standards scoring system Experience in organising | Camping, orienteering Combat sports for boys Life saving Swimming Posture and relaxation Fitness work Nutrition, smoking, alcohol, drugs, temperance |

While the time requirements to implement the syllabus were not clearly laid out there were suggestions made in relation to the facilities required and these are outlined in Table 6.

As with the specification of content, the recommended facilities provided a comprehensive overview of what was required for a well rounded physical education programme. In both cases, however, it seems that the details of the syllabus were significantly in advance of what might reasonably be expected to happen in most schools. While the existence of play areas and the provision of small equipment did not provide major difficulties, the stipulations regarding indoor areas and learner swimming pools proved unattainable, especially given the number of small primary schools around the country.

Table 6
Facilities recommended for the implementation of the Primary School
Physical Education Syllabus
 (adapted from Department of Education, 1971)¹⁶

| Indoor | Outdoor | Equipment |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Smooth, non-slip floor 2. Sufficient area to implement indoor work | 1. Grass and all weather play areas | 1. Portable mats, balls, benches, ropes, hoops, bats bar-boxes, scramble tables 2. Ropes and climbing units 3. Equipment for camping, hiking, orienteering, life saving 4. Small learner swimming pool |

The potential difficulties in implementing the syllabus were, to a large extent, identified before the syllabus was put into place. A Dublin-based teachers study group, while warning of the 'technical jargon' in the early draft of the syllabus, welcomed the proposed improvements in physical education and suggested that 'In-service training would also help to promote the ideas outlined'.¹⁷ This statement, along with the contention of the syllabus that 'age or lack of physical activity on the part of the teacher' should not inhibit implementation of the syllabus represented an optimistic view of the proposed changes.¹⁸ The success of the new syllabus was inextricably linked to the ability of teachers to deliver and to the facilities available in schools.

The measures which were necessary to facilitate changes in attitudes, teaching skills and school facilities were only partially addressed for a variety of reasons. Coolahan noted that local school circumstances and the broader national and international economic contexts inhibited full implementation of the new curriculum:

Furthermore, while reforms in school conditions were afoot, the circumstances which still existed in many schools were such as to impose severe impediments in the way of full implementation. Then, the creditable start which had been made on in-service education and teaching resources petered out and fell into rapid decline after 1974.¹⁹

As a consequence, little progress was made in the implementation of the physical education syllabus, and there has been no change in the syllabus since it was first adopted. The *Report on the National education convention* noted that 'It is generally accepted that physical education receives inadequate attention because of lack of facilities, teachers' perceived lack of competence, and fear of litigation'.²⁰ Effectively, the physical education vacuum which had existed at primary level since the foundation of the State had continued after the adoption of *Curraclam na bunscoile*, despite the best intentions of the Department. The actual provision for physical education at primary level will be investigated in the next chapter, along with some of the factors which have inhibited its progress.

Second-level syllabi

During the 1960's there was no detailed syllabus or guidelines for physical education in second-level schools, with the Department of Education taking the position that schools should provide for the teaching of physical education and/or organised games and athletics.²¹ Following the appointment of an inspector of physical education this situation changed with the drafting of a more detailed statement of content.²² This was the first of two syllabi which sought to guide the delivery of physical education between 1973 and the present day. In 1987, a new syllabus was published.²³

There was a notable contrast in the style and focus of the 1973 and 1987 documents. The earlier version concentrated on aspirational statements about the value of physical education without going into detail as to what should be covered as part of the school programme. It was clearly a document which sought to formally establish physical education as part of the curriculum. The absence of a firm structure and obligatory status were serious weaknesses, however, which left much to the interpretation of individual schools. It offered little practical advice to physical education teachers in their design and delivery of programmes.

No concerted effort was made either to identify the elements of the Irish system which could be enhanced. Accordingly, the syllabus missed an opportunity to complement and build upon existing practices and traditions. In contrast, the 1987 statement provided a clear structure for the development of students at various stages of the second-level cycle. It showed a significant evolution in thinking as far as the delivery of physical education was concerned and the importance of kicking and striking games as part of the national culture was recognised.

The Department of Education formed a Syllabus Committee to frame the more recent syllabus, which was a departure from the centralised approach used for the 1973 document. This Committee included representatives from teacher unions, the P.E.A.I., school management, Thomond College and the inspectorate. Apparently, there was a somewhat distant approach taken by Thomond College to the process and led to a situation where there was no significant link between the national college, its graduates or its staff, and the new syllabus. In addition, the low ebb of the P.E.A.I. at the time meant that little true consultation was possible with the representatives of physical education teachers.²⁴ Both syllabi will now be examined from the perspective of aims, areas of work, teachers, time, facilities and evaluation.

Aims

There was a clear link between the broad aims of the two syllabi, with both documents outlining the contribution of physical education to the development of the individual. The 1973 document outlined the aim of physical education as being:

...to promote the organic well being of the child, to develop in him a suitable range of motor skills, to help him adapt himself to his immediate environment and to cultivate desirable social attitudes. Physical education may also make a valuable contribution towards the aesthetic, emotional and moral development of the child.²⁵

Notably, this was a re-iteration of the aim which had been outlined as part of the primary school syllabus and placed organic well-being, motor skill development, adaptability and social attitudes at the centre of the process. Aesthetic, emotional and moral development appeared as important, but secondary, aims. These concerns were, for the most part, mirrored in the later document:

The aim of Physical Education is to contribute to the development of the individual through the medium of selected physical activities and related cognitive and social experiences. This aim will be achieved through a comprehensive programme which meets the following criteria:...²⁶

This statement was followed by a clearer series of statements of objectives which included: the development of a level of fitness in students; motor skill development; acquisition of knowledge in six areas of activity; promotion of positive attitudes towards continued participation; development of an appreciation of all forms of activity; creation of a mature body image and finally the development of leadership qualities. The aims of both syllabi and revealed some marked similarities and differences. In both cases the promotion of fitness, the development of skill and the opening of pathways to recreation were mentioned, indicating the enduring nature of these goals during the period in question.

There were significant differences in emphasis in the goals of the two syllabi. The 1973 syllabus spelt out the need for physical education to contribute to the moral, emotional, aesthetic and social development of the student. The 1987 document placed less accent on these issues, with a much stronger emphasis on the physical elements of education. This included the appreciation of all forms of physical activity and the development of a mature body image. This shift may be reflective of an increasing sense of confidence within the profession about the merits of the subject in its own right and in the context of a broadening view of the education process.

Teachers

The implementation of any syllabus is critically dependent on those charged with its delivery and both syllabi addressed the question of who should be responsible for teaching physical education. In each case, the option of a specialist teacher for the subject was preferred, with the 1987 document being somewhat more forceful on the matter. Physical education was a newly developed area when the earlier syllabus was written and consequently the possibility of using non-specialist teachers was left open to schools:

Ideally, a fully qualified specialist teacher in Physical Education should be responsible for the work in post-primary schools. Such a teacher would have qualifications from a recognised college, but where the services of a specialist teacher are not available, a teacher partly qualified in physical education may take responsibility for those aspects of the

programme in which he/she has an appropriate qualification. In general, however, teachers with less than 100 hours attendance at official or other recognised courses should not be given any degree of responsibility.²⁷

This statement was reflective of the dearth of physical education teachers at the time, particularly males. The clause which permitted teachers who were 'partly qualified' in physical education presumably referred to those teachers who had taken part in a series of short courses in the late 1960's or who had some form of N.G.B. qualification. It could be argued, however, that by failing to take a strong position on the employment of specialist physical education teachers the syllabus was a weak introduction to what physical education was to be about. On the other hand, the recognition for partially qualified teachers was a pragmatic realisation of the situation in schools and of the role which interested teachers could play in the development of the subject.

The 1987 syllabus did not leave such an option, which was understandable given the extensive work which had been done in teacher training following the establishment of N.C.P.E. The document stated that 'Qualified specialist teachers should be responsible for the development of physical education in post-primary schools'.²⁸ This statement certainly reflected major progress during the fourteen year period. Interestingly, though, the word 'should' remained. When taken in conjunction with the non-compulsory nature of physical education at second-level there were two layers at which the discretion of management in individual schools in left to arbitrate: i) whether the subject should be taught and ii) whether a specialist teacher should be employed. As will be seen in the next chapter, the combination of these 'shoulds' and the lack of resources in the system led to a situation where, by 1990, 57,000 students did not have a physical education programme.

Time

Before any consideration of time allocation to physical education attention must be devoted to the overall status of the subject in the curriculum. Both the 1973 and 1987 documents were unconvincing on this matter: 'Physical education should form part of the curriculum. The programme should be based on the approved syllabus and teaching hours should be registered on the school timetable'.²⁹

The identical nature of this statement in both documents highlighted the lack of progress over an extensive period. In both syllabi, reference to physical education followed a list of subjects which were compulsory (Irish, English, history and geography, mathematics, science; or a language other than Irish or English; or commerce; or a subject from the business group, civics).

The 1973 syllabus stated that the physical education programme 'should ideally be contained within the curriculum timetable and should be supplemented by recreation after school'.³⁰ Each lesson was recommended to be of the same duration of the normal class period. This was somewhat impractical given the transition, changing and organisational time required for physical education classes. It was suggested that it might be useful, on an occasional basis, to block two or three periods together, with the distinction or relationship between physical education and the traditional games programme somewhat unclear.

Despite these shortcomings two single periods and a double period were recommended as a 'basic time allotment' for physical education.³¹ This recommendation was actually greater than that made in the later document which stated:

A basic minimum of two hours per week is required to implement this Physical Education Programme. Each lesson should have a time allocation similar to that of the normal class period, but occasionally it will be useful to block two or three periods together, particularly for games and other out-of-door activities. The Physical Education Programme should be contained within the curriculum time-table and supplemented by recreational opportunities in after school hours.³²

It is notable that the recommendation on the duration of the class period still persisted since 1973, further emphasising the stability on the time issue during the period under consideration. Furthermore, the suggestion that normal class periods would suffice for the delivery of physical education displayed a lack of realism concerning the basic time allotment which was required to deliver a physical education class in a quality way.

Areas of work

The content outlined in the two syllabi displayed many similarities. The earlier document identified seven areas of work: athletics, dance, games, gymnastics, outdoor pursuits, swimming and health education. The only area which received any detailed consideration was that of health education:

Good health is a necessary base for individual well being and is a definite requirement for physical development. Health education during physical education might be catered for under the following headings:

- (i) Know your body - preserve a good constitution.**
- (ii) Food - good and bad eating habits.**
- (iii) Cleanliness**
- (iv) Disease - how infection spreads and how to take precautions**
- (v) Safety - in the school, the home and outside.**

The aspects of Health Education covered under these headings should be dealt with as an integral part of the course, and the physical education teacher should give at least eight lectures on Health Education to the Leaving Certificate classes (5th and 6th years). Visual aids should be used in these lectures.³³

It is interesting to note such detail and definition on health education as part of a syllabus which gave only a general mention to the other six areas of work. Nowhere else in the overall syllabus, which covered all subjects, was health education mentioned. It would appear, therefore, that the responsibility for developing this area lay with physical educationists. Despite this recommendation, the inclusion of health education as part of physical education did not materialise in any concerted way within the programmes delivered in schools. Nor was health education included in the training of teachers at N.C.P.E.

The issues of content, sequencing and teaching methodology were not dealt with to any great degree in the 1973 syllabus. By contrast, the more recent document provided a detailed breakdown of what should be happening in the context of an overall five-year framework. The seven areas of work employed in the 1973 syllabus were replicated. Swimming was now called aquatics and a new area 'fitness' was added. These changes reflected the broadening nature of the curriculum and an emerging health-related fitness orientation.³⁴ The overall

framework of the 1987 syllabus was based on a three-stage model and is outlined in Table 7.

Table 7
Major stages of the 1987 physical education syllabus³⁵

| Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Year 1 Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 Year 5 |
| Basic introductory course | Specialisation | Options, Leadership, Project |

The framework provided a coherent view of the physical education programme and was based on the need to provide a broad range of competencies to the student, some of which were to be developed to a high level. Stage one covered the first two years of the second-level cycle and it was assumed that the student would have completed 'a programme in Physical Education in a primary school, as outlined in *Curaclam na Bunscoile*'.³⁶ However, it was suggested that some students would not have reached the required skill level to enable them to participate in Stage one and it was proposed that such students should undergo a remedial skills development programme. This was an implicit admission of the inadequacy of the primary school programme.

A diagnostic assessment of each student was suggested with reference to general health and fitness, posture and body mechanics and motor ability. In an innovative proposal it was posited that the data gleaned from such a screening could serve a dual function. Firstly, it could be used as a formative evaluation which would contribute to programme design. Secondly, and even more radically, the combination of the efforts of physical education teachers in this area were seen as a possible contribution to 'a national evaluation of the physical welfare of Irish schoolchildren'.³⁷ To date, however, no concerted move has taken place to take this proposal, perhaps because of the practical implications for both the physical education teacher and the school. Eight activity areas were suggested for inclusion as ten-and-one-half blocks in the programme of the first stage:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Games- | 3 blocks |
| Gymnastics- | 2 blocks |
| Fitness- | 1 block |
| Athletics- | 1 block |
| Dance - | 1 block |
| Aquatics- | 1 block |
| Health Ed.- | 1 block |
| Outdoor ed.- | 1/2 block³⁸ |

The major aim in including these areas of work focused on recreational participation in a broad range of activities: 'It is expected that each pupil will attain a level of proficiency which will enable him/her to participate enjoyably at a recreational level in whatever activities are introduced'.³⁹ In gymnastics a theme based approach was suggested, organised around locomotion, weight bearing, weight transference and flight. One of the objectives of the gymnastics programme was listed as: 'The pupil will require skills necessary to participate in club activity', while reference to competitive swimming was also made.⁴⁰ This specific reference and linkage of the physical education programme to club activity was somewhat different to the overall treatment of the school/club issue in the syllabus, perhaps reflecting the international trend for early specialisation within both gymnastics and swimming.

Within games, two major criteria for programme planning were laid down, namely the recognition of games which are indigenous in the catchment area of the school and the need to provide for the development of striking, kicking, throwing and catching skills. In addition, a balance between individual and team games was suggested. The centrality of games which involve kicking skills was noted, with specific reference to gaelic football, soccer and rugby: 'The skill of kicking is fundamental to a number of the major games which form part of our culture'.⁴¹ This was an important recognition and showed an understanding of the need to anchor the syllabus in its cultural context.

The basic philosophy of Stage two sought to build on the broad base of activities introduced in the earlier stage. It was suggested that 'some degree of specialisation will take place' with the intention being 'to give each pupil the experience of being good at a chosen activity'.⁴² It was proposed that the year-long programme be divided into four major areas consisting of eleven blocks of five hours each:

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Games and Athletics | 4 to 6 blocks |
| Gymnastics and Dance | 2 to 4 blocks |
| Aquatics and Outdoor | 2 blocks |
| Fitness and Health | 2 blocks⁴³ |

The inclusion of specialisation at this stage was notable, but the methodology, resources and outside linkages which were inevitably necessary, were not addressed in any concerted fashion. The complexity of providing for specialisation for a large number of students in the context of limited teacher and time allocations was also underestimated.

The final stage of the syllabus sought to recognise that the student should be at a stage where 'a degree of independent choice is important to them'.⁴⁴ This was an important recognition of the needs associated with later adolescence. The motivational issues associated with senior cycle physical education had been an important issue in the context of the National Physical Education Conference in 1986.⁴⁵ The assumption that physical education should be compulsory at this stage may require re-appraisal in the light of emerging evidence on teenage activity patterns and preferences.

The main justification for inclusion of activity at this stage was school based and instrumentally motivated on the basis that 'It is important during this stage that pupils are involved in physical activity which helps to reduce the stress which is increasing as a result of examinations'.⁴⁶ The writers of the syllabus sought to place the justification for including the subject into the context of the highly pressurised Leaving certificate examination which had increasingly become a central focus within second-level education since the 1970's. This approach defined the worth of the subject in terms of the narrow academicism associated with the examinations-based system. While understandable, this stance disregarded the opportunity to forcefully press home the value of physical education for its own sake.

A concerted effort was made in the document to promote the areas of fitness and health, leadership and personal choice. It was recognised that this approach would need to be modified depending on a number of factors.

- * the number of pupils
- * facilities
- * amount of coaching required for the activities
- * level of risk
- * availability of teachers, coaches etc.⁴⁷

This was an important qualification and went a considerable way to recognising the heterogeneity which characterised physical education provision amongst the second-level schools of the nation. It also provided the teacher with the opportunity to mediate within a proposed framework, based on professional judgement and individual circumstances. In this regard, the syllabus provided a valuable signpost for the future in the complex interactive process between centrally-prescribed syllabi and local needs and resources.

Facilities

The provision and availability of facilities is a core issue in the implementation of a quality physical education programme. Both syllabi addressed this matter and made recommendations. A comparison of the two documents reveals high aspirations in each case as outlined in Table 8.

Table 8
Comparison of 1973 and 1987 syllabi in terms of facility recommendations

| 1973 syllabus | 1987 syllabus |
|---|--|
| 1. A gymnasium or specially adapted hall | 1. Suitable indoor space with showering and changing a priority |
| 2. Fixed and moveable equipment | 2. No recommendation |
| 3. Sports equipment | 3. No recommendation |
| 4. Indoor and outdoor play areas; grass, all weather, hard running tracks | 4. Suitable outdoor space - grass or hard surface. Applications to full games should be possible |
| 5. Swimming pool - indoor heated if possible | 5. Access to swimming pool |
| 6. Outdoor pursuits areas | 6. Access to outdoor pursuits areas (hostels and centres) |
| 7. No recommendation | 7. Access to classrooms, laboratories and audio-visual equipment |

The early syllabus was clearly more optimistic concerning the direct availability and ownership of facilities. The 1987 document was less ambitious, reflecting the reduced pace of facility provision for schools which began in the mid-1970's.

Assessment and evaluation

The assessment and evaluation of any school-based programme is central to its on-going relevance and regeneration. The 1973 syllabus made no recommendations on this matter, while the more recent document suggested that the progress of each individual student should be recorded over the five-year programme:

The keeping of such records serves a number of purposes:

***They provide a source of information for the school staff and also for parents and children**

***They provide a record for the Physical Education staff which will assist in programme planning**

***They act as a screening process to identify pupils with particular talents which may benefit from specialist attention**

***They act as a strong motivating force for children⁴⁸**

The potential role of evaluation in the context of the broader State system of certification was not considered by either syllabus. Strategically, this was a significant omission, in that the syllabus thus became isolated from the main modus operandi of the academically-based and examination-oriented system. While immediate linkage with the formal examination system may not have been desirable, reference might have been made in both cases to the need to provide validation and reward to students in an area which was quite different to the majority of the cognitively-oriented subjects on the second-level curriculum.

More recently, the Department of Education has sponsored a project entitled *Physical education: assessment in second level teaching (ASSIST)*⁴⁹ which has developed systematic means of recording pupil progress across the seven major areas of the curriculum, while the P.E.A.I. has debated the issue of certification at length.⁵⁰ This issue is clearly an important one in the light of on-going discussion on the status of physical education in the school system and will be returned to in the next chapter.

Physical education syllabi within academic and cultural contexts

This chapter has outlined the main syllabus developments which have occurred in physical education since 1960 at both primary and second-level. The period in question saw a significant widening of the syllabi, reflecting the increasing understanding of the breadth of the subject and its potential contribution to the development of individual students. The anchoring of the syllabi within the framework of the often competing demands of an academically-oriented system and those of a complex national system of physical culture proved difficult. In particular, the prevailing strength of the national games was an important factor which might have been considered. This influence was countered by broadening

perspectives on sport and physical activity which were linked to the European ideal of 'Sport for All'. A broadly based, multi-activity syllabus resulted.

The primary school syllabus was strongly linked to the progressive philosophy which influenced planning during the 1960's and employed content and methodologies which found their origins in the work of Rudolf Laban. This individualised and creative approach to physical education had become dominant in the United Kingdom in the 1950's and 1960's. The second-level syllabus of 1987 showed that consideration was given to the establishment of an educational continuum involving both primary and second-level, while recognising that there were fundamental difficulties with the implementation of the most basic physical education programme throughout the primary school system.

The syllabi at second-level reflected the strongly school-based view which was held of physical education, although the need for linkages with the co-curricular programme were recognised. The absence of a coherent approach to the development of sport and recreation nationally made it difficult for such linkages to emerge. Similarly, the interface between professional physical educators and volunteer or semi-professional personnel was unduly strained due to the absence of clear role definitions and the lack of a concerted commitment to the employment of physical education teachers in schools.

The range of content included in both the 1973 and 1987 syllabi reflected a belief that all students should be exposed to the fullest range of physical activities in the course of their development, leading to autonomy in the choice of activity. Such a philosophy marked a break from the more restricted traditions which had gone before. The uni-dimensional approach which had been associated with schools games traditions was challenged in this context.

The latter document showed an increase in detail on the 1973 version. The earlier syllabus was quite a limited statement given that it led the way for the formal recognition of physical education as a new subject on the second-level curriculum. It also failed to match the approach and technical content which were outlined in the primary school syllabus, thus leaving the physical education teacher with the difficult job of effectively coming up with his or her own syllabus, with little support. The 1987 document was, on paper, a landmark in the definition of what physical education should involve. It represented a major step forward in that it outlined clear guidelines and a student-centred

developmental continuum for the school based physical education programme. It also displayed a strong move in the direction of health-related fitness and the assessment of students.

However, the precipitous manner in which it was adopted meant that the syllabus failed to win the support of the professionals on the ground.⁵¹ This meant that the entire period from 1973 lacked the kind of stability which a well worked-out and supported syllabus could provide. Both documents were significant in that they formally established the proposed content and structure of the physical education programme in second-level schools. The full implementation of the two syllabi would certainly have made a major impact on the school-going population over the past twenty years. The non-compulsory nature of the subject; inadequate time allocation, teacher employment patterns and variable facilities all combined to ensure that the impact of the syllabi tended to be thin and patchy for the most part. The circumstances of individual schools has added to the variability in implementation of the syllabus. However, despite difficulties over implementation, a significant impact was made and the physical education programme brought about many positive changes in the life of second-level students.⁵² In this context, the next chapter will deal with the actual provision which has been made for physical education and the responses within the system to the initiative.

References

-
- ¹Department of Education, *Curraclam na bunscoile: teachers handbook Vols. 1 & 2*. Dublin: Brown & Nolan, 1971
- ²National Coaching and Training Centre, submission to National sports strategy group, 1996
- ³Physical Education Association of Ireland, submission to the Department of education on the Green paper in education, 1993
- ⁴Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction in Primary Schools, *Final report of the commissioners*. Dublin, H.M.S.O., 1898 (C.-8923)
- ⁵Board of Education on Primary Education (Ireland), *Report of Mr. F.H. Dale*. Dublin: H.M.S.O., 1904 (Cd. 1981)
- ⁶O'Donoghue, T. *The Physical Education Association of Ireland 1968-1989*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1989
- ⁷National Programme Conference, *Report and programme*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1926
- ⁸Department of Education, *Revised notes for teachers. Physical training*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1932 (Pr. 1426)
- ⁹Council of Education, *Report of the Council of Education on the curriculum of the secondary school*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1954 (Pr. 2583), p.188
- ¹⁰*Ibid.*, p.190
- ¹¹McDonagh, K. (ed) *Reports on the draft curriculum for primary schools*. Dublin: Teachers' study group, 1969
- ¹²Department of Education, 1971. *Curraclam na bunscoile*
- ¹³*Ibid.*, p.289
- ¹⁴Central Advisory Council for Education, *The Plowden Report*, London: H.M.S.O., 1967

-
- ¹⁵Department of Education, 1971. *Curraclam na bunscoile*
- ¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹⁷McDonagh, K., 1969. *Report on the draft curriculum for primary schools*, p.41
- ¹⁸Department of Education, 1971. *Curraclam na bunscoile*, Vol. 2, p.317
- ¹⁹Coolahan, J. Educational policy for national schools in D. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan, *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Dublin: Institute for Public Administration, 1989, p.69
- ²⁰Secretariat of the National Education Convention. *Report on the national education convention*, Dublin: Cahill Printers, 1994, p.71
- ²¹*Dail Debates*, 215, 1965, p.1458
- ²²Department of Education, *Rialacha agus clar do leith meanscoileanna*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1973 (prl. 3205)
- ²³Department of Education, *Rules and programmes for secondary schools*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987 (pl. 8263)
- ²⁴Darmody, M. interview
- ²⁵Department of Education, 1973. *Rialacha agus clar*, p.253
- ²⁶Department of Education, 1987. *Rules and programmes*, p.356
- ²⁷Department of Education, 1973, *Rialacha agus clar*, p.253
- ²⁸Department of Education, 1987 *Rules and programmes*, p.357
- ²⁹Department of Education, 1973 *Rialacha agus clar*, p.13 and 1987 *Rules and programmes*, p.7
- ³⁰Department of Education, 1973, *Rialacha agus clar*, p.253
- ³¹Ibid., p.253
- ³²Department of Education, 1987 *Rules and programmes*, p.357
- ³³Department of Education, 1973 *Rialacha agus clar*, pp.254-255
- ³⁴This health-related orientation was reflected in a curriculum development project *Action for Life*, which was developed by the Department of Education, the Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Health and the Irish Heart Foundation for use in schools. Department of Education, *Action for life: health-related fitness programme*. Dublin, n.d.
- ³⁵Department of Education, 1987. *Rules and programmes*, p.357
- ³⁶Ibid., p.358
- ³⁷Ibid., p.358
- ³⁸Ibid., p.358
- ³⁹Ibid., p.359
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p.360
- ⁴¹Ibid., p.360
- ⁴²Ibid., p.363
- ⁴³Ibid., p.363
- ⁴⁴Ibid., p.364
- ⁴⁵Darmody, M., Duffy, P. & Dugdale, L. (eds) *Physical education and the young adult*. Limerick: Thomond College of Education, 1987
- ⁴⁶Department of Education, 1987 *Rules and programmes*, p.364
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p.365
- ⁴⁸Ibid., p.367
- ⁴⁹Department of Education, *Physical education assesement in second level teaching*. Dublin, 1990
- ⁵⁰The issue was discussed at both the 1987 and 1996 Annual General Meetings of the Association and in 1996 the following motion was adopted: 'that physical education be a subject for certification at junior cycle and senior cycle, subject to the condition that any such assessment procedure leading to certification be designed, piloted and implemented by practising physical education teachers'.
- ⁵¹ At the 1984 National physical education conference a draft syllabus was circulated. Concern was expressed at the advanced stage of the document. In the aftermath of the conference, the re-vitalised P.E.A.I. insisted on the draft status of the syllabus. However, it was subsequently adopted without further consultation, leading to a degree of ill-feeling which became manifest in the 7 February, 1986 meeting between the P.E.A.I. and the Department of education
- ⁵²Department of Education and Department of Health, *A national survey of involvement in sport and physical activity*. Dublin, 1996

Chapter 8

Chapter 8

The implementation of policy in school physical education

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the syllabus at both primary and second level. The syllabus represents the official version of what should happen in schools and is an important indicator of stated policy on physical education. However, the manifestation of actual policy occurs through the provisions which are made throughout the education system. Accordingly, the efficacy of policy and the existence of unplanned outcomes can be measured through observation of the patterns which exist in schools. The Department of Education has maintained detailed statistical records on the second-level education system since the *Investment in education* report pointed to the need for a more empirical approach to the planning of education.¹ This chapter will outline the provision which is made for physical education at both primary and second-level, based on the data which are available from Department of Education and from other sources.

The data in the statistical record of the Department of Education are an important starting point in solidifying the empirical base upon which conclusions about policy can be made. While there has been criticism of the reliability and validity of these statistics as they relate to provision for physical education,² an examination of the trends contained therein is essential if the evolution of physical education is to be more fully comprehended. The trends emerging from such an analysis will be tested against evidence from other sources, leading to a balanced appraisal of the development of school physical education within the Irish education system.

Provision for primary school physical education

The analysis of provision for physical education at primary level is difficult given that the Department of Education itself does not provide any detailed breakdown of the way in which *Curraclam na bunscoile* has been implemented since 1971. The most recent data on this subject were generated by Deenihan when he was Opposition spokesperson with responsibility for physical education and sport.³

Deenihan's study involved 1,456 primary schools and set out to establish the time and facilities devoted to physical education classes and the perceptions of school principals on 'the adequacy of the present PE programme in regard to facilities available, professional training, equipment etc.'⁴ The study found that physical

education was allocated from between ten minutes to one hour per week with 75 per cent of classes receiving less than 30 minutes per week. Deenihan concluded: 'Many children are experiencing very little Physical Education in Primary Schools because of lack of basic facilities and resources'.⁵ The facilities for physical education as identified in the study are outlined in Table 9.

Table 9
Facilities for physical education at primary school
(Adapted from Deenihan, 1990)⁶

| |
|--|
| 30% of schools had no indoor facilities |
| 60% outlined the need for a grant for the provision and renewal of equipment |
| 80% felt that facilities and equipment were 'totally inadequate' |

These statistics were supported by comments from teachers which suggested that the Department of Education lacked a coherent policy and commitment to physical education. In addition, the position of smaller schools in the provision of physical education was particularly tenuous, given the paucity of facilities in many such schools.

Deenihan's findings served an important purpose in quantifying the position of the subject in primary schools, based on a large sample. These results reflect the perceived lack of attention which has been given to physical education and which has been a source of considerable concern among the profession.⁷ The *Primary review body* addressed this issue and the matter received further consideration within the Department of Education:

1. **In view of the lack of confidence of teachers in approaching PE the Review Body feels that there should be an appropriate programme of teacher education (pre and in-service education).**
2. **The Review Body recommends that some degree of specialisation among teachers should be encouraged so that each school might have at least one teacher with a particular interest and expertise in this area.**
3. **However, for safety and because of the nature of the skills that are required in specialised forms of P.E., the Review Body recommends the employment of specially qualified teachers who could service a number of schools.⁸**

These issues were further re-inforced in the *Report on the national education convention*⁹ which recommended that specialisms be developed among teachers through in-service education and that some involvement of specialist teachers should occur at primary level. The source of the difficulties relating to perceived competence in teaching physical education would appear to derive their origin, in part at least, from the low level of time devoted to the subject during primary school teacher training courses.¹⁰ Lennon has identified the number of hours devoted to this aspect of the training of primary teachers and these are outlined in Table 10.¹¹

Table 10
Time allocation (hours) to physical education at Colleges of Education, 1990

| College | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Total |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Mary Immaculate | 18 | 9 | 0 | 27 |
| St Patrick's | 27 | 54 | 0 | 81 |
| Froebel College | 21 | 21 | 21 | 63 |
| St Mary's | 42 | 42 | 42 | 126 |
| Church of Ireland | 48 | 48 | 48 | 144 |

These figures, while understandable in the context of a broadly based teacher preparation process, compare unfavourably with the 1200 hours which is required for specialist teachers at second-level. Given these circumstances it is hardly surprising to note that the experiences of children within physical education at primary school have been unsatisfactory leading to reduced levels of fitness and what the P.E.A.I. termed 'psychomotor illiteracy'.¹² The innovative nature of the 1971 primary school physical education syllabus was never followed up by any concerted approach in relation to pre and in-service training. The second-level syllabus recognised the problems arising from the paucity of provision at primary level,¹³ while more recently the submissions to the *National sports strategy group* have shown a renewed and strong interest in the need to make major improvements in the provision of primary school physical education.¹⁴

Provision for physical education at second-level

This section will outline the major statistical trends which emerge at second-level based on Department of education records from 1970 to 1994. In addition, statistical data which have been collected from other sources will be referred to in order to compare and validate the statistics which have been collated by the Department.

Number of students taking physical education

The registration figures for teachers which were outlined in chapter five provided an important indication of the position of physical education within second-level schools since 1965. One of the limitations of the figures, however, is the fact that they related to secondary and comprehensive schools only and they provided no direct information about the physical education experience for students. In order to obtain an overview of the contribution of the subject to the education of students it is necessary to look at a broader range of statistics. Perhaps one of the most important of these is the number of students undertaking physical education according to Department of Education records. Such figures are available since 1970 and are summarised in percentage form in Table 11 and are outlined in more detail in Appendix 4.¹⁵

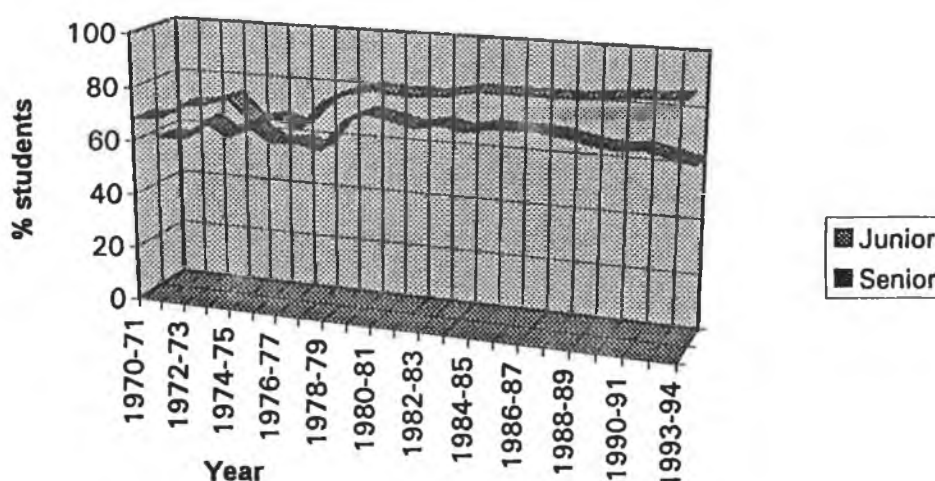
Table 11
Percentage of students taking physical education 1970-1994¹⁶

| Year | Junior | Senior | Total | Year | Junior | Senior | Total |
|---------|--------|--------|-------|---------|--------|--------|-------|
| 1970-71 | 68 | 57 | 65 | 1981-82 | 84 | 68 | 79 |
| 1971-72 | 69 | 57 | 65 | 1983-84 | 85 | 68 | 79 |
| 1972-73 | 74 | 64 | 71 | 1984-85 | 87 | 70 | 81 |
| 1973-74 | 75 | 59 | 70 | 1985-86 | 87 | 70 | 82 |
| 1974-75 | 78 | 63 | 73 | 1986-87 | 87 | 70 | 81 |
| 1975-76 | 70 | 58 | 67 | 1987-88 | 87 | 69 | 81 |
| 1976-77 | 72 | 59 | 68 | 1988-89 | 87 | 67 | 80 |
| 1977-78 | 69 | 57 | 65 | 1989-90 | 88 | 66 | 80 |
| 1978-79 | 79 | 68 | 76 | 1990-91 | 89 | 67 | 81 |
| 1979-80 | 83 | 72 | 80 | 1992-93 | 89 | 67 | 80 |
| 1980-81 | 85 | 70 | 80 | 1993-94 | 90 | 63 | 80 |

Physical education followed an overall growth in total student numbers and there was a gradual rise in the percentage of students taking the subject during the period. From an initial total of 98,643 in 1970, the number of students taking

physical education peaked in 1990-91 when it reached 267,447. The period saw the percentage of students taking the subject rise from 65 to over 80 per cent, following a relatively steady trend. This increase followed the overall expansion of student numbers which occurred during the period. Relative growth in physical education slowed down in the 1980's, however, with the overall percentage showing a marginal decline by the end of the decade and into the nineties. The percentage of students receiving physical education at junior cycle was invariably much higher than at senior cycle.

Figure 3
Percentage of students taking physical education at junior and senior cycle



At junior cycle growth has continued to a point where 90 per cent of students were reported as receiving physical education in 1993-94. At senior cycle a peak was reached in 1979-80 when 72 per cent of students took the subject. However, following a slow decline in the early eighties, there has been a marked fall-off in the percentage of students taking the subject, amplifying the claims that the increased emphasis on gaining points at the Leaving certificate examination has, in fact, caused a squeeze on a non-examinable subjects such as physical education. By 1993-94 only 63 per cent of Leaving certificate students were taking the subject.¹⁷

The statistics indicate that significant, if unspectacular, progress has been made in moving the percentage of students taking physical education upwards. Notably, there had been a relatively high proportion of students reported as having taken physical education in 1970-71 (68 per cent at junior cycle and 57 per cent at senior

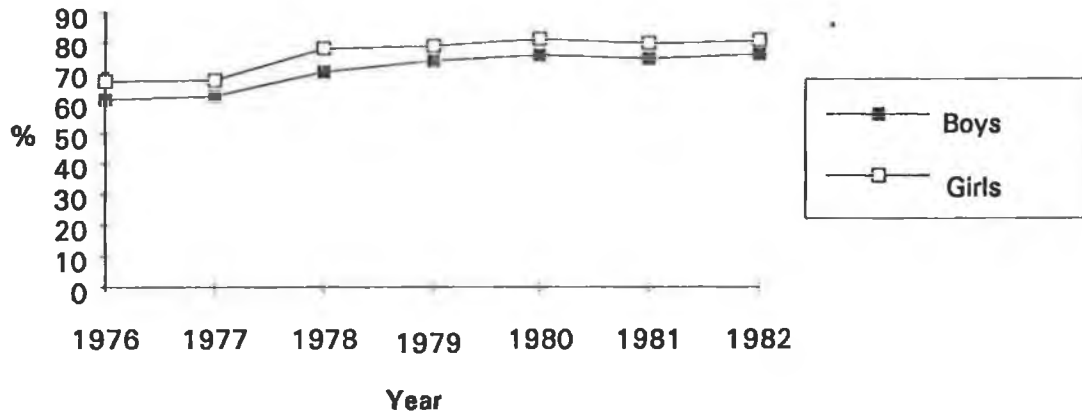
cycle). This figure re-inforces the teacher registration data which suggested that physical education was already making progress in the schools prior to the establishment of N.C.P.E. A possible distorting factor here, however, is the likelihood that the school returns were coloured somewhat by the unclear distinction between physical education and games.

While the Department figures have been criticised on the basis that games periods have often been counted as physical education, the 1970-71 figures underline the extent to which schools were providing for some type of physical activity for their students. It is also the case that 156 teachers had been registered by the time the 1971/72 school year came round, suggesting that there was at least a capacity to provide physical education to 93,600 students in the previous school year.¹⁸ The Department's figures claimed 98,643 students for that year. These figures provide a glimpse at the initial base from which physical education in the post Ling-Sion Hill era developed. Such a perspective may be somewhat blurred, but it is indisputable that school principals perceived that almost two-thirds of students in the entire school population were exposed to physical education at the start of the 1970's.

Number of schools providing physical education

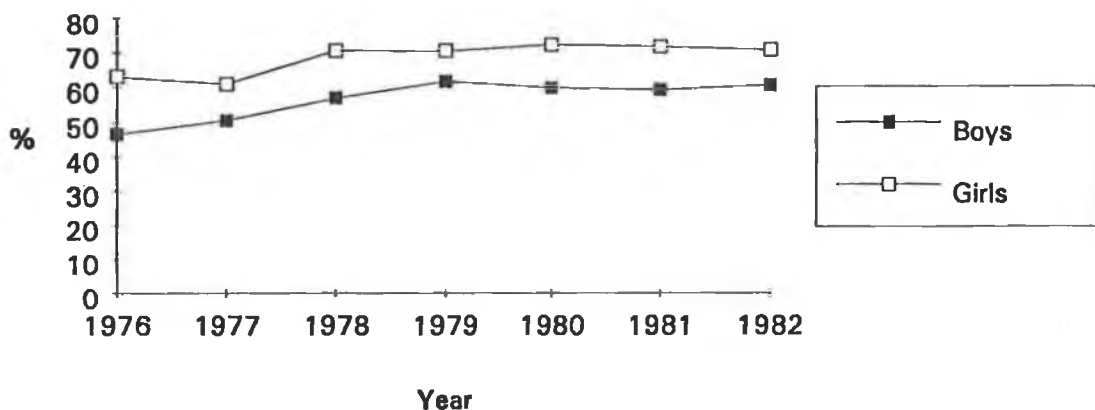
A further important indicator of the rate of development of physical education is the number of schools declaring to offer the subject. While the Department only provides data from 1981 onwards, it is possible to extrapolate the number of schools offering physical education from the mid 1970's using the statistics which were recorded in relation to the number of boys and girls schools offering physical education. These figures show that there was a steady rise in the number of schools offering physical education from 1976 onwards at both junior and senior cycles and this trend is outlined in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4
Schools offering physical education to boys and girls at junior cycle



At junior cycle, the late 1970's saw a sharp rise in the number of schools offering physical education, with the period between 1976 and 1979 showing the most rapid rate of growth.

Figure 5
Schools offering physical education to boys and girls at senior cycle



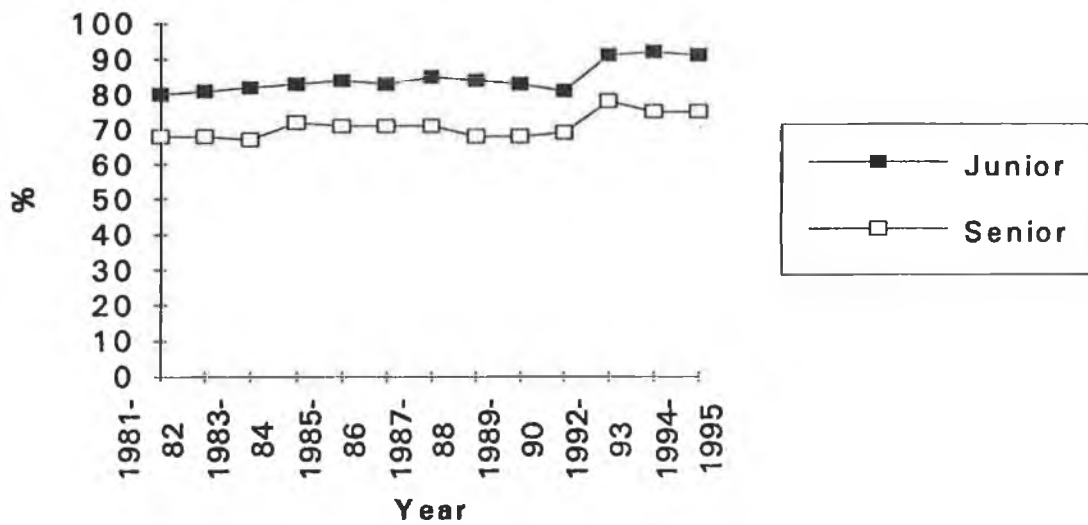
These figures are consistent with the later Department of Education data which reported the number of schools offering physical education from 1981 onwards. These data are summarised in Table 12.

Table 12
Schools offering physical education at junior and senior cycle

| Year | PE junior | All schools junior | % PE junior | PE senior | All schools senior | % PE senior |
|---------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|
| 1981-82 | 645 | 806 | 80 | 521 | 769 | 68 |
| 1982-83 | 651 | 805 | 81 | 530 | 775 | 68 |
| 1983-84 | 656 | 802 | 82 | 520 | 777 | 67 |
| 1984-85 | 668 | 801 | 83 | 558 | 778 | 72 |
| 1985-86 | 672 | 797 | 84 | 551 | 771 | 71 |
| 1986-87 | 666 | 799 | 83 | 555 | 777 | 71 |
| 1987-88 | 676 | 800 | 85 | 552 | 780 | 71 |
| 1988-89 | 670 | 797 | 84 | 531 | 777 | 68 |
| 1989-90 | 655 | 789 | 83 | 529 | 783 | 68 |
| 1990-91 | 626 | 772 | 81 | 528 | 770 | 69 |
| 1992-93 | 699 | 771 | 91 | 591 | 763 | 78 |
| 1993-94 | 699 | 764 | 92 | 563 | 755 | 75 |
| 1994-95 | 692 | 757 | 91 | 555 | 745 | 75 |

Once again the junior cycle provision was higher than that at senior cycle, in the context of an overall and gradual increase in the number of schools offering physical education, as outlined in Figure 6.

Figure 6
Percentage of schools offering physical education at junior and senior cycle



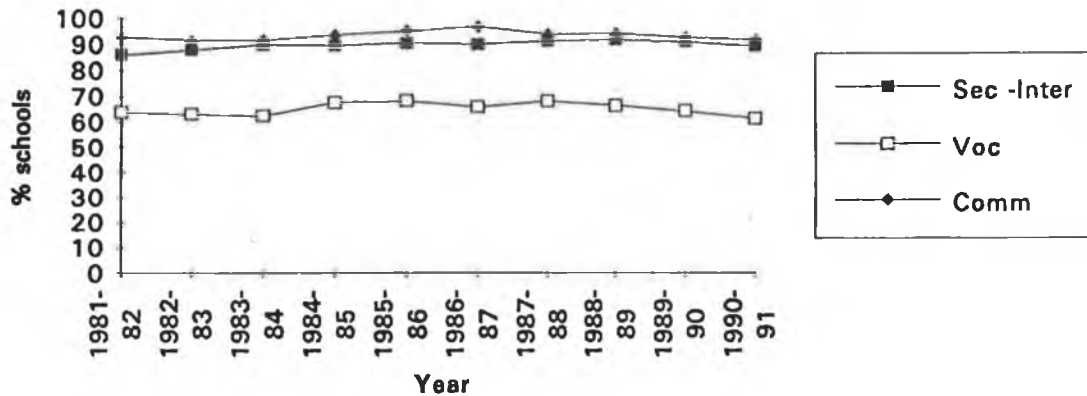
A notable trend has emerged since 1992, where the percentage of schools reporting physical education at both junior and senior cycle has shown a marked increase. Changes in data collection, storage and retrieval systems within the Department may account for some of this variation.¹⁹ There is some inconsistency when these figures are compared with the trend in Table 11, where a steady decline in the numbers of students taking physical education at senior cycle was noted. It is also possible that more schools are offering the subject to students, but that there is a more selective delivery or optional up-take within the senior cycle.

The overall growth in the number of schools offering physical education during the period was undoubtedly related to the increased availability of qualified teachers from the N.C.P.E. and Thomond College of Education. As well as this it was indicative of a willingness on the part of schools to employ physical education teachers. Despite this, there appears to be a resilient and significant number of schools which has not provided for physical education. Up to 10 per cent of schools have not provided the subject at junior cycle according to the 1994-95 figures. Twenty-five per cent of schools reported that they did not provide physical education at senior cycle during that year. It may be that school size and resources are responsible for this situation. Provision according to school type will now be outlined with a view to casting some light on this issue.

School type and provision for physical education

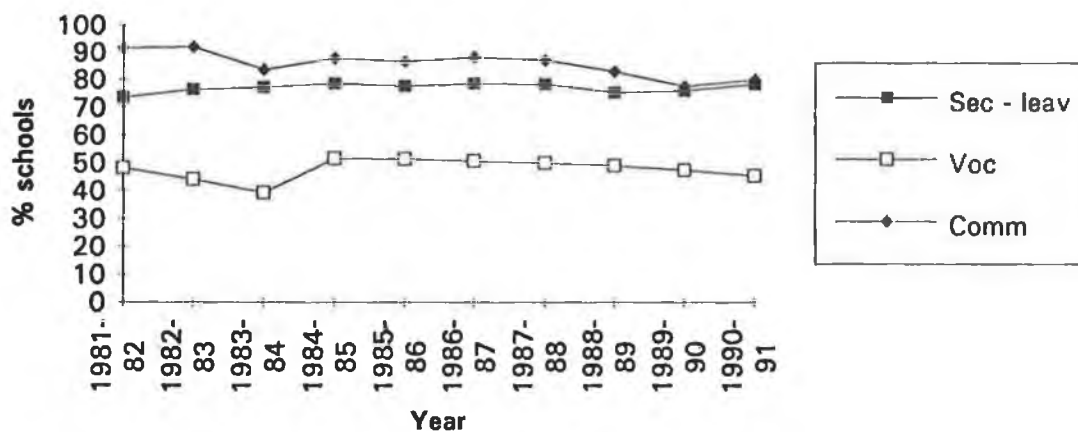
Provision for physical education varies across the variable of school type. Definitive figures for these schools are only available from 1980 onwards and these are summarised in Figures 7 and 8 for a ten year period in junior and senior cycles respectively. During the 1990's the data collection on this variable has been somewhat discontinuous. In general, community and comprehensive schools were most likely to provide physical education while vocational schools were least likely to do so. Secondary schools fell closer to community and comprehensive schools in terms of provision.

Figure 7
School type and physical education at junior cycle



Notably, it has been the community/comprehensive sector which led the way in provision for physical education. The comprehensive ideal, the relative newness of these schools and the policy of providing many such schools with relatively high quality facilities were all likely contributors to this trend. At junior cycle, provision in these schools has been consistently above 90 per cent since 1981. Secondary schools have followed a similar, though slightly lower trend, with recent years demonstrating a convergence with the figures in community/comprehensive schools. Vocational schools have consistently had up to one-third of schools which have not provided physical education at junior cycle. The trends at senior cycle follow a similar vein, although more marked, as outlined in Figure 8. From a position of being clearly ahead in terms of provision in 1981, community and comprehensive schools have fallen to a position of near parity with secondary schools, reflecting the trend of convergence which was noted at junior cycle.

Figure 8
School type and physical education at senior cycle



The figures from both levels would seem to suggest that the comprehensive curriculum ideal may have become diluted within community/comprehensive schools. School amalgamations may have contributed to this trend where the terms community and comprehensive may be used to reflect the organisational entity which is formed as a result of such amalgamations rather than the actual nature of the school which is subsequently formed. If this trend was repeated for other subjects there would be serious implications for the original vision which was developed for community and comprehensive schools in the early 1960's.

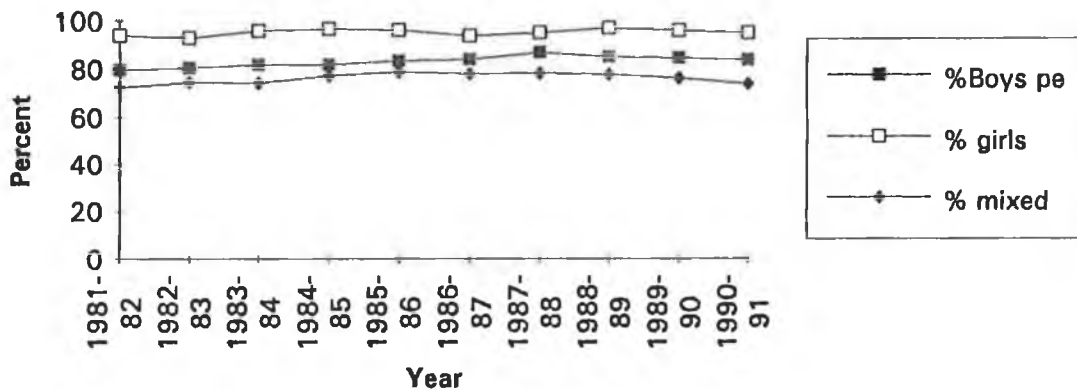
Secondary schools have incorporated the subject to high levels also. The uneasy relationship between the games tradition and physical education as well as the propensity to place emphasis on Leaving certificate examination subjects appear to have been important factors which have inhibited further growth in this sector. Vocational schools once again displayed a very low level of provision at senior cycle. Little over half of such schools provided for physical education. School size and available facilities seem to be major factors in this regard.²⁰

Gender differences in provision

In chapter five, the registration figures for physical education showed that there are over twice as many female physical education teachers as males in the system. This trend is reflected, to some degree, in the figures relating to provision of physical education to boys and girls. There has been a very strong relationship between

gender and provision of physical education at junior and senior cycle. The trend for the ten year period 1982-1991 in junior cycle is outlined in Figure 9.

Figure 9
Schools offering physical education at junior cycle - by
gender of students



At both junior and senior cycle girls' schools have far outpaced either boys' or mixed schools in provision for physical education. These trends reflect the points which have been made elsewhere to the effect that girls' schools have been much more friendly towards the physical education innovation. Mixed schools ranked lowest in terms of provision at junior cycle. These trends are replicated at senior cycle.

Specialist teachers and the time allocated to physical education

Central to the development of physical education has been the training and employment of specialist teachers. Chapter five outlined the general pattern of registration for such teachers since 1965 and showed that significant progress was made until the early 1980's, when the rate of registrations slowed down considerably. Apart from one effort in 1975, the Department of Education has not published data on the relationship between the number of specialists working in the system and the time allocation for the subject.²¹ However, other research exists which provides a significant degree of evidence on this matter.²²

Darmody recorded the level of physical education up-take Munster as outlined in Table 13. He also noted that within schools which did not have a qualified physical education teacher, games were invariably taught to the students by non-specialist teachers, some of whom had coaching qualifications. In one school, as many as sixteen unqualified teachers were timetabled for physical education.²³ Seventy per cent of physical education teachers were timetabled to teach games while up to one-third of physical education teachers spent more than five hours per week on co-curricular activity,²⁴ a finding which has been supported by other studies.²⁵

Table 13
Schools with qualified physical education teachers

| County | % schools offering PE |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Tipperary (north) | 70 |
| Tipperary (south) | 59 |
| Limerick (excluding city) | 44 |
| Kerry | 57 |

On the basis of Darmody's work it is possible to calculate the numbers of specialist teachers that would be required across four counties in order to fully implement the Department of Education recommendations for physical education.²⁶ O'Sullivan and McCarthy have summarised this work which is outlined in Table 14.²⁷ Notably, the need for 146 teachers was heightened by the fact that physical education teachers were found to be teaching the subject for just over half of their teaching time.

Table 14
Percentage of schools with qualified physical education teachers and number of teachers needed to meet minimum Department of education standards for physical education

| County | % schools | No teachers | PE hours | Teacher equivalents (current) | Teacher equivalents (required) |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Waterford | 73 | 24 | 275 | 12.5 | 33.5 |
| Tipp. (south) | 64 | 14 | 180 | 8.2 | 27.5 |
| Tipp. (north) | 70 | 13 | 163 | 7.3 | 23.7 |
| Kerry | 57 | 18 | 246 | 10.6 | 40.0 |
| Limerick | 44 | 11 | 145 | 6.6 | 21.9 |

Higgins found that 34 per cent of P.E.A.I. members surveyed reported that non-qualified personnel were taking physical education in their schools, suggesting that physical education teachers had either chosen or were compelled to work with such

teachers while bearing reduced loads themselves in the actual teaching of physical education.²⁸ The consequences for the student have been exposure to relatively low levels of physical education on a weekly basis, with the situation deteriorating progressively from first to sixth year as will be seen later in Figure 13.

The reduced levels of time spent teaching physical education may have been related to the changing profile of the profession. According to the *Assist* survey 47 per cent of the teaching force had 10 or more years experience in 1987, as outlined in Table 15.²⁹

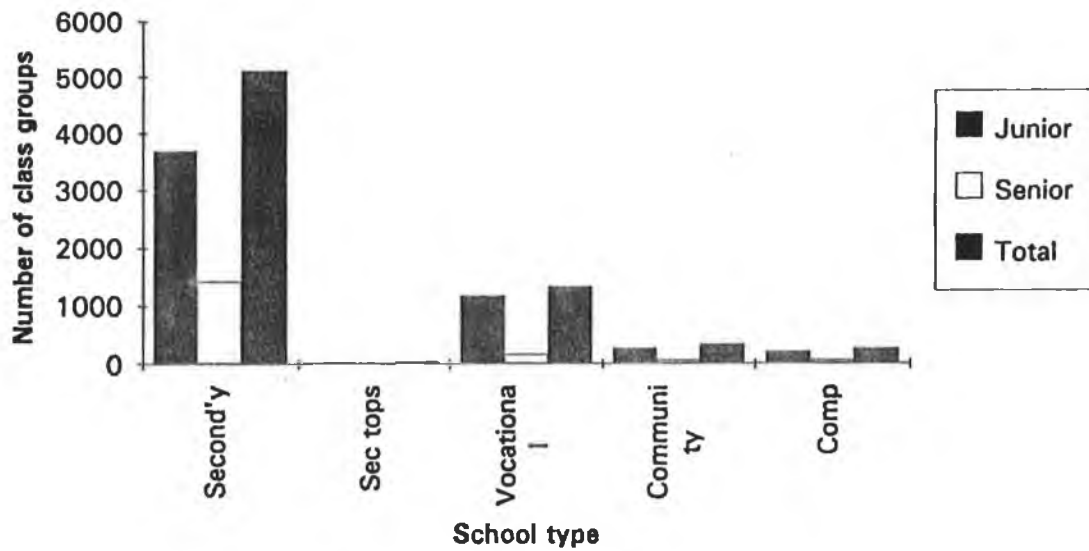
Table 15
Profile of physical education profession³⁰

| Years experience | % of teachers |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 0 to 4 years | 20 |
| 5 to 9 years | 31 |
| 10 to 14 years | 30 |
| 15 to 19 years | 13 |
| More than 19 years | 4 |

The annual reports of the Department of Education provide a quantitative overview of the provision for physical education in schools. However, such statistics do not provide any indication of the quality of the experience which is provided for students. An important measure of such quality relates to the time provision which is made for the teaching of physical education. The Department did endeavour in one year, 1975/76, to calculate the number of class groups taking physical education and the number of teaching hours given over to the subject. The figures can be combined to provide an estimation of the amount of time devoted to physical education each week, thus providing important baseline data at a crucial period in the development of physical education within the school system. In addition, it is possible to establish the number of teachers required to service the subject at the time assuming teaching loads for each teacher ranging from 18 to 22 hours per week.

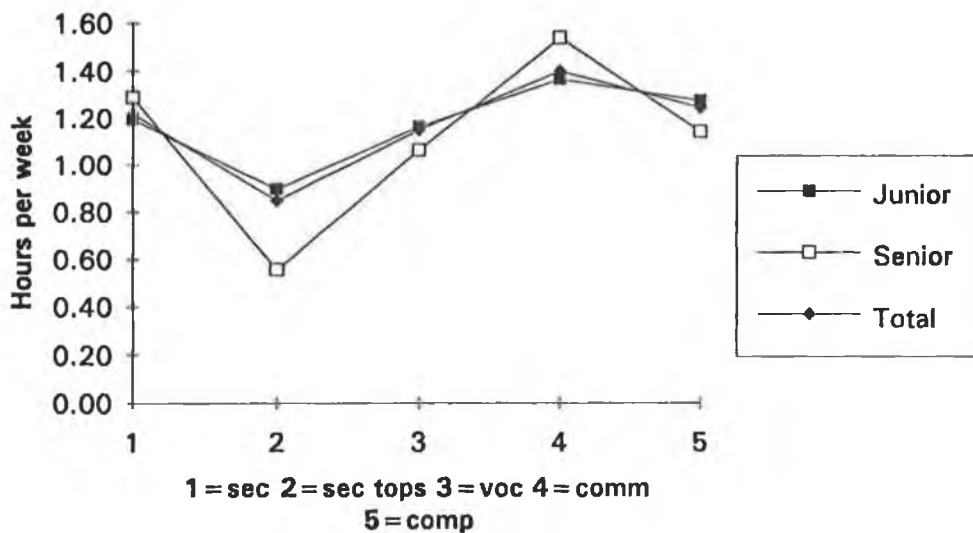
Because these figures were provided on one occasion and around the time that the first graduates of N.C.P.E. were available for work in schools they merit close attention and the data are summarised in Figures 10, 11 and 12.³¹

Figure 10
Number of class groups taking physical education 1975/76



According to the Department statistics, a total of 7,051 class groups took physical education in 1975/76. At junior cycle there were 5,344 class groups and 1,707 at senior cycle. The major proportion of these classes were in secondary school (72 per cent) with 19 per cent in vocational schools and the remaining 9 per cent in the community/comprehensive sector.

Figure 11
Hours per week physical education 1975/76

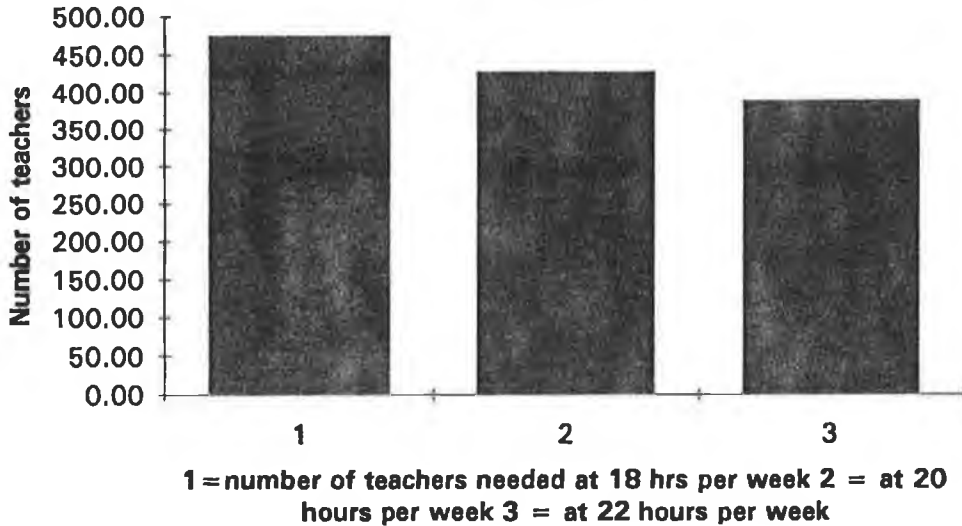


The time allocated to physical education varied from 51 minutes per week in secondary tops up to 84 minutes per week in community schools as illustrated in Figure 11. Secondary schools averaged 73 minutes per week which was slightly ahead of vocational schools (69 minutes) and slightly behind comprehensive schools (74 minutes).

The average time at junior cycle was 72 minutes per week, while at senior cycle it was 76 minutes. While the number of class groups was significantly less at the senior cycle it is interesting that where schools did offer senior cycle physical education the time allocation was greater than that offered at junior cycle. This is important data, given the trend which was to later emerge and which saw a considerable diminution of physical education at senior cycle. These results must be tempered by the fact that only 58 per cent of all senior cycle students took physical education in 1975/76 compared to 70 per cent at junior cycle.

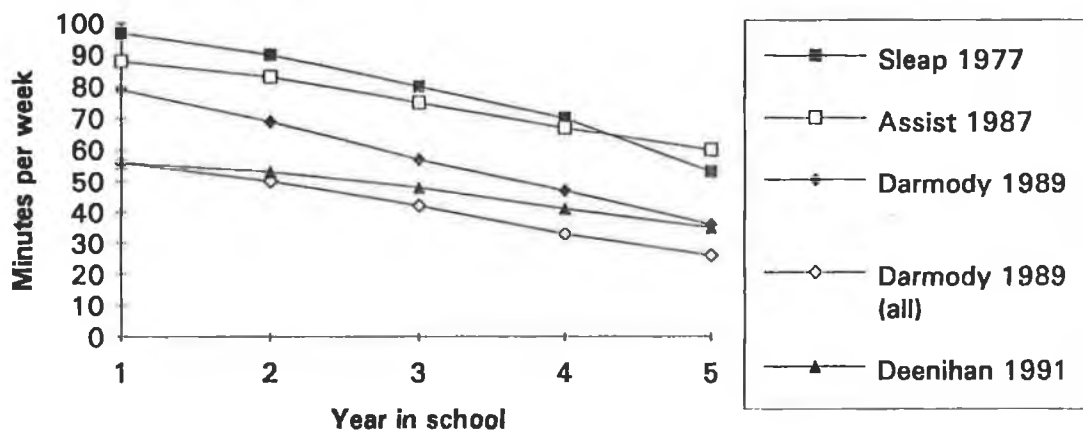
Physical education was taught to all students for an average of 73 minutes per week. Based on the data provided by the Department it is possible to project the number of physical education teachers that would have been required to deliver physical education to all class groups taking the subject in 1975/76. These data are summarised in Figure 12. It can be seen that if physical education teachers taught an average of 18 hours per week there was a requirement of 475 teachers to service the system at that time. This number was 427 and 389 for an average of 20 and 22 hours per week teaching respectively. By comparing these statistics with the actual teacher registrations up to 1975/76 (at 20 hours per week) it can be noted that 313 would be required to deliver the Departments reported figures within secondary schools, while there were 320 teachers registered.

Figure 12
Number of teachers required to deliver physical education 1975/76



These figures suggest a degree of internal consistency within the Department's data gathering approach, hence providing important baseline information against which subsequent developments can be measured. The time devoted to physical education has also been studied by Sleep,³² McGarry,³³ Department of Education,³⁴ Darmody,³⁵ Higgins,³⁶ Deenihan.³⁷ The results of these research efforts have been consistent and some of the key findings are summarised in Figure 13.

Figure 13 Comparison of time provision for physical education 1977-1991



While the methods and samples of these studies varied considerably, it is useful to plot the trend in relation to timetabled physical education over a 15 year period. A notable feature of the research results was the inverse relationship which existed between year in school and the number of minutes devoted to physical education. Senior class groups received less physical education than those at an earlier stage in the school cycle. It is also notable that, over time, there appears to have been a gradual downward trend in the time devoted to timetabled physical education. From these studies it can be seen that provision in schools lags well behind the Department of Education guidelines of two hours per week for physical education.³⁸ Time devoted to physical education in Irish schools also falls considerably below the levels of all other countries in the European Union, where the weekly average is well above two hours per week.³⁹

Grants for major facilities

An essential element of a comprehensive physical education programme within the school system is a reasonable facility infrastructure. McDonough noted that by the time he took up his position the Building Unit of the Department of Education had become involved in supporting the construction of 23 gymnasia in second-level schools.⁴⁰ These developments were indicative of an expanding investment on the part of the State in education generally and laid the basis for an improvement in the place of physical education in schools.

This building programme persisted during the 1970's and extensive support was given to the construction of quality physical education facilities in community and comprehensive schools. By 1977, 43 percent of schools which employed physical education teachers owned a gymnasium, with a further 34 percent having access to such a facility. Thirty one per cent of schools had access to a swimming pool, of which 7 per cent were actually owned by the schools. Playing fields were owned by 58 per cent of schools and only 12 per cent of schools did not have access to pitches.⁴¹ The late 1970's and the 1980's saw the arresting of this positive trend, with limited provision being made for indoor physical education facilities. Many schools proceeded with their own building plans in the hope that they would get support from the Department of Education. When such support was coming it tended to impose restrictions based on the size of the school - a policy which meant that many schools only managed to secure funding for halls which were not large enough to house a regulation basketball court.

The outcome of this approach was that the delivery of physical education to classes of up to 30 pupils was quite difficult. In addition, the criteria for allocating funds was seriously questioned by the P.E.A.I.⁴² By 1991 the provision for indoor physical education facilities had not advanced to the level that might have been expected since Sleaf's study in 1977.⁴³ Higgins⁴⁴ found that almost 60 percent of schools did not have an all-purpose hall. Significantly, the community/comprehensive sector was the best resourced in terms of indoor facilities, reflecting the positive outcomes of the process of comprehensivisation which had been initiated by the State in the 1960's and followed through on during the early 1970's.

Such a policy appears to have waned somewhat later in the decade and in the 1980's and 1990's, with school amalgamations occurring in a manner which did not truly reflect the comprehensive ideal. During such mergers it appears provision for subjects such as physical education has been somewhat neglected and that the policy of comprehensivisation has been superseded by a process of rationalisation, with a limited broadening of the curriculum available to students as a result.

Validity and reliability of Department of Education statistics

As was indicated at the outset of this chapter, some criticism has been expressed concerning the Department of Education statistics on the basis that they do not reflect the circumstances as they exist in schools.⁴⁵ The main criticism of the figures related to their accuracy in reporting the actual situation in schools. The underlying tenet of such criticism was that school principals either over-reported the level of physical education provided or that games periods and activities which were not carried on under the direction of a specialist physical education teacher have often been reported as physical education. These criticisms must be considered in the light of the validity and reliability of the statistics which are provided by the Department.

On the question of validity, the Department of Education statistics provide a clear measure of what goes on in schools as reported by school principals. There can be no question but that the Department is justified in collecting data from school principals concerning the subject offerings in the school and the number of students taking such subjects. Such data are a fundamental measure of what is happening in schools and have been available since the late 1960's. Without such statistics it would be impossible to chart the position in schools, bearing in mind the central importance of the perceptions and decision-making processes of the management of individual schools in determining the subjects which are offered to students.

It may be the case that school principals mis-report the actual situation, as Higgins noted.⁴⁶ He found that 20 per cent of schools did not distinguish between physical education and games, and this suggests that the Departmental figures should be adjusted accordingly. It could also be argued that the perception of school principals of what is actually happening is a valid measure given the role of the principal in determining priorities within each individual school. Furthermore, if the figures of the Department of Education concerning physical education are inflated through the inclusion of games periods, it is an indication of the continued and unresolved tension which exists between the roles to be played by timetabled physical education and traditional games periods.

So, in the consideration of whether the Department of Education statistics measure what they purport to measure it must be stated that they do provide an important indication of what principals perceive to be physical education experiences within schools. Such a definition may not tally with that of physical educationists, but this discrepancy is one which ought to be a point of discussion and development, providing an important barometer of the different traditions which exist within the system for the development of students within physical activity.

The reliability of the figures may be open to question on the basis that the interpretation from school to school may vary concerning what is considered to be physical education. It is also the case that variations in the form of data gathering, storage and retrieval by the Department have disrupted reliability. Despite these issues it has been noted that a strong degree of internal consistency existed in the 1975/76 figures which were subject to cross-checking with validated Registration Council figures.

The Department, from the time it introduced a more statistical form of public reporting in 1967/68, concentrated on the *quantitative* aspects of the system. It is here that the biggest criticism can be made. While the statistical information provided has been very extensive there is an almost complete eschewing of the *qualitative* elements of physical education provision. Apart from one brief attempt for the 1975/76 school year, no policy-driven effort has been made to establish the extent and quality of the exposure which students received in physical education, or any other subject for that matter.

The result is that the figures, which in certain respects reflect well on the overall development of the subject in the system, mask the true situation which is often one of fleeting and rushed experiences for the students and logistical headaches for the physical education teacher. However, while there are doubts about the exact nature of the information reported to the Department, the quantitative statistics provide a useful measure over time. On the qualitative side, little attempt has been made to establish the situation, casting doubt on the overall usefulness of raw figures which make no attempt to report the quality of education to students. The issues relating to the qualitative aspects of physical education in second-level schools will now be dealt with, based on the available research evidence, most of which derived its origin from outside the Department of Education. No systematic evidence exists in relation to the primary sector, although occasional references will also be made to this stage of the educational process.

Qualitative aspects of physical education provision at second-level

The two syllabi which have been developed for physical education since 1973 have both attempted to define the shape of the subject.⁴⁷ The elements of both documents were outlined in the previous chapter. They have represented the aspirational aspects of policy and have sought to provide a full range of movement and educational experiences for the student. As has been seen, however, the situation within the school system has not matched the aspirations of the syllabi and the qualitative aspects of physical education policy have been variable, depending on school circumstances. The orientations of four key groups to the physical education initiative will now be outlined. Teachers, students, school principals and parents all have valuable perspectives on the role and effectiveness of physical education in schools and particularly with reference to the quality of what is provided. Evidence from these groups will serve an important complementary role alongside the Department of Education statistical indicators.

The orientation of school principals to physical education

The position of physical education in schools is critically dependent upon the decision-making processes which operate within individual schools. This is especially the case given the non-compulsory nature of the subject and the wide range of demands made on school resources. Given the Department of Education position that physical education **should** rather than **must** be taught in schools the need to have a supportive principal is a most frequently talked about issue when physical educationists meet.

Higgins conducted an in-depth study into the attitudes of 187 school principals to physical education.⁴⁸ He found that the following factors were related to a positive disposition towards the subject on their part:

- *The qualities of the individual teacher
- *The resource allocation from the State
- *The standard of indoor facilities at the school
- *A change in the regulations governing the student-teacher ratio in State schools
- *The provision of more time in the school day
- *A reduction in the academic pressure on students at senior cycle

The study also found that physical education was regarded as a very valuable subject by the majority of school principals. Its contribution to the health, leisure and physical fitness of the students were seen as being important by the principals. In addition, the development of motor skills was regarded as a significant attribute of the subject. Higgins also found that the status of physical education teachers was on a par with other teachers in the eyes of the school principals.⁴⁹ The development of aesthetic appreciation, moral development and cognitive appreciation were least accepted by principals as positive claims for the benefits of physical education.

The response of physical education teachers in relation to the development of physical education in second-level schools

The greatest difficulty which has faced individual teachers in the implementation of the physical education syllabus has been the diversity of provision in schools. Variations in facilities between schools, the ratio of physical education teachers to students and the amount of physical education class time provided on a weekly basis for each student have led the professionals in the field to interpret the syllabus according to their own school situation or to ignore it altogether. Consequently, there has been considerable variation in the goals, content and outcomes of physical education programmes around the country.

According to McGarry the goals most valued by physical education teachers were general physical development, enjoyment, skill acquisition and, at senior cycle, preparation for leisure.⁵⁰ Darmody has conducted extensive research into the actual physical education programmes in schools and, in the course of a number of surveys in the Munster region, has found that a strong emphasis has been placed on the provision of experiences for students in team games.⁵¹ This orientation, which far exceeded syllabus recommendations on the matter, was somewhat balanced in years

one and two by the inclusion of other activities such as gymnastics, dance and aquatics. In general, however, Darmody found that the emphasis on team games increased as students progressed through the school programme.⁵²

Darmody's work provided an important overview of the status and nature of physical education in schools and indicated a concern among teachers to provide a quality programme, and in many cases, informally evaluate student progress.⁵³ These results reflected a moderate degree of success in the introduction of the physical education initiative into schools, but also indicated the difficulties in implementing a quality and balanced programme in the context of strong games traditions, high student/teacher ratios (for example 1:385 in county Waterford)⁵⁴ and the apparent decreasing involvement of physical education teachers in teaching the subject as their careers progressed.

One of the objectives of Darmody's work was 'to serve as a basis for discussion and in-service work'.⁵⁵ In this regard he successfully identified a number of issues which could be addressed in order to assist teachers in mediating in their own circumstances and thus provide students with a wider range and greater depth of physical education experiences. This research became the basis for a number of curriculum development projects which were to serve as an important focus for the profession over a number of years.

These projects were reflective of a pro-active approach among the profession. This orientation is evident in the substantial volumes which charted the proceedings from the national physical education conferences from 1984 right up to 1995.⁵⁶ Invariably the conferences dealt with issues which had a direct impact on the experiences of the student, with an increasing trend of involving physical educationists from the Irish system in the delivery of presentations. The 1984 conference was an important benchmark in that it saw the revival of the P.E.A.I. and the keynote address was delivered by Dr. Ed Walsh, who was Chairman of the Curriculum and Examinations Board at the time. His address noted that physical education was to be one of the core subjects at junior cycle.⁵⁷

Liam Dugdale and Michael Darmody were central figures in the 1984 conference and continued to play important roles in subsequent years. By 1987 they had moved their focus to the individual physical education teacher and how s/he could provide the best possible programme within the context of available resources. This approach consisted of a number of workshops which were entitled *A re-appraisal*

of the physical education curriculum and which sought to address many of the issues which had been raised in Darmody's earlier research and which had emerged at national conferences and regional meetings of the P.E.A.I.⁵⁸

The empowerment approach which characterised this in-service work continued into the *Physical education: assessment in second level teaching (Assist)* project.⁵⁹ This project derived its origin from the concerns of physical educationists that there was no form of formal assessment of the outcomes of the physical education in schools. This situation had persisted despite the official Department of Education position as outlined in the *Rules and programmes for second-level schools*:

Each pupil, on the successful completion of the programme should attain the aims and objectives as outlined earlier. Each individual's progress will be recorded over the five year programme. This will be done in the form of individual files or record cards which will have information on the pupils progress in relation to the various objectives. The use of micro computers for the storage and processing of pupils records should be undertaken where possible.⁶⁰

The introductory section to the *Assist* manual noted that over thirty per cent of physical education teachers did not carry out any formal assessment of pupil progress.⁶¹ The same document pointed to the deleterious effects of this situation:

The diversity and richness of the subject continues to grow, but its overall place in the system has been stunted by the absence of any systematic means of assessing pupil progress. The breadth and depth of pupil learning experiences has gone largely unrecognised - perhaps devaluing the work which has been done by both pupils and teachers.⁶²

This linkage of teachers and students was appropriate and during the many conferences, courses and surveys of the 1980's and 1990's physical education teachers displayed a genuine concern for the quality of student experience. Frustrated by the lack of time to deliver a quality programme, teachers have been reluctant to go down the road of adding an assessment process which might take up more time and, very importantly, might take from student enjoyment of their experiences in physical education.

The teacher-driven approach which was taken to the project inevitably meant that the issue of assessment became a live one within the P.E.A.I. Following a lengthy debate at the 1987 Annual General Meeting a motion was adopted which conditionally supported the inclusion of assessment of physical education with reference to the Junior certificate:

..that PE be a certified subject at Junior certificate level. Subject in (sic) the following conditions:

(i) Any such assessment procedures leading to certification be designed and piloted by practising teachers

(ii) That discussion take place with the wider body of PE teachers with regard to any system of assessment for certification so designed and approved by the A.G.M. of the P.E.A.I.⁶³

The adoption of this position was a major step for the Association and inherent in the motion was the distinction between certification and formal examinations of a written nature. However, there was little progress on the issue and it took until the 1996 Annual General Meeting for a similar motion to be endorsed, this time including the senior cycle in the deliberations.⁶⁴ The *Assist* project illustrated the potential of a more formal approach to the assessment of physical education and provided an example of how an empowerment approach could be a catalyst for practical progress, even in the most difficult of circumstances.⁶⁵ In the early stages of the project Diarmuid Leonard recorded some tangible signs of empowerment:

Already the teachers have to some extent transcended certain limitations commonly ascribed to their normal attitudes towards new ideas proposed to them. They have demonstrated willingness and ability to overcome difficulties in translating new guiding principles into specific operational procedures. They have been able to modify their normal teaching behaviour to accommodate new assessment procedures(though it should be recorded that the cost of these, in time and effort, is now the subject of experimentation).⁶⁶

The origination of quality material for use in schools was also evidence of a major commitment and considerable skill on the part of the participating teachers. From the Department of Education view-point it was an important example of teacher-led in-service. The *Assist* project was but one example of incisive curriculum development work which has been initiated by physical education inspector Michael

Darmody. Further projects in *Dance in Education*⁶⁷ and *Action for Life*⁶⁸ have yielded tangible results in terms of teacher participation and applied materials and methodologies. Darmody's responsiveness to the concerns of teachers has meant that potentially problematic areas can now boast the most attractive and practical resources (assessment, dance and health related fitness).⁶⁹

The response of the teachers in the system, therefore, has been seen to be one which has managed to overcome frustration and cynicism and to get on with the job of developing physical education within schools and in the system generally. What has happened, in effect, is that teachers have become pro-active within their own sphere of influence. In addition, the work of Michael Darmody, with the support of some of his colleagues, and the not so quiet lobbying of the P.E.A.I. has meant that in a relatively short space of time the position and profile of physical education has consolidated. The erosion in provision which has been prompted by recent policies is not on a scale which is likely to disrupt the ever solidifying of the purposefulness of physical educationists in the system. Indeed, as the profession ages, unexpected benefits may begin to accrue as physical education teachers move to more senior and influential positions within the system, provided a policy of employing greater numbers of new physical education graduates is developed.

The response of students

Despite the strong student orientation of the conferences and in-service activities of the 1980's and 1990's, the response of students to the provisions of the syllabus within the context of delivered physical education classes has not been widely researched. Recent evidence suggests that school physical education is positively regarded by the recipients long after they have left school. In a Department of Education and Department of Health study, 65 per cent of those who had taken physical education in school 'thought that the subject had a positive influence on their long term enjoyment of sport'.⁷⁰ Notably, the percentage of the population which has been exposed to physical education at school has increased over time with 61 per cent of the total population having had experience of the subject as outlined in Table 16.

Table 16
Physical education as part of the school programme by age⁷¹

| Age Group | % who had PE in school | % who had no PE in school |
|----------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 16-18 years | 88 | 12 |
| 19-34 years | 86 | 14 |
| 35-54 years | 61 | 39 |
| 55-64 years | 34 | 66 |
| 65-75 years | 22 | 78 |
| Overall | 61 | 39 |

Despite the dissatisfactions which persist relating to provision, there is evidence to suggest that students are interested in the subject in large numbers. The active nature of physical education in a predominantly academic curriculum has meant that it has always had a particular attraction for second-level students.

Interest across the curriculum is varied, however, and there are important gender differences. In an extensive survey, representing in the region of one per cent of the second-level school population, Jones, Duffy, Murphy and Dineen⁷² found that swimming, badminton, outdoor pursuits and volleyball were the activities which were most strongly perceived as being gender neutral. A number of other activities were assigned 'male' or 'female' labels very strongly by the sample, indicating that there are very strong gender associations with such sports as indicated in Table 17.⁷³

Table 17
Perception of activities as 'male' or 'female'

| Male | Male/Female | Female |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Gaelic Football | 1. Swimming | 1. Yoga |
| 2. Hurling | 2. Badminton | 2. Dance |
| 3. Weight Training | 3. Outdoor Pursuits | 3. Gymnastics |
| 4. Soccer | 4. Volleyball | 4. Netball |

Many of the findings of the study related to broader-than-school issues, which in itself was an interesting departure on the part of the P.E.A.I. The linkage between school physical education and wider societal issues had not been a strong element of physical education thinking up to that time and notably the project received the support of the Sports Section of the Department of Education and a foreword was included in the final publication from the Minister for Sport.⁷⁴

The study consisted of a stratified random sample which received responses from 86 physical education teachers and 2,051 senior cycle second-level students. On the question of class organisation there was an overwhelming view amongst the sample, which was drawn from the first year of senior cycle, that physical education should be taught in a mixed context. Similarly, there was strong support for the view that the same activity should be offered to both sexes in physical education classes. This view was taken in spite of the perceived tendency that boys were more influential in determining class content.

Participation in co-curricular activity was high with 72 percent of the sample indicating some level of involvement. This finding once again highlighted the important role which such activity plays in building on and complementing the work of the physical education programme. Seventy-nine per cent of the students were positively disposed towards joining some form of sports club on leaving school. The reality would appear to be quite different with a large, though unsubstantiated, fall-off in participation in physical activity in the late teens. Clearly, improvements in school-club links could help to capitalise on the seemingly positive dispositions of the students to continue their involvement.

The students reported a rate of one student in ten missing physical education class often. This was a significant, though not surprising, non-participation rate. It is likely that medical reasons, perceived ability and perceived attractiveness of the activities offered were factors in this regard. Girls were perceived as being more likely to excuse themselves from class and over one-third of teachers indicated that menstruation was an acceptable reason for non-participation in physical education class.

One of the most striking findings of the P.E.A.I. study related to the body image of respondents, particularly females:

Girls displayed an alarming tendency to be unhappy about important aspects of their bodies. The fact that up to one-third were unhappy with their weight and shape is a strong reflection of modern media about the characteristics associated with the ideal female.⁷⁵

The study went on to suggest that: 'Fundamentally all activities in physical education should seek to promote more positive body image in all pupils and amongst girls in particular'.⁷⁶ More recently Duffy and Dugdale have suggested that physical education should seek to promote a love of and comfort with one's own body in the context of an 'appreciation of physical activity for its own sake'.⁷⁷ These concerns received no attention of any note in either of the syllabi which have been developed by the Department of Education to date.

Based on student response the potentially positive and negative aspects of competition in both physical education and sport were pointed out:

While competition is seen as potentially desirable by both boys and girls, physical activities should be played and presented in a context which recognises their significance in the overall scheme of things. Winning should not become an end in itself at the expense of the pupils respect for themselves, their bodies and for others. Extra-curricular sport and club related sport are areas where the win-at-all costs ethic is most likely to exist. There is much scope here for an examination of the role models provided by the adult leaders in these contexts and of possible initiatives which would improve their effectiveness in both technical and personal development contexts. A systematic, nation-wide coach education programme is required for this purpose.⁷⁸

A recommendation was also made in the study to the effect that a national policy in the area of school sport should be drawn up, with special emphasis on gender equity. It was suggested that:

The Department of Education, school authorities and physical education teachers should examine the allocation of facilities, time and expertise which are available to both sexes for extracurricular activities and ensure that they are distributed on an equal basis.⁷⁹

Many important outcomes emerged from the study which have significant implications for the physical education profession in general and for the Department of Education in particular, not least the interest and positive orientations which students hold towards this aspect of their education. The issue of the quality of the student experience in physical education takes on special significance in the light of the relatively low levels of time allocated to the subject nation-wide. Much of the evidence relating to these experiences has been generated through documentation of teacher perceptions and experiences. Leonard and Duffy identified a number of key

teacher observations which had emerged in the context of an empowerment-based curriculum project with over 30 physical education teachers.⁸⁰ Five main areas related to student experience were identified by the teachers:

1. Low level of student achievement
2. Limited range of activities
3. Coping with boys/girls and with groups of mixed ability
4. Difficulty in motivating senior cycle students
5. Entry levels of performance (first year)

Mention of all of these areas of concern has recurred extensively over the past twenty years in national conferences and P.E.A.I. annual and regional meetings. The Kellogg's Physical Education Awards catalogues have documented several projects which have dealt in one way or another with these issues.⁸¹ Duffy and Leonard found that teachers could identify a number of student-focused actions which might be initiated to improve the quality of physical education and these included:

1. More theory for senior cycle
2. Variety in audio-visual presentation
3. Develop new teacher competencies
4. Use of clubs to help raise standards.
5. Plotting individual student progress.
6. Bridge the gap with primary school.
7. Student involvement in organisation and administration
8. Use of topical material.⁸²

These proposed actions reflect the continuing concern of physical educationists in developing quality experiences for their students. In turn, it appears that students have generally responded well to the physical education programme in schools, despite the limitations in provision which were noted earlier.

The perspective of parents

The pre-dominantly positive orientation towards physical education among school principals and students has more recently been re-inforced in the context of the increasing parental involvement in educational matters. At the primary level, Kilfeather noted that 'Parents with a new heightened awareness are demanding - a major revision of the P.E. programme and clear statement of its aims and objectives - preservice and inservice education, maybe on a whole school basis to be made available to teachers to implement this programme'.⁸³

Kilfeather further suggested that consideration should be given to having at least one teacher in each school who would take an interest in physical education. She noted that Ireland lagged behind Europe in terms of time provided for primary school physical education and that a National Parent's Council study had found that many schools provided for physical education and sport related activity, often on a fee paying basis. The average annual cost of these activities per student for swimming, for example, was in the region of £22 per student. Such a trend was seen as supplementing inadequate State provision and made for inequitable provision based on an ability to pay. In concluding her analysis Kilfeather stated that 'The lack of fitness of our school children is a national disgrace. Its high time for all of us to get on our bikes'.⁸⁴

A similar sense of frustration was expressed by Quinn in the context of the academically-oriented second-level system:

The students also get very little exercise during the day. As they progress towards the Leaving Certificate students tend to take less and less physical education. This, combined with a long day spent mainly sitting down, together with the stress build up, is very bad for students. Yet, this continues to be the pattern. When secondary students arrive home at night they 'head for the books' again as soon as they have had something to eat, re-emerging in time for supper and bed. What kind of lifestyle is that for our children? Are we, as parents, putting too much emphasis on some things to the detriment of others?⁸⁵

So, it would appear that many of the issues which have been raised time and again by physical education teachers and students are reflected in the concerns of parents who see that the full and rounded education of students has been effected by the relatively low emphasis on the subject in schools. Such concerns, while they have been articulated at national level, have not resulted in any concerted move by parents to seek a change in the priority given to physical education in the face of the on-going emphasis in the academically-oriented points race.

Actual gains in the context of stated policy

This chapter has reviewed the Department of Education statistics with a view to establishing the levels of provision for school physical education since 1970. It was noted that the inclusion of physical education in second-level schools had begun in advance of the establishment of N.C.P.E. The subject has made steady gains since that time, with gradual increases in both the numbers of schools providing the subject and the percentage of the school population taking the subject. These gains persisted until the mid 1980's when a decline, particularly at senior cycle was noted. The nineties have brought the signs of a re-surgence in provision, although changes in data collection procedures and the recent nature of the trend suggest caution in reading too much into these positive indications.

Despite the doubts which have been expressed over the validity and reliability of the Department of Education figures it was concluded that the data provide a valuable indicator of the progress of the subject during the period in question. Such consideration was complemented by reference to other sources of data and was tempered by an awareness of the quantitative rather than qualitative nature of the Department statistics.

The Department of Education data, therefore, suggest that school physical education has made notable progress since 1960, with the major gains having occurred before the 1970's had ended. The continued momentum of the innovation has been curtailed by the lack of a strong and sustained commitment on the part of the Department concerning the role of physical education in the overall education of students. Accordingly, investment in the employment of teachers and the construction of facilities has been less than that which is perceived essential by professionals working in the field. This situation has been further magnified by the non-compulsory nature of the subject, which has left the major decisions relating to implementation to the discretion and resources of individual schools.

Much work has been done by physical educationists to increase the quality of what is on offer in schools and a range of curriculum development projects were noted. The response to the physical education innovation within the system has largely been positive with the energies of a proactive profession gradually winning over the understanding and support of students, past students, principals and parents alike.

It would appear from the foregoing that the stated and actual policies of the Department are congruent. The Constitutional framework outlined in Article 42 of *Bunreacht na hEireann* is mirrored in a reluctance to make physical education a central and compulsory element in primary and second-level schooling.⁸⁶ This formal policy position has been reflected in a significant, though patchy and intermittent, commitment to funding schools for physical education provision. This situation has persisted despite the many positive statements which have been made, particularly in reports of a non-binding nature. It has also pertained in spite of the State's increasing involvement in sport related activity, an issue which will be addressed in the next chapter.⁸⁷

References

-
- ¹Investment in education survey team, *Report of the survey team*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1965 (Pr.8527)
- ²Owens, T. Physical education - what really happens? in L. Dugdale & P.Duffy, *Possibilities and limitations in physical education*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland and School of Graduate and Professional Studies, Thomond College of Education, 1985
- ³Deenihan, J. 'Physical education in Irish primary and special schools.' Fine Gael, Dublin, 1990
- ⁴Ibid., p.1
- ⁵Ibid., p.10
- ⁶Ibid.
- ⁷The Physical Education Association of Ireland passed the following motion at its Annual General Meeting in 1986: 'That physical education be taught by teachers competent and qualified to teach P.E. in primary schools, on a daily basis, and that facilities and equipment be made available for this purpose. In addition, In-service training be provided to enable teachers to update themselves in this important area.' Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, *Annual report, 1986-1987*. p. 6
- ⁸Department of Education, 'Implications of the Review body's recommendations on P.E. and suggested course of action.' Unpublished internal document, n.d.
- ⁹Secretariat of the National Education Convention, *Report on the national education convention*. Dublin: Cahill printers, 1994, p.79
- ¹⁰This position has been addressed in several documents. For example: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 'Physical education in the primary school - a submission document by the Physical Education Association of Ireland to the Primary review body, 1988 and Department of Education, *Education for a changing world*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1992 (Pl. 8969)
- ¹¹Lennon, J. Physical education...first level. Paper presented at the Symposium on physical education, health and lifestyles, Dublin, February, 1992
- ¹²Physical Education Association of Ireland, submission to the Primary review body, 1988, p.4
- ¹³Department of Education, *Rules and programme for secondary schools 1987/88 to 1991/92*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1991 (Pl. 8263)
- ¹⁴The case for such improvements has been made by the G.A.A., N.C.T.C., P.E.A.I. and many other National Governing Bodies and community based groups indicating a continued awareness of the importance of physical education at this stage of education. Unpublished submissions to the National sports strategy group, 1996
- ¹⁵These figures are summarised from the statistical reports of the Department of Education
- ¹⁶This table does not include figures for 1991/92 as physical education was not included in the statistical return of the Department
- ¹⁷Twomey, A. Is P.E. a dying subject at senior cycle? *The Secondary Teacher*, 1991, 20(1), pp. 2-5,7

- ¹⁸ This figure is based on a twenty hour teaching week to class groups of thirty students
- ¹⁹ In 1991, the Department of Education switched to a computerised database system. Schools were asked to make returns on diskette and this may have led to a greater degree of efficiency in recording, storing and retrieving the data
- ²⁰ Department of Education, *Statistical report, 1987/88*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1990 (Pl. 7136) p.38
- ²¹ Department of Education, *Statistical report, 1975/76*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1977
- ²² Michael Darmody, physical education inspector with the Department of Education, has conducted a series of surveys on physical education within the second-level system. These include: M. Darmody, 'Physical education in Co. Waterford'. Unpublished survey, 1989. M. Darmody, Physical education in North Tipperary. *The Irish Journal of Physical Education*, 6(1), 1988 pp. 17-27
- ²³ Darmody, M. Physical education in North Tipperary. *The Irish Journal of Physical Education*, 6(1), 1988, pp. 17-27
- ²⁴ Darmody, M. Physical education in North Tipperary
- ²⁵ These figures were supported by other research, for example: Department of Education. Unpublished survey results from the Assessment in second level teaching project (*Assist*), 1987. C. Higgins, 'P.E.A.I. member survey. Summary report for the 1993 A.G.M'. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1993
- ²⁶ Darmody, M. Physical education in North Tipperary, Physical education in Co. Waterford
- ²⁷ O'Sullivan, M. & McCarthy, L. Physical education in Ireland: a view from the looking glass in P. Duffy & L. Dugdale, A. Hope, J. Kirwan & M.O'Sullivan (eds) *HPER-Moving toward the 21st century*. Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1994, p.135
- ²⁸ Higgins, C. P.E.A.I. member survey
- ²⁹ Department of Education, Results of the *Assist* survey
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ These data are drawn from the Department of Education statistical report for 1975/76
- ³² Sleep, M. A survey of physical education in Irish post-primary schools. *The Irish Journal of Education*, xii(2), 1978, pp.107-118
- ³³ McGarry, S. 'Culture, ideology and the physical education curriculum in Ireland.' Unpublished master's thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1987
- ³⁴ Department of Education, results of the *Assist* survey
- ³⁵ Darmody, M. Physical education in North Tipperary, Physical education in Co. Waterford
- ³⁶ Higgins, C. 'The attitudes of Irish post primary principals to physical education.' Unpublished master's thesis, University College, Dublin, 1991
- ³⁹ Deenihan, J. 1991. Physical education survey
- ³⁹ Department of Education, *Rules and programme for second-level schools*, Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987
- ³⁹ European Physical Education Association, Unpublished survey on physical education in schools, n.d.
- ⁴⁰ Department of Education, 'Physical education report'. Unpublished internal report, 1965
- ⁴¹ Sleep, M. 1977. A survey of physical education in Irish post-primary schools, p.114
- ⁴² Physical Education Association of Ireland. Unpublished submission to the Department of Education, February 7, 1986
- ⁴³ Sleep, M. 1977. A survey of physical education in Irish post-primary schools, p.114
- ⁴⁴ Higgins C. 1991. The attitudes of Irish post primary principals to physical education, p. 9
- ⁴⁵ Owens, T. 1985. Physical education - what really happens?
- ⁴⁶ Higgins C. 1991. The attitudes of Irish post primary principals to physical education
- ⁴⁷ Department of Education, 1973 and 1987 syllabi for physical education
- ⁴⁸ Higgins C. 1991. The attitudes of Irish post primary principals to physical education
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ McGarry, S. 1989. Culture, ideology and the physical education curriculum in Ireland
- ⁵¹ Darmody, M. 1989. Physical education in North Tipperary, Physical education in Co. Waterford
- ⁵² Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Darmody, M. Physical education in Co. Waterford

⁵⁵Darmody, M. 'Physical education survey 1985-1989.' Unpublished report, 1989, p.1

⁵⁶These conferences have been extensively documented in edited conference proceedings: Dugdale, L. (ed) *Physical education and sport in 1990*. Limerick: Thomond College of Education, 1985; Dugdale, L. & Duffy, P. (eds) *Possibilities and limitations in physical education*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland and School of Graduate and Professional Studies, Thomond College of Education, 1986; Darmody, M., Duffy, P. & Dugdale, L. (eds) *Physical education and the young adult*. Limerick: Thomond College of Education, 1987; Owens, C. (ed) *Equality of opportunity*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1993; O'Donovan, G. & Darmody, M. (eds) *Physical education for a changing world*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1994; Darmody, M. & O'Donovan, G. (eds) *Physical education at the crossroads*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1995; Darmody, M. (ed) *P.E. in Europe: the Irish dimension*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1996

⁵⁷Walsh, E. Keynote address in L. Dugdale (ed), 1985. *Physical education and sport in 1990*, p.19

⁵⁸Leonard, D. & Duffy, P. The place of the physical education teacher in curriculum development - at the heart of it. In D. Carre (Ed) *Teacher education and teaching physical education*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1986

⁵⁹Department of Education, 1990. *Physical education: assessment for second level teachers*. Dublin, 1990. This project, involving up to 24 teachers in a core pilot group, was co-ordinated by Michael Darmody and facilitated by Diarmuid Leonard (Thomond College) and Pat Duffy. An independent pilot group of 19 teachers tested the materials in the field. A research committee consisting of representatives of the Department of Education and Thomond College was also put in place.

⁶⁰Department of Education, 1987. *Rules and programmes*, p.367

⁶¹Department of Education, *Physical education: assessment for second level teaching*, p.1

⁶²Ibid., p.1

⁶³Physical Education Association of Ireland, *Physical Education Association of Ireland annual report, 1987/1988*. Limerick, 1988, p.8

⁶⁴Physical Education Association of Ireland, Annual General Meeting, 1996

⁶⁵The full background to the project is outlined in P.Duffy, D. Leonard, M. Darmody, Physical education: assessment in second level teaching. *Irish Educational Studies*, 11, 1992, pp.237-248

⁶⁶Leonard, D. Teacher empowerment in a curriculum project. Paper presented to the 12th Annual Conference of the Education Studies Association of Ireland, Carysfort College, 19-21 March, 1987, pp.14-15

⁶⁷Department of Education, Dance in education curriculum development project, n.d

⁶⁸Department of Education, Action for life, n.d.

⁶⁹Three types of in-service education for physical education teachers were also identified by P. Duffy & L. Dugdale, Inservice education in retrospect and prospect. *Irish Educational Studies*, 13, 1994, pp.196-206

⁷⁰Department of Education and Department of Health, *A national survey of involvement in physical activity*, 1996, p.47

⁷¹Ibid., pp.46-47

⁷²Jones, T., Duffy, P., Murphy, G. & Dineen, J. *Girls and boys come out to play*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1991

⁷³Ibid., p.32

⁷⁴Ibid. pp.v-vi

⁷⁵Ibid., p.43

⁷⁶Ibid. p.43

⁷⁷P. Duffy and L. Dugdale, Themes and issues for the 21st century. In P. Duffy, L. Dugdale, A. Hope, J. Kirwan & M. O'Sullivan, *HPER - Moving toward the 21st century*, 1994, p.8

⁷⁸Jones, T., Duffy, P., Murphy, G. & Dineen, J. *Girls and boys come out to play*, 1991, p.44

⁷⁹Ibid., p.49

⁸⁰Leonard, D. & Duffy, P. 'Re-appraisal of the physical education programme'. Unpublished report of an in-service course, Thomond College of Education, October 25 & 26, 1985

⁸³Kilfeather, N. Physical education in the primary school. Paper presented to the symposium on physical education, health and lifestyles, Dublin, February, 1992

⁸⁴Ibid., p.5

⁸⁵Quinn, E. Physical education at second level. Paper presented to the symposium on physical education, health and lifestyles, Dublin, February, 1992

⁸⁶Bunreacht na hEireann: Constitution of Ireland, 1937

Chapter 9

Chapter 9

The link between sports policy and school physical education

Introduction

The development of school physical education has been influenced, to varying degrees, by State policy on physical activity and sport. Until 1969, four years after the first physical education inspector was appointed, the State played no formal role in providing for sport. The establishment of the Sports Section of the Department of Education signalled a shift in Government thinking. It also provided the opportunity to develop dual policies on the promotion of physical education in schools and of sport and recreation within the wider community. State policy on sport since 1969 will be investigated in this chapter, with particular reference to its impact on, and relationship with, school physical education.

The shift of the State policy towards a stronger involvement in sport

Following the establishment of the Free State sport was considered as a possible vehicle for the development of the new nation. No direct State intervention occurred, however. Government policies up until the end of the 1950's were paternalistically supportive of sport, but lacking the necessary commitment to make its development a priority. A number of forces brought about a gradual shift in this position. During the late 1950's and early 1960's, awareness of the importance of leisure and recreation began to increase and a number of issues were raised in Dail Eireann relating to primary school physical education¹ and the provision of swimming pools and life saving lessons.² The Local Government (Planning and Development) Act of 1963 made provision for the planning of open space in new developments.³

Perhaps the most significant factor, however, was the gradual engagement of the State with its European partners through the Council of Europe. This interaction, combined with a changing economic and social climate, paved the way for a greater State input into sport. Initially, the liaison with the Council of Europe was carried out by Fr Lonergan of C.U.S., as has been seen in chapter three. The Council of Europe began to address the issue of 'sport for all' in 1966, through its Council for Cultural Co-operation (C.C.C.). The Irish Government may have been influenced by such thinking and began to consider the establishment of a sports section in the Department of Education.⁴

The significance of European influences was noted in the document *A policy for youth and sport*:

The Bruges Report (January, 1968), which marked the starting point of the C.C.C.'s work in this field, defined the objectives of 'Sport for All' as an effort aimed at 'provision of conditions to enable the widest possible range of the population to practice regularly either sport proper, or various physical activities calling for an effort adapted to individual capacities'.⁵

Ireland's increased participation in European activities had been spurred on by a new and pro-active approach to Government which had been signalled through the publication of the *Programme for economic expansion*.⁶ This mould-breaking blueprint sought to remove trade barriers and to adopt a 'productive' as opposed to a 'social' orientation to State spending.⁷ Such an approach became manifest in education policy and soon became evident in the moves towards the comprehensivisation of the school system at second-level.

Dugdale suggested that there were four main reasons which prompted the State to become involved in the funding of sport in 1969: an improved economic climate; the need to service the tourist industry with better amenities; the influence of the media in drawing attention to facilities and programmes in other countries and the increasing importance which was attributed to education by the State.⁸ It was in this context that the first physical education inspector was appointed to the Department of Education. Among the first proposals which were made by Michael McDonough when he took up his position in 1965 was the establishment of a Council for Physical Education and Sport which was to have the aim of 'the development of PE and Sport in Ireland'.⁹

While no immediate action was taken on this suggestion, the growing international momentum from the Council of Europe and the impetus generated by the Dublin based 1968 World I.C.H.P.E.R. Congress led to a situation where serious consideration would have to be given by the Government to the future role of school physical education and sport within Irish society. Initial attention focused on the establishment of a national college of physical education and was soon followed by a consideration of whether a special section should be set up within the Department of Education to deal specifically with sport.¹⁰

However, prior to the summer general election of 1969 the following exchange took place in Dail Eireann, indicating that the climate was still not right for the Government to take on a very direct role in sports policy:

Mr Molloy asked the Taoiseach if he will now consider establishing a special Department to assist in the promotion of sporting activities.

The Taoiseach: I do not consider that the establishment of a special Department of State to assist in the promotion of sporting activities would be justified.¹¹

Circumstances changed following the election. A Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education with a special responsibility for sport and physical education was appointed. For the second time in a five-year period the State put in place a structure to formalise its involvement in the development of physical culture. It now had an inspector working within the second-level school system and a special section which was responsible for the development of sport.

The early operation of the Sports Section of the Department of Education

The establishment of the Sports Section within the Department of Education in 1969 was accompanied by an allocation of £100,000.¹² This funding was utilised to provide direct support to N.G.B.s for the first time in the history of the State. The initial title of the Section was the *Youth and physical recreation section* of the Department of Education.¹³ The position of Parliamentary Secretary covered both physical education and sport.¹⁴ Mr Bobby Molloy was the first to occupy the post and his appointment was warmly welcomed by professionals at the time.¹⁵ He stayed in his position for one year during which time he progressed proposals for the development of N.C.P.E. He was followed in the position by Michael O'Kennedy who set about the establishment of *The National Council for Sport and Physical Recreation (Cosac)*.¹⁶ A dual-policy approach was subsequently adopted in relation to sport and physical recreation, with a significant role envisaged for N.C.P.E.:

In 1970, when the first Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education was appointed, the Taoiseach said that the Government would put emphasis henceforth on physical recreation.

The grants scheme (for national governing bodies) is one of the developments which have flowed from this statement of intent; others have been:

- the award of Physical Education Scholarships**
- the building of the National College of Physical Education in Limerick**
- the founding of COSAC**
- the impending appointment of four Physical Education Inspectors in the Department of Education**
- the building of sports centres in the community**

If a nation is to be healthy, the recreation habit must be acquired during schooling. This is why the National College of Physical Education is the cornerstone of the whole policy.¹⁷

The new national council had a key role in trying to establish these initiatives. The Council was to provide advice to the Parliamentary Secretary on a wide range of issues:

- a. co-ordination of Physical Recreation activities to ensure the fullest national participation;**
- b. to advise on the financing of sporting and recreation schemes;**
- c. national policy for uniform standards;**
- d. maximum use of existing facilities and present and future requirements;**
- e. the best ways to encourage and assist communities to develop their own physical recreation requirements**
- f. any other matter relevant to sport and physical recreation activities¹⁸**

The need for the Council was justified on the basis of the 'drastic' changes which were occurring in lifestyle in the early 1970's and which included 'increased standard of living, the breakdown of social barriers, extra leisure time, greater mobility, and increased living pressures'.¹⁹ The Council members were not selected to represent any particular group or organisation but because 'the individual members will make an ideal team, capable of working as an effective unit for the betterment of recreational life in Ireland'.²⁰

In addition to its terms of reference the Council was seen as being a national 'watch dog in this whole field' and four additional areas of work were outlined: the development of sport for all; uniform standards for facilities; the development of a national policy on facility provision and the development of school physical education.²¹ The inclusion of physical education in the work of the Council was an

indication that the Government saw the development of physical culture as something which should occur in a holistic way, inside and outside of schools: 'The establishment of the Council is an earnest example of the Government's concern and intention to pursue a positive policy in sport, physical education and recreation for the benefit of the whole community'.²²

Specific reference was made to the on-going development of N.C.P.E. and the relationship which the Government saw between the work of the Council and the graduates of the new college:

At present, the Department is in the process of setting up a National College of Physical Education. The graduates from this college will be a potent force in the implementation of the recommendations of the Sport and Physical Recreation Council. These graduates will be equipped to teach in schools and advise, organise and coach in adult life (emphasis added).²³

The terms of reference and initial brief of *Cosac* suggest that a long term and cohesive view had been taken of the development of the system, a view which the new national college either did not know about or did not adhere to. It was also proposed that there should be nine regional sports councils which would each have twelve members which would help in identifying and assessing local needs. A particular focus was to be the dual-use of facilities by schools and the community.

Despite the proposed links with physical education, the Council did not have a broader policy role relating to competitive sport in a national context. It was suggested in Dail Eireann that there should be pressure exerted on the G.A.A. to lift the 'ban' and that there should be greater co-ordination between the various sporting bodies. The Parliamentary Secretary, Michael O'Kennedy responded by saying that 'There can be no question of direct interference or a direction by me or by *Cosac*, for that matter, in the administration or management of their (national governing body) affairs' but that he had found from the G.A.A. and other organisations that there was a 'readiness to co-ordinate'.²⁴

The Council was appointed for an initial term of two years. Following a change in Government its term was extended for a further year after which time it was disbanded. This move led to some heated discussions in the Dail. The Parliamentary Secretary, John Bruton outlined the reasons for making this decision by saying 'in the course of considering the reconstitution of a new body, I came to

the conclusion that this could be done if a clearer understanding of its role and function in overall national planning for sport were arrived at'.²⁵

Opposition deputies voiced their concern at the delay in establishing an overall national plan for sport and recreation. In reply Mr Bruton indicated that he wished to achieve acceptance of the Council 'not just by the Department of Education but by other Departments as well of the proper role of any such council'.²⁶ He further indicated that he felt it was necessary to have a coherent plan in place before seeking additional funds for sport and that he had set up an expert working group to look into this matter. According to the policy document which was finally produced, *Cosac* had done much to increase public awareness of sport and to secure additional funding for national governing bodies in sport. There were, however, several difficulties which hindered the development of the Council:

The most serious disadvantage was that COSAC, although its theoretical responsibility stretched across the whole sports field, in reality, was formally linked to the Department of Education. It was chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and in practice its effective influence may not have extended much beyond the limited field for which he was responsible. Its secretarial and research services were very restricted. They were provided by the same small number of officials who were also responsible for physical education, grants-in-aid to youth and sports organisations, and other matters within the Department itself. This was a bad situation both from COSAC's point of view and from that of the Department of Education.²⁷

It appears also that the brief of the Council was somewhat limited, not only in its terms of reference but also in the manner in which it was composed. Without formal linkages to, or representation from other Government departments the Council could not truly claim to be a forum in which all matters pertaining to sports policy could be discussed in a realistic fashion. This situation was exacerbated by the low level of resourcing which was made available to the Council and by the multi-faceted nature of the roles which were played by the officers serving it. Despite these shortcomings, an important start was made in providing structured support for N.G.B.s and in obtaining an overview of the major developments which were occurring in the funding of sport. Between 1970 and 1974 a number of important funding arrangements were put in place and these are summarised in Table 18.

Table 18
Funding arrangements for physical education and sport 1970-1974²⁸

| <i>Project</i> | £ |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| P.E. in schools (sports halls) | 1,700,000 |
| Grants to National Governing Bodies | 413,000 |
| P.E. grants to schools (equipment) | 55,027 |
| Teachers | 3,750,000 |
| N.C.P.E. (capital) | 1,064,866 |
| -equipment | 54,601 |
| -Staff and administration | 431,801 |
| -Grants to students | 96,048 |
| In-service courses | 10,559 |
| <i>Total</i> | 7,475,904 |

This expenditure was indicative of a concerted effort to establish sport and physical education within the system during the early years of the 1970's. Important infrastructural developments were put in place with the building of schools halls and N.C.P.E. The establishment of support for N.G.B.s in sport was another significant step. By 1976 sport had become an important element in the work of the Department of Education, albeit serviced by a small administrative section. The Sports Section did not have a technical wing to its operation to deal with the many questions of a specialist nature which were inevitable in the evolution of policy. Nonetheless, moves were set in train to publish a coherent policy statement.

A policy for youth and sport

*A policy for youth and sport*²⁹ was the first time in the history of the State that such a document was published. The policy was motivated by a desire to 'provide a coherent framework' within which State support for voluntary sport could be maximised and it was drafted at a time when the first sports council, *Cosac*, had gone out of existence.³⁰ The document was rooted in the view that voluntarism was the bedrock of sport as it played 'such a significant role in the life of the people and strengthens the web of society'.³¹ The overall policy was based on the premise that:

...many formative experiences of young people occur during their free time or leisure time and that the aim of youth work should be the provision of activities and facilities which will enable young people to use this time to develop personally, to appreciate society and to contribute to it.³²

The primary objective of the youth section of the policy was seen as the education of young people in informal settings: 'Education is not the sole prerogative of the school and it is not limited in relation to any time or place in the life of the

person'.³³ This statement had particular relevance for the physical education of the child, given the range of formal and informal sport and recreation experiences which existed both inside and outside of school.

In addition to the informal and educational emphasis of the policy for youth a number of secondary objectives were identified. These included 'recreation for young people, counselling for young people with their personal problems, opportunities for voluntary service by young people' and 'enabling young people to contribute to the development of the community'.³⁴ The policy gave 'priority to the development of personnel rather than of physical facilities'.³⁵ This priority was reflected in the emphasis given to the need for trained volunteers. N.G.B.s and Vocational Education Committees (V.E.C.'s) were seen as being the agencies which should take the initiative in this regard. Specifically referring to sports policy, the document stated that 'The main objective of this policy is to increase substantially the number of Irish people taking part in active sport'.³⁶ Twelve major recommendations were made by the Report and these included the proposals that provision be made for:

1. additional funding for youth and sport activities
2. the employment of 'community animateurs' on a pilot basis to encourage the development of youth and sport organisations
3. in-service training for youth workers
4. the establishment of a new sports council
5. the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer and staff to assist the Council
6. the promotion of 'sport for all' by the Council
7. the operation of a sports bureau (consisting of offices and administrative/secretarial support) and a library and information service by the Sports Council
8. an annual review of grants-in-aid
9. the implementation of youth and sport policy by V.E.C.s
10. the consultation with local groups by V.E.C.s with a view to establishing needs
11. the putting in place of an interest subsidy scheme to assist in the re-furbishment and construction of facilities
12. the commissioning of research on an on-going basis to assess the effectiveness of the policies.³⁷

In making these proposals the document recognised that the State had a responsibility towards the funding of youth and sport activities. The guiding principle was that the State should be a facilitator of programmes rather than the provider of direct subsidy to individuals or groups in order that they might participate in sport. As has been seen, the direction of such programmes was

clearly guided by the sport for all philosophy which had become widespread in Europe at the time. This had led to the adoption of a policy on sport for all by the Conference of European Ministers responsible for sport in 1975.³⁸

The proposed re-establishment of the Sports Council

A key question addressed by *A policy for youth and sport* was the role to be played by the Sports Council. The proposed re-establishment of such a council was to be based on an eighteen member model, comprising of twelve members to be selected by the Government for their knowledge of sport with a further six members to come from other government departments. It was proposed that 'the over-riding objective of the Council will be to promote the ideal of sport for all'.³⁹ The development of standards of performance as they related to competitive success at international level was seen as a secondary objective:

International success will be seen not primarily as an end in itself, but as a valuable incentive to the more important objective of getting an increased number of ordinary people involved to their full capacity. Giving priority to mass participation means spreading investment over a wide field and is not an easy option. The results, in terms of international success, may come more slowly than if the money were invested immediately in a few top competitors or in international facilities. Not only will the broader approach bring direct benefits to a larger number of people, but will build a sound base on which longer term international success will be likely to be achieved.⁴⁰

The new Council was seen as being advisory to the Government as a whole and that various departments would present their activities to the Council on a yearly basis. This recommendation was based on the perceived need for administrative reform given that many government departments had become involved in sport and recreation independently of one another. Accordingly, it was felt that a 'unifying strategy' was necessary.⁴¹ As has been seen, the lack of such a unified approach, along with the absence of a strong administrative base, had impeded the work of the nation's first sports council. The outcome was that the *Cosac* had not been in a position to meet many of the expectations which had been placed upon it, a situation which the policy document sought to redress. Specific and immediate tasks were identified for the proposed new Council:

1. The identification of measures to be adopted in order to increase the participation of target groups within the population.
2. Co-operation with Thomond College of Education in monitoring the fitness levels of the population.
3. The provision of information on the level of sports participation in conjunction with sports organisations.
4. The continuous review of information on participation patterns and the re-orientation of policy.
5. The review of grant aid to sports organisations with a view to improvement and to increasing accountability for such aid.
6. To identify ways in which coaching could be improved with a view to serving the objective of sport for all and to ascertaining ways in which coaching could be shared between different sports.
7. To examine the possibility of the establishment a federation of sports organisations.
8. To examine ways and means of co-operating with sports interests in Northern Ireland.
9. To examine the possible development of corporate fitness programmes within industry.
10. To consider the measures necessary for the general development of sports medicine in Ireland.⁴²

In addition to the sport for all orientation which was central to the proposals a number of interesting features were included in the immediate agenda which was outlined. Firstly, co-operation between the Council and Thomond College of Education was seen as being desirable suggesting that the College had a potentially wider role within the sports system. Secondly, the need for greater accountability for the funding which was provided to sports organisations was recognised. Thirdly, the strong thirty-two county nature of sport was seen as necessitating greater co-operation with the sports movement in Northern Ireland. It was also felt that there should be a representative body for sports organisations.

It was proposed to appoint a Chief Executive Officer and staff to support the work of the Council. The offices of the Council were also to operate a 'sports bureau' which would assist sports organisations with secretarial and administrative type duties. In the long-term it was envisaged that there would be a central building which would become the head-quarters for Irish sport 'housing administrative services of various sports organisations, common facilities for meetings and the Sports Council office itself.'⁴³

As well as providing central funding for sport, it was suggested that a mechanism be put in place to oversee the co-ordination of decisions relating to sports policy at local level. It was suggested that this function should be carried out by V.E.C.s. It was envisaged that through this mechanism linkages would be made between teachers and the work of out-of-school agencies. It was suggested that 'Teaching staff would work exclusively with the adult volunteer youth leaders to help them in their work but would not engage in direct work with young people'.⁴⁴ Specifically it was suggested that teachers could act in the role of community animateurs. This suggestion presented a model where the expertise in physical education could be transferred into community and club settings. The training and structures for such involvement was not addressed, however.

No comment was made either on the need to establish a strong implementation plan for the Department of Education syllabus in schools, although reference was made to the role of the subject:

Physical education is an important part of the school programme and as well as contributing to physical and mental welfare, it also prepares the child for the proper use of his leisure time throughout his adult life. It should be the means of establishing within each child an affinity with, and a love of physical recreation.⁴⁵

While recognising the role of physical education within a school context, the Report made a number of important suggestions which sought to link the work done with students in physical education classes to the sporting and recreational opportunities which existed in the community. These included the examination of 'ways and means of integrating the physical education programme in schools with the work of local sports organisations' and the establishment of 'common coaching centres for a number of second-level schools'.⁴⁶ However, the failure of the Report to support the need for the full implementation of physical education policies was a significant omission. From this point onwards, physical educationists were to be asked to create linkages with the community and to participate in the promotion of sport for all, without first having the facilities, time and personnel to deliver the foundational school-based programme.

A change of government and the formation of Cospoir

The implementation of the proposals of *A policy for youth and sport* was affected by the change of government which occurred in 1977. With the return to office of Fianna Fail a number of important developments took place which introduced a somewhat different emphasis to that identified by Bruton's document. A key issue which precipitated these changes was the disenchantment which had become manifest in the 1977 concerning unemployment in general and that of the youth population in particular. The new Government set about addressing this situation through the use of a fund contributed by the State, employers and unions (known as the tri-partite scheme) and the formation of a *Youth employment action team*. This team came up with a set of proposals which included a nation-wide physical fitness campaign to involve 840 youth instructors who would be trained by twelve physical education teachers.⁴⁷

While nothing became of this particular development, the tri-partite scheme produced a substantial amount of funds. Accordingly, the State could embark on the construction of locally-based facilities. The allocation of this funding was based on a tiered and geographical spread. Sixty-three locations around the country were to benefit from the scheme which involved a total of £8m capital expenditure, including local contributions. Eighteen major centres were proposed, sixteen community facilities and the remaining twenty-nine were to be locally based facilities.⁴⁸

The establishment of Cospoir

This sudden and liberal disbursement of public funds was not the only feature which signalled a different policy approach from the new Government. The appointment of a new sports council, called *Cospoir*, in February 1978 also precipitated a change in thinking. While the idea of such a Council had been considered as part of Bruton's policy process, the terms of reference and operation of the Council revealed a somewhat different emphasis than suggested in *A policy for youth and sport*.

The new sports council was set up by the Minister for Sport, Jim Tunney, in February 1978. The Chairman was the 1956 Olympic Champion, Ronnie Delaney, and the Council consisted of over twenty people drawn from the sporting world without any representational function to any given constituency or organisation. The new Council was provided with terms of reference which placed it in an advisory capacity to the Minister of State at the Department of Education. Interestingly, this role was clearly defined in the context of a 'sport for all' policy,

thus reflecting the European influences which had been evident in the Bruton policy document. In addition, the Council was to consider the raising of standards of performance in competitive sports.⁴⁹

The Council was empowered to 'prepare, submit and recommend' annual budgets relating to the needs of N.G.B.s and to its own requirements in the execution of its role. In so doing, the Council was to consult with N.G.B.s, local authorities, government departments and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland. It was also proposed that the Council should be served by a Chief Executive Officer 'and other officers for the purpose of the discharge of its functions'.⁵⁰

The advisory capacity of the Council was balanced with the need for autonomy. Its terms of reference stated: 'Subject to such directions as the Minister of State in the exercise of his responsibility may issue, the Council shall have autonomy in the exercise of its functions'.⁵¹ The compatibility of the advisory capacity and autonomy of the Council was an issue which was to re-surface in many ways in subsequent years. Despite this anomaly, Cospoir set about its task in an ambitious way and the minutes from the early years of its work indicated that it intended to take its role seriously. An immediate work programme was identified which included the preparation of discussion papers on:

1. Physical education at all levels of education.
2. Provision for sport and physical recreation in the Garda and Army forces.
3. Government and local authority provision for sports facilities.
4. The delivery of 'sport for all' to the general public.
5. The spending of £10,000 available to the Council.
6. The convening of a 'walking committee'.⁵²

The members of the first Council expressed their general satisfaction with the terms of reference with which they had been issued and it was recognised that there might be some overlap with the work of the Health Education Bureau and discussions with this agency were proposed.⁵³

Cospoir and the position of physical education within the system

The Council clearly saw that it had a role in ensuring that physical education programmes within the education system were adequately catered for. In 1978: 'Council agreed, after discussion, that the development of physical education within the educational system would receive the attention of Council in the normal progression of its work'.⁵⁴ This view was echoed by the Minister for Education who stated that physical education was 'strongly linked' to 'the Government's policy

of 'sport for all'.⁵⁵ Such an approach to policy, which clearly saw the remit of Cospoir as linking with school physical education, suggested that an ally for both the P.E.A.I. and Thomond College had emerged.

This alliance did not materialise in any strong fashion, however. Early in its term of office the Council visited Thomond College of Education, a visit which failed to yield strong co-operation between the two agencies.⁵⁶ The absence of a representative from the College on the Council was, perhaps, one of the reasons why such a synergy failed to develop. Even though the relationship with Thomond College was not strong, the Council remained firm in its view of the importance of physical education in schools:

The Chairman informed Council that a report of the meeting held in Thomond College on 18 November would be held on file and copies were available on request.

It was agreed that the improvement of the present teacher quota system in post primary schools to accommodate P.E. graduates, should be examined by the Advisory committee. It was decided that Council should liaise with Thomond College and the Physical Education Teachers Association on this matter.⁵⁷

The Council took a keen interest in the functions of Thomond College and actively pursued the notion that hostel accommodation be developed there for use by Olympic athletes.⁵⁸ The entry requirements of the College were subject to scrutiny and an advisory committee was set up which made the following recommendations:

- 1. That greater consideration should be given to physical achievement.**
- 2. That the emphasis on academic achievements should be reduced, and all candidates with 2 honours should be interviewed.**
- 3. That provision should be made for mature students.⁵⁹**

As well as attempting to work with Thomond College the Council became involved in actively lobbying the Minister in relation to facilities for second-level schools. This initiative met with some success and the Council was informed 'that a favourable reply had been received from the Minister on the matter of physical education halls in post-primary schools'.⁶⁰ The Department of Education also viewed the Council as having a role in the development of a model for facilities in third-level institutions.⁶¹ In the same year, the Council undertook to study the 1976

Report on the effects of competitive sport on young people,⁶² further underlining its concern for issues which were also on the agenda of many physical educationists.⁶³

Sport for all initiatives and relationships with the P.E.A.I.

One of the immediate initiatives addressed by the Council was that of a 'sport for all' campaign which was run in co-operation with V.E.C.s and which also involved the P.E.A.I. The involvement of the P.E.A.I., as well as some V.E.C.s, was seen as being less than successful as the Council considered the overall outcome of its 'sport for all' week-end which was held in May 1979.⁶⁴ The role of the P.E.A.I. and the infrastructural weaknesses of the V.E.C.s were to remain as issues in the implementation of a successful sport for all initiative right throughout the 1980's and into the 1990's. In the case of the professional association its absence from the Council may have contributed to this situation. The first 'sport for all' day was held on October 1, 1978 and the P.E.A.I. agreed that physical education teachers should be involved in organising jogging centres around the country. Thirty-seven physical education teachers attended a meeting in Dublin to plan for the day and these teachers were asked to recruit their colleagues in organising centres around the country. Expenses were to be re-imbursed through the local V.E.C.⁶⁵

The 1978 event proved to be a success, but problems were to emerge early in 1979. *Cospoir* pressed ahead with the idea of a further 'sport for all' week-end on 21/22 April which coincided with the school Easter holidays and which also fell in the same school year as the October event. At a meeting between the association and representatives of *Cospoir*, the P.E.A.I. complained that they had not been consulted about the date which was most unsuitable for physical education teachers. Further questions were raised about the perceived importance of the role of the P.E.A.I. and references which had been made to the Association, without consultation, in a *Cospoir* press release. While the meeting concluded with an agreement that co-operation should continue, it was a turning-point in relations between the two organisations.⁶⁶

The difficulties which had been anticipated by the P.E.A.I. representatives were realised when the idea was discussed within the wider membership. Indeed, it transpired that concerns over the date for the week-end were the least of the worries of practising physical education teachers. The Cork branch of the Association decided to boycott the 'sport for all' week-end 'as a platform to show the public that no grants were available for P.E. facilities'.⁶⁷ The P.E.A.I. itself decided to correspond with *Cospoir* 'expressing disappointment and grave

misgivings that no consultation was held with P.E.A.I. prior to press release, unsuitability of dates...' and that future participation would depend on appropriate prior consultation.⁶⁸

Despite these difficulties *Cospoir* was clearly trying to adopt a positive position on school physical education. Concerns had emerged at the National Physical Education Conference in 1978 about the provision for school physical education. The Chairman of *Cospoir* told the President of the P.E.A.I. that he 'was aware of P.E. teachers feelings since conference and had decided that a joint committee of P.E.A.I./*Cospoir* Executive be set up to outline the degree of feelings, needs and frustrations of P.E. teachers. *Cospoir* would do all they could to highlight the needs of the P.E. teacher'.⁶⁹

Such a committee never materialised and matters worsened when the Executive Committee was told in 1979 that the Minister of State, Mr Tunney, 'felt as the P.E.A.I. was a teachers organisation he could not support administrative costs but funds would be available for research projects'.⁷⁰ This decision appeared to ignore the previous involvement of the Association in administering and implementing the *Cospoir* 'sport for all' initiative and marked a policy departure which actively sought to de-lineate work in schools from that which occurred in the community. It also occurred at a time when the tri-partite recreational facilities scheme was unfolding, apparently without reference to the serious concerns which had been expressed by the P.E.A.I. and *Cospoir* about provision for physical education in schools. These frustrations were possibly magnified, coming as they did, at the end of a period of economic difficulty which had begun with the oil crisis and which had serious effects on such a cost-intensive area of educational provision as school physical education.

Local difficulties were also encountered in the implementation of 'sport for all' initiatives. The P.E.A.I. felt that its representatives should have acted in the capacity of chair/co-ordinator of local sports advisory committees (set up in 1980), but this did not happen and in many cases the input of professional physical educationists was reduced to a marginal role. In addition, policies varied greatly within the V.E.C.s, making it very difficult to establish an overall pattern. Some V.E.C.s did not re-imburse expenses to the physical education teachers involved, which in turn caused considerable difficulty. All of these issues pointed to a lack of clarity on the part of *Cospoir* as to the precise structures and functions which were to be associated with a policy of 'sport for all'.⁷¹

There were other problems which were to emerge for *Cospoir*. By 1983 the Chairman of the Finance Committee, Noel Drumgoole, reported that 'at present they did not fulfil all the functions of a Finance Committee' and that the advisory function of the Committee in relation to N.G.B. funding had been lost.⁷² He recommended that the Committee should be consulted in relation to the yearly estimates for sport and that the grant allocation function to N.G.B. should be retained. These difficulties were related to long standing staffing issues within the Department of Education which impeded progress. Staffing levels were low and the absence of technical support was a consistent problem. The situation got progressively worse in the first eight years of the life of the Council.⁷³

The establishment of the National Lottery and plans for major facilities

Despite difficulties relating to the precise role of the Council and its back-up services, *Cospoir* proceeded to examine the future development of Irish sport. Central to this work was the belief that additional funding was needed for sport. In pursuit of this goal, the Council actively promoted the idea of a national lottery. The concept was discussed in the early days of the work of the Council⁷⁴ and it eventually was brought to Cabinet in 1984.⁷⁵

The subsequent success of the lottery idea owes much to the initial thinking of the Council. The lottery helped to increase the funds available for sport significantly, as outlined in Table 19.

Table 19
Summary of Sports Section funding and distribution 1986-1995⁷⁶

| Year | Current (£m) | Capital (£m) | Total (£m) |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1986 | 1.604 | 1.509 | 3.113 |
| 1987 | 1.706 | 1.035 | 2.741 |
| 1988 | 5.370 | 3.040 | 8.410 |
| 1989 | 6.124 | 3.358 | 9.482 |
| 1990 | 5.599 | 3.522 | 9.121 |
| 1991 | 5.587 | 6.761 | 12.348 |
| 1992 | 5.649 | 4.235 | 9.884 |
| 1993 | 5.999 | 5.353 | 11.352 |
| 1994 | 6.775 | 10.329 | 17.104 |
| 1995 | 7.550 | 5.616 | 13.166 |
| Total | 51.963 | 44.758 | 96.721 |

While the lottery was originally conceived with the needs of sport in mind, twelve per cent of the total profits now return to sport. Despite this, the period since the launch of the lottery has seen significant increases in funding for sport. Notably, however, all sports expenditure is now taken from the lottery, including the mainstream administrative costs which had been previously covered by the central exchequer.

The growing belief that more funding was required for sport was accompanied by a strong desire on the part of the Council to progress standards in relation to high level performance and in coaching. These concerns led to the production of two extensive reports. The first, produced in 1985 argued for the establishment of a national sports centre which would be based at the Custom House Dock site in Dublin. This facility was to be state-of-the art and was to include an extensive indoor arena, fifty-metre swimming pool and support facilities. In addition, the question of a national outdoor arena was to be addressed and a number of regional sports centres were to be established around the country.⁷⁷

Although the main recommendations of this report never saw the light of day, there was some progress on the development of regional sports centres and of sport specific facilities of a high quality nature. One of the minor recommendations which emerged from the report was the proposal 'that Thomond College be designated a National Coaching and Training Centre'.⁷⁸ This recommendation was subsequently acted upon in 1987 when the Minister for Sport declared his intention to establish such a centre there.

Despite the progress on the establishment of a national lottery and the development of a number of high quality facilities, the role of *Cospoir* diminished as the 1980's progressed. The large number of Council members, the perceived political and non-representative nature of its composition and the absence of a strong administrative and technical support structure left the Council in a vulnerable position. When the term of the Council lapsed in 1988 it was not replaced, despite the fact that work had been completed on the production of a sports policy document. The outcome of the process was never published, however.⁷⁹

Cospoir was finally re-constituted in advance of the general election of 1992. Despite the presence of many technical personnel on the new Council, it was unable to effect changes in the overall structure of sports policy. This situation was magnified by the fact that the role of *Cospoir* and its Chairman had become increasingly ill-defined in the four year hiatus which preceded its appointment. The Council was not re-appointed when its term lapsed in 1995. Instead, a sports strategy group was appointed by the Minister for Sport which was asked to look at the terms of reference and composition of the Council as a matter of urgency and in the context of the development of an overall sports policy document.⁸⁰

While many of these developments related to sport, the link with physical education had been revived following the re-vitalisation of the P.E.A.I. in 1984. During the late 1980's the Association sought increased links with the Sports Section of the Department of Education. These moves were supported by the Minister for Sport who provided financial support for a range of projects, including the establishment of a training scheme for exercise and fitness instructors in 1987.⁸¹ This scheme has produced over 1,000 trained exercise and fitness instructors in the following eight years.

The increasing involvement of the Association in co-operating with the Sports Section of the Department was also manifest in a stronger input into the 'sport for all' initiative. The Association became involved in the national co-ordinating committee for *Be Active, Be Alive* campaigns and nominated a number of 'animateurs' to help link with V.E.C.s around the country. The P.E.A.I. was also a strong advocate of the need for leadership training for volunteers so that the sport for all ideal could become a reality on the ground. Physical education teachers and exercise and fitness instructors were called upon to assist in a nation-wide campaign which included fitness testing and advice and for the first time a reasonably strong synergy developed between the professional association and the Sports Section.⁸² Related to the sport for all initiatives was the development of long distance walking routes, which had been on the agenda of the very first sports council and which sought to capitalise on the natural terrain. An extensive network of mapped routes was steadily developed throughout the country, contributing in no small way to sports tourism and to the sport for all ideal. Together with the development of outdoor education centres and the training of instructors to work in the outdoors, the long distance walking routes represent the successful development a native sports policy which makes maximum use of natural and human resources.⁸³

Sports policy within the context of overall government policy

This chapter has dealt with the way in which the Department of Education has gone about the relatively new role of developing and implementing sports policy. Since 1969 the Department has had a direct responsibility through the Sports Section. During the intervening years it has been seen that this role was seen, at various stages and in varying degrees, to be linked to the State's efforts in the development of physical education. The initial brief of *Cosac*, and many of the public statements which were made at the time, indicated that the development of school physical education and sport and recreation in the wider community were seen as complementary elements of the one overall policy. Such a policy was geared towards the greater involvement of Irish people in physical recreation and was underpinned by the aspiration to establish school physical education in primary and post-primary schools.

*A policy for youth and sport*⁸⁴ attempted to establish a policy and structural framework which incorporated school and community settings and which was overseen by a policy-making council. The development and implementation of coherent policy, however, was hampered by several changes in government during the 1970's. The Fianna Fail administration of 1969-73 established a policy which saw the establishment of N.C.P.E. and *Cosac*, ostensibly with parallel and complementary missions. The Council was certainly provided with the brief and structure which allowed it the scope to shape the future of Irish sport and recreation. However, it was short on technical support. N.C.P.E. was provided with excellent facilities and had a technical staffing structure, but defined its goals in such a way that it soon became a peripheral force within the development of the Irish sport and recreation structure. Successive governments also failed to provide its graduates with a firm and consistent platform for the development of physical education in schools.

The coalition Government of 1973-1977 was faced with severe economic difficulties and chose to disband *Cosac* on the basis that it was not serving the needs of sport in a cross-departmental way and that its goals were not clear. The Fianna Fail Government which swept into power in 1977 re-established the sports council. Once again, an ambitious agenda was provided without the necessary resources and status to address the development of sport in a concerted way. This situation was not helped by the advisory and non-representative nature of a Council which had little technical back-up. In addition, there was a failure to achieve a

comfortable dove-tailing of the inputs of experienced volunteers and the new physical education professionals.

By the time the *White paper on educational development* was published in 1980 the impetus and enthusiasm which had characterised the development of school physical education and community sport and recreation had become dissipated. The document strongly re-iterated the dual school/community policy and proposed a five year programme 'covering schools, school and community co-operation in the sharing of facilities, youth and sports organisations, recreational facilities, recreation officers, coaching/training opportunities and publicity and promotion'.⁸⁵

However, no proposals were made concerning the structures which were required to carry out the policy. In particular, there was a lack of clarity of the relative roles of the Department itself and *Cospoir* in the implementation of the policies. As the 1980's wore on, the role of *Cospoir* became less clear. In 1984 the Minister of State encapsulated the situation by saying that his Department was using '*Cospoir* as its agent and catalyst'.⁸⁶ Essentially, the Council was being asked to develop ideas and deliver the outcomes without having the autonomy or resources to do either effectively.

The *Programme for action in education 1984-87* recognised the need for greater funding for sport and suggested that *Cospoir* was the agency which was responsible for developing the Government commitment to Sport for All.⁸⁷ In addition, the demands of general participation and high performance sport were seen as having placed great demands on sports organisations with the suggestion that more attention be given to more effective administration'.⁸⁸ However, the question of the overall structure and administration for sport was not addressed in the document, marking another lost opportunity for the establishment of a firm policy on how sport should be developed.

The constrained economic circumstances of the mid-1980's meant that there was little scope for major expansion of the State's role in sport, but by 1987 expectations had been raised with the establishment of the National Lottery. The Minister of State stated that 'Significant developments will now take place in the provision of national, regional and local sports facilities' and he signalled that there would be a tighter and more professional approach adopted to the planning and management of such facilities.⁸⁹

In addition, the Minister proposed greater support for school sport and indicated that there 'many fine professionals in the field, all that is required is that we structure and support their endeavours'.⁹⁰ The issue of structure was taken up by Duffy who stated that the story of participation in Irish sport 'has lacked one basic ingredient - a plot! We have stumbled from one budget allocation to the next. The time is ripe for a plan - a strategic plan to be implemented within the context of a tight system of physical culture which caters for all interests and abilities'.⁹¹

The Minister for Sport, in deciding not to re-constitute *Cospoir* in 1988, apparently wished to address this issue of structure and a draft sports policy was written, but never published.⁹² Essentially, policy was determined by the Minister and his officials in the period spanning 1988 and 1992. The Minister pursued his role with vigour and established a three-pronged approach to policy; the provision of adequate facilities at local, regional and national level; the pursuit of excellence and the development of mass participation in sport.⁹³

The publication of *Education for a changing world* in 1992 provided an important opportunity for sport to re-assert its policy position within the Department of Education. This opportunity was taken and the re-establishment of *Cospoir* was proposed. However, there was no consideration given to the remit which the Council would follow although it was suggested that 'the contributions of individuals, of voluntary and community organisations, of the private sector and of the various government departments and public sector agencies will be effectively co-ordinated at local and national levels'.⁹⁴ The development of sport for all, standards of performance in organised sport, extra-curricular sport at school level and the provision of capital facilities were identified as the major policy initiatives which were to be addressed.

Once again, all of these initiatives were set in a context where: 'As a follow-on to the promotion of the physical well-being of children in school, the aim will be to develop greater fitness and a more active lifestyle among the population and to enhance performance standards by Irish sportspersons'.⁹⁵ The dual school/community approach had been re-stated with the added recognition that there were varying levels of participation and aspiration among the population which would have to be addressed.

In effect, however, the disjointed nature of policy has not helped the linkages between school and community and by the time the White paper on education was published in 1995 the policy relationship between physical education and the broader sport and recreation area had become somewhat tenuous. Nonetheless, the White paper saw that there was an important link between the work of the school and outside agencies:

The specific aims of sports policy will be to facilitate individuals and groups, as far as possible, to participate in physical recreation and sporting activity and to offer appropriate opportunities for every individual - regardless of sex, age or ability - to continue the practice of sport and recreation throughout their lives. This will build upon positive attitudes to physical well-being cultivated in formal schooling. In co-operation with the appropriate sports organisations, a further aim of sports policy will be to ensure that people with interest and ability have the chance to improve their standard of performance in sport.⁹⁶

The White paper, while recognising the sport for all, school/community and development of excellence axes was somewhat light on how positive attitudes would be built in a tangible way in the school system. It was also unclear how the overall thrust of sports policy would be fleshed out and implemented. Perhaps this was left to *Cospoir*, which had been re-constituted following the publication of the Green paper, albeit with essentially the same structure and terms of reference which had applied some fourteen years earlier.

It has been seen that a number of significant developments have occurred in the evolution of sports policy since 1969, but it is fair to say that the State has not yet reached a stage where there is confidence or clarity in relation to its role in this area. The establishment of the Sports Section within the Department of Education was a positive step. However, the relationship between this section and the mainstream Department has failed to yield a synergy which capitalises on the huge economic, educational and social potential which exists in the broad sphere of physical culture.

In the same way that ambivalence has effected the development of school-based physical education, the absence of clear direction and organisational structure has hindered the development of sport as well. The discontinuity and lack of authority of successive sports councils and the absence of strong cross Departmental co-operation have not helped in this regard. The relatively weak position of the Sports

Section within the Department of Education and the absence of a senior ministerial for sport have been instrumental in perpetuating this situation.

In this context, physical educationists came to the view that a coherent approach to the development of physical culture was necessary. The evolution in the position of the P.E.A.I. relative to Department of Education policy was highlighted in the comprehensive submission which was made to the Department of Education in response to *Education for a changing world*.⁹⁷ Within this submission it was claimed that one of the most important developments for the Association was 'the broadening of its focus to include a diverse range of areas relating to physical education and sport'.⁹⁸ In defining these areas under the broad heading of 'physical culture' the Association reflected the need to view the development of physical education within a wider context than the school system alone.⁹⁹

This view had been expressed at several Annual General Meetings of the P.E.A.I. during the 1980's.¹⁰⁰ The Association was clearly pleased to see that the Department of Education adopted such a holistic view within the Green paper, covering as it did physical education at primary and second-level; the question of extra-curricular sport and issues relating to the development of sport for all and elite sport. The P.E.A.I. stated:

The recognition of physical education as an important element in the primary and post-primary school experience is an important step. The suggestion in the Green paper that physical education will form part of the general entitlement of all students from primary level onwards is most welcome. The extension of the concept of physical education beyond the school to one of a lifetime pursuit has long been promoted by the P.E.A.I. We, therefore, welcome the formulation of a national policy on sport and the wider area of physical culture and see the proposals outlined in the Green paper as an important step in this regard.¹⁰¹

In commenting on the relevant aspects of the Green paper, the Association called for a re-assessment of the sports policy of the nation and referred particularly to the need to train volunteers in the area of Sport for All and for research into the effectiveness of Sport for All campaigns. A re-structuring of Cospoir, the National Sports Council was proposed, with the suggestion that the Council be made up of specialist personnel thus 'ensuring that the Council is well placed to advise on all aspects of physical culture'.¹⁰²

The Association further suggested that much more attention be given to a training and certification structure for physical culture. This recognition on the part of the P.E.A.I. was a clear indication of the need for physical educationists to consider the total societal context within which school physical education occurs and, interestingly, it was felt that the Sports Section of the Department of Education should take the lead on this matter when it was proposed that:

The Sports Section of the Department of Education liaises with or convenes a forum to facilitate discussion between the appropriate agencies within physical culture, namely the Physical Education Association of Ireland (P.E.A.I.), the National Coaching and Training Centre (N.C.T.C.), the Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences (P.E.S.S.) and the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (I.L.A.M.), regarding the establishment of a structure for a national certification and accreditation system.¹⁰³

It was envisaged that such a structure would deal with training in certification as it related to sports administration, coaching, sport and sport for all leadership, exercise and fitness instruction, prevention and care of sports injuries. This was an important policy departure for the P.E.A.I. and the Association seems to have arrived at the view that school physical education was part of a bigger picture which dealt with the involvement of the population in healthy physical activity from birth to death.¹⁰⁴

Ironically, this is a view which had been expressed by the Department of Education down through the years and an effective sport for all strategy might have yielded the type of synergy which was required between the *Cospoir*, the V.E.C.s and the physical education professionals. This opportunity was lost and the issue was not addressed by the P.E.A.I. until the late 1980's when the question of the definition of sport and physical education became less important than the establishment of the precise relationship between all of the elements of a comprehensive system of physical culture. It is in the absence of a broad framework for the discussion of these issues that the Department of Education can be most strongly criticised. Physical educationists must also take some of the responsibility for failing to contribute more positively to this debate from the time of the establishment of N.C.P.E. onwards.

The study of sports policy in Ireland reveals that from 1969 onwards the State took on an increasing role in planning and provision. From promising beginnings, in which substantial investment was made, the dual policy of developing school physical education and community based sport and recreation faltered in the absence of a coherent strategy and implementation structure. Despite these problems, much progress was made in diffusing the goals of physical education into schools and the concept of 'sport for all' into society. Levels of awareness and participation have progressed significantly in the last twenty-five years.¹⁰⁵ It can only be speculated that much more might have been achieved if a stronger and more enduring commitment had been made to the development of physical culture. The final chapter will provide an interpretation of how physical education has fared within the broader policy environment. Possible lines of development for the future will also be identified.

References

- ¹*Dail Debates*, 176, 1959, p.1187; *Dail Debates*, 181, 1960, p.1710; *Dail Debates*, 189, 1961, p.1342
- ²*Dail Debates*, 180, 1960, 2079; *Dail Debates*, 188, 1961, p.436; *Dail Debates*, 218, 1965, p.760
- ³Local Government (Planning and Development) Act of 1963
- ⁴O'Dalaigh, T. Interview on 5 April, 1995 and J. Wade, interview on 24 May, 1995
- ⁵Department of Education, *A policy for youth and sport*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1977, p.19
- ⁶Government of Ireland, *Programme for economic expansion*. Dublin; Stationery Office, 1958 (Pr. 4796)
- ⁷Lee, J. *Ireland, 1912-1985 politics and society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p.345
- ⁸Dugdale, L. 'Government aid to sport and recreation in the Republic of Ireland'. Unpublished paper, 1974
- ⁹Department of Education, 'Physical education report'. Unpublished internal report, 1965, p.6
- ¹⁰*Dail Debates*, 240, 1969, p.411
- ¹¹*Dail Debates*, 240, 1969, p.595
- ¹²*Dail Debates*, 247, 1970, p.1225
- ¹³Dugdale, L. 1974. Government aid to sport and recreation in the Republic of Ireland
- ¹⁴McCann, P. Editorial. *Bulletin of the Physical Education Association of Ireland*. March, 1970, p.2
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, p.2
- ¹⁶Press release announcing the establishment of the National Council for Sport and Physical Recreation, 23 January, 1971
- ¹⁷Press release announcing details of grants for youth, sport and physical education activities, 10, March, 1973, pp.2-3
- ¹⁸Press release on 23, January, 1971
- ¹⁹*Ibid.*, p.2
- ²⁰*Ibid.*, p.2
- ²¹*Ibid.*, pp.4-5
- ²²*Ibid.*, p.5
- ²³*Ibid.*, p.5
- ²⁴*Dail Debates*, 254, 1971, p.45
- ²⁵*Dail Debates*, 275, 1974, p.57
- ²⁶*Dail Debates*, 275, 1974, p.57

-
- ²⁷Department of Education, *A policy for youth and sport*, 1977, p.23
- ²⁸*Ibid.*, p.46
- ²⁹*Ibid.*
- ³⁰*Ibid.*, p.3
- ³¹*Ibid.*, p.3
- ³²*Ibid.*, p.7
- ³³*Ibid.*, p.9
- ³⁴*Ibid.*, p.9
- ³⁵*Ibid.*, p.16
- ³⁶*Ibid.*, p.19
- ³⁷*Ibid.*, p.43
- ³⁸Council of Europe, Resolution of a policy for sport for all. 1975
- ³⁹Department of Education, *A policy for youth and sport*, 1977, p.35
- ⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p.25
- ⁴¹*Ibid.*, p.22
- ⁴²*Ibid.*, pp.36-37
- ⁴³*Ibid.*, p.38
- ⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p.30
- ⁴⁵*Ibid.* p.32
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p.33
- ⁴⁷Joyce, J. A physically fit nation once again. *Hibernia*, 2 December, 1977, p.4
- ⁴⁸Minutes of Cospoir meeting on 25 July, 1980. These files are located at Floor 11 Hawkins House and are arranged chronologically by meeting date
- ⁴⁹The National Sports Council (Cospoir), Terms of reference tabled at a meeting of the Council on 29 March, 1978
- ⁵⁰*Ibid.*
- ⁵¹*Ibid.*
- ⁵²Document entitled 'Immediate work programme' tabled at Cospoir meeting on 29 March, 1978
- ⁵³Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 29 March, 1978
- ⁵⁴Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 21, March, 1978
- ⁵⁵*Dail Debates*, 311, 1979, p.36
- ⁵⁶Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 15 December, 1978
- ⁵⁷*Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸Minutes of the Cospoir Advisory Committee, 22 November, 1983
- ⁵⁹Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 21 July, 1978
- ⁶⁰Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 26 October, 1979
- ⁶¹Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 27 November, 1979
- ⁶²Department of Education, *Effects of competitive sport on young people*. Dublin: Stationery office, 1976
- ⁶³Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 16 March, 1979
- ⁶⁴Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 15 June, 1979
- ⁶⁵Minutes of Physical Education Association of Ireland Executive Committee, 21 September, 1978
- ⁶⁶Minutes of a meeting between the National Executive Committee of the Physical Education Association of Ireland and Cospoir Department of Education officials on 2 February, 1979
- ⁶⁷Minutes of Physical Education Association of Ireland Executive Committee, 2 February, 1979
- ⁶⁸*Ibid.*
- ⁶⁹*Ibid.*
- ⁷⁰Minutes of Physical Education Association of Ireland Executive Committee, 7 June, 1979
- ⁷¹These issues appeared frequently in the minutes of the P.E.A.I. during 1978 and 1979
- ⁷²Minutes of Cospoir Advisory Committee, 22 November, 1983
- ⁷³A document on staffing prepared in 1986 showed that the Sports Section had 14 staff in 1978, it had only 10 staff in 1986. The same document also recorded that 'a physical education inspector acts as an advisor in a part-time capacity'. Cospoir file, 1986
- ⁷⁴Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 15 December, 1978: 'Following discussion it was agreed that the executive raise the matter with relevant bodies and prepare a report for submission to the Finance Committee in the first instance.'

-
- ⁷⁵Minutes of Cospoir meeting 22 November, 1983: 'a memorandum was being prepared for submission to the Government seeking approval for the establishment of a National Sports Lottery'.
- ⁷⁶Department of Education, Sports Section. *Annual report*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995
- ⁷⁷National Sports Centre Committee, *Report on the need for a national sports centre*. Dublin: Cospoir, 1985
- ⁷⁸*Ibid.*
- ⁷⁹Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 21 June, 1988: 'Copies of the Cospoir policy document on the future development of sport in Ireland were circulated at the meeting. The document is to be presented to the Minister. It will then be a matter for the Minister to take decisions on recommendations made'.
- ⁸⁰Press release announcing the formation of a National Sports Strategy Group, 7 November, 1995
- ⁸¹Letter from the Minister for Sport to the President of the P.E.A.I. 29 February, 1988
- ⁸²Physical Education Association of Ireland, *Annual report 1990/1991*. Limerick, 1991
- ⁸³Department of Education, *Annual report of the Sports Section*, Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995
- ⁸⁴Department of Education, *A policy for youth and sport*, 1977
- ⁸⁵Department of Education, White paper on educational development. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1980, (PrI. 9373) p.98
- ⁸⁶Creed, D. Opening address in *Outdoor recreation and leisure - future planning and development*, conference proceedings. Westport: Mayo Sports Advisory Body, 1984, p.3
- ⁸⁷Department of Education, *Programme for action in education 1984-1987*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1984 (Pl. 2153)
- ⁸⁸*Ibid.*
- ⁸⁹Fahey, F. Opening address in *Sport for all conference 1987 - conference papers and working party recommendations to the Minister for Sport*. Tralee: Town of Tralee Vocational Education Committee, 1987, pp 6-7
- ⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p.11
- ⁹¹Duffy, P. Who plays? - The Irish story in *Sport for all conference 1987 - conference papers and working party recommendations to the Minister for Sport*. Tralee: Town of Tralee Vocational Education Committee, 1987, p.63
- ⁹²Minutes of Cospoir meeting, 21 June 1988
- ⁹³Fahey, F. Opening address in *Public relations, sponsorship and sports marketing*, conference proceedings. Dublin: Cospoir, 1988, p.14
- ⁹⁴Department of Education, *Green paper on education: education for a changing world*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1992, pp.218-219 (Pl.8969)
- ⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p.217
- ⁹⁶Department of Education, *White paper on education: charting our education future*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995 (Pn. 2009) p.111
- ⁹⁷Department of education, *Green paper*, 1992
- ⁹⁸Physical Education Association of Ireland. 'Submission to the Department of Education on the Green Paper in education', 1993, p.3
- ⁹⁹*Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁰The outcome of this process was the production of a draft document entitled: 'A national policy on physical culture'. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1990
- ¹⁰¹Physical Education Association of Ireland, Green paper submission, 1993, p.4
- ¹⁰²*Ibid.*, p.12
- ¹⁰³*Ibid.*, p.13
- ¹⁰⁴Following this submission, the Sports Section asked the P.E.A.I. to facilitate a consultative sports forum on the Green paper
- ¹⁰⁵Department of Education and Department of Health, *A national survey of involvement in physical activity*. Dublin, 1996

Chapter 10

Chapter 10

School physical education - key developments, influences and future directions

Introduction

State policy on school physical education since 1921 has been shaped by prevailing social, political and economic circumstances. The subject has had to take its place among the competing demands for scarce resources in what was a state emerging from very difficult military, political and social circumstances. Ensuring survival and stability were important aims in the early decades, but the pace of modernisation gathered momentum from the 1960's onwards. The fortunes of physical education have been inevitably effected by the nature and pace of wider educational reform. Pluralistic attitudes and practices in physical culture have also taken time to materialise. As a consequence of these circumstances, the case for a broadly based physical education programme as a central part of the curriculum has been difficult to establish.

The final chapter of the study provides an overview of how physical education has fared in this context, with particular reference to the period since 1960. Firstly, a brief outline recalls the major stages in the advancement of physical education. This is accompanied by an interpretive analysis of the forces that have shaped the position of the subject. An identification of key policy issues and lines of development for the future is then provided.

Stages in the development of physical education

Four major phases can be observed in the progression of policy on physical education in Ireland since political independence. In considering these stages, the model proposed by Rose¹, which suggested the following four steps in the evolution of policy, will be employed:

- a. The emergence of a policy issue on the agenda
- b. Policy formulation and authorisation
- c. Implementation
- d. Policy termination or change

As well as this sequential analysis, the Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt² overview of power and influence will be used. This template outlined four layers of influence in the policy process; *insiders, near circle, far circle* and *sometime or often forgotten players*.

Physical education on the agenda of the new State, 1921-1949

The period spanning 1921 to 1949 was characterised by intermittent attempts to place physical education on the policy agenda of the new State. Within the context of a largely rural and agricultural society the need for structured programmes of physical education was not a high priority during the 1920's. The conservative, nationalistic and Catholic Church dominated social milieu did not provide a conducive environment for the introduction of a subject which sought to liberalise norms relating to physical activity. Coupled with the fragile political climate of the country at the time, these circumstances encouraged a propensity for things to remain the same rather than to change.

Granted, the interest shown in the Tailteann Games and the indirect role of the State in the establishment of the Irish Olympic Council were early signs that the broader area of sport was seen as a possible contributor to nation-building. However, there was little concerted State action in the promotion of sport or school physical education. During the 1920's and 1930's, the emphasis on the Irish language as a means of nationalistic expression meant that physical training lost out as a compulsory subject at primary level. Notably, the primary teaching profession played an important policy influencing role on this issue by recommending that the number of subjects on the school curriculum be reduced. The narrow focus on drill at primary school remained as a result, with an accompanying absence of formal programmes at second-level.

Although very little happened by way of action during the 1920's, the 1930's was an intriguing decade. The Free State turned its attention to the role which sport and physical training could play in establishing national identity and economic progress. These efforts were centred around the Army during the first half of the decade, but came to nothing. Similarly, the *Report on physical education* of 1938³ failed to produce any improvement in the position of physical education.

Furthermore, despite the existence of Ling College in Dublin and the strong military interest in physical education, there were no central initiatives to establish the subject in schools. The defining moment came in 1937 with the formulation Article 42.3.2 of the Constitution, which enshrined a discomfort with physical

education into the regulatory and legislative systems of the new State. The basis for this decision has yet to be fully understood and merits further study. However, it is almost certainly the case that the exclusion of the word 'physical' was not simply the consequence of a casual omission.

It is much more likely that the construction of a constitutional barrier to compulsory physical education was related to significant ideological and political concerns. Key members of the cabinet and representatives of the Catholic Church took an interest in this issue. For a variety of reasons, which may have included the misgivings of the Church on the concept of physical education and possible fears concerning the link between physical training and fascism, these policy insiders were wary of the implications of giving the State a constitutionally supported role in physical education. Instead, they opted firmly the other way and spurned any central and positive policies on the subject.

This policy line was adopted despite strong moves from a number of *near circle* groups. During the early part of the decade it seemed that the Army was to become a key policy player, but tension may have developed between the Department of Defence and the Department of Education on the question of where initiatives in physical education should reside. The Inter-Departmental Committee on physical education may have been an attempt to mediate on the matter and it certainly had the effect of neutralising the role of the Army in determining and implementing policy. The Report of the committee, though not acted upon, signalled a reduced role for the military in physical education.

The G.A.A. and other sports federations continued to influence policy to the extent that the organisation of school sport competitions became more widespread. School sport also benefited from extensive inputs from religious personnel. Christian Brothers schools developed strong gaelic games traditions, while the Holy Ghost Fathers, for example, promoted rugby and athletics. In the case of gaelic games, the 1930's saw moves to seek their inclusion on the physical education programme at primary level. However, it appears that sports federations were mainly pre-occupied with the uni-dimensional promotion of their activities and did not devote much attention to policy on physical education. In fact, in the Ireland of the 1930's, their activities provided a wholesome alternative to a potentially expensive curriculum subject.

The period 1921-1949 saw physical education emerge on the policy agenda on several occasions, but without any positive result. The subject was victim to the inertia which invariably afflicted the State on educational matters in the face of reservations from the Catholic Church. The situation was compounded by the formulation of the Constitution and by the political and economic circumstances of the time. In parallel with this, the physical culture of the nation took on an increasingly divisive nature, with the demarcation between 'native' and 'foreign' games taking a strong foothold.

The Catholic Church as catalyst in the formulation of policy, 1950-1959

While the period between 1950 and 1959 saw little change in the attention given to physical education at official level, the Catholic Church took a more active interest in the subject following the Church-State clash of 1950. The inertia in State policy was related to the State of Emergency which existed during and after the Second World War. This was compounded by the reluctance of the Department of Education to progress new educational policies, especially if support from the main Church was not present. There was one attempt in 1942 to bring physical education back on the agenda at Departmental level. This effort came to nothing and while the economic and political effects of the war were to the fore, the recently established Constitutional framework did not provide any incentive to move the matter forward.

The strong position adopted by the Church on the teaching of physical education in the Mother and Child debate of 1950 was almost certainly related to the perception of the subject at the time. Up until then, physical education in Ireland had consisted of a strong discipline orientation in the form of drill and was also influenced by the medico-health emphasis of the Ling tradition. The close association between this latter approach and health education rendered the Catholic Church wary of the role of physical education. Kirk⁴ has noted that as late as the 1950's, sex education was seen by physical educationists in Britain to be an element of health education, and part of their domain. It is likely that this association existed in Ireland as well, and almost certainly in the minds of the Catholic hierarchy.

The possible link between physical education and sexuality may have been one of the reasons why the Catholic Church seems to have initially blocked progress and why it eventually became involved in the management of the subject. The Mother and Child debate was a turning point, in that the Catholic Church became proactive in the promotion of physical education, beginning with the input of

Archbishop John Charles McQuaid as Chairman of the *Commission on youth unemployment*. This Commission made extensive recommendations on physical education and recreation⁵.

The awakening of the Catholic hierarchy to the issue of physical education gave rise to the establishment of St Raphael's College, Sion Hill in 1954 by the Dominican Order, where female specialist teachers were trained to work in Catholic schools. Despite the control orientation which appears to have motivated the hierarchy, the College adopted a progressive, child centred and releasing view of physical education, mirroring a trend that had begun to emerge in Britain at the time⁶. In so doing, an alternative to the medico-health approach of Ling College and the militaristic orientations of the Army School of Physical Culture was provided, signalling a new stage in the evolution of Irish physical education. The female physical education movement was strengthened as a result, with the addition of an important Catholic dimension.

The adoption of such an innovative approach by St. Raphael's was a manifestation of the importance of physical education in helping to confront gender related social mores. This minor renaissance in Irish physical education was certainly part of a broader and ultimately quickening movement which sought to challenge traditional views of girls, women, their bodies and their role in Irish society. Many of these issues had emerged sharply in the preceding twenty years, with the Catholic Church adopting a repressive view of dancing and the exposure of the female body in athletic competition.

The initiative at Sion Hill, however, was only part of a wider movement on the part of the Church to see physical education established. The 1954⁷ and 1962⁸ reports of the *Council of education* made strong claims for the subject. It appears that Catholic Church interests within the Council supported the need for physical education in the context of a more scientific approach to physical education. This approach reflected the influence of the British scientific functionalist movement which had gathered strength in the 1950's and suggests that the need for physical education courses for males and females may have been in view at an early stage. Ling College was associated with the Protestant tradition but the small and private nature of the institution, coupled with the medico-health orientation of its courses, resulted in its relative marginalisation in the origination of policy. However, along with the opening of Sion Hill, the existence of Ling College was tangible evidence of the need for a policy on school physical education.

As the 1950's drew to a close, the sustained interest of the Catholic Church in physical education at once removed a barrier and provided a catalyst which enabled the Department of Education to recognise the role which the subject could play in the context of a comprehensivising curriculum. The importance of the support of the Catholic Church for changes in policy was summarised by O'Buachalla⁹ who stated that 'in effect due merely to the extent of its presence no policy measure can be realistically implemented in the system without the tacit consent of the Church'. This position seems to have been particularly salient in the case of physical education, where the State effectively stood back until such time as the Catholic Church had acquired a strong foothold in the training of teachers.

The 1950's saw the Catholic Church step into the vacuum which had been left as a result of the policies of successive Governments and assume a relatively unchallenged position in determining the policy agenda for physical education. In so doing, the Church not only began to re-establish the position of physical education on the agenda, but succeeded in policy formulation as well. Though the State raised the issue of physical education in the context of the Mother and Child controversy, it was the Catholic Church which identified the real policy issues. The reports produced by the *Commission on youth unemployment* and the *Council of education* documented the need for physical education in a way which had not been done since the 1930's and the early 1940's. The input of the Catholic Church was significant in both policy documents.

The opening of St. Raphael's College was a bold step in the implementation of policy at a time when the Department of Education and the Government were not excited by the need for physical education in schools. As had been the case with Ling College, the new Catholic institution was established without input or approval from the State. It was not until the 1960's that the State committed itself to the authorisation of the policy directions which had been initiated by both traditions, thus building on the momentum which had been re-generated by the Catholic Church in the 1950's.

Formulation, authorisation and implementation of State policy, 1960-1976

Between 1960 and 1976 there was a marked and rapid increase in the role of the State in the promotion of physical education, particularly at post-primary level. This engagement by the State was part of expansive moves to widen the curriculum and increase access to education. The granting of registration status to

the graduates of St Raphael's College, Sion Hill and Loughborough College in 1960 signalled the authorisation of the policy initiative which had been taken by the Catholic Church in 1954. It was also a recognition of the need for qualified physical education teachers in second level schools.

The fact that registration for the graduates of Ling College took a further five years was an indication of the differing levels of influence held by the two religious traditions in the policy process. Clearly, the Catholic tradition had an inside track in securing almost immediate recognition for the graduates of Sion Hill. The significance of this sway became even more apparent soon after the 1960 decision when the A.S.T.I. objected to the inclusion of physical education on the confined register. The teacher union feared that the status of its members would be eroded by the registration of non-graduate teachers of practical subjects. The unsuccessful incursion of the teacher union into the physical education policy debate highlighted the important role of the wider profession in regulating policy developments. The degree-oriented approach adopted by the union was indicative of the academicism which physical educationists would face over the ensuing thirty years.

Despite this context, and with Department of Education authorisation, graduates from St. Raphael's College were to the fore in introducing the notion of physical education to girls' schools in the early years of the 1960's. Graduates from Ling were also gaining employment even before the formal approval of the Registration Council in 1965 and all of these developments signalled the first tentative steps in the implementation of Department of Education policy on physical education. However, despite the formulation and authorisation of these policies, the Department of Education response to the *Council of education* in the early 1960's continued to mirror the Constitutional framework of Article 42, thus ensuring that physical education would not become a compulsory subject.

Even though the Department was not prepared to make physical education mandatory, it took many positive steps in the early 1960's to establish the subject and move to the implementation phase of policy. These included the provision of grants for capital projects and involvement in Council of Europe activities. Through the influence of Fr Lonergan the vital link was made between the need for the subject in Ireland and the European movement to spread physical education and sport for all. These advances were further evidence of the close co-operation between the Church and State in the formulation of policies.

As has been seen, the Church played a key role in the 1962 *Council of education* report and the appointment of a physical education inspector in 1965 derived its origin from one of the recommendations of that report. The appointment of the inspector was a milestone in the development of policy. There was now a voice inside the Department of Education to advocate the implementation of the fragmented policy lines which had already begun to emerge. The new inspector, Michael McDonough, quickly formulated a policy statement, which notably made strong references to the link between physical education and Christianity and the contribution which had been made by Fr. Lonergan¹⁰.

The wider educational, economic and social contexts of the mid 1960's provided a supportive environment within which the changes proposed by the new inspector might occur. The move towards a more comprehensive education system and the publication of *Investment in Education* created a climate in which new proposals were likely to receive a more sympathetic hearing than heretofore. Increasing industrialisation and urbanisation also highlighted the need for more productive use of leisure time. International influences in the form of European initiatives in sport and physical education, as well as the impact of television, helped to create greater awareness of the need for structured physical activity and sport within a modern society. Even within the G.A.A. the debate had begun over 'the ban', heralding a new vista in the slow move towards sporting ecumenism.

Michael McDonough capitalised on these circumstances and cleverly enlisted the media, the new professionals and international physical education partners to highlight the case for physical education. In addition, he found an important ally at a key level in the policy chain in the form of Sean O'Connor, Assistant Secretary in the Department of Education. McDonough's success in securing a meeting involving himself, John Kane, Sean O'Connor and the Minister of the day, Brian Lenihan, following the 1968 I.C.H.P.E.R. congress was critical. The feasibility report arising from the meeting, which was quickly produced, led to a decision in principle in 1969 to proceed with the construction of the N.C.P.E. McDonough had succeeded in creating a strong link across three important layers of the policy influencing circle.

From himself as advocate and member of the near circle, he enrolled and convinced a top civil servant and the Minister of the day of the need for a major policy departure. Both of these officers were undoubtedly on the inner circle in terms of policy making at the time. The formulation, authorisation and implementation of

this massive shift in Department thinking all occurred within the space of four years from conception to completion. This was, without question, the most significant few years in the history of Irish physical education and promised to be the beginning of a concerted policy which would see the full implementation of physical education within the school system.

The establishment of N.C.P.E. in 1973 was a landmark in this regard. The decision to locate the college in Limerick in a purpose-built facility on an extensive site prompted great optimism among the physical education profession. From the outset, the Department of Education and the authorities of the College adopted an approach which identified strongly with the practices and traditions of the British physical education movement. There was little accommodation of existing Irish and female traditions and the gender related tension of British physical education was replicated in the new college, with a sharp distinction occurring between the scientific and creative aspects of physical education.

This situation was compounded by an isolationist philosophy which saw little responsive interaction with the needs of schools, teachers, the new sports council and the N.G.B.s. In defence of the new college, poor Department of Education planning and the uncertainty over the nature and validation of its degrees made for a difficult start. The foundational years of the institution were characterised by acrimony and student unrest. As a consequence of all these conditions, N.C.P.E. did not develop a strong view of what physical education was in an Irish context and failed to see the importance of placing its institutional mission within the wider nexus of a long established tradition of physical culture and sport.

The initial mission of the College, which had been narrowly interpreted and poorly articulated, was further diluted when the national college was incorporated into Thomond College of Education in 1976 as part of Government policy to establish a training institution for practical subjects. The absorption of the N.C.P.E. into Thomond College was an important turning point for policy on physical education. The ethos, leadership and organisational structures of the enlarged institution proved ineffective in originating and negotiating a concept of physical education that was widely acceptable in an Irish context.

The speed and significance of the decision to establish N.C.P.E. led to a situation where its very existence was undermined by a number of factors. The first of these related to authorisation of the new policy within the Department of Education. Despite the imprimatur of the Minister, it seems that there were elements within the Department which did not agree with such a resource intensive undertaking for a new subject. This discomfort was further exacerbated by the fact that neither *Investment in education*¹¹ nor the *Commission on higher education*¹² had provided any strong direction that a college of this nature was required. To use a sporting metaphor, it seems that the N.C.P.E. proposal came in from left field when many of the policy referees within the Department were looking the other way. The long term implications of this scenario inevitably pointed to difficult times for the new college and for physical education within the schools, given that there was less than whole-hearted support within the Department.

On top of this, the decision to establish the national college was a manifestation of the importance which was placed on physical education for males. The need to put in place a training course for male students seems to have superseded all other considerations and the two existing female colleges were closed down. This situation need not have been serious, but the manner in which existing traditions were cast aside did not help matters. The authorities of the Catholic Sion Hill were consulted on the need for, and possible location, of the N.C.P.E. Conversely, Ling College was simply informed of the intention to proceed with such a plan, highlighting the policy hierarchy which existed when it came to Departmental dealings with the two traditions in physical education.

Both traditions suffered, however, from the strong male and British orientation which dominated the planning and early implementation of the affairs of N.C.P.E. The involvement of male British physical education personnel along with the physical education inspector suggests something of a 'male coup' in Irish physical education at an important time. The failure to involve more fully the extensive supply of expertise from the Ling and Sion Hill traditions is difficult to understand in any other context.

This position was not helped by the absence of a route for graduates of the two colleges to obtain a degree. The position of the A.S.T.I. towards the graduates of these colleges had been negative during the 1960's, based on a desire to establish an all-graduate profession. The stance of the Union was much more receptive when the registration for the degree-holding graduates of the N.C.P.E. came up for

discussion at the Registration Council some thirteen years later. The creation of a degree/diploma discrepancy within the profession proved to be a major point of contention which only served to further heighten the uneasy relationship between the old and new physical education traditions.

At second-level, physical education gained recognition as a school subject in 1971¹³, the same year as the adoption of a comprehensive syllabus for physical education as part of *Curraclam na bunscoile*¹⁴. In both cases it was recommended that physical education 'should' rather than 'must' be taught, a position which has held to the present day. Nonetheless, during the late 1960's and throughout the early part of the 1970's, the Department of Education took many important steps to establish physical education within the system and there was a general sense of optimism among the profession about the future of the subject in schools.

The period between 1960 and 1976 was a momentous one for physical education in Ireland. The Catholic Church had made much of the running in terms of placing the subject on the agenda and in the initial formulation of policy. With the appointment of an inspector within the Department, this balance changed considerably and the State began to address policy matters in a structured way. Through the work of the new inspector the resonance of physical education on the policy agenda increased. In this context, the mobilisation of the new physical education professionals was an important contributor to bringing about change as was the enlisting of leading figures from British physical education.

It was during this time that the influence of physical education professionals on core policy was at its highest, signified by the Kane-McDonough report¹⁵ on the establishment of the N.C.P.E. and the weight which was given to the newly established professional association during the course of the 1968 I.C.H.P.E.R. conference¹⁶. The strong State moves to establish the national college coincided with a reduced role for the Catholic Church in core policy decisions. It appears, however, that this was a voluntary decision on the part of the Church.

The Church role now became one of mediator of policy developments at local level, given that the Department of Education continued to shy away from making physical education compulsory. Individual schools were responsible for decisions on physical education, based on resources and ethos. Catholic girls' schools quickly gained the best record in employing physical education teachers. It is notable, however, that where the State had a greater input into the structure and

management of schools that a high quality record of facility provision and employment of specialist teachers developed. The community and comprehensive schools developed an excellent record in provision for physical education during the 1970's.

Thus, once the Church had satisfied itself that the general direction of physical education was satisfactory, and did not include health education, it was prepared to allow individual schools dictate the pace at which the innovation would proceed. Some of its schools, and boys schools in particular, were less than forthcoming with their support of the new initiative. In the case of the Christian Brothers this reticence may have been related to the strong traditional involvement of the brothers in the delivery of sport on a voluntary basis, particularly gaelic games. The new subject and the new professionals were a threat to the ethos associated with this tradition and the policy of the Department was such that individual school ethos and tradition was to be a critical factor in determining implementation at local level.

The decision to proceed with the N.C.P.E. project provided insights into the machinations of the Department of Education. The existence of political will in the short term swung the argument, but it is obvious that the hierarchical and subject related structures within the Department generated resistance to the adoption of a long-term policy on the matter. The acceptance and authorisation of the new policy might not have been a problem if the national college built on the momentum which Michael McDonough had generated. This did not happen, and the isolationist and British-dominated philosophy of N.C.P.E. precluded it from having any significant role in influencing Department policy.

The P.E.A.I. was in the early years of its existence and, given that the new college adopted a patronising view of the professional body, its influence was also limited. Within this fragmented context the case for a coherent implementation strategy did not emerge in a forceful fashion, making it easier for an unconvinced Department to renege on the earlier policy commitment. In addition, there was little effort at reaching a consensus on the form of physical education which was suitable in an Irish context, thus alienating the perspectives of many school traditions and the orientations of the various sporting traditions.

Overall, the period saw the dramatic emergence of physical education on the agenda and the rapid formulation and authorisation of policy. In the end, the speed of these processes and the failure to fully bed the developments into mainstream Department thinking had serious effects on long term implementation. The strong role which was played by the Catholic Church in developing the initial case for physical education diminished as the State took on an increasing role which went to the highest political level. It was ministerial intervention which precipitated the quantum leap to establish a national college. The fact that the initial Department of Education commitment was not sustained in a strong way through the economic difficulties of the 1970's meant that local management soon became the critical point in the mediation of policy.

Difficulties in implementation and policy re-appraisal, 1976-1996

By 1980, over 400 teachers of physical education were employed at second-level, many of them having trained on the Plassey campus. This new body of teachers played a substantial role in increasing the availability of physical education, with the majority of schools responding positively to the subject. However, further progress was inhibited by the policy of the Department, which stopped short of making physical education a central part of the curriculum and which called for a reduction in student intake to N.C.P.E. despite the huge demand for places.

Much of the momentum which had been generated by the move towards the democratisation of education from 1967 suffered as a result of the resource squeeze which characterised the 1970's. Investment in physical education was costly and, when the international oil crisis of 1974 precipitated economic difficulties, the State found it increasingly burdensome to meet the expectations which had been raised in the preceding years. Consequently, the commitment of individual schools came much more into play. A resource intensive subject such as physical education, which did not contribute to the race for third-level places, became more vulnerable. At primary level, the in-service support available to implement the physical education syllabus also suffered, reflecting wider difficulties in the implementation of the primary school curriculum¹⁷.

This change in circumstance came at a critically early time in the development of school physical education. On top of this, the harsh economic circumstances prevailed into the 1980's, causing a decline in provision for physical education in second level schools. To explain these difficulties purely in economic terms, however, is simplistic. The Department of Education, while constrained by the

working party of 1991²⁰ was shelved on the basis of resource constraints. This policy line had been signalled through an unsuccessful attempt to exclude the P.E.A.I. from the working party. The N.C.C.A. efforts to limit the size and scope of the group and the open conflict which ensued encapsulated the anger of the profession at the course of the policy process. The decision to alter the composition of the group on foot of P.E.A.I. objections was a mark of the new weight of the profession in curriculum developments. It was also a recognition that the initial attempt to appoint a non-representative group went against the emerging trend of participative policy development.

The assertiveness of the P.E.A.I. on the N.C.C.A. issue was reflective of its growing confidence and expanding membership base. As the Association grew in strength during the 1980's, it came into conflict with the Department of Education over the question of implementation. While these disagreements may have been somewhat counterproductive in the short term, the professional association successfully kept the issue of physical education on the agenda and made it clear that it wished to be a player in the policy process. The initiation of the Kellogg's Physical Education Awards²¹ and the commissioning of *Girls and boys come out to play*²² were evidence of the Association's commitment to a pro-active stance on the development of physical education. The persistence of the Association led to the point where the primary and second-level syllabi were reviewed within the context of the N.C.C.A., with inputs from the association in both cases.

While physical education received attention in the move towards a legislative framework for education, the wider debate became strongly focused on broader issues of participation and control. In this context it was difficult for physical education to get a strong foothold. The Department of Education assumed a pivotal position in an inclusive policy process, while the Catholic Church focused on broader issues relating to management and ethos within education. The Catholic Church had all but withdrawn from the direct debate on physical education, perhaps reflecting its satisfaction with the status quo. However, its continued influence in the overall management of the system placed it in an important policy influencing role. Its influence at local level continued to be immense and proved to be a significant factor in the progress of the subject.

Undoubtedly, the Department of Education has been the key policy player in the fourth period as it relates to physical education, dictating the pace at which changes have occurred. The Department was bound by wider economic

constraints, Government policy and, more recently, the stringency associated with moves towards monetary union in the European Community. The brief attempt to overhaul radically the curriculum was quickly reeled in through the N.C.C.A. and the resource constraints of an expanding education system placed the case of physical education down the policy agenda of a multi-faceted and traditionally conservative Department.

Within the Department of Education itself, the physical education inspectorate had to make its way in the context of the subject-related pecking order which existed. As resources became tighter, the non-examination nature of physical education placed it in on the periphery of the Departmental power structures. The lack of clarity in relationships with the Sports Section did not help matters, despite the presence of Michael McDonough in a dual role as inspector and technical adviser to Cospoir. In essence, this lack of clarity meant that the Department confused its physical education policy within a poorly thought out approach to the long term development of sport.

The marginalisation of Thomond College within the policy process in physical education continued during the 1980's. In many ways this was self-induced, with little dynamic interaction initiated by the College with key partners and had not been helped by the circumstances surrounding the student unrest of the late 1970's. The position of the College was further weakened by the imposed reduction of student numbers in physical education by the Department of Education in 1987 in the lead up to the integration of the college into the University of Limerick. The merger provided new opportunities for physical educationists on the Plassey campus to play a leading role in the evolution of policy and to establish positive links with emerging areas such as sports science.

Within the education debate, there was a widening range of forces and interest groups, including parents, wishing to stake a claim in the educational template of the future. Notably, however, physical educationists and other subject representatives did not succeed in gaining representation at the National Education Convention, signalling that in the broader policy process curricular issues were at some remove from the centre of the policy circle. Despite this setback, the consistent work of the professional association has ensured that, in the move towards revised curricula and a legislative framework for education, the position of school physical education has been well represented. Physical education featured, to varying degrees of prominence, in *Education for a changing world*²³,

*Charting our education future*²⁴ and the *Report on the National education convention*²⁵. Consequently, as the dust settles on the wider debate, the opportunity for physical education to modify and re-assert its position presents itself.

Key policy themes in the re-appraisal of physical education

A number of key policy themes arise in the context of an appraisal of the position of physical education. Firstly, the State's commitment to physical education has been inhibited by the Constitutional framework²⁶ and the ideological milieu within which decision-making is made. Consequently, a resolute commitment to school physical education has not emerged on a consistent basis. Secondly, the State has, at various stages expressed the desire to put in place a dual policy which involves school based physical education and community based sport. This stated policy became more clearly manifest since 1969, but has not materialised in practice to any great degree. Thirdly, physical education in Ireland has not yet found a culturally specific definition and sense of identity which is fully congruent with the education system and society in which it operates.

The lack of State commitment on the role of school physical education

As has been seen, the lack of a commitment to physical education derived its origin early in the life of the State, reflecting perhaps, a lack of strong public interest on any sustained basis. Successive Presidents of the P.E.A.I. have alluded to the fact that the absence of a strong and enduring commitment from the Department of Education has impeded the progress of the subject. These observations reflect the frustration which has been felt in the profession, despite the obvious and important progress which has been made in the introduction of school physical education since 1960.

The Department of Education position on the development of the subject has differed consistently from that of the physical education profession on the question of compulsion. As has been seen, contemporary physical education drew its origins from the wider movement towards the democratisation of education. In addition, physical educationists were strongly committed to the egalitarian notion of physical education for all in the face of the competition and specialisation which was associated with sport. With a full and consistent commitment from the Department of Education, these ideals might have been realised, but there are factors which, in a modern context, suggest that this ideological position might be reviewed.

At a practical level, the feasibility of delivering a physical education programme to all students at all levels and in a quality way is certainly open to question. The needs and interests of students at different stages of adolescence, the difficulties associated with mixed ability teaching and the deleterious effects of compulsion in relation to long term attitudes and behaviour in physical activity suggest that physical education for all is not only unattainable, but is perhaps undesirable as well. In addition, the resources and energy of physical education teachers are seriously stretched with a very high level of exposure to large numbers of students.

These circumstances suggest that both the physical education profession and the Department of Education need to move from ideological positions which have been held for over twenty years. The profession ought to consider the development of a more student-centred and needs-based form of physical education which has the option of validation within the formal examination system. This would entail a shift in the role of the physical education teacher, an issue which will be returned to later.

For its part, the Department of Education needs to re-establish a strong policy line for the development of physical education. Such a direction needs to occur within the context of overall policy priorities and available resources. However, with appropriate planning and effective use of resources, there is much that can be achieved. At primary level, the revision of the physical education syllabus, backed up by a phased programme of in-service education is an essential step. The improvement of the pre-service training for primary teachers should also be on the agenda. In addition, the development of guidelines and training for external personnel in activities which are complementary to the physical education programme would harness an emerging trend. The physical education profession can do much to support these initiatives through advice and technical input.

At second-level, the enhanced planning and management of facilities would add greatly to the basic infrastructure for the subject. A phased programme of introducing new teachers supplemented by the limited re-training of teachers from other subjects would help to address the issue of access for a greater number of students. With the expectation of decreased enrolments and teacher re-deployment, this may well be a cost effective option. The re-formulation of the physical education syllabus with examination options should also be supported by the provision of templates for school planning which include the development of

physical education and co-curricular activity. Physical education teachers will require in-service training to help deal with this changing context.

While none of these developments will occur over-night, the re-formulation of a clear policy for the progress of physical education is essential. The work of the N.C.C.A. course committees might act as a catalyst for this process and the National sports strategy provides an important point of articulation for any new policies. These are opportunities which can contribute very effectively to the aspirations of *Charting our education future* and to the holistic development of students within the context of health promoting schools.

Dual policy on school physical education and community sport and recreation

From an early stage in the development of the State, a dual policy on physical education and sport was in view. However, it was not until the formation of the Sport Section within the Department of Education and the decision to build the N.C.P.E. that the State formally committed itself to the dual school and community policy which involved physical education, sport and recreation. This theme was taken up by the first sports council, *Cosac*. However, the full articulation between school and community was impeded by economic and political circumstances which proved to be stronger than the Department's resolve to establish a concerted and coherent policy on the matter. In addition, the failure to achieve any kind of inter-departmental liaison on the role and value of sport was a significant barrier to its development, particularly at a time when demands on the Department of Education were escalating.

It also seems that within the Department of Education the necessary communication and cohesion did not develop to ensure that the dual policy would translate into long term and concerted action. No formal attempt was made to link the work of the College and its graduates to the wider sports system and the newly formed sports council. Accordingly, by the end of the 1970's the dual policy was in difficulty. This situation was further compounded by the frustration among physical education teachers that basic provisions were not being made in the schools. Special concern was emerging about the lack of physical education in primary schools and the low levels of time allocation and the variable facilities in second-level schools.

However, repeated references to the dual policy in Department of Education policy statements displayed an enduring belief that work in schools should be closely linked to sport and recreation needs and developments within the community.²⁷ These statements were not followed up with any serious structural proposals to ensure that such policy could be pursued within the Department of Education. As a result, the linkages between school and community interests tended to progress on a somewhat piecemeal basis.

The early expectations of the sports councils that physical education teachers would become community animateurs on a wide scale have proven to be unrealistic, particularly given the failure to establish a comprehensive system of school based provision with an adequate specialist teaching force. The response of physical educationists to the sport for all initiatives of the late 1970's was indicative of their disappointment that the State had not followed through on the decision to build a national college in the early 1970's by investing in the necessary physical and human infrastructure within the school system.

Hence, the sport for all move towards community based initiatives, which relied heavily on volunteer inputs, was perceived to be a threat to the tenuous position of school physical education, given the scarcity of resources. In addition, there was a belief that community based initiatives, which targeted the adult population in particular, were building on sand given the relatively new and weak position of school physical education. The absence of a clear plan and rationale on the dual policy further exacerbated matters, no doubt a consequence of the differing priorities which prevailed within the wider Department (which was responsible for school physical education) and the Sports Section (which was responsible for community based sport and recreation).

This broader policy issue also translated into tensions within the school setting in the context of the relationship between physical education and sport. The uneasy co-existence of physical education and co-curricular sport partly derives its origin from the fact that school sport pre-dated physical education in Irish schools. School sport was often delivered by unqualified volunteers and frequently had elitist and competitive orientations. The source of the tension between physical education and sport reflects a conflict between the egalitarian ideals which were evident in the physical education movement and the more exclusive practices which were associated with sport. It seems that this history, combined with the battles which had to be fought to establish physical education as a curriculum subject,

conspired to ensure that the exact nature of the *complementarity* of physical education and sport was never addressed in any coherent fashion. The absence of an overall national policy did not help matters with the result that a strong *esprit de corps* between physical educationists and the sports industry has been slow to emerge.

Towards a re-appraisal of the concept of physical education

Decision making on the use of public resources is linked to the value which is associated with any given initiative. Within the school context, it has been seen that physical education provided an alternative, rather than an addition, to the prevailing academically focused curriculum. Accordingly, the subject was always in a difficult position, particularly given the strong emphasis on examinations which had prevailed within the system since the Intermediate Education Act in 1878.

In addition to this, the values which were inherent to the Swedish and British models of physical education which underpinned the Irish physical education initiative, were in many ways incongruent with the core values which existed in the wider society. In the first instance, the first wave of the physical education movement was initiated by women who sought to liberalise the views which prevailed in relation to the involvement of females in physical activity. Secondly, physical education practices sought to involve all children, no matter what their ability, and was thus a challenge to the existing and strongly competitive games model. Thirdly, the sports pluralism which was inherent to a broad physical education programme was at odds with the sporting traditions associated with the nationalist and colonising influences which were very influential in the early years of the State.

In particular, the uni-dimensional approach to national games was opposed to the involvement of its members in foreign games. This ban mentality was at odds with the multi-activity focus which was inherent in physical education and the articulation between the subject and the national games has never been conclusively addressed. The issue was clearly on the agenda during the 1970's when the G.A.A. pointed to the findings of the 1976 UNESCO Report on the First International Conference of Ministers on the *Role of physical education and sport in the education of youth*²⁸. The Report had placed particular emphasis on the role of traditional games and activities and on the relationship between sport and physical education:

In this respect, it seems particularly important that in many newly independent countries, where physical education curricula, like the list of sports practised, are virtual imitations of foreign models reflecting, more especially, a European image of sport, an effort should be made to think the problem of physical and sports activities out afresh in terms of those countries' own cultural frames of reference and drawing on traditional practices. Such an adjustment-the reinstatement, for example, of many traditional games and sports whose educational value should not be underestimated-would often avert the danger of a traumatic effect being produced by educational practices divorced from the real social, cultural and physical environment.

This was a telling reference, cited by the G.A.A., on the importance of linking the physical education curriculum to the traditions and culture of the nation, a call which seems to have received little attention in the core philosophy of N.C.P.E. Similarly, the syllabi developed for schools by the Department of Education in 1971 and 1984 may not have fully grasped the significance of the cultural context of the subject.

The development of a culturally specific form of physical education in Ireland was, therefore, not addressed in any significant way. Interpretation of the Irish situation by the Department of Education and the N.C.P.E. might have led them to the conclusion that the new physical education initiative ought to build on existing traditions and develop in a way which was congruent with, and acceptable to, the Irish education system and to wider society. Three specific issues emerge in this regard.

Firstly, there was a clear need to ensure that the physical education programme was linked to the culture and traditions of the country. This would have led to a consideration of how national games and dance could be incorporated into a multi-activity curriculum. Secondly, there was the notable absence of a link between physical education and the academically oriented examination system. It was unrealistic to expect that the subject could prosper without some form of incentive in a context where a high value was placed on achievement in examinations. Finally, the need for a positive relationship between the new physical education movement and the longer established games tradition was not seriously addressed. Physical education and games ought to have been defined as complementary activities in the context of the holistic development of the student. This would have necessitated that the inter-relationships between physical education professionals and games teachers and coaches be more clearly worked through.

The fact that these issues were not dealt with in a concerted way meant that the Irish physical education movement relied on definitions and initiatives which had relevance to other countries. The absence of any concerted study of the history, sociology and philosophy of Irish physical education is evidence of the cultural blind-spot which has existed. The result has been the absence of a clear articulation of the role of physical education in the context of the powerful ideologies which are linked to academicism, nationalism, patriarchy and social class within Irish society. Notably, the incorporation of physical education into what is widely regarded as the prevailing ideology within Irish society, that of Catholicism, resulted in the period of the most rapid growth of the subject within the system between 1954 and 1973.

Prevailing ideologies in Ireland have been somewhat counter-balanced by increasing Europeanisation, pluralism, democratisation, industrialisation and its associated health and leisure concerns, all of which have helped the case for physical education. The way forward for physical educationists would appear to be to rise on the tide of these changes and to emphasise the unique contribution which the subject has to make in an increasingly competitive and, oftentimes, alienating education process. In tandem with this, there is a need to ensure that the definition of the subject assumes greater cultural specificity, while at the same time being an acceptable force for change. Through such a re-appraisal the subject can move closer to the centre of the educational policy process and perhaps re-establish the political interest and will which has periodically existed in the past.

Such re-appraisal, focusing on realistic targets, culturally specific content, the role of the physical education teacher, linkages with sport and the community as well as assessment and certification issues would appear to be necessary if physical education is to gain ground in the broader policy debate. The implications for the physical education teacher suggest that the content of the physical education programme should be more closely aligned with the culture and practice within which the school operates. The Department of Education syllabus has an important role to play in providing the framework for such an approach, while the individual physical education teacher has a responsibility to ensure an appropriate mediation of the syllabus in the context of the overall school plan, as outlined in *Charting our education future*.

The role of the physical education teacher requires review also in the light of changing circumstances. The pure egalitarian philosophy which underpinned physical education for all has proven to be unworkable in the face of resource constraints and fragile Department resolve. More importantly, the justification for insisting on compulsory exposure to physical education for all students merits examination in modern circumstances. Undoubtedly, the case for physical education in an increasingly sedentary and leisure oriented society is a strong one. Perhaps, however, the time has come for practitioners to emphasise the quality and long term impact of the physical education experience for students rather than simply seeking to spread their expertise thinly over larger numbers. There is also a need to recognise that compulsion in physical activity is often the ingredient which may lead to disenchantment and drop out, especially in the senior cycle.

Senior cycle students deserve the opportunity to explore and develop the physical talents and interests which they possess. The physical education teacher can play a vital counselling, co-ordinating and liaison role in helping to bring this about. The current over-emphasis on academically oriented decision-making ought to be counter-balanced by a clear set of *sport choices* in which the student is challenged to assess and maximise talents and interests. Recreational sport and competitive sport options should be identified in such a way that they are seen to be part of the natural progression from adolescence into adulthood. Of critical significance for physical education is its position relative to the formal examination system. Options should be developed for students to follow certification routes in State examinations, thus providing validation for their knowledge and skills in the area.

A review of the role and place of physical education ought to take place in the context of emerging proposals within the N.C.C.A. primary and second-level course committees. Physical educationists have come to play a greater role in these processes, signalling the building of important bridges with the system and their colleagues in other subjects. All of this work will be restricted, however, unless a clear commitment is given to developments in the subject, particularly at primary level. The capacity for the physical education programme to make a difference in the lives of students is critically related to the commitment of the State. To date, this commitment has been patchy and intermittent.

On a more positive note, much progress has been made in bringing the physical education initiative forward since 1960. Tangible changes have occurred in the availability of specialist teachers and quality facilities. The response of students to

their experiences has been predominantly positive and significant gains have been made in skilling students for participation in later life. These developments amplify the tremendous potential of the subject within the context of a balanced, holistic and health promoting education for the students of the nation. As the next century approaches, and policy in education and sport is under review, another opportunity emerges for the Government, the Department of Education and the physical education profession to seize the opportunity and develop quality school physical education which is true to the needs of the Irish European citizens of the future.

References

-
- ¹Rose, R. Comparing public policy, *European Journal of Political Research*, 1, 1973, 1
- ²Marshall, C., Mitchell, D. & Wirt, F. *Culture and education policy in the American States*. New York: The Falmer Press, 1989
- ³Department of Education, *Report on physical education*. Internal unpublished report, 1938
- ⁴Kirk, D. *Defining physical education*. London: The Falmer Press, 1992
- ⁵Department of Industry and Commerce, *Report of the Commission on youth unemployment*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1951 (pr. 709)
- ⁶Kirk, D. 1992. Defining physical education
- ⁷Department of Education, *Report of the Council of education on the function and curriculum of the primary school*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1954 (Pr. 2583)
- ⁸Department of Education, *Report of the Council of education on the curriculum of the secondary school*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1962 (Pr. 5996)
- ⁹O'Buachalla, S. *Education policy in twentieth century Ireland*. Dublin: The Wolfhound Press, 1988, p. 233
- ¹⁰Department of Education, 'Physical education report'. Unpublished internal report, 1965
- ¹¹Investment in Education, *Report of the survey team*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1965 (Pr. 8527)
- ¹²Commission on Higher Education, *Presentation and summary of the report, Vol. 1*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1967 (Pr. 9326)
- ¹³Department of Education, *Rialacha agus clar do leith meanscoileanna*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1973 (Pr. 3205)
- ¹⁴Department of Education, *Curraclam na bunscoile teachers' handbook volumes 1 and 2*. Dublin: Brown & Nolan, 1971
- ¹⁵Department of Education, 'National College of Physical Education - feasibility and recommendations'. Unpublished internal report, 1969
- ¹⁶Members of the newly formed association and representatives from I.C.H.P.E.R. visited President deValera during the conference
- ¹⁷Coolahan, J. Educational policy for national schools in D. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan, *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989
- ¹⁸Curriculum and Examinations Board, *Issues and structures in education*. Dublin, 1984
- ¹⁹Department of Education, *Rules and programmes for secondary schools*. Stationery Office: Dublin, 1987 (Pl. 8236)
- ²⁰Physical Education Working Party, 'Physical education: at a critical cross-roads'. Unpublished internal report of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1991
- ²¹The Kellogg's Physical Education Awards were initiated in 1987 and at their height involved over 1,000 students in a high profile project competition at the RDS in Dublin
- ²²Jones, T., Duffy, P., Murphy, G. & Dineen, J. *Girls and boys come out to play*. Physical Education Association of Ireland: Limerick, 1991
- ²³Department of Education, *Education for a changing world*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1992 (Pl. 8969)

²⁴Department of Education, *Charting our education future*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995 (Pn. 2009)

²⁵Secretariat of the National Education Convention, *Report on the National Education Convention*. Dublin, Cahill Printers, 1994

²⁶Bunreacht na hEireann, Article 42

²⁷Department of Education, *A policy for youth and sport*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1977

Department of Education, *White Paper on educational development*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1980 (prl. 9373)

Department of education, *Green and white papers, 1993 and 1995*

²⁸Gaelic Athletic Association, *Action policy for G.A.A. youth*. Dublin, n.d. p. 6

Appendices

| SUB-PERIOD | PRE 1900 | 1900-1912 | 1913-1921 | 1922-1932 | 1933-1943 | 1944-1957 | 1957-1969 | 1970-1977 | 1978-1987 | 1987-DATE |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| BROAD POLITICAL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS | | | First Dail 1919-1921 Second Dail 1921-1922 Political Independence 1922 Free State Constitution | Jan 1922-Aug. 1922 Provisional Govt (Pro Treaty) Sept 1922-Sept. 1923 Cumann na nGael Govt. Sept 1923-June 1927 Cumann na nGael Govt. June 1927-Oct 1927 Cumann na nGael Govt. Oct. 1927- Mar. 1932 Cumann na nGael Govt. | Mar 1932 Fianna Fail Govt. Feb 1933 Fianna Fail Govt. 1937 Constitution Adopted July 1937-June 1938 Fianna Fail Govt. June 1938-July 1943 Fianna Fail Govt. | July 1943-May 1944 Fianna Fail Govt. May 1944-Feb 1948 Fianna Fail Govt. Feb 1948-June 1951 Coalition Govt. June 1951-June 1954 Fianna Fail Govt. June 1954-Mar. 1957 coalition Govt. 1949 -Ireland a founder member of the Council of Europe | March 1957-June 1959 Fianna Fail Govt. June 1959-Oct 1961 Fianna Fail Govt. Oct. 1961-April 1965 Fianna Fail Govt. April 1965-Dec 1968 Fianna Fail Govt. Dec 1968-June 1969 Fianna Fail Govt. 1958 First programme of economic expansion 1964-70 Second programme of economic exp | June 1969-Feb 1973 Fianna Fail Govt. Feb 1973-June 1977 Fine Gael/Lab Govt. | June 1977-June 1981 Fianna Fail Govt. June 1981-Feb 1982 Fine Gael/Lab Govt. Feb 1982- Nov. 1982 Fianna Fail Govt. Dec 1982-Mar 1987 Fine Gael/Lab Govt. | 1987-1991 Fianna Fail Govt. 1991-1992 Fianna Fail/PD Govt. 1992-1994 Fianna Fail/Lab Govt. 1994- Rainbow coalition Govt. |
| SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES | 1896 First Olympiad - Athens | 1900 Paris Olympics 1904 St Louis Olympics 1908 London Olympics 1908 Fina founded (swimming) | GAA as recruiting ground for activists 1912 Stockholm Olympics 1913 IAAF founded 1920 Antwerp Olympics | Civil War Building of the State National identity 50 per cent of population in agriculture 1929 Papal encyclical 1932 Eucharistic conference 1924 Paris Olympics - Ireland Competes 1928 Amsterdam Olympics - Gold P. O'Callaghan | Music and dancing - concern of church 1932 Los Angeles Olympics - Gold P. O'Callaghan, B. Tisdall 1936 Berlin Olympics (no Irish Team) Women's League of Health and Beauty formed. | 1949 Women's athletics condemned in Lenten pastoral 1950 Mother and Child debate 1956 Lenten Pastoral 1948 London Olympics 1952 Helsinki Olympics 1956 Melbourne Olympics (1 gold, 1 silver and 3 bronze) | Economic expansion population growth Ireland Applies for EC membership (1961) 1966 - Devlin Commission (Civil Service) 1961 Television arrives in Ireland 1977 Committee on the Constitution 1960 Rome Olympics 1964 Tokyo Olympics - 1 bronze 1968 Mexico Olympics | 1974 Oil crisis 1975 Sport for all charter adopted 1973 Ireland joins EU Increasing Technology/Automation/ Europeanisation 1972 Munich Olympics 1972 Rugby test cancelled over Bloody Sunday 1976 Montreal Olympics | Spending/renewal then exchequer cuts Unemployment/drugs Increased urbanisation Papal visit. Social issues referenda 1980 Moscow Olympics 1 silver 1 bronze 1984 Los Angeles 1 silver | Programmes for Govt. 1991 Maastricht Treaty Constitutional Commission 1988 Soccer team reaches euro finals 1988 Seoul Olympics 1992 Barcelona Olympics 1 gold 1 silver |
| DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY | 1878 Intermediate Education Act 1898 Belmore Report | 1904 Dale Report | No Minister for Education in first Dail Ministers: JJ O'Kelly, M. Hayes | 1922 First national programme 1923-35 Powers of Boards of National and Intermediate Ed. rescinded 1924 Establishment of Department of education 1926 Second National Programme 1930 Vocational Ed. Act Ministers: F. Lynch, E. McNeill (1922-26) J.M. O'Sullivan (1926-1932) | Article 42 of Bunreacht na hEireann Ministers: T.Deirg (1932-43) S. O'Ceallaigh (3 wks) E. deValera (9 Months) | 1946 Teacher strike 1951 Commission on youth unemployment 1954 Council of Education/Primary Ministers: T. Deirg (1943-48) R. Mulcahy (1948-1951) (1954-1957) S. Moylan (1951-1954) | 1962 Council of Education report 1965 Investment in Education 1967 Free Education 1968 Commission on Higher Education Ministers: J. Lynch (1957-59), D O'Malley (1966-68), P. Hillery (1959-65), B. Lenihan (1968-69) G. Colley (1965-68) | 1969 HEA set-up. 3rd level re-organisation 1970's 9 RTC's 50+ Community Schools 1971 Curriculum na Bunscoile 1970 NIHE (LJ) set up Increasing laicisation of teaching force. Ministers: P. Faulkner 1969-73 R. Burke 1973-76 F. Barry 1976-77 | 1980 White paper on educational devt. 1984 Programme for action in education 1984 CEB formed 1987 NCCA replaces CEB 1980 TCE Act. 1985/86 Teachers industrial campaigns Ministers J. Wilson 1977-81 J. Boland 1981-81, M. O'Donoghue, G. Brady, 1982. G. Hussey (1982-86) P. Cooney (1986-1987) | 1992 Education for a Changing World 1994 Charting our Education Future 1991 NCCA Established 1989 Primary Review body + Curric. Review Body 1995 Sport Section split as part of de-centralisation Ministers: 1987-1991 M. O'Rourke (1992-) N. Davern, M. Geoghan-Quinn (1992) N. Bheathnach. |
| DEVELOPMENTS IN SPORTS POLICY | 1857 First athletics meet (Trinity) 1873 Irish Champions Athletic Club founded 1880 IRFU founded 1881 Irish Cross Country Association founded 1882 Irish Cyclists Association founded 1884 Formation of GAA 1884 Caledonian Games 1885 Irish Amateur Athletics Association founded 1888 Tara Street Baths built 1891 GUI Founded 1893 IASA founded 1894 ILHU formed 1899 BUI formed | 1900 Ling Gymnasium opened 1900 GAA establishes Provincial 1903 GAA ban on RIC/soldiers/sailors 1902 GAA ban on non-gaelic footballers 1911 IPGA formed School sport expands to formal competitions | 1918 GAA Proscribed 1920 Bloody Sunday, Croke Park 1922 NACA formed NIAA formed 1922 FAI formed (breaking from IFA) 1922 ILTA (32 counties) formed | 1924, 1928, 1932 Tailteann Games 1923 Irish Cricket Union formed 1923 IOC formed 1928 Cosgrave declares the State has no role in funding sport | 1932-34 Tichy Initiative by the Irish Army 1934 IAAF ban on NACA (32 county issue) 1937 AAI formed 1942 SJA formed (initially HJRE) 1948 Irish Basketball Assoc formed | 1948 Controversy over 'Eire' title and selection of Athletes at Olympics 1951 IOC reforms as OCI 1954 An Bol Chumann formed 1953 First athletics summer school | 1958 Opening of Santry Stadium 1967 BLE founded (AAVE/NACA Merge) 1970 Lord Killanin President IOC | 1969 Establishment of Sport Section 1969 Grant aid of £107,000 to NGBs 1969 Appointment of Parliamentary Secretary, Bobby Molloy 1971 Appointment of COSAC (1971-74) 1970 M. O'Kennedy Parliamentary Secretary 1972 Jim Tunney Parliamentary Sec. 1973 John Bolton Parliamentary Sec. 1977 A policy for youth and sport 1970 AFAS/Whin Established 1975 Achill OE Centre opened. | 1977 Jim Tunney, Minister of State 1978 Appointment of 1st Cospair (1978-81) 1978 Sport for All campaigns Begin 1978 Rec. Man. Course in Waterford 1981 Appointment of 2nd Cospair (1981-82) 1981 Michael Keating Minister of State 1982 Maire Geoghan Quinn, Minister of State 1982 Appointment of 3rd Cospair (1982-85) 1982 Donal Creed, Minister of State 1984 Lottery proposal to Govt. 1985 Appointment of 4th Cospair (1985-88) | 1987 ICB merges with proposed NCTC 1987 Frank Fahey Minister of State 1991 NCTC Established 1991 Liam Aylward Minister of State 1992 Appointment of 5th Cospair (1992-95) 1994 Bernard Allen Minister of State 1995 Sport strategy group formulated |
| DEVELOPMENTS IN SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION | | 1900 Ling Gymnasium opened 1908-1911 Increase in Gymnasia 1904 Dale report outlines significant increase in schools offering drill | 1915 Ling Courses for instructors commence | 1926 Drill becomes non-compulsory 1923 Ling two-year courses in place | 1934 Tichy initiative 1938 Report on national institute for physical training. 1942 Department of Education and Department of Defence Report | 1947 Dublin College of PE formed 1954 Opening of St. Raphael's, Sion Hill 1963 Council of Europe courses run 1964 Grant scheme for PE capital 1965 Appointment of PE Inspector to Dept. of Ed. 1965 Registration status for Ling registration status for designated UK Colleges. 1968 Founding of PEAI 1968 World ICHPER in Dublin | 1960 Registration status for Sion Hill and Loughborough Colleges 1969 PE scholarships to UK (Mullin) 1976 NCEP becomes part of TCE 1977 PE student unrest 1976/77 NUI degrees to PE Grads 1977 School building programme stopped 1972 Ling/Sion Hill close 1971 PE syllabus adopted primary & secondary | 1969 Decision to establish NCPE 1973 Opening of NCPE 1969 PE scholarships to UK (Mullin) 1976 NCEP becomes part of TCE 1977 PE student unrest 1976/77 NUI degrees to PE Grads 1977 School building programme stopped 1972 Ling/Sion Hill close 1971 PE syllabus adopted primary & secondary | 1982 PEAI Disbands 1978 National PE Conference (Wexford) 1979 National PE Conference (Ballina) 1980 National PE Conference (Kilkenny) 1978-1991 NCEA Degrees to PE Grads. 1979 School building programme re-started 1987 Kellogg's PE Awards established 1986 School grant scheme amended 1984 Hall sizes/school size policy 1984 PEAI re-forms | 1984-Present, National PE Conferences held each year 1987 Sports Section funds PEAI 1989 NCCA Working Party formed. 1990 PE at a critical crossroads 1990 Assist Published 1991 World ICHPER in Limerick. 1991 TCE Merges into UL 1991 Girls and Boys come out to play 1994 PE course committee formed |

Appendix 2

School physical education/ sports policy chronology

| YEAR | SPORTS POLICY | SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION |
|---------|---|---|
| 1960-61 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing interest in primary PE and community recreation issues in Dail Eireann. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration status for Sion Hill/ Loughborough College Appointment of Cmdt. O'Keefe to St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra. |
| 1962-63 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council of Europe summer courses for teachers Grants scheme for gymnasiums initiated |
| 1964-65 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. McDonough appointed inspector to Department of Education Ling graduates accepted for registration |
| 1966-67 | | |
| 1968-69 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports Section established Grants for NGB's Bobby Molloy Parliamentary Secretary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PE Scholarships to Strawberry Hill (males) World ICHPER in Dublin |
| 1970-71 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COSAC established Michael O'Kennedy Parliamentary Secretary AFAS/TIGLIN set up | <p>1970 PE recognised as a subject at second-level</p> <p>1971 PE syllabi adopted at primary and second level</p> |
| 1972-73 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jim Tunney Parliamentary Secretary (1971-73) Swimming pool development through Dept. of Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ling/Sion Hill close NCPE opens |
| 1973-74 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COSAC disbanded John Bruton Parliamentary Secretary (1974-77) | |
| 1975-76 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-surfacing of Belfield to tartan Achill O.E.C. set up with State support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First PE Graduates from NCPE (1975) NCPE becomes Thomond College |
| 1977-78 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A policy for youth and sport published First Cospoir appointed Jim Tunney, Minister of State (1977-81) Tri-partite building scheme developed "Sport for All" campaigns Irish Sports Federation founded | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student unrest at Thomond College. School building programme stopped NUI/NCEA validation controversy at NCPE |
| 1979-80 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waterford RTC establishes Rec. Man. course Sports Advisory Committees established | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amended school building programme resumes |
| 1981-82 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second Cospoir appointed and disbanded Third Cospoir appointed Michael Keating Minister of State (1981) Maire Geoghan Quinn Minister of State (1982) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1982 PEAI "Caretaker" executive |
| 1983-84 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donal Creed Minister of State (1982-87) Lottery proposals drafted by Cospoir | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1984 PEAI re-vitalised 1984 2nd draft syllabus published 1984 PE 'core' in CEB proposals |
| 1985-86 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fourth Cospoir appointed Cospoir Coaching and National Sports Centre reports Outstanding sportspersons scheme established | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Syllabus adopted |
| 1987-88 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cospoir discontinued Lottery funds become available Frank Fahey Minister of State 1987-1991 Role of ILAM enhanced NCEF set-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kellogg's PE Awards launched |
| 1989-90 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCCA Working Party established, re-established and reports, Assisf published |
| 1991-92 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fifth Cospoir appointed Liam Alyward Minister of State 1991-94 NCVA set-up. Sport & Rec. Sub Group established NCTC established and set-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PE course committee (Primary) level 1 TCE merges with UL. PESS formed. World ICHPER in Limerick PEAI Administrator appointed |
| 1993 - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1994 Bernard Allen Minister for State 1995 Sport Strategy Group appointed 1996 Code of ethics for children's sport in Ireland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PE Course Committee (Primary) Level 2 PE Course committee second-level. Constitutional review committee reports on Article 42 |

Appendix 3
Registration of physical education teachers 1965-1993

| year | men | women | total |
|---------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1965-66 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 1966-67 | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| 1967-68 | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| 1968-69 | 1 | 21 | 22 |
| 1969-70 | 0 | 25 | 25 |
| 1970-71 | 1 | 39 | 40 |
| 1971-72 | 3 | 45 | 48 |
| 1972-73 | 6 | 35 | 41 |
| 1973-74 | 4 | 46 | 50 |
| 1974-75 | 5 | 45 | 50 |
| 1975-76 | 9 | 14 | 23 |
| 1976-77 | 15 | 29 | 44 |
| 1977-78 | 15 | 25 | 40 |
| 1978-79 | 19 | 19 | 38 |
| 1979-80 | 21 | 30 | 51 |
| 1980-81 | 9 | 13 | 22 |
| 1981-82 | 15 | 17 | 32 |
| 1982-83 | 26 | 23 | 49 |
| 1983-84 | 6 | 18 | 24 |
| 1984-85 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| 1985-86 | 5 | 9 | 14 |
| 1986-87 | 4 | 14 | 18 |
| 1987-88 | 6 | 10 | 16 |
| 1988-89 | 5 | 7 | 12 |
| 1989-90 | 4 | 19 | 23 |
| 1990-91 | 8 | 6 | 14 |
| 1991-92 | 11 | 14 | 25 |
| 1992-93 | 8 | 20 | 28 |
| Totals | 213 | 564 | 777 |

Appendix 4
Number and percentage of students taking physical education 1970-1994

| Year | Junior Cycle PE | Total Junior Cycle | % Junior Cycle PE | Senior Cycle PE | Total Senior Cycle | % Senior Cycle PE | Total PE | Total all | % Total PE |
|---------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1970-71 | 72733 | 107050 | 68 | 25910 | 45184 | 57 | 98643 | 152234 | 65 |
| 1971-72 | 76822 | 111144 | 69 | 27927 | 48950 | 57 | 104749 | 160094 | 65 |
| 1972-73 | 86361 | 116201 | 74 | 32763 | 51092 | 64 | 119124 | 167293 | 71 |
| 1973-74 | 91981 | 123189 | 75 | 31410 | 53268 | 59 | 123391 | 176457 | 70 |
| 1974-75 | 100270 | 128679 | 78 | 36214 | 57671 | 63 | 136484 | 186350 | 73 |
| 1975-76 | 128451 | 183145 | 70 | 42628 | 73587 | 58 | 171079 | 256732 | 67 |
| 1976-77 | 137457 | 189797 | 72 | 45907 | 78212 | 59 | 183364 | 268009 | 68 |
| 1977-78 | 132642 | 192966 | 69 | 44761 | 79084 | 57 | 177403 | 272050 | 65 |
| 1978-79 | 155605 | 196105 | 79 | 54683 | 80487 | 68 | 210288 | 276592 | 76 |
| 1979-80 | 164921 | 198638 | 83 | 60047 | 83204 | 72 | 224968 | 281842 | 80 |
| 1980-81 | 168964 | 199343 | 85 | 60764 | 86339 | 70 | 229728 | 285682 | 80 |
| 1981-82 | 169807 | 202394 | 84 | 62001 | 91634 | 68 | 231808 | 294028 | 79 |
| 1982-83 | 172495 | 205310 | 84 | 67193 | 96024 | 70 | 239688 | 301334 | 80 |
| 1983-84 | 176614 | 208352 | 85 | 68078 | 100030 | 68 | 244692 | 308382 | 79 |
| 1984-85 | 183063 | 210827 | 87 | 71063 | 101577 | 70 | 254142 | 312404 | 81 |
| 1985-86 | 185146 | 212316 | 87 | 72340 | 102765 | 70 | 257486 | 315081 | 82 |
| 1986-87 | 183007 | 211141 | 87 | 73505 | 104897 | 70 | 256512 | 316038 | 81 |
| 1987-88 | 181692 | 207992 | 87 | 74512 | 108344 | 69 | 256204 | 316336 | 81 |
| 1988-89 | 178510 | 204060 | 87 | 75201 | 112231 | 67 | 253711 | 316291 | 80 |
| 1989-90 | 162575 | 184777 | 88 | 75147 | 114069 | 66 | 237722 | 298846 | 80 |
| 1990-91 | 192959 | 217682 | 89 | 76287 | 114246 | 67 | 269246 | 331928 | 81 |
| 1992-93 | 184,906 | 207,904 | 89 | 77,756 | 119,497 | 67 | 262,662 | 327,401 | 80 |
| 1993-94 | 189,511 | 210,262 | 90 | 77,936 | 124,185 | 63 | 267,447 | 334,447 | 80 |

Bibliography

Bibliography

I Primary source material

- a. Registration Council minutes
- b. N.C.P.E. and Thomond College records
- c. Cospoir minutes
- d. P.E.A.I. records
- e. Interviews
- f. State papers
- g. Correspondence

II Other unpublished source material

- a. Minutes and correspondence
- b. Papers of individuals
- c. Unpublished reports
- d. Unpublished thesis
- e. Conference presentations

III Official publications of the United Kingdom prior to Irish independence

- a. Bills and Acts
- b. Reports of commissions and committees
- c. Annual reports

IV Official publications of the Irish Free State and the Irish Republic

- a. Bills and Acts
- b. Official reports and publications
- c. Parliamentary debates
- d. Annual reports

V Newspapers and journals cited

VI Books and pamphlets

VII Articles in books and journals

VIII European resolutions and documentation

IX Ministerial speeches/addresses and press releases

I Primary source material

a. Registration Council minutes

Registration Council minutes, 27 May, 1942; 13 January, 1960; 11 January, 1961; 15 January, 1964; 6 May, 1964; 13 January, 1965; 12 January, 1966; 11 January, 1967; 10 April, 1967; 10 January, 1968; 15 January, 1969; 4 July, 1969; 14 January, 1970; 8 March, 1971; 13 January, 1971; 28 May, 1971; 28 January, 1972; 15 March, 1972; 31 May, 1972; 31 January, 1973; 6 June, 1973; 30 January, 1975; 30 April, 1975; 6 June, 1975; 24 October, 1975; 14 November, 1975

b. N.C.P.E. and Thomond College records

Minutes of the Board of Management on 18, October, 1972; 16 July, 1973; 7 January, 1974; 14 January, 1975; 10 June, 1975; 22 July, 1975

Minutes of Governing Body of Thomond College on 14 June, 1977; 23 August, 1978; 11 September, 1978; 28 October, 1978; 16 November, 1979; 18 January, 1981; 27 July, 1981; 4 March, 1982; 7 April, 1982; 8 November, 1982; 28 January, 1983; 30 August, 1984; 9 November, 1984

Minutes of the Academic Board, 23 January, 1973; 7, February, 1973; 5 March, 1973; 6 April, 1973; 30 April, 1973; 6 May, 1973; 5 June, 1973; 21 June, 1973; 17 July, 1973; 25 July, 1973; 25 September, 1973; 3 October, 1973; 14 November, 1973; 28 November, 1973; 4 February, 1974; 19 February, 1974; 25 April, 1974; 30 April, 1974; 9 May, 1974; 21 May, 1974; 29 May, 1974; 4 June, 1974; 7 June 1974; 11 June, 1974; 25 June, 1974; 31 July, 1974; 18 September, 1974; 19 September, 1974; 1 October, 1974; 8 October, 1974; 22 October, 1974; 23 October, 1974; 5 November, 1974; 12 November, 1974; 18 November, 1974; 26 November, 1974; 2 December, 1974; 10 December, 1974; 16 January, 1975; 21 January, 1975; 25 February, 1975; 22 April, 1975; 5 May, 1975; 3 June, 1975; 19 June, 1975; 30 June, 1975; 18 March, 1976; 12 April, 1976; 18 May, 1976; 9 June, 1976

Minutes Academic Council, 11 June, 1976; 9 July, 1976; 26 August, 1976; 6 September, 1976; 10 September, 1976; 6 October, 1976; 15 November, 1976; 10 January, 1977; 25 January, 1977; 3 February, 1977; 7 February, 1977; 21 February, 1977; 4 March, 1977; 15 March, 1977; 30 March, 1977; 21 May, 1977; 5 July, 1977; 19 July, 1977; 20 September, 1977; 26 September, 1977; 2 October, 1977; 10 October, 1977; 17 October, 1977; 3 November, 1977; 17 November, 1977; 21 November, 1977; 29 November, 1977; 1 December, 1977; 8 December, 1977; 18 January, 1978; 1 February, 1978; 8 February, 1978; 20 February, 1978; 4 April, 1978; 18 April, 1978; 25 April, 1978; 2 May, 1978; 10 May, 1978; 11 May, 1978; 5 December, 1978; 31 May, 1979; 17 December, 1985

Minutes of staff meetings, 18 January, 1973; 18 September, 1973; 17 October, 1973; 18, October, 1973; 24 October, 1973; 23 November, 1973; 5 September, 1975; 7 October, 1975; 11 November, 1975; 21 November, 1975; 28 November, 1975; 2 December, 1975; 5 December, 1975; 11 December, 1975; 18 February, 1976

Correspondence to the Department of Education from the architectural firm Delany, McVeigh and Pike on 19 October, 1971

Letter to N.C.E.A. on June 1, 1972 from Secretary of Departmental Steering Committee for N.C.P.E.

Minutes of a meeting between the Chairman of the Board of Management and members of staff held on 7 May, 1973

Report from the Curriculum Planning Committee minuted at the Academic board on 21, June, 1973

Letter from Dr. Oliver to Dr. Walsh, 1 October, 1973

Minutes of a meeting between N.C.P.E. representatives and the Minister for Education, 27, March, 1974

Document presented to Academic Board on 21 May, 1974 entitled 'Administrative structure for N.C.P.E.' and accompanying organisational chart

Letter from Dr. Walsh to Dr. Oliver, 15 October, 1974

N.C.P.E. internal document, 11 November, 1974 prepared for a meeting with Department of education officials and representatives of the architectural firm.

Document submitted to Academic Board on 2 December, 1974

Woodman, K. *Report*. Unpublished internal report, December 1974.

Letter from staff members of N.C.P.E. to Risteard O Foghlu, Department of Education and Chairman of the Board of Management on 10 January, 1975

Minutes of a meeting between the Director and staff of N.C.P.E. on 5 December, 1975

Prospectus 1976-77. Limerick, 1976

Minute of a meeting between the N.I.H.E. and N.C.P.E. 15 October, 1976

Memo from the Secretary of Thomond College of Education to all staff members, 3 February, 1977

Statement by the Student Union of N.C.P.E. on the issue of validation 15 March 1977

Letter from the President of U.C.C. on 26 April 1977 to the Director of Thomond College.

Annual reports for 1983 and 1984

Submission to the National Council for Educational Awards for re-approval of programmes. Vol. 2: Material specific to the B.A. Limerick: Thomond College, 1985

Statistics, presented to the Governing Body on 27 November, 1987

Thomond College of Education Executive Committee, Briefing documents on the future of the College, 28 September, 1989

Correspondence with the Higher Education, Authority, 1989/1990

Submission by Thomond College of Education to the Higher Education Authority Committee on inter-institutional links, 5 October, 1990

University of Limerick submission to H.E.A. working group on inter-institutional links, 1990

c. Cospoir minutes

Minutes of Cospoir meetings, 21, March, 1978; 29 March, 1978; 16 June, 1978; 21 July, 1978; 18 August, 1978; 20 October, 1978; 15 December, 1978; 19 January, 1979; 16 March, 1979; 18 May, 1979; 15 June, 1979; 18 July, 1979; 20 July, 1979; 17 August, 1979; 26 October, 1979; 27 November, 1979; 22 January, 1980; 25 March, 1980; 27 June, 1980; 25 July, 1980; 24 June, 1981; 22 November, 1983; 21 June 1988

Document entitled 'Immediate work programme' tabled at Cospoir meeting on 29 March, 1978

The National Sports Council (Cospoir), Terms of reference tabled at a meeting of the Council on 29 March, 1978

Cospoir file, 1986: document on staffing

d. P.E.A.I. records

Minutes of Physical Education Association of Ireland Executive Committee, 21 September, 1978; 2 February, 1979; 7 June, 1979

Minutes of a meeting between the National Executive Committee of the Physical Education Association of Ireland and Cospoir Department of Education officials on 2 February, 1979

Kellogg's Physical Education Awards. Catalogues from 1987 to 1996 are held at the Physical Education association of Ireland offices, University of Limerick

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 1985-1996

Physical Education Association of Ireland, *Annual reports* 1985-1996.

President's addresses to the Annual General Meeting of the Association, 1985-1996.

Submission to the Department of Education, 7 February 1986. Unpublished document. Physical Education Association of Ireland files

Letter from the Minister for Sport to the President of the P.E.A.I. 29 February, 1988

Submission to the Primary Review Body, 1988,

Letter from the President of the Physical Education Association of Ireland to the Minister of State at the Department of Education, 7 December, 1988.

'A national policy on physical culture', 1990

Higgins, C. Survey of the members of the Physical Education Association of Ireland. Unpublished report, 1993

Physical Education Association of Ireland, Green paper submission, 1993

e. Interviews

Aylward, L.; Darmody, M.; De Forge, M.; Deenihan, J.; Desmond, J.; Donnelly, A.; Dugdale, L.; Haugh, C.; Healy, A.; Healy, T.; Hope, A.; Hudson, E.; Keany, Sr. J.; Kearns, Sr. B.; Kyle, M.; Long, R.; McCarthy, L. (by telephone); McDonough, M.; Molloy, R. (by telephone); O'Carroll, B.; O' Dalaigh, T.; O'Sullivan, P.; Vekins, C.; Wade, J.

f. State papers

de Valera Papers, F. L. J. Killiney, Dublin

Department of Defence, Parkgate Street, Dublin. File 2/39391, 1934

National Archives, Dublin. File SII 053A

g. Correspondence

Letter from Sr. Bede Kearns to the P.E.A.I. on 30 December, 1987

Letter to the author from Sr. Bede Kearns, former principal of St. Raphael's, 27 January 1995

Letter to the author on 7 February, 1995 from T.K. Whitaker.

Letter from Jim Wade, 6 April, 1995

Letters from past Presidents of the P.E.A.I. Darmody, M.; Halbert, J; Murphy, G.; Porter, J.; Stanton, P.;

Letter from G. O'Donovan, Chief administrator, P.E.A.I.

II Other unpublished source material

a. Papers of Individuals

Dugdale, L. 'Government aid to sport and recreation in the Republic of Ireland'. Unpublished paper, 1974

Letter to Liam Dugdale from the Department of Local Government in January, 1974

Letter from Bishop James Staunton, Secretary to the hierarchy, to An Taoiseach John A. Costello, 10 October, 1950. Reproduced in J. Whyte, *Church and State in modern Ireland 1923-1970*. Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1974, pp 424-425

M. McDonough, *The progress of physical education in Ireland*. Unpublished paper, n.d.,

Research being undertaken by Manuel Carrizosa in the Universidad De Extremadura, Portugal and documented in a letter to the author on 16 October, 1995

b. Unpublished reports

Cospoir 'Recommendations on the location of a National Sports Centre'. Unpublished Cospoir report, 1985

Cospoir 'Report of the Coaching Committee', 1986.

Darmody, M. 'Physical education survey 1985-1989.

Darmody, M. 'Physical education in Co. Waterford'. 1989

Deenihan, J. 'Physical education survey - report on physical education in Irish secondary schools', 1991

Deenihan, J. 'Physical education in Irish primary and special schools.' Dublin, 1990.

Department of Education and Department of Defence, 'Physical Education Report' 1938.

Department of Education, 'Physical education report'. Unpublished internal report, 1965, p.6

Department of Education, 'National College of Physical Education - feasibility and recommendations, 1969

Department of Education, Dance in education curriculum development project, n.d

Department of Education, 'Implications of the Review Body's recommendations on P.E. and suggested course of action.' Unpublished internal document, n.d.

Department of Education, *Results of ASSIST survey*. Unpublished results of a survey of 387 physical education teachers. Manuscript with author.

European Physical Education Association, results of a survey of physical education in Europe, 1994

Leonard, D. & Duffy, P. 'Re-appraisal of the physical education programme'. Report of an in-service course, Thomond College of Education, October 25 & 26, 1985

Physical Education Working Party, 'Physical education: at a critical cross-roads'. Unpublished report of the working party on physical education, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1991.

McDonough, M. 'Progress in physical education'. n.d.

Submissions to the National Sports Strategy Group. Submissions held at the Sports Section, Floor 11, Hawkins House, Dublin.

c. Unpublished theses and papers

Dooley, J. Physical education in Irish national and secondary schools, 1924-1965. Unpublished research paper, Trinity College, Dublin, 1974, pp. 45-6

Healy, Fr. L. History of Blackrock College. Blackrock College Archives.

Higgins, C. The attitudes of Irish post-primary principals to physical education. Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University College, Dublin, 1991

McDonough, M. Physical education in the sports complex in the community school. Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, Trinity, 1981.

O'Donoghue, T.A. The policy of the State on the promotion of physical education in Irish secondary schools. Unpublished M. Ed. thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1984

McGarry, S. Culture, ideology and the physical education curriculum in Ireland. Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1987

Mahedy, D. An investigation of national policy for the provision of indoor aquatic facilities in Ireland - past, present and future. Unpublished M.A. thesis, Institute of Public Administration, 1996

Turbidy, R. The origin and development of the Registration Council for secondary teachers 1914-1960. Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University College, Dublin, 1984

d. Conference presentations

Coote, B. Science or sciolism in gymnastics. Lecture presented to the P.N.E.U. in Dublin on 9 November, 1938

Duffy, P. Primary school education - spirit, mind, but what about the body? Paper presented to the annual conference of the National Parents' Council - Primary. Dundalk, April, 1992

Kilfeather, N. Physical education in the primary school. Paper presented to the symposium on physical education, health and lifestyles, Dublin, February, 1992

Lennon, J. Physical education...first level. Paper presented at the symposium on physical education, health and lifestyles, Dublin, February, 1992

Leonard, D. Teacher empowerment in a curriculum project. Paper presented to the 12th Annual Conference of the Education Studies Association of Ireland, Carysfort College, 19-21 March, 1987

Lynch, K. Dominant ideologies in Irish educational thought: consensualism, essentialism and meritocratic individualism. Paper read at Educational Studies Association of Ireland Annual Conference, University College, Galway, 20-22 March, 1986

Quinn, E. Physical education at second level. Paper presented to the symposium on physical education, health and lifestyles, Dublin, February, 1992

III Official publications of the United Kingdom prior to Irish Independence

a. Bills and Acts

Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act, 1878 (41 & 42 Vict. Ch. 66)

Vocational Education Act, 1930

Thomond College of Education Act, 1980

University of Limerick (dissolution of Thomond College), 1991

b. Reports of commissions, committees etc.

Board of Education on Primary Education (Ireland) *Appendix to the rules and regulations of the Commissioners of National Education*, H.M.S.O., 1903

Board of Education on Primary Education (Ireland), *Revised programme for national schools*. Dublin, H.M.S.O., 1900

Board of Education on Primary Education (Ireland), *Report of Mr. F.H. Dale*. Dublin: H.M.S.O., 1904 (Cd. 1981)

Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction in Primary Schools, *Final report of the commissioners*. Dublin, H.M.S.O., 1898 (C.-8923) and referred to as the Belmore Report

c. Annual Reports

Rules and regulations of the Commissioners on National Education, Dublin: H.M.S.O., 1913,

Notes for teachers in connection with the programmes of instruction for national schools, Dublin, 1920

IV Official publications of the Irish Free State and the Irish Republic

a. Constitution, bills and acts

Bunreacht na hEireann: Constitution of Ireland, 1937

Local Government (Planning and Development) Act of 1963

Thomond College of Education Act, 1980.

Vocational Education Act, 1930 (No. 29)

b. Official reports and publications

Commission on Higher Education, *Presentation and summary of the report*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1967 (Pr. 9588)

Commission on Higher Education, *Presentation and summary of the report, Vol. 1*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1967 (Pr. 9326)

Commission on Higher Education, *Report of the Commission on Higher Education*. Stationery Office: Dublin, 1967 Vol. 2 (Pr. 9389)

Council of Education, *Report of the Council of Education on the curriculum of the secondary school*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1962 (Pr. 5996)

Curriculum and Examinations Board, *Issues and structures in education*. Dublin, 1984

Curriculum and Examinations Board, *In our schools*. Dublin, 1986

Curriculum and Examinations Board. *The arts in education*, Dublin, 1986

Department of Education and Department of Health, *A national survey of involvement in sport and physical activity*. Dublin, 1996

Department of Education, *Notes on the teaching of physical education in the primary school*, Stationery Office, 1932

Department of Education, *Revised notes for teachers - physical training*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1932

_____ *Report of the Department of Education for the school year 1932-1933*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1933

_____ *Curraclam na bunscoile teachers' handbook volumes 1 and 2*. Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1971

_____ *Rialacha agus clar do leith meanscoileanna*. Stationery Office: Dublin, 1973 (prl. 3205)

_____ *Memo 51/74*

_____ *Effects of competitive sport on young people*. Dublin: Stationery office, 1976

_____ *A policy for youth and sport, 1977*

_____ *Programme for action in education 1984-1987*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1984 (Pl. 2153)

_____ *White paper on educational development*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1984 (pl. 2153)

_____ *Partners in education: serving community needs*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1985

_____ *Physical education: assessment for second level teachers*. Dublin, 1990.

_____ *Report of the review body on the primary curriculum*, Dublin, 1990

Rules and programme for secondary schools 1987/88 to 1991/92.
Dublin: Stationery Office, 1991 (Pl. 8263)

 Education for a changing world. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1992 (pl.
8969)

 Charting our education future. Stationery Office, 1995 (Pn 2009)

Department of Industry and Commerce, *Report of the commission on youth unemployment.* Dublin: Stationery Office, 1951 (Pr. 709)

Government of Ireland, *Second programme for economic expansion.* Dublin: Stationery Office, 1964, Part 1: (Pr. 7239) Part 2: (Pr. 7670)

Higher Education Authority, *Memorandum B13*, 1969

Higher Education Authority, *A council of National Awards and a College of Higher Education at Limerick*, Dublin: HEA, 1969.

Higher Education Authority, *Report on teacher education.* Dublin: Stationery Office, 1970 (E/67)

Investment in education survey team, *Investment in education.* Dublin: Stationery Office, 1965 (pr. 8527)

Investment in Education survey team, *Investment in education: report of the survey team, Appendices.* Dublin: Stationery Office, 1965 (Pr. 8311)

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 'Physical education: at a critical cross-roads'. Report of the Physical Education Working Party, 1991

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, *Curriculum and assessment policy: towards a new century*, Dublin 1993

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 'Re-drafting of physical education.' Dublin, 1996

National Education Convention Secretariat, *Report on the National Education Convention.* Cahill Printers: Dublin, 1994

National Programme Conference, *National programme of primary instruction*, Dublin: Educational Company of Ireland, 1922

National Programme Conference, *Report and programme*, Dublin: Stationery Office, 1926

Sports Research Committee, *The economic impact of sport in Ireland.* Dublin: Department of Education, 1994

c. Parliamentary debates

Dail Debates, Vol 44, 1932; Vol 113, 1948; Vol 153, 1955; Vol 176, 1959; Vol 180, 1960; Vol 181, 1960; Vol 188, 1961; Vol 189, 1961; Vol 194, 1962; Vol 201, 1963; Vol 203, 1963; Vol 215, 1965; Vol 218, 1965; Vol 240, 1969; Vol 242, 1969; Vol 245, 1970; Vol 247, 1970; Vol 248, 1970; Vol 254, 1971; Vol 259, 1972; Vol 265, 1973; Vol 266, 1973; Vol 275, 1974; Vol 311, 1979; Vol 409, 1991; Vol 409, 1991

d. Annual Reports

Department of Education, *Annual report of the Sports Section*, Dublin: Stationery Office, 1995

Department of Education, *Statistical reports*, Dublin: Stationery Office, 1974-1995

V Newspapers and journals cited

An Caman

Catholic Bulletin

Catholic Mind

Irish Independent

Irish Press

Irish Review

Irish Times

Sport

The Catholic Bulletin

The Irish Review

The Irishman

VI Books and pamphlets

Australian Sports Commission *National junior sport policy for Australia* Draft. Canberra, 1992

Barron, F. *Swimming for a century*. Dublin: Irish Amateur Swimming Association, 1993

Cahill, E. *The Framework of the Christian State*. 1932

Cantelon, H. & Gruneau, R. (eds) *Sport, culture and the modern state*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1982

Champion, S. *Irish Amateur Gymnastics Association: history of the first twenty five years*. Dublin: Irish Amateur Gymnastics Association, 1989

Clancy, P., Drudy, S., Lynch, K. & O'Dowd, L. *Ireland: a sociological profile*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1986

Conference of Major Religious Superiors (Ireland). *The Catholic School in Contemporary Ireland: Papers Presented at a Conference* Dublin: CMRS, 1991

Coolahan, J. *Irish education: history and structure*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981

Coolahan, J. *The ASTI and post-primary education in Ireland 1909-1984*. Dublin: Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland, 1984

Cospoir, *Provision of integrated sports and recreational facilities, conference proceedings*. Cork, 1981;

Crooks, T. & McKernan, J. *The challenge of change: curriculum development in Irish post-primary schools 1970-1984* Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1984

Council of Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe. *Training the teacher*. Strasbourg: Council of Education, 1964

Darmody, M. & O'Donovan, G. (eds) *Physical education at the cross-roads*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1995

Darmody, M. (ed) *P.E. in Europe: the Irish dimension*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1996

Darmody, M., Duffy, P. & Dugdale, L. (eds) *Physical education and the young adult*. Limerick: Thomond College of Education, 1987

Department of Education, *Action for life*. n.d.

Dickinson, E. *Physical training*. Dublin: Educational Company of Ireland, 1920

Dickinson, E. *Primer of physical exercises*, London: London Board of Education, 1909

Duffy, P. *Physical education: an approach for youth*. Ashbourne: Exemplar Publications, 1982

Duffy, P., Dugdale, L., Hope, A., Kirwan, J. & O'Sullivan, M. (eds), *HPER - moving toward the 21st century*. Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1994

Dugdale, L. & Duffy, P. (eds) *Possibilities and limitations in physical education*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland and School of Graduate and Professional Studies, Thomond College of Education, 1986

Dugdale, L. (ed) *Physical education and sport in 1990*. Limerick: Thomond College of Education, 1985

Encyclical of Pope Pius XI. *The Christian education of youth*. December 31, 1929

Evans, J. (ed) *Physical education, Sport and schooling: studies in the sociology of physical education*, Lewes: Falmer Press, 1986

Evans, J. (ed) *Teachers, teaching and control in physical education*, Lewes: Falmer Press, 1988

Fine Gael *Policy for a just society - 3. Education* Dublin: Fine Gael, 1966

Gaelic Athletic Association, *Action policy for G.A.A. youth*. Dublin, n.d.

Gafner, R. (ed) *The International Olympic Committee one hundred years*. International Olympic Committee: Lausanne, 1994

Giddens, A. *New Rules of the Sociological Method*, New York: Basic Books, 1976

Griffin, P. *The politics of Irish athletics 1850-1990*. Ballinamore: Marathon Publications, 1990

Guiney, D. 1992. *Olympic facts and figures*, Dublin: Olympic Council of Ireland

Hannan, D. & Shortall, S. *The quality of their education: school leavers' views of educational objectives and outcomes*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute, 1991

Hyland, A. & Milne, R. (eds) *Irish educational documents. Volume 1*. Dublin: Church of Ireland College of Education, 1987

International Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, *Proceedings of the 16th World Congress*. Dublin, 1969.

Johnston, J.N. *Indicators of education systems* Paris: UNESCO, 1987

- Jones, T., Duffy, P., Murphy, G. & Dineen, J. *Girls and boys come out to play*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1991
- Kearns, Sr. B. *The Dominican approach to education*. Dublin: Veritas, n.d.
- Kirk, D. *Defining physical education*. London: The Falmer Press, 1992
- Laban, R. *Modern educational dance*. London: MacDonald & Evans, 1948
- Labour Party, *Challenge and change in education* Dublin: Labour Party, 1963
- Lane, D. *Religion, education and the Constitution* Dublin: Columba Press, 1992
- Lee, J. *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989
- Lenten regulations for the diocese of Dublin in 1956. Issued by Archbishop John Charles McQuaid, 9 February, 1956
- Ling Physical Training College. Dublin: Ling College, n.d.,
- Majchrzak, A. *Methods for policy research*. London: Sage, 1984
- Marshall, C., Mitchell, D. & Wirt, F. *Culture and education policy in the American States*. New York: The Falmer Press, 1989
- Mc Fadden, C. & O'Donovan, G. *Teachers and insurance: aspects of insurance for teachers*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1993
- McIntosh, P. *Landmarks in the history of physical education*. London: Bell, 1965
- Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy *Sport: The way ahead. The report of the Minister's task force on Federal sport policy*. Ottawa, 1992
- Mulcahy, D. & O' Sullivan, D. (eds) *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989
- Mulcahy, D. *Curriculum and policy in Irish post-primary education*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981
- Murphy, J.A. *Ireland in the Twentieth Century* Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1975
- O'Buachalla, S. *Education policy in twentieth century Ireland*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1988
- O'Donoghue, T. *Physical Education Association of Ireland 1968-1989*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1989
- O'Donovan, G. & Darmody, M. (eds) *Physical education for a changing world*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1994

- O'Flaherty, L. *Management and control in Irish education: the post-primary experience*. Dublin: Drumcondra Teachers Centre, 1992
- O'Maolfabhail, A. *Caman: two thousand years of hurling*. Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1973
- O'Meara, J.J. *Reform in education*. Dublin: Mount Salus Press, 1958
- Owens, C. (ed) *Equality of opportunity*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1993
- Randles, E. *Post-primary education in Ireland 1957-1970*. Dublin: Veritas, 1975
- Sparkes, A. *Curriculum change and physical education: towards a micropolitical understanding*. Deakin: Deakin University Press, 1990
- Sports Section Department of Education, *Council of Europe seminar on the greater involvement of women in sport*. Dublin: Cahill printers, 1981
- The Herald of St. Raphael. Leaflet published by the Dominican Order, n.d.
- Tussing, D. *Irish educational expenditures - past, present and future* Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute, 1978
- Van Esbeck, E. *One hundred years of Irish rugby*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1974
- Whyte, J. *Church and State in modern Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1974,
- Wynne, T. *Ninety years of the Irish Hockey Union*. Naas: Leinster Leader, 1985
- Zeigler, E.F. *History of sport and physical education to 1900: selected topics*. Champaign: Illinois, Stipes, 1973

VII Articles in books and Journals

- Bain, L. Interpretive and critical research in sport and physical education *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*. 1989, **60(1)**, pp. 21-24
- Berry, D. Role of athletics in Catholic schools. *Momentum*. 1982, **13(2)**, pp. 36-37
- Best, D. Policy for physical education - a reply *British Journal of Educational Studies*. 1981, **29(2)**, pp.159-163.
- Brailsford, O. Religion and sport in eighteenth-century England: for the encouragement of piety and virtue, and for the preventing or punishing of vice; profaneness and immorality. *British Journal of Sports History*. 1984, **1(2)**, pp.166-183

Coolahan, J. Education policy for national schools in D.G. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan *Irish educational policy*. Institute of Public Administration: Dublin, 1989

Crooks, T. The Interim Curriculum and Examinations Board. 1984-87. *Compass: Journal of The Irish Association for Curriculum Development*. 1987, **16(2)**, pp. 7-26.

Darmody, M. Physical education in North Tipperary. *The Irish Journal of Physical Education*. 1988, **6(1)**, pp. 17-27

Devlin, J. Irish games and athletics. *Catholic Bulletin*. 1928, **18(9)**

Duffy, P. Leonard, D. Darmody, M. Physical education: assessment in second level teaching. *Irish Educational Studies*, 1992, **11**, pp.237-248

Duffy, P. & Dugdale, L. Inservice education in retrospect and prospect. *Irish Educational Studies*. 1994, **13**, pp.196-206

Duffy, P and Dugdale, L. Themes and issues for the 21st century. In P. Duffy, L. Dugdale, A. Hope, J. Kirwan & M. O'Sullivan, *HPER - Moving toward the 21st century*, Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1994

Duffy, P. Physical education to-day: status and marginality in the school in L. Dugdale (ed) *Physical education and sport in 1990*. Limerick: Thomond College of Education, 1995.

Duffy, P. Who plays? - The Irish story in *Sport for all conference 1987 - conference papers and working party recommendations to the Minister for Sport*. Tralee: Town of Tralee Vocational Education Committee, 1987

Egan, S. The "Aonach Tailteann" and the Tailteann Games origin, function and ancient association. *Cahper Journal*, 1980, **May/June**, p.4

Gillmeister, H. *The role of religion in the evolution of early european ball games in Sport and religion: the history of sport and the physical education in the Iberian cultures*. Proceedings of the international HISPA congress, (Ninth) Lisbon, Institucionacion dos Desportos, 1992

Fitzgerald, G. Investment in Education, *Studies*, 1965, **Winter**, pp. 361-374

Haag, H. & Paas, M. Co-operation of Sport and Church *International Journal of PE*. 1992, **29(2)**, pp. 40-41

Harris, J. The policy making role of the Department of education in D.G. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan *Irish educational policy*. Institute of Public Administration: Dublin, 1989

Horgan, J. The problem of choice in education - a modest proposal. *Administration*, 1976, **24(1)**, pp. 40-49

- Johnstone, J. The history of the Physical Education Association: a widening influence. *British Journal of Physical Education*, 1984, **15**(2), pp. 50-51
- Joyce, J. A physically fit nation once again. *Hibernia*, 2 December, 1977
- Kennedy, K. The role of social science in relation to public policy in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 1973, **73**, pp. 647-648
- Keogh, D. The Irish constitutional revolution: an analysis of the making of the Constitution *Administration*. 1987, **35**(4), pp. 4-85
- Lennon, J.F. P.E. a dying subject at senior cycle - a response. *The Secondary Teacher*. 1991, **20**(3)
- Leonard, D. & Duffy, P. The place of the physical education teacher in curriculum development - at the heart of it. In D. Carre (Ed) *Teacher education and teaching physical education*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1986
- Lindblom, C. The science of 'muddling through'. *Public Administration Review*, 1959, **19**
- Locke, L. Qualitative research as a form of enquiry in sport and physical education. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*. 1989, **60**(1), pp. 1-20
- Mandle, F. Sport as politics: the Gaelic Athletic Association 1884-1916. In R. Cashman & M. McKernan (eds) *Sport in history: the making of modern sport history*. Brisbane: Queensland University Press, 1979
- Mandle, F. The I.R.B. and the beginnings of the Gaelic Athletic Association. *Irish Historical Studies*. 1977, **20** (80), pp. 418-438
- McCann, P. & Byrne, S. Ling Physical Education College. *Bulletin of the Physical Education Association of Ireland*, 1969, **1**, p.58
- McCann, P. Editorial, *Physical Education Association of Ireland Bulletin*, 1970. **March**, p. 2
- McGuinness, S. & Shelly, B. Physical education in the primary school: an evaluation of programme implementation. *Oideas*, 1996, **44**, 46-65
- Mulcahy, D. Official perceptions of curriculum in Irish second-level education in D. Mulcahy & D. O'Sullivan (eds) *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989
- Mulcahy, D.G. Two traditions of post-primary education in Ireland: part 1. *Administration*. 1981. **29**, pp. 25-43, 1981
- Mulcahy, D.G. Post-primary education in Ireland: part 2. *Administration*. 1981, **29**, pp.171-206

- Murphy, S. Ideological trends within physical education and implications for the profession in Ireland. *Irish Journal of Physical Education*, 1989, **8(2)**, pp. 6-15
- O'Boyle, D. A view towards the attitudes regarding examinations in physical education in the Republic of Ireland. *Irish Journal of Physical Education*. 1986, **4(2)**, pp. 19-26
- O'Boyle, D. Examinations in physical education - should we, can we? *The Secondary Teacher*, 1991, **20(4)**, pp. 7-11
- O'Connor, S. Post-primary education: now and in the future *Studies*. 1968, Autumn
- O'Donoghue, T. Sport, recreation and physical education: the evolution of a national policy of re-generation in Eire, 1926-48. *British Journal of Sport History*. 1986, **3(Sept)**, pp. 216-233
- O'Donoghue, T. The attempt by the Department of Defence to introduce the Sokol system of physical education into Irish schools in the 1930's. *Irish Educational Studies*, 1985. **5 (2)**, pp. 329-342
- O'Sullivan, D. The ideational base for Irish educational policy in D. Mulcahy & D. O' Sullivan (eds) *Irish educational policy: process and substance*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1989
- O'Sullivan, M. & McCarthy, L. Physical education in Ireland: a view from the looking glass in P. Duffy, L. Dugdale, A. Hope, J. Kirwan & M.O'Sullivan (eds) *HPER-Moving toward the 21st century*. Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1994
- Owens, T. Physical education - what really happens? in L. Dugdale & P. Duffy, (ed.) *Possibilities and limitations in physical education*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland and School of Graduate and Professional Studies, Thomond College of Education, 1985
- Park, R. The second 100 years: Or, can physical education become the renaissance field of the 21st century? *Quest*, 1989, **41**, pp. 1-27
- Pope Pius XI Sports and Gymnastics *Catholic Mind*. 1953, **51**
- Pyne, P. The Irish Civil Service. *Administration*. 1974. **22(1)**, pp. 26-59
- Robinson, M.T. The Role of the Irish Parliament. *Administration*. 1974, **22(1)**, pp. 3-25
- Rose, R. Comparing public policy. *European Journal of Political Research*. 1973, **1**, p. 1
- Rouse, P. The politics of culture and sport in Ireland: a history of the GAA ban on foreign games 1884-1921. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 1993, **10 (3)**, pp. 333-360

Ryan, J. The Pope's Encyclical on education. A Catholic interpretation. *Current History*, 1931, **31**, pp. 1087-1088

Sleap M. A survey of physical education in Irish post-primary schools. *The Irish Journal of Education*, 1977, **12(2)**, pp. 107-118

Stanaland, P. The Tailteann Games of Ancient Ireland: their origin, growth and continuity through centuries of unwritten history. *Proceedings of the North American Society for Sport History*. Eugene: North American Society for Sport History, 1977

Stanaland, P. Some commonalties of two ancient fairs: Aenoch Tailteann and the Olympic Games in *Proceedings of the North American Society for Sport History*. Eugene: North American Society for Sport History, 1982

Thompson I. Policy statement: physical education and sport *Scottish Journal of Physical Education*. 1987, **15(3)**, pp. 24-30

Twomey, A. Is P.E. a dying subject at senior cycle? *The Secondary Teacher*. 1991, **20(1)**, pp. 2-5,7

Walsh, B. The Constitution and constitutional rights. *Administration*. 1987, **35(4)**, pp. 86-109.

Walsh, E. Keynote address. In L. Dugdale (ed) *Physical education and sport in 1990*. Limerick: Thomond College of Education, 1985.

Woodman, K. The governance of Thomond College *Administration*. 1977, **25**, pp. 533-541

VIII European resolutions and documentation

Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, *Resolution (70) 7* - adopted by Ministers' deputies on 7 March, 1970

Council of Europe Resolution on sport for all, 1975

European Sports Charter, Council of Europe, 1992

IX Ministerial speeches/addresses and press releases

Hillery, P. Press conference on 20 May, 1963

Hillery, P. Policy statement on post-primary education 20 May, 1963 in *OECD Reviews of National Policies for Education, Ireland*. Paris, 1969

Press release announcing the establishment of the National Council for Sport and Physical Recreation, 23 January, 1971

Speech by Mr. Michael O'Kennedy on 23 January, 1971 on the occasion of the establishment of the National Council for Sport and Physical Recreation (COSAC)

Speech by Mr. Jim Tunney, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education on 23 January, 1973

Press release announcing details of grants for youth, sport and physical education activities, 10 March, 1973

Speech by the Minister for Education at N.C.P.E. on 27 March, 1974

Speech by the Minister for Education on the occasion of the first meeting of the Governing Body of Thomond College of Education, 9 April, 1976

Speech by the Minister for Education to the Governing Body of Thomond College of Education, 27 July, 1981

Creed, D. Opening address in *Outdoor recreation and leisure - future planning and development*, conference proceedings. Westport: Mayo Sports Advisory Body, 1984

Fahey, F. Opening address in *Sport for all conference 1987 - conference papers and working party recommendations to the Minister for Sport*. Tralee: Town of Tralee Vocational Education Committee, 1987

Fahey, F. Opening address in *Public relations, sponsorship and sports marketing*, conference proceedings. Dublin: Cospoir, 1988

Press release issued by the Minister for Education on May 9, 1991

Press release announcing the formation of a National Sports Strategy Group, 7 November, 1995

Bhreathnach, N. Opening address to the 1994 National Physical Education Conference in M. Darmody & G. O'Donovan (eds), *Physical education and the cross-roads*. Limerick: Physical Education Association of Ireland, 1995