

Title of Research Project: Men in Teaching

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Relevant key words: Community; Collaboration; Gender; Masculinities; Relationships; Theory and Practice; Wellbeing

Summary:

Primary teaching has traditionally been framed by assumptions about gender. These commonly held, but seldom voiced, assumptions have a strong impact on male primary teachers and on men considering teaching as a career. With this in mind, the objectives of this project sought: 1) to bring together teachers and researchers in the area of masculinities to share their experiences and knowledge regarding gender in schools; 2) to strengthen the links between research, policy and practice, and to strengthen collaboration with teachers, and 3) to support practitioners to develop new understandings of teaching and to imagine different approaches to their practice, through critically reflecting on how they see themselves and their students, and on the contexts in which they teach.

Firstly, workshops and seminars were developed and delivered under the themes of 'Men in Teaching' and 'Collaboration in Research'. The Teachers' Research Exchange (T-Rex) was a highly useful platform to notify members and to share knowledge from these seminars and workshops, which took place in the following locations nationwide: Drumcondra Education Centre, Dublin with guest speaker Dr. Declan Fahie (March 2018), Cork Education Support Centre (June 2018) and Waterford Teachers' Centre (October 2018). The sharing of best practice was a key feature of these events and was facilitated by the safe environment created through talk and discussion methodologies and activities. Opportunities were created to build bridges between theories and practice by creating opportunities for the sharing of teachers' daily experiences of masculinities in primary schools.

Secondly, a researchmeet was organised for Saturday, March 9th, 2019. Many who engaged in the seminars and workshops also attended this event. The primary aim of this researchmeet was to create a community of learning and research comprising academics, primary teachers, students and

all those interested in the question of gender, and particularly masculinities, in education. This research meet supported teacher agency by allowing teachers to be leaders of their own learning. Lived experiences were shared with the wider educational community coupled with research findings from Master and Doctoral students. Guest speakers on the day included Professor Nel Noddings, Professor Emeriti of Child Education at Stanford University, who joined us via Skype, and spoke about the importance of care in education. Dr Mark Rowe, Medical Doctor, author, and TEDx speaker joined us on the day to share his vast expertise in human behaviour and medicine. He created a meaningful as well as interactive experience through a tailored one-hour experience tailored specifically for education and the audience on the day. Master and Doctoral students from University College Dublin, University of Limerick and Maynooth University shared current research from around the country. Question and answers sessions were a key feature of the day. Knowledge and learning were further disseminated using Twitter, T-Rex and the Froebel Departmental Magazine 'Machnamh', which is available in e-format and hard-copy. Strong relationships built on trust and understanding were established between schools and universities during the timeframe of this project that still live on to this day through collaborative projects.

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