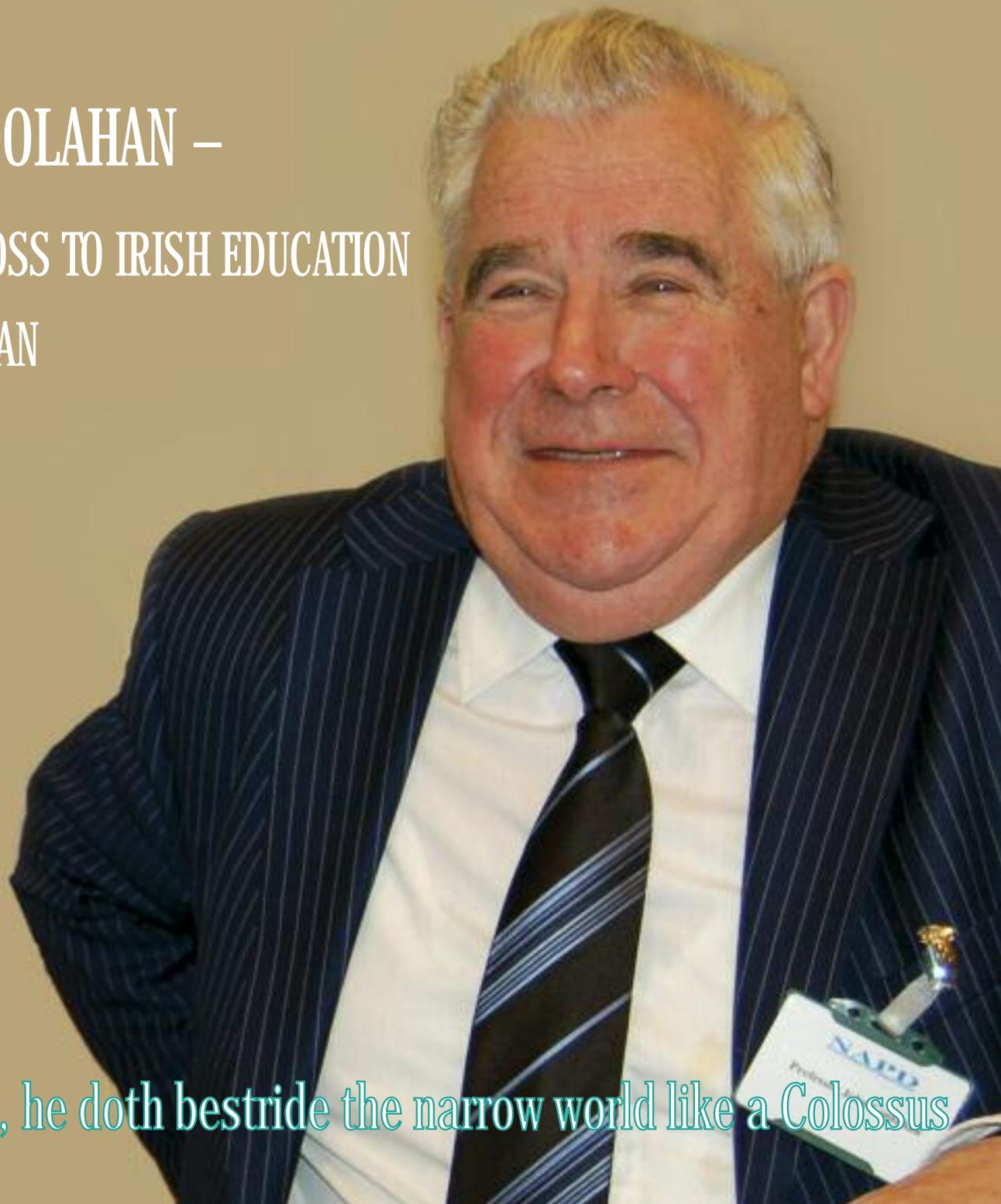


Leader

QUARTERLY

JOHN COOLAHAN –
A GREAT LOSS TO IRISH EDUCATION
A GREAT MAN



Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus

Health Insurance

When it pays to switch



2018 has seen a lower average premium increase on health insurance policies than in previous years. Some insurers have even decreased premiums across a multitude of their plans. With that being said, all insurers have released new corporate plans to the market which may offer better value than your current cover. With over 330 plans on the market across the 3 health insurers, comparing cover remains a challenge for consumers.

Whether you are buying your first policy or renewing your cover, the good news is that there are a number of ways to find the policy that best meets your needs whilst cutting the cost of your premium. We've put together some questions you can ask yourself to help you find ways to save money on your health insurance:

- **Is private hospital room cover important to you?** You could make significant savings if you change from private to semi-private room cover in private hospitals (a semi-private room includes a maximum of five beds).
- **Is a "Network Plan" something you would consider?** These are plans that offer a limited selection of public or private hospitals.
- **Are all family members on the same health insurance plan?** You may be able to save money by putting your children (including young adults aged 18-25) on a separate, lower cost plan that provides similar cover.
- **Do you pay for your policy in instalments or in one lump sum payment?** Paying in instalments may be costing you more money in the long run. Calculate how much you may be saving by doing a comparison between paying upfront and your monthly cost.

New health insurance benefits

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| ✓ Online GP | ✓ Gym Membership Contribution | ✓ Health Screen Contributions |
| ✓ Fertility Benefits | ✓ International Second Opinion Service | ✓ Telephone Counselling Services |
| ✓ Submit Claims Online | ✓ Wearable Tracker (Fitbit)Contribution | ✓ Dietician/Nutritionist Visits |
| ✓ Wellness Benefits | | ✓ 24/7 Nurse line |
| ✓ Free multi-trip travel insurance | | |

• **Is cover for everyday practitioners (GP, Physio, Dentist etc.) something you need?** Some plans allow you to claim back for these visits. A good rule of thumb is if you have less than 3 or 4 visits per year it doesn't make sense financially to pay extra premium to cover such visits. However if you have several of these visits per year paying €50-€75 extra on your annual premium could allow you to claim back €100s during your policy year. Do the maths before opting for a plan with (or without) these benefits.

Savings

Potential health insurance savings can be made by switching to comparable plans with your existing provider or with an alternative provider. However, you need to be mindful when making savings on your health insurance. Downgrading your health insurance cover to make savings can result in higher excesses, the removal of certain hospitals and restricted access to high tech hospitals etc. It is also important to remember that if you downgrade cover and return to a higher level of cover at a later stage; then a two year upgrade rule for existing illnesses could apply. This is where it is important to get advice from a qualified health insurance expert who can talk you through the impact of any changes you are making to your cover. On average those that used our comparison service to review cover saved €488* on their renewal.

Switching

Many people consider switching health insurance providers, but some are fearful of the consequences of doing so because of myths and misunderstandings.

Reviewing your cover on an annual basis should be seen as an opportunity to make sure that you are on the best cover that meets both your budget and your needs.

It's important to remember that if you do switch insurers that:

- You will not have to re-serve waiting periods
- You will not have a break in your cover
- Any Lifetime Community Rating Loading will not be affected by switching
- It is not time consuming

If you do decide to switch provider, you may be able to avail of new offers across plans such as child offers, young adult discounts, free multi trip travel insurance etc.

This is where Cornmarket's Health Insurance Comparison Service can add real value. We will review the options from all the providers on your behalf and provide a documented comparison of your existing plan against our recommendation.

This service compares all health plans on the market to help you choose the plan that suits you. Call us today on (01) 470 8098.

FROM THE EDITOR FROM THE EDITOR



More than ever we need great leaders

The world stage is at present bereft of inspirational leaders. It is much easier to look to the past for role models who raised our hearts and our sights. We think of Nelson Mandela, JFK, Pope John 23rd., Kofi Annan. We think of John Hume, who has stepped into the wings and we cannot but feel a sense of loss. Most recently, we remember John McCain, brave and principled to the end and who consistently maintained, as Barack Obama said, 'fidelity to something higher.'

The new world dramas seem to be dominated by the braggadocio of a Trump and his ilk, the ruthlessness of a Putin and his sidekicks, the bumbling of a May and her comic retinue – roles for melodrama or farce; certainly not role models.

Closer to home, we currently are in mourning for that great man of educational letters, John Coolahan, and we are marking his passing by celebrating his achievements in these pages.

It may be that we will find more valuable and applicable inspiration in our schools, where there are so many leaders who are grounded in both ethical practices and sensible procedures. We can learn a lot from them.

This edition of our *Quarterly* offers you the words of some leaders who are close to the chalk face, or its modern equivalent. We listen to the voices of John Gorman and Mary Forrestal, who have spearheaded the successful passage of the Rosses Community School through the last decade. They drew their inspiration from great figures in the worlds of sport and education and they, in turn, have encouraged leadership within the school at all levels. They will pass their learnings to NAPD delegates at the forthcoming annual conference in Galway.

We also bring you the voice of Mike Hughes, who, through his writings and presentations and workshops, has fired up successive waves of principals and deputy principals. We celebrate the publication of his *Magenta Principles*, in a special edition adapted to the Irish context. He, too, will be a towering presence at the Galway conference.

NAPD has consistently taught the skills of leadership to those who are the helm in our schools. But underlying the 'nitty-gritty' of the day-to-day has been a moral imperative, bound up in the phrase 'vision and values' which for twenty years has been the central part of the Association's mission, in all aspects of its activities.

We have to believe in the capacity of education to raise individuals towards their aspirations and to endow our communities with the civic and ethical republicanism that Garret FitzGerald articulated so clearly for us.

Powerpoint slides may be the stepping stones to efficiency and functional success, but it's the great leaders, the great role models and their values that will, for us, light the way.

Derek West, September 2018



Leader

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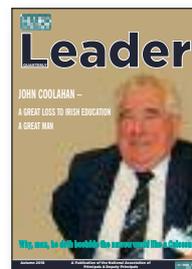
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Contents



This Month's Cover

NAPD's great friend,
John Coolahan

Photo: Paddy Boyle



22

Mary Forrestal and John Gorman



32

Jenny Byrne



45

Karen Edge



64

Mary West

- 5** **NAPD PRESIDENT**
Mary Keane
- 6** **FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK**
Clive Byrne
- 7** **REMEMBERING JOHN COOLAHAN (1940-2018)**
Derek West
- 10** **JOHN COOLAHAN – ADMIRER BY MANY**
Páirc Clerkin, Mary McGlynn, Clive Byrne, Mary Keane, John Quinn, George Cunningham, Mary McGillicuddy, Áine Hyland, Séamus McGuinness, Pádraig Hogan, Sheelagh Drudy, Tom Collins, Mary O'Rourke, Niamh Bhreathnach, Ruairi Quinn, Richard Bruton, Tom Boland, Don Thornhill, Brigid McManus, Harold Hislop
- 20** **JOHN COOLAHAN – A PARTIAL CHRONOLOGY**
- 21** **IRISH FILM INSTITUTE LAUNCHES NEW PILOT SCHEME FOR SCHOOLS' FILM CLUBS**
- 22** **HOW DO SCHOOLS WORK? BACK TO THE ROSSES TO LOOK AT STRATEGIC PLANNING**
Derek West, John Gormley and Mary Forrestal
- 32** **MEASURE FOR MEASURE**
Jenny Byrne
- 34** **ANALYSING EDUCATION: LEAVING CERT '18 – SOME FACTS, SOME QUESTIONS**
Seán McDonagh
- 42** **LEARNING & TEACHING WORKSHOPS 2018-19**
Dates, locations, costs of Mike Hughes and Graham Powell workshops
- 43** **THE MAGENTA PRINCIPLES.ie [Mike Hughes]**
A special edition geared for the Irish context.
- 44** **iCLASS OFFERS NEW SCHOOL SOLUTIONS**
- 45** **CONFERENCE UPDATE 2018**
News of additional speakers and additional workshops
- 46** **JCT: ENHANCING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION THROUGH JUNIOR CYCLE REFORM**
Pádraig Kirk
- 49** **INNOVATION OR DENIGRATION: HISTORY IN THE JUNIOR CYCLE CURRICULUM**
James Ryan
- 51** **OPEN SCHOOLS FOR OPEN SOCIETIES [OSOS]**
Caitriona Mordan
- 53** **VIVA LAS VEGAS! CONFERENCE IN EXOTIC SETTING; ALL ABOUT REEL**
Jackie Ahern and Verity Swan
- 57** **FÉILTE 2018. DROICHEAD, RE-VETTING**
Update from The Teaching Council
- 58** **FIVE MINUTES WITH SINÉAD McSWEENEY**
Exclusive interview with Managing Director, Twitter Ireland
- 60** **THE MOST EXPENSIVE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL**
David Garry
- 62** **LEGAL DIARY – ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOL ACT 2018**
David Ruddy BL
- 64** **SHADES OF THE PRISON HOUSE...**
Mary West

NAPD President, MARY KEANE



THE SHIP IS SAILING...

At this stage of the academic year I feel the school is like a large cruise ship that has just set sail for its learning destination. All the crew and guests onboard are full of enthusiasm and very eager to reach the destination. School leaders steer and guide the ship whilst navigating stormy waters, dealing with announced and unannounced visits from the coast guard, dealing with memos, new charts and demands from the ship's owners, managing the resources and constantly working to ensure that crew and guests harmoniously reach their destination.

CENTRE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP [CSL] (Support for Captains and Seconds in Command!)

The establishment of CSL in 2015 gave formal recognition not only to school leadership, its role and importance, but also to the need to examine, review, revise and reform how leadership and leaders are supported throughout their career. CSL has achieved a great deal to date and is now embarking on its two year transition phase before it will achieve permanent status. The Director, Mary Nihill, and the two Deputy Directors are to be complimented for their drive, dedication and commitment to influencing policy that ensures there will be a continuum of support for school leaders. The CSL team has carried out an environmental scan of leadership professional opportunities in a number of jurisdictions to facilitate comparison around professional learning models for senior school leaders. The importance of leadership for good learning outcomes for students and the need to develop leadership qualities and skills for the onset of a career emerged as common themes underpinning their research.

The CSL proposes a continuum of support

that aims at developing and fostering the qualities and skills which characterise effective leaders. They are running a very successful one to one mentoring programme for newly appointed principals and a coaching service available to principals at any stage of their career.

CSL has provided coaching for approximately 420 principals (both primary and post primary). This is a confidential programme which provides 6 meetings between principals and professional coaches and we are delighted that this is being provided for another year.

May I highly recommend the coaching service, as I myself have engaged in this service. I found it very beneficial from many points of view. It helped me to relearn the discipline of being reflective and allowed me time to work out solutions to different school related issues in a very safe environment. The fact that my coach was not from an educational background allowed me to find a solution within myself rather than be given ideas from another's educational experience. What I did learn is that issues that arise in school leadership are similar to those that arise for leaders in non-educational settings. After 15 years in senior leadership it allowed me to critically examine habits that had formed as with time it is easy to become "blind" to areas that need improvement. Our hope is that the one-to-one mentoring and coaching service will be available to Deputy Principals in the future.

NAPD is providing group mentoring for principals going into their second year and we also provide group mentoring for newly-appointed deputy principals.

NOTABLE EVENTS FROM 1998

The Education Act 1998 was signed into law in December 1998. The Act provided

for the first time, a statutory framework for the Irish Education System at both first and second levels. The Act made provision in the interests of the common good for the education of every child in the state, including any child with special education needs.

The Vocational Education Committees of the towns of Bray, Drogheda, Sligo, Tralee and Wexford were abolished.

Good Friday Agreement was endorsed in a referendum by people north and south of the border.

The punt is traded for the last time as the euro currency is launched.

First coherent policy on life-long learning is shaped.

National forum on Early Childhood Care and Education is convened.

NAPD is established.

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM 1916

On reading a book *The story of a Success* written by P.H. Pearse (a record of St. Enda College Sept. 1908 – Easter 1916)

Padraig Pearse wrote –



Wise men have told me that I ought never to set my foot on a path unless I can see clearly whither it will lead me. But that philosophy would condemn most of us to stand till we rot. Surely one can do more than assure oneself that each step one takes is right and as to the rightness of a step one is fortunately answerable only to one's conscience and not to the wise men of the counting houses. The street will pass judgement on our enterprises according as they have "succeeded" or "failed", but if one can feel that one has striven faithfully to do a right thing does not one stand ultimately justified, no matter what the sentence of the street?

Wise words never date!



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

CLIVE BYRNE

WE
NEED TO
ENSURE THAT YOUNG
PEOPLE ARE EQUIPPED
FOR THE REAL
WORLD.

Ireland is changing. According to the Central Statistics Office 12% of our current population has a non-Irish background. Pupils from 200 countries with multiple languages attend our schools. 13% have a disability and 20% experience deprivation. Ireland wants an education system that nurtures happy, fulfilled and challenged students, who can think for themselves. We need an education system which will provide equality of opportunity and develop in students a love of learning, autonomous and self-directed learning; to equip them for the realities they will face when they leave school.

In sixth year, according to the recent Comhairle na nÓg survey, students experience a lot of written homework in classrooms where the teacher does most of the talking; there is a lot of practising past exam questions, little group work, little project work in classes where over half of the students take grinds.

The National Parents Council Primary conducted a survey recently as part of NAPD's Education Symposium. In what I believe is a very positive indication, over 66% of parents said they would like to see changes to the current senior cycle on offer. Parents want their children to get good results, but to be happy, to develop good social skills and to know about the world they live in. The qualities parents would like to see developed by our school system include independence, confidence, creativity, ambition, leadership, curiosity and courage. It was a comprehensive survey and, when asked about the values needed for the future, they listed compassion, honesty, justice, empathy, tolerance, respect for themselves and respect for others.

Parents feel that their children should

have strong computer and digital skills, a high level of literacy and numeracy; they should be critical and creative thinkers, with practical skills and a knowledge of their own wellbeing. There is a growing hunger for reform of the Irish education system and, thankfully, a growing desire, which has accelerated in recent years, to satisfy that hunger.

The junior cycle and the Junior Certificate have already undergone extensive changes. Younger students are now assessed continuously over the course of the junior cycle, learning important skills such as coding and digital media literacy, in shorter, term-length modules. Acronyms like CBA and SLARs are now routinely implemented in the system.

Soon Computer Science and Physical Education will be examined as Leaving Cert. subjects for the first time. The new Politics & Society course was examined for the first time this year and is proving popular.

The introduction of new subjects and the revision of syllabi in more established ones to bring them more up-to-date are big strides forward,

but we must do more to address the problems at the very core of the senior cycle. Critics have long argued for more continuous assessment, including practical and presentation work spread out over the two years. Continuous assessment, aside from reducing stress, gauges a wider spectrum of knowledge over a longer period of time, rather than the two or three-hour snapshot terminal exams provide.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, at the Department's request, has now begun to review the exam. NCCA has designated a broadly-based number of schools to get staff, parents and students in a wide-ranging consultation to ensure that all opinions are sought with an eye to reform. Whatever the final approach adopted, it has to be supported by those to whom it matters most for it to succeed – students, parents, teachers and colleges.

Those with an interest in reform must now start that process by making a strong case to the education partners and the Government that change is needed and is the right way forward. In any revised senior cycle, a culture of life-long learning should permeate our schools for our teachers and our students. There must be much more self-directed learning. We should seek to emphasise competences rather than qualifications and – most importantly of all – we should decouple final school certification from third level entry.

NAPD is keen to contribute to the debate and has commissioned a report which will be launched at Conference 18, in an attempt to promote constructive discussion and reasoned debate on a thorny issue that has been at the heart of our education system for almost a century.

John Coolahan

Visionary, historian, teacher, reformer, planner and policy-shaper, supporter of the arts and champion of young people, a great friend of NAPD. Derek West dips into the archive and finds in an early contribution to an NAPD event much that characterises the man and his thinking.



Dr Garret FitzGerald and John Coolahan attending the NAPD Symposium.

In March 2007, NAPD hosted the first of its 'Vision and Values' Symposia at the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham. The Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin, opened the proceedings and then Dr Kathleen Lynch, Professor Tom Collins and, pre-eminently, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, spoke to the theme of 'Civic Republicanism', but it was left to John Coolahan to draw the threads together in his inimitable, articulate style as rapporteur, a role he was to take in many of the subsequent symposia.

John proved to be hugely supportive of the Association from its inception and he frequently praised NAPD 'for exercising a responsibility of enlightened educational leadership' and for being a unifying force among principals and deputy principals at second level.

John passed away on June 3, after a long illness, bravely borne, just a few months after he had attended the 2018 NAPD Symposium in Dublin.

John Coolahan was generous with his wide-reaching wisdom and could always be relied to bring a broad historical perspective to any contemporary development. And it was all there in his head, just like that of the wondrous schoolmaster in Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*:

***And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.***

Apart from having a great memory and prodigious analytical skills, John had a breadth of experience in education at many levels – from the National School to the OECD – and in the arts, as evidenced by his contribution to theatre-in-education (TEAM) the ARK (arts centre for young people) and his chairing of the implementation group for the arts-in-education Charter. He was immensely proud of his roots in Tarbert in Kerry, but he was equally at home on the stage of international education.

John was indefatigable, even in the face of serious illness. In the last year of his life, he compiled *Towards a Memoir*, a reflection on his youth and a detailed chronology of his academic career; he was a driving force behind *Towards a Better Future*, a review of the Irish school system, published jointly by NAPD and IPPN in the spring of 2017, and he then went on to write *Towards the Era of Lifelong Learning*, a monumental history of Irish education from 1800 to 2016. He was a constant presence at educational events – alert and engaged to the end. Delegates at the 2018 NAPD Symposium in Dublin were delighted to see him in attendance, alongside his old NUIM colleague, Pádraig Hogan, listening to, and contributing to, the proceedings.

Reverting to 2007, in summing up that first Symposium, John both identified and enacted his own *modus operandi*, so it is instructive to look back at some of the things he had to say on that occasion and the principles that emerged.

First, he identified the importance of contemplation:

'It is important to engage periodically in reflection, analysis and taking stock of trends and developments in education.'

This was the permanent hallmark of his approach to education and explains why he was so eminently suited to the task of chairing the National Convention in 1995. Being in the eye of the perfect storm that was educational change – 'unprecedented, accelerated' – through the last decade of the twentieth century and on into the 2000s, he felt deeply the need for both acknowledging traditional value systems and engaging with the contemporary social context," without being

blinkered by *presentism*". If anyone was to chronicle that era of innovation and reform it was John Coolahan.

In praising the keynote speakers, he also identified the values to which he remained constantly faithful. This was to do with –

"centring our consciousness on core educational values and processes", [of having] "a great commitment to public service and the common good of society.... [and a] deeply-felt concern for the well-being of our young generations".

He hoped, too, that their addresses "should make us sit up and take notice, with a view to taking action". Reflected in that remark, too, was perhaps a memory of his hopes for the National Convention, in which he had invested so much, and a rueful reflection on the slow movement of reform.

The Convention and the plethora of Government publications on education through the 1990s were both impressive in their scope and disheartening in their implementation. John was uncharacteristically critical of this:

"I draw attention to these recent major policy documents because the values underpinning them are very reflective of the values to which speakers advert and aspire to in their discussions today. The problem is not the impoverishment of thought or paucity of values in these documents, but the relative failure to implement them, the moving away from, if not the abandonment of them, which has been taking place. These are all relevant, recent Government policies. However, they have tended to slip into oblivion to such an extent that a recent Minister for Education considered it necessary to initiate nationwide meetings as to what needed to be done in education, although he had three White Papers, of his own Government, to hand, much of which have still not been implemented. This is part of a lamentable tendency by Irish Ministers for Education, not wishing to be associated with the policies of their predecessors in an endeavour to establish an individual personal mark on events."

He went on to allude to the "very frosty reception" given by the Minister for Education to a reform agenda for Senior Cycle, which had been prepared by NCCA. That was in 2007; finally, eleven years on, that particular strand of reform is getting under way!

Following Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, in the first decade of this century there had been a series of Government reform



documents on childhood. John applauded this, as he consistently championed the child, but issued a warning against 'negative, counter-forces... strong and interpenetrative'.

"While there are many countervailing forces at work, there is also a reservoir of thinking to hand which could be drawn upon to counterbalance inimical ideological trends. And a valuable feature of them is that they developed not from a 'top-down' approach, but from a highly consultative process, which should give a sense of ownership. We do not have to re-invent the wheel in this regard".

John Coolahan's project was always a humanitarian one, in line with NAPD's vision and values, and those of Garret Fitzgerald; he was particularly critical of policy that ignore 'reference to the values of humane, civic society'. He was very wary of a form of education that was led predominantly by the economy.

While he despaired about a lack of 'joined-up thinking within Government', he concluded, as always, on a positive note – looking at 'the way forward' – and, as always, he had an abundance of suggestions. They were practical, systematic and rooted in fundamental values. They were rooted in a belief in the potential and essential goodness of humankind. He repeatedly affirmed students and teachers and school leaders:

It behoves us... to stress the need for a centring of civic and personal values as core within education.

We have much valuable data to hand. to renew efforts at implementation of constructive, value-influenced policy before the slippery slope makes it difficult to redress.

Schools still retain and champion values and their pupils exhibit them.

Teachers and school principals are still held in high regard and trust by the public.



One of the great assets we have... is the quality of the teaching force, both in their personal and professional capacities.

[He endorsed] the value of the voice of students in schools.... The way of life of the school community should exemplify, and give scope to, the practice if civic virtues.

There are times when reflection 'outside the box' is required... We need to reflect more on the models of schooling which are most congenial to what is required and seek to move towards them.

The key issue is balance between economic goals and human values – economic goals are justified but they are only part of the whole. If allowed to predominate and monopolise education policy, then distortion occurs. The key issue is balance, and genuine balance, not superficial rhetoric in relation to other values.

In the way forward, the virtue of hope should be a beacon.

[Quoting Tom Collins] We can make a future which is sane, humane and ecological; and, drawing on an old proverb that runs close to the ideology of NAPD:

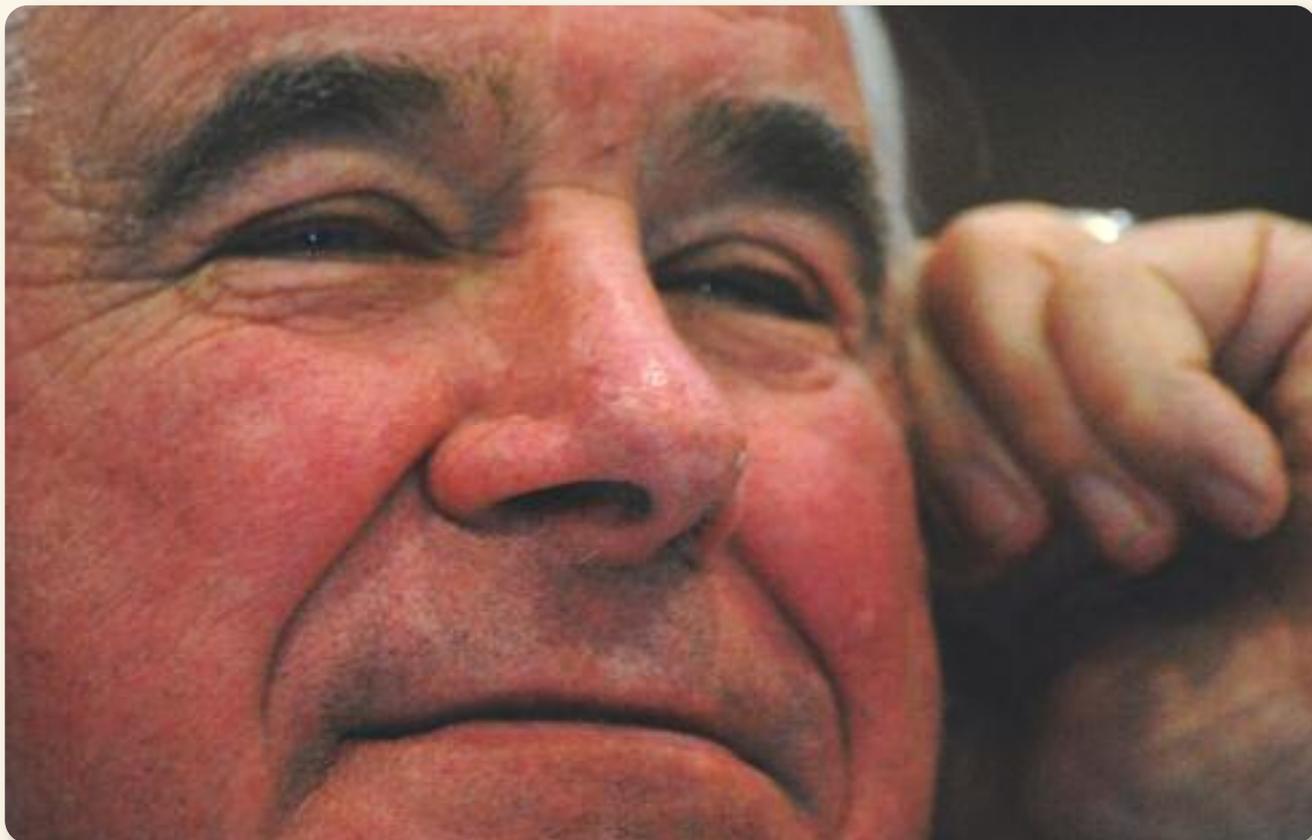
Ní neart go chur le Chéile (there is no strength until we work together)



Brigid McManus (Secretary-General, DES), John Coolahan, Eamon Stack (Chief Inspector, DES) and Mary Hanafin (Minister)

John Coolahan

PRAISES FROM HIS PEERS



Paying tribute to John Coolahan has proved to be an easy task for his many admirers, who have been so generous in writing for *Leader*. There was so much to admire in the man and in his work. NAPD Leader has been fortunate to capture twenty voices that reflect many facets of his life – the teacher, the academic, the shaper of policies at the highest level. His roots were in Kerry and we will touch on that. His deep love of arts, particularly in relation to young people, peeps through the testimonials. He gave great encouragement to serious educational endeavour – so it is fitting that we start with Páirc Clerkin’s tribute, which touches both on his career and the magnanimity with which he shared it among school leaders.

PÁIRC CLERKIN

The many tributes in national and education-sector publications dedicated to honouring John Coolahan, not to mention the widespread comments on social media, are a testament to the calibre and impact of the man, the visionary, the academic, the friend, on all of us.

Most will know Professor Coolahan as a lecturer in Carysfort College and University College Dublin, and as Emeritus Professor of Education at NUI Maynooth, where he shaped our understanding of



policy over many decades. His crafting of various White Papers and Green Papers for the Irish government and his support for, and encouragement of, generations of teachers have influenced perceptions of the importance of education, and of teachers and teacher education. His more recent steering of the equity-focused work of the government's Forum on Patronage and Pluralism will have lasting positive consequences for generations of children and their parents.

His influence went far beyond our shores, with consultancy projects at the World Bank, the OECD, the Council of Europe and the European Commission shaping international education policy as well.

He graduated from St Patrick's College in Drumcondra in 1951 and taught as a primary teacher for four years, during which time he obtained an MA in English and qualified also as a post-primary teacher. He later added a PhD in the history of education to his qualifications, and wrote very significant books on the topic, notably *Irish Education, its History and Structure*, published in 1981.

John's pride in his roots in Tarbert, Co. Kerry was never far from the surface and he regularly spoke of the influence of his primary and post-primary schools on his life and career, and on his love of the arts – literature and drama in particular. He remained very involved in the community there, and was an avid follower of Kerry football.

IPPN's founding president and director, Jim Hayes and Seán Cottrell, involved Professor Coolahan from the very beginning of the organisation and valued his insights and collaboration over almost two decades. As recently as 2016, at the behest of IPPN and NAPD, John led a group of eminent educationalists to co-author *Towards a Better Future: A Review of the Irish School System*, published in early 2017. That they did so *pro bono* is a reflection of his - and their - profound commitment to Irish education, and their generosity of spirit.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam uasal

[Páirc Clerkin is CEO of the Irish Primary Principals' Network].

As we have seen already, John stayed close to the development of NAPD and its fora on leading, learning and teaching. The two Directors, past and present, and the current President sing his praises.



MARY MCGLYNN

John – For the countless ways in which you touched my professional and personal life I shall be forever grateful.

We first met in the early 1980s. While charting a way forward for the fledgling Vice-Principals Association (VPPA) we shared memories of our Kerry roots and stories. As school leaders you encouraged us to envision a child-centred, teacher-enabling, management-led system with the arts as an integral component of a holistic education. You suggested that we set up links with colleagues internationally (ESHA-Ireland followed in the late 1980s). Above all, you were the catalyst who led to the establishment of NAPD in 1998.

Visionary, bridge-builder, historian, innovator, colleague – your legacy to education is unique. My abiding personal memories will be of a wise mentor, gracious host, warm friend and thorough gentleman.

Go gcónaí tú sa tsíocháin.

[Mary McGlynn was Director of NAPD from 1999 to 2008].



CLIVE BYRNE

John was an inspirational lecturer on the History of Education when I did the Higher Diploma in Education in UCD in 1977. Our paths crossed on many occasions thereafter. He delivered a keynote address to the Parents Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (PACCS) when I was working in Mount Temple Comprehensive School. He was a genial late night collaborator during the Educational Studies Association of Ireland social gatherings as I undertook post-graduate courses in Leadership and Management in the 1990s. His was a progressive voice in Irish education, recognising the quality of our teachers and the role education could play in articulating a vision for Irish society and the values we wished to promote. I was surprised to see him on the interview panel for my current job – my memory of that occasion was that his questions to me were searching, incisive and invariably polite.

He had great time for NAPD and the contribution it made to supporting school leaders and was proud to be asked to edit our joint NAPD-IPPN Publication *Towards a Better Future – A Review of the Irish Schools System*. He addressed

many of our conferences and symposia, participating with an incisive commentary at our most recent symposium in March shortly before his final illness. I think he was driven by a sense of service in his work at home and overseas. He was a good and faithful servant to Irish education.

[Clive Byrne is Director of NAPD and President of ESHA].

John remained loyal to his home place, Kerry, and to the friends of his youth. John Quinn and George Cunningham were never far away from the path he trod. Mary McGillicuddy knew him to be a good friend to the schools in Tarbert.

JOHN QUINN

MARY KEANE

It was with great sadness that NAPD learned of the passing of our great friend and educationalist, John Coolahan. John has played a pivotal role in the development of education policy in Ireland for many decades. A man with a very sharp intellect he had the



ability to describe the complex mix of ideal vision and concrete practicalities by means of a language that challenged all relevant stake holders to reflect on their vision and values for education in 21st century Ireland. John has had a long association with NAPD, presenting papers at a number of conferences. When NAPD held the first Education Symposium, March 2007, John acted as rapporteur. He congratulated NAPD for taking the initiative and said "thereby exercising a responsibility of enlightened educational leadership". I had the privilege of attending this event and I was amazed at John's capacity to analyse trends and developments in education and his ability to synthesise, interpret and interrogate opposing views. He enriched many of our symposia by acting as rapporteur. We were hugely honoured that he attending our symposium this year as our guest. It is important to acknowledge the huge role that he played in bringing the Arts centre stage in government thinking and planning. It was through his work with the DES, the Department of the Arts and the Arts Council that he ensured that each child was given access to the highest quality art and cultural experiences. John was an academic, researcher and author and as Minister for State, Mary Mitchell O' Connor said "he was a colossus in Irish Education". We mourn his loss but he has left a huge legacy that will inspire educationalists for a long time into the future.

[Mary Keane is President of NAPD].

I was a student with John Coolahan in St. Patrick's Training College, Dublin 1959-61 and we have been friends ever since. In a subsequent career with RTE Radio, I would have featured "Johnny" regularly in education programmes. When Johnny died, I wrote the following lines which were read by his daughter Marie-Louise at his funeral.



JOHN COOLAHAN

I remember the student
Bursting with passion
For learning and life
Holding us all in thrall
On the rugby pitch
Or in the debating hall.

I remember the teacher
Intense and committed
Abounding in energy
That searching mind
Relentless in pursuit
Of wisdom unbounded
And truth undefined.

I remember the professor
Measured and sage
With the confident ease
Of a man in his prime
"These are the hurricane years",
He would explain
"Much to do in little time".

I remember the friend
Always unfailing
With support and concern
And words ever wise.
We'll always remember
That bright blazing comet
That shot through our skies.

[John Quinn is a writer and was a broadcaster on RTÉ for 27 years].



Old classmates: John Coolahan, John Quinn, Billy Colfer and George Cunningham

GEORGE CUNNINGHAM

Friends for Almost Sixty Years: We met as student teachers in 1959, almost sixty years ago, in what was then St Patrick's Training College, Drumcondra. Alphabetically we were grouped together: so the Cs and some Ds were in Roinn B. Deep and lasting friendships developed. For all of us – 108+ budding educationalists in that class of '61 - Johnny Coolahan remained an inspiration all our lives. He had a great head-start, coming from the influence of an enlightened teacher in Tarbert, the famed Ms McKenna, whereas most of the rest of us were products of the 'Murder Machine' of its time. I mourn not only a great friend but the outstanding Irish educationalist of our time. We shared many proud, joyful and significant scholarly and friendly moments and to have published his *Towards a Memoir* is a cherished privilege.

[George Cunningham NT., FSA, D.Litt (UL), M.Litt., MA (NUIG)].

MARY MCGILLYCUDDY

In his passion for education, and his commitment to its improvement, Professor John Coolahan was a wonderful advisor and friend, not only to many people, but to many institutions and organizations, and indeed to the entire country.

However, here in Tarbert, he was simply one of our own, and we know that we had a special place in his heart. He supported our two schools, Tarbert National School and Tarbert Comprehensive; he attended events, he gave talks, he gave advice; ever a teacher, he gave us books, books and more books, all new, carefully chosen and age- and interest-appropriate; above all he gave us time. He was Johnny, he did not stand on ceremony, he was proud of us and we were, and are, very, very proud of him.

Tá sé imithe ar shlí na fírinne anois. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

[Mary McGillicuddy was Principal of Tarbert Comprehensive School, Co. Kerry].



John Coolahan was highly respected as an academic, as a teacher and a scholar, across a range of third-level institutions. Here, now, are appreciations from some of the people who shared his goals and ambitions and insights.

ÁINE HYLAND

The death of John Coolahan on 3 June 2018 marked the end of an era in Irish education and in the arts in Ireland. He played a major part in influencing Irish education policy – both as an “insider” and an “outsider” - and was actively engaged in various education and arts initiatives for over half a century. His influence on Irish educational policy goes back to the early 1960s. In 1961 he was a founder member of the Young Teachers Study Group which contributed to Irish education policy during a seminal period in Irish education. In the early 1970s he played a key role in drafting the new three year B.Ed. programme which was first awarded in 1977.



He was exceptionally generous in his willingness to give talks and keynote addresses to a wide variety of groups and associations including teacher unions, managerial bodies, the National Parents Council and the Educational Studies Association of Ireland – to name but a few. At an international level, he spoke at conferences and seminars all over the world. Through his work with the OECD and the European Commission, he was a key influencer of educational policy in numerous jurisdictions.

He willingly accepted onerous and demanding roles on a wide variety of government-appointed groups and committees. Politics played no part in his appointments, in that the various Irish Ministers for Education who appointed him were from Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Labour.

His chairing of the National Education Convention in 1993 was a turning point in the history of Irish education. To quote John himself: *“The National Education convention was a landmark event in the shaping of educational policy in modern Ireland and its impact was to be very far-reaching and long-lasting”*. More recently he chaired the National Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector and his 1991 report has had a major influence on government policy on the patronage of primary schools – although its recommendations have yet to be fully realised.

John's generosity was boundless. His chairing of various boards, committees, conventions and fora, were all carried out on a *pro bono* basis, as were the countless talks and keynote addresses which he gave. He was incomparably unselfish in his willingness to help and advise his friends, students and colleagues – nothing was too much for him and no request was ever refused.

This author is one of many of many who owe an enormous debt to him for his wise and sagacious advice. He advised and supported me in the late 1970s as I researched and wrote up my own Ph.D. He invited me to act as a tutor in Carysfort College when he was a part-time lecturer there. He encouraged me to apply for the professorship in UCC in 1993 and he was an invaluable colleague throughout my academic career. He was a great friend and mentor and his loss to Irish education is incalculable.

[Dr. Áine Hyland is Emeritus Professor of Education and former Vice-President of University College Cork]

SÉAMUS MCGUINNESS

My career in education has been considerably enriched through my contact with John. This extends back to 1964 when we both taught at secondary level and continued thereafter when I had the privilege of working alongside him on a range of projects. It is rare for one individual to have taught at all levels of the educational system and to be so in touch with the dynamics and policies across these levels. John embraced all three.



John was driven by a deep commitment to promoting the values and policies which he believed should underpin an educational system of the highest quality. Quite apart from his undoubted knowledge and expertise which has been widely recognised and valued both here in Ireland and internationally, John's generosity in sharing his knowledge with all who came into contact with him stands out as an outstanding quality of the man.

[Dr. Séamus McGuinness is a former Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin]

TOM COLLINS

The contribution of the Education department in Maynooth to Irish education has been long -running and multi-faceted. Since its establishment almost 50 years ago the department has graduated a supply line of teachers for the Irish second level school system who have played pivotal roles in the emergence of universal second level education in Ireland since the 1970's. A typical annual cohort of teacher graduates of about 150 students amounts to more than 7000 teachers over the past 5 decades.



But the department's relationship with schools was greater than this. John Coolahan who was the second Professor of Education in Maynooth, succeeding

Professor Seamus Ó Suilleabháin, the inaugural Professor, went on to develop a suite of graduate programmes for teachers in areas such as school leadership and guidance counselling in schools. The department continued to expand its Masters and Doctorate provision under his stewardship, not merely in school related areas but in the broad discipline of Education generally.

The contribution of the Education department to Irish education generally is mirrored in its contribution to the development of Maynooth University. Having succeeded John as Professor of Education in Maynooth in 2006 I joined a department imbued with his unique blend of scholarly commitment and pastoral care. He was revered by his former students, who kept returning to Maynooth on an ongoing basis in many guises for years after graduating. John was first and foremost a teacher and no teacher looks for any greater reward than the esteem of their students. This he was given in abundance. His students took up positions in schools throughout the country where their love for Maynooth and the regard in which they held it was transmitted on a daily basis, year after year, in classrooms all over the country. In this way the Education department came, albeit unwittingly, to be the recruiting ground for countless generations of students to Maynooth.

In a close working relationship with John on many different projects over our years as colleagues in Maynooth through the 1990's, I was continuously struck by his work ethic; his constant good humour and collegiality and his deep sense of patriotism – that is in his sense of public service. If John had been a Kerry footballer, (something which I am sure he would have loved to have been), he would have been a corner back – more a Páidí Ó'Sé than a Pat Spillane. Good corner backs understand the value of going forward- even if in small steps- rather than going backwards; they like to keep the whole field in their sight line; they rarely seek a flashy score and generally distrust all forms of flashiness; they bring other players into the game ;they become the icon of the team as the other team members come to trust in them implicitly to do the necessary in moments of extreme danger.

John was the ultimate corner back. He was forever charismatic, reliable and true. He believed in the inherent capability of the human condition and devoted his life work to tuning the education system in Ireland , sometimes in a patient and incremental way, to enable it to rise to the challenge of releasing this capability. Through a lifetime of painstaking work on multiple fronts in Irish education he would become a central player in the quiet but ongoing evolution of the system in Ireland . The fact that this system is now largely unrecognisable from that which he would have first encountered as a newly graduated primary teacher in 1960's Ireland is in no small measure attributable his life's labour.

[Dr. Tom Collins is Chairperson of both the Governing Bodies of Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB) since 2013 and founding Chairperson of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) since 2015. Appointed Chairperson of the Public Water Forum in 2015. He was President of RCSI Bahrain from 2011 to 2013. Emeritus President of Maynooth University 2010-2011 where I was also Professor of Education and Dean of the Faculty of Social Science from 2006-2010. Director of Dundalk Institute of Technology from 2001 - 2006.]