

Family Support and Informal Adult Learning Adapted to the Needs of Different Groups. CEDEFOP Study Visit, Linkoping, Sweden. October 14th -17th 2013

Clare Family Learning Project 2013

Mary Flanagan

Clare Family Learning Project
Limerick Clare Education Training
Board

Clare Family Learning Project

Mary Flanagan

–Rural Home Economics teacher 1982

–TEFL teacher 1987

–Montessori teacher 1994

–Masters in Adult Education 2004

–Co-ordinator of Clare Family Learning Project- 2006

Main work:

–Engage those least likely to attend classes

–Develop curriculum, resources, programmes, training

–Outreach, network with other service providers,
share

Where are we?





Capital: Dublin 1,110,627

Population: 4,588,000 (Census 2011)

Density: 65.3/km²

87% Irish, 13 % other nationalities

Clare: 117,196 (Census 2011)

Ennis: 25,360

Irish Workforce: 2.1million (Est. 2012)

Migrants: 15% of workforce

Travellers: 36,000 or 0.6% of population

Services: 78%

Industry 19%

Pharmaceuticals, chemicals, computer hardware and software, food products, beverages and brewing, medical devices

Some Irish Facts (2012)

- Irish economy is worth €163 billion (Circa 45th biggest economy)
- Total €56 billion - 100% government expenditure
- Health €13.9 billion – 25% government expenditure
- Education € 8.6 billion – 15% gov.exp.
- Welfare €20.8 billion – 37% gov. exp. [gov.ie]
- Borrowings €12.5 billion – 7.6% of GDP
- Government debt €190 billion –117% of GDP
- 296,300 – 13.3% of labour force (**Sept 2013**)

‘Minister for Education Ruairi
Quinn to find savings of over
€100m in October Budget’

**Irish Times Newspaper
headline**

September 17th 2013

–An internal document lists
75 possible cutbacks in the
education sector

Formal Education in Ireland

- Primary, 2nd, 3rd level education Dept. of Education and Skills
- Schools adhere to relevant curriculum
- Free one year childcare for child at 3 or 4 years
- Children start school at 4 or 5 years of age
- Compulsory 6-15 years / first 3 years of 2nd level to include **Junior Certificate exam**
- Final two years of 2nd level - **Leaving Certificate**
- 3rd level access- based on best 6 LC subjects on a competitive basis
- Mature student entry to 3rd level is different

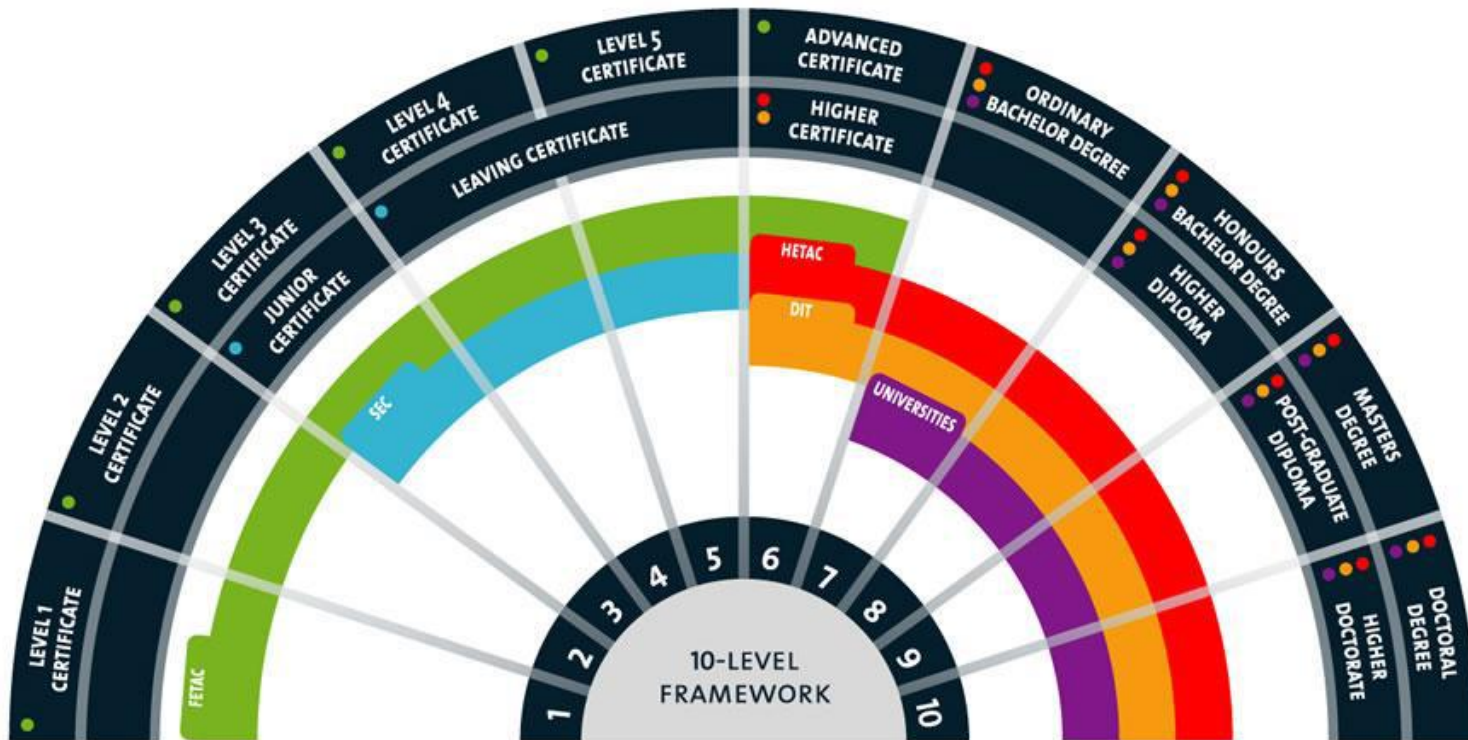
Types of primary school

- Roman Catholic 91.1%
- Church of Ireland Anglican 5.7%
- Multi-denominational 2.3%
- Presbyterian 0.4%
- Inter-Denominational 0.3%
- Muslim 0.1%
- Jewish 0.1%
- Quaker 0.1%

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

KEY

- FETAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
- SEC - State Examinations Commission (*Department of Education & Science*)
- HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
- Universities
- new Framework awards



History of Irish Adult Education

- 1930s Vocational Education Committees set up
Duty of continuing education Adult classes available
- 1960s Rapid expansion of VECs
- 1979 Adult Education Officers appointed
- 1984 Adult Literacy Organisers appointed + funding
- 1997 OECD Adult Literacy Report, poor results –
increased funding
- 1998 Green Paper Adult Education
- 2000 White Paper Adult Education
- 2013 Results of PIAAC out October 8th
- Programme for the International Assessment of
Adult Competencies- OECD countries

Context

In a... review of adult education in Ireland, Fleming (2004:15) argues that the Irish state

- has particular difficulty acting in the interests of this community or civil society because, some would say, it has been seduced, maybe corrupted, by the economy to act in its interests. In this way the **tendency of the State is to support a vision of lifelong learning and adult education that sustains the economy and values learning that involves job skills and up-skilling.** In fact the **Government sets as a priority the learning that supports economic development.** There is rhetoric of social inclusion and equality but that too has an economic intent. There is a contradiction between the inequality the system needs... and the objective of social cohesion or social justice.

Adult **Education** in Ireland

- Minister of State for Adult Education
- Influenced by the European Union to promote lifelong learning, and create a learning society
- Growth area due to unemployment
- Less money to deliver more provision
- Is the Cinderella of Education after
– Primary, Second Level, Third Level

Adult **Literacy** Service

- Annual budget for pay and non-pay costs
 - Part time hours have been cut this year
- Basic skills and themed literacy is used to hook adults back into learning e.g. woodwork, cookery, gardening, helping children with homework, language
- Literacy is not used in the title especially in rural regions e.g. Clare Adult Basic Education Service

Delivering Equality of Opportunity in **Schools** (DEIS)

- Extra funding for smaller class size, extra tuition, linking schools together, linking with other agencies
- Home School Community Liaison Teachers support families. Remit to support parents - FL assist them

(DEIS: An Action Plan for Educational Inclusion May 2005)

Adult Literacy DEIS Funding

Specific funding for family literacy programmes

Total of €265,000 per annum for 16 areas

Must apply each year – maximum €30,000 grant

Literacy budget is also used for Family Learning

In Ireland....

- Family Learning is an umbrella term which describes a wide variety of educational intervention programmes that have an **intergenerational** focus in their design and delivery
- Mainly parent/carer only programmes in Ireland – adult literacy background
- Some parent/carer and child together

History - Clare Family Learning Project

- 1994 Parents requested support with children's homework
- First Family Literacy programme established
- Portable pack developed in 2000
- Trained 714 family learning facilitators (1999 - 2013)
- Dedicated family learning tutor support website
- Currently 2 full time members of staff, with 5 part-time tutor (in 2010 – 22 part time tutors)

Clare Family Learning Pack

- Pack developed for parents/carers of children 0-7 years
- Programme delivered over 8-14 weeks (2 hours per week)
- Key elements

Facilitators Resource Guide

6 Parent booklets

50 piece Photopak

A family learning approach to developing programmes

- Affirming what parents are already doing at home as valuable (valuing and building on existing home literacies)
- Encouraging parents to become involved in their child's education at an early age
- Helping parents develop strategies for extending their children's emergent literacy and numeracy skills

continued...

- Building a partnership between home, school and community in order to maximise support to parents
- Providing parents with opportunities to improve their own literacy and numeracy skills
- Fostering the notion of lifelong learning
- Clare Family Learning Resource Guide 2000
- These inform all courses in family learning/literacy

The Early Catastrophe The 30 Million Word Gap

- By age 3, children from privileged families have heard 30 million more words than children from underprivileged families. Longitudinal data on 42 families examined what accounted for enormous differences in rates of vocabulary growth. Children turned out to be like their parents in stature, activity level, vocabulary resources, and language and interaction styles. Follow-up data indicated that the 3-year-old measures of accomplishment predicted third grade school achievement.

Children's academic successes at ages 9 and 10 can be attributed to the amount of talk they hear from birth through ages 3-5.

Gaps widen, rather than diminish, over the early primary school years.

By age 3 trends in the amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction are well established and suggest widening gaps.

At 16-18 months when children begin amassing vocabulary, word learning is significantly affected by economic background. **Copyright Zero to Three USA 2011.**

Programme Models

- Understanding how school works
- Providing positive fun learning opportunities around home and family leading to lifelong learning
- Explaining curriculum content and helping with homework and study skills
- Promoting greater engagement with books and stories at all ages
- Engaging whole families in activities

How does Family Learning work?

- Identify location
- What might interest parents / respond to requests from parents
- Reach parents through schools/partners
- Provide venue in or close to school
- Trained tutor with resources
- 2 hour class once per week for 6-12 weeks
- Options to join other classes
- Option to gain national qualification

Who are our priority groups?

- Single parents
- Travellers
- Refugees / asylum seekers
- Migrant workers
- All adults with basic skills needs
- Long-term unemployed adults
- Young parents
- Early school leavers
- Low income parents
- Grandparents/significant adults
- Carers, foster parents

Outcomes for learners

- Positive attitude to their children's schooling - increasing chance of achievement in school, staying in school
- More confident in coming to class
- Increased interest and ability to learn
- Building confidence through small successes - gives hope
- Good social networks and friendships

Wider benefits of Family Learning

- Increased parent child interaction on literacy and numeracy activities
- Cultural integration of migrants
- More active citizens in communities - (Anthea Rose)

What makes a family learning programme successful?

- Partnership
- Informal / non formal structure (becoming harder to maintain. Strong push to certified courses)
- Interesting topics - meeting the needs of groups
- Building on existing knowledge of learners
- Practical activities
- Nurturing parents learning then they in turn can help their children learn
- Experienced and well trained tutors
- Flexible provision, times, locations

Issues working with families

- Engaging and recruitment
- Retention
- Progression
- Measuring success

Child Literacy and Social Inclusion Report

National Economic Social Forum November 2009

- Clare Family Learning Project mentioned as an example of good practice (Section 8.34)
- Some of the more integrated and focused areas are in Family Literacy ... family literacy (nationally) is showing positive signs of development ... (Section 8.32 Community Initiatives)
- FL...can help to overcome barriers to learning felt by adults and children who find it difficult to relate to school learning
- Clear outcomes needed for each stage of delivery- DEIS Review**
- An area-wide family literacy strategy could help**



An evening of Irish culture with learners and staff

Roma Families Learning

- Request from Turkey for support as a partner in a **Comenius Regio** project
- Adult education together with schools and other community agency – twinning
- Worked with local groups and schools improved networking and maximised resources, shared information, improved outcomes



Once upon a time there was a Family Learning project.....