



‘An Exploration of the Irish and Finnish Education Systems from the Perspectives of Initial Teacher Education and Inclusion’

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ABSTRACT	CONTEXT	FINDINGS/ RESULTS	ANAYLSIS OF FINDINGS
<p>This project strived to investigate the key difference and similarities between the Finnish and Irish education system. Initial Teacher Education and Inclusion were chosen as the key points of focus for the comparison.</p> <p>The researcher chose to conduct semi structured interviews with educational experts from both Finland and Ireland</p> <p>The researcher found that a variety of successful inclusion initiatives were present in each country. It was visible that Ireland has a more structured Initial Teacher Education. Finally, it was observed that more teacher autonomy is witnessed within Finnish schools.</p>	<p>P.I.S.A. Finland is renown for their success in P.I.S.A. rankings. In recent years Ireland has made great progress in their results. In 2018 Ireland ranked in fifth place with Finland one place above at fourth.</p> <p>Research Question The overarching research question of the project: How can Finland’s educational reforms have potential to be used as a learning tool for the Irish education system?</p> <p>The embedded research questions are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How does teacher education in Finland and Ireland compare? 2) How do the structures and processes of implementation of Inclusion Policy in Ireland compared to that in Finland? 3) How can Ireland learn from these Finnish programs in terms of structure, program specifics, and implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is seen that Finnish teachers have more autonomy over their classroom and the structure of the curriculum they teach when compared to Irish teachers. It appears that the Irish education system is controlled more thoroughly by national legislation when compared to Finland • Initial Teacher Education varies in Finland and Ireland with a masters being necessary in Finland but not in Ireland. The advantages of the Irish method of a concurrent teaching degree and <i>Droichead</i> are discussed. Finland’s educational fees are covered by the state while Irish college students must pay for their fees. • Inclusion is of pivotal importance within each education system. From discussion with the interviewees both education systems incorporate a range of different methodologies to cater for all students regardless of their level of need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is evident that there are advantages associated with both Irish and Finnish education systems. • The high level of autonomy linked to Finnish teachers is described as a positive within all gathered data which is a matter which could be further examined from an Irish perspective. • Inclusion is a broader concept than simply those with additional learning needs, both education systems from observation incorporate methodologies to cater to students needs regardless of the level of the specific need in question. For example, positive reinforcement Individualised Education Plans and a focus on retaining students with learning difficulties in mainstream classes is becoming more prevalent within Irish and Finnish education systems. • It is seen that Irelands education system equips student to perform to a high standard, moving up in P.I.S.A rankings in recent times. • School self-evaluation can be seen as opportunity for overall reflection and further development/improvement. Finally, positive educational improvement should be celebrated encouraging further development.
<p style="text-align: center;">CONTACT</p> <p>Name: Grace Banville Instituion: Mary Immaculate College, Thurles. Email: banvillegrace@gmail.com</p>	<p>METHODS AND MATERIALS</p>	<p>Key Reference</p> <p>Salokangas, Maija & Wermke, Wieland & Harvey, Gerry. (2019). ‘Teachers' autonomy deconstructed: Irish and Finnish teachers' perceptions of decision-making and control.’ <i>European Educational Research Journal</i>. 19, 329-350 Available: doi: 10.1177/1474904119868378.</p>	<p>DISCUSSION</p>
	<p>The researcher opted for qualitative research. According to Moretti et al. (2011), the advantage of qualitative research is the richness of the collected data and such data need to be interpreted and coded in a valid and reliable way.</p> <p>Semi Structured interviews were chosen as a research method as it allowed the researcher to gain insight from the reputable educational experts on the overarching questions concerning their dissertation topic. Interviewing educational experts from each country ensured there was no biases present. Opting</p>		<p>There is no formal framework for Initial Teacher Education in Finland while Ireland has the established Droichead programme. The Droichead programme offers valuable support to NQT’s, while in Finland there is no designated staff within school to support their NQT’S. This interlinks to the autonomy gap; Finland's teachers have a higher level of autonomy and freedom. From analysis of my findings, I feel an increase in autonomy within the Irish teaching profession could bring benefits</p>

