

## SRHE OUTLINE

In this paper I discuss the enduring question of re-imagining initial teacher education, with a focus on recent developments in the primary sector in Ireland. In doing so, I bring forward memories or in Joycean terms “fragments” that serve as illuminative epiphanies in my own journey as a student teacher, a classroom teacher and a teacher educator. Influenced by Heidegger’s ([1927] 1998) phenomenological writings, where “being” is “being possible” (p. 183) and “becoming” is “it’s unfolding” (p. 183) and in a context where time and space are contending concepts, I describe these after Denzin (2001) as existentially problematic moments or: “Time and Space Epiphanies in Teacher Education Programmes”. Using a policy-as-discourse approach, I discuss the challenges of re-imagining “being” in the here and now and also “becoming” as a “feasible utopia” (Barnett, 2011, p. 4) or “glimpse” of some positive signs for the future of teacher education in the twentieth-first century in Ireland. I first present state of recent statutory and policy production in initial teacher education in Ireland, then the critical importance of elaborated and everyday ideologies, leavened by the role of projects of choice in educational renewal and reform, followed by the inherited context in epistemologies of re-imagining, and conclude with a discussion of nonsynchronous patterns in conceptualising teacher education well-suited to the twentieth-first century.

In postmodern terms, we are currently deep in a “flow” of a number of simultaneous patterns in initial teacher education in Ireland. Official accreditation is assured for teacher education programmes that meet national and international quality criteria for the first time. The teacher continuum from initial through induction and then in-career phases originally inscribed in a statutory and policy context more than a decade ago is now part of an elaborated official policy discourse. Whether an essentialist or privileged focus on literacy and numeracy will help students acquire the analytical, reasoning and communication skills necessary for full participation in a knowledge society is hotly contested terrain for those with different knowledge claims and practices in teacher education, the social sciences and the liberal arts. These simultaneities serve as the context for the first bellwether or highly developed incidence of teaching and teacher education renewal and reform nationally in almost forty years.

Surprisingly, there have been no paradigm wars about complexity, constructivism, reflectivity, diversity and communication, notwithstanding their integration in curriculum innovations and programme renewals in Ireland. In this paper, I will discuss how emergent elaborated ideologies are “refashioned” into everyday ideologies (Gramsci, 1971) through the thresholds of learner, teacher, researcher and leader in initial teacher education programmes. In this way, I will challenge essentialist, singular, and asymmetrical ideas of student and teacher and argue for the fusion of what it means to be a learner, teacher, researcher and leader in the spatio-temporal cauldron of initial teacher education programmes.

The following animating question guides the present paper: How does “spatio-temporal” reasoning serve as a plausible and explanatory framework for connecting learning, teaching, researching and leading? As part of the answer to this question, I believe that we should re-imagine teacher education as a project of choice. By “project of choice” I mean the will that precedes the way and it includes both dispositions and qualities oriented towards content and forms of knowing embedded in a set of practices (Barnett, 2007). Re-imagining things being otherwise through the harsh light of policies, frameworks and programmes and the soft lens of discourses, identities and practices is a naturally occurring phenomenon in the journeys of student teachers, classroom teachers and teacher educators. “Imagining things being otherwise”, Greene (1995) states in her writings on education, the arts and social change, “may be the first step toward things becoming different—a space of freedom to move before we choose in the light of possibility” (1995, p. 22).

The act of re-imagining initial teacher education assumes anterior imaginings from classical to present times. Indicative examples of “collective imaginings” from Spinoza, through Rorty to Lacan address whether imagining should be individual, collective or combined, past and/or present-centred, or indeed if the idea of a coherent unity is an illusion (Gatens, 1999). Influential contemporary imaginings include Taylor’s (2004) political writings on rules that do not contain the principles of their own application, Castells’ (2009) communication writings on the net as the replacement for vertical hierarchies, and Castoriadis’ (1998) philosophical writings on change involving radical discontinuities. Bridging these distal influences with a voice that raises up the power of the imagination linked to the animating themes of knowledge, curriculum and practice, I

will argue is central to realising what we means to be “fully becoming” a student teacher across the scope and sequence of initial teacher education.

In response to the challenges of realising what it means to be fully becoming a student teacher, Greene’s (1995) signature educational, democratic and participative educational philosophy which takes full advantage of knowledge and experience is especially relevant for the present times. Her philosophy of “imagining things as if they could be otherwise” reminds us that reimagining is not only a dialectical tick-tacking between elaborated and time-honoured ideologies, paradigms and theories about constructivism, reflectivity, diversity and communication (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre and Demers, 2008) but also, recursively, everyday ideologies and realities “that are continually shaped and reshaped via, discourse, embodied sensations, memory, personal biography and interactions” (Lupton, 1982, p. 2). In this way, conceptually hyphenating space and time as a spatio-temporal phenomenon is not only a matter of critically engaging with subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 2003) but also with [student] learning spaces” (Savin-Baden, McFarland and Savin-Baden, 2007) that often lie beneath the surface of things in subterranean channels across classrooms, schools, colleges, communities and broader society. In sum, this paper will re-imagine initial teacher education programmes as responsive and relevant ways of linking being possible and it’s becoming or unfolding in the twentieth-first century in Ireland.