Chapter 11
Re-representing Education's Image and Status: In the 'Interest' of Pedagogical Innovation

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Introduction

The European Commission's *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000, p. 3) sets out the vision for 'a successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society'. Six key messages suggest 'a comprehensive and coherent lifelong learning strategy for Europe' (European Commission 2000, p. 4). This paper focuses on the third message, namely, the strategy's goal 'to develop effective teaching and learning methods and contexts for the continuum of lifelong and life-wide learning' (ibid.). Such a focus does not preclude a relational critique of the other five messages since, at their core, all share assumptions regarding the value of the following: 'skills-based' knowledge, investment in the principle of 'human capital', the efficacy of 'learning outcomes', a focus on equal 'opportunity' over-and-above equal 'conditions' and equal 'effects' and the (intended) appeal to an inclusive range of learners. The overall strategy was to have been, by now, fully implemented (European Commission 2000, p. 3). This paper proffers an implicit assessment of this profligate target. With specific attention to the message on teaching and learning, it argues that the strategy connects with neo-liberal meanings, standpoints and practices that oversee an incomplete educational representation. Despite inadequate representation, productive power is ideologically, structurally and culturally secured via loose connectivity at various supranational, nation state, political interest, academic, media and wider societal levels. These levels cohere at some point to cast education's dominant image and status and enunciate new ways to 'innovate' teaching and learning.

There are aspects to this *Memorandum* that are to be welcomed, not least the commendable goals to: build an inclusive society with equal access to quality

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learning; adjust the ways in which education and training is provided (including how paid working life is organised); set out objectives for higher overall levels of education and qualification; and seek and facilitate deeper forms of active citizenship (European Commission 2000, pp. 4, 5). Such worthy goals are chiefly diluted, however, by the strategy's insubstantial analysis of education as a field of power – specifically, the concern that education reflects and produces diverse interests and effects (e.g. Bourdieu 1984, 1988, 1998). Here, education's image and status – how it is unremittingly interest-led and powerfully contested – is of primary concern for this paper. Thus, whilst it is welcome to observe 'questions for debate' accompanying each strategy message in the European Commission's *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, this paper argues for further, wider enquiries. Ultimately, if there is to be *innovation* in teaching and learning, the paper concludes; this is best served, and can only be effectively engaged, via a more complex and authentic representation.

A Vision of Lifelong Learning: Questions for Further Debate

Crucially, the *Memorandum* presents 'two equally important aims for lifelong learning – promoting active citizenship and promoting employability' (European Commission 2000, p. 5). Little is said about their relationship other than indicating that the latter provides a 'core dimension' of the former and is 'decisive' in developing European-wide 'prosperity':

> For much of most people's lives, having paid work underpins independence, self-respect and well-being, and is therefore a key to people's overall quality of life. Employability – the capacity to secure and keep employment – is not only a core dimension of active citizenship, but it is equally a decisive condition for reaching full employment and for improving European competitiveness and prosperity in the 'new economy'. (European Commission 2000, p. 5)

The primacy of education's 'economic' value is assumed here. This, in turn, obscures other important (sociopolitical) questions that speak directly to the challenges of active citizenship. These questions include: How can dynamic economic growth *and* social cohesion be strengthened? What and whose 'knowledge, skills and competence' are being represented? Beyond 'skills gaps' recognition, how are diverse educational opportunities, conditions and effects addressed? Is the economic revelation 'to raise demand for learning as well as its supply' an adequate response 'for those who have benefitted least from education?' (ibid., p. 8). Do proposed 'public-private initiatives' and 'new user-oriented learning systems' include the interest of marginalised learner groups? (ibid., p. 8). There is intimation in the *Memorandum* that education is not all about employability:

> Employability is obviously a key outcome of successful learning, but social inclusion rests on more than having paid work. Learning opens the door to building a satisfying and productive life, quite apart from a person's employment status and prospects. (European Commission 2000, p. 9)

Notwithstanding this (fleeting) recognition, 'obvious' economic value connections are still securely established. Moreover, whilst there is no hesitation in revealing that 'learning opens the door', the 'door that opens learning' (i.e. the portal of access) remains firmly closed from view.

Similarly, when it extols the message of innovation in teaching and learning, the *Memorandum* stresses the 'obvious' economic value of education. There are commendable objectives that need *not* be imbued with such value, such as the need to: challenge traditional systems of learning; reform initial and continuing teacher professionalism; extend and practise open and participatory teaching and learning methods; and encourage meaningful *qualitative* standards of practice (European Commission 2000, pp. 13, 14).[1] But these objectives overlap with those of clearer economic purpose that endorse the following: more user-oriented learning systems; outcome-based learning approaches; and the 'added value' of applied educational research (European Commission 2000, pp. 13–15). Moreover, all these objectives, including those directed towards 'innovation in teaching and learning', coalesce around an economic 'sign value' (Brancaleone and O'Brien 2011). In this way, the primary focus is on teaching and learning as technical, skills-based activities, where *innovation* implies effective *methods* of service delivery (e.g. ICT-based pedagogies) and functional *outcomes* (e.g. qualifications exchange in the marketplace). Challenging such pedagogical representation remains key to challenging the lifelong learning vision presented in the *Memorandum*.

Power Interest in Education's Image and Status

Contestation around pedagogical representation speaks to the prevalence of *power interest* in education's image and status. Image here concerns itself with both semiotics (e.g. how one imagines education; attaches meaning to it) *and* modus operandi (e.g. how one practises teaching and learning). Status concerns itself with distinction (e.g. Bourdieu 1984), particularly the prominence afforded to certain educational positions (e.g. dominant perspectives on educational 'effectiveness'). Whilst image and status do not *directly* form practice, they can be hugely influential – particularly if they garner structural support and cultural endorsement. Accordingly, education may be viewed as a field of power that is contested both symbolically and effectually. Emissary voices are ever-present, sometimes cohering, other times contradicting each other's evocative claims.

[1] In making this point, I have deliberately chosen to alter certain terminology. The *Memorandum* stresses the phrase 'teacher training'. I have replaced this with 'teacher professionalism' to emphasise the importance of 'craft', in addition to/over, 'skills-based' knowledge forms. The *Memorandum* also uses the term 'qualitative benchmarks'. I use 'qualitative standards' in its stead to demonstrate that such measures are intrinsically valuable and are ultimately irreducible to *transferability*. It is clear that language is key to any declaration of power interest in education.

Their resonating power interest may be more apparent or hidden from view.[2] Notwithstanding their transparency, diverse interest groups powerfully invest in education's image and status and its associated pedagogical relations. Accordingly, 'innovation' in teaching and learning is shown to have different meanings, purposes, parameters and actions. This paper examines some 'innovation' messages, notably those that relate to Irish university education. Critical analysis centres on unveiling and articulating the power interests that lie within these messages.

The *Memorandum* concludes that an investment in people ('Europe's main assets') is best achieved by adapting (read synchronising) 'education and training systems' (European Commission 2000, p. 6). Such supranational authority, so bound up in the 'lifelong learning' message, has greatly shaped national policy agendas on education. Changes have duly followed. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) movement and the subsequent establishment of national qualifications frameworks provide for a paradigmatic shift towards the measurability, transfer and progression of outcome-based skills, knowledge and competences.[3] In agreement with Gleeson (2011, p. 3), the focus of such a shift has been on 'curriculum as content' and the mutual recognition of technical systems and award qualifications in different jurisdictions, rather than on learning processes, teaching methodologies and student-centred forms of assessment. The introduction of outcomes-based education, in particular, complements regulatory approaches to teacher 'competence' and development (e.g. European Commission 2004; OECD 2005; Tuning Project 2010). Such a focus shift has largely resulted from neo-liberal pressures for increased ('contractual' forms of) accountability, alongside greater 'quality' control systems and the expansion of 'performance-based' indicators (e.g. Sleeter 2007; Roberts 2007; Beck 2010). Gleeson and O'Donnabhain (2009) point to the Department of Education and Skills' *Customer Service Action Plan* as a good exemplar of an Irish policy response to such pressures.

Education's image and status increasingly reflect this select supranational interest. Concomitantly, a particular pedagogical representation is produced. Standardised forms of assessment bear strong emblematic and concrete influence. To illustrate, international tests such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Survey) and TIMMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) comparatively 'rank' national test scores. From 'common sense' and 'reasonable' perspectives, these international tests present a renewed focus on education with improved opportunities for innovative ('benchmark') practices.[4] 'Commonsense' assumes that the 'outcomes' of education

[2] The forces that shape education's image and status are difficult to fully articulate since they assemble at a myriad of power-knowledge, structural and sociocultural levels. Such forces may become more articulate at a point of some convergence between these levels.

[3] In contradistinction to note 1 above, I have deliberately chosen to leave unchanged the language terminology presented here. These terms resonate with a particular, managerialist/neo-liberal, image of education (e.g. O'Brien 2012).

[4] Of course 'benchmarking' is hugely problematic. For example, does one follow Finland or South Korea for exemplar educational policies and practices? Both nations appear to perform well in

systems are pre-eminent, capable of being effectively measured and readily adopted (O'Brien and Brancaleone 2011). A 'reasonable' perspective assumes that comparative tests are unproblematic, or at least have the capacity to overcome their (inherent) limitations.[5] Whilst a more exhaustive critique of comparative standardised testing is beyond this paper's remit, it is clear that both assumptions are highly contentious. Hitherto, however, they remain largely uncontested at official policy levels. The power effects of standardised testing are especially neglected vis-à-vis their consequences for how education is inexorably signified and positioned. The impact on teaching and learning, including pedagogical 'innovation', is likewise neglected. Despite this, structural authority continues to support the image and status production of 'tests' and, concurrently, new pedagogical 'truths'. Whilst the levels and powers of structural authority vary, they may coalesce at some mutual educational position. Further, as a loosely interconnected set of forces, structural authority may not always be transparent. To illustrate, those with a particular power interest in assessment are often presented as discrete/disconnected when, in reality, they have (an equivalent or greater) power interest in education's image and status, including its constituent pedagogical character. Thus, it is possible (indeed necessary, from a critical perspective) to identify test sponsors, designers and administrators as 'interested' power groups, e.g. the role of *The Indicators and Analysis Division Directorate for Education at the OECD* in PISA and the function of *The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement* with respect to PIRLS and TIMMS. In this way, ideological, structural and cultural connectivity is exemplified in the European Commission's explicit position on 'lifelong learning' and the ongoing work of international assessment organisations.

'Change', states the *Memorandum*, 'can only come about in and through the impetus of the member states' (European Commission 2000, p. 5). In an Irish context, the 'connected' state has advanced its response with the introduction of the *National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People* (DES 2011). This emphasises the primacy of outcomes-based education and its regular test functions.[6] The Educational Research Centre, established on the campus of St. Patrick's College of Education in Dublin, has positively welcomed this shift to 'national testing' (Educational Research Centre 2011). Whilst it 'officially' recognises the importance of 'classroom-based' assessment (ibid.), as espoused by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (e.g. NCCA 2007), the interrelationship between this formative/developmental model of assessment and more

international tests (as evaluated by 'exam scores'), but they could not be any different in terms of their philosophical, methodological and sociocultural construction!

[5] To illustrate, comparative tests may overcome their (inherent) limitations via the cyclic improvement of their apparatus, including the moderation of 'hard' statistics (e.g. introducing '*ranges* of rank order positions' and *schools like ours* data), the use of provisional statements (e.g. encompassing such phrases as 'all other variables being equal') and an engagement with some qualitative measures (e.g. 'student motivation' levels, 'reading enjoyment' indicators place etc.,).

[6] Among its proposals for primary (elementary) schools is the compulsory requirement to implement, from 2012 onwards, standardised testing in reading and mathematics for all students in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes (i.e. ages 7–8, 9–10 and 11–12).

standardised forms, is not adequately engaged.[7] The main 'work' of the Educational Research Centre continues to be the development of standardised, diagnostic and profile test systems. To illustrate, the centre analyses the results of state examinations, monitors the 'outcomes' of education in areas of literacy and mathematics ('connecting' with PISA, PIRLS and TIMMS) and develops new assessment instruments. The authenticity of this work is not questioned here. But, crucially, the limitations of standardised testing are largely neglected, including their potentially negative impact on education's image and status. Of course the work of the centre is upheld by those (e.g. government, various schools and parents) who claim that the system is made more measurable and visibly accountable. There is obviously some basis to this argument and there are apparent benefits to various groups that uphold such a position. But it is important to stress that 'accountability' takes on specific meaning here, allied as it is to the understanding that a range of 'output' indicators echoes comparable degrees of 'performance'. Furthermore, the (oft unforeseen) consequences of this association are manifest in individual schools and teachers being increasingly orientated towards these outcomes. Likewise, 'innovation' in teaching and learning is progressively framed by such values.

The Bologna process and Lisbon strategy exemplify the European Union's commitment to become the most competitive 'knowledge society' in the world (Lisbon European Council 2006). The role of the university is core to this objective as it captures the so-called knowledge triangle of research, education and innovation. Universities are thus seen as valued research and pedagogical environments that produce, accredit and transmit innovative knowledge, ultimately serving the expansion of Europe's competitive global status. This value position is frequently championed by the European University Association (e.g. EUA 2004). Moreover, the European Commission (2006) sees universities' specific association with industry as key to the production of a European knowledge economy. The OECD's recent *Economic Survey of Ireland 2009* similarly stresses advanced coordination with industry in the interests of increasing 'innovation and wealth'. Irish politicians have readily borrowed and adopted this position on higher education. Increasingly, they perceive their role as being 'hands-on' in directing and managing the purpose and function of the university:

> Our universities have a critical role to play as a dynamo energising our Smart Economy with new ideas and creativity. Increased collaboration among our universities – joining forces – greatly helps us to up our game in the intense ongoing global competition to come up with new ideas, new products and new services. (Former Taoiseach/Prime Minister Brian Cowen, *Education Matters* 2010, Feb 20)

Symbolic, and real, links between education and the economy are unambiguous in the state's habitual (and 'imitative') use of the phrase 'smart economy'. Yet, a

[7] The 'two types of assessment' are said to 'share several features' (The Educational Research Centre 2011, p. 6), though this is not explicated further. The following is also presented: 'The immediate introduction of standards-based classroom assessments, without first establishing a strong underlying knowledge base about classroom assessment strategies among teachers, may not be successful' (ibid.). This initial 'problematising' is welcome, but further elaboration on, and investigation into, the statement's conclusion is (regretfully) not provided.

fundamental contradiction persists in the state's accommodation of the autonomous role of the university (as secured in *The Universities Act*, 1997) and its verification of the university's (contingent) economic purpose:

> I have no hesitation in firmly endorsing the need for our institutions to enjoy strong levels of autonomy […] In terms of graduate education, we must ensure that our Doctoral graduates have not only in-depth knowledge of their chosen research area but also the broad range of 'workplace' skills and competencies required by industry […] [We need] to maximise the impact of our research results in terms of the commercialisation of that research and its conversion into real sustainable jobs. (Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn, *Education Matters* 2011, Nov 22)

Politicisation presents as a particular power interest in education. At a concrete level, the financial dependence of universities on the exchequer 'has given politicians and civil servants the power to bend them to their own purpose' (Fitzgerald 2010, p. 1). Actual current spending on higher education has reduced by almost two-thirds between 2001 and 2005 (ibid.). Despite a 15 % increase in student numbers over the past 3 years, universities have 10 % fewer academic staff than 2 years ago and government grant funding has been reduced by 9 % in that same period (Murray 2011 statistics). Economic austerity and new public sector reforms are presented as the 'rationalising rationale' for this diminution of resources. Such rationale has given rise to ideologically informed policy decisions that subvert the role of education to the needs of business/industry, whilst promoting state dynamism in facilitating people 'back to work'. Whilst present resource reductions are undoubtedly arduous, the exhortation to 'do more with less' precedes more straitened economic times. Ireland has always operated an underfunded education system.[8] Looking outside for policy direction appears, in 'good times and bad', to consolidate the nation state's compact fiscal position. The European Commission has long argued for the efficient management of resources and the 'rolling back' of state investment in education to include 'higher private spending' and 'incentives for more and sustained investment from enterprises and individuals' (European Commission 2003, pp. 3–4). A parallel position is to be found in the World Bank's promotion of the global market economy (including the educational market economy) and the liberalisation/privatisation of education services through the World Trade Organisation's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATs) (Robertson 2008). Shaped by this politicised discourse, the 'knowledge industry' encapsulates an ever-expansive network of 'learning services'. This encourages increased HE privatisation (e.g. Hibernia College in Ireland) and 'performance-based' comparisons amongst educational providers (e.g. the Russell Group in the UK). Moreover, an economic value for education is greater secured via 'fee' payments and the depiction of students/learners as 'consumers'. This is exemplified by the Minister for Education and Skills' recent encouragement to university students to be 'critical consumers' of the education they receive:

[8] On an OECD scale ranking overall education spending in relation to wealth or gross domestic product, Ireland lies 27th of 31 countries surveyed. To illustrate how resource constraints operate in practice, Ireland has already the second most overcrowded primary classrooms in the EU. Further, Irish universities are operating at approximately 60 % of the funding available to their counterparts in Britain and the rest of the EU. (all statistics from Flynn in *The Irish Times*, Feb 08, 2012a).

> A bad restaurant doesn't get repeat business. I think there has to be some response from the user of the service provided in an open market economy like ours. People can exercise their choice by moving to another supplier of the service. (Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn, in Duggan, *Sunday Independent* 2012, Feb 5, p. 6)

The above sentiments by an Irish (Labour education) minister appear acutely rooted in the neo-liberal zeitgeist. This ideological outlook is ever-more culturally inscribed into civic arenas of society, including public education. Moreover, it increasingly permeates individuals' 'life-world perspectives' (Shutz and Luckmann 1973), fashioning for them particular possibilities and choices (Rose 1999).[9] Emissary voices for greater 'innovation' in education are saturated in, what Stephen Ball might call, the 'discourse of business sensibility' (e.g. Ball 2007, 2009). This is clearly evident in a recent edition of 'Innovation', *The Irish Times Business Magazine* (November, 2011), specially entitled 'Saving Our Education System: The reforms needed to make us competitive again'. As a compendium of articles and commercials affirming the education-economy relation, they provide a curious role for business/enterprise (particularly science and technology) in the drive to 'innovate' a (supposed) moribund education system. One such article is written by an academic so disposed to this 'innovative' task (Walsh 2011). As a former President of the University of Limerick, Dr. Ed Walsh believes that 'competition in the knowledge economy is a global race for talent' (Walsh 2011, p. 24). Citing PISA test scores, he maintains that Ireland's 'international rankings […] have been plummeting' (ibid.). There is an impending need to 'innovate' education (and pedagogical relations therein). Exhortations are thus made to, inter alia (Walsh 2011, p. 25):

- 'Upgrade the performance of existing teachers by boosting in-service […] linking outcomes to award of annual increments'
- Reform governance structures – particularly at National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and university levels – to comprise a majority of board members from the private sector
- Introduce a graduation tax system to enable the full introduction of university fees
- 'Permit universities to compete in the market for international talent by removing limits on individual salary offers, while imposing strict limits on average salary levels within the university'[10]

The above 'innovations' are highly contentious. Crucially, they disregard the recent signs and consequences of market failure. They also disregard extensive research critiquing the impact of neo-liberal change on educational institutions and the teaching profession (e.g. Clark and Newman 1997; Ball 2003; Olsen and Peters 2005; Harris

[9] Of course 'choice' (e.g. school choice) is central to neo-liberal lexicon and conceptual thought. It is unsurprising, therefore, to see 'choice' being named (and therefore legitimated) in the minister's quotation above.

[10] Interestingly, the government's recent finance bill (Feb 2012) ensures, under its 'Special Assignee Relief Programme' (SARP), that highly skilled workers can be exempt from income tax (up to 5 years) on 30 % of salaries between 75,000 and 500,000 euro. Worker competition and attracting 'the best human capital' (key tenets of neo-liberal thinking) appear central to parallel 'innovation' messages.

2006; Clegg 2008). Moreover, the arguments presented are both paradoxical and incomplete. To illustrate the former, Walsh (2011, p. 24) cites PISA as the rationale for drastic innovation whilst, at the same time, decrying the 'narrowness' of the final summative state school examination and the 'tyranny' of [test score] appraisal for entry to university (Walsh 2011, p. 24). Also, Finland, South Korea, Singapore and Canada are jointly presented as 'the world's best school systems' (Walsh 2011, p. 25), without due regard for variation in philosophical, structural, sociocultural and methodological substances. These distinctions are key to any attempt to establish equivalent 'innovation' lessons for Ireland. Finland's education system, for example, is characterised by more: professional trust in teachers, extensive network supports, critical peer accountability systems and non-prescriptive approaches to school-based curriculum development (e.g. Gleeson 2011). Finland is frequently presented as the 'leader to follow' in terms of its productive 'outputs' but is hardly ever presented in terms of its qualitative 'inputs'. Walsh's arguments are incomplete too. As exhortations, they appeal to a demand for 'teaching excellence', a system that does not permit 'any student to fall behind',[11] an 'upgrade [of] the skills of those that teach', 'rigorous teacher assessment', etc. (Walsh 2011, p. 25). These exhortations are short on methodological details, vague in their proposals for 'how' innovation is to be achieved. Moreover, they mask vested power interests that seek to shape education's image and status in a particular, neo-liberal, direction.

It is important to acknowledge that not all business/enterprise perspectives are captured by Taylorist forms of managerialism and crude 'outcome' approaches to education. At the very least, 'innovation' necessitates creative independence, not blind imitation, and professional trust/engagement, not suspicion/control. The proliferation of interest groups in education is such that, even within one power base, 'innovation' messages frequently present as ambiguous and contradictory. Even so, policy paradigms rely on social context for some coherence – specifically the 'intersubjective level' of social formations for 'shared thought, language systems or discourses' – to become identifiable and embodied (O'Sullivan 2005, p. 66). In this way, a circuitous intertextual quality is prevalent in Irish education's diverse power interest base. Recent addresses by university leaders to some of Ireland's business leaders illustrate this point well, with frequent cross-referencing to the primacy of the education-economy relation (Barry 2011; Murphy 2011). Here, 'innovation' is captured by the 'enterprising' character of university-industry partnerships[12] (ibid.). The education-economy relation is further consolidated by the national strategy for Irish higher education (Hunt Report 2010) and by those seeking a new 'technological university' status (Neavyn 2012). A 'technological university' is characterised

[11] The language used here resonates with a particular *authoritative* stance on school and teacher effectiveness (e.g. High Reliability Schooling and *No Child Left Behind* in the US; the work of Ofsted and the Training and Development Agency for Schools in the UK).

[12] To illustrate further, University College Cork now holds an annual Innovation Week (Innov8). In the 2012 calendar, a 'Bright Ideas Competition' was organised. Guest speakers were invited from business enterprises; an 'entrepreneur of the year university lecture series' was launched and 'celebrity' entrepreneurs (from the TV show *Dragons' Den*) gave keynote presentations.

by the 'professional readiness of its graduates and proximity to the world of work' and the focus of its research and innovation 'on application and enterprise' (O'Cathain 2012, Feb 7). Whilst there are power divisions on the question of this 'new' university (Flynn 2012b), somewhat paradoxically all higher education institutions appear eager to contest for business/industry partnerships. Beyond symbolic alliance, practical gains are to be made from sourcing much needed funds from agencies like Science Foundation Ireland and Enterprise Ireland. Higher level institutions themselves have become culturally inscribed by this ideological/pragmatic rationale, to the point where academics' work (some more than others) has been increasingly occupied by partnership/sponsorship concerns (e.g. Maguire 2011). Of course all academics are affected in some way by new managerial structures and power relations in the university (e.g. O'Brien 2012). This pervasive impact would not be possible but for certain academics' 'buy-in' to paradigmatic change. In an Irish context, it is possible to imagine some manifestation of 'free-floating intellectuals' (Mannheim 1949 cited in O'Sullivan, 2005, p. 66) positioning themselves strategically and shifting allegiances in line with hegemonic constituencies. In this way, various academics may actively participate in the types of politicisation and business/enterprise perspectives that sustain the dominant paradigm.

Thus, whilst a proliferation of power interest groups exist, a circuitous intertextual quality prevails with respect to the dominant education-economy relation. As above discussions demonstrate, there is loose connectivity here at various supranational, nation state, political interest and academic levels. Whilst this connectivity may occasionally falter, through what Foucault calls 'slippage', it nevertheless possesses an intrinsic (economic) 'rationality' (Foucault 1978, 1997). Moreover, connectivity popularly expands to the media via various public presentations, policy statements, television, radio and newspaper coverage. What is produced is a general 'acceptance' that education (with particular focus on the STEM[13] disciplines) 'forms and informs our path to economic recovery'[14] (*Education Matters*, Feb 12, 2012). This 'innovation' message very clearly ties education to jobs. Parents are given an assumed responsibility for 'steering' their children towards sectors where jobs are available:

> The mammies and daddies of Ireland need to move away from the notion that future secure employment is in the traditional professions such as medicine, law and teaching […] The real opportunities for Irish graduates will be in technology, science and engineering, and students with an interest in these areas must be encouraged to pursue courses in those fields. (John Hennessy chairperson of the Higher Education Authority and former managing director of Ericsson Ireland, in Donnelly, the Irish Independent 2012, Dec 30)

[13] STEM denotes the collective disciplinary sphere of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. These subjects are popularly related to 'innovation' and 'enterprise' concepts.

[14] This quote is attributed to the EU Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science (Maire Geoghegan-Quinn) on the occasion of her speech at a Science Foundation of Ireland (SFI) board meeting on Feb 9, 2012. Ms. Quinn (who has helped develop a new 80 billion euro EU funding programme called *Horizon 2020*) was invited by the chairperson of the SFI (a significant funder of STEM disciplines in universities), Professor Pat Fottrell. Professor Fottrell is also chairperson of the strategic planning group associated with the lead and development of 'technology universities'.

Concomitantly, teachers and learners are given an assumed ('contractual') responsibility to co-operate and secure a successful learning 'product'. This pedagogical relation is thus shaped by 'innovation' messages circumscribed by couched 'interest' in such concepts as 'accountability', 'performativity' and 'success'. The 'internalisation of [the] externality' of these messages, as Bourdieu (1977, p. 72) might put it, leads to a type of (Foucauldian) 'self surveillance' whereby 'the student acts the good student, the teacher acts the good teacher, the school acts the good school' (Youdell 2006, p. 36). Wider media remains largely complicit in the enunciation of this message, even fuelling its open broadcast. This it does via, inter alia: insubstantial debate on the real purpose of education; the presentation of league tables; acritical commentary on connected elements of educational policy and practice; decontextualised 'celebrations' of parental, student[15] and school 'successes' and general disinterest in 'interested' educational perspectives. Thus, the power effects of the media, in loose connectivity with other aforementioned 'interests', largely inauthenticate the image and status of education.

Re-representing Education's Image and Status: In the 'Interest' of Pedagogical Innovation

This paper suggests that 'innovation' messages (such as those that relate to teaching and learning in *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* 2000) need to be seriously questioned. This is easier said than done. Part of their 'connectivity' is contradictory, much is tacit and hard to identify. Moreover, the greatest expression of their reception manifests itself in their wide cultural endorsement in society. Though 'interested' power groups can never fully determine education's image and status, this paper demonstrates how loosely connected forces convene to shape 'real' practice.[16] A range of individuals, perhaps unwittingly, reproduce (and sometimes realign) this practice.

Of course, I write this paper with a particular 'interest' in how education's image and status is cast. As a professional educator and critical social researcher, I am interested in questioning/challenging the representative scope of 'innovation' messages. This paper responds to a professed need to interrogate the *educational sensibility* of particular power 'interests' in education. The evidence presented indicates

[15] To illustrate, one student (Cillian Fahey) who achieved straight 'A' grades in his final state examination (The Leaving Certificate), made headlines when he sold his exam notes on eBay for 3,000 euro. He subsequently wrote a series of articles for the *Irish Times* (entitled 'Secrets of My Success') outlining to ('interested') readers how to achieve top grades in different subject disciplines. He also began to work for a team of entrepreneurs who provide 'comprehensive' notes for postprimary students via their website mocks.ie. On the 27 January 2012, Cillian Fahey appeared on *The Late Late* – a popular Irish TV chat show that airs to (a weekly population average of approximately) three-quarters of a million viewers.

[16] An inauthentic representation, or 'simulacrum' (Baudrillard 1994), still produces 'real' educational effects (Brancaleone and O'Brien 2011).

an over-representation of the education-economy relation that obviates against education being seen as a moral and social practice (e.g. Biesta 2012). Consequently, this paper's evidence indicates the need to establish a stronger intellectual and teacher-professional presence at the educational 'partnership' table. Intellectuals and teacher-professionals have a (critically informed) role to play in challenging consensual forms of partnership. Crucially, they are well placed to confront the crude, inauthentic, order of education's prevailing status and image.

Calls for an extensive public debate on the purpose of education, such as that proposed by Tim Rudd at the Department of Education in the University of Brighton, are now timely. In recognition of the state's 'interested' position, he is calling for an independent body to arbitrate diverse educational perspectives and disseminate balanced findings in the wider public arena. The role of government is designed to act upon these results. Such a worthy proposal transcends the educational sphere. As Ireland's President Dr. Michael D. Higgins reminds, there exists 'an intellectual crisis in society' (Flynn, the *Irish Times*, Jan 26, 2012c). Intellectuals are now challenged to 'a moral choice, to drift into, be part of, a consensus that accepts a failed paradigm of life and economy or to offer, or seek to recover, the possibility of alternative futures…' (Higgins, Feb 21, 2012). This brings great responsibility to bear on those that enunciate 'innovation' messages. *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000) undoubtedly exercises its power to represent education along these lines. But where education's image and status falls short, re-representation is required, not least in the 'interest' of pedagogical innovation.

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