

At the outset, I want to say that I believe teaching is the most important of all professions - the profession whose function is to facilitate the unique talents of each young person being recognised and nurtured; so that s/he is able to reach his/her potential while also contributing to the common good.

Here, I am reminded of two quotations.

'To me the sole hope of human salvation lies in teaching'.

George Bernard Shaw - playwright, Nobel laureate, Oscar winner, Fabian socialist and co-founder of the London School of Economics.

'In a completely rational society, the best of us would be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something else.'

- **Lee Iacocca** – US Businessman, former CEO of Chrysler and Ford

Yet many **teachers** are **dissatisfied**, many young students are dissatisfied, and many parents are dissatisfied.

Indeed, there is worldwide concern about the capacity of 21st century education to equip young people with the competences and dispositions for life and work.

There is also general acknowledgement of a serious disconnect between competences and dispositions of the jobless and the competences and dispositions required in the workplace.

And a growing realisation that many skills cannot be acquired within the classroom – that their acquisition must involve real workplace experience.

Yet, I **believe** that **schools** have **never** been **more caring** institutions and that the **standard** of teaching has **probably** never been **higher**.

The **problem**, as I see it, is that the **model** of schooling and **teaching** that may have **served** society well in the **industrial** age, has **outlived** its **usefulness** in what might be termed the **post-information** age.

Teaching is **no longer** about delivering a **static** curriculum to **compliant** students.

Many **students** have significant **emotional** and **behavioural** difficulties.

Furthermore, schools **face** other **enormous** challenges - in a **world** where **social, environmental, technological, economic** and political **TURBULENCE** threatens the **fulfilment** of long cherished expectations.

More than any **other** institution; the **post-primary** school is **tasked** with **cultivating** a **citizenry** capable of **responding** to these **challenges** – using the **outdated tools, structures** and processes.

We need to **change** from a **‘teaching-led’** model to a **‘learning-led’** model, with the **emphasis moving** from learners **being taught** what they need to **retain for life** - to **acquiring** the **skills** and **dispositions** to become **willing** and **able** lifelong learners.

With **information** only a **mouse click** away, the **function** of 21st century **education** is to provide students with the **capacity** to **go on learning** for the **remainder** of their lives - to **interact** continuously with **knowledge, technology, politics, economics** and social and **cultural** structures that are in a **permanent** state of flux.

21st century **schooling** is about learners **internalising** their **learning** and using what is **learned** to solve **new problems in new ways**, to **interpret** the world **around them** as it changes **before their eyes**, to inform **relationship** development, and **so on**.

The challenge is to **maximise** engagement between **teachers** and learners and between the learners and **what** they are **learning**.

And this **engagement** must take place in a **context** where **teachers** and **learners** appreciate that **what is being acquired** is the **capacity** to go on **learning** about the **things** they deem **relevant** to their lives (in the **family**, in the **community** and at **work**) - in a world where **change** is **ubiquitous** and **continuous**.

In the **teacher-led** model of teaching, teachers **do most of the work** in class, resulting in **teachers** feeling **jaded** and **frustrated**, as their **efforts** do not **appear** to be **appreciated**.

If **students** are to **make** the **most** of their **talents**, both from a **personal** and **societal** perspective, we must, **together (management and unions)** devise a **new paradigm** for schools and teaching that **bridges** the **gap** between **teacher and learner** and **subject and learner**, thus facilitating the **emergence** of a **collaborative** learning environment, where students **take responsibility** for their **own learning** and the **role** of the **teacher** is to **support** student learning **rather** than, as it were, to **force** learning on **unwilling** recipients.

If we **achieve** this kind of **transformation**, we can make **teaching** a hugely **rewarding** **profession** that is **highly regarded** across society.

Much **current negativity** towards teaching, particularly at **second-level**, stems from the fact that teachers have been **compelled** by **circumstances**, not of their **own making**, to fill a **role** that is no longer **fits with** the social **context** in which they **operate**.

We must **collaboratively reimagine** the role of the **teacher** - if we want to **ensure** the **attractiveness** of teaching and if we want to **ensure** that the **work** of teachers **contributes** effectively to human **prosperity**, cohesion and **fulfilment**.

In **reimagining** the **role** of the teacher, ICT can be the **key** to **transforming** teaching and **learning** and, as it were, **emancipating** both the **teachers** and **students** from what has **amounted** to a kind of **master-slave relationship** that has **soured teachers** and **students** for too long.

If education is to **deliver** critical **thinkers** and **lifelong self-directed** learners, teachers **must** be **empowered** to contribute towards the **achievement** of these outcomes.

And their **work** must be both **energising** and **professionally** rewarding.

In **reimagining** the **role** of the teacher, we must proceed on the **assumption** that the **future** will be one of **continuous change**, that the **competences** and **dispositions** of teachers will need to be **continuously updated**; and that the **teachers capacity** will be as much a **function** of continuous **professional development** as his/her **initial** teacher education.

This **reality** was clearly addressed by the **Irish Teaching Council's** 2011, Policy on the **Continuum of Teacher Education**.

This policy provides a **flexible framework** for the **reconceptualisation** of **teacher education** across the teaching **lifecycle** – from **initial** teacher education, through **induction** and **probation**, **early** and **continuing professional development** and, indeed, **late career support**.

The policy **explicitly rejects** the notion that a teacher, **once initially qualified**, is equipped to teach for the **whole of his/her career**.

Irish teachers **renew** their Teaching Council **registration annually**. And the Council sets the **requirements** for the **renewal** of registration.

Already, all newly qualified teachers (**NQTs**) in Ireland have to **complete** an **induction** programme into the teaching profession before obtaining **full teacher registration** status.

A **new model** of induction and probation, currently being piloted, **involves** a period of **post-qualification professional practice** where the **NQT** is **mentored** by **experienced** teachers in the school.

Furthermore, these **NQTs** are **probated** by a **small group of senior teachers** in the school.

Essentially, the **teaching profession** is now being **given a significant** role in **supporting** and **guiding student teachers** and **NQTs** during **their training and initial teaching experience**; and a **significant role** in deciding whether an **NQT** should be **granted full teacher registration** status.

Previously, the teaching profession was not involved in teacher education; it was a **matter** for the **teacher training colleges**.

In **implementing** the '**Continuum policy**', the **Council** is involved in a **consultation** process **regarding** the **development** of a **national framework** for **CPD** that recognises both **formal** and **informal** forms of **CPD engagement**.

This will, in the **foreseeable** future, result in **teacher re-registration** being made **contingent** on teachers **demonstrating** that they have **engaged in** particular kinds of professional development.

What **might** such a **CPD framework** and **requirement** for re-registration **look like**?

Well, from **August 2014**, all **fully registered** teachers in **Scotland** are **required** to participate in a **programme** of **professional review** and **development (PRD)** termed '**Professional Update**'.

This **means** that the **General Teaching Council (GTC)** of **Scotland** is requiring **teachers** to **meet** certain **CPD requirements** in **order** to **re-register** with the Council.

Professional Update was **developed** in consultation with all stakeholders, including unions, and **takes account** of the **experiences** of **comparable professions** (e.g. medicine, dentistry, accountancy, and **teaching professions** in other parts of the world) which have already introduced similar schemes.

The **key purposes** of **Professional Update** are:

- To **maintain** and **improve** the **quality** of **teachers** and **teaching** - in accordance with agreed **Professional Standards**.
- To **support, maintain** and **enhance** teachers' **professionalism** and the **reputation** of the **teaching profession** in Scotland.

The GTC Scotland has established the following **professional standards**:

- [Standards for Registration](#) – provisional and full registration
- [Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning](#)
- [Standards for leadership and Management](#)

The **Standards for Registration** provide a **gate-keeping function** for entry into teaching in Scotland with **those for full registration** constituting a **baseline professional standard** for **competence**.

The **Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning** provide a **reference framework** for **teachers** as they **consider** how **they might develop** their **professional knowledge** and **skills** through on-going self-evaluation and professional learning.

How does Professional Update Work?

- The **focus** is on '**professional learning**' - that is **activities** that **contribute** to a **teacher's personal professional development** – towards **ensuring** that their **professional knowledge** and **practice** is always **informed, up-to-date** and **stimulating**.
- The term '**professional learning**' is being **used** in place of '**CPD**' to **reflect** the **shift in focus towards teachers taking ownership** of **their own individual learning**, rather than seeing continuous professional development as **something** which is **done** to them, and **over which** they may **have little control**.
- Whole process is **positive** and **supportive** of the **individual teacher**, yet **challenges** the **teacher** to **identify practical steps** that s/he can take **towards improving practice** and student outcomes.
- **All** teachers must **maintain** a **Professional Learning Profile** document to **regularly record planned professional learning** activities, the **expected impact** of those **activities**, and **evidence** of their **actual impact** on practice.
- **Any activity** undertaken by teachers which **contributes to their professional learning** and development, **and** which **impacts positively on students' learning**, can be **recorded** on the professional learning profile. For example: **professional reading, action research** projects, **sharing practice** with colleagues, or **attending** a workshop or **conference**.
- At the **beginning** of each **school year**, each teacher **prepares** a **professional learning plan** for the year using a **process** of **self-evaluation** with **reference** to the **Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning**. This is **recorded** in the **Professional Learning**

Profile.

- **Over** the course of the **year**, the teacher **shares** and **reviews** the **plan** with **colleagues** and **line-manager**, as appropriate. Then **updates amendments** and **reflection** in Profile.
- **Throughout** year teacher **undertakes planned professional learning activities** - **records evidence** of their **impact** on **practice** in Profile and **shares** these learnings with **colleagues** and **line manager**, as appropriate. Again, the **reference point** for **reflection** and **discussion** is the **Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning**. The **whole idea** here is to **encourage professional discussion** in the **context** of **agreed professional standards** regarding what **constitutes** good practice.
- **Annually**, the teacher has a **review meeting** with his/her **line-manager**. This **involves** a **review** of the **professional learning** that the **teacher** has **undertaken** over the course of **the year** and the **way** in which this **learning has impacted** on **student**. The **meeting** also focuses on the **extent** to which the teacher's professional learning over the **course** of the **year** has **addressed** elements of the **Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning** that the teacher was **working** to address.

Besides, the **review meeting** involves a **discussion** of the teacher's professional **learning plans** for the **following year**. #

Indeed, the **teacher** must **agree** these and any **specific supports** that the **teacher may need** to **implement** these **plans** with **his/her line manager**. Such professional learning **plans** should **balance** the **needs** of the **teacher**, the needs of the **school**, and **national priorities**. All of this should be **recorded** in the **Profile** and **recorded** in a **Review Meeting Record Form** – **signed** by the **teacher** and **reviewer**.

- Every **5 years** each teacher is **required** to **confirm** his/her **engagement** in **Professional Update** to the Teaching Council. This needs to be **endorsed** by the **line-manager**.

Agreed **professional standards** are, in my opinion, the **key** to **personal professional** and **system** improvement; though I **acknowledge** that there are many who **sincerely** hold **contrary** views.

They **hold** that **teaching** is not **amenable** to being **analysed** in terms of its **skills** or **competences**.

Instead (if I understand them correctly) they **contend** that **teaching** is a **social practice** and that it is **not reasonable** to **conceptualise** teaching **exclusively** in terms of its **skills** and

ignore the **personal qualities, dispositions** and **values** of the teacher, the **purposes** of teaching; and the **capacity of the teacher** to **integrate** disparate skills, **knowledge** and **values** into a **coherent teaching** package that **enables students** to learn about **matters relevant** to their **lives** and **inspires** them to **integrate** what is **learned** into their **lives**.

I **agree** whole **heartedly** with this analysis.

I simply **don't accept** that teaching **standards** cannot **accommodate** the **broader** and more **holistic dimensions** of teaching.

For me, the **first step** towards **establishing** a new **paradigm** for teaching and school **leadership/management** is the **establishment** of agreed **standards** – similar to what has been **done** in **Scotland**.

Unless we explicitly **set out** what teaching **entails**, how **can** we make **judgements** about the **degree** to which we **succeed** or **fail**; how can we make **judgements** about **what** kind of **professional development** is required, and **so on**?

In the **absence** of such **standards** also, **schools** and **teachers** leave themselves **open** to unfair **criticism** of their **performance** – from the **media, parents**, and even **students** themselves.

If there is **no clarity** about what **constitutes** the **real business** of **schools** and **teaching**, schools and teachers will **inevitably** be **judged** on the basis of the examination **results**, the **proportions** of students **transferring** to **3rd** level, and **so on**.

If, **as I believe**, schools and **teachers** are primarily about enabling young people to **recognise** and **make** the **most** of their **talents**, both from a **personal** and **societal** perspective, then **performance** in examinations or **transfer rates** to **3rd**-level are **entirely inappropriate** criteria for **assessing** school or teacher **performance**.

In Ireland, **annually**, the **press** publish **league tables** of **Ireland's schools** – based **exclusively** on the **proportions** of their **students transferring** to **3rd**-level.

This **results** in the work of many **outstanding** schools and **teachers** being **undervalued** and the **work** of **schools** that **suffocate** their student's **individual talents** in pursuit of high **transfer rates** to **3rd** level being **overvalued**.

This serves students **and** teachers badly. It **stifles** teacher **professionalism** by **compelling** them to **confine** their work to **preparing** for examinations – without **regard** for **whether** the **students: internalise** what is learned, have the **capacity** to **apply** what is learned in their

own lives, have a **acquired** a love **for learning** and the **capacity** to be **lifelong learners**, have their **unique individual** aptitudes **recognised** and **nourished**, have their **social and emotional needs** met, and **so on**.

I believe this **syndrome** could be more **effectively tackled** if we had a **set** of **explicit** teaching standards.

Before concluding, I would like to **turn briefly** to the matter of **school management and leadership** – a matter that I also see **central to establishing** a new **paradigm** for teaching.

Clearly, **some countries** do **better** than **others** in terms of **management** and **leadership** but, as I talk to **colleagues** around **Europe**, I gain the **impression** that many have **serious concerns** about the **way we** lead and **manage** our schools.

In **Ireland**, we have what can be **described** as a **crisis** in school **management**.

I just recently **surveyed** school **principals** in Ireland and the **findings** are **alarming**.

- 67% feel that while they see their work as both important and rewarding, the inadequacy of the middle management system results in constant distraction from their core functions.
- **60%** of **principals** believe the current **middle** management system in schools **does not facilitate** :
 - ✓ The **development** of **future** school leaders.
 - ✓ The **professional development** of teachers
 - ✓ **Curriculum** development
 - ✓ The **leading** of **teaching** and **learning**

And I **could go on**.

Why is this so?

I **believe** in education **generally**, the **importance** of **management** is under **appreciated**.

Management may be **critical** to the **success** of other **organisations** but education is **different**.

Teaching is such a **complex practice** that it is **not amenable** to management. **Teachers** are **independent** professionals and **not amenable** in any way to **others intervening** in their work.

Based on **25 years'** experience leading schools, I **believe** that, **unless a school** establishes a **cohesive** and **efficient** management **structures** its **capacity** to **set** and **achieve** organisational **goals** depends on a **confluence** of chance **developments**.

Besides, it is **generally acknowledged** that the **notion** of the **omnipotent**, heroic leader is **redundant** in today's **organic and complex** organisations. **Dispersed leadership** and **management** are today deemed **critical** to **organisations** both **defining** and **achieving** their **macro** and **micro** goals.

In many **respects**, the **management** structures in **education** substantially **ignore** decades of **development** and **research** in **organisational theory** and **management** science.

If we want to **improve** student **outcomes** and the **professional satisfaction** of **teachers**, in my opinion, we must **put in place** appropriate **management** structures and **processes** in **all** our **schools**.

Recently I had an **opportunity** to look at the **management** of **schools** in **NSW** (where I worked for many years) and there **performance** standards and performance **management** are **central** to the **work** of schools.

I **fully** realise, given the way **inspectors** and others **harshly** treated **teachers** in the **past**, that there is an **understandable** aversion in **teaching**, even within **management**, to the whole **idea** of **performance** management.

Teachers see **themselves** as **highly-qualified** professionals and **fear** the **imposition** of '**control systems**' that would **limit** their **capacity** for **independent professional** practice **tailored** to meet the individual **needs** of learners.

However, in the **complex** organic 21st century **school**, where the **emphasis** is not only on the **delivery** of a **permanently** evolving **curriculum** but also on the **holistic welfare** and **development** of a student **group** whose **needs** are **changing** by the day, the **need** for a **contemporary** management **system** is (in my opinion) **manifest** – not a **system** that **focuses**

on **'commanding and controlling'** but a **system** that **focuses** on a **decentralisation** of **managerial** decisions, **change** management, **capacity building**, mentoring, **empowerment**, **professional discussion**, team **work** and **the interdependence** of all staff, the **school** as a **learning organisation** and the **commitment and capacity** of all staff to **updating continuously** their **knowledge**, skills and **dispositions**; and **performance management** for **all** staff, those who **teach** and those who **manage**.

In the **second decade** of the **third millennium**, effective management **not only** enables the **school** to **set** and **achieve** its **goals**; it **can be** a **powerful force** for **empowering teachers** and **improving** their sense of professional satisfaction at a time when the **morale** of teachers everywhere is being seriously **undermined**.