



The Irish Teaching Diaspora – good or bad for the Nation?

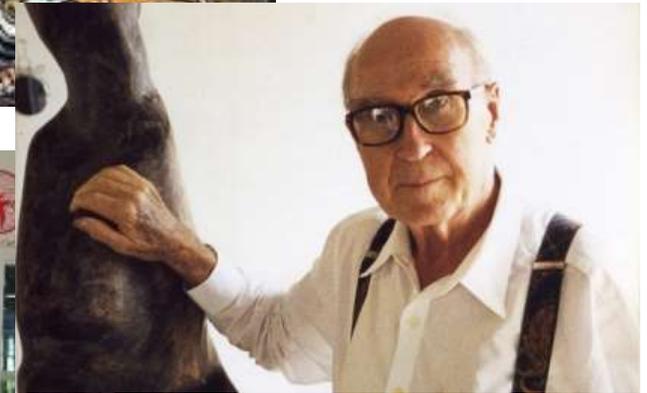
Drew Transatlantic Connections Conference
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The influence of teachers

Teachers affect eternity; they can never tell where their influence stops.

Henry Adams (adapted), quoted in *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom



The tradition of teaching overseas

- Missionaries & teaching orders
- Teaching in the UK: Miss Beamish, Kent, 1962
- The 1980s: exiles from the North
- The growth of International Education
- A career overseas, how Ireland became home, and a home to our start-up

Irish influence: the story of Brother Joe McNally



Push and pull since 2008

- Pull factors: globalisation and changes in education; the UK
- Well trained, English speaking, with initiative & flexible
- Jumeira Bacculaureate School, (JBS) founded 2010 with 90 students; 860 students by 2014



Irish staff at JBS, September 2012

- 10 / 23 primary staff, including Music & Special Needs
- 6 in their mid 20s, unable to get a full time job in Ireland
- 8 in their first or second year teaching overseas

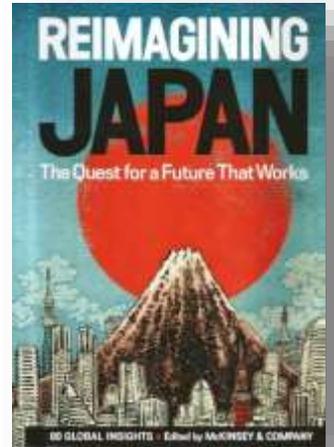


Good or bad for the nation?

- Good jobs, new skills, wider horizons
- Home remittance & investment
- The longer overseas, the more removed from the Irish education scene
- How many are working overseas?
- The problem of Post Qualification Employment
- Loss of professional contact, even a feeling of disillusionment as they are absorbed into other systems

Missed opportunities?

- The need to for young people to travel, learn and contribute for any modern economy
- The opposite problem to Ireland: the 2011 McKinsey report on Japan
- La Salle School of Arts, Singapore leans towards its British partner, Goldsmith's College, University of London, not an Irish institution



The opportunity for two way traffic

- Irish teachers overseas have a lot more to offer than remittances
- There is an abiding desire to keep connected while developing careers overseas
- Irish teachers here have a lot to offer their friends and colleagues overseas: the evidence of the Irish Teaching Council's Féilte conference
- Educational Start Ups & innovation in the North West: the School Door, Qubizm & Consilium Education. All are relevant to the international market

Return ?

- Those who have made the move overseas do not view the prospect of a career at home with optimism, with good reason
- The problem of finding permanent jobs remains for many Irish teachers: Ireland is now one of the most important recruiting centres for international schools and other national systems
- The current situation gives the impression of an unrecorded, unsupervised exodus, with few professional backward looks
- Once overseas, their options for Post-Grad distance qualification tend to be British, Australian, American or international

... or dialogue?

- No coordinated effort being made to reach out to what may be the largest single group of professional Irish citizens living and working overseas
- They should be engaged with when overseas, and be actively encouraged to contribute to an Irish educational dialogue
- If they can't return, their influence overseas should be actively promoted: the Brother Joe story shows what can be achieved, and in the future, the home country should benefit as well

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