

THE EMPLOYMENT OF NEWLY-TRAINED TEACHERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, 1978-1982

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Cohorts of newly trained teachers from the Northern Ireland training institutions over five consecutive years were followed up from six to eight months after completing their teacher training. The cohorts are distinguished by training institution, type of course, sex and for those employed in teaching, the employing sector and the permanent or temporary nature of the post obtained. Three trends which emerged from the analyses were the decreasing employment in teaching of the newly trained, an increasing tendency to enter teaching by obtaining a temporary post, and a decreasing rate of participation in the follow up surveys.

In the early 1970s the number of students admitted annually to teacher training courses in Northern Ireland had approached 1,400 and the number awarded scholarships to train in Great Britain had approached 700. By 1977, the former number had been reduced to 920 and the latter to 70 (6, Tables 35 and 39). By 1980, the former had been further reduced to 620 and awards for courses in Great Britain had been discontinued for all but a very few courses, as for teachers of the deaf, which were not available in Northern Ireland.

The main reason for this curtailment in teacher training was the birth rate, which, from 1964 to 1977, had declined by 26 per cent (8). Among other reasons given at the time were the state of the economy, the failure of the nursery school programme to develop as anticipated, and a reduction in wastage rates in the teaching profession, particularly among women teachers.

The wider implications of falling rolls for teacher training and the

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schools have been examined elsewhere (11) The present paper is concerned with the extent to which those teachers who completed their training in the five year period from 1978 to 1982 were employed in teaching some six to eight months after their training had ended. The evidence on which the paper is based derives from a series of annual surveys, the first four of which were conducted by the Northern Ireland Council for Educational Research at the request of the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee for the Supply and Training of Teachers and the last of which was conducted at the request of the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) All five surveys were carried out with the full co-operation and assistance of the Northern Ireland teacher training institutions

NLWLY TRAINLD TLACHLRS

Between 1978 and 1982, 4,690 newly trained teachers emerged from the seven Northern Ireland training institutions. Table 1 shows a decline of some 20% in annual output over the period, a decline which is gradual except for 1980, when a coincidental output of three year and four year trained teachers from the three colleges of education took place as a consequence of having moved from a four year to a three year course for the general BEd degree. Almost one in three of the total output of teachers over the period was from Stranmillis College of Education. The smallest output was from the North West College of Technology, which has provided a one year course of training for teachers of commercial subjects, but which, in 1982, had an additional output of two year trained teachers

TABLL 1

TEACHLR OUTPUT BY TRAINING INSTITUTION, 1978-82

Training Institution	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1978-82
Stranmillis College of Education	310	338	385	226	221	1480
St Joseph's College of Education	117	119	120	92	96	544
St Mary's College of Education	152	137	176	105	105	675
New University of Ulster	159	164	123	148	126	720
Queen's University of Belfast	155	96	113	105	106	575
Ulster Polytechnic	150	96	115	115	119	595
North West College	15	20	19	15	32	101
Totals	1058	970	1051	806	805	4690

The teachers emerged from five types of course (Table 2). Over the period, the gradual run-down of the Certificate of Education course in the colleges of education and in the New University is obvious. The BEd courses (provided in the Belfast colleges of education and the Ulster Polytechnic) contributed almost one half of the total number of teachers and this number remained stable over the five-year period except for 1980, when it was swollen by an overlap of three- and four-year general course graduates. The next largest number emerged from Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses (provided in Queen's University and the colleges of education), followed by BA/BSc graduates (from the New University of Ulster, where teacher training, as with the BEd degree elsewhere, is concurrent with the academic course). Specialist Diploma courses include the course for teachers of commercial subjects at the North-West College together with the Ulster Polytechnic courses in art, craft, home economics, music, and physical education. Teachers who underwent re-training are those who attended the 1978-79 one-year shortage area courses in commercial subjects at St Mary's, in heavy crafts at St Joseph's, and in mathematics at Stranmillis. The courses were run only in 1978-79 and accounted for a small proportion (3.7%) of the teacher output for that year.

TABLE 2
TEACHER OUTPUT BY TYPE OF COURSE, 1978-82

Course Type	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1978-82
Specialist Diploma	146	90	67	54	68	425
CertEd	172	134	67	39	37	449
BEd	400	406	626	409	402	2243
BA/BSc	132	152	119	145	125	673
PGCE	208	152	172	159	173	864
Retraining	—	36	—	—	—	36
Totals	1058	970	1051	806	805	4690

In 1978, some 61% of the total qualified teaching force in full time service in Northern Ireland schools were female (6, Table 48). In the primary and nursery sectors the percentage was 76, whereas in the secondary and grammar schools the proportion of female to male teachers was more evenly balanced at 49 and 51% respectively.

Over the five year period and within each of the five years, the proportion of females to males among the newly trained was of the order of two to one (Table 3). Females predominated among those whose training had a nursery, primary, or special education emphasis and only among the small number whose training had a dual emphasis were males in the majority. Just over half of all the newly trained had prepared for secondary teaching and here again females were in the majority by a factor of five to three.

TABLE 3

TEACHING OUTPUT BY SIX AND TRAINING EMPHASIS, 1978-82

Training Emphasis	1978		1979		1980		1981		1982		1978-82	
	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I	M	I
Nursery	—	3	—	4	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	16
Primary	40	276	37	258	31	261	18	212	17	144	143	1151
Secondary	234	364	203	303	202	286	146	327	151	292	936	1572
Primary/secondary	9	3	10	16	13	28	92	—	96	105	220	152
Special education	1	25	—	—	—	11	1	10	—	—	2	46
Unknown	49	54	77	62	88	122	—	—	—	—	214	238
Totals	333	725	327	643	334	717	257	549	264	541	1515	3175

EMPLOYMENT IN TEACHING

From 1978 onwards, each newly trained teacher was sent a postal questionnaire in October of the year when he or she completed teacher training. The questionnaires were issued and retrieved by the appropriate training institutions and then made available to the Research Council as anonymous returns. Any teacher who recorded that he or she was still seeking a teaching post was sent a further short questionnaire in the following January and these completed questionnaires were similarly retrieved and made available to the Council. This procedure meant that the experience of the newly trained in seeking and obtaining employment in teaching was monitored over a period of some six to eight months from their completion of training.

Of those teachers who were trained from 1978 to 1982, 67% reported that they had found employment within the stipulated period. However, not only did those finding posts decline from 77% in 1978 to 58% in 1982 but the rate of success varied considerably across the training courses (Table 4). The Specialist Diploma teachers had the most favourable employment record, followed by the BEd and PGCE teachers. The Certificate of Education and BA/BSc groups, on the other hand, both experienced a considerable downward employment trend.

Although the number of pupils enrolled in Northern Ireland primary schools declined from 1975 onwards, the number of primary teachers continued to increase until 1978, when it began to contract (7). This is reflected in Table 5, which shows that from 1978 onwards recruitment of the newly trained to the primary sector fell away considerably. A fall in the total numbers of pupils and teachers in the secondary schools from 1980 onwards is also reflected in the table, whereas the grammar schools, in which enrolments continued to expand, did not show a falling off in their recruitment of the newly trained. Also, the proportion of the newly trained which entered teaching in the further education sector in 1982 shows a sudden increase over that in previous years.

A further feature of the employment in teaching of the newly trained is that, as employment in teaching decreased from 1978 onwards, the ratio of teachers finding temporary posts to those finding permanent posts increased from one to three in 1978 to almost one to one in 1982 (Table 6). If this trend should continue, then entry to teaching by way of temporary employment must become the accepted pattern for many young teachers.

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE EMPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS BY COURSE TYPE

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1978-82
Specialist diploma	81	77	70	87	81	79
CertEd	72	77	55	33	46	65
BEd	82	77	67	66	60	70
BA/BSc	70	66	41	35	31	49
PGCE	72	80	66	56	65	68
Retraining	—	67	—	—	—	67
All Courses	77	75	63	58	58	67

TABLE 5

SECTOR EMPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS
AS A PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL OUTPUT

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1978-82
Nursery	0	1	1	0	0	1
Primary	23	20	18	15	12	18
Secondary	35	35	30	27	25	31
Grammar	10	12	9	11	13	11
Further education	3	2	2	3	7	3
Special education	1	0	1	1	1	1
Not recorded	4	5	2	2	1	3
All sectors	77	75	63	58	58	67

TABLE 6

PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS OF TEACHERS
AS PERCENTAGES OF ANNUAL OUTPUT

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1978-82
Permanent	58	54	39	34	32	44
Temporary	19	21	24	24	26	23
All posts	77	75	63	58	58	67

UNEMPLOYMENT IN TEACHING

The figures we have considered (Tables 4, 5, and 6) are for those teachers who obtained teaching posts within six to eight months of their having completed training. The other side of the picture concerns the teacher in three who, from 1978 until 1982, had not found employment in teaching within the given period or who failed to co-operate in the enquiry (Table 7). Eleven percent reported that they were still looking for a post in teaching, 2% that they had given up looking for a post, 5% that they had not sought a post, and 15% failed to reply.

TABLE 7
PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN
FOR THOSE NOT KNOWN TO BE TEACHING

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1978-82
Still seeking posts	5	8	13	15	15	11
No longer seeking	2	2	2	3	2	2
Never sought	5	4	5	6	4	5
No reply	11	11	17	18	21	15
Total	23	25	37	42	42	33

Two trends are discernible in the data about teachers not known to be teaching. The first is the three fold increase, from 5 to 15%, in the proportion of teachers still looking for posts half way through the school year — a trend which is in keeping with that of decreasing employment of the newly trained in teaching throughout the five year period. The second is the increase, from 11 to 21%, in the proportion of teachers who failed to co-operate in the survey. If we assume that those who are in teaching are more likely to co-operate in an enquiry of this kind, then the gradual increase in the proportion of those who failed to do so may be seen as a further reflection of the increasing difficulty young teachers face in finding work in teaching.

CONCLUSION

This paper is concerned with the employment in teaching of newly

trained teachers who emerged from the seven Northern Ireland training institutions over the five year period, 1978-82. That period corresponds to what may be described as the first stage in the contraction of teacher training. From 1983 onwards, the numbers of the newly trained will reflect a second stage of contraction which took place from 1980 onwards, when the annual intakes to training were again reduced and at the same time made to accord more closely with identified teacher shortage areas within school sectors and subject areas (12).

In the five year period reviewed in the paper, the pattern is one of decreasing numbers of newly trained teachers emerging from the training institutions, a progressive decrease in employment in teaching among the newly trained and, for those employed in teaching, a markedly progressive shift from permanent to temporary teaching in the initial year of employment.

Decreasing employment opportunities in the period under review were most marked in the primary school sector. This is in keeping with the impact of a declining birth rate on that sector which will continue into the middle 1980s. While there was also evidence of decreasing opportunities in the secondary schools, the fact that this was not apparent in the grammar schools suggests the influence of factors which are internal to the post primary school system. In terms of falling rolls, the worst years for post primary schools will occur in the latter half of the 1980s and persist into the early 1990s.

This dissimilarity in the impact of falling rolls on the primary and post primary school sectors and its implications for teacher training have been examined in a Departmental Working Paper (10), which has sought to assess the likely scale of teacher training in the 1980s and 1990s and the implications of this for the teacher training system. The Paper has pointed out that since the greater demand for newly qualified teachers in the next ten years will come from the primary schools, the training of teachers for the primary sector will require expansion, while at the same time there will be a sharp decline in the number of newly qualified teachers entering secondary schools. The effect of these changing demands on the structure of teacher training and the role of the training institutions has been discussed in a subsequent Departmental statement (9), which has made it clear that the total intakes to teacher training courses and the detailed allocation of places to the training institutions will continue to be reviewed annually and adjusted in the light of the needs of the schools.

For the newly qualified, the question that remains is whether or not they will find employment in their chosen profession. For that reason alone it is important that the training institutions should continue to monitor their employment prospects from year to year. Equally, at a time when the schools must continue to live with the ebb and flow of pupil numbers, it is important that the trends and features which this paper has sought to identify should be subject to continuing scrutiny.

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