

Kenneally, Anthony, 1997, *A Critical Evaluation of the Contribution of the Irish National Teachers Organisation to policy on Equality in Education, 1980-96.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation deals with the question of equality in education and the Irish National Teachers Organisation's contribution to policy in this area. An overview of the historical evolution of the term 'equality' in education in both the international and Irish contexts is presented in Chapter One.

The decades of the 60's and 70's saw the popularisation of the term 'equality of educational opportunity'. It became a political slogan. Initiatives were taken in Ireland to improve access to education for all. However equality which focuses exclusively on access to education was rejected as inadequate by the I.N.T.O. and others.

In Chapter Two the literature on equality in education is analysed with a view to coming to a definition of the term. With so many definitions possible the idea of the 'equality continuum' is presented ranging from historically conservative definitions on one end to radical/Marxist definitions on the other. The literature produced by the I.N.T.O. on matters of equality and educational disadvantage are analysed as contributions to policy formation.

Chapter Three uses case studies to evaluate the impact of the organisation on general education policy, while Chapter Four focuses on the I.N.T.O. campaigns in the area of equality in education in the period chosen, 1980 to 1996.

In Chapter Five the overall conclusions are drawn together. The response to the White Paper on Education is examined and a suggested approach to future policy on equality in education is put forward.