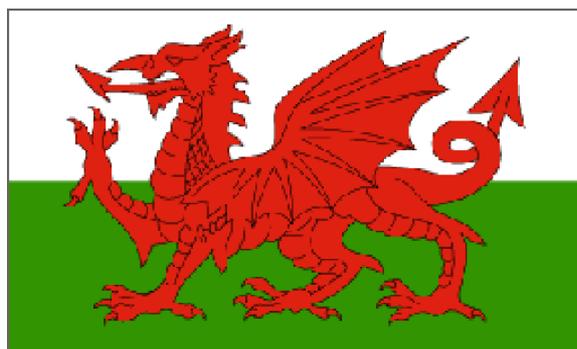


**NAGY MELINDA**



**AN OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATION IN THE UK –  
OBTAINING RELEVANT INFORMATION FOR THE  
ROMANIAN EDUCATION**



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Instruction ends in the school-room, but education ends only with life.  
Frederick W. Robertson

## INTRODUCTION

I chose to write about the British education as being a model of stability, certainty and clarity, which should also be taken up by the Romanian educational system.

In chapter 1, I will present the history of education, both in England and Romania, pointing out differences and similarities. In chapter 2, will be highlighted the present position of the British education in Europe. In chapter 3, I will discuss the school organization and examinations in England and Wales compared to Romanian school system and the required examinations, having subchapters for each stage: pre-school, primary education, secondary education, further education (after 16) and higher education. I will continue to present in chapters 4 and 5 the educational systems in Scotland and Northern Ireland, pointing out the differences from the English and Romanian systems. In chapter 6, I will refer to the differences between state and public schools in the UK and Romania. In the last chapter I will describe the supply of teachers in the countries discussed throughout the book.

As bibliography I will use books about British culture and civilization, which have a chapter included about British education, as well as electronic references, for the history of education, latest changes appeared in education, statements made by ministers of education.

Through my presentation of the British educational system I will constantly make reference to the Romanian educational system in terms of differences, similarities and possible improvements. By this book I want to present an alternative for the actual Romanian school system, by highlighting the positive aspects of the British education. I do not mean that we should import the British education as it is, but that we should make a clear system of ourselves and try to maintain its stability and then we may have a reliable system, too with better performance in Europe.

As Gordon and Lawton (2004: 1) highlight in the *Dictionary of British Education*, the educational system in the UK is not only different to that in many other countries, but there are also differences in the four countries of the UK. Education is compulsory in all the four countries, but the compulsory age is different: in England, Wales and Scotland is

5-16, whereas in Northern Ireland is 4-16. the duration of compulsory education is the same in New Zealand and in the United States (11 years), while in Germany, Netherlands and Belgium is 13 years and in Romania is only 10 years, according to the statistics published on [http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/edu\\_dur\\_of\\_com\\_edu-education-duration-of-compulsory](http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/edu_dur_of_com_edu-education-duration-of-compulsory) (accessed 27 May 2009)

British education has a tradition and stability, with clear and precise organization of schools and examinations. Despite a long series of reforms in education, including curriculum changes, student assessment, teacher training, student performance is still low by EU and by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) standards, according to the *Education Policy Note – Romania*, available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRROMANIA/Resources/EducationPolicyNote.pdf> (accessed 16 May 2009)

Outcome indicators of educational achievement are close to international averages, but lower than in the EU, OECD, and even neighboring countries in East and Central Europe:

Romania placed 34<sup>th</sup> out of 42 countries in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Furthermore, Romania performs worse than the average for all European and Central Asian countries and significantly below the EU countries.

Table1. PISA Student Assessment Results for Literacy for 15-year-olds for OECD and Five Accession Countries, 2000

OECD average	500
Czech Republic	492
Hungary	480
Poland	478
Latvia	458
Bulgaria	430
<b>Romania</b>	<b>428</b>

Source: OECD and UNESCO Institute of Statistics 2003 (World Bank 2007: 2)

One of the reasons for Romania's poor performance relative to its neighbors and new partners in the EU might be because of the constant changes occurring in the educational system. Romanian education needs stability. In recent years there have been many changes in student assessment and examination. Until 1999 admission in high schools was locally organized in each institute. In 1999, the National Exam was introduced for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. It had a high national characteristic, it was held in the same time by every student, had a unique exam subject and assessment criteria, as described on the site of Ministry of Education, available at: <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/2630> (accessed 16 May 2009). In 2007, mid-term exams were introduced for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, which were held in each semester during these two years. The school subjects were the same as for the previous national exam: Romanian Language and Literature, Mother Tongue, other than Romanian, for minorities, Mathematics and Geography or History, <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/c747> (accessed 16 May 2009). In 2009 another change has been announced by Mrs. Ecaterina Andronescu, Minister of Education, appeared on the online version of the *Evenimentul Zilei* newspaper on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2009, in which she declared that since 2010, there will be admission examinations in high schools.

Education is the movement from darkness to light.

Allan Bloom

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **School History in the UK and Romania**

#### *1.1. Education before 1800*

A brief reference to the past is necessary to understand the present status of British education, which has a long history and went through a lot of changes until it reached its final position.

Oakland (2002: 191), states that the first schools established were church schools. During the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, when England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland were gradually converted to Christianity, the church's position in society enabled it to create the first schools. These church schools were generally developed to prepare boys for priesthood. Later, the church established more schools, but most of the boys received basic instructions in reading, writing and arithmetic.

Beside church schools, there were also schools established by rich people or monarchs. These were called high, grammar and public schools. But "grammar" did not mean studying structures of language but it was "a preparation for reading, especially reading aloud, and was taken to involve comprehension and commentary, so that was inseparable", according to Derek Gillard, available at: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/chapter01.html> (accessed 16 May 2009). King Henry VI was one of the monarchs who established schools and he founded Eton College at Windsor and King's College, Cambridge in 1440. Unfortunately, these were destined only for the sons of the rich and many people remained illiterate for all their life.

J.E. Hales (2006: 11) states that "the real starting-point of the British system of education is not the establishment of schools but the rise of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge".

Oxford University is the oldest in the English-speaking world and its first mention dates back to 1168, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, rioting between the townspeople and students made them to remove at Cambridge, which was followed by the founding of a large

number of colleges at Cambridge and as well as in Oxford. These universities were highly appreciated and in 1530, Henry VIII forced the University to accept his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. More information can be found on the official site of Oxford University: <http://www.ox.ac.uk> (accessed 16 May, 2009)

Derek Gillard shows in *Education of England*, that the establishment of universities and colleges enabled a kind of liberation from the authority of the church, diminished its control in education and new specialized studies were introduced as law, medicine and theology and the teachers were no longer appointed but they were licensed by universities to teach.

As it can be noticed so far, that during the Middle Ages the emphasis on education was on theology and spiritual pursuits. According to the Encyclopedia by Farlex, available at: <http://encyclopedia.farlex.com> (accessed 16 May 2009), the aim of Renaissance education was to produce the “complete human being” or “universal man”, practiced in the humanities, mathematics and science (including their application in wars), the arts, the crafts and athletics and sports. It was also intended to increase the fields of study and geographical knowledge, free thought, and the study and imitation of Greek and Latin literature and art. There was little formal education for girls.

After the Reformation and Renaissance, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries there were major developments in education. According to Joan Simons (1979: 384-5), Comenius, Czech teacher, scientist, educator and writer, promoter of the universal education, was invited by the House of Commons to promote learning in England in 1641.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the curriculum was beginning to take on its modern form, with the addition of mathematics, geography, modern languages and crucially, the physical sciences, as stated by Derek Gillard on his website about education in England, <http://www.educationengland.org.uk> (accessed 16 May 2009).

According to the information from *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, an important role in establishing modern education had the Industrial Revolution at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, because industry required much more than limited reading skills acquired through moral catechism and mathematics, physics and astronomy made notable advances, the foundations of chemistry were laid.

At the beginning, education in Romania was also mainly religious. Greek and Latin were dominant. At first, Cyrillic alphabet was used and this only changed in 1833.

Due to this change the enhancement of the standard of education could have been easily noticed.

In Romania rulers also established schools and the situation was different depending on the principality. In 1692, Constantin Brâncoveanu founded the first academy at the Saint Sava monastery in Walachia, where education was available only in Greek, until the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when French and Italian were also used for teaching.

In Moldavia academic education was present as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In 1562 the so-called Schola Latina (a Latin Academic College) was founded in Cotnari, near Iași, a school which marked the beginning of the organized humanistic academic institutions in this region of Romania.

In Transylvania, education was also mainly religious. Due to the Austrian dominance, education was in German or in Latin. The situation in this region was more fortunate because the transition to modern education occurred earlier and faster than in the other provinces. Secondary schools begin to appear in big cities as Cluj and Timișoara.

### *1.2. Education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century*

Derek Gillard distinguished new types of schools needed for the new century to fulfill the requirements of the period. One type of school was the industrial school, where the poor people received manual instructions to work in factories. Another type of school was the Sunday school, where also the poor, no matter adult or children were taught to read the Bible.

In the 1833 Parliament Act was decided to make national funds available for school building (<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/10110-EducationActs.html> accessed 16 May 2009). Due to this, more and more children attended school, but still the average length of attendance was 2 years in 1851.

In the next decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century several Acts were introduced to promote mass education and the foundation of public schools. The first occurred in 1868, the Public School Act which promoted a curriculum consisting of classics, mathematics, a modern language, two natural sciences, history, geography, drawing and music. In 1869

the Endowed Schools Act, introduced a national system of secondary education. In 1870, the Forster Act, introduced compulsory education for children aged 5-13, these Acts are available online at: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/10110-EducationActs.html>, (accessed 16 May 2009)

The situation of the Romanian education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was different, because it was not a state yet and education differed in the principalities.

Transylvania was under Austro-Hungarian dominance and the language of teaching was German and Hungarian in cities, and Romanian and Hungarian in smaller towns. Literacy was higher in this region than in Walachia and Moldavia, and well-known writers of the period studied here. For higher education the language was Latin or German.

In Walachia and Moldavia education was available only in cities and towns, although rich families afforded education abroad and they either studied in Vienna or Paris. The Greek and the Turkish influence disappeared, making place for the French trends. With Alexandru Ioan Cuza's educational reforms since 1860s, the first four years of education became compulsory and he founded new high schools and the first two universities at Iași and Bucharest.

### *1.3. Education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century*

The most important piece of legislation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the Education Act of 1944, also known as the Butler Act. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/10110-EducationActs.html>, (accessed 16 May 2009) It replaced all previous legislation. The main aim was to give every student the chance to develop their abilities and talent in free and state system of education. Compulsory education was raised to the age of 15 and to 16 by 1973. A national test was introduced at the end of the primary school, called 11+. Depending on the results of this tests the students were able to go to one of the three types of secondary schools (tripartite system):

1. grammar secondary schools (for educational elite)
2. technical school (for the artistic)
3. secondary modern (for everyone else)

This selective system has been slowly changing into comprehensive schools beginning with the Labour Government during 1964-1970. These comprehensive schools did not select their students based on their academic achievement or aptitude. Those, who were for this system argued, that is immoral to reject or select students based on their academic ability, and by introducing these type of schools, more children had access to higher education after 16. Those, who were against the comprehensive schools, said that the very good students had no longer the chance to study in a grammar school. As Harvey and Jones (2002: 62) show, nowadays 90% of secondary schools in Britain are comprehensive, taking children of all abilities from their local area.

Politicians still have proposals for the future. For instance, one that appeared on 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2007 on BBC News, set out in the Queen's speech:

...in England by 2013, all pupils will have to stay in education or training until the end of the school year in which they 17. By 2015, this leaving age will be raised to the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. <http://news.bbc.co.uk> (accessed 16 May 2009)

As a conclusion we can say that the beginnings of the education were quite similar in England and Romania, there were church schools and schools established by rich individuals or monarchs, but the English education proceeded faster towards a modern system helped by factors which required these changes:

1. The establishment of universities and colleges, which diminished the control of the church in education
2. William Caxton's first English printing press, set up in 1476, through which books became cheaper and encouraged literacy of the 15<sup>th</sup> century
3. The Reformation, which introduced new languages for teaching
4. The Renaissance with its literature
5. The monarchs' concern for education
6. The Industrial Revolution, which needed more knowledge than simply reading skills

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were more educational reforms in England than in Romania. The aims of these educational reforms were:

1. To build new schools
2. To promote mass education

3. To create examination commissions
4. To make education compulsory up to the age of 12 by 1899
5. To establish Public schools and national secondary schools

The road to a modern education system was paved in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But Romania showed good signs, too, by introducing four years of compulsory education and by the foundation of the two universities.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century and still nowadays, Romania's education is at a crossroad, as appeared in the Romanian Education Policy. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTROMANIA/Resources/EducationPolicyNote.pdf> (accessed 16 May 2009)

Important reforms were initiated after the fall of communism (1989), including curriculum changes, student assessment, teacher training, finance and governance, but all these must continue to improve education outcomes. However, Romania's integration into the European Union will place new demands on the country's human capital, creating new challenges for this sector.

Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.

Malcolm Forbes

## CHAPTER 2

### The Present Position of the British Education in Europe

In January 2009, European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) published a report about the performance and innovation of the member countries of the EU, available at: [www.proinno-europe.eu/EIS2008/website/docs/EIS\\_2008\\_Final\\_report.pdf](http://www.proinno-europe.eu/EIS2008/website/docs/EIS_2008_Final_report.pdf), (accessed 17 May 2009), in which Sweden, Finland, Germany, Denmark and the UK are the Innovation leaders, with innovation performance well above that of the EU average and all other countries. Romania situates itself on the opposite pole, together with other countries as Malta, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Bulgaria with innovation performance well below the EU average.

I will present the results of Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), in which England performed well above TIMSS average:

Table 2: Average Mathematics scores of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students, by country, 2007

Countries	Mathematics scores
TIMSS scale average	500
Russian Federation	544
<b>England</b>	<b>541</b>
Netherlands	535
Lithuania	530
Germany	525
Denmark	523

Source: TIMSS results 2007, [www.nces.ed.gov/timss](http://www.nces.ed.gov/timss), (accessed 17 May 2009)

Table 3: Average Mathematics scores of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, by country, 2007

Countries	Mathematics scores
TIMSS scale average	500
Hungary	517
<b>England</b>	<b>513</b>
Czech Republic	504
Slovenia	501
Bulgaria	464
<b>Romania</b>	<b>461</b>

Source: TIMSS results 2007, [www.nces.ed.gov/timss](http://www.nces.ed.gov/timss), (accessed 17 May 2009)

Table 4: Average science scores of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, by country, 2007

Countries	Science scores
TIMSS scale average	500
<b>England</b>	<b>542</b>
Hungary	539
Czech Republic	539
Slovenia	538
Bulgaria	470
<b>Romania</b>	<b>462</b>

Source: TIMSS results 2007, [www.nces.ed.gov/timss](http://www.nces.ed.gov/timss), (accessed 17 May 2009)

British universities are the best across Europe and they are also in top position worldwide. I will present a 2008 ranking of universities to highlight the value of British universities.

Table 5: The QS World University Ranking 2008:

2008 rank	University	Country
1	Harvard University	United States of America
2	Yale University	United States of America
<b>3</b>	<b>University of Cambridge</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>University of Oxford</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>
5	California Institute of Technology	United States of America
<b>6</b>	<b>Imperial College London</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>UCL University of London</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>

Source: QS Quacquarelli Symond [www.topuniversities.com](http://www.topuniversities.com), (accessed 17 May 2009)

Looking at these statistics, we can conclude that British education has a top position in European education, having results above the average level of EU. Furthermore, the universities of the UK score better than all the other universities in Europe and also occupying high positions worldwide among the well-known universities of Harvard and Yale from the United states of America.

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.

Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **School Organization and Examinations in Wales and England Compared to Romania**

There are many differences between the English and Romanian education in terms of structure, organization, curriculum and examinations. Compulsory education starts at the age of 5 in England and Wales, but in Romania at 7. In England there are four national examinations at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16, whereas in Romania these are organized at the age of 14, at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade as a selection method for entering a higher form of education, and at the age of 18, when students graduate high school.

In England, education is in the responsibility of the Department of Education and Skills and the Secretary of State is a member of the Cabinet, as Gordon and Lawton (2004: 1) informed us. In Wales, since the devolution, the National Assembly of Wales has established a National Council for Education and Training, which works together with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. In Romania, education is in responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, [www.edu.ro](http://www.edu.ro), (accessed 19 May 2009).

##### ***3.1. The Status of Welsh Language in Schools***

Education delivered through the medium of Welsh language is known as “Welsh medium education”. Since 1988, differences appeared also in curriculum, when the Welsh language and nation were accepted as terms for distinctiveness (Gordon and Lawton 2004: 4). In 1988, the Education Reform Act gave Welsh the status of a core subject of the National Curriculum in Wales in predominantly Welsh speaking and bilingual schools and the status of a foundation subject in the rest of the schools in Wales.

In 1999, it became a compulsory subject at Key Stage 4. So now all pupils in mainstream schools in Wales study Welsh (either as first or second language) for 12 years, from the ages of 5 to 16. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales>, (accessed 19 May 2009)

Most Welsh medium secondary schools teach the majority subjects through the medium of Welsh, or bilingually, using both English and Welsh. At the moment, provision of Welsh-medium further education is small and does not meet demand, except in the Welsh-speaking areas of the North West. But the new emphasis on bilingualism in workplaces is increasing students' awareness of the value of bilingual education, and thus increasing both demand and supply. Vocational courses through the medium of Welsh are slowly becoming available in response to student and employer demand.

### ***3.2. Pre-school (age 3-5)***

Children may attend pre-primary schools, until the age of compulsory education, which are held in nursery schools. The importance of pre-school education in the UK is stated in the Education Encyclopedia:

With many families having both parents working, or a single parent working, the government increasingly has gotten involved in attempts to improve the quantity and quality of pre-compulsory schools. Many pre-compulsory schools are run with no charge in England and Wales. Attendance is almost universal in England, with 94% of all students attending in 1995, according to government data. <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1619/United-Kingdom-PREPRIMARY-PRIMARY-EDUCATION.html>, (accessed 19 May 2009)

The increasing emphasis on pre-school education means that children's skills will be developed and assessed earlier and earlier. Pre-school education is necessary for children to make the transition to primary school easier and to get accustomed to a schedule. It is important for children to find themselves in a community since early ages. Under the guidance and supervision of the teachers, a child can discover and develop their skills and talents from an early age, which might not have been noticed at home by his/her parents.

Pre-primary education in Romania covers the ages 3-7. The state provides preschool and child-care institutions, including nurseries for children under three and

kindergartens for children aged 3-6/7. Kindergarten attendance is optional, except the last year, which is compulsory and it is called the preparatory year.

### ***3.3. Primary Education (age 5-11)***

Primary education both in England and Wales is for children aged 5-11. Primary school is divided in two Key Stages: Key Stage 1 (KS1) for 5 to 7 year-olds and Key Stage 2 (KS2) for 7 to 11 year-olds.

During Primary education in England, which lasts 6 years the following subjects must be covered: English, Mathematics, Science, Design and Technology, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), History, Geography, Art and Design, Music and Physical Education, according to <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/agencies/primaryschool/>, (accessed 19 May 2009).

At the end of each Key Stage, there are national tests to provide information for teachers and parents, how well the student is doing in relation to the target levels for their age.

KS1, for 7-year-olds has two elements, teacher assessment and written tests in writing, reading (including handwriting), spelling and Mathematics, marked in schools by teachers. (Harvey & Jones 2002: 63)

KS2 tests for 11-year-olds also contain the two elements of teacher assessment and written tests in English (reading, writing, handwriting and spelling), Mathematics (including mental arithmetic) and Science. The Science tests are being taken for the last time in 2009. These exams are marked externally and the school's results are published nationally. The results of these tests can be used as a selection for attending academically challenging grammar schools, "...but 90% of secondary schools in Britain are now comprehensive, taking children of all abilities from their local area." (Harvey & Jones 2002: 62)

Primary schools in Wales must, by law, teach the basic curriculum and the National Curriculum. The basic curriculum consists of Religious Education (RE), and Personal and Social Education (PSE). The National Curriculum is the same as in

England, but the teaching of Welsh language is also compulsory. [www.bbc.co.uk/wales](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales), (accessed 19 May 2009)

The news announcing that Wales has renounced to national tests for 7, 11 and 14-year-olds, and that they are in favour of teacher assessment, appeared on Wednesday, 14 July 2004, in The Guardian:

The gap between the testing regime in schools in England and the lighter approach in the rest of the UK widened yesterday after tests for 11 and 14-year-olds were scrapped in Wales. While pupils in England continue to take national tests in English, maths and science at seven, 11 and 14, pupils in Wales will sit a new skills test at 10, backed up by teacher assessments. The changes, announced by Wales's education minister, Jane Davidson, and welcomed by unions, are broadly in line with recommendations made by a team led by Richard Daugherty of Aberystwyth University, which reported in May. Coming after Wales scrapped tests for seven-year-olds and school league tables in 2001, they mean the difference between the two testing regimes is fundamental. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2004/jul/14/sats.wales>, (accessed 19 May 2009)

Due to this decision, students at the age of 7 take a statutory teacher assessment in English and Welsh, Mathematics and Science. At the age of 10, they have cross-curricular “skill tests” in numeracy, literacy and problem-solving mandatory from 2008. All results are private. The KS2 national exam for 11-year-old has also been replaced by statutory teacher assessment and school’s results are available locally.

In Romania primary school is compulsory from the age of 7, there are no entrance requirements. It is completely free of charge. Students are assessed continually by their class teacher and there is neither final examination, nor certification at the end of the primary school. The first four are by taught by a single teacher (învățător) for most of the subjects. Additional teachers are assigned only for a few specialized subjects: Foreign Languages, Introduction to Computers, Physical Education and Religious Education. Regarding examinations during primary school, Romania’s system is more similar to Wales’, because in both countries teacher assessment is preferred to national tests.

### ***3.4. Secondary Education (age 11-16)***

Secondary education in England and Wales covers the ages 11-16. This is further divided in two: Key Stage 3 (KS3) 11-14 year-olds, and Key Stage 4 (KS4) 14-16 year-olds.

Most of the secondary schools in England are comprehensive, which means that they take children irrespective of their abilities and knowledge, but there are also 164 grammar schools in England, which take pupils according to their results in the exams taken. <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk>, (accessed 19 May 2009)

As Gordon and Lawton (2004: 4) show, another major difference between the English and Welsh educational systems is that all secondary schools in Wales are comprehensive and there is no selection at the age of 11 and they replaced the national tests at the end of KS2 with teacher assessment and their results are available locally.

England is also planning to abandon the national tests at the age of 14. "National tests for 14-year-old school pupils in England are to be scrapped". Children's Secretary, Ed Balls said that these tests are no more needed, because the tests at the age of 11 and those at the age of 16 are sufficient to show the performance of secondary schools. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/education/7669254.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/7669254.stm), (accessed 19 May 2009). But even though the government no longer requires these tests at the age of 14, hundreds of thousands of schools decided to have them. Schools are continuing with them because "management are terrified they're not going to have data on pupils" - and believe parents want to see the results. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/education/7991073.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/7991073.stm), (accessed 19 May 2009).

In Wales, the Key Stage 3 national tests have also been replaced by teacher assessment in English (Welsh), Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Design and Technology, Information Technology, Modern Foreign Languages, Art, Music and Physical Education.

The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) system was launched in 1986 and since then many millions of secondary students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have had to select which GCSE subjects they would like to study and eventually be examined in. Though GCSEs are not actually mandatory, the vast majority of students find that this qualification is the perfect block to higher education and a further career. It is highly valued by schools, colleges and employers. Some subjects are

compulsory like Mathematics, English (Welsh), Science, and a foreign language. GCSEs are graded from A\* to G and U (unclassified). <http://www.gcse.com/>, (accessed 19 May 2009)

In Romania, students who have completed their studies in primary education are moved up to secondary education without any entrance requirements, but many schools have special classes such as intensive English classes or Information Technology classes, providing one or two more courses in these subjects. Selection for such classes is done based on local tests.

Since 2007, national mid-term tests were introduced for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students (aged 13-14). These are taken in each semester during the 2 years of courses, usually in December and May. The tests include the following subjects: Romanian, Mathematics, The History or Geography of Romania. Students who have studied in their mother tongue, other than Romanian, have to sit an extra exam in their language. The results of these are used as entrance to high school. <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/2630>, (accessed 19 May 2009)

As a conclusion I will present a table showing the years of education and examinations in England, Wales and Romania:

Table 6: School organization and examinations:

Pre-school

Country	Status of education	Ages	Examinations
England	optional	3-5	No exams
Wales	optional	3-5	No exams
Romania	Optional (except last year of the kindergarten, which is compulsory)	3-7	No exams

### Primary education

Country	Status of education	Ages	Examinations
England	compulsory	5-11	Age 5: teacher assessment Age 7: KS1 National Tests Age 11: KS2 National Tests
Wales	compulsory	5-11	Age 5: teacher assessment Age 7: teacher assessment Age 10: Cross-curricular “skills tests” Age 11: teacher assessment
Continuous assessment by the teacher Romania	compulsory	7-10/11	of the class

### Secondary Education:

Country	Status of education	Ages	Examinations
England	compulsory	11-16	Age 14: teacher assessment since May 2009 Age 16: GCSE exams
Wales	compulsory	11-16	Age 14: teacher assessment Age 16: GCSE

			exams
Romania	compulsory	10/11- 14	National mid-term tests during 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grades, in each semester

### ***3.5. Education after Sixteen***

Education after 16 is not compulsory either in England or Wales, or in Romania. In England or Wales, students at the age of 16 have taken their GCSE in five, ten or even fifteen subjects. They can continue with further education or leave education entirely.

Students, who decided to go on with further education or professional training, usually take A level examinations in 2 or 3 subjects. This needs two more years of study after GCSE.

In England and Wales, students after the age of 16 can study either in the sixth form of a secondary school, or if they do not have this sixth form, they can go to a separate sixth form college. Other students may choose vocational subjects such as catering, tourism, secretarial or building skills, after graduation having National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) (Harvey and Jones 2002: 66)

A sixth form college is an educational institution in England and Wales, where students aged 16 to 19 typically study for advanced school-level qualifications, such as A-levels. There are currently over 90 sixth form colleges in operation in England and Wales. Students at a sixth form college typically study for two years. Many students sit AS exams at the end of the first year, and A-level exams at the end of the second.

The number of A-level exams taken by students can vary. Three is usually the minimum number of A-levels required for university entrance. There is no limit on the number of A-levels one can study. The qualification offered by education institutions is called the Advanced Level General Certificate of Education (GCE) or simply A-levels.

Besides GCE, another form of examination was introduced in Wales, the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification, also known as WBQ or Welsh BAC. It runs alongside with A-levels with the aim to broaden post-16 education. A form of baccalaureate will be on

offer to all schools in Wales from September 2007. The Welsh Bac, which has already been piloted, features modules in subjects including modern languages, ICT and mathematics plus credits for community work and work experience. It will be offered at intermediate and advanced levels with an advanced being equivalent to an A grade at A-level. "We are leading the way to a new style of learning, and I believe one that will be the envy, if it's not already the envy, of learning cultures throughout the UK," said Jane Davidson, Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in Wales on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

<http://www.iqmagazine.co.uk/iqeducation/633245048303691250/633262307811250000>,  
(accessed 19 May 2009)

Romanian compulsory education also ends at the age of 16. Students at the end of the year 10 have to decide whether they want to continue or not. Most of students stay in education and continue with years 11 and 12. High school education covers the 15-18/19 and ends with the National Baccalaureate Exam, which comprises 2 or 3 oral examinations and 4 or 5 written examinations. It is a highly centralized, national exam. In 2008, 77.24% of the students passed this exam, according to <http://www.bacaureat2008.org/stiri.php?pag=70>, (accessed 19 May 2009).

Major decisions are not made at the age of 16, when the compulsory education ends, but at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> year of studies, when students in Romania graduate secondary school. They have to decide what they want to study and what type of education will they attend.

Students with good results at school generally choose a high school, according to their preference and take the National Baccalaureate Exam at the end of their studies. Usually high school studies last 4 years.

Students may also choose a career and technical education, which prepares learners for jobs that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific occupation. These studies last 2 or 3 years. After graduation they may go in the work field or try to take the National Baccalaureate Exam, by further attending 2 or 3 years of a high school, ay daily or evening classes.

### **3.6. Higher Education**

Approximately 1.8 million students are currently enrolled in the UK higher education system; about one third of young people go on to higher education at age 18 (with almost 50% of students in Scotland), and an increasing number of "mature" students are studying either full-time or part-time for university degrees. Higher education is a current policy priority for the government, with a target set to attract 50% of 18- to 30-year-olds to higher education by 2010. <http://chronicle.com/academicDestination/United-Kingdom/66/facts/>, (accessed 19 May 2009)

*Undergraduate courses* normally take 3 years of full-time education, although professional courses take longer such as medicine, architecture, foreign languages, law and teaching. They lead to a Bachelor's degree in Arts or Science. Postgraduate degrees, such as master's degree is earned in one year, research master's degree in two years, while doctoral degree is earned in three years. (Harvey & Jones 2002: 66)

A bachelor's degree is a course of academic study leading to a qualification such as:

1. Bachelor of Arts (BA)
2. Bachelor of Science (BSC)
3. Bachelor of Medicine (MB).

*Postgraduate qualifications* include master's degree and doctorates. A master's degree is a qualification of academic study. It can be research based, a taught course, or a mixture of both, and will take at least 12 months of full-time study to complete. It may also include the submission of a dissertation at the end of the course. The types of master's degree include:

1. MA (Master of Arts)
2. MSC (Master of Science)
3. MBA (Master of Business Administration)
4. LLM (Master of Law)
5. MED (Master of Education)
6. MPHIL (Master of Philosophy)
7. MRES (Master of Research)

A doctorate qualification gives the opportunity to undertake an original piece of research. It will usually take at least three years of full-time study to complete. Throughout the course, it is expected to work independently, with guidance from a supervisor. The supervisor advises the student whether his/her research is on track and about deadlines he/she has to meet. More information about qualifications in UK: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/QualificationsExplained/index.htm>, (accessed 19 May 2009)

There are 109 universities in the UK and 169 higher education institutions. Institutions have to meet certain criteria to be awarded the title “university”. These are assessed by the Quality Assurance Agency ([www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)) on behalf of Privy Council. The Privy Council is responsible, under the Further and Higher Education Act, for approving the use of the word “university” in the title of a higher education institution.

Table 7: Number of institutions (August 2008)

Country	Universities	Higher Education Institutions
England	90	133
Scotland	14	20
Wales	3	12
Northern Ireland	2	4

Source: [www.universities.ac.uk](http://www.universities.ac.uk), (accessed 19 May 2009)

Most UK students will need 2 or more A-levels to be admitted to one of the universities or to a higher education institution. Most applicants applying to Cambridge are studying 3 or 4 A-level subjects. ([www.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cam.ac.uk))

Both Oakland (2002: 204) and O’ Driscoll (1995: 139) showed that universities in the UK can be classified into four groups:

1. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge founded in the medieval period; older universities were founded also in Scotland, such as St. Andrews (1411), Glasgow (1450), Aberdeen (1494) and Edinburgh (1583)
2. The “redbrick” or civic universities, such as Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool, which were created between 1850 and 1930. They were built of local material often brick, in contrast to the stone of older universities.
3. Campus universities, such as East Anglia, Sussex and Warwick, which purpose-built institutions located outside the countryside but close to towns. These were created mostly in the early 1960s.
4. The “new” universities were created in 1992 when polytechnics and some other colleges gained university status.

In Romania there are three types of higher education institutions:

1. Universities, which include a large number of departments and programs that confer academic diplomas and scientific titles
2. Academies that prepare their graduates in a certain specific field: economics and business administration, arts, music etc.
3. Polytechnic universities that train students for technical fields of study and institutes, which confer vocational diplomas and qualifications.

In Romania, there are 56 state universities and 27 private universities. The qualifications are the same as in England: bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and doctorate’s degree. Entrance is made either through an entrance contest consisting of two examinations, to which the average from the baccalaureate can be added with a variable weight, or based upon results from pre-university education. The methodology of admission is set by each university.

Comparing the Welsh and English education systems, we can conclude that the English is more traditional, shows more stability, they maintained the national examinations at the ages of 7, 11 and 16 and still having the exam at the age of 14, even if the government does not require it any longer, whereas the Welsh education system went through major changes during the years, trying to find their own identity, separate from the English, replacing the national exams with teacher assessment, introducing a new pre-university qualification, the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. The Welsh

education system is open to changes and tries to make it individual, while the English system resists to these changes, whether there is a government decision or not.

The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.

Aristotle

## CHAPTER 4

### The School System in Scotland

#### *4.1. School History in Scotland*

Education in Scotland is unique and different from the education systems of other parts of the United Kingdom. In this chapter I will present the differences between Scottish education and education in other parts of the UK. I will also make references to the similarities and differences between Romanian and Scottish education.

During the medieval period Scottish education followed the typical European model of education, as we could find in England, Wales and Romania (see 1.1). There were church schools and grammar schools, early examples including the High School of Glasgow in 1124 and the High School of Dundee in 1239. The first universities established were the University of St. Andrews in 1413, followed by Glasgow in 1451 and King's College, Aberdeen in 1495.

Education became compulsory for all children aged 5 and 13 with Education (Scotland) Act 1872. The leaving age was raised to 14 in 1901. and the Scottish Education Department introduced a Leaving Certificate Examination in 1888 to set national standards for secondary education. The Education (Scotland) Act 1918 gave Gaelic a statutory place as a "subject". The Leaving Certificate instituted in 1888 continued in secondary education until it was replaced by the Scottish Certificate of Education Ordinary Grade ("O-Grade") and Higher Grade ("Higher") qualifications in 1962.

#### *4.2. Compulsory Education in Scotland*

Compulsory education comprises the ages 5-16, as in England and Wales. Education starts with **pre-school**, which is optional and takes children who passed their third birthday until they are 5 years old. In Scotland pre-school education is very important.

The Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum highlighted the importance of pre-school education in 1999:

The vital contribution of pre-school education lies in developing and broadening the range of children's learning experiences, to leave them confident, eager and enthusiastic learners who are looking forward to school. [http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears/images/CFsection1\\_tcm4-122181.pdf](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears/images/CFsection1_tcm4-122181.pdf), accessed (19 May 2009)

The present Law on Education in Romania addresses issues related to the educational needs of children between 3 and 6 years, who are enrolled in pre-schools. Pre-school is optional in England, Wales and Romania, too.

**Primary education** comprises children aged 5-12, it lasts one year more than in England or Wales. Primary schools contain both boys and girls. Each class has normally one teacher. There is no statutory curriculum in Scotland but the Scottish Executive offers guidance in the form of the 5-14 programs. ([www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk))

In Romania primary school lasts four years. It is completely free of charge. Students are assessed continuously by their class teacher and their neither final examination, nor certification at the end of the primary school. The first four are by taught by a single teacher (învățător) for most of the subjects. Additional teachers are assigned only for a few specialized subjects: Foreign Languages, Introduction to Computers, Physical Education and Religious Education.

At the age of 12 students in Scotland enter a **secondary school**. There is no restriction to secondary education. Secondary education in Scotland extends from age 12 to 18 but it is not compulsory after the age of 16. It is divided into lower and upper secondary education.

**Lower secondary education** covers 4 years, which is further divided in two stages:

1. The first 2 years (S1 and S2) are concerned with general education based on the 5-14 programs.
2. The second two years (S3 and S4) from about age 14 and onward, education may become more specialized and vocational.

**Upper secondary education** (age 16 to 18, S5 and S6) is not compulsory and it covers the final two years of secondary school and prepares students for vocational training, employment or higher education.

Between the age of 14 and 16, students in Scotland are preparing for Standard Grade courses, which are equivalent to GCSE in England and Wales. These examinations fall in the SQA responsibility, which

“...aims to be recognized as a national and international leader in the delivery of qualifications, our statutory obligations and the quality of our services. SQA is the national accreditation and awarding body in Scotland. We work in partnership with industry, universities, colleges and schools to provide high quality, flexible and relevant qualifications and assessments - embedding industry standards where appropriate. We are sponsored by the Scottish Government’s Learning Directorate.”  
<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5656.html>, (accessed 19 May 2009)

Standard Grade courses are available at three levels: general, credit and foundation. The Standard Grade replaced the old O-Grade qualification and was phased in from the late 1980s until the early 1990s. The Scottish Government states that all students must take the following subjects: English, Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences, Physical Education, Religious, Moral and Philosophical Education, Education for Personal and Social Development.

Plans for a new curriculum in Scotland’s schools were announced by Fiona Hyslop, cabinet secretary for education and lifelong learning, who said that Standard Grade exams will be replaced with a new qualification, to be announced in June, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/scotland/7363739.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/7363739.stm), (accessed 19 May 2009). These changes were announced in 2008 when Ms. Fiona Hyslop said: “There is clear evidence that Scotland has a good education system. However, it can be better. Indeed, it needs to be better.

The changes would see separate awards for literacy and numeracy skills, where the exams would draw on evidence from pupils’ work across the curriculum and partly be assessed through external examination.

In Romania students who have completed their studies in primary education are moved up to secondary education without any entrance requirements, but many schools

have special classes (such as intensive English classes or Informatics classes, providing one or two more optional courses in these subjects). Selection for such classes is done based on local tests.

### ***4.3. Further and Higher Education in Scotland***

At the age of 16 students have to decide whether they continue with upper secondary education or leave school. The national school-leaving certificate exam is called Higher and it is also required for university entrance. Higher examinations, in common with all National Qualification levels, have 5 grades: A, B, C, D and No Award.

The Advanced Higher is an optional qualification. It was introduced in 2001. It is normally taken by students aged around 17-18 after they have completed Highers, which in turn are the main university entrance qualification. In the Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) tariff of valuing qualifications for university entrance, Advanced Highers are usually considered on the same footing as A-levels in England, which are offered to students of the same age elsewhere in the United Kingdom. According to the online UCAS ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)) tariff of January 2006, Advanced Highers are worth the same number of points as A-levels: A – 120, B – 100, C – 80, D – 72. An Advanced Higher qualification might be equivalent to an A-level in terms of UCAS points, syllabus content and examination difficulty.

After the success of the Advanced Highers, in which the brightest students of Scotland showed their abilities in languages and science, Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, revealed that an award will be introduced for upper secondary school graduates, the Scottish Baccalaureate. The first Baccalaureates will be awarded in August 2010. Ms Hyslop said:

"The Baccalaureate awards aim to encourage more of our young people to study more science and language courses in the later stages of secondary school, raise the status of S6 and assist our young people in making the transition from school to higher and further education and employment."

Professor John Coggins, Vice Principal of Life Science & Medicine, Glasgow University, said:

"A very attractive feature of the Science Baccalaureate is the Interdisciplinary Project which will challenge able pupils to apply a range of subject and problem-solving skills in an integrated manner and so prepare them admirably both for Higher Education and for their future careers."

Derek Elder, Director for Scotland, Institution of Civil Engineers, said:

"Engineering is applied science to solve problems. We see benefits in the project element of the Baccalaureate. It will allow students to apply skills from one area to solve problems in another. Good problem-solvers make good engineers."

Claire Bleasdale, Chairperson of the Scottish Association of Language Teachers (SALT), said:

"On behalf of SALT, I welcome the Scottish Science and Language Baccalaureates, and with them the recognition of Languages and Science as cornerstones of Scottish education and of Scotland's future economic growth. The new award, and the requirement of at least two languages at Higher and Advanced Higher, will help to promote the principles of the Curriculum for Excellence programme, to raise the profile of languages in secondary schools and to give more young people the opportunity to study a wider range of languages at all levels".

Vivienne Brown, Skills Development Scotland, said:

"Employers seek these high-order skills. Working in an Interdisciplinary way provides the learning vehicle to develop transferability skills and optimise mobility in future career opportunities as the labour market will increasingly demand."

Jim Scott, Head Teacher, Perth High School, said:

"The Scottish Baccalaureate completes the process of developing the four capacities in our young people."

All these statements appeared on <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/11/26115701>, (accessed 19 May 2009)

There are 20 higher education institutions in Scotland: 14 universities and 6 other institutions (see Table 7 in 3.6.). Entry usually depends on a group of passes in national examinations set by the SQA. The higher education system is the same as in other countries in the UK and offer similar courses for their students. Degrees awarded in Scotland are recognized throughout the UK and across the world. Higher education institutions provide sub-degree courses, first degree courses and courses for the education and training of teachers, courses for post-graduate studies as Masters and Doctorate levels and courses at higher level in preparation for a qualification from a professional body. Higher education institutions are also expected to carry out research.

#### ***4.4. Gaelic Medium Education***

Gaelic Medium Education is defined as a form of education in Scotland that sees pupils taught primarily via the medium of Scottish Gaelic with English being taught as the secondary language. In 2007 there were 692.215 pupils in all sectors of Scotland's schools. Of these pupils only 2.601 were included in Gaelic medium education and 6.145 were learning it as a subject.

Table 8: Pupils receiving Gaelic medium education and those learning Gaelic, 2007

<b>Gaelic medium education</b>	Number of pupils
Only through Gaelic	739
All curriculum through Gaelic or bilingual	1.283
Some curriculum through Gaelic and some through English	579

<b>Gaelic as subject:</b>	Number of students
Taught through Gaelic	1.096
Taught as learner	5.049

Source: A National Statistics Publication for Scotland “Pupils in Scotland” 2007 – 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2008

The Scottish Qualifications Authority offers two streams of Gaelic examination across all levels of the syllabus: Gaelic for learners (equivalent to the modern languages syllabus) and Gaelic for native speakers (equivalent to the English syllabus).

The study of their national language has not reached the status of Welsh in Wales parents whether they place their children in a Gaelic medium education or not, whereas in Wales the study of Welsh, either as first or second language is compulsory from the age of 5 to 16 (see 3.1.).

By going through the educational system in Scotland, it can be noticed that there are similarities, but also a few differences from the educational systems in England or Wales. In all three countries compulsory education is from the age of 5 to 16, but in Scotland primary education comprises the ages 5-12, whereas in England and Wales is from 5 to 11 and in Romania from 7 to 10/11.

Secondary education in Scotland is divided into lower secondary school and upper secondary school up to the age of 18, while in England and Wales secondary education ends at age of 16 and continues with sixth form colleges.

The examination at the age of 16 is called Standard Grade in Scotland and in England and Wales is GCSE. The AS and A-levels exams in England and Wales are equivalent to Highers and Advanced Highers in Scotland.

Both Wales and Scotland introduced an optional qualification, called Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification and Scottish Baccalaureate, which is similar to the Romanian Baccalaureate, an exam taken after graduating high school.

The higher education system is similar in all three countries of the UK and in Romania, having the same courses and degrees awarded.

If a man neglects education, he walks lame to the end of his life.

Plato

## CHAPTER 5

### The School System in Northern Ireland

The school organization in Northern Ireland is more similar to that in England and Wales than it is to Scotland. Compulsory education comprises ages 4-16, and it is divided into Key Stages.

Primary education comprises:

- Foundation Stage (aged 4-6)
- Key Stage 1 (aged 6-8)
- Key Stage 2 (aged 8-11)

Secondary education is also divided into two sections:

- Key Stage 3 (aged 11-14)
- Key Stage 4 (aged 14-16)

#### *5.1. Types of Schools in Northern Ireland*

Since devolution the responsibility for education is in care of two departments, each with its own Minister: the Department for Education, concerned with schools and the Department for Employment and Learning, concerned with further and higher education. (Gordon & Lawton 2004: 6)

Until 1989 Northern Ireland had only two basic categories of school: **controlled schools** (nursery, primary, special, secondary and grammar schools, managed by the Education and Library Boards for the area) and **voluntary schools** (owned and managed by trustees, normally the local churches).

There are two types of voluntary schools: **voluntary maintained** (including voluntary primary and secondary schools) and **voluntary grammar** (which are permitted to select pupils on the basis of ability). The majority of voluntary maintained schools are controlled by the Catholic Church.

The 1989 Order introduced a new category of schools, **the integrated school**, which was to provide a religiously mixed environment capable of attracting reasonable numbers of both Catholic and Protestant pupils. Although integrated education is expanding, Northern Ireland has a highly-segregated education system, with 95% of pupils attending a maintained (Catholic) school or a controlled school (mostly Protestant).

**Irish-medium schools** are peculiar to Northern Ireland. In these schools children are taught through Irish in more than half the compulsory subject (excluding English). The total number of schools is given in Table 9.

Table 9: The number of schools in Northern Ireland by school type (2005):

School type	Number of school types
hospital	3
independent	17
integrated	17
preparatory	18
special	45
grammar	70
nursery	99
secondary	162
primary	894
Total	1308

Source: [http://www.rsc.org/images/NIeducationssystem\\_tcm18-55030.pdf](http://www.rsc.org/images/NIeducationssystem_tcm18-55030.pdf), (accessed 20 May 2009)

## *5.2. Primary Education in Northern Ireland*

Primary education in Northern Ireland includes three stages, comprising children 4 to 11:

-Foundation Stage (aged 4-6)

-Key Stage 1 (aged 6-8)

-Key Stage 2 (aged 8-11)

In the Northern Ireland Curriculum, available at [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk), (accessed 20 May 2009) are described the aims of the **Foundation Stage**:

The Foundation Stage aims to build on these learning experiences by providing children with an appropriate learning programme to develop their dispositions to learn. It also aims to provide them with the skills and competencies they will need to succeed in school and future life. [www.nicurriculum.org.uk/foundation\\_stage](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/foundation_stage), (accessed 20 May 2009)

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage includes: Language and Literacy, Mathematics and Numeracy, Arts, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, Physical Development and Movement, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.

**Key Stage 1** is defined in The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 paragraph 3 as:

The period beginning at the same time as the next school year after the end of the foundation stage and ending at the same time as the school year in which the majority of pupils in his class complete two school years in that key stage.

All pupils from this Key Stage1 must follow a programme of education in the six areas of learning in the curriculum: Language and Literacy, Mathematics and Numeracy, Arts, The World around Us, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, Physical Education, set out in the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

**Key Stage 2** is the final phase of primary education in Northern Ireland and comprises children aged 8-11. The curriculum is the same as for the Key Stage 1. At the age of 11 students had the opportunity to choose a grammar school and be selected by their academic knowledge and take the 11 “Transfer Procedure” Test (Gordon & Lawton 2004: 6). Caitriona Ruane, Northern Ireland’s Minister of Education said, according to

the BBC News website (Tuesday, 4 December 2007), that the test, commonly known as the 11+, would come to an end in 2008. Under Ms Ruane's proposals, pupils will take major decisions about their education at the age of 14. She said her proposals were ambitious, but that they would end an "outdated and unequal education system" which labelled 11-year-olds as "failures". "After 2010, if a school has too many applications, pupils will be selected on the grounds of where they live and whether they have family members already at the school." "By moving the point of transition to 14, and by introducing more flexibility and agility into the structures, we will make it possible for the transformed education system to facilitate the deserved and diverse needs of children." [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/7126557.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/7126557.stm), (accessed 20 May 2009)

### *5.3. Secondary Education in Northern Ireland*

Secondary education is also divided in two sections:

-Key Stage 3 (aged 11-14)

-Key Stage 4 (aged 14-16)

At the end of **Key Stage 3**, when students are in their 10<sup>th</sup> year of compulsory education, at 14 years, have to take formal tests in English, Irish (in Irish-speaking schools), Mathematics and Science. They are marked externally by the CCEA, the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment.

At the end of **Key Stage 4**, students being in year 12 of their education, at 16 years, they take General Certificate of Secondary Education Exams (GCSE), similar to those in England and Wales (see 3.4.). Exams are in subjects that the students have been studying for two years, usually including English, Mathematics, Science, a modern language, History, Geography, Business Studies, Home Economics, Economics, Politics or an appropriate modular provision and religious education.

#### ***5.4. Further and Higher Education in Northern Ireland***

Further education and lifelong learning are a very important part of many people's lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to the Northern Ireland Career Service ([www.careersserviceni.com](http://www.careersserviceni.com)) there are many post-compulsory qualification options for students at the age of 16.

**A-levels** give students the possibility to remain in school or college after the age of compulsory schooling and to continue their education for another for another two years. A-levels are considered academic, with the exception of a few such a Business Studies that have a more vocational theme..

**VCE qualifications** prepare them for both the world of work and progression to higher education. **NVQ** are related to real work and test how competent you are in the actual tasks involved in a job. There are NVQs for almost every industry and employment sector. **Essential Skills Qualifications** are nationally accredited qualifications that are available throughout Northern Ireland and are a key part of all post 16 further education and professional and technical learning provision.

On 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007, Northern Ireland's 16 further education colleges merged into six new super colleges. The new six colleges according to the Department for Employing and Learning ([www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)) are:

1. Belfast Metropolitan College
2. Northern Regional College
3. North West Regional College
4. Southern Regional College
5. South Eastern Regional College
6. South West College

The higher education sector includes Queen's University Belfast, the University of Ulster and the Open University, which is a UK distance learning centre. According to Harvey and Jones (2002: 67) "the Open University was started in 1972 to cater for adults who did not have these formal qualifications." There are also two university colleges: Stranmillis University College and St. Mary's University College. At these institutions students have the opportunity to get an undergraduate degree or a postgraduate degree. Postgraduate certificates and diplomas offer vocational training or a professional

qualification. Courses usually last for one or two years of full-time study and can lead to qualifications or may be integrated into Master's degree programmes. A Master's degree can be obtained by pure research or by a course of instruction, which will include a short research project and an examination. Doctorates are normally awarded after at least three years of supervised research.

### ***5.5. Irish-medium Education in Northern Ireland***

As a medium of communication, the Irish language has been in decline in Ireland as a whole since the 18th century, and today its use in everyday speech is largely confined to parts of the west of the Republic of Ireland. By the beginning of the present century it had virtually ceased to be used in the six counties which today make up Northern Ireland. There has, however, been a revival of interest in the language in recent years and a number of families have chosen to raise their children as Irish speakers.

Irish-medium is education provided in an Irish speaking school. The Department of Education has a duty to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education.

According to The Department of Education in Northern Ireland, [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk), (accessed 20 May 2009) there are two types of Irish-medium schools in Northern Ireland: 21 stand-alone schools and 12 Irish-medium units attached to English-medium host schools. In addition to this, there are two independent schools teaching through the medium of Irish. These are Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach in Crumlin and Gaelscoil na Daroigne in Derry City.

In Northern Ireland children generally come from English-speaking homes and receive all of their education through the medium of Irish, achieving fluency in Irish during their course of education.

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter the Northern Irish education system is similar to that in England and Wales. It is divided in Stages, with the difference that compulsory education starts at the age of 4 in Northern Ireland, whereas in England and Wales at 5. The GCSE, A-levels and higher education qualifications and degrees are the same in the all three countries.

We are born weak, we need strength; helpless, we need aid; foolish, we need reason. All that we lack at birth, all that we need when we come to man's estate, is the gift of education.

Jean Jacques Rousseau

## CHAPTER 6

### The Independent (fee-paying) School Sector

An independent school, as defined on [www.independentschools.com](http://www.independentschools.com), is a school which is not dependent upon national or local government for financing its operation and instead derives from investments and fees paid by the pupils' parents for their education, which vary between schools and can amount to several thousands pounds a year.

As Driscoll (1995: 130) shows, schools funded by the government are called “state schools” and education provided in this way is known as “state education”, whereas schools from the private sector, independent schools are known as “public schools” in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, while in Scotland and Romania all schools that are not dependent on state funding are known as “private schools” or “independent schools”.

Some public schools are particularly old such as Westminster (founded 1179), Eton (1440), St. Paul's (1509), Harrow (1572) and Winchester (1382), which has maintained the longest unbroken history of any school in England. These were often established for male scholars from poor or disadvantaged backgrounds.

Most public schools, however, developed during 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and came to play an important role in the development of the Victorian social elite. These were schools for the gentlemanly elite of Victorian politics, armed forces and colonial government. Often successful businessmen would send their sons to public school as a mark of participation in the elite.

David McDowell (2007: 153) said that the “public school system is socially divisive, breeding an atmosphere of elitism and leaving some outside the system feeling socially or intellectually inferior, and in some cases intimidated by the prestige attached to public schools. The system fosters a distinct culture, one based not only upon social superiority but also upon deference.” Jeremy Paxman, a leading journalist, himself an ex-

public schoolboy remarked, “The purpose of a public school education is to teach you to respect people you don’t respect.”

According to the Independent School Council (ISC), [www.isc.co.uk](http://www.isc.co.uk), the UK independent sector as a whole educates around 628.000 children in around 2.600 schools. The independent sector educates around 6.5% of the total number of school children in the UK and over 7% of the total number of school children in England with the figure rising to more than 18% of the pupils over the age of 16.

There is a wide variety of types of independent schools in England and Wales:

1. **All through schools**, which take pupils all the way through from early age to 16 or 18/19, though usually in quite separate departments or separate schools under the same management.
2. **Pre-preparatory schools** (ages 2-7), also called nursery schools or kindergartens, correspond to nursery and infants stages in local authority schools. Here, children are taught to read, write, develop numeracy and learn to play.
3. **Junior schools** (ages 7-11 or 13) often called preparatory or prep schools, have a full range of subjects leading to admission to senior schools at 11+ or through 13+ Common Entrance Examination.
4. **Senior schools** (ages 13-18) offer three years of general studies followed by two years for GCSE and two years for AS/A2 or an International Baccalaureate.
5. **Sixth form colleges** (aged 16+) admit students usually for two-year AS/A2 courses, the International Baccalaureate, vocational courses or GCSE.

These schools can also be distinguished as: boarding or day-schools, single-sex or co-educational. A **boarding school** is an educational institution where some or all pupils not only study, but also live, among their peers. The word boarding in this sense means to provide food and lodging. Boarding school pupils normally return home during the school holidays and often at weekends. If they do not want to study and live there, parents can choose a **day-school** for their children and pupils return home every day. There is also a distinction between a **single-sex school** where public schools take only boys or only girls, and a **co-educational school**, where both sexes are taught together.

In Northern Ireland there are 17 independent schools and their organization is the same as in England and Wales.

Independent schools in Scotland in membership of Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), [www.scis.org.uk](http://www.scis.org.uk), are registered with the Scottish Government Schools Directorate and are subject to inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care.

In September 2008 there were 31.840 pupils in SCIS schools of which 28.317 were day pupils and 3.523 were boarding pupils. Of the 31.840 total number of pupils, 11.601 were in primary schools and 18.460 were in senior schools.

Each school has its own admission policy and entrance procedures. While some schools are academically selective, the majority admits children of mixed abilities and use entrance tests to judge how each child's needs can be best met. Entrance to senior schools is usually by way of a written examination, often combined with an interview. At Senior 1, the entrance exam often comprises an English paper, a Mathematics paper and one that tests reasoning. Some schools use national, standard tests while others have developed their own form of assessment.

In Romania there are only 53 private schools, 76 high schools and 27 private universities, according to the article appeared on <http://www.infonews.ro/article18363.html>, (accessed 29 May 2009). In the EU, the statistics show that one of five students attend a private school. Private education has appeared in Romania after 1989, but the percentage of students enrolled is almost insignificant, one student of a thousand. The main reason for which parents are not eager to give their children to private school is money, because the price of schooling exceeds the possibilities of most of the Romanians. The average wage in Romania is 280 euros/month and the minimal wage is 130 euros/month, while the fees in a private school can vary between 300 and a few thousands euros/month.

According to statistics published by the European Commission, Romania is one of the six countries where almost all students (98%) learn in a state school. The other five are: The Republic of Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia and Bulgaria.

Private schools compete and offer options for leisure time, after school programmes: in sports, cooking courses, general culture, arts, journalism, swimming, tennis or carting, all with specialized teachers. School inspectors admit that there is quality education in a friendly and more secure school environment, but say that such schools are accessible only to families with financial possibilities much above average.

In the UK there is a tradition of private education and this can be also noticed in students' enrolment in private institutions. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, these schools are called public schools, while in Romania and Scotland are known as private or independent schools. Private schools provide high quality education in all countries with various schools and free time activities. The enrolment in private education is higher in the UK (6.5%) than it is in Romania (2%)

The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards.

Anatole France

## CHAPTER 7

### The Supply of Teachers in the UK and Romania

So far I have presented the students' part in education, school organization and examinations in the four countries of the UK and Romania. In this chapter I will analyse the supply of teachers in the UK and Romania.

Anyone who wants to teach in England and Wales must complete initial teacher training (ITT). There are many different types of ITT course. All courses cover the principles of teaching along with practical experience in the classroom. There are several different ways one can complete his/her ITT: alongside a degree, straight after a degree, as part-time course alongside work or as a full-time course. To become a teacher a degree and a qualified teacher status (QTS) are needed.

ITT combines theoretical learning with at least 18 weeks practicing teaching during school placements. All programmes lead to qualified teacher status, which is needed if someone wants to teach in state-maintained schools in England or Wales. There are undergraduate teacher training, postgraduate teacher training and employment-based teacher training.

**Undergraduate teacher training** includes Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Arts or Science with QTS. Both courses enable the study for a degree and the completion of ITT at the same time. Courses generally take three or four years full-time or four to six years part-time.

Those who already have a degree can choose a **postgraduate teacher training** to gain a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. This course focuses on developing teaching skills and generally lasts for one year full-time or up to two years part-time. After graduation, teacher training can also be achieved by training in a school environment, known as school-centred initial teacher training. These programmes are designed and

delivered by groups of neighbouring schools and colleges. Courses generally last for one year full-time.

**Employment-based teacher training** allows training and working in a school. The Graduate Teacher Programme is an on-the-job training programme that allows graduates to qualify as a teacher while they work. On this programme they will be employed by a school, earn a salary and work towards qualified teacher status, all at the same time. Training usually takes up to one school year, full-time, depending on previous teaching experience. Another employment-based teacher training is Teach First. It is a programme run by an independent organization, enabling top graduates to spend two years working in challenging secondary schools qualifying as a teacher while completing leadership training and work experience with leading employers.

All trainee teachers in England, regardless of their programme of ITT, will need to pass the skills tests as part of the requirement for the award of qualified teacher status (QTS). After having completed the ITT and passed the skills tests for the award of QTS, they can look for a job as teachers. School vacancies are often advertised by the local authority. Teaching jobs are advertised online, either on specialist recruitment websites or dedicated sections of the major recruitment sites. Jobs can be found in the national or local press. Many teachers take up their first position in one of the schools they were placed to during their ITT.

The induction year as a newly qualified teacher is a three-term period of assessment, usually completed in a single school year, which helps ensure that the teaching career is built on a firm foundation. Through a personalized programme of guidance and support, induction provides the tools newly qualified teachers will need to be successful in their career.

In Scotland the courses that they can take to qualify as a teacher are similar to those in England and Wales. There are undergraduate degrees as Bachelor of Education or combined degrees, postgraduate degrees as the one-year Professional Graduate Diploma in Education or part-time courses, usually done in partnership with certain local authorities.

Those who want to teach in a Scottish local-authority school must be registered with the General Teaching Council Scotland. Teachers in the independent sector may also require registration. Before they can get full registration with the General Teaching

Council Scotland, teachers have to carry out a probationary teaching period. This is to ensure that all new teachers are able to take on the demands and responsibilities of teaching.

According to the Scottish Government, in Scotland there are 32 local authorities, each responsible for managing schools within their own area, including the employment of staff. Each local authority has its own process for recruiting staff, however, most will advertise in newspapers. All local-authority teachers are legally obliged to employ only teachers who have registered with the General Teaching Council Scotland.

According to the Policy Review of Teacher Education in Northern Ireland, the broad field of education is divided in initial teacher education, which describes the training of potential teachers who are either undergraduates having a Bachelor of Education degree or postgraduates taking a one-year certificate in education. On completion of initial teacher education, teachers leave with a Career Entry Profile. The next stage is the induction year. This refers to the first year of teacher's employment after qualifying as a teacher. Teachers are required to register with their Education and Library Board. During induction, teachers are the shared responsibility of their school and their Education and Library Board, where a teacher-tutor will have regular contact, will provide support, guidance and in-service training as requested by the schools. Early Professional Development describes the training given to teachers in their second and third years of teaching. The teacher is required to complete 2 Professional Development Activities during these years. The school completes a summative report to link the induction year to his second and third year experience. Continuing Professional Development describes the training of teachers throughout their careers after completion of the first years.

In Romania to become a qualified teacher you need to have a bachelor degree and to attend the courses of the pedagogical module, through which students are trained to become teachers. After this they can take part in the national exam for teachers, held in mid-July, and be appointed teachers in schools in order of their marks at the exam. After two years of teaching, teachers are assessed locally by their inspectors, who assists them 4 classes and they take an examination at a university centre for being awarded the Basic Teacher's Certificate (definitivat). They may go on with their professional development and take "gradul 2" or "gradul 1".

As we could see in all the countries initial teacher training includes undergraduate and postgraduate courses, but in England beside these, they can also complete this stage of training by employment-based teacher training. Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is required in England and Wales to become and continue being a teacher. QTS as such does not exist in Scotland or Northern Ireland. However, like in England and Wales, teachers in Scotland and Northern Ireland are required to register with General Teaching Council Scotland and General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland. These will only consider graduates with a teaching qualification for registration.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the first year of teaching, which is assessed and controlled is known as induction year, while in Scotland a one-year of probation period must be completed. In Northern Ireland the induction year is followed by other stages as early professional development, which concerns the next two years and continuing professional development, which is the training of teachers throughout their careers after their completion of the first three years. Employment as a teacher is a major difference between the countries of the UK and Romania. In the UK after having completed all the stages to be eligible for a teaching career they can go in search of a job, advertised in newspapers or the internet and they are hired through a selection and interview process, which will vary from one authority to another. In contrast, in Romania teachers are appointed in schools according to their results at the national exam for teachers.

More information about teaching in the UK can be found at: [www.tda.gov.uk](http://www.tda.gov.uk), [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk), [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk) and for Romania <http://titularizare.edu.ro>.

The first duty of government is to see that people have food, fuel, and clothes. The second, that they have means of moral and intellectual education.

John Ruskin

## CONCLUSION

Education is a vital concern throughout Britain because a highly developed nation depends upon educated professionals and a skilled workforce.

There are many differences not only between the education systems of the UK countries and that of Romania, but also among the four countries of the UK. The first difference can be noticed in the years of compulsory education.

Table 10: Compulsory education

Country	Years of compulsory education	Age
England	11	5 - 16
Wales	11	5 - 16
Scotland	11	5 - 16
Northern Ireland	12	4 - 16
Romania	10	6/7 - 16

School organization and division in sectors is also slightly different.

Table 11: School organization (compulsory education):

Country	Primary education	Secondary education
England	6 years Age: 5-11	5 years Age: 11-16
Wales	6 years Age: 5-11	5 years Age: 11-16

Scotland	7 years Age: 5-12	4 years (lower secondary education) Age: 12-16
Northern Ireland	7 years Age: 4-11	5 years Age: 11-16
Romania	4 years Age: 7-11	4 years Age: 11-15

Further education can be continued at secondary school if there is one or at sixth-form colleges in England and Wales. Education continues with upper secondary school, in Northern Ireland at further education colleges and in Romania with high schools or vocational schools. This comprises pupils aged 16-16 in each countries, which means 2 more years of education after the end of compulsory education.

Higher education is similar in all the countries offering undergraduate programmes with a bachelor degree and postgraduate programmes with a master's degree or doctorates degree. British universities have a worldwide fame and they are acknowledged as being among the best. (see Table5, Chapter 2)

As examinations are concerned, England maintained most of the national tests, while the other countries gave up to them in favour of teacher assessment.

Table 12: Examinations in the UK and Romania:

Age	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Romania
5	Teacher assessment	Teacher assessment			
7	Key Stage 1 National tests				
10		Cross-curricular			

		“skills test”			
11	Key Stage 2 National tests	Teacher assessment		11+ Transfer Procedure test (optional)	
14	Teacher assessment since May 2009	Teacher assessment		Formal tests in English (Irish), Mathematics and Science	National mid-term tests during 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grades, in each semester
16	GCSE exams	GCSE exams	Standard Grade	GCSE exams	
17	AS-levels	AS-levels	Highers	AS-levels	
18	A-levels	A-levels or Welsh Baccalaureate qualification	Advanced Highers or Scottish Baccalaureate	A-levels	National Baccalaureate Exam

Besides these exams there is a continuous teacher assessment in Romania and pupils may take an exam after finishing primary school if they wish to continue in special classes. Selection for these classes is made by the teachers of the school, according to the ability or talent of the pupils. In Scotland based on 5-14 Curriculums, national tests may be taken at any stage. Level A is the easiest and is sat near the start of the child’s school career. Level F is the hardest and is usually sat in the second year of secondary school. In addition in England and Northern Ireland the exam at the age of 11 can serve as a selection of students to attend academically challenging grammar schools, but more than 90% of secondary schools in Britain are now comprehensive schools.

Related to the usage of their national languages in schools, it can be said that Wales had done great efforts in preserving and using Welsh in schools. It is compulsory as first or second language during the ages of 5-16, while in Scotland and Northern

Ireland parents are those who decide whether they want their children to learn in a Gaelic-medium education or an Irish-medium education.

In the UK there is a tradition of private education and this can be also noticed in students' enrolment in private institutions. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, these schools are called public schools, while in Scotland and Romania are known as private or independent schools. Private schools provide high quality education in all the countries with various school and free time activities. The enrolment in private education is higher in the UK (6.5%) than it is in Romania, where almost all students (98%) learn in state schools.

There are different types of independent schools in Britain as boarding schools or day-schools, single-sex or co-educational and faith schools. In Romania there are international private schools, too. Those who wish for their children an education in British or American system they can have this option. The problem with private schools in Romania is that they cost very much and most of the people cannot afford to send their children in such institutions and prefer state schools which are free of charge.

The supply of teachers in the UK is distinct from that in Romania. In the UK teachers have to go through an initial teacher training, either with an undergraduate programme. They can choose a postgraduate programme or in England and Wales there is also a possibility to train and work in a school and earn a salary in the same time through an employment-based teacher training. All trainee teachers in England and Wales, regardless of their programme of initial teacher training, will need to pass the skills tests as part of the requirement for the award of qualified teacher status. In Scotland and Northern Ireland after the required qualification they need to register with the General Teaching Council in their country. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the first year of teaching, which is assessed and controlled is known as induction year, while in Scotland a one-year of probation period must be completed. In Northern Ireland the induction year is followed by other stages as early professional development, which concerns the next two years and continuing professional development, which is the training of teachers throughout their careers after their completion of the first three years. Employment as a teacher is a major difference between the countries of the UK and Romania. In the UK after having completed all the stages to be eligible for a teaching career they can go in search of a job, advertised in newspapers or the internet and they are

hired through a selection and interview process, which will vary from one authority to another. In contrast, in Romania teachers are appointed in schools according to their results at the national exam for teachers.

As it could be noticed so far the educational systems of the countries discussed are different in terms of school organization, examinations, employment of teachers, curriculum, and compulsory years of education.

By presenting the education in the UK I tried to obtain some relevant principles for Romanian Education, which could lead to its improvement and a better performance of students. These principles are:

- stability
- clarity
- certainty
- predictability
- rigorous selection of teachers

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