Habitus is a fate not a destiny:

A Study of Student Completion

In First Year at an Irish Institute of Technology

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and

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ABSTRACT

Having worked in The Institute of Technology sector for decades as both lecturer and faculty manager, the quality of the student experience has always been of prime interest to the researcher, particularly with regard to student success and retention. This research examines student completion among first year students including those who enter from access schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. The study took place over a five year period, 2009-2014 and was carried out through surveys, interviews and an online diary that involved mainly first year students including, students who had withdrawn from programmes, as well as academic and administrative staff. The research sought to capture the student voice primarily but also the perspective of lecturers and administrative support staff involved with year one students. Within the binary system that exists in the Irish Higher Education system the Institutes of Technology have always struggled against public perceptions of being of 'lesser value', that students who study in the Institutes of Technology are 'weaker' academically, have lower CAO points on entry and have 'failed' to enter the traditional university. Using Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus the research also examines the perspectives of academic and support staff on year one completion among this cohort of students. The findings show that completion rates are higher in year one for those students entering ITT from the access schools than from non-access schools. It also finds that there is an association between CAO points on entry and levels of successful completion in year one. The findings also reveal that habitus does have a significant impact on the cohort of students and the students' quality of experience in year one. There is a notable gap between the perceptions of staff and the students' reality in year one.

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Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Preface and Rationale

This study is concerned with first year student progression and it took place over five years from 2009-2014 in an Irish Institute of Technology (IoT). The researcher worked for 25 years in the particular institution as a lecturer, as Head of Department and as Head of Faculty and now is a member of senior management in a partner institution.

Student participation and progression is an issue within every Higher Education institution and improving the retention and achievement of students is an important subject for all stakeholders. Student progression is a matter of serious concern to all Higher Education institutions and central to that concern is the negative impact that non-progression can have on that individual student especially if s/he has had a bad experience of Higher Education. The Institutes of Technology as a sector has a good track record in widening participation in Higher Education particularly for traditionally under-represented groups of students. However, low retention rates have been identified as an issue in the sector. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which was set up in 2003, is the framework through which the many different types and sizes of qualifications are organised based on their level of knowledge, skill and competence. Non-progression rates in the IoT sector were at 21% in 2013/14 and

23% (2012/13) in IoTs for all NQF levels of study as compared to 15% and 16% respectively in University sector (Higher Education Authority 2017). This research attempts to examine the problem of non-progression among students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who have made it into higher education. In gathering quantitative data to establish the extent of the issue of low retention among first year students, this research also investigates the reasons why students may leave Higher Education. The research adopts a mixed methods approach, drawing from qualitative data conducted with students by way of focus groups, interviews, and an online reflective diary, as well as quantitative data drawn from surveys. This research seeks to bring the student voice into the current literature on retention. It also captures the views of lecturers and support staff through surveys and interviews so as to establish what similarities or differences exist regarding student retention.

For certain students, moving into Higher Education at an Institute of Technology from second level schools in economically disadvantaged areas, is a positive step and they cope well. However, for others, progression becomes difficult or even impossible. This research aims to examine why certain students abandon programmes in the first year and do not achieve their full potential. National and international research points to the importance of the first to second year transition. In the US context, Porter (1990) found that over half of student attrition occurs in the first year, while Smith and Naylor (2001) had similar results in the UK.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) in the 2014-2017 *System Performance Report* highlights a rise in non-progression rates for students from target socio-economic groups, in particular those undertaking awards at Levels 6 and level 7 on the National

Qualifications Framework. The report recommends that further analysis is needed to increase our understanding of the reasons for higher non-progression rates among particular groups and the most effective measures necessary to address this. This thesis subject matter aligns itself with that recommendation by investigating the causes of non-progression among students in an Institute of Technology in an area of socio-economic disadvantage.

The purpose of this research is to ascertain which causes of student non-progression, among this cohort of students, are within the influence or control of an institution; what makes the most difference to student progression; and where could an institution concentrate its energies to make improvements. This research uses Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework to investigate this issue of non-progression among these first year students. Bourdieu offers a framework to critique education by allowing us to see the narrative of students through the social reproduction lens. He describes how when "*habitus* encounters a social world of which it is the product it's like a 'fish in water'-it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu and Wacquart 1999, p.127). For students from the higher socio-economic groups the choice of participation in Higher Education is always a possibility whereas students from the lower socio-economic groups come from backgrounds where Higher Education is not considered as an option, not 'normal' or 'achievable' (Forsyth and Furlong 2003). As a consequence, they experience anxiety about participation in Higher Education and lack the conviction that it is their right (Leathwood and O'Connell 2003).

In terms of cost-benefit analysis to Ireland, staying in Higher Education and completing a programme of study has clear cost-benefit. Research shows that having a Higher Education qualification enhances the economic, social and positive mental health of all (Higgins et al. 2008). Statistics issued annually by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) confirm that employment and labour participation rates increase according to educational attainment and are highest among those who progress to Higher Education as demonstrated in Table 1.1.

Table 1 1 Economic Status of Individuals with Third-Level Education 2009-2011

Economic Status	1999 (Q2)	2003 (Q2)	2007 (Q2)	2011 (Q2)
FT Employment	77.5	75.2	75.6	68.0
PT Employment	8.4	9.4	10.3	12.3
Unemployed	2.0	2.4	2.3	6.4
Marginally Attached	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.3

Source: Own Calculations based on CSO Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS)

As with Census 2011, Census 2016 shows unemployed persons finished education at an earlier age than those who were at work (Figure 1.1). There were 255,663 people aged 15 and over who had ceased their education and were unemployed. Among those with stated age education ceased, Census 2016 shows that 42.9 per cent (down from 49.0% in 2011) had completed their full-time education by age 18 while 11.4

per cent (down from 13.4% five years earlier) had completed their education aged 15 or under.

Figure 1 1 Economic Status by age education ceased 2011-2016
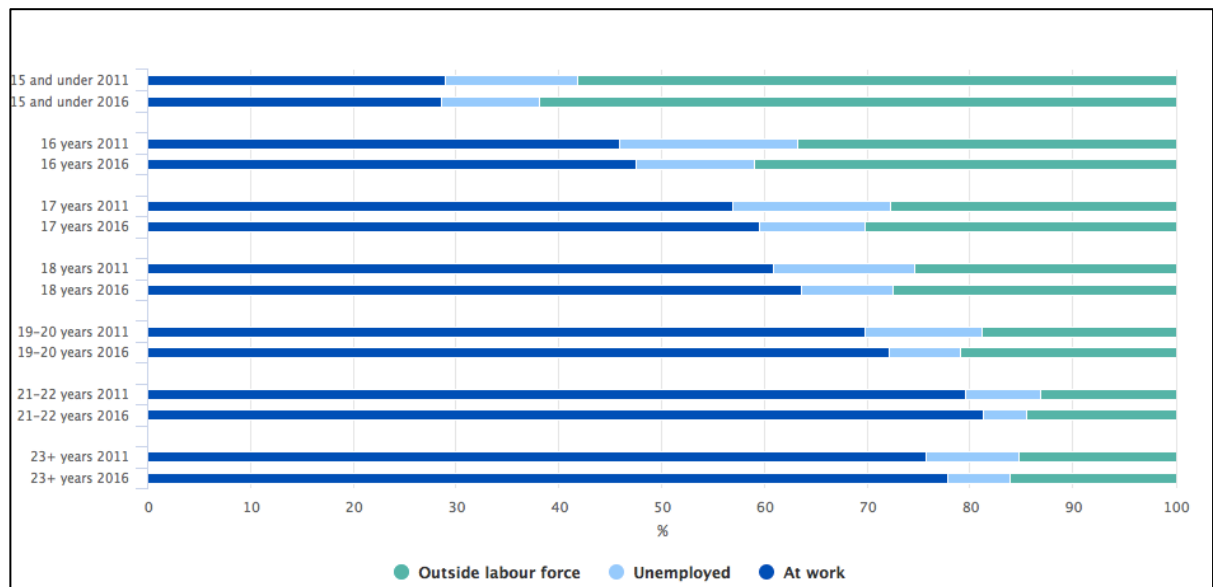
Source: CSO Ireland

Higher Education graduates earn more and have better health and life-expectancy. Going to Higher Education has a positive impact in terms of promoting general personal well-being, confidence as well as social harmony. "Education is an important social determinant of health. For the people as a whole, greater levels of education help to create wealthier economies. However, the benefits of education go far beyond economic ones. Education can impact positively on levels of social engagement" (Higgins et al. 2008 p.6)

The motivation for this research is profoundly rooted in social justice and the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to pursue higher education if they so wish. The researcher herself was a first generation entrant to higher education, first in her

family, first on her road. She was encouraged to pursue higher education by an inspiring school principal and to apply for the local scholarship. Yet, the researcher was aware that labels and barriers could be very damaging to an individual student.

The research is informed by her own personal journey from a working-class family into higher education where it was not considered the normal thing at the time, to her time as an educator, nine years at second level and twenty seven years at third level. The researcher started teaching in a coed second level school where on arrival she was informed that only the girls in the school studied French and only to Intermediate Certificate level (now known as the Junior Certificate). The researcher saw this as an injustice because a direct consequence of that decision was that all of those students were being excluded from higher education. A modern language at Leaving Certificate level was a matriculation requirement for entry to University. To address the matter in a constructive way, the researcher set up a French exchange and before long, the students, both boys and girls, were demanding that the principal allow them study French to Leaving Certificate level. It was wonderful when barriers such as this were removed, to see those students progress to higher education and beyond in their professional and personal lives. Moving forward to the researcher's work in ITT when it commenced in 1992, that same desire to ensure equality of opportunity to all students continued to feature in her work. Working in a new Higher Education Institution, in an area of high economic disadvantage where traditionally secon level students did not progress into higher education, while a challenge, the researcher was passionate about the project that was ITT. When the first cohort of graduates started to emerge in the late 90's, the first programmatic reviews were carried out and revealed low levels of retention across ITT. Efforts were made to address this issue in the form of targeted initiatives with varying levels of success. The researcher was

seconded to draft the first version of a quality manual for ITT and accompanying standard operating procedures during which time she became interested in accessing the real extent of retention and in examining the reasons for low levels of retention from the perspective of the students themselves. In tandem with this interest in the data both quantitative and qualitative, the researcher working as lecturer, middle and senior manager, experienced a particular culture with regard to the students expressed in often subtle but significant ways, this motivated the researcher to examine whether there was any connection between that expression of culture and the levels of completion.

1.2   Aims of the Research

Having gathered the quantitative and qualitative data and carried out analysis of the findings, the ultimate aim of this research is to assist educators and institutions in supporting students complete their Higher Education. This research has as its aims:

-To explore aspects of these students' experience in Higher Education through mixed method research with a view to establishing what the students' perspectives are on the subject of non-progression.

-To contribute to the establishment of high quality, statistically robust data on programme progression among first year students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds compared to the general student population.

-To draw from the data to establish how Higher Education systems and institutions can better facilitate the success of students from non-traditional backgrounds.

1.3 Research Questions

The five main research questions which this thesis is designed to answer are as follows:

1. To what extent is non-progression an issue in first year among those students accessing Higher Education in an Institute of Technology?

2. To what extent is there a difference in non-progression rates between all first year students and those entering from access schools?

It is important to identify and quantify the extent to which non-completion is an issue among registered students entering the research site through the school links access programme. By using data gathered through ITT's information system, a clear picture of non-progression rates will be presented. This research aims to examine the quantitative data available through the student records system to establish what the non-progression rates are between entering Higher Education in September and up to the beginning of the second semester after the first semester examinations. The research aims to show that there is a great number of students who do exit their programmes of study between this period of time.

3. What are the factors that have a positive or negative effect on student completion among first year students coming from access schools into Higher Education as seen from the first year students' perspectives and does the habitus of an institution influence completion?

Having established the extent to which non-completion is an issue, mixed method research will be carried out to establish why students from access and non-access schools do not complete their programme of study. A series of surveys will be carried out by using on-line tools, focus groups and interviews will be held with sample groups in order to gain insight into the reasons for non-completion.

4. To what extent does the habitus of the institution match the previous experiences of students? Finding out what we can do to ensure that we help more students from economically disadvantaged areas achieve their potential will benefit all stakeholders.

5. What strategies and practices can individual institutions develop that can better accommodate the learning experience of this particular group of students.

The challenge is to develop ways in which an individual's identity is affirmed, and incorporated into the organisation's culture (Braxton 2000). Students are significantly influenced by the extent to which they perceive that their values, expectations and learning styles are recognised by the institution. When their overwhelming perception is of being in what might be described as an 'alien' culture, they are likely to choose to leave. Since there is now an increased effort being made to increase the participation of previously marginalised groups or what can sometimes be called 'non-traditional' groups, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, the institution must examine all aspects of its own functioning in terms of how this is likely to impact on students.

1.4   The Widening Access Context

"Higher Education is potentially a space in which to manage and transcend feelings of marginalisation, meaninglessness and inauthenticity in interaction with others; in which it is possible, given their support and encouragement, to compose a new life, a different story and a more cohesive self" (West 1996, p.120)

There have been many changes in Irish society over recent decades and this change has been reflected in the field of educational access. There is now a substantial body of research which documents social inequality in Higher Education participation in Ireland (Smyth, 2018, Lynch et al., 2017). Many such studies place the focus of attention on family social class or socio-economic group when examining inequality. Looking at the social class background of school leavers in 2007 "A Study of Future Demand for Higher Education in Ireland" (McGuinness et al. 2012) taking the higher social class where both parents are employed (a 'dominance approach'), a clear linear pattern is found, that is, the highest participation is found among those from higher professional backgrounds and the lowest participation is found among those from unskilled manual backgrounds (see Figure 1.2 below). Participation rates are also low among other working-class groups, namely, those from skilled and semi-skilled manual backgrounds.

Figure 1 2 Proportion of All School Leavers Entering Higher Education by Social Class (Dominance) 2007
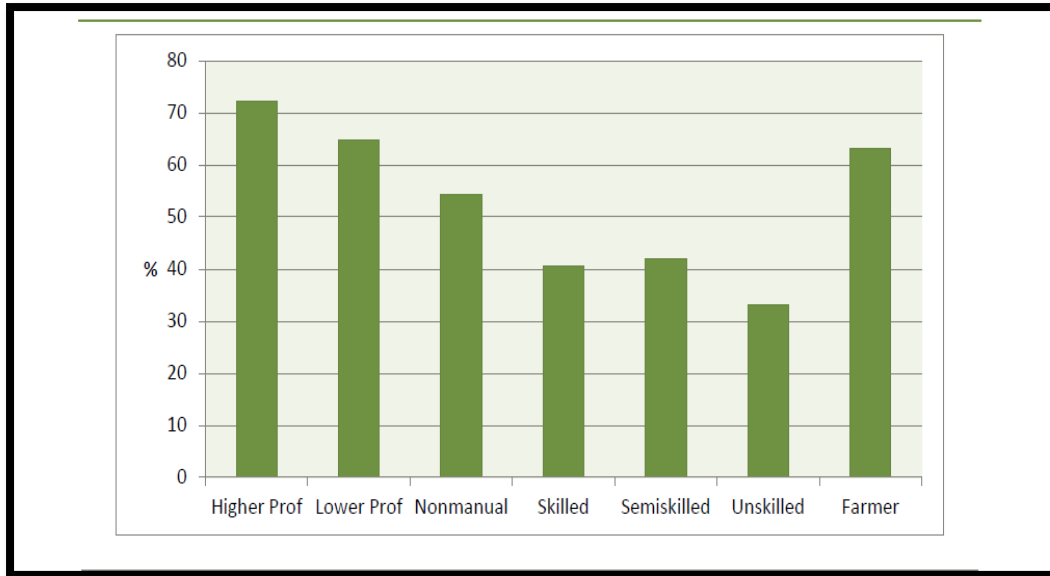
Source: McGuinness et al. ESRI 2012 p.22

When the non-manual group was disaggregated into the 'intermediate non-manual' and 'other (lower) non-manual groups, McCoy et al. (2010a) found differences in the profile and Higher Education entry levels of the two groups. This research has been important in highlighting the need to move beyond broad inter-class analysis towards a nuanced approach incorporating intra- as well as inter-class analysis (McCoy and Byrne 2011). Over and above the effects of social class and socio-economic group, having non-employed parents is found to reduce the chances of Higher Education entry (McCoy and Smyth 2011).

In addition, the evidence indicates that inequality in access to Higher Education extends to the nature of Higher Education accessed. Expansion in university places over the 1990s in particular drew in large numbers of middle class young people, reflecting the higher direct costs of university entry as well as the risk of social demotion for middle class young people who attend Institutes of Technology. Less advantaged social groups have increased their participation in Higher Education largely through accessing Institutes of Technology and consequently shorter duration

courses and less prestigious fields of study (McCoy and Smyth 2011, p.255). These long-standing trends in Higher Education access have also been documented in the earlier work of Clancy (2008, 2007, 1996) and in international research examining differentiation in Higher Education (Reimer and Jacob 2011; Boliver 2011; Schindler and Reimer 2011). There are lower rates of Higher Education entry and access to more prestigious institutions and fields of study from the 'traditional' working class (manual workers) as well as those in less skilled white-collar jobs and those in non-employed households. 80% of those who complete second-level from professional backgrounds will progress to Higher Education while only 45% of those whose parents are unemployed and from manual backgrounds will progress to Higher Education (see Figure 1.3).

Figure 1 3 Rates of Progression to Higher Education (those who completed second level education) by Parental Socio-Economic group, 2007
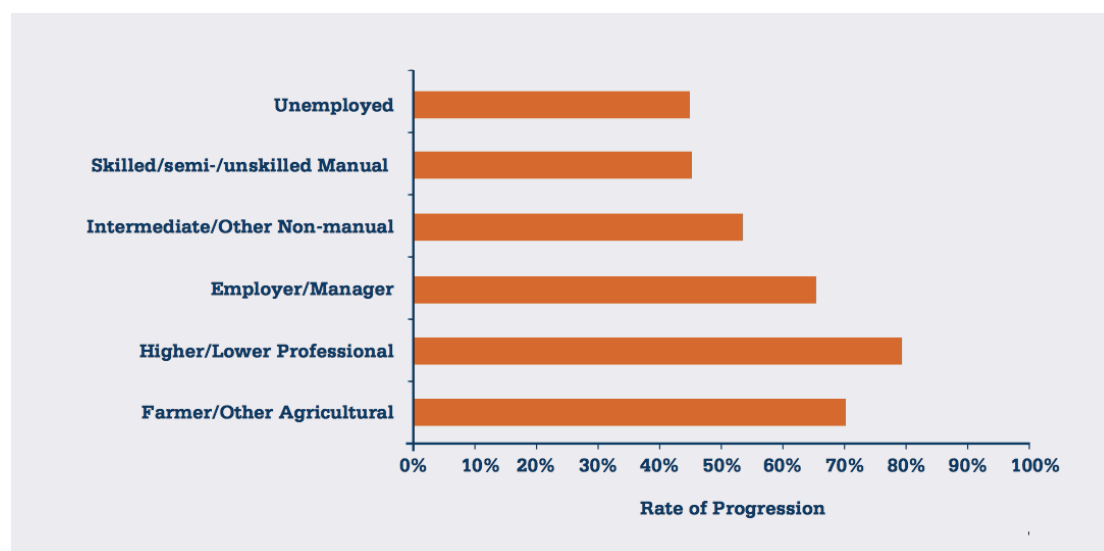
Source : Byrne D. et al. 2008

Mooney et al. (2010) examined student progression from first to second year across HE institutions, sectors and courses. Their study provides valuable insights into the

processes and factors shaping non-progression in Higher Education, both at institutional and individual levels, and in the process provides important lessons in terms of expansion of the Higher Education system and its implications for levels of student success and achievement. Figure 1.4 shows non-progression rates measured against CAO points attainment. Clearly, students entering Higher Education at all NQF levels with lower CAO points show higher rates of non-progression.

Figure 1 4 Non-Progression Rates by Prior Educational Attainment and NFQ Level
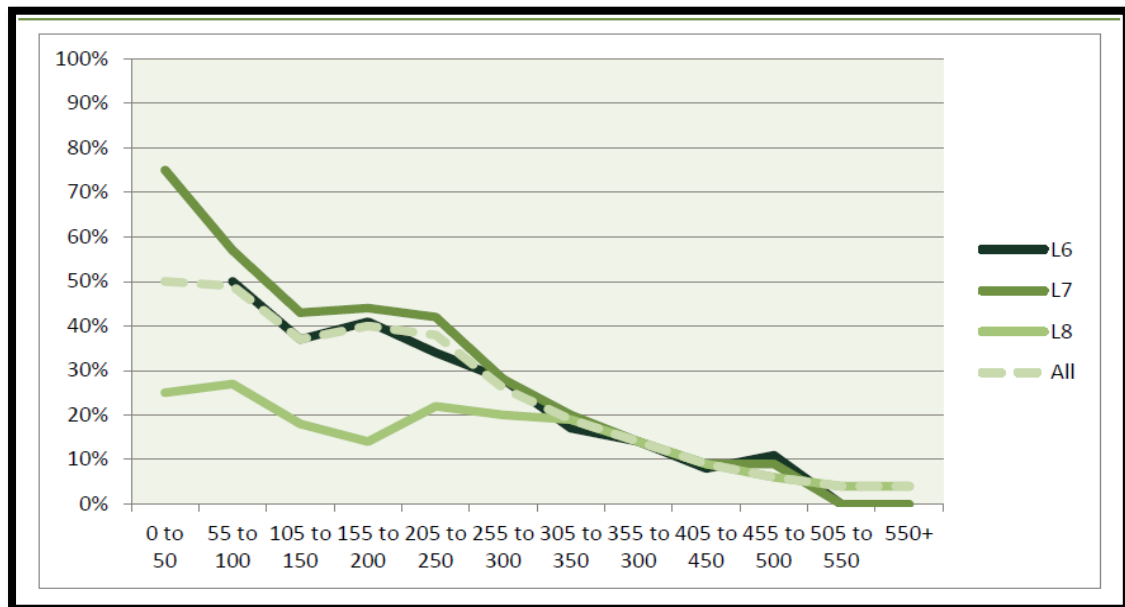
Source: Mooney et al. 2010, HEA p.18

Table 1.2 shows the most common points attained by entrants to the IoTs compared to those of entrants to the Universities. In the IoTs, Level 6 and Level 7 points range between 255-300 CAO points while Level 8 points of entrants range between 355-400. In the Universities, there are few Level 6 or 7 programme offerings for the years of the research and the CAO points of entrants range is higher-between 455-500.

Figure 1 5 Most Common Points Attained by Sector and NFQ Level 2012/13.

SECTOR	LEVEL	MOST COMMON POINTS ATTAINED (2012/13)	MOST COMMON POINTS ATTAINED (2011/12)
Institutes of Technology	Level 6	255 – 300	255 – 300
	Level 7	255 – 300	305 – 350
	Level 8	355 – 400	355 – 400
	All New Entrants	305 – 350	305 – 350
Universities	Level 8	455 – 500	405 – 450
Colleges	Level 8	455 – 500	455 – 500
All institutions	Level 8	405 – 450	405 – 450
All institutions	All New Entrants	355 – 400	355 – 400

Source: HEA (2016) p.37

Ireland is now in the position that our Higher Education attainment rate is at 52.6% which is the highest in the European Union (HEA 2014). The HEA is tasked with promoting equality of opportunity in Higher Education and following two national policy statements the 1995 White Paper on Education identified wider participation in Higher Education as 'a major policy objective' of the government, irrespective of social class, age or disability (Department of Education 1995, p.97). A report by a HEA-commissioned steering committee report on the future development of Higher Education recommended 'targeted funding' to widen access. The HEA implemented a Targeted Initiatives Programme in 1996, subsequently renamed "strategic initiatives scheme", and set out to increase the participation of disadvantaged school leavers, mature students and students who have a disability.

Recent policy documents and national plans point to a commitment to lifelong learning and tackling educational disadvantage, such as the 'Towards 2016: Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015'. This initiative to tackle educational disadvantage aimed to ensure that investment in education prioritises those most at risk and to optimise access, participation and outcome at every level of the educational system

for the disadvantaged groups. More students enter Higher Education each year but there are noticeable areas of educational disadvantage in Higher Education in Ireland. Equity of access to Higher Education is a national priority and has been very clearly set as such by the Department of Education and Skills in its Higher Education System Performance Framework 2014-2016 document. Estimated participation by target socio-economic groups increased from 27% to 30% of those from non-manual and unskilled worker backgrounds but not to the extent projected (HEA 2014 p.12). In 2015, it was reported that the targets of 31% participation (2008-2012) set for participation from socio-economic under-represented groups were not met. This target comprised 30% participation from the non-manual worker group and 35% participation from the semi/unskilled manual worker group. The HEA estimated participation to be at 23% and 26% respectively (HEA, 2015).

The System Performance Report (HEA, 2017) has indicated that achieving the socio-economic participation targets will require Higher Education Institutions to collectively have an intake of at least 21% of new entrants from the two socio-economic groups combined by 2016. The target increased from 23% to 27% for the non-manual worker group and from 26% to 30% for the semi-skilled and unskilled worker groups.

There are higher rates of non-completion in the IoT sector compared to the universities: 23% non-progressed across the IoT sector at all levels, compared to 11% non-progressed at all levels in the universities (HEA 2014). Institutions that are funded by the HEA are required, as part of the Strategic Dialogue process, to report on interventions and activities that are set in place to address non-completion. Each

institution must submit a Compact document to the HEA that provides data on student retention and measures that are in place to address any issues of low retention.

1.5   The Institutes of Technology Context

The Institutes of Technology, have as their remit "to provide vocational, technical education and training for the economic, technical, scientific, commercial, industrial, social and cultural development of the State with reference to the region served by the college." (RTC Act Section 5). As indicated by Table 1.3, the Institutes of Technology tend to have greater representation of students from lower income socio-economic groups than do universities (Lynch 1996 McCoy and Smyth 2011).

Figure 1 6 Socio-economic group by Higher Education sector 2012/13 and 2011/12

Soci-economic group	Universities		Institutes of Technology & National College of Ireland	
	2012/13	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12
Employers and Managers	20.1%	21.1%	14.5%	16.0%
Higher Professional	14.4%	15.1%	6.1%	5.5%
Lower Professional	9.9%	11.4%	6.5%	6.6%
Non-manual	9.4%	9.2%	9.3%	9.4%
Manual skilled	9.6%	9.5%	14.1%	15.1%
Semi-skilled	4.6%	4.5%	6.8%	6.8%
Unskilled	1.9%	1.6%	3.5%	3.3%
Own account workers	7.7%	7.7%	8.5%	9.2%
Farmers	7.8%	8.0%	7.2%	7.0%
Agricultural workers	0.7%	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%
All others gainfully occupied, and unknown	13.9%	11.1%	22.7%	20.1%

Source: HEA, Key Facts 2012, p.26

First preferences to Universities make up 62.3% of all level 8 first preference applications; Institutes of Technology make up 29.8%, while The Institutes attract the highest number of Central Applications Office (CAO) applicants for Level 6 and Level 7 programmes at 93.3% compared to only 1.9% for the University sector (HEA, 2014) as seen from Tables 1.4 and 1.5.

Figure 1 7 Sectoral Changes in Level 7/6 CAO First Preference Allocation 2010-2014

	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Institutes of Technology	38,622	93.2	38,521	93.0	37,622	93.7	34,936	93.4	34,846	93.3
Universities	792	2	733	1.8	774	1.9	693	1.9	710	1.9
Others	2,024	4.8	2,162	5.2	1,772	4.4	1,770	4.8	1,777	4.8
Total	41,438	100	41,416	100	40,168	100	37,399	100	37,333	100

Source: HEA An analysis of CAO 1ˢᵗ Preference Applications 2014, p.8

In 2005, the OECD report, in 'Education at a Glance', showed that student progression rates for third-level courses in a number of OECD countries was a cause of concern, both within the sector and elsewhere. It also reported low-progression rates for students in Irish Institutes of Technology. The HEA Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education 2010 showed the non-presence rate, in the research site, to be the lowest in the sector nationally at Level 8 (30%) and Level 7 (33%) and second lowest for Level 6 (31%) all well above the national averages for The Institute of Technology sector (HEA 2010).

Figure 1 8 2007/2008 full time new entrants Non-Progression rates by IoT at NFQ Level

Institute of Technology	Level 6 Non Presence	Level 7 Non Presence	Level 8 Non Presence	All Levels Non Presence
Athlone Institute of Technology	24%	26%	11%	21%
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	29%	27%	18%	24%
Cork Institute of Technology	22%	21%	23%	21%
Institute of Technology Carlow	28%	26%	18%	24%
Dundalk Institute of Technology	21%	30%	13%	24%
Dunlaoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology	19%	24%	14%	16%
Dublin Institute of Technology	15%	25%	13%	16%
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	34%	30%	22%	28%
Limerick Institute of Technology	28%	23%	18%	23%
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	19%	25%	4%	22%
Institute of Technology Sligo	38%	24%	10%	23%
Institute of Technology Tallaght	31%	33%	25%	30%
Institute of Technology Tralee	21%	20%	12%	18%
Waterford Institute of Technology	26%	22%	21%	22%
All	**25%**	**26%**	**16%**	**22%**
National Average	**25%**	**26%**	**11%**	**15%**

Source: HEA 2010, p.76

This Institute of Technology sector accounts for over 40% of Higher Education enrolments (HEA. 2016, p.3) and there has been rapid expansion in enrolments particularly from those students in economically disadvantaged locations as well as those students who score lower CAO points in the Leaving Certificate examination but who still wish to enter Higher Education (McCoy and Smyth, 2010 p.247). This rapid expansion in the numbers registered in the IoTs has played an important role in the increased numbers of disadvantaged students and students with lower Leaving Certificate points gaining access to Higher Education (McCoy and Smyth, 2010 p.254). Research would indicate that some institutions with more disadvantaged students fare better than others in providing supports that improve student success (Byrne and McCoy, 2017). The research shows that when under-represented students are supported academically and socially, these groups emerge as having the same probability of completing as all other students. (Byrne and McCoy, 2017).

The research shows that when under-represented students particularly those who enter through the HEAR and DARE access schemes which reduce the academic requirements for entry to higher education are supported academically and socially they have the same probability of successfully completing their programme of study as other students (Byrne et al, 2013, p.23). Gansemer-Top and Schuh (2006) established that where US institutions invested directly in student academic integration, there were improved retention rates in numerous institutions. Chen (2012) reported a similar outcome where students who attended an institution with higher expenditure on student services tended to have fewer student withdrawals.

In the Irish Higher Education context, universities are referred to as 'first tier', offering traditional academic programmes and attract high CAO point achievers.

Institutes of Technology are known as 'second tier' and in contrast provide a wider range of non-traditional academic programmes at both degree and sub-degree level to a greater number of students from underrepresented groups including economically disadvantaged locations (McCoy and Smyth 2010). The statistics show that students in IoTs are significantly more likely not to complete compared to their University equivalent. There are high levels of non-progression among Level 7 and Level 6 participants compared to Level 8 programmes. For the most part, universities do not offer Level 6 and level 7 programmes while IoTs offer programmes at all three levels.

There are significantly lower levels of non-completion among students who are receiving financial aid (McCoy and Byrne, 2010). In their report, McCoy and Byrne (2010) found that a higher proportion of students in Institutes of Technology (than in universities) are in receipt of a grant and the authors indicate that "grant aid contributes to progression in The Institute of Technology sector; at level 6, the progression rates of the grant-aided new entrants are 5% better than those of non-aided students; at level 7 they are 4% better; and at level 8 they are 3% better. Thus, overall in The Institute of Technology sector, being in receipt of a grant increases a student's chance of progressing and has a positive effect on non-presence rates". (McCoy and Byrne, 2010, p.19). Financial support plays a very important role in student progression and where there is greater financial security and lower levels of dependence on part time work, progression is higher. There also is the motivating factor that students on a grant, if they fail and need to repeat the year, lose their eligibility for student financial aid. Lassibille and Gomez (2008) have carried international research on this issue of financial aid and in the UK Yorke conclude that

'scholarships and grants tend to have the greatest beneficial effects on (college) persistence' (Yorke, 2004, p117).

1.6   The Research Site.

It is important to set the research in the historical and social context of the research site which has a very regional focus. Given that we are also examining the issue of non-completion among year one students who are entering higher education from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, it is valuable to the frame the research within the local and regional setting.

1.6.1   Locality: South Dublin County.

The Institute of Technology Tallaght is situated in South Dublin County. The population of South Dublin County is 265,205 (CSO 2012) and has experienced huge economic expansion over recent decades and after Dublin city has the greatest concentration of business and industry. With regard to the age structure and dependency ratios for the county, the 2011 census showed that South Dublin County has a higher proportion of its population (27%) in the dependency age groups 0-14 as compared to 18.3% for Dublin City. South Dublin has 46.4% of its population under 25 (CSO 2012). However, some areas of the County remain disadvantaged, particularly those areas within the Dublin 22 and Dublin 24 postal districts. For example, in South Dublin County, Killinarden has been identified as a RAPID , Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development, a focussed initiative by the government to target the areas of most disadvantage in the country. Designated as a Strand 1 area by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (South Dublin County Council Annual Report 2009). The young nature of the population of South Dublin in which the research site is set is an important demographic feature.

Figure 1.5 shows that the county also has a noteworthy disparity between males and females, with more females in their twenties and early thirties and in their fifties, contributing to one of the lowest sex ratios in the country.

Figure 1 9 South Dublin Population 265,205
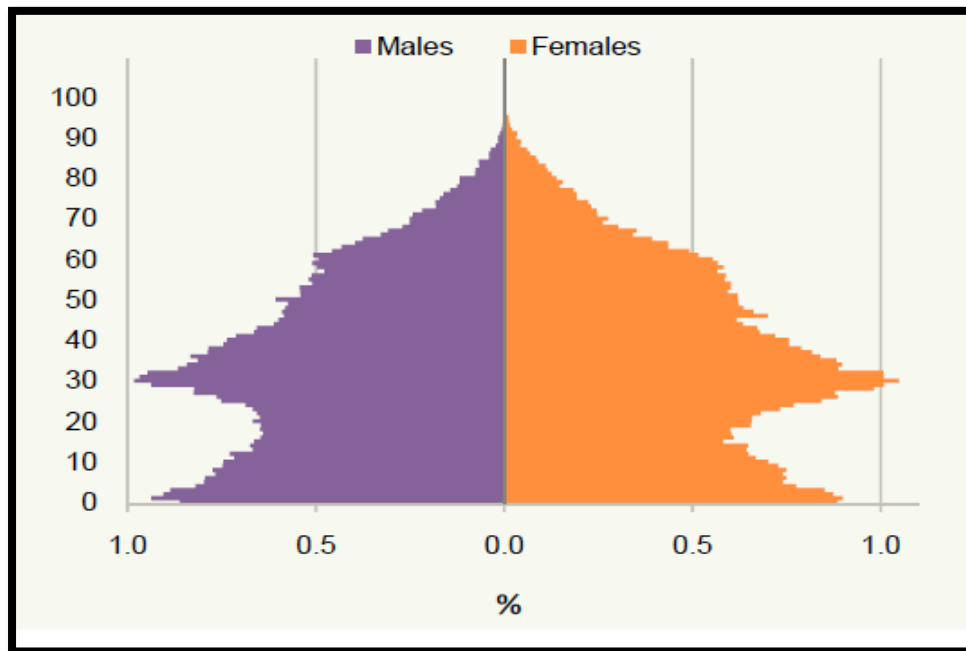
Source: Central Statistics Office 2012

Within South Dublin County there are areas of both highest and lowest level of educational attainment nationally. The county includes the more affluent areas of Rathfarnham, Terenure and Templeogue as well as less affluent areas to include the electoral areas of Tallaght (Jobstown, Fettercairn, Kilnamanagh, Tymon and Millbrook) as well as Clondalkin (Dunawley, Moorfield, Cappaghmore and Rowlagh) all of which have extremely low levels of participation in Higher Education. The latter, together with high levels of unemployment, reflects the significant economic disparities that exist within the immediate region of the research site. There is undoubtedly a strong geographical and community dimension to under-representation

in progression to higher education, for example with only 15% (Dublin 17) and 16% (Dublin 10), to 26% (Dublin 22) and 29% (Dublin 24) as seen in Figure 1.6.

Figure 1 10 Progression to Higher Education-the Regional Dimension
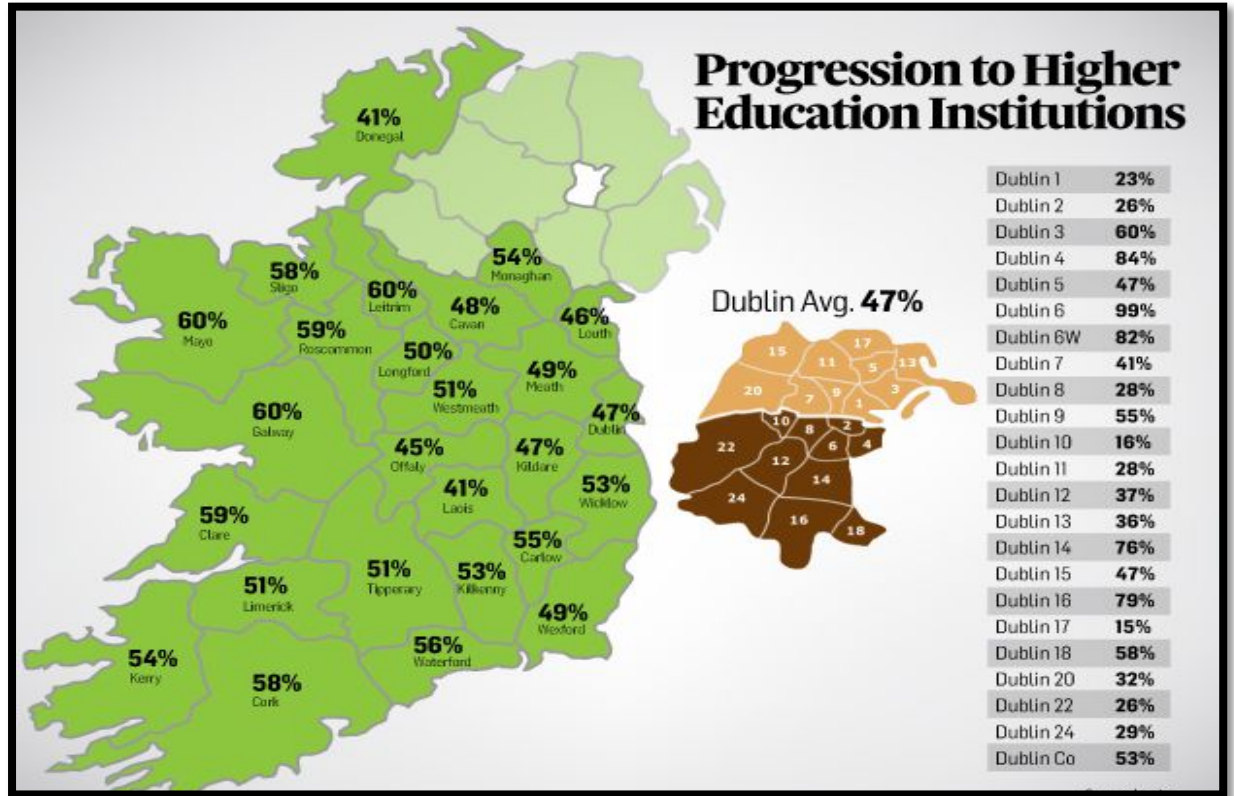
Source: HEA 2017, p.45

1.6.2 The Institute of Technology being studied.

The Institute being researched opened its doors in 1992 as a Regional Technical College Tallaght, joining the network of Higher Education providers originally set up in the 1970s. The college was designated as the Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT) in 1997 and confirmed under The Institutes of Technology Act 2006. ITT is the sole Higher Education institution in South Dublin County which is the most densely populated and highly industrialised regions in the country. In its mission-based Performance Compact, submitted to the HEA in 2014, it states as one of its main roles to "promote equality of access and opportunity to widen participation and facilitate all

learners in achieving their potential" (Strategic Plan, 2009 p.6) and provide learners with Higher Education opportunities from level six to ten on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)" (Strategic Plan 2009 p.8). The Institute has a great track record in its continuing education part-time provision in the evenings since opening its doors in 1992 and meets the high demand for such programmes in this highly industrialised and densely populated region (Strategic Plan 2009 p.5).

1.6.3   The Institute of Technology Tallaght and Widening Participation

The Institute Vision 2009 to 2013, as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2009-2014, includes the goal of Wider Participation (Goal A3):

"The Institute will continue to be an open and accessible Institute and will enhance participation in Higher Education by students from its region, ensuring they achieve their potential. The Institute will make particular efforts to widen participation for those students from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in Higher Education. It will meet its targets in support of the HEA National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education through a range of supports and activities for learners including pre-entry activities, alternative entry mechanisms, and post-entry supports". (Strategic Plan 2009 p.2)

The Institute consistently ranks highly in its rates of participation by the two most under represented socio-economic groups, the non-manual group and the semi- and unskilled manual group: HEA data for 2008 shows that 19% of full-time new entrants into the Institute are from these two groups, considerably higher than the figure for all Higher Education institutions, 13% according to the HEA data from the Equal Access Data survey completed by new entrants to the Higher Education institutions (HEA, 2017). ITT is located in an area of great socio-economic disadvantage and has strong

links with access schools.   The six access schools are those schools positioned in areas of significant socio-economic disadvantage and include:

Mount Seskin Community College

Killinarden Community School

St. Aidan's Community School.

Collinstown Park Community College

Deansrath Community College

St. Kevin's Community College

These schools have programmes designed to assist students gain access to Higher Education: Access to College Education (ACE) in Tallaght, and the Clondalkin Higher Education Access Programme (CHEAP) in Clondalkin.

Analysis by the Department of Education and Skills indicates that 24% of students completing the second year of senior cycle in Access schools/DEIS progress to Higher Education compared to 50% for all schools (Weir et al., 2014, p.55).   Indeed, further analysis by the HEA indicates that 12% of entrants to Higher Education are from an access/DEIS school as seen in Table 1.6 (HEA, 2014)

Table 1 2 Widening Participation Targets for Higher Education

Additional Indicators of performance	Current	Target
Participation by students from Access schools of which	12%	15%
Participation by entrants from lowest participating postcodes in Dublin		
Dublin 17	15%	20%
Dublin 10	16%	21%
Dublin 22	26%	31%
Dublin 24	29%	34%

Source: HEA 2014

In particular, The Institute has focussed its work in this area on schools in local disadvantaged areas, working very closely with six schools positioned in areas of significant socio-economic disadvantage, Jobstown, Killinarden, St. Aiden's (Tallaght) and Collinstown CC, Deansrath CC and St. Kevin's CC (Clondalkin). These schools have programmes designed to assist students gain access to Higher Education: Access to College Education (ACE) in Tallaght, and the Clondalkin Higher Education Access Programme (CHEAP) in Clondalkin. The Institute provides comprehensive post-entry supports to all students who attend the ACE and CHEAP schools such as a student assistance fund, a laptop loan scheme and a book voucher scheme. These same post-entry supports are also available to students who attended a further four schools in disadvantaged areas, namely, St James CBS Dublin 8, Caritas and St John's De La Salle Ballyfermot and Our Lady of Mercy Drimnagh.

ACE is a DES-funded programme for senior cycle students in Killinarden Community School, Jobstown Community College, and St. Aidan's Community School. The Institute Access Officer is on the ACE Management Committee. Established in 1998, ACE now has between 40 and 50 students participating each year. The programme includes intensive after-school academic activities, and weekend language schools. The Institute reserves two places per school for ACE students who do not achieve the necessary CAO academic requirement in the Leaving Certificate Examination. The CHEAP programme commenced in Collinstown Park Community College and its sister school, St Kevin's, in 1997 and in Deansrath Community College in 1998. The project has close links with a range of Higher Education institutions which enable the school to assist a student in securing a place in Higher

Education. The CHEAP programme supports activities such as examination year study, maths tuition hours and language provision hours for students preparing to sit the Leaving Certificate.

The Institute also participates in and strongly supports the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS). In 2009 the number of students who gained entry to first year by way of a QQI Level 5/6 award was 63 (8% of new entrants). In the light of increased demand for places, ITT increased the number of reserved places per school from 2 to 3, giving a total number of reserved places of 18.

The number of entrants from the six access schools has increased with the annual average number of entrants over a three year period from 39 (2007-2009) to 45 (2010 – 2012). The Institute has a number of programmes and support schemes in place to enhance participation, working closely with primary and second-level schools in local disadvantaged areas as well as with colleges of further education and with community education groups so as to adopt a partnership approach.

ITT attracts students from a wide area of greater Dublin and surrounding counties and is the Higher Education provider of choice for students from Tallaght and Clondalkin, which represents 78% of registered students. Considering the low participation rates for the catchment area as seen in Table 1.7, The Institute plays an important part in widening access to Higher Education.

Table 1 3 Higher Education Participation Rates by Dublin Postal District

Postcode	Participation Rate
Dublin 1	23%
Dublin 2	26%
Dublin 3	60%
Dublin 4	84%
Dublin 5	47%
Dublin 6	99%
Dublin 6w	82%
Dublin 7	41%
Dublin 8	28%
Dublin 9	55%
Dublin 10	16%
Dublin 11	28%
Dublin 12	37%
Dublin 13	36%
Dublin 14	76%
Dublin 15	47%
Dublin 16	79%
Dublin 17	15%
Dublin 18	58%
Dublin 20	32%
Dublin 22	26%
Dublin 24	29%
Dublin County	53%
Dublin Total	**47%**

Source: Towards the development of a new National Plan for Equity of Access, HEA, 2014

1.6.4   The role of the researcher within the context of the research site

The researcher joined RTC Tallaght, as it was then called, as a lecturer, when it opened its doors in 1992, excited by its mission to create a brand new college and welcome school leavers in the disadvantaged catchment area who were very much

under-represented in higher education. It has indeed been a great success story and thousands of students have graduated at all levels, both undergraduate and postgraduate. Yet not everyone who came through the door of the RTC or, later ITT, managed to survive first year and when retention data started to be examined nationally in the first HEA reports, it confirmed the researcher's concerns that ITT had very low retention rates, one of the lowest nationally as will be seen in the next section of this chapter.

When the researcher commenced the research, she was a lecturer with seventeen years experience in ITT. In addition, the researcher was also the elected staff representative for multiple terms on Academic Council in ITT, the elected staff representative on Governing Body and seconded to assist the registrar draft the first iteration of a quality manual for ITT. During this time, it had become increasingly noticeable at academic and examination board meetings that first year students were leaving in large numbers, and furthermore, that very little discussion was taking place as to the reasons why. There appeared to be a general acceptance that this was the natural order of things since 'weak students' are not 'capable' of sticking the course, that the national widening participation agenda meant that students who 'were not meant to go higher education' were failing in large numbers.   Essentially, a certain inevitability existed about the low retention figures given the 'type of student' entering ITT and a belief that nothing could really be done about the situation.   This motivated the researcher to pursue the study and establish what the extent of the problem was and what might be done to address the issue.

1.7   ITT and Retention Reports

Eivers, Flanagan & Morgan (2002) in their study of the possible reasons for non-progression in IoTs stated that changes in the demographic structure of the population and the changing role of Institutes of Technology in Higher Education needed to be taken into account. In addition, they question how the maintenance of intake can be balanced with the provision of services that will enhance progression rates. The report also recommended a review of teaching and learning methodologies taking into account the emphasis on research within the sector. In its review of the initiatives undertaken to combat dropout, it has to be recognised that many students withdraw from college for a variety of personal and social reasons, while for others academic failure is the major cause. There is also a need to consider differences between fields of study in devising appropriate interventions. The authors are of the view that most students would benefit from focusing on the experiences of students in their first year, since most problems arise during this time. It is considered important that retention efforts should begin even before students arrive in college and that the Institutes of Technologies should build stronger links with schools so that potential applicants are better informed. There is also a need for extended orientation programmes. The establishment of learning support programme for students who are weak in critical areas is to be recommended as well as a mentoring programme to monitor the problems that individual students may be encountering. A mentoring programme should be linked to a range of services for students identified as being at risk of dropping out.

A more detailed investigation of the pattern and causes of non-progression is needed which would be enhanced considerably if reasons for departure could be documented

in a manner which is consistent across institutions. As part of an internal audit plan in 2006, ITT undertook an assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of the arrangements in place for student retention at the Institute which identified three main areas of weakness (Institute of Technology Tallaght, Self-Evaluation Report 2006). Firstly, although some improved student retention is included as an objective in the Institute strategic plan, there is no formal retention strategy or implementation plan in place to maximise student retention. The absence of such a plan means that progress against strategic objectives cannot be reliably tracked. Secondly, roles and responsibilities regarding retention have not been clearly defined and although it is the case that all individuals within The Institute have a responsibility to ensure that retention rates are as high as possible, it is clear that certain roles must be defined, such as the responsibility for compiling statistics and for measuring the success of initiatives. Finally, although some retention statistics are produced by the Institute, the statistics are not produced regularly or in a prescribed format. Accurate statistics are required to measure the impact of student attrition, to identify and address patterns, to allocate resources in accordance with priority areas and monitor student retention initiatives.

The findings of McCoy and Byrne (2010) show that only Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) students show a statistically significant lower propensity to drop-out when comparing drop-out rates among all IoT students at NQF levels 6 and 7. That is, when controlling for student background, Leaving Certificate performance, field of study and course level among all IoT studying at NQF Levels 6 and 7, only DIT students were less likely to drop-out than all other students (Figure 1.7).

Descriptively, students attending ITT showed a higher risk of drop-out than all other IoT students, studying at Levels 6 and 7, but this was not statistically significant.

Table 1 4 Non-Progression Odds for Institutes of Technology, Unadjusted and Controlling for Additional Individual Characteristics
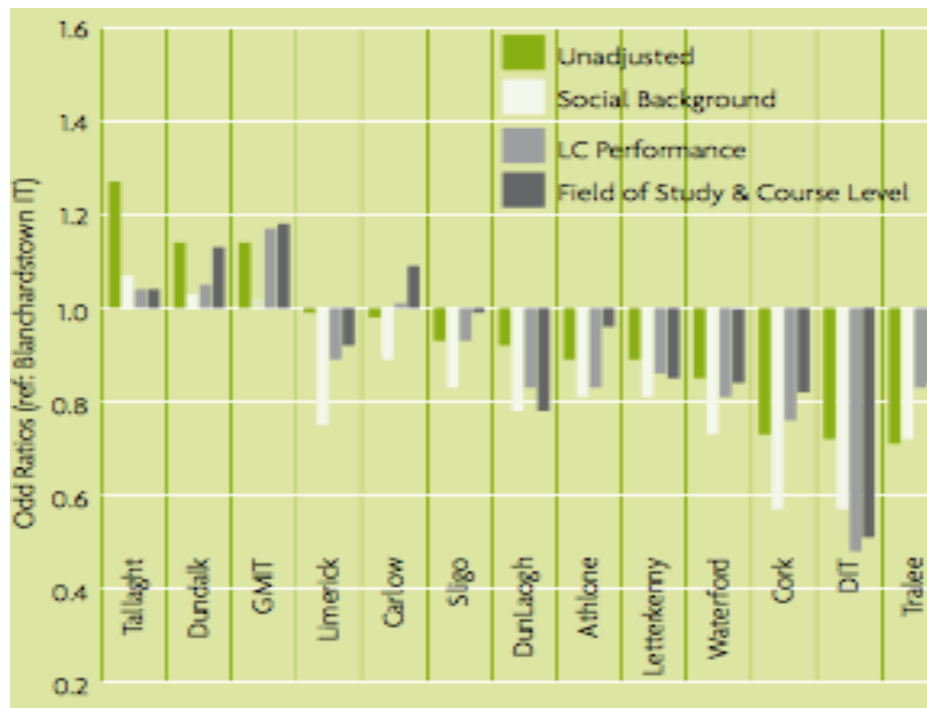
Source: Mooney et al. HEA 2010, p.49

These reports show part of the picture at ITT and the researcher in carrying out this study was determined to present a more comprehensive and holistic picture of retention at ITT. The findings will reveal positive stories, for example, that there is an overall upward trend in retention rates over the period of the study, that the success rate of funded first years is higher than the combined overall rates for the Institute and really importantly that access students entering year one display higher success rates than non-access students over the five years of the study. The research will also reveal what the enablers are to successful

completion in year one as well as what perceived obstacles are causing difficulties for students, some of which are due to the pervading habitus of ITT.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis reflects how the research developed and evolved over the period of the study.

Chapter One: The current chapter introduces the motivation for this research, the rationale, the purpose and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two: This chapter presents the review of literature. The case study analyses on student retention is theoretically guided by Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Decisions to leave or stay are influenced by habitus both individual and institutional. Institutional habitus is more than the culture of an institution, it also includes relational issues and institutional priorities that are often deeply embedded and inform practice. The focus in this chapter is on the student and how the institution reproduces existing social relations in society and how this impacts on the student experience. Also included is the current national literature on retention that have come from the most recent national reports on retention at Higher Education.

Chapter Three: This chapter consists of a presentation of the research methodologies used in carrying out the research. Both quantitative and qualitative data was required in establishing the extent of low retention among the group studied as well as the reasons behind that data. Different methodologies were necessary in order to carry

out a complete analysis of both data sets. This chapter also presents the evaluation cycle including samples tested, timing of research, variables and pilot surveys. It also presents the challenges of being a researcher 'insider' and of carrying out research from within an organisation as well as issues relating to research ethics and data collection.

In Chapter Four: This chapter examines student attainment and non-retention in year one over a five year period (2009-104) in the case study site being studied. The particular research questions being addressed here relate to the extent to which non-progression is an issue in first year among those students accessing Higher Education in an Institute of Technology and whether there is any difference in those rates of completion among students entering ITT from access schools. This quantitative data is gathered from ITT's management information system and reports generated around year one students as well as from examination broadsheets over the five year period. This chapter aims to quantify the extent to which non-progression is an issue in ITT and what patterns or trends are evident from the data comparing the general first year student population to the student group from the access schools.

Chapter Five: This chapter consists of an analysis of the quantitative data gathered to examine how the first year students and staff feel about the institution and if there are differences among students coming from access and non-access schools. The preliminary data collected in this chapter is gathered through an online survey of students, staff, both support and academic.

Chapter Six: The detailed results for the qualitative individual interviews and focus groups are presented in this chapter so as to investigate why non-completion is an issue and what are the reasons students do not complete. Qualitative research data will be presented in this chapter gathered by means of interviews with students who had already left their programme of study before completing year one. This chapter also presents the findings of an online reflective journal, an innovative research tool used to capture the personal student perspective on non-completion. The rich findings support the findings in the previous chapters and add an enhanced perspective on the first year student journey in year one.

Chapter Seven: In this final chapter there is an examination as to how the thesis contributes to current literature on the subject of student completion, Bourdieu's theoretical framework on habitus, as well as what future research developments may exist.

1.9 Conclusion

This thesis investigates the extent to which and the reasons why students from socio-economic disadvantaged groups decide to leave Higher Education at an Institute of Technology within their first year of study. It aims to meet the need for further analysis of the reasons why students do not complete their first year at an Institute of Technology by introducing the student voice into the debate and informing institutions as to how we might improve retention rates among this group of students. Education is a power for social change and if certain social groups are not attaining full potential, the issue must be addressed.

Students who enter Higher Education from second level schools in designated socio-economically disadvantaged areas have already succeeded. They have overcome many real barriers to enter Higher Education. When they decide to leave the Higher Education environment, it is important to assess to what extent they leave and for what reasons. The work of Pierre Bourdieu provides a structural theory of practice connecting structure, relationships, culture, and power and ultimately the reproduction of the values, norms, symbols and education of the dominant class. Bourdieu argues that the curriculum is implicitly biased in favour of middle class students since it uses and values the knowledge that it possesses and which those students form other social groups lack. Bourdieu uses the analogy of a game to convey the sense of activities within a field. To be successful within a game situation requires not just understanding and following the rules but having a sense of the game.

Bourdieu demonstrates how education as an institution acts as a means of social reproduction, maintaining and consolidating existing power relations in society. Bourdieu carried out pioneering collective research on problems concerned with the maintenance of a system of power by means of the transmission of a dominant culture. One of the central themes of his works is that culture and education are central in the affirmation of differences between social classes and in the reproduction of those differences. Mapped against this theoretical framework of *habitus* the thesis investigates why students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds leave Higher Education and what factors can be addressed by an institution in preventing this from happening.

Individuals who choose to depart from an institution choose to do so because they have come to see that further participation in that institution no longer serves their best interests. In some cases that may reflect differences in goals. In others it may reflect the absence of sufficient commitment to pursue those goals. What is important is that institutions determine whether the students in question view their leaving as personal failure because when this happens, there is an important commonality of interests between the student who enters the institution and those institutional members who wish to enhance student retention in their institution. When non-completion is defined as failure then it is a shared failure; the student has failed to attain a desired educational goal and the institution has failed to assist the student in achieving that desired goal.

Chapter 2   Review of Literature

2.1   Introduction

The intention in this chapter is to carry out a review of the research literature relating to student non-completion in Higher Education in Ireland, specifically empirical literature in Ireland on student completion. It will also examine theoretical literature by Pierre Bourdieu regarding social reproduction in education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) and his concepts of *capitals*, *habitus* and *field* as applied to higher education. Finally, critiques of Pierre Bourdieu's work (Adkins and Skeggs, 2004 Reay, 2004 Reed-Danahay, 2005) will be presented and discussed.

Through an analysis of the assumptions made within that literature and to assess the limitations of it so as to position this research contribution within that body of work, this research seeks to examine how Pierre Bourdieu's theories may be useful in examining student completion in year one among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The role of Higher Education institutions in transforming social inequalities has preoccupied Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's work examines the interplay between culture and power and how this shapes social class. This research seeks to examine what relational analogies can be drawn between Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical frameworks that can inform findings on student non-completion in year one at Higher Education among students from a socio-economic disadvantaged group. Bourdieu's work is concerned with researching and investigating the social in a way that takes account of individuals in their own reality. His work can serve as a tool to

focus on the ways in which the socially advantaged and disadvantaged demonstrate attitudes of cultural superiority and inferiority engrained in their *habitus* in their daily interventions. It is a means to re-think the student experiences of this particular group of students in relational terms. Given that the research is taking place in an area of high socio-economic disadvantage, Bourdieu's framework on social reproduction in education serves as a valuable measurement instrument for this research.

Higher Education has the capacity to enable individuals to fulfil their potential as learners but that project can sometimes be undermined by the particular institutional conditions within which the learning takes place. The focus here is on the student and how the institution may reproduce existing social relations in society and how this can have an impact on the student experience. Understanding how practices within a given institution mediate the bigger social forces is central to understanding student success but also to what extent can the first year experience in an Institute of Technology for this group of students be a force for social transformation or an instrument of social reproduction.

Bourdieu's theories assist us in drawing out those institutional processes and structural relations that hide behind every action made within an educational field, from the academic discourse within the lecture theatre to the comportment of a student or a lecturer. His ideas provide us with a set of literacies that make it possible to interpret various scenarios within the Higher Educational field. Educational institutions can potentially create, reinforce or indeed exacerbate inequities that already exist in society. This is why Bourdieu's concepts of *capital* and *habitus* offer us an explanation of how class structures are repeated in subsequent generations with

power being maintained by the elite and middle classes. This becomes possible because the educational system favours and rewards certain behaviours. Educational institutions reinforce the social structure through all of their elements, including curricula.

This chapter examines how the notions of *habitus* and *capital,* as established by Bourdieu, relate to the experiences of first year students from a socio-economic disadvantaged group in an Institute of Technology context. Bourdieu is important to the research as the questions we are examining relate to the experiences of year one students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and how the habitus of that institution has an impact on their likelihood to succeed. In examining the *habitus* of the institution, as expressed through the individuals with whom the students interact, we can identify if there is a variance between the habitus of the students themselves.

2.2   Empirical Literature in Ireland on Student Non-Completion

Policy Context

Higher Education institutions have identified retention, completion and student withdrawal as important issues to be addressed. Targeted initiative funding from the Higher Education Authority increased intra-institutional awareness and the Irish Inter-University Retention Network was established in 2004 (Moore, IUA, 2004). Since 2014, Higher Education Institutions must submit Strategic Compact Plans that include detailed data on retention statistics and initiatives that each institution has in place to

tackle retention issues such as the recruitment of recruitment officers or managers. A focus has also been placed on on the transition from second to Higher Education guided by the Department of Education and Skills Transitions Reform Group (DES, 2015). Many institutions have set up centres to address specific learning challenges in maths, academic English, computing and languages. The educational sector is more than ever subjected to increased monitoring and accountability; institutions must produce retention data and reports as part of their annual compact to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) so as to evaluate the 'study successes of their students. The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* and *The System Performance Framework 2014-2016* both acknowledges 'successful participation' as a key component of the Quality and Qualifications, Ireland (QQI), which aims to ensure that learners successfully participate in a programme leading to a qualification (Government of Ireland 2012). The HEA report (2010) on retention highlighted the fact that in this climate of increased accountability and efficiency that "…minimising students' non-completion of courses is an important part of ensuring that the resources available to the HE sector are utilised with maximum efficiency" (Mooney et al. 2010, p.10).

Previous Research Findings

Byrne and McCoy (2017) in their paper *An Analysis of Retention in Higher Education* state that it is timely to assess the factors that contribute to student success in Higher Education given that Higher Education institutions vary in their 'effectiveness' (Byrne and McCoy 2017 p.111). One-in-six Higher Education students in Ireland do not successfully progress from year one to year two in their course of study (Liston et al. 2016). McCoy et al. (2014) examine students' experiences of the transition to

Higher Education with most of the students who withdrew citing significant differences in teaching and learning styles and the standards expected of them as well as the difficulty in managing the workload. Support within the Higher Education institution was found to play a pivotal role in reducing the prevalence of both academic and social difficulties. Reports show that financial support plays a very important role in student retention and significant lower rates of non-progression exist among student financial aid recipients. Due to an increased financial security and reduced dependence on part-time work students are more likely to progress. Added to this, students in receipt of student aid must attend and successfully complete examinations in order to have continued student aid which is a motivation to students to complete.

The increased levels of non-completion has been the subject of many studies in The Institute of Technology sector (Costello 2013; Crowley et al. 2012; Eivers et al. 2002 and Healy 1999) with the focus being on gathering quantitative data on the levels of non-completion in the sector. The HEA studies in Progression in Irish Higher Education Institutions 2012/13 and 2013/14 provide quantitative analysis of student non-completion across the sector. In recent years there has been a move to better understand non-completion since there can be many variations depending on the level of the programme being studied, the type of institution where the programme is being studied as well as the CAO points on entry. However, in much of the research that has been conducted to date, the student perspective is often missing. This research seeks to address this gap and capture the student perspective on the first year experience.

2.3   Pierre Bourdieu and his relevance to this research

As the central focus of this study is a higher education institution that forms part of a binary or dual form of educational provision, Bourdieu, who studied dual systems of education, is of value to this research. One of Pierre Bourdieu's main reasons for developing his social theory was to overcome dualisms that are brought about in society; he was preoccupied with binary oppositions and explanations. The use of Bourdieu's theory in this research assists in presenting findings and analysing responses from participants specifically in regard to their individual and group *habitus* and capital.

Bourdieu's formula for social practice incorporated *habitus*, *capitals, field* and *practice* (Bourdieu 1992). Bourdieu's work can be seen in the context both of the debate on class inequalities in educational attainment and of broader questions of class reproduction in society. The theory of reproduction is concerned with the link between original class membership and ultimate class membership, and how this link is mediated by the Higher Education system. According to Bourdieu, the education systems of industrialised societies function in such a way as to legitimate class inequalities (Sullivan 2002). Success in the education system is facilitated by the possession of capital and of higher class habitus, success and failure in the education system is seen as being due to individual gifts (or the lack of them). Therefore, for Bourdieu, educational credentials help to reproduce and legitimate social inequalities, as higher-class individuals are seen to 'deserve their place' in the social structure.

Bourdieu (1979) viewed education as an important social institution, perceiving it to be full of 'symbolic violence' because its mediating structures could determine the

allocation of status and power, reinforcing social inequality rather than reducing it. According to Bourdieu, instead of eliminating social inequality, which education purports to advocate, it has the capacity to reinforce it more into society:

"... it [education] is in fact one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a social gift treated as a natural one" (Bourdieu 1974 p. 32).

Bourdieu published three major works on education. The first was *La Reproduction* (1970) where the focus is on cultural capital and the systems that produce it. The second *Homo Academicus* (1988/84) where Bourdieu examines the academic and intellectual fields and the third work *La Noblesse d'Etat* (1996b). In *Homo Academicus* Bourdieu refers to the 'official oblates of the Higher Education clergy' (p.112) and implies that education reproduces class hierarchies. In the prologue of *La Noblesse d'Etat* (1996b) Bourdieu states that social structures and mental structures are homologous. He is concerned with educational institutions which he calls 'immense cognitive machines' and begins with carrying out an analysis of the individual cognitive structures that lecturers and students use in constructing the social reality of their actions and representations. Bourdieu 'unveils' Higher Education as 'one of the foundations of domination and of the legitimate domination' (1990, p.9) asserting that not everyone has academic talent, and it is educational institutions which 'decide' who are and are not 'the talented'. Bourdieu sees this process of classification in something as simple as the language used to assess students in their work: 'brilliant/dull; effortless/laborious' (1990, p.17). It is in this

sense that the educational institutions are 'cognitive machines' holding up a structured mirror to the minds of those who pass through them showing either a match or a mismatch between one form of cultural capital, constituted by and through habitus, and another. In this way, natural selection occurs.

Bourdieu's main concerns about the system is this selection process, class reproduction, academic content, language and academic qualifications equating to social classifications. (Jenkins 1992:190) Bourdieu argues that Higher Education systems preserve an uneven social system by favouring certain cultural heritages and disregarding others and in effect, class continues to be reproduced. Bourdieu also argues that Higher Education is often self-selective. His argument is that students from lower socio-economic classes who have internalised negative dispositions are more likely to drop out due to having limited belief in their likelihood to succeed. This belief is a consequence of previous members of that class. Since students accessing the Institutes of Technology are perceived as entering less prestigious institutions than the university sector and are students entering from a socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the work of Bourdieu presents a valuable framework for the purposes of this research.

Bourdieu suggests 'when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like 'a fish in water' it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 p.127). Michael Apple offers the analogy of a swimming pool to illustrate the potency and potential of social reproduction to advantage one group over another and highlights the dynamics of

social reproduction. "In all too many cases, the situation that has been created is the equivalent of an Olympic-length swimming pool in which a large number of children already drown. The response is to lengthen the pool from 100 metres to 200 metres and give everyone an 'equal opportunity' to stand at the far end of the pool, jump in, and then swim the doubled length. However, some children come from families who are affluent enough to have given their children swimming lessons or have sent them to expensive summer camps, whereas others could not even swim the earlier length because of not having such economic advantages. "Yes, we guaranteed equality of opportunity, but basically all we really did was put in place another stratifying device that ratified prior advantages in cultural and economic capital" (Apple 2001 p23). Bourdieu makes use of four concepts to explain social inequality: *habitus*, *field*, *capital* and *symbolic violence*. It is in the interaction between one another which, according to Bourdieu causes social inequality. His studies in education followed a methodological approach which involved constructing a social taxonomy of the field. Instead of taking a sample of individual students for analysis and out of that establish generalities, Bourdieu was interested in the structural morphological changes in the total population. Thus, his approach to *Homo Academicus* was to study academia as a field first and in turn consider how individual dispositions-*habitus*-could be seen as a procedural part and product of this social space.

2.4 Bourdieu, *capitals* and education

Bourdieu's best-known concept of cultural capital has three distinct forms (1990). It is "embodied", or connected to individuals in their language, accent, dispositions, actions and styles. It is "objectified" or connected to objects, such as art, books,

buildings and machines. It is "certified" or connected to institutions-schools, colleges and universities which produce educational credentials. The overall consequence is the reproduction of the values, norms, symbols and education of the dominant class. For instance, Bourdieu argues that the curriculum is implicitly biased in favour of middle class students since it uses and values the knowledge that it possesses and which those students from other social groups lack. This prizing of tacit knowledge, language and experiences is evident in the relationship between staff and students as well as in the preference for traditional pedagogies and curricula.

The capital Bourdieu talks about relates to the circle of contacts or social networks to which the person has access. These networks and contacts create real and potential resources that can be mobilised to fulfil functions: "…as in the case of education, we do not enter fields with equal amounts, or identical configurations of capital. Some have inherited wealth, cultural distinctions from up-bringing and family connections. Some individuals, therefore, already possess quantities of relevant capital bestowed on them in the process of habitus formation which makes them better players than others in certain field games" (Grenfell and James 1998 p.21). In this way, the network-based resource that is social capital reveals itself through the relationships, social supports and the sense of cohesion each first year student experiences. "The volume of social capital possessed by a given agent…depends on the size of network connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural, or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected" (Bourdieu 1986 p.249).

While economic capital according to Bourdieu includes material assets which are "immediately and directly convertible into money" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.242), social capital is intangible but it does have the ability to be productive and to facilitate action within the social structure. Sense of belonging and connectedness through networks must be constructed and maintained through strategic investment of capital, whether economic, human, cultural, or social.

2.4.1 The role of *capitals* in higher education

Capital ultimately means power; the capacity to exert control over one's future. It is this 'differential distribution of capital' that structures society yet individuals do strive to optimise their level of capital. The accumulation of their capital is what determines their 'social trajectory' and their opportunities in life. There is social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital; all of which interact between one another. Bourdieu sees cultural capital as the root of social reproduction and it is one of Bourdieu's main interests. He affirms that it is not as easily obtainable as economic capital; it is something that one acquires through life as a result of social circumstances.

"The selection of meanings which objectively define a group's or a class culture as symbolic system is arbitrary insofar as the structure and functions of that culture cannot be deduced from any universal principle, whether physical, biological or spiritual, not being linked by any internal relations to the 'nature of things' or any 'human nature' (Bourdieu 1977 p.8).

However, this cultural capital is 'assigned'. Bourdieu's term 'arbitrary culture' means that culture is simply assigned at random; no basis for why one class should like a

certain music or art more than another or why one is more admirable than another. Nevertheless, cultural capital is ultimately how one speaks, one's taste in life, one's attitude towards art and music and one's bodily dispositions. Alternatively, how one acts in any given situation, even if there is no reason why any of these should reflect one's class.

According to Bourdieu's use of social capital, students have limited access to the information that will enable them to succeed at college, such as knowledge of the benefits of degree completion and of various resources, such as tutoring or graduate mentoring programmes. Ricardo Stanton-Salazar (1997) describes the concept of social capital in terms of access to mentors and resources to encourage and educate students. Middle-class students reap the benefits of family- and school-based networks for academic support (Stanton-Salazar 1997). However, low-income students do not have equal social capital and do not benefit from these relationships. Social capital has to do with the amount and quality of resources individuals have access to within their social networks. Cultural capital once again being the central part, Bourdieu found that it affected educational attainment as students often performed higher if they obtained more cultural capital. He saw that cultural capital could be transformed into occupations with high status and incomes at the end of the tunnel of education. Bourdieu also found that curriculum content and style were all tailored towards the language of people who held high cultural capital.

Social capital is defined as the various social networks one belongs to that provide access to resources within these networks. Putnam (2000) writes that "whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of

individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (p.19). Portes (1998) expands on this idea of social capital when he states that to "possess social capital, a person must be related to others, and it is those others, not himself, who are the actual source of his or her advantage" (p.7).

The OECD claims that communities can be "materially poor, but socially rich" (1999, p.20) and demonstrates differences between the impacts of unemployment on communities with differing levels of social capital. In the local area of ITT, traditional working class communities are characterised as having strong family and community bonds. It is however possible those students entering ITT from these communities have high levels of social capital within their own communities but this may not be valued in the Higher Education institution. Preece (1999) asserts that the social capital is owned by some sectors of society is simply not valued by others. To be specific, these students from these communities imply alternative policy solutions. Preece shifts the responsibility for change firmly on to educational institutions. Social capital provides a support network and can in this way overcome some of the social challenges students face on entering Higher Education. At its most basic level, friends help people to feel like they belong, and deal with the move into Higher Education. It is common knowledge that when students have problems, they will often turn to friends before they tap into the formal support services. Social capital can also create academic benefits such as networks of contacts whereby students discuss academic problems and help build self-confidence. At this point it should be mentioned that social capital can include relationships with academics as well as with class colleagues. Students can access social capital through the relationship they have

with lecturing staff and tutors. Tinto (1993) cites a student who comments that by participating in a "learning community" she has more social contacts and as a result is learning more both in and out of the forma classroom through the process of dialogue.

2.5   *Habitus* in Education

Habitus tries to explain the dispositions that influence individuals to become who they are and also include the conditions of existence (Bourdieu, 1992) and the activities of individuals display their relations to society. Habitus explains how the body is present in the social world but also how the social world is present in the body (Reay 2004). While dispositions form a person's habitus (Bourdieu 1998), it is also formed by an individual's history. Nash (1999) argues that habitus discloses the traces of its origins in practice, including how people act in a particular way, that reflects social structures and the process of socialisation, which in turn is reproduced through their actions.

Research questions 3 and 4 of this study relate to how habitus can impact on year one completion and how the habitus of the staff can be at variance with that of the student, in this way, the status quo is reproduced. Bourdieu explores the dynamics of social class and how the members of the higher social groups adopted different methods to protect and reproduce their social positions. The terminology that Bourdieu developed and the methodological framework centres on the central question in Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture (1970) is the manner in which dominant structures such as class and power are produced and reproduced. His term

'reproduction' refers to the production, reproduction and persistence of the dominant group in replicating power and advantage. Bourdieu believes that the concept of habitus solves a fundamental problem in sociology which is the conflict between structure and agency. Bourdieu notes that working class students are more likely to drop out of the education system than middle and upper-class students, even if we control for previous achievement. He claims that this is a more important mechanism of selection than exam failure.

"Thus, previous performances being equal, pupils of working-class origin are more likely to eliminate themselves from secondary education by declining to enter it than to eliminate themselves once they have entered, and a fortiori more likely not to enter than to be eliminated from it by the explicit sanction of examination failure" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990 p. 153).

Bourdieu claims that this can be explained in terms of the working class habitus which is in some way formed by the objective chances of success shared by the class. The habitus in turn determines the actions of the members of the class: "... the negative predispositions towards the school which result in the self-elimination of most children from the most culturally unfavoured classes and sections of a class ...must be understood as an anticipation, based upon the unconscious estimation of the objective probabilities of success possessed by the whole category, of the sanctions objectively reserved by the school for those classes or sections of a class deprived of cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1977a p.495). *Habitus* gives us an insightful way to understand social interactions. Actors' behaviours will be related to their position in the field. As Bourdieu has indicated, an actor's practical relation to the future, which

defines their present behaviour, consists of the relationship between the habitus and the opportunities offered to them. The relation to what activity is possible is a matter of whether it is within the power of the individual; this in turn depends on what position an individual occupies within the field. Hence his phrase 'habitus is a fate, not a destiny". By this he means 'fate' represents one's lot in life, that from which one has come (*le sort* in French); destiny represents one's future. The "sense of the probable future is constituted in the prolonged relationship with a world structured according to the categories of the possible…and the impossible" (p.40). Dispositions include our habits, beliefs, values, tastes, bodily posture, thoughts and feelings that Bourdieu argues are socially produced. They are made and not inherent and are inculcated through childhood as children we watch and listen and the cultural capital of those that surround us, becoming part of our habitus.

In this way, the 'collective heritage' is transformed into an individual's unconscious, which is nevertheless shared by others. In this way, culture is connected with education and the individual with society as a whole and it is a relationship that is at the centre of the education system. *Habitus,* as the Latin indicates, is something non-natural, a set of acquired characteristics which are the product of social conditions and which, for that reason, may be totally or partially common to people who have been the product of similar social conditions. *Habitus* is not something inborn; it is a product of history, of social experience and education. Indeed, it may be changed by history, by new experiences, education, or training. Any dimension of *habitus* is very difficult to change but it may be changed through a process of awareness and of pedagogic effort. It is defined as "a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations" (Bourdieu 1990

p.53).   *Habitus* is thus a sense of ones (and others') place and role in the world of one's lived environment. *Habitus* and the conceptual framework, within which it sits, are valuable for understanding life, particularly how the patterns of individual lives fit together into the lives of larger social units, however defined.

Habitus is an embodied as well as a cognitive sense of place. The dispositions of *habitus* serve to predispose actors to choose behaviour which appears to them more likely to achieve a desired outcome with regard to their previous experiences, the resources available to them and the prevailing power relations: "the relation to what is possible is a relation to power." (p.4). Actors undertake a practical evaluation of their potential behaviour. However, such a practical evaluation is often not a conscious pattern of rational thought, but rather an intuitive practical reaction to a situation based on experience; an embodied sensibility, which leads to 'structured improvisations'. Bourdieu uses the analogy of a game to convey the sense of activities within a field. To be successful within a game situation requires not just understanding and following the rules but having a sense of the game. It requires constant awareness of and responsiveness to the play of all the actors involved. It requires improvisation and flexibility. Such an insight and sense of the game, a '*habitus'*, develop with experience. Players learn from experience about what is possible and what is not as well as how to work effectively within existing practices in the field and how the rules might be modified. Players' activities are constructed, therefore, both by the external limits of rules and regulations and also by their own internalisations and placing of limits on what they think they can do in the circumstances. Decisions to complete or not complete are influenced by 'habitus'. Bourdieu's habitus translated into non-completion terms are those students having a

disposition that pushes them toward departure rather than toward continuing within the community of the institution.

2.5.1 Symbolic Power in Education

Pierre Bourdieu and his work at the *Centre de sociologie européene* in Paris is especially relevant to researchers of the context and development of working class culture and the maintenance of a system of power by means of the transmission of culture. For the purposes of this research a significant part of Bourdieu's work is how the reproduction of culture through pedagogic action is reproduced in the whole social system as a whole. Bourdieu (1977) demonstrated how education as an institution acts as a means of social reproduction, maintaining and consolidating existing power relations in society. He argues that the institution does this through what he terms 'symbolic violence. 'Symbolic violence,' Bourdieu explains, happens when a pedagogical happening can be said to have been imposed on the basis of unequal power, between the educator and the learner (Bourdieu 1977 p.7). The curriculum legitimises and reproduces these relations of power. In this way, according to Bourdieu, the dominant classes reproduce themselves, and the small numbers of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who succeed, do so because they work hard at overcoming the disadvantage of prior habitus that is at odds with the system. Higher Education, according to Bourdieu, not only reproduces class interests but also does it in a manner that it is 'misrecognised' as neutral and therefore accepted. The dynamics of social reproduction are 'so integrated into our everyday consciousness that it is extremely hard, not to say, impossible, to raise oneself to the point of view of reproduction' (Althusser 1971 p.43). Bourdieu explored the dynamics of social class and how members of the higher social groups

could adopt a variety of measures to protect and essentially 'reproduce' their given social positions. Bourdieu established an entire terminology and methodological framework and his seminal work in this area 'Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture', explores the way in which the dominant structures, such as class and power, are not only produced but are reproduced. By 'reproduction' he means the production, re-production and persistence of the dominant group in re-producing their advantages and power.

2.5.2 Bourdieu's concept of *field* in education

Bourdieu has been described as a 'leading living social theorist' (Shusterman 1991 p.1) and his concepts of *habitus*, *field* and *social capital* constitute an attempt to make sense of the relationship between objective social structures such as institutions, and everyday practices-what people do and why they do it, to understand and explain the relationship between people's practices and the contexts-discourses, values, rules and regulations-which produce and transform attitudes and practices as 'cultural fields'. A 'cultural field' is defined by Bourdieu as a series of institutions, rules, rituals and conventions, which constitute an objective hierarchy, but also is made up of the interactions between institutions, rules and practices. According to Bourdieu, the amount of power a person has within a field depends on that person's position within the field and the amount of capital s/he possesses and the ability to navigate fields.

Bourdieu explains the competition for capital within fields as reproduction and transformation. Higher Education establishes structural relations between lecturers and students, which help to maintain the distinction between each other. For Bourdieu, the Higher Education system works to 'consecrate' social distinctions by

cultivating certain ways of acting that have the effect of reproducing social inequality. Although more and more people have the opportunity to attend Higher Education, the entire system continues to work to reinforce privilege. This is done in many ways. For example, by making distinctions between prestigious universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, Harvard and Yale and less prestigious centres of Higher Education, such as the remaining Universities and Institutes of Technologies, we can recognise how Higher Education can reproduce social division. Higher Education is not simply about providing students with discipline-specific skills and knowledge in a given area but in equipping them with a generic set of skills that will distinguish them over people who have not received Higher Education. Bourdieu suggested a three level approach for the analysis of fields- the position of the field within the field of power; the structure of the field itself; and then the individual habitus: "To evoke the structure of the field of power and the relation that the university fields taken as a whole maintains with it, analyse -as far as the empirical data permits-the structure of the university field and the position which the different faculties occupy within it, and finally, analyse the structure of each faculty and the position that the different disciplines occupy within it" (Bourdieu 1990 p.32). Bourdieu was starting to carry out research in education at a time when the student population was exploding and many of these new students were children from working class families. Bourdieu saw the structure of the university field as a homologous reflection of the structure of the field of power. "As a 'habit-formed force', the school provides those who have undergone its direct or indirect influence not so much with particular and particularised schemes of thought as with those general disposition which engenders particular schemes, which may then be applied to different domains of thought and

actions, a disposition that one could call the cultivated habitus" (Bourdieu 1990 p.184).

2.6   Bourdieu and the context of the institution

There is also institutional habitus which is more than the culture of a given institution but includes relational issues and institutional priorities that are often deeply embedded and inform practice. In seeking to better understand the first year student experience and why students complete or not, we need to uncover those aspects associated with the fact that learning at Higher Education takes place within an institutional context which is itself part of a wider context in society. "The danger with individualising the problem, and thus problematising the individual, is that it allows traditional, elitist and exclusionary practices to continue within the education system" (Thomas 2001, p.3). In other words, in order to understand a student's experience, we need to understand it as something that happens in an immediate context, the context of the institution and within the wider cultural and societal context. The immediate context tells us about the specifics of who is involved in a given activity. The institutional context tells us that the particular activity is taking place within the context of Higher Education with its particular economic and social functions, its ways of organising, communicating and validating knowledge.

Research question 5 of this study examines what practices an institution can put in place to enable successful completion among more students in year one. Individuals who choose to depart from an institution choose to do so because they have come to see that further participation in that institution no longer serves their best interests. In

some cases, that may reflect differences in goals. In others it may reflect the absence of sufficient commitment to pursue those goals. What is important is that institutions determine whether the students in question view their leaving as personal failure because when this happens, there is an important commonality of interests between the student who enters the institution and those institutional members who wish to enhance student retention in their institution. When we define dropout as failure then it is a shared failure; the student has failed to attain a desired educational goal and the institution has failed to assist the student in achieving that desired goal.

To understand the occurrence of continuing patterns of departure we need to refer to the structural conditions of institutions, to the social and intellectual character of an institution as well as the mechanisms which enable individuals coming from disadvantaged backgrounds to become integrated as competent members of the institution. Bourdieu believes that 'social life cannot be understood as simply the aggregate of individual behaviour' (Jenkins, 1992 p.74), so that structures need to be analysed too.

The significance of organisations is apparent in Bourdieu's work since he viewed the education system as the primary institution through which class order is maintained. Social capital is perceived as the "glue" that helps more people through participation to feel more included and less excluded. In an academic context, relationships with peers and academic staff can have huge benefits on academic progress   Social capital can also be of value and be developed through relationships with peers within the classroom setting through small group learning or learning communities. Not only are the students learning but also, they are creating networks of peers that they feel

attached to and look to for support. Since institutional commitment is a precursor or predictor of student completion, institutional commitment itself becomes an important object of study. Institutional commitment is a student's overall impression, satisfaction, sense of belonging, and perception of quality, match with, and attraction to a particular institution.

Networking skills which play a pivotal part in a student's decision to complete or not. The students who do not complete year one certainly have networking skills but perhaps these do not match those of the *habitus*. Institutes can assist in the process of community formation by creating student networks. The social capital Bourdieu talks about relates to the circle of contacts or social networks to which the person has access. These social networks and contacts create real and potential resources that can be mobilised to fulfil functions: "…as in the case of education, we do not enter fields with equal amounts, or identical configurations of capital. Some have inherited wealth, cultural distinctions from up-bringing and family connections. Some individuals therefore, already possess quantities of relevant capital bestowed on them in the process of habitus formation which makes them better players than others in certain field games" (Grenfell 2008 p.21).

Preece (1999) asserts that others simply do not value the social capital, owned by some sectors of society. Social capital provides a support network and can in this way overcome some of the social challenges students face on entering Higher Education. At its most basic level friends help people to feel like they belong, and deal with the move into Higher Education. Social capital can also create academic benefits such as networks of contacts whereby students discuss academic problems

and help build self-confidence. At this point we should mention that social capital can include relationships with academics as well as class colleagues. Students can access social capital through the relationship they have with lecturing staff and tutors. Tinto cites a student who comments that by participating in a "learning community" she has more social contacts and as a result is learning more both in and out of the formal classroom through the process of dialogue.

Thomas (2002), Stack and Casey (2000), in their studies suggest that "social capital" can contribute to student retention and success in Higher Education but that institutional practices can militate against the development of social capital by students.   Educational institutions can potentially create, reinforce or indeed exacerbate inequities that already exist in society. This is why Bourdieu's concept of social capital and habitus offer us an explanation of how class structures are repeated in subsequent generations with power being maintained by the elite and middle classes. This becomes possible because the educational system favours and rewards certain behaviours. Educational institutions reinforce the social structure through all of their elements, including curricula.

When talking about social capital, that is the resources and power which people obtain through their social networks and connections, Bourdieu recognises the important links and potential conversions between social capital and its relationship to power.   The exercise of that power, often through symbolic exchange, often communication, lies in the basic shared belief about the relative positions of the agents involved. Actively engaged, we obtain a huge amount of practical knowledge. This knowledge, however, is filtered by the embodied understanding of our *habitus*

which in turn reflects and affects our understanding of what is taking place in various situations and most importantly for this research purposes, shapes how we practically engage (or not) with those situations. Bourdieu has recognised the potential oppressive nature of *habitus*, writing, "It would be wrong to underestimate the pressure or oppression, continuous and often unnoticed, of the ordinary order of things" (p.140).

2.6.1 *Habitus* and the systems of the institution

Institutions can develop social capital in different ways: formal and informal social activities promote friendships and networks between students. Having a range of organised and social spaces is therefore important for that to happen. Shared living arrangements favour opportunities that develop more contacts. At the moment, some institutions do not value the importance of developing social capital. Today there is a lack of time, the lack of space within functional buildings and there is often a limited range of social activities and spaces. More students are in paid employment, the challenge is to develop social capital in the learning environment of the class. This is indeed a challenge in a climate that increasingly views them as outputs and clients. Reviewing and rethinking approaches to learning to incorporate this social element is a change particularly in those modules where it has not traditionally been represented.

For many of the students in ITT there is less time for socialisation within the institution. Unlike traditional students who live in shared student accommodation or student residences who are members of student clubs and societies and unions, today many students only attend lectures. These students are engaged in paid employment with many external responsibilities. All of this militates against participation in student social life. Institutions need to provide a variety of community spaces,

physical infrastructure where students can meet and interact including those where it is not necessary to spend money. However, leaders within Higher Education institutions state that space is a premium and the needs of students are often not a priority. Institutions are normally made up of both academic and social systems each having its own formal and informal structure. The formal structure concerns itself with the academic affairs of the institution and the formal education of the students. Its activities revolve around the classrooms and the learning spaces of the institution (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2 1 Habitus and Institutional Systems
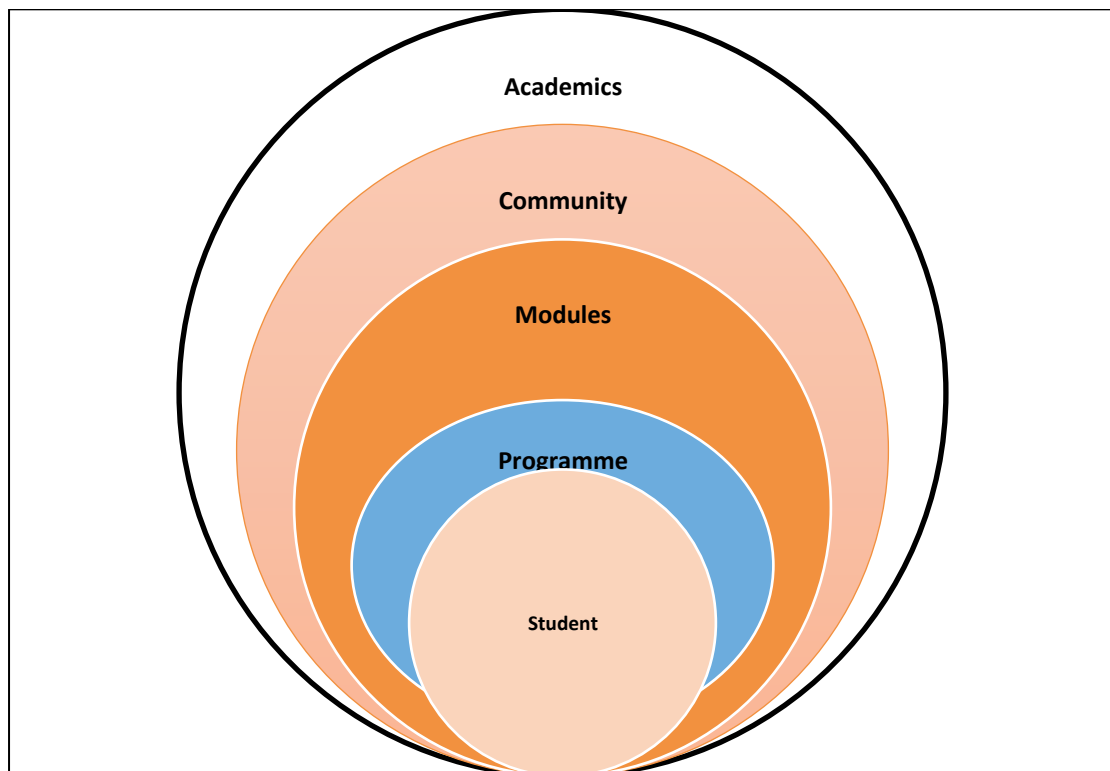
Source: Researcher's own work

Since the academic and social systems of the institution are, to a certain extent, distinct, it follows that integration in either system does not automatically imply similar integration in the other system. A student may well achieve integration in one system, for example may be an established member of the social system of the institution and still not complete because of an inability to become an established

member of the academic domain, that is to say, failure to achieve adequate grades. Equally, social isolation can lead to departure regardless of a student's academic performance. Bourdieu found that students express their resistance to education as a reaction to the structural impositions of the system that appear intolerable to them. The educational system does not educate the young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds to recognise the link between high educational qualifications and high financial rewards. The school system has, therefore, failed to relate to the background of those being taught.

Differences in institutional rates of completion arise out of discernible differences in the structure of institutional academic and social systems. Bourdieu tells us that this is particularly apparent in those Higher Educational settings where the two systems are highly segregated and/or unequal in size, as is the case among non-residential institutions where local systems are often quite weak. In the latter instances, the absence of strong, enduring social systems comprised of interacting students may pose "serious problems for institutions which seek to fully integrate their students into the life of the institution" (Tinto 1987 p.108). Experiences, for example, in the informal academic system, may feedback on a student's experiences in the formal part of that system. This may happen in two ways. If interactions between the institutional staff outside the classroom are favourable this may lead directly to improved intellectual development and in turn integration into the academic system of the institution. Conversely, the lack of informal student-staff interactions and/or unsatisfactory interactions can lead to lower levels of academic performance and in turn results in withdrawal by the student. All of this interplay between formal and informal interactions can also take place within the social system of the institution.

For example, if a student gets a job in the formal social structure of the institution, as an officer in the students' union, or in the library, this may help to improve individual integration into the informal domain of student life.

Integration in both the academic and social systems of an institution are mutually interdependent since they usually involve many of the same individuals, what happened in one system will unavoidably have an impact on the other. These could also be perceived as being in competition with each other since academics are constantly asking the student to allocate time and energy to their studies which sometimes make integration into the social system of the institution very difficult. This can lead to social isolation among our students. It is possible, if the subcultures of each system are supportive of activities in each system, for the two systems to encourage integration in all systems of the institution. Integrative experiences increase the likelihood of persistence while their absence increases the likelihood of departure since it establishes conditions that tend to isolate the student from the daily life of the institution.

Closely allied to attitudes of staff and the relationships that students have with them are the issues around how teaching, learning and assessment is organised. Methods of teaching, learning and assessment provide opportunities for interactions between students, staff and their peers but also with institutional structures. Therefore, they have a central role in both changing and reproducing social and cultural inequalities. According to Bourdieu, a traditional institutional habitus assumes that the habitus of the dominant group is the correct one and treats all students as if they possessed it and this is reflected in teaching, learning and assessment strategies. According to

Bourdieu's work in France, the habitus of the dominant social group acts as a multiplier of educational capital. In a similar way, Berger and Milem (1999) outlined organisational behaviour, organisational culture and organisational climate as crucial to understanding the effect the campus organisation had on the student. "Organisational culture represents patterns of organisational behaviour that have become institutionalised as structures…organisational climate represents current perceptions about organisational behaviour that are less permanent and more transitory than the patterns of behaviour that have already become enculturated on campus" (Smart, 2000, p.275). This includes a variety of organisational features and behaviours that have an impact on student experiences and outcomes, and it has been used as a framework for examining the impact of the college environment on student outcomes, including student retention

Space and time are required for the accumulation of cultural capital. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is useful in examining student experiences in first year to highlight the issue of privilege in relation to what students bring with them to the learning situation and how they engage or not with the institution. "Capital is any resource effective in a given social arena that enables one to appropriate the specific profits arising out of participation and contest in it" (Wacquant 1998 p.7). He argues that the effective transfer of cultural capital takes 'extended' time and association with those who have it. The time needed is dependent on 'time free from economic necessity' (Bourdieu 1997 p.321). This transfer of cultural capital may be constrained under curricular conditions where there may be little open and free time for contact between students and lecturers.

2.6.3   The institutional *habitus*

The significance of organisations and institutions is evident in Bourdieu's work since he viewed the educational institutions as the main organisation through which class order is maintained. Reay et al. (2001) postulate that an 'institutional habitus' is a significant factor on second level students' choice with regard to Higher Educational choices. In the same way, pedagogy becomes an instrument that reinforces status by ensuring that the values of the dominant class and culture are the most likely to be successful. If a student feels like s/he does not fit in and that their reference points of social and cultural practices are not valued and in fact are inappropriate, they are more inclined to leave early, they become as Bourdieu describes it, a 'fish out of water.' Liz Thomas (2002) argues that where institutions celebrate diversity and difference, students from diverse backgrounds will find greater acceptance and this promotes higher levels of completion. This brings us to the concept of agency, Webb et al, defined agency (2002) as 'the idea that individuals are equipped with the ability to understand and control their own actions, regardless of the circumstances of their lives" (p.ix). Bourdieu made the comparison with a 'field' and its practices to knowing the 'rules of the game' or 'how the game is played'. The strategies that an agent might use to act in the world derive from the ability to 'play the game' and take advantage of the opportunities that come along. Bourdieu claimed that the code of a culture (rules of the game) is not fixed as a way of being, these can be generated and invented. In Higher Education we cannot assume a shared culture between all members of the institution. Multiple cultures intersect and often it is the dominant ways of thinking expressed in ways of teaching and assessing which may be differentially distributed between members. For some, joining this cultural complex may seem natural and seamless whereas for others it may seem like entering an alien environment in which the activities and meanings are unclear and out of one's control

(Leathwood and O'Connell 2003 p.597-615). The challenge is to develop ways in which an individual's identity is affirmed and incorporated into the organisation's culture (Braxton 2000). Students, particularly students from disadvantaged backgrounds, can be significantly influenced by the extent to which they perceive that their values, expectations and learning styles are recognised by the institution. When their overwhelming perception is of being in what might be described as an 'alien' culture, they are likely to choose to leave.

Decisions to complete or not complete are influenced by 'habitus'. Bourdieu's habitus translated into non-completion terms are those students having a disposition which pushes them toward departure rather than toward continuing within the community of the institution. There is also institutional habitus which is more than the culture of a given institution but includes relational issues and institutional priorities that are often deeply embedded and inform practice.

In order to address the research question with regard to the importance of habitus in the experience of year one students, it is necessary to assess how the habitus manifests itself through the systems of the institution. How the students are made to feel as if they belong to the institution, if they feel that they are part of a community and are engaging both formally and informally with their learning and through the communication and language that is used, they are part of that community.

Figure 2 2 How Habitus expresses itself in an institutional context
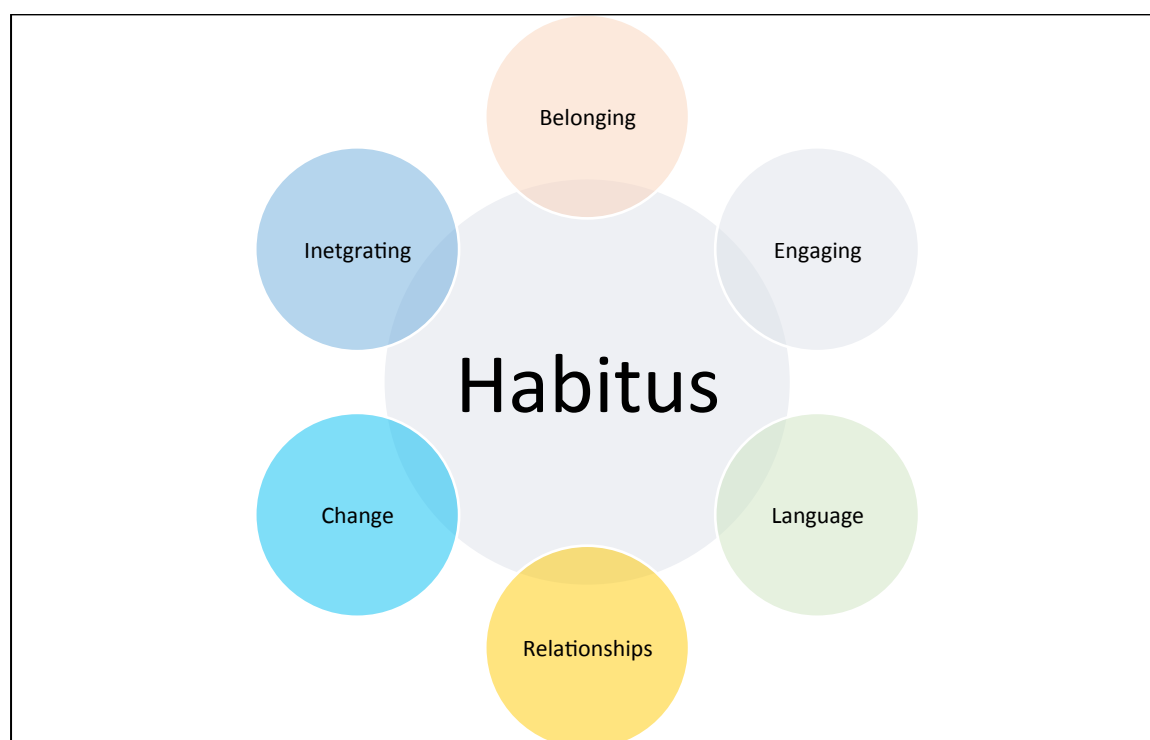
Source: Researcher's own work

For the purposes of the current research, it is how Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* expresses itself through the systems of an institution, which are of importance in the context of non-completion. When a first year student entering Higher Education encounters change, it is how that student integrates, how the very language that now becomes part of this new environment and the relationships h/she forms that all contribute to the overall sense of belonging to that institution (Figure 2.2).

2.6.4   *Habitus* and levels of integration

Students arrive in Higher Education with a variety of patterns of personal, family, and academic characteristics and skills including initial dispositions and intentions with respect to college attendance and personal goals. These intentions and commitments are subsequently modified and reformulated on a continuing basis through a series of interactions between the individual and the structures and members of the academic and social systems of the institution. Rewarding encounters with the formal and

informal academic and social systems of the institutions lead to greater student integration and thus to completion. Integration is the extent to which the individual shares the normative attitudes and values of peers and faculty in the institution and abides by the formal and informal structural requirements for membership in that community or in subgroups of it. As integration increases, it strengthens students' commitments to both their personal goals and to the institution through which these goals can be achieved. Negative interactions and experiences, however, tend to impede integration and distance the individual from the academic and social communities of the institution, thereby reducing commitments to both goals and institution and promoting the individual's marginality and ultimate non-completion (Tinto 1993 p.76).

2.6.5   *Habitus* and isolation

Isolation is where insufficient levels of engagement exist for integration to be possible (Tinto 1975). Some students feel lonely and isolated during the first weeks of term. Wilson (2003) has suggested that how students perceive themselves can impact on the integration process; if they see themselves as being 'different' this can affect the process of fitting in. Liz Thomas (2002) found that socialisation was an important aspect of integration into a Higher Education community with positive impacts on academic motivation, willingness to look for help and achievement. Forsyth and Furlong (2003) found that students were not able to find or fit in with other similar students were in danger of becoming socially isolated which could eventually have a negative impact on their confidence and commitment to their chosen programme of study. The level of social integration Thomas has identified as being influenced by economic factors, i.e. having enough disposable income as well as cultural ones.

Living at home is often the profile of many students in ITT; this is an economic decision but can contribute to social isolation. Those students who do seek to become involved in college life can find themselves trapped between two worlds but belonging to neither. Robert Connell (1993) in his deliberations on 'compensatory programmes' demonstrates that very often they can run the risk of reinforcing patterns of inequality since they function within existing institutions that force students to compete although the resources they draw on are unequal. Rather the focus, according to Connell (1993) should shift to how inequalities are produced and examine the influence of the institutional character of the institution systems and the cultural processes that occur in them. Anxiety has been identified as an important risk factor for suicidal behaviour. It is a sense of dread and apprehension about the future and is associated with a loss of confidence and a loss of assertiveness. It is true that the level of integration experienced by a student with the institution depends on the student's personal qualities and background characteristics such as pre-entry ability, gender, class and ethnicity. Indeed it is also true that withdrawal is less likely when the personal attributes and background characteristics match with the ethos of the institution and persistence with study at the institution is considered more likely when attendance on a particular course at a particular institution is part of a personal goal commitment.

2.6.6 *Habitus* and belonging

Undoubtedly, belonging cannot happen simply by passing examinations and meeting the formal requirements of the institution. Belonging is also influenced by the prevailing academic culture of an institution since that culture helps identify for the formal structure what constitutes competent membership and what does not. If we

consider that the particular programme on which the student has registered as a community, this is one form of affiliation that ties the individual student to the life of the institution. Reminding us that Higher Education is a 'field' in which there is constant struggle for position to the extent that students need similar social relations. The importance of friends and networks at Higher Education makes sense in the context of social capital. Hence the importance for Higher Educational institutions to create social networks through living arrangements as well as socialising facilities and collaborative learning communities (Thomas, 2002). Bourdieu, in his notion of habitus, seeks to examine how the dynamics of commitment and disaffection might be different in socially disparate schools. He states that the way students engage is different depending on where their school is located in the larger societal pattern of organised social differences and inequalities.

The social process in the institution is the way in which the single behaviours, words or signs, become representative of the self. By focussing our attention upon the families and children it implies that something is lacking in the family, and so, in the child. Once the problem is seen even implicitly in this way, then it becomes appropriate to coin the terms 'cultural deprivation', 'linguistic deprivation' thus distracting attention from the deficiencies in the institution itself.

2.6.7 *Habitus* and dealing with situational change

An important factor for completion is the level of regulation within an institution and its causal relationship with the emotional disposition of the non-completing student. Students have to deal with enormous situational change and become aware of the incongruity between their initial state and their expectations. Such an example could

be their expectations regarding their programme requirements. In such cases or where the student views the new regulation as interruptive and not corresponding to his/her life goals, he/she finds their ambitions aimless and is not willing to adapt to change that is too drastic and too rapid to be meaningful. One of the key concepts in approaching an understanding of the reasons behind non-completion is closely related to the question of change, especially changes that take place with great speed. Change is experienced differently in different layers of the social structure and in turn affects various groups differently. Bourdieu shows that college is a different place; an unfamiliar place and the students fear isolation, have difficulty in making friends and have a sense of being an outsider, not having a sense of ownership. He maintains that middle-class students have a bigger network of friends from their school and neighbourhood than students from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is a cultural and social separateness where there is a cultural clash between home and Higher Education. In Higher Education, they feel different from everybody else and that they are living between two worlds.

Bourdieu continues to identify a further barrier to completion which is the fact that that there is a middle-class culture in Higher Education, where for the most part, staff are from middle class backgrounds, and the ethos is predominantly middle class. Indeed, the curriculum does not reflect the lifestyle, culture and values of the group. This is what is referred to as 'cultural deficit' leading to a 'them versus us' situation, where the perceived lack of commitment among lecturers who have no expectations educationally for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

2.6.8   *Habitus* and relationships

The importance of the expectations and attitudes of institution-staff on the success of students is often high particularly since family and community members have little experience of Higher Education. The classroom provides the main place in which students and staff interact and therefore teaching methods have an important impact on the progress and success of students. Different students bring with them different prior educational experiences and they have different expectations about the type of teaching and support they will receive.   Bourdieu describes how the lecturer "finds in the particularities of the space which the traditional institution arranges for him (the platform, the professional chair at the focal point on which all gazes converge) material and symbolic conditions which enable him to keep the students at a respectful distance and would oblige him to do so, even if he did not wish to" (Bourdieu, 1990 p.169).

Relationships between students and lecturers are very important to attitudes towards learning and to coping with difficulties as they arise. Individuals, groups and institutions that exist within particular 'fields' do so within structural relations to each other and are mediated by habitus. Therefore, to understand the habitus of an institution we must understand the relations between lecturers and students. Students seem to do well if there are positive relations between teaching staff and students and if the teaching and learning is inclusive to suit these differing needs of a more diverse student body. Thomas in her research found that "positive relations with teaching staff, and an inclusive pedagogy and curriculum were found to be of benefit to improved rates of retention" (Thomas, 2002, p.139). Students not only need to feel that they fit in academically but also socially. In Thomas's research there are significant references in her interviews with students to the importance of friends encouraging and supporting them to stay in Higher Education (Thomas, 2002). "The

habitus of an institution does much to shape these interactions, as do those of the individuals involved, but these exchanges in turn contribute to shaping the habitus of both the individuals involved, and the institution itself, and influencing future relations between staff and students, and students and Higher Education" (Thomas, 2002 p.141). Habitus is defined as "a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations" (Bourdieu 1990 p. 53). Habitus is thus a sense of ones (and others') place and role in the world of one's lived environment. Habitus is an embodied as well as a cognitive sense of place. The dispositions of habitus serve to predispose actors to choose behaviour which appears to them more likely to achieve a desired outcome with regard to their previous experiences, the resources available to them and the prevailing power relations: "the relation to what is possible is a relation to power" (Bourdieu 1980, p. 4). People undertake a practical evaluation of their potential behaviour. However, such a practical evaluation is often not a conscious pattern of rational thought, but rather an intuitive practical reaction to a situation based on experience; an embodied sensibility which leads to 'structured improvisations'. When talking about social capital-the resources and power which people obtain through their social networks and connections- Bourdieu recognises the important links and potential conversions between social capital and its relationship to power. The exercise of that power, often through the symbolic exchange of communication, lies in the basic shared belief about the relative positions of the agents involved.

2.6.9   *Habitus* and Language

Language is part of the complete habitus of a person and cannot be isolated on its own. To reconstitute the notion of habitus and field in the context of language, we see the hierarchy of teaching methods within academic disciplines. Pedagogic authority becomes 'the power to impose (or even inculcate) the arbitrary instruments of knowledge and expression of society (Bourdieu 1991a/1982 p.168).   Students in Higher Education learn through language and on entering the new environment of Higher Education, they enter a new world with a new domain of knowledge that has its own language as well as the language of their chosen discipline of study. The position and status of language is central to Bourdieu's work and are laid out in *Ce Que Parler Veut Dire* (1982b) and (1991a). In exploring the concept of habitus and field in terms of the language of teaching is very valuable to this research. In a Higher Education context, language is used to bestow academic credit on individuals in the forms of classroom assessments and examinations.

For Bourdieu, words are never just words and language is never just a vehicle to express an idea. Rather it comes as the product and process of social activity and is therefore valued within fields of social activity. Language is value-laden and Bourdieu argues that language should be examined in terms of the relationships from which it is generated. "No-one acquires a language without acquiring a relation to language" (1977b p646).   These relationships are differentiated according to the principles generating social hierarchies because they are constituted by the same social processes and values attributed to their products. "…Linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power through which the relations of power between speakers and their respective groups come into being in a transfigured way….Even

the most simple linguistic exchange brings into play a complex and rarefying network of historical power relations" (1992a p.108).

Of all the distancing techniques, with which the institution equips its officers, "magisterial language," as Bourdieu calls it, is the most efficacious and the most subtle (p.109/110).   Bourdieu uses the term 'langue légitime' by which he means the language is legitimate in the way that a government may be legitimate and Bourdieu sees it as an arm of the State.   The higher social classes have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo since they have greater access to the legitimate language through the cultural capital they inherit from their families and through the education system where this given linguistic cultural capital is increased.   Bourdieu's sociology is about processes of categorisation and domination, a way of ordering the world and the people in it.   "This means that inevitably inscribed within the dispositions of the habitus is the whole structure of the system of conditions, as it presents itself in the experience of a life-condition occupying a particular position within that structure" (1984/1979 p172).

Lecturers focus on 'deficits' of disadvantaged culture thus compounding the sense of 'being an outsider' in an insiders' world.   Forsyth and Furlong (2003) found in their study of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds that cultural barriers were implicated in every stage of the decision making process: from whether to stay in post-compulsory education through to which institution and what course to take. Reay et al. (2001) note that some of the working-class participants appear to be emotionally constrained.   They self-excluded themselves from the more traditional universities and selected institutions where they felt they could 'fit in' (Leathwood, 2003).

2.6.10 *Habitus* and student staff interactions

Another way in which *habitus* is transmitted is through student-staff interactions. Within a particular 'field', individuals, students, institutions exist in structural relations to each other, which are mediated by habitus. In this way the relations between staff and students are key to understanding the institutional habitus. The way in which the Higher Education field is structured is of importance. For example, if there is a conflict between teaching and research or where teaching and learning are viewed as having high status, such factors are key to understanding the habitus. It is in fact to be expected that staff-student relations would be important since it is through these that relative positions are reached. The habitus of the institution does much to shape these interactions, as do those of the individuals involved. Those exchanges in turn contribute to shaping the habitus of both the individuals involved and the institution itself and influences future relations between staff and students, and indeed students and Higher Education. Some staff members may be judgemental about the social lifestyle of students and only endorse those activities deemed to be "acceptable" by the dominant group in the institution. Thomas (2002), Stack and Casey (2000), in their studies suggest that "social capital" can contribute to student retention and success in Higher Education but that institutional practices can militate against the development of social capital by students.

Bourdieu believes that generating and maintaining a distance between academic staff and students is a fundamental part of Higher Education practice. Even through the use and layout of the built environment. For example, one of the principal forms of teaching, the lecture, tends to involve the 'sage on the stage' method of delivery where the lecturer delivers a monologue from behind a lectern on a podium in front of a large auditorium, confirming that the lecturer is removed from, and works on a

different, more elevated level to the students. To continue to rely on this traditional method of transmitting knowledge when there are so many other forms that the students could access information, reinforces the fact that Higher Education is like a secret club and the student wants to join this club.

Another very important means of maintaining this distance is through the language and discourse that is used. It is almost a given that good students will master this mysterious academic discourse without needing any instruction as to how to do so. Academic disciplines tend to be set in very specialised and esoteric language. It is, for Bourdieu, as if there is a complicit game between lecturers and students. In *Homo Academicus* (1984) Bourdieu discusses the way in which students learn to succeed by reproducing the learned discourse in essays and mastering the language. However, some students according to Bourdieu are unable to master the unfamiliar language. Thus, a literate student gives back to the system what it wants, (re)produces a style of language that can be recognised and valued.

These interactions come in many forms: formal and informal, social and academic and these interactions have an effect on the various student outcomes. Kuh (2006) found, for example, that informal student-staff interactions have an impact on aspects of students' self-concept, such as self-worth and confidence, as well as on their academic skills. Strauss and Volkwien (2004) have found that higher satisfaction with staff interaction resulted in greater commitment to an institution. The importance of the expectations and attitudes of institution-staff on the success of students is often high particularly where family and community members have little experience of Higher Education (Thomas 2002). The classroom provides the main

place in which students and staff interact and therefore teaching methods have an important impact on the progress and success of students. Different students bring with them different prior educational experiences and they have different expectations about the type of teaching and support they will receive. Students seem to do well if there are positive relations between teaching staff and students and if the teaching and learning is inclusive to suit these differing needs of a more diverse student body. Thomas in her research found that "positive relations with teaching staff, and an inclusive pedagogy and curriculum were found to be of benefit to improved rates of retention" (p.139). Students not only need to feel that they fit in academically but also socially.

Research that links out-of-class interactions to student outcomes have led the way to studies exploring the behaviours that influence such interactions. Wilson (1974) indicates that the teaching practices of staff provide cues to students about the staff member's accessibility outside of the classroom. Jaasma and Koper (1999) have suggested that verbal immediacy and student motivation are positively related to out-of-class interactions, both formal and informal. Trust was also found to be positively related to informal interactions and socialising during informal contact, but negatively related to informal contact that involved discussions of personal problems. Nadler and Nadler (2001) found that staff empathy and credibility are positively related to out-of-class communications.

Institutions with low rates of departure are therefore likely to be those, which are able to more fully, integrate their students into their social and intellectual life. Conversely, institutions with high rates of departure are more likely to be those which

are unable to do this. It follows, therefore, that one approach to the question of institutional policy on retention is that which looks toward a restructuring or modification of the social and intellectual mechanisms for the integration of students into its social and intellectual life.

2.6.11 *Habitus* and Assessment

A central aspect of the academic experience at Higher Education relates to assessment and it defines the relationship between lecturers and students in formal learning contexts. Grades, results and ward classifications are all very powerful expressions of this relationship. Not only is the examination the defining feature of education as a social institution, according to Bourdieu, educational systems can only ensure their legitimacy through the assurance of societal acceptance of their examination systems. They do this by 'inculcating' these values in the social class most disposed to accept their pedagogic authority, in other words, Bourdieu states, and the middle classes. Willing engagement with the system will depend on the predisposition of the individual towards education established through their habitus, and on what rewards are seen to attach to examinations: "In fact,, the examination is not only the clearest expression of academic values and of the educational system's implicit choices: in imposing as worthy of university sanction a social definition of knowledge and the way to show it, it provides one of the most efficacious tools for the enterprise of inculcating the dominant culture and the value of that culture" (Bourdieu and Passeron p. 142). Assessment is at the very heart of the Higher Education experience and it defines what students regard as important, how they manage their time and how they see themselves and their future.   In adopting a Bourdieu approach, we can

examine assessment results as forms of capital pertaining to a series of overlapping fields

What is the impact of assessment results on students' self-confidence and their perceptions of themselves? Bourdieu argues that social selection is disguised as technical selection and the differences between social classes are most obvious if we examine the number of students from each social class at the point of entry to the next level of the educational system rather than at completion. "…the generative unifying principle of conducts and opinions which is also their [academic and social differences] explanatory principle, since at every moment of an educational or intellectual biography it tends to reproduce the system of objective conditions of which it is the product" (Bourdieu 1977 p.161).

The habitus is made up of a combination of individual and structural factors. Our structural position such as our social class or gender determines our habitus which in turn determines the opportunities we take, which in turn reinforces the habitus. Where a student extends outside his/her habitus by entering Higher Education from a social context where that is not the norm, according to Bourdieu, their habitus will be 'translated' through this experience and the new opportunities it creates. However, whilst the individual may change, existing social relations and structures remain essentially unchanged. Bourdieu therefore defines the educational system as an 'agency of selection, elimination and concealment of elimination' and within this the examination is the central means for 'translating' social difference into academic difference so that this translation stays hidden: "Nothing is better designed than the examination to inspire universal recognition of the legitimacy of academic verdicts

and of the social hierarchies they legitimate, since it leads the self-eliminated to count themselves among those who fail, while enabling those elected from among a small number of eligible candidates to see in their election the proof of a merit or 'gift' which would have caused them to be preferred to all comers in any circumstances" (Bourdieu 1977 p.162).

One of the limiting conditions often present in Higher Education is a culture of expertise, expressed in the social relations of the institution, in the practices of formal assessment and in the value placed on 'intelligence'. Within the higher level institution, social relations are both hierarchical and collegial, expressing different relations of power between academic and students, between non-academics and academics. Part of this power is undoubtedly due to the fact that the academics control the examinations process, the results of which have a significant effect of the future of students. A culture of learning can replace a culture of expertise where in such a culture, making mistakes, takes risks and even failure are valued as a requirement of learning. Academics can also act as learners and dialogue is the key.

The power to enable or diminish is exercised within the institution through its purposes, epistemological assumptions and practices, social relations and ethics, assessment practices, the structuring of time, space and activity, and differential access to normalised social and discursive practices. The overall effect can produce feelings of worthlessness, lack of sense of belonging, feelings of stupidity, invisibility and compliance. The challenge for the individual student is to overcome these feelings and somehow learn to negotiate such potentially alienating conditions and complete the programme. The challenge for the institution is to transform itself so

that the forces of differentiation (engaged action where students are engaged in a dynamic process in social relations, enhancing the student's freedom to learn (Rogers and Freiburg 1994) outweigh the forces of concentration. Otherwise, the "social advantages and disadvantages are progressively retranslated into educational advantages and disadvantages" (p.160).

2.6.12 *Habitus* and levels of engagement

The challenge for Higher Education institutions is not to assume that the habitus of 'traditional' Higher Education students is the 'proper' habitus and that students without it should not be assisted or indeed not complete on account of it. In their struggle for position, students entering first year need to feel included and engaged. The term *engagement* is used in literature to refer to the extent to which students participate in academic and non-academic institutional activities and identify with and value academic outcomes. Its definition usually comprises a behavioral component pertaining to participation in institutional activities (Finn 1993). It also comprises a psychological component pertaining to a person's identification with institutional and acceptance of institutional values (Goodnow and Grady 1993). The participation component is usually evident in attendance, being prepared for class, completing assignments and being involved in extra-curricular activities. The psychological component can entail students' sense of belonging, their social ties and bonds, their relationships with staff and the extent to which they value academic success. In many ways engagement is closely related to the nation of "social capital" which embodies features of social organisation, particularly the networks that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit (Coleman1990). High levels of social capital may make an important contribution in encouraging students to remain in education.

The most important components appear to be participation, particularly in social clubs and groups, a sense of belonging, relations with lecturers, and valuing academic success. For some students bonding is what is needed and because there can be class differences the students have a different kind of social capital where going back home for lunch or during free periods is more attractive to them than staying at college.

Actively engaged we obtain a huge amount of practical knowledge. This knowledge, however, is filtered by the embodied understanding of our habitus which in turn reflects and affects our understanding of what is taking place in various situations and most importantly for our research purposes, shapes how we practically engage (or not) with those situations. Bourdieu has recognised the potentially oppressive nature of habitus, stating, "it would be wrong to underestimate the pressure or oppression, continuous and often unnoticed, of the ordinary order of things" (1997 p.141).

2.7   Critics of Bourdieu

There have been many who criticise Bourdieu and in attempting to understand Bourdieu and the many complex concepts, I have been assisted by Adkins and Skeggs (2004) Reay (2004) Reed-Danahay (2005) and readings in the original French of his work.

One common criticism of Bourdieu is that his overall thesis limits an individual to only reproduce what he/she knows, reproduction in the sense of our ability to act on the world. Much has been said about the 'light use' of Bourdieusian notion of habitus applied to research and Diane Reay in addressing the variability in its usage by

coining the phrase 'the habitual use of habitus' (2004) or the more critical comment of Hey (2003) who described this practice as 'intellectual hairspray'.

The Bourdieu notion of habitus has indeed been criticised as being deterministic. However Reay challenged this arguing that while habitus reflects the social position in which it was constructed, it also encompasses the origin of new creative responses that have the capacity to transcend the social conditions in which it was produced (Reay 2004). Reay has also remarked that some researchers take a superficial view of Bourdieu's work and criticise it because it applied to Les Grandes Écoles in 1960's France. A further criticism of Bourdieu's work is that it is far too pessimistic, especially for educationalists. Even one of the most positive accounts of Bourdieu's work, Robbins, notes that "…an element of fatalism or perhaps of reluctant cosmic conservatism" (Robbins 1991 p.175).

Lovell asserts that when Bourdieu talks about social transformation, he 'holds the place for the powers that thwart these processes and that condition and shape agency. He is a pessimist rather than a determinist and his pessimism is sometimes salutary" (Lovell 2007 p.7).

Bourdieu's main concern with social practices within social spaces or fields stems from the fact that, in his view, social fields produce knowledge and knowledge is a form of capital linked to power and prestige. As a linguist myself, I am interested in the various translations of the terms found in Bourdieu's work. For example, the French word *'connaissance'* as used by Bourdieu, translated as 'knowledge' but also includes with its French equivalent as knowledge as to how to do things, such as how

to interact or act in a given social situation. For Bourdieu, the 'socialised body (what is called the individual or the person) is not opposed to society: it is one of its forms of existence (1993 p.15). To those involved in educational research or practice, there are objections to this notion of referring to people, not as individuals *qua* individuals, but for their part in social practices, which are indicative of fields, capitals, positions and relationships.

This research has found Bourdieu's conceptual framework, particularly with regard to habitus, to be valuable in highlighting contemporary issues of social inequality and injustice in a Higher Education context.   A Bourdieusian perspective includes considering how educationalists and researchers may have collective interests to maintain certain traditional ways of doing things. As Frédérique Matonti (2012) the French political scientist remarked, "I sometimes have the impression that criticism has targeted a Bourdieu who never actually existed.   Often criticism seems to correspond to the way that Bourdieu has been taught, rather than to ideas in his work itself, which are remarkably malleable, never set form, but constantly reworked" (p. 85).

Marie-Anne Lescourret (2008), Bourdieu's biographer, points out that some of the concepts created by Bourdieu originated in philosophy.   According to Passeron, "people who were even vaguely familiar with Bourdieu, know he had the capacity of suffering intensely because of the hardness of the human condition, the arrogance or hypocrisy of social domination" (p.23).

2.8   Conclusion

A review of the empirical research in Ireland to date has shown that much attention is now placed on the issue of student retention in higher education and this is to be welcomed. Higher Education Institutions must present annual reports to the Higher Education Authority in which they present retention data accompanied by plans and initiatives that are in place to address issues of non-progression. The review also showed that the student perspective on retention is very often missing from the discussion around retention. It is for this reason that this research avails of Bourdieu's work to explore the student perspective on completion. Bourdieu's theories suggest an approach that explores non-completion as a social practice, in which student and institution engage. We investigate in what way social hierarchies become academic hierarchies. Habitus and the conceptual framework within which it sits, are valuable for understanding life, particularly how the patterns of individual lives fit together into the lives of larger social units, however defined. Bourdieu is concerned with what motivates human action. Do people act in response to external stimuli? To what extent is people's reasoning about how they act influenced or determined by structural factors? He proposes a structural theory of practice which connects structure and agency in a dialectical relationship between culture, structure and power, recognising the social relations among actors as being structured by, and in turn, contributing to the structuring of, the social relations of power among different positions depending on class, gender and so forth.

Another of Bourdieu's key contributions useful to our research is his understanding of behaviour, the distinction between synoptic and participatory views of activity. Synoptic views stand apart from the activity process, describing what is taking place;

participatory views regard action from what is a participant's standpoint, emphasising the perspectival nature of behaviour. Habitus provides the link between these two views. It "mediates between a synoptic view of activity formations characteristic of a community and a dynamic view of the processes by which these activities are actually enacted on specific occasions by human actors" (Lemke 1995 p.33).

The concepts of 'habitus' and 'cultural capital' are integral to students' and their families' classed choices of school (Ball et al. 1998). Robbins has described habitus as 'the practical mastery which people possess of their situations' (Robbins 1991). Cultural capital refers to the knowledge, language and culture, differentially accessed and possessed, that guides the decisions made and actions taken. Middle-class and working-class families have differential access to various forms of cultural, social and economic capital and resources, which differentially frames the educational choices that different families can or will make. Middle-class parents can pass on cultural and material advantages that privilege or enable their children to succeed within the educational system (Allatt, 1993). Working-class families experience more economic and physical constraints and lack the same knowledge of the system and social networks that encourage the reproduction of privilege (Reay et al. 2001). Thus, educational choices operate as a medium of power and stratification, within which there is interplay of social, economic, cultural capital with institutional and family habitus.

Maguire et al (2000) found that for middle-class students, with their increased social, economic and knowledge resources, 'choice is presented as natural, orderly, clear-cut, almost beyond question, very unlike the chancy, uncertain process many working-

class students are caught up in'. Working-class students, on the other hand, experience greater risks and constraints framing their decision-making. For working-class students, the importance of 'fitting in' and 'feeling comfortable' within an institution may mean that….."the perceptions, distinctions and choices of Higher Education institutions used and made by students play a part in reconstituting and reproducing the divisions and hierarchies in Higher Education. It is in this way that they 'do' or embody social structures. In effect, this is social class 'in the head'. That is to say, cultural and social capital, material constraints…social perceptions and distinctions, and forms of self-exclusion…are all embedded in the process of choice" (Maguire et al. 2000 p.7). Thus, social hierarchies are transformed into 'academic hierarchies' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). One of the central themes of Bourdieu's work is that culture and education are central in the affirmation of differences between social classes and in the reproduction of those differences.

Bourdieu maintains that the social construction of reality is not carried out in a vacuum. Each person is equipped with a habitus shaped in formative years by home culture and that habitus has an affinity to a larger referential group or class habitus. The encounter between student and teacher entails an encounter of two habituses and it also entails meeting in a specialised environment of a college which, as an institution, has a mission of transforming or reproducing the habitus. There can be a mismatch or a match in the habitus of student, teacher or institution. Bourdieu asserts that "…affinities of habitus experienced as sympathy or antipathy, are the basis of all forms of cooperation" (Bourdieu 1988 p.16).

Choosing to study at higher level is a social practice that can have empowering or alienating social consequences for the individual student. In the dynamic interaction between the individual student and the institution there is a play of power in the various layers of the institution such as the way it structures time, space and activities, its social function in society and its role of assessing and validating qualifications. objects, such as art, books, buildings and machines.

Chapter 3   **Methodology**

3.1   Introduction

The literature review located the centrality of the work of Bourdieu and in particular 'habitus' as a framework to examine student (non)completion at an Institute of Technology in Ireland. It also established gaps in the existing research on student completion particularly in capturing the student voice on the matter. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the rationale for the research design used to address the research questions. This will be followed by a presentation of the methodological approach and research instruments used. The main body of the chapter will examine data collection and analysis methods followed by a discussion on the ethical considerations, in particular, involving 'insider' research. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an outline of the limitations of the study. The research design centred around a case study using a mixed method approach. This was deemed to be the most appropriate design to address the research questions as it allows for more in-depth data to be gathered from participants relating to their experiences, perceptions, feelings and attitudes. This type of data collection relies on the quality of participant contributions to guide the research (Sanders 2013). The theoretical and conceptual work of Pierre Bourdieu has informed the methodological approach that was developed for the research is underpinned by Bourdieu's concept of '*habitus*'. In making use of a Bourdieusian approach, the conceptual framework for research is framed by "the links between individuals (*habitus*), field structures and the positioning both within and between the fields" (Grenfell 2008, p 223).

In practical terms, this means that the research is firstly concerned with mapping the '*field*', that is to say, employing administrative data to measure the extent of first year non-completion. Once the data has been analysed, the research will focus on carrying out an analysis to establish the '*habitus*' of the agents, the agents in this case being, year one students and the lecturing and administrative staff who interact with them. This is done by way of questionnaires and interviews that investigate the 'background, trajectory, positioning' (Grenfell, 2008, p223).

The research drew data from the ITT's Business Information Records System, Banner, which records the school of origin, 'entry code', progression, completion and academic awards of each student, as well as the CAO points of new entrants.

The research took place within ITT and in preparation for the research, the researcher investigated research design and research methods generally in order to establish an overarching method to be used for the research. The researcher was a member of staff at ITT and is aware of the implications for the research. This chapter also details the mechanisms that were employed to ensure this was not an obstacle to the research but in fact, an added value to engaging the participants and gaining access to the field.

In keeping with the researcher's own constructivist view of education, the idea of insider practitioner research was deemed appropriate for the study, aligned with the concept of knowledge being socially constructed and situated within a specific context. The main advantage of applied insider research was the understanding of the cultural environment in which the research was conducted and the access to records and documents that facilitated the research. Through extensive experience as an academic staff member, the researcher had valuable insights and background information on how ITT had grown over the years. This knowledge enabled the

development of specific research questions where the findings could then be directly applied and would be beneficial to her role as an academic, as well as to the wider ITT community and potentially beyond. Other advantages included the researcher's understanding of the formal and informal management and administrative structures acquired as an academic but also while on secondment to registry. However, being a practitioner researcher also had its challenges, in particular, the potential for perceived pressure on participants who are also colleagues and students. The last thing the researcher wanted was for any academic staff member or student participant to feel that there was an imbalance of power or that they were under an obligation to participate.

It is hoped that the information provided later in this chapter as to how the researcher successfully carried out the research as a practitioner and overcame the challenges along the way will be of benefit to those who wish to pursue similar type of research.

3.2   Research Design

The research design is the strategy used to investigate the research questions. It is how the 'philosophical ideas are translated into an approach, to research within a particular discipline' (White 2000, p.25). Since the research questions concern a five year period in the same institution, the case study design was chosen as the most appropriate to the particular research questions posed by the research: to examine the extent to which non-completion is an issue in year one at an Institute of Technology; to determine whether there is a difference in completion rates among access and non-access students; to identify the factors that have a positive or negative effect on year one completion and the role, if any, of habitus; and to explore whether the habitus of

an institution matches the student's experiences? Making use of a case study approach entailed using methods with a wide range of participant experiences and ensuring that sampling is representative (Bruyn, 1966). Bourdieu also believes that it is essential to study human beings in natural setting, both the physical and the internalised, in order to learn how that setting influences them. The case study research design was chosen to investigate the experiences of students and staff, providing an "all-encompassing method" for systematically studying and describing a phenomenon (year one student completion) within a real-life context (Yin, 2003, p. 14). Furthermore, the case study approach provides an empirical framework for collecting, analysing, and triangulating multiple sources of quantitative and qualitative evidence, including questionnaires, interviews and surveys (2003). The case study research design also provides an excellent methodological framework for performing mixed-method research studies in the social sciences (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). As an evidence-based strategy, the case study method furnishes the researcher with a proven set of procedures for investigating an empirical topic within a naturalistic setting (Yin, 2003). A descriptive case study successfully provides multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative evidence for triangulating such experiential data in an all-encompassing manner (Yin 2003). Yin (2003) also suggests that the case study method is appropriate "when a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control" (p. 9). This study's research question aligns well with this viewpoint, asking how and why habitus impacts year one completion. Merriam (1998) emphasises that the case study approach is appropriate when the researcher seeks to "gain an in-depth understanding of the situation" (p. 19). According to Yin (2003), every "good case study... uses as many sources as possible" (Yin 2003 p.85). In essence, Yin's case

study approach, on which this study is modelled, assists both the reader and researcher in following the derivation of evidence, addressing the "methodological problem of determining construct validity, [and] thereby increasing the overall quality of the case study" (2003, p. 105). Consistent with Yin's (2003) recommendations for reporting high-quality research, this study provides sufficient citations and quotes from the qualitative field data, an appropriate database for storing and querying the evidence, comprehensive research-based protocols driven by the theoretical framework and research questions, and analytical processes suitable for the methodologies selected (p. 105). The study's resultant trustworthiness and credibility involves an interweaving among the methodological procedures followed, the theoretical frameworks selected, the analytical lens applied, and the researcher's own experience and expertise. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the various steps taken in the research design to address the research questions and the methods used to support the design.

Table 3 1 Research Methods Used to Address Research Questions

LINKING RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS		
Research Questions	Sources and methods	Rationale
1. To what extent is non-progression an issue in first year among those students accessing Higher Education in an Institute of Technology? 2. Is there a difference in non-progression rates between all first year students and those entering from access schools?	**Quantitative** -Management Information Systems -Student Records -Examination broadsheets for the five year period	-To provide data on the extent of non-completion -To establish the unique data set -To identify students who had withdrawn
3. What are the factors that have a positive or negative effect on student completion	**Mixed Methods** -Surveys of staff and current	To identify through

among first year students coming from access schools into Higher Education as seen from the first year students' perspectives and does the habitus of an institution influence completion?

4. To what extent does the habitus of the institution match the previous experiences of students?

5. What strategies and practices can individual institutions develop that can better accommodate the learning experience of this particular group of students. | first year students

-Interviews with academic staff -Interviews with administrative staff

Interviews with year one students

-Focus Groups with students who had withdrawn

-Student Reflective online journals-student voice/ Eccles tone's sense of 'care' | interviews and focus groups what are the main issues as seen through the experience of students, academic staff and administrative staff

To investigate reasons for non-completion as seen from the perspective of the student, lecturer and administrative staff

To obtain information on the experience of being at Higher Education as told by students themselves |
| | Triangulation | To establish a deeper, more comprehensive explanation of what institutions can do to improve completion |

3.2.1   Multiple Data Sources

In order to maintain a focus on the research questions posed by the research multiple data sources were used.

(a) Data Sources Used to address Research Question 1-To what extent is non-progression an issue in first year among those students accessing Higher Education in an Institute of Technology?

To address this first research question, it was necessary to establish a robust data set in order to quantify question one, what is the extent of non-completion among the first year student population. This involved using quantitative research methods to collate

and filter data from ITT's Business Information System (Banner) to draft reports for the purposes of this research and establish the unique data set.

In order to verify the data drawn from Banner, a second data source was used which involved accessing and analysing the first year examination broadsheets for the five year period. This time-consuming exercise was a valuable cross-checking mechanism that helped to identify students who had 'gone missing' since registration in semester one, year one. In ITT, examination broadsheets are generated twice each academic year: one examination broadsheet for semester one is generated in January and the second examination broadsheet is generated in May for the second semester. For the purposes of the research, this created two opportunities for each academic year to analyse the examination broadsheets over the five academic years in order to identify the number of non-completing students and provide a cross-reference with the information collected through Banner. All of this quantitative data collection is necessary to establish the actual extent of non-completion among all students and with particular focus on those students entering year one from the access schools. From 2009-2014, five different groups of first year students entered ITT and once registered, were entered into Banner. An examination of the data relating to each year of the study allowed the researcher to establish the number of students entering, the age and gender of each student, the school of origin, the CAO points on entry, the student source of finance as well as the programme of study. At other intervals in the academic year, Banner presented the updated registration status of the student, whether the student had withdrawn from the programme of study as well as examination performance of each student.

(b) Data Sources Used to address Research Question Two- Is there a difference in non-progression rates between all first year students and those entering from access schools?

The second research question aims to investigate if there is a difference in completion rates among access and non-access students in year one. This was done through a detailed examination, filtering and analysing of the dataset drawn from Banner.

(c) Data Sources Used to address Research Question 3- What are the factors that have a positive or negative effect on completion among first year students coming from access schools into Higher Education as seen from the first year students' perspectives and how habitus shapes the practice of (non)completion? This involved the use of multiple data sources in the form of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups with students, academic staff and administrative staff. The rationale for adopting this particular research approach is outlined later in this chapter.

(d) Data Sources Used to address Research Question Four and Five- To what extent does the habitus of the institution match the previous experiences of students and what strategies and practices can individual institutions develop that can better accommodate the learning experience of this particular group of students? What in the view of the year one students, are the practices that Institutions can put in place to assist year one completion and what role does 'habitus' play in putting those practices into action? This was examined by enabling the student voice and during the 2013-2014 academic year, an additional data source was used through the provision of an online reflective diary available through the Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle. The use of this online diary aimed to allow participants an opportunity to express themselves in a safe environment and in a very free manner.

3.2.2   Multi-methods Research Methods and Data integration

Qualitative data is numerical in form and qualitative is not but both are related. "All quantitative data is based upon qualitative judgements and all good qualitative data can be described and manipulated numerically" (Cresswell 1994 p.27). The particular research methods are justified on pragmatic grounds as appropriate tools for accomplishing the research aims" (Robey 1996). Quantitative and qualitative methods of research are not in opposition to each other in this research. A combination of both methods is necessary in order to adequately answer the research questions. The particular qualitative research chosen is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly interpretivist, which is, concerned with how the social world is interpreted, experienced and understood. Table 3.2 below shows the overall rationale behind the qualitative research methods. It is based on methods of data generation which are both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced rather than abstracted from real-life contexts. It is based on methods of analysis and explanation which involve understanding the complexity and the detail of each different context. It was intended to be systematic and rigorous in approach, sensitive to the context and actively reflective at every stage of the research. The end result being to produce explanations or arguments that have wider resonance.

3.2.3 Integration of data

The quantitative data and qualitative data were both necessary and extremely valuable to the research. The quantitative data was collected for each year of the five year period of the research through Banner to a) establish the extent of non-completion in year one and b) to examine if differences existed between the students from access schools and those from non-access schools. The data from Banner answered these two questions, surveys were designed to advance the research questions. This next stage

of quantitative data was collected through the yearly surveys of students, lecturers and administrative support staff. As seen from Table 3.2 the quantitative data informed the qualitative data collection, interviews and focus groups, as it identified divergences in views of access and non-access year one students, views of lecturers and administrative support staff concerning student completion. Both the quantitative surveys and the qualitative interviews informed participant selection for the 'checking back' questionnaires and the reflective diary participants.

Table 3 2 Quantitative and Qualitative Data Integration

Quantitative	Integration between both Quantitative and Qualitative Data	Qualitative
Business information system (BIS) Data	Established extent of non-completion in year one Established Comparative data between access and non-access	Interviews- Students Lecturers Admin staff
Questionnaires- Lecturers Students Admin Staff	Determined Participant Selection Identified Emerging and Recurring Themes Identified students considering not completing	Focus groups Reflective diary by students

3.3 Data Collection Phases

This section presents the different stages of the research over the five academic years of the study 2009-2014. In all, five data collection stages took place as follows:

The first stage involved gathering the quantitative data for each new academic year. This involved census data that was drawn from Banner cross-checked against the examination broadsheets in January and May of each academic year. The data was collected and filtered according to the research questions. The second stage involved an exploratory phase to establish the research design best suited to address the research questions appropriately. This stage incorporated the literature review aligned

with the drafting of questionnaires directed at all first year students and staff. The third stage involved refining the research design and the implementation of the research methods. During this stage the questionnaires were completed and analysed.

At the fourth stage the focus was placed on the first year students themselves and in particular with the cohort of students entering ITT from the access schools, those schools positioned in areas of significant socio-economic disadvantage, Jobstown, Killinarden, St. Aidan's (Tallaght) and Collinstown CC, Deansrath CC, St. Kevin's CC (Clondalkin), St James CBS D8, Caritas and St John's De La Salle Ballyfermot and Our Lady of Mercy Drimnagh. These schools have programmes designed to assist students gain access to Higher Education: Access to College Education (ACE) in Tallaght, and the Clondalkin Higher Education Access Programme (CHEAP) in Clondalkin.

This important stage involved three parts:

> (a) carrying out interviews with individual access students in year one and

> (b) carrying out interviews with individual students who had already left their programmes without completing year one at ITT and

> (c) the facilitation of focus groups with year one students.

When the extent of non-completion was established among the year one students it allowed for a selection to take place for the qualitative interviews and focus groups. The quantitative research also identified students who were at risk of non-completion.

Semi-structured interviews, involving an interactional exchange of dialogue, were conducted using one-to-one interactions, larger group interviews and focus groups over a five year period. What Burgess calls 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess

1984, p.102). A thematic, topic-centred narrative approach was adopted with an established set of starting points allowing for fluid and flexible dialogues and for the development of unexpected themes. Good quality interviewing is seen as involving the construction or reconstruction of knowledge more than the excavation of it (Mason, 2002). This is in keeping with the case study approach to research whereby people's experience, in this case of year one in Higher Education, is constructed or reconstructed in the interview process. The approach involves asking situational rather than abstract question.

A fifth stage used in the final year of the research, the 2013-2014 academic year, involved the use of a reflective online diary which was established as a data collection instrument with which all access students could engage online and freely express in a very safe manner their personal views and opinions on their first year experience. The researcher had experience in using the reflective online diary as a method to engage students in their learning and it would in the research context prove to be very valuable in allowing the student voice to be captured on the research questions.

3.3.1 Group Size and Participant Selection

All first year students at ITT over the five year period 2009-2014 were invited to participate on a voluntary basis. The researcher over the five year period of the research served as a lecturer then as Head of the Department of Humanities and later as Head of School of Business and Humanities in ITT. The researcher has a very healthy and positive relationship with ITT, its students and staff as well as with management colleagues having served on the staff since ITT opened in 1992. Ethical issues with regard to being a 'researcher within' are dealt with later in this chapter. Research Ethics Approval is included in D.

The initial cohort for the Moodle questionnaire was drawn from the general first year students in the academic year 2009-2010 and all lecturers who were lecturing on first year programmes across all faculties and departments. This involved support staff from student services who had vast experience in dealing with the administration and counselling of students in year one. For each academic year of the research, all year one students were invited to participate in the research via their own personal Moodle page. All registered first year students were contacted and ninety four responded to the Moodle questionnaire. Thirty six academics responded and completed the questionnaire and six support staff participated in the questionnaire. During the academic year 2009-2010 the 'Early Day's questionnaire was sent to all first year students, in mid-October 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 when all first years have spent four to five weeks in college. Over the five year period four hundred and thirteen first year students (n=413) completed the 'Early Days' questionnaire.

The 'Checking Back' questionnaire was sent in mid-February of each academic year of the research, to all students who had participated in the 'Early Days' questionnaire. One hundred and nineteen (n=119) students completed the 'Checking Back' questionnaire. Interviews and focus groups were used to address the research question relating to the influence of habitus on year one student retention as seen from both the student and staff perspective. The Focus Group research firstly involved one meeting with six first year general student participants (October 2009) and another with students who had been identified as 'at risk' in their response to the questionnaire (February 2010).

A third focus group (February 2011) took place with six year one students who had been identified as 'at risk' of leaving, as captured in their questionnaire responses. A further focus group (February 2012) took place with six students who had already

withdrawn from programmes at ITT. The researcher availed of the support of an experienced moderator so as to ensure that all participants had an opportunity to make a contribution and added greater objectivity to the research. The interviews involved twenty three different interviews over the lifetime of the research, thirteen with students and ten with staff both academic and administrative support. The online reflective diary was made available to all year one students during the academic year 2013-2014 and two hundred and nine year one students made entries in the online forum. An overview is presented in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3 3 Research Participation Groups

Year	'Early Days' Questionnaire (Students)	'Checking Back' Questionnaire (Students)	Questionnaire (Staff)	Focus Group (Students)	Interviews (Students and Staff)	Reflective Diary (Students)
09/10	94	24	18 academic staff	6 students -general year 1		
10/11	95	24	18 academic staff	6 'at risk' general year 1 students	Jan: 5 year 1 students (3 access and 2 non-access) June: 3 academics	
11/12	77	24		6 'at risk' access year 1 students	January: 6 year 1 students (3 access and 3 non-access) June: 2 students who had left college (1 access and 1 non-access) June: 2 academics	

12/13	70	27		6 students who had left, 2 access and 4 non-access		
13/14	77	20	6 administrative support staff		Jan-Feb: 5 admin. Support staff	209 year one students
Totals	**413**	**119**	**42**	**24**	**23**	**209**

3.3.2 Triangulation

In order to ensure objectivity, reliability and validity of the research, Gliner (1994) describes triangulation as a method of determining validity in research since qualitative studies involve different foci that can complement each other (Buitink 1998). Used as a process of combining and synthesising data that was collected by a variety of instruments and each having their own focus, triangulation served to develop a comprehensive view on non-completion. Triangulation of all the data allowed the researcher map out and explain more fully the richness of the participants'' experiences and perspectives by studying them from more than one standpoint (Cohen and Manion, 1986). Since the researcher was very close to the research setting, it was all the more important to establish confidence in the research findings, triangulation was used. "Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measure processes" (Webb et al 1966 p.3).

The main objective in this research is to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, informed by research design and the methods of data collection. According to O'Donoghue and Punch (2003) triangulation is a 'method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data' (p78).

Methodological Triangulation and Triangulation by Data Type are the approaches that best describe for research carried out here. Many issues in educational research are multifaceted and complex and making use of one single methodology may not yield adequate results from the research. A mixed methods approach is a methodology for conducting research that includes collecting, analysing and mixing quantitative and qualitative research and data (Figure 3.1). The purpose being that both qualitative and quantitative research in combination can provide a greater understanding of the research question. The quantitative research is involved with capturing the statistical data. The data was collected from Banner and was filtered and analysed to produce reports for the purpose of this research. The data filtering and analysis also allows us to compare the data against the general student population in year one.

Figure 3 1 Parsimonious Designs
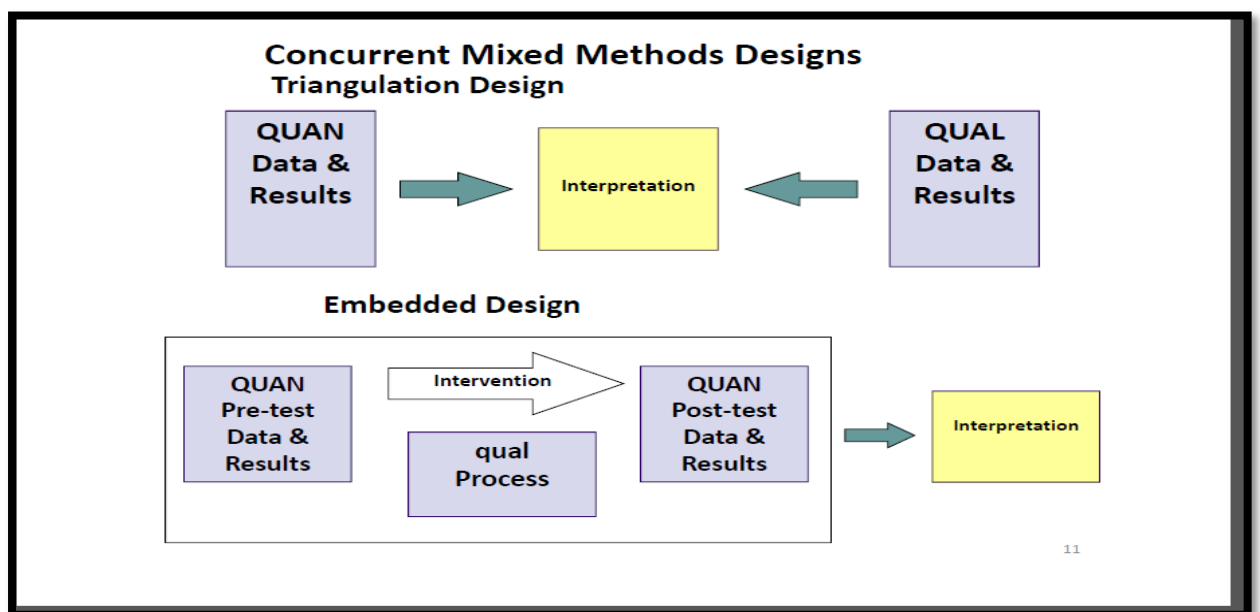
Source: Creswell 2007 p. 27

3.3.4   Research Chronology and Timings

As the research concerns students in Higher Education, it had to be carried out in line with the academic year. This meant that the research took place over the two

semesters, each lasting 13 weeks taking examination periods into account. Interviews with academic staff took place in the interval between the two semesters, January or June in each academic year. Table 3.4 gives an overview of the different evaluation cycles which took place over a five year period:

Table 3 4 The evaluation cycle over the five years of the study

Year	Research Activity and Method	Participants
Year 1 2009-2010	**Exploratory Phase** Focus Group No.1 (Sept 2009) Pilot of 'Early Days' Questionnaire Pilot of 'Checking Back' questionnaire **Group 1 'Early Days' and 'Checking Back'** **Data collection on the Student Records system 2009-2010** **Focus Group No.2 (Feb. 2010)**	year one new entrant students lecturers to first year students year one students Year one students from access schools. year one students
Year 2 2010-2011	**Data Collection** 'Early Days' Questionnaire 'Checking Back' Questionnaire **Data Analysis from questionnaires** **Data collection on the Student Records system 2010-2011** **Focus Group No. 3 (Feb. 2011)**	first year students Students from access schools. students from access schools
Year 3 2011-2012	**Data Collection** Interviews Part 1 Focus Group No. 4 (Feb. 2012) Interviews Part 2 **Data collection from Student Records system 2011-12** **Interviews Part 3**	Current first year students from access schools Students who had left college Students who had left their programmes from access schools. Academic Staff

Year 4 2012-2013	**Data Collection** Focus Groups **Data collection from Student Records system 2012-2013** **Interviews Part 4**	With group of students from access schools in first year Administrative staff
Year 5 2013-14	**Data Analysis** Transcription and cataloguing and Cross-referencing **Data collection from Student Records system 2013-2014** **Data collection from the online Reflective Diary**	

3.3.5   Focus Groups

Focus Groups are defined as group discussions organised to explore a specific set of issues (Barker and Rich, 1992). The group is focussed in the sense that it involves some kind of collective activity, examining a single message or simply debating a particular set of questions and crucially, the focus group is distinguished by the explicit use of the group interaction. Focus groups are important for this research as it ensures priority is given to the respondent's hierarchy of importance, their language and concepts, their framework for understanding the world. The group provides mutual support in expressing feelings that are common to the group-this is important when working with marginalised groups (Lengua et al., 1992). Focus groups are sociological methods (Merton and Kendall, 1946) widely used now in social research. It is the ideal instrument for listening to the human voice (Agar and MacDonald, 1995) and helps to identify group norms.

For this research as seen in Table 3.5, four focus groups were carried out between 2009 and 2013 with year one students.

The first focus group was conducted before the circulation of the questionnaire in late September 2009 so as to develop a general understanding of the first year experience at the very early entry point of year one at ITT.

The other three focus groups were carried out in February 2010, February 2012 and February 2013 as shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3 5 Focus Groups Planning and Process

Timing of Focus Groups	Cohort Involved and purpose	Numbers involved
Focus Group 1 September 2009	Year one general student population-to get an overall sense of first year experience at the very early stage of the year	**6 year 1 students**
Focus Group 2 February 2010	Year one students who had been identified in questionnaires as 'at risk' of leaving from general student population	**6 students**
Focus Group 3 February 2011	Year 1 students identified as 'at risk' from questionnaires	**6 students**
Focus Group 4 February 2012	Students who had already withdrawn from year one and had left ITT	**6 students**

The purpose of the three other focus groups were to generally explore with first year students what has been their experience of year one in ITT. In particular, to explore further among those year one students, who had been identified through the 'Early Day's questionnaires as being 'at risk' of leaving, why that was the case; why year one students entering from the access schools were thinking Higher Education was not for them and were considering leaving; why non-completers had left.   The

participants for focus group number one (September 2009) were selected at random from Moodle, an email was issued to all students and the first six responses were selected. The participants for focus group number two (February 2010) were selected by sending an email request to year one students who had participated in the 'Early Days' questionnaire earlier in their year and who had stated they were considering leaving college and the first six respondents were selected. The participants for the third focus group (February 2011) involved sending a request to those students who had participated in the 'Early Days' questionnaire, who had stated they were considering leaving and were from access schools. The first six respondents were chosen for the focus group.

The fourth focus group (February 2012) required the involvement of students who had already dropped out of first year and were from both access and non-access schools. An email was issued to students who had been in ITT and had entered from the access schools but who had since left. Four former students replied stating they were willing to participate. In addition, six students who had recently officially withdrawn from ITT were contacted and requested to participate.

3.3.6 Role of the moderator in the focus groups

During the research, focus groups took place in the Synergy Business Innovation campus adjoining the main campus and was conducted by an independent moderator with the researcher present in the room to introduce the research to the group.

Given that the researcher was involved with some of the participants not only as a lecturer but as their head of department, a moderator assisted in the focus groups to allow the participants to freely express their views. In addition, good practice

regarding insider researcher advocates the use of a moderator for some aspects of data collection (Krueger, 1994, p.124). Although a stranger to the participants, the moderator was in a similar role in an IoT context and brought that experience into the focus group. The researcher provided the interview guide in advance and conducted a briefing to ensure that the moderator had a sound background of the objective of the focus group.

The researcher was actively involved in the process; welcomed and briefed the participants, explained the logistics of the meeting and set up the recording equipment. The moderator then conducted the focus group and afterwards sat with the researcher as they listened back to the recordings where notes were taken by the researcher. A skilled moderator, who was external to ITT, but from the IoT sector, assisted in encouraging group interaction and this greatly allowed a more comprehensive understanding of year one student completion. Using a moderator who was not known to the participants allowed them to feel comfortable to make critical comments.

3.3.7 Interviews

The in-depth interview allowed for more than a simple exchange of questions and answers. It became an interactive process of telling, listening, clarifying and understanding (Chase and Bell, 1994). During the interviews, the shared objective was always to listen and to understand the students' narrative in detail. Initially there were several interviews held with the same students.

In addition, interviews were held involving the general student population and with lecturers. Ultimately in such research the validity of the data depends on the

relationship between the interviewer and the student and it is through close personal contact that researchers learn to trust what they are told. Bertaux (1995) states that "a good life story is one in which the interviewee takes over control of the interview situation and talks freely". (p.55)

It was agreed, with the consent of all participants, that the interviews would be recorded. Stephen A. Richardson (1965) in his analysis of the field research process certainly shows that there is no such thing as the good research interview.

There will always be significant differences according to the purpose of the interviewer, the nature of the situation and the nature of the interviewer-respondent relationship, as well as the personalities of both. No single interview stands alone and has meaning to the research in relation to other interviews and other data collection.

Table 3.6 shows the planning and the process involved in the interview stage of the research. A total of twenty three interviews took place over the period of the research. Thirteen interviews took place with students over the five year period.

The purpose of the interviews with year one students was to explore the student experience of year one, the issues they perceive as the cause of non-completion and how they perceive the habitus of ITT.

In addition, ten interviews took place with staff both academic and support staff in order to explore the views of staff on year one completion and how they perceive the habitus of year one students. In doing this we would assist in addressing the research question relating to the influence of habitus on student completion as seen from the perspective of both student and staff member.

The student participants for the interviews were selected from the participants in the 'Early Days' and 'Checking Back' questionnaires, each being sent an email for response by a given date. Lecturers who delivered modules on year one programmes in various disciplines across The Institute were emailed by the researcher and fifteen lecturers from across ITT Schools and Departments responded by the given date. The request to the administrative support staff working to support year one students in student services was issued by email and ten staff responded by the given date. Copies of the questionnaires to staff are in Appendix C.

Table 3 6 Interview Planning and Process

Timing of Interviews	Cohort Involved and purpose	Numbers involved
Interviews Part 1 **January –February 2011** **January- February 2012**	Year one students Year one access students To explore their experience of year one and what issues they perceive as the cause of non-completion and how they perceive the habitus of ITT	5 students 6 students
Interviews Part 2 **June-July 2012**	Students from access schools who had already withdrawn from ITT To explore the reasons for their withdrawal how they experienced year one and how they perceive the habitus of ITT	2 students
Interviews Part 3 **June-July 2011 and 2012**	Academic Staff involved with year one students of The Institute To explore the views of lecturers on year one completion and how they perceive the habitus of year one students	**5**
Interviews Part 4 **January 2013**	Administrative support staff from ITT To explore the views of the students support staff on year one completion and how they perceive the habitus of year one students	**5**

The purpose of data collection is to create a conversational setting in which the information provided is faithful to the frame of reference of the respondent. The researcher offered the minimum amount of steerage of the research topic and provided broad areas of discussion. Types of questions asked of students and staff are found in Appendix C. The interviews were held at the Synergy Business Innovation centre and were recorded. During the five year period evaluation cycles took place that involved participation from academic staff and support and administrative staff who have experience of working with new entrants in student services. Table 3.7 shows the evaluation cycle that took place with staff both academic and support.

Table 3 7 Evaluation cycle with staff

Academic Year	Evaluation 1 Questionnaire	Evaluation 2 Interviews
AY 2010/2011	January 2011 Academic staff	June 2011 Academic Staff
AY 2012/13	October 2012 Support Staff	January 2013 Support Staff

This involved a number of steps as seen in Figure 3.2 below. Step one examined what the research was designed to explore with cross-referencing index cards with all the mini questions that would be useful in achieving this objective (Step 2). Step three incorporated general interview situational type questions but not rigid or scripted. Step four involved cross-referencing to ensure that each of the big research

questions had a set of corresponding mini-research questions and that each of these had a set of ideas about interview topics and questions and vice versa. The final step considered the development of ideas about a loose structure and format for the actual interviews. There were a number of standardised questions identified that would be required to be asked of each participant. What was required was the maximum flexibility but also a guide or prompt which resulted in a set of index cards.

Figure 3 2 Steps involved in the research

Step 1 Moodle Questionnaires and Pilot

Step 2 Research questions-Early Days/Checking Back

Step 3 Possible Interview Topics and questions

Step 4 Crross-reference

Step 5 Loose interview structure and format
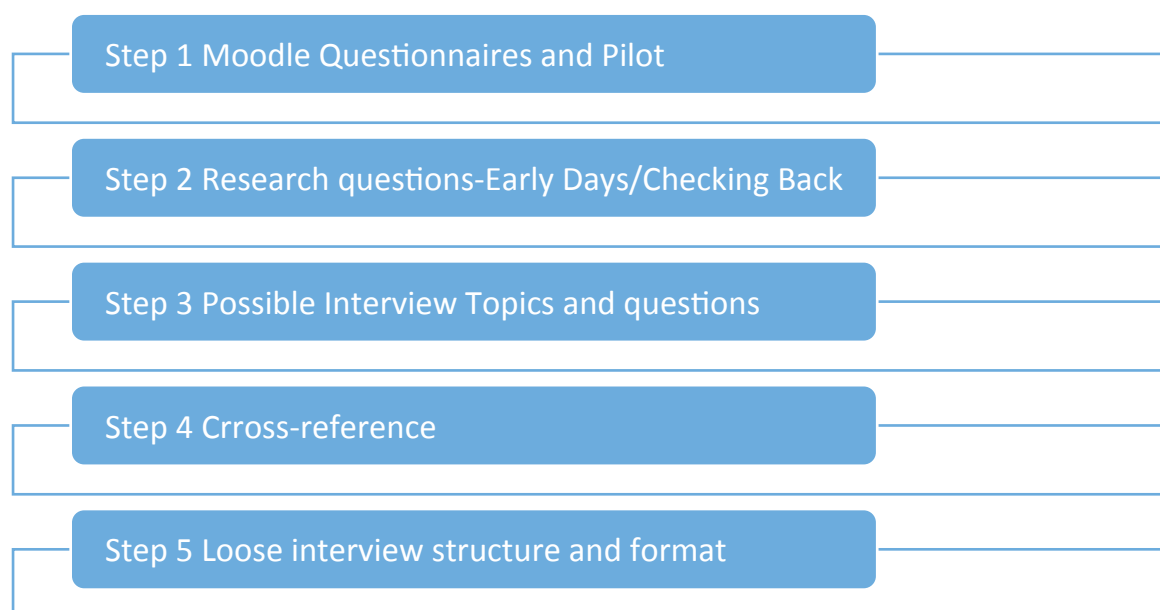
All interviews were recorded as were the focus groups. Transcription software was used to assist with the transcription process which generally took prolonged periods of close attention to the data during the academic break between the semesters or during the break between the academic years.

3.3.8 Questionnaires

A questionnaires as a research instrument is a set of systematically structured questions used by a researcher to get needed information from respondents, "any

written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out answers or selecting from among existing answers" (Brown 2001 p.6). As an important research instrument and tool for data collection a questionnaire has as its main function, measurement (Oppenheim 1992). It is the main data collection method in surveys and yield to quantitative and exploratory data (Dornyei, 2007). In designing the questionnaires, the researcher arranged the questions in a variety of ways so as to elicit a variety of responses. Two questionnaires were sent in each academic year to first year students over the five year period via Moodle. This included all faculties/schools in ITT across all programmes. One questionnaire was issued early in the first semester and the second at the beginning of the second semester. The first pilot questionnaire 'Early Days' was circulated to all students in ITT via Moodle in week five of the first semester in 2009.

The questionnaires contained questions relating to the year one experience in its totality. The academic programme, the tutoring system, the staff interactions, student supports, social involvement with peers and all matters relating to their first year experience. A copy of the questionnaire is available in Appendix A.

The questionnaires were conducted at the mid-term at the end of October for each year of the study when the students had attended lectures for five weeks of their first semester.

3.3.8.1   *'Early Days' Questionnaire to Students*
The first questionnaire 'Early Days' was circulated to all first year students in ITT via a link in their Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle, in week five of the first semester. All such calls for participation through Moodle, generate an email and SMS to those students who are registered in year one and in turn, registered in

Moodle. For the 'Early Days' questionnaire data was required on the initial experience and impression of Higher Education and to identify any students who were disclosing doubts about completion. The categories of heading for the questionnaires were informed by the research questions derived from the literature and the study's aims. The 'Early Days' questionnaire captured data on aspects such as student background, initial impressions of college, experience of student support, quality of relationships, the learning process and whether the students had any thoughts of leaving college.

(i) Student Background

In establishing a context, it is important to gather data around the student general background and history. Data on this is already available in Banner but is now made available through Moodle also. This included questions around age, gender, second level school attended. It also asked about previous educational level of parents or guardians to ascertain whether the respondents were first generation at Higher Education. Questions were also asked with regard to decisions to attend ITT and what preference was this current programme in their CAO selection. It also asked questions regarding the level of preparedness for Higher Education and knowledge of The Institute prior to entry. A series of questions was asked about Institutes of Technologies and whether the respondents had positive perceptions about the sector and ITT. All the information relating to background assisted in establishing an overview of the student population and the context of the research.

(ii) Initial impressions of Higher Education.

As the questionnaires were circulated just after the first month of arrival at Higher Education, availing of this opportunity to examine first impressions is important so as to measure it against the follow-up research collection later in the academic year. Questions centred on how students feel the experience matches their expectations,

how they find the transition to Higher Education and what they perceive as the main changes and transitions.

(iii) Experience of student support

This part of the questionnaire sought to measure the levels of support the students felt during their initial weeks in Higher Education. Questions focus on support from staff both academic and administrative, from other students, and from family.

(iv) Quality of Relationships

Do they work in groups with other students and have they met their tutor yet, if they have difficulty in their interaction with lecturers. There are questions relating to how they spend their day on campus and if they have free time how do they spend that time.

(v) The learning process

What process of learning are they going through as they start first year? Students are attempting to meet both their own learning needs, their 'learner identity' (Weil 1988 p.20) and the needs of the institution, the 'learning context' and to what level there can be dissonance between both. How are they coping with essay writing, study skills, meeting deadlines and knowing what is expected of them as well as coping with 'course load'.

(vi) Any thoughts of leaving

There are questions requiring them to reflect on how they think they are coping with the transition, how happy or satisfied they are and if they have any regrets or thoughts of non-completion at this stage. This section of the questionnaire is important to identify at risk students or students who are having difficulty or negative thoughts about their Higher Education experience. The response over the five year period is shown in Table 3.8.

Table 3 8 Response to 'Early Days' questionnaire in semester 1

Academic Year	Responses Total	access	non-access
2009/10	94 n=94	20	74
2010/11	95 n=95	24	71
2011/12	77 n=77	19	58
2012/13	70 n=70	18	52
2013/14	77 n=77	21	56
Totals	**413**	**102**	**313**

Over the five year period from 2009-2014 four hundred and thirteen questionnaires were completed by five different year one students, 24% of which were from students entering year one from access schools.

3.3.8.2 Questionnaire Number Two 'Checking Back' for Students

The second questionnaire, 'Checking Back', was circulated to a selected sample in February (the second semester) for each year of the study. The selected sample was drawn from the respondents of the first questionnaire and included a mixture of students from access schools as well as students from non-access schools who, in general, had been identified as 'at risk' based on feedback from questionnaire number one. The categories of questions here attempted to delve further and are framed by Bourdieu's concepts of social capital, field, dispositions and habitus. This questionnaire captured data on how the students are engaging with college, what sort of relationships they have developed and how happy they are in college. A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix B.

(i) How are you engaging in Higher Education?
Questions ask respondents to answer questions regarding their attendance, the amount of time they spend on campus and studying. How they are engaging in extra-curricular activities. What friends they have made. How happy they are with their programmes. Did they have good results in the first semester. What parts of Higher Education do they least enjoy.

(ii) What sort of relationships have you developed?
Questions asked respondents how they are managing their course work and assessments. How often they get feedback on their performance and what is the quality of that feedback. Questions were asked with regard to their sense of self confidence. Questions also were asked on other issues in relation to the student staff interactions as well as relationships with other members of the staff of ITT.

(iii) How happy are you in college?
Assessing the students' level of happiness at college is important to our theoretical framework and 'habitus'. Firstly, are they happy and is this sense of happiness linked to their sense of belonging, the culture of care manifested in the institution. Measuring general feelings of contentment among the year one students allows us to establish the factors that contribute to their successful completion.

Table 3 9 Response to 'Checking Back' Questionnaire

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE NUMBER TWO IN SPRING SEMESTER			
Academic Year	Participants	access	Non-access
2009/10	24	13	11
2010/11	24	14	10
2011/12	24	11	13
2012/13	27	15	12
2013/14	20	13	7
Totals	119	66 (55%)	53 (45%)

One hundred and nineteen participants completed questionnaires over the period of the study from 2009-2014 with an average response rate of 55% from students entering from the access schools, Table 3.9.

3.3.9   A Reflective Online Diary

The researcher piloted, in ITT an online reflective diary, Student Diary Pro, in 2008 which she had seen in use in the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland. Initially the researcher used this as a reflective tool for students on national and international internships and work placements. At the end of the pilot year, an evaluation was carried out which found the reflective online tool to be very effective in engaging the students and in achieving the learning objectives of increased reflective practice. The author decided to use this as a qualitative research method to engage responses from the group of students being researched. The tool is very user friendly, requiring a minimum of training of students in its use. The students can access the tool at any time and from anywhere and it has since been integrated into Moodle, which is their Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that they are familiar with.   Real and meaningful reflective practice comes from the student *"...taking ownership and taking responsibility for their own learning"* (Stiggins & Chappauis, 2008 p.42).   Absolum (2006) uses the phrase 'active reflection' to describe the goal-focused evidence based thinking that is ongoing. A reflective learner is one who understands the difference between simply knowing theories and effectively using them in practice. Reflective practice requires valuing inquiry, knowing how to structure opportunities for discovery and sense making as well as having the willingness to engage in it.

Reflection involves "a continual interweaving of thinking and doing" (Schön, D. 1989 p.12).

The students were asked to reflect on the first year experience in the broadest sense. The training provided, which is detailed in later chapters, included an introduction to reflective writing and the use of online diaries. Guidelines were also provided that guided their reflection without interfering with the personal nature of the diary.

The reflective online diary was introduced to ITT in 2008 and for the purposes of the research in February 2014 for the year one students, academic year 2013-2014. Students nowadays are very familiar and very comfortable using social media. This instrument has proven useful where any element of reflection is required and has proven very effective for that purpose. It is a safe environment for individual students to further express their thoughts on experiences of first year and particularly useful in allowing everyone to have an opportunity to contribute. This involved meeting with the group and providing training in the use of the diary, what constituted reflective writing and the different types of reflective entries, what is reflective writing, what type of entries could be recorded in the diary as well as training in what is appropriate and not to record with regard to anonymity (Reflective writing 2000). The participants were also made aware that the diary is totally confidential and not visible to anyone else except themselves and the researcher.

The level of engagement in the diary was relatively high due to the fact that the participants already had access to Moodle with which they were familiar and the online Diary Pro tool is very user friendly. During the final year of the research, 2013-14, this additional online reflective diary was used as a further research instrument for one semester from mid-September to mid-December. In total, 232

students completed consent procedures and 209 registered with the online diary. At least one diary entry was received from each of 209 students. 1124 entries were made by participants over the period of the twelve week semester. Engagement in the diary by year one students varied in terms of their participation rates, how frequently they opened the online diary and the length of their diary entries. Interestingly, the students used the online diary in different ways, some responding to the diary categories and prompts that were created, while others used it as a diary to record their experiences and thoughts. The prompts created on the online diary related to the culture of care, their identity, learning, relationships, feelings of isolation, integration, belonging and college being an unfamiliar place.

3.4 How the data was analysed

A contextual and holistic approach was chosen for the data analysis. This method allowed for comparisons and explanations in order to gain a sense of the distinctiveness of the different elements of the data. This approach enhanced the understanding of the interwoven parts of the data set, the social processes and the complex narratives and practices. In particular, it suited the organisation of the data around the chosen themes and issues while at the same time placing the emphasis on the context (Mason, 2002).

Identifying the key elements of the data meant organising the data manually and helping to establish connections and relationships in the data. This necessitated obtaining answers for the following question:

- How many students were offered a place through the CAO

- For how many was it their first preference

- For how many was it their Second or other preference

- How many registered in year 1

- How many registered from the access schools

- How many sat the first semester (January) exams

- How many sat the June exams

- How many sat repeat examination

- How many registered and progressed to year 2

For the qualitative data, the researcher chose thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) to analyse the data set with emerging themes being identified. An inductive approach by the researcher used a "process of coding the data from the "bottom up" as opposed to fit the data into a pre-existing coding frame as is the case with deductive analysis which is theory driven" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.83). Participant interviews were transcribed verbatim. These were carried out as soon as possible post-interview. Transcribing interviews verbatim is believed to increase the validity of the qualitative research findings as it ensures a precise description of what has been heard throughout the interview (Robson 2002). The researcher chose thematic analysis to decipher meaning from the data collected using a process of coding. Thematic analysis is defined as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.83). There has been much discussion surrounding thematic analysis as to whether it qualifies as a standalone method (Ryan and Bernard 2000). Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that it should be

viewed as a method in its own right (2006) and they have established six phases that the researcher systematically follows:

Phase One: The researcher became immersed within the data and made notes on areas of interest and identified possible themes (Taylor and Usher 2001). A deep reading of all of the transcripts allowed for themes and ideas to emerge. This then led to an initial mapping of the year one experience from the student participant perspectives.

Phase Two: Moving through each transcript from the general to the specific, the researcher noted recurring themes and patterns of themes. This involved reading under the headings which were inherent in the data: environment, learning, support, physical space and relationships. The data which involved the access students in particular revealed headings relating to familiarity with college and being part of a community. Working through the data to identify quotations that would be moved under each of these headings, large white sheets were useful in charting these findings. The researcher generated initial codes, labels which "captures a key analytical idea in the data and conveys this to the researcher" (Braun, Clarke and Terry 2006, p.100). This process of coding is part of the analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994) as the data became organised into meaningful groups (Truckett 2005). Features of interest within the data were systematically coded with appropriate labels attached. In this phase of the research, the researcher identified the codes. The researcher recorded the codes using an excel spreadsheet with accompanying quotes entered on the grid. A sample is provided in Appendix F. **Phase Three:** The initial codes were further analysed to support answering the research questions and some were discounted and some merged to form potential themes to support answering the research questions. **Phase Four:** The researcher further refined the themes. Broader

level themes were now starting to develop from the codes and the researcher carried out an interpretative analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) with the number of themes being further refined. **Phase Five:** The researcher identified themes which were clearly defined and labelled. The researcher is aware that this type of data analysis involves her own role as a researcher since she has to interpret and make sense of the participants' experiences. **Phase Six:** The researcher presented the written analysis, providing a coherent and analytical narrative (Cresswell, 2007).

3.4.1 Overview of themes emerging from participant interviews and online diary:

Table 3.10 shows an overview of the themes that emerged in the interviews with year one students, staff both academic and support as well as through the online diary. The over-arching theme was one of care as experienced through systems of the institution, through interactions with peers and lecturers and in the learning environment of ITT.

Table 3 10 Overview of Themes emerging from Student and Staff Interviews and online diary

Themes	Relationships	Sense of Identity	The College Culture	The Learning Environment
S U B T H E M E S	Support	View of IoTs	Culture of care	Assessment Matters
	Anticipation	Views of Students of IoTs	Physical space	Timetabling and Organisation
	Communities of Learning	View of ITT	Being an Access Student in ITT	Challenges and being challenged

3.5   Reliability and Validity of Research Design

Credibility refers to the accuracy or credibility of the research findings the 'truth formulating process' between the researcher and the participants (Lincoln and Guban

1985). In order to ensure that the research was carried out in a manner that maximised its credibility, Guban suggests a prolonged engagement with the research participants, persistent observation and triangulation. The researcher drew on Bourdieu's recommendation which advocates a departure from traditional oppositions and rejects the division between research and theory (Bourdieu 1992). Key to this approach is reflexivity or self-awareness (Wacquant and Bourdieu 1992) and the researcher made use of a reflective online diary tool which supported this approach which acted as a valve against any potential 'intellectual bias.' The researcher also made use of the peer/stakeholder debriefing to provide an external check on the research, By involving stakeholders with a specific interest in the research-participants, lecturer colleagues as well as a triangulation approach in data sources, data set and method. "It requires a much more active and labour-intensive approach towards genuinely self-critical research, so that something of originality and value is created, with which of course, people are then always free to disagree, but may be less inclined to do so because of the strength of the author's case" (Clive Seale, 1999). This research took place over a five year period commencing at the start of the academic year 2009-2010 and concluding in the academic year 2013-2014. The research involved contributions from a number of different participants as follows:

(a) Five different groups of first year students from access schools over that five year period.

(b) Academic staff at intervals during that five year period.

(c) Administrative support staff at intervals during that five year period.

(d) Former year one students who had already left their programme of study at ITT during that five year period.

In order to successfully carry out the research over the five year period and involve participation by the various groups mentioned above, it was necessary to divide the research into different evaluation stages over the five year period. This chapter presents an evaluation of the various research stages and how it aims to apply Bourdieu's model of analysis of the 'field', the researcher was required to position the field of the first year access student in the broader field of power within the institution as represented by peers, managers, academics and administration. Powell and DiMaggio (1991) note that "Bourdieu's framework offers a particularly balanced and multifaceted approach to action […] much of it dovetails with and may contribute to a broadening and deepening of institutional traditions." (1991 p.45). According to Bourdieu the social world is composed of a large diversity of fields and "each of these fields corresponds to a fundamental viewpoint of the world which creates its own object and finds within itself the principle understanding and explanation suited to that object" (Bourdieu 1992 p.64). In other words, each 'field' has its own logic and its own vision of the world. In applying the mixed and multi-methods approach to the research, there was a need to have constant review and reflection after each phase to ensure that all of the research questions were being addressed throughout the research cycle.

3.5.1   Setting and Environment

The setting in which the research is to be carried out is an important factor in order to engage the participants in critical thinking and in problem solving (Resinch 1987). The research is carried out via Moodle and Survey Monkey and a reflective online diary so as to maximise responses. If the participants can complete the questionnaires and diaries at any time that is convenient to them and in the privacy of their own space then the response rate is higher. The interviews were held in the location of

choice for students and staff and in a relaxed environment again with the intention that this would be conducive to a better flow of dialogue and greater engagement with the subject matter.

3.5.2   Initial Meetings

Before each of the data collection phases the researcher had meetings with the group to explain the objectives, the purpose of the research and answer any questions or clarifications that were required. For the online diary and questionnaires a preamble noted at the start of each questionnaire as to the purpose of the questionnaire and a training session regarding reflective writing was recorded using Camtasia and embedded in the online diary was hyperlinked to the page on Moodle. With regard to the focus groups the researcher met the groups and it was important to establish trust and build relationships in this way so that all participants were at ease and comfortable with the research process.

3.6   Ethics and Research

An application for research ethical approval was granted to the author by ITT's Research Ethics Committee in October 2008 and included in the application was the rationale for the research, copies of the questionnaires and consent forms. The application for ethical approval was made on the basis that the research formed part of a PhD study and as such would be a public document. The President of ITT supported the study and its contribution to the important issue of retention in the sector, approving the naming of the Institute in the research

Over the lifetime of the study, the researcher was a long-serving member of the Research Ethics Committee in ITT and had the role as vice-chair and as such was very aware of the process and the importance of clear and precise research ethics guidelines for all parties involved in research.   ITT Research Ethics committee approval was also supported by Maynooth University. A copy of the Research Ethics application to the committee is available in Appendix D, Within research, it is very important to remember that ethical considerations do not end with ethical approval because "permission from an ethics committee to proceed with the research is just the beginning of a process of constant self-monitoring by the researcher" (Rolph 1998, p.135). Informed consent was required from all participants preceding the interview process and participants were assured that they could freely withdraw at any time during the research project (Barbara 2009).   As well as informed consent, a brief synopsis of the study was provided to each participant including information on how the data would be stored. Names and contact details of participants were kept in a password-protected excel spreadsheet and further protected through an encrypted and password protected computer. Transcribed interviews were assigned an identifying code known only to the researcher and any identifiable characteristics were removed. The anonymised transcripts were also kept in individual password-protected Microsoft files with a back-up copy of the password protected transcripts and identification codes stored throughout the duration of the study on a portable hard drive which is due to be destroyed after two years. Furthermore, all audio interviews were destroyed as soon as the transcription process was complete. The key ethical issues in the research were the familiarity of the researcher with the institution and the participants as well as the reputation of the institution being examined.

3.6.1 Researcher 'Insider'

The researcher was a long-time member of the staff of the Institution where the research was being carried out as a lecturer and member of academic management team. The researcher was interested in gaining the students' own personal perspectives on the first year experience and therefore facilitated the research in such a way that the researcher's view was not at all important or visible to the process. The researcher aimed to enter the participants' world "not as a person who knows everything but a person who has come to learn" (Bodgan, 1992, p.79). Carrying our research from within an organisation has its challenges as well as its advantages. The main advantages of being a researcher insider is that of having a greater understanding of the culture being studied. The researcher already knows how the systems of ITT operate, its formal hierarchy and knowing whom to approach, which would take an outsider researcher a good deal of time and effort to acquire (Smyth and Holian, 2008).

Speaking the same language, understanding the local values and knowing the management structure facilitated gaining permission to conduct the research, to carry out interviews and to access records (Rounay 2005). Because of the researcher's role, she was able to collect data over the period of the study and this allowed for continuity of data collection which assisted in setting up a robust data set with greater detail. In examining and analysing the data, when gaps in the data were identified, the researcher was in a position to pursue focus groups with the participants which enhanced the robustness of the data.

In order to maintain an objective view on the research the researcher involved participation from other academic researchers in ITT and outside from other institutions. The research took place over five years, involved all new entrants to

year one, from different academic cycles and from all academic and departments in order to ensure a fair and even distribution of views and perspectives.

The researcher collected data as an insider participant observer. Insider participant observation is viewed as an important but challenging instrument in qualitative studies (Hermann, 1989). The author was a long serving and respected member of staff of the institution serving many terms as elected staff representative on Academic Council and Research Ethics Committee who gained support from senior management including the Registrar for the research and approval from the Research Ethics Committee. Gaining access to sensitive information, the author, at all times during the research process, respected the ethical issues and anonymity of all individuals involved in the research (Smyth, Holian 2008).

The researcher found that carrying out research in the form of interviews, focus groups and questionnaires within the institution allowed for a greater flow of interaction in a more natural way that might have been the case for an outsider researcher. This established familiarity helped to promote the telling and the judging of the truth. However, the author is also aware that such familiarity can lead to bias or lack of objectivity (Hewitt Taylor 2002). In order to avoid this, the researcher adopted a preventative approach by involving participants in the research process, external academic advisors, other postgraduate researchers and facilitators and moderators (Rooney 2005). The researcher has always practised self-reflection as part of her teaching review. Throughout the research she maintained a researcher reflective online journal as an audit trail. This assisted in sharing and verifying the interpretations with the participants. It also served to record detailed descriptions of the research setting as well as the research participants and in turn enhanced the research rigour (Becher et al 2005).

The main difficulty is counteracting any negative perceptions that may prevail regarding potential negative outcomes to the research. The researcher spent a good deal of time communicating to members of ITT the motivation for the research and the benefits to ITT and ultimately to an enhanced student experience.

Overall, the researcher found that since educational research involves human beings, a range of participants and their accompanying behaviour, this brings to the research process a wide range of perspectives including the researcher's own (Porteli 2008) In this way, it leads to a more balanced and more objective view of the research development. Gaining the support of many members of the organisation from the computing services, registrar's office, colleagues and most importantly the student participants has been a valuable learning experience.

3.6.2 Advantages and Challenges of Practitioner Insider Research

When the researcher reflects on the experience of being an insider researcher, there were many advantages as well as some challenges. Being in a position, as a lecturer, to be able to collect the research data at any time of the day was very valuable as it provided continuity for the collection of the research data. That continuity of data collection also meant that the researcher could engage in multiple methods of data collection that in turn added to the trustworthiness of the research data. The staff involved who were drawn from both administrative and academic bodies were also colleagues, which assisted the data collection process since requests were, for the most part, positively accepted. This might have proven more difficult for an outsider. Added to this, where any gaps or questions were identified, the researcher was in a position to complete the missing data, again adding to the validity of the data.

Being an insider researcher was helpful during the analysis stage of the research because it was not necessary to spend time getting to know the research site itself. The researcher was familiar with the various roles and responsibilities of staff, students and support services. That knowledge meant the researcher understood the context whereas an outsider researcher could potentially have missed some interesting data because of a lack of understanding of that context.

Of course that same advantage can also be a challenge since there exists a risk of being too familiar and of being biased through the researcher's own preconceived ideas. 'An insider needs to make the familiar strange' (Hockey, 1993, p.2018). The researcher tried to avoid this pitfall of over-familiarity by maintaining a mind-set throughout the research that consisted of not making assumptions about events or the views of participants or indeed that the participants think the researcher already knows what the, the participants know.

There was also the challenge of 'role duality' as an insider researcher, given that the researcher's role was intertwined through the personal and professional relationships with the academic colleagues and students in ITT. Inevitably, there was some blurring of boundaries especially during certain interviews where participants sometimes wanted to discuss issues or concerns they had which were not particularly pertinent to the research. The researcher was happy to afford them this opportunity and saw that this allowed for the trust to be established in the confidentiality of the research process. The duality of the researcher-academic role was beneficial in that one role informed and enhanced the other. The participants were willing and comfortable to express their views and to discuss issues with someone they felt who understood and were not being judged in any way.

The researcher managed the challenge of student participants viewing her role as one of either formal or informal power by using strategies for recruitment through Moodle so that no perceived personal pressure was placed on student participants.

Being a member of any institution does not automatically mean the researcher has access to all aspects of the organization for research purposes. An insider researcher may have restricted access to important information due to their relationship with the participants and this was the case in gaining access to the Business Information System of ITT. Establishing a robust data was key to this research so learning where to find that, access it and navigate it was very important. The researcher avoided emailing people asking for information as that would have been met with a refusal or would have been ignored. It was very important to gain the trust of colleagues and management. So, the researcher made sure to meet colleagues and explain the purpose of the queries and why the information was needed. Otherwise, colleagues would, understandably, be wary of providing access to data. The researcher also used the existing communication platforms in ITT, by engaging with academic board, with meetings of faculty and with research groups to present interim research findings. This dissipated any potential concerns there may have been as to the motivation for the research, the improvement of student retention and the year one experience. In this way, the key issue of gaining access to Banner, the business information system of ITT, was overcome. At the start of the research study, the researcher was not familiar with the system and did not have automatic access. When the researcher sat down with the BIS manager, she was very happy to assist once she understood the purpose of the request and she trained me in navigating the dashboard and generating reports.

The researcher was very conscious of protecting the identity of participants by using identifier codes known to the researcher alone. In addition, the researcher did not reveal any observations that the researcher made with any participants.

The researcher sought to overcome some of the challenges and disadvantages of insider research by taking a preventative approach. As mentioned before, the researcher was an accepted person by the faculty members, and the administrators, because of past interaction and experience, did not have difficulty in expressing her role as a researcher to ITT staff.

The risk of bias is always present in all research and the researcher attempted to confront any potential blind spot by collecting the data without prejudice as far as possible. One practical step that assisted in reducing any potential bias was the assistance of a moderator for a section of the research collection. The research findings from that section of the research aligned with that found in the other data sources and methods and had the added value of triangulating the findings.

In the researcher's case, she was fortunate that the relationship with her superiors was positive and constructive, always being mindful of our mutual professional responsibilities.

In conclusion, the researcher feels that she experienced many advantages in being in an insider position and overcame the few challenges in her research and hopes her experience is useful to other practitioner researchers.

3.7   Conclusion

The process of creating a research design began with a literature review and identification of the main research questions for the study. Yin's (2003) principles were followed by

(i)   collecting quantitative evidence through the Business Information System (Banner) of ITT, through questionnaires to students and staff

(ii)   collecting qualitative evidence through interviews and focus groups as well as an online reflective diary

(iii)   identifying the most significant themes through thematic analysis

(iv)   presenting a descriptive narrative, supported by quotations and student personal insights.

The findings are presented in the following chapter. It was a very lengthy research period but very valuable in gaining a full view of non-completion among this selected group of students in year one which is one of the main objectives of the research. The research attempts to address some of the gaps in the existing research on non-completion among the first year student population by using a case study research design, supported by quantitative data. Previous studies have tended to focus on statistical quantitative data alone in order to explain non-completion among this cohort of students. The general philosophy underpinning the research design used is to include the students as consultants in the measurement process by including their voices. The main focus, therefore, is on qualitative methods and draws on, but not exclusively, naturalistic methods. Where the task is to understand the subjective realm of a lived life, it is essential first for the researcher to listen to those who know (Bertaux-Wiame 1981).

Where research concerns students' own lives and circumstances, they are the 'expert witnesses' and "provide an inner view of the person not accessible through other

methods of data collection" (Birren and Deutchman 1991, p.24). Adopting these methods allows access to structural aspects of their world as their stories reveal how their experiences are shaped by the wider Higher Educational community. They can throw light on the network of social relations to which they belong (Bertaux, 1984). It is in this sense that the "effort to understand a biography in all its uniqueness…becomes the effort to interpret a social system" (Ferrarotti 1981, p.36).

Chapter 4   Attainment and Non-Retention

4.1   Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine student attainment and non-retention in year one over a five-year period (2009-2014) in ITT. The particular research questions being addressed here relate to the extent to which non-completion is an issue in first year among those students accessing Higher Education at ITT and whether there is any difference in those rates of completion among students entering the Institute from access schools.

To address these research questions it was necessary to establish a robust data set. This was done by collating and filtering data from ITT's Business Information System (BIS). The data relating to ITT's full time year one intakes over the five-year period is presented. This chapter presents an analysis of the results of the quantitative data collection.

The various sections of this chapter present the data sources used for the study over the five-year period and then how the data was filtered and for what purpose. Initially, the data is examined regarding the numbers of students accepting CAO programme offers at ITT. Following this, the data presents the numbers who actually registered at the Institute for the five years of the study, the numbers of students who successfully completed year one in order to establish the rates of completion for each year of the study.   To establish any patterns of (non-)completion in particular disciplines, the data was analysed according to the school or academic department where the students are registered.   This analysis enhances our understanding of

particular expressions and impact of habitus in ITT or where pockets of (non-completion may exist. The data was then filtered to establish if there were differences between rates of completion among the access and non-access year one students. Finally, this data was examined in terms of CAO points of year one students on entry, the funding supports of year one students and their academic performance so as to establish what influence these may have on student completion in year one.

4.2   Data Sources

In order to establish the levels of completion and non-completion in year one entrants, it was necessary to gain access to ITT's Business Information system. Gaining access to the management information system is available to all administrative staff and to the total management team of ITT. In the initial years of the research, the researcher was not part of the total management team and as such did not have automatic access to the management information system of ITT. It was necessary to apply for authorisation and this was secured through an application to ITT's Ethics Committee chaired by the Institute Registrar. Gaining access was an initial step in the quantitative data collection. A further stage in the data collection process involved learning to navigate the dashboard of the system and learning how to filter the data once accessed. In order to filter according to the relevant category heading took an extensive period of trial and error. In year one 2009 the researcher used an advanced version of Excel, Tableau, to filter the data and establish reports for each subsequent year of the five year study. The reports generated each year were deemed to be the headings that would source data pertinent to the research questions, in particular

research question number one, 'to what extent is non-completion an issue in first year among those students accessing Higher Education from the access schools?'

The researcher had gained many skills during her many years working in ITT performing multiple roles as a lecturer, as a placement coordinator, as an Erasmus manager, as a Volunteer Committee founding Chair, as a National Franco-Irish Research Centre founding member and many more, each one allowing her to enhance the learning experience of the students as undergraduates and as research postgraduates themselves. The researcher also gained interpersonal skills to develop and practice in her professional relationships which greatly helped her to be a sensitive research interviewer. In addition, as vice-Chair of the ITT Research Ethics the understanding gained of theory, values and ethics in practice helped in the research process. Having worked assisting the registrar in drafting a quality manual and corresponding Standard Operating Procedures for ITT, prepared the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Subsequently, as Head of Department, the researcher learned how to handle sensitive emotional situations with both students and staff that greatly assisted in the research that involved interviews and engagement with research participants. As an active academic and manager, it is important to learn to draw together information from many sources, to analyse information in the light of our knowledge and to make decisions based on evidence. All of this was very valuable in the utilisation of data sources for the research over the five years of the study.

4.2.1   Data Collection Headings/Data Filters

The data accessed through the management information system was filtered in the following ways in order to address the research questions:

- Firstly, the data was obtained to produce an overview of year one student intake over the period 2009-2014. This overview was necessary in order to establish an overall picture of student numbers in year one for the overall general student population over the five years of the research study.

- Once an overview was established, the data was then filtered to seek out information relating to the CAO intake points of entrants into year one. Traditionally, students accessing Institutes of Technology have lower CAO points than those entering the university sector. By filtering the data according to CAO points it was hoped to establish the average CAO intake points over the five year period and to see if there was any pattern or any noticeable changes over the five year period.

- A further data filter was set up in order to ascertain the funding mechanism of the year one entrants and for each year of the study, a further filtering of the data was carried out. The research is concerned with completion among socio-economically disadvantaged students and this cohort of students depend on receiving funding in order to access and progress in Higher Education. Therefore, establishing the number of students who were in receipt of funding and entering year one of Higher Education was important to our research.

- At this point it was important to the research to carry out filtering and establish the success rate of each intake of year one students. Establishing the number of students who successfully pass year one of their programme was important to ascertain the overall completion rate in ITT for each year of the research study. To examine if there were any patterns or changes was relevant also.

- Finally, the data was filtered to examine how the year one students entering ITT from the six access schools compared with the general overall student intake over the five-year period. In order to establish the rates of completion each year among this cohort of students, the data was filtered each year of the study based on the school of origin of entrants. This allowed for comparisons to be made between the general intake of year one students and the students from the six access schools only.

4.2.2 Data inclusions and exclusions

The data is presented with a focus on differing perspectives. There is not a single set of data used in the study, rather a number of different subsets of data depending on the focus of the particular question being examined. Almost 6,000 registration records were extracted from the database. Excluded from the data are first year students who are registered on ITT's Programmes co-taught in China. The focus of this study was on first year students attending ITT. Another group excluded from many tables and analyses are mature students. These are students who are age twenty-three and upwards on the first of January of the year of admission. Mature students are a very interesting cohort in ITT and deserving of study. However, for the purposes of this study where the focus is on completion and retention, it was felt that

the variation between the non-mature student group and the mature student group might mask some of the particular characteristics of the non-mature group.

The mature group consists of over 930 students (Table 4.1). Mature students varied as shown below. Mature student participation in Higher Education varies inversely with the external economic situation with times of high unemployment often corresponding to higher mature student participation in Higher Education. In addition, government policy over the period worked to encourage more participation in Higher Education as the Back to Education Allowance and other schemes promoted mature student participation in Higher Education. Such factors can, of course be confounding factors when conducting a study over a number of years, as is the case with this current study.

Table 4 1 Mature Student Numbers at ITT over the five-year period

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number	160	184	187	212	190

Source: Business Information System at ITT

4.3 Students accepting CAO offers at ITT 2009-2013

In this section data is presented in relation to the overall numbers accepting CAO places in ITT. It includes 'No Shows' (NS) as opposed to 'Attending' which represent students who have accepted, less 'No Shows'. In order to establish

comparisons between the students accessing Higher Education from the six access schools, it is first necessary to examine the entire student intake into year one over the five-year period.

Figure 4 1 Year 1 students accepting a CAO place at ITT
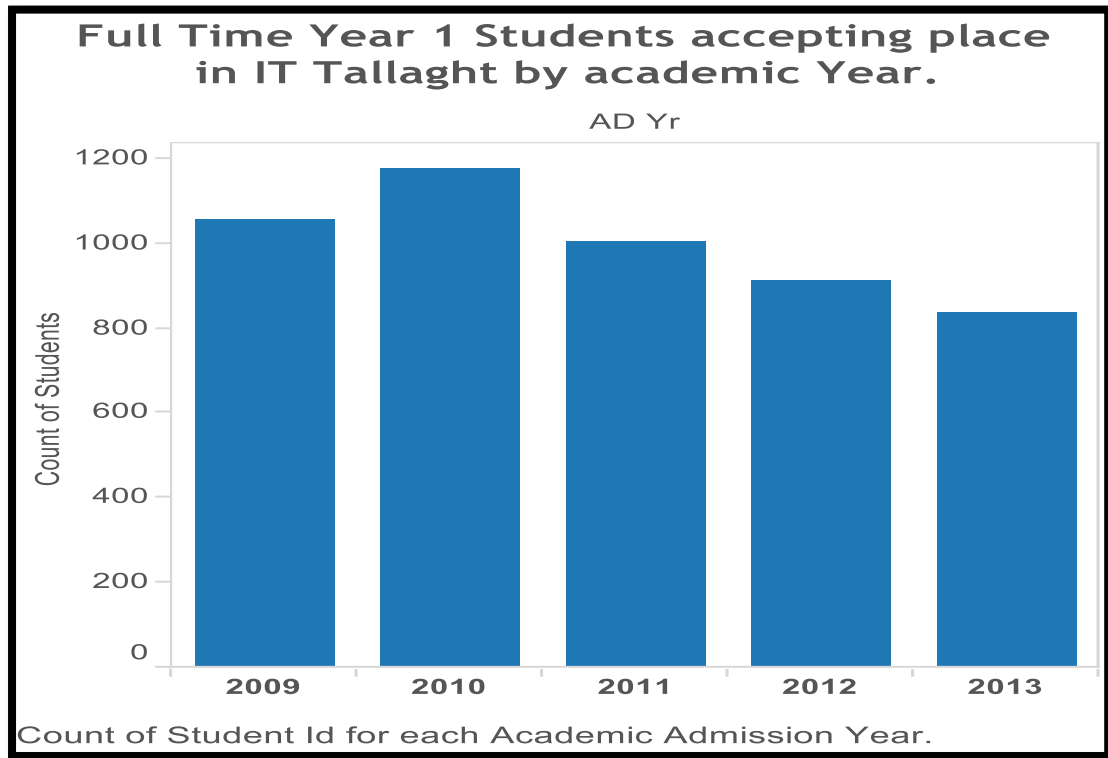
Source: Business Information System at ITT

The data in Figure 4.1 shows that over the five years of this research the numbers accepting a place in ITT are, on average, around 1,000 students each year, reaching its height in 2010 with acceptances at 1,178 and dropping to 835 in 2013.   This shows the gross number for all accepted non-mature students.

4.3.1 Registered Students for the study period 2009-2013

It is important to note that not all 'accepted students' actually turn up to register at ITT. For the purposes of this research, when examining data relating to completion,

the numbers quoted relate to those students who have registered to study in ITT. Figure 4.2 shows the count of students for each academic year of the study accepting a CAO offer along with the different colours to represent the different registration statuses. In Figure 4.2, the code 'TR' means the student is recorded on Banner as Temporarily Registered as s/he is awaiting payment of fees or determination of grant eligibility. 'TR's have the same 'rights' as 'RG's, that is, 'registered' and typically indicates that a student is awaiting a grant application determination. 'TR' link well to SPONS rate code, those students who are sponsored, that is, in receipt of financial grant support. The majority of 'TR's are temporarily registered while they await their sponsorship from the local authority administered through SUSI.

What Figure 4.2 and the accompanying Table 4.2 show is that the number of students entering year one over the period of the study peaked in 2010 with 951 new entrants. However, the numbers of new entrants started to decline each later year of the study, dropping by 24% for the 2013/2014 academic year. In addition, we see that the number of year one entrants on Temporary Registration 'TR" status increases substantially during the period of the study, this is the number of year one students who are awaiting the outcome of a student grant applications.

At the start of the study, in 2009, 36 students were in this situation, that is, 4.3% of year one students. There is an increase in 2010, with 89 students having this registration status, representing 9.3% of year one students that year. The numbers peaked in 2011 with 390 students, representing 43.7% of year one students, awaiting an outcome of a grant application. 2012 shows an equally high number, 320 students, 42.1% of year one students, in this bracket. Finally, by 2013, there are 265 students, 36.8% of year one students awaiting the outcome of their grant application and have'TR" status.

Figure 4 2 Number of New First Year Students accepting CAO place in ITT over the period 2009-2014.
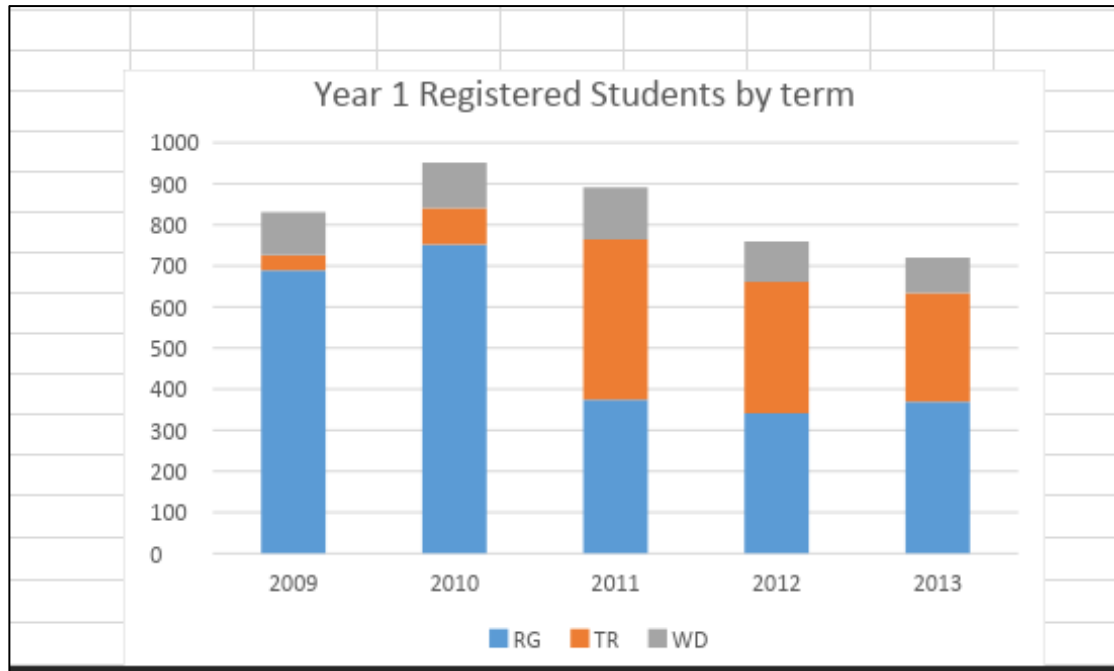
Table 4.2 shows the actual count of first year students by academic year and according to their registration status.

Table 4 2 Count of First Year students by Academic Year broken into registration status.

TABLE 14	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
RG	690	752	374	341	369
TR	36	89	390	320	265
WD	105	110	127	98	86
	831	951	891	759	720

Source: Business Information System at ITT

4.3.2   Registered Students by Payment Code

At this point in the examination of the data an analysis is carried out to establish the payment codes of the year one students over the five year period. This is necessary in order to ascertain the proportion of year one students who are self-funded and those who are in receipt of a student grant. As the research is focused on students entering ITT from the access schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, establishing this aspect of data set is important. It will allow an examination of the different funding sources of the students and later in the research track those students from a completion perspective.

The data was examined from the perspective of the funding background of students from access schools and non-access schools. For this examination, the students were split into 'Fee Paying' and 'Funded'. The category 'Fee Paying' includes those who have to pay the student charge and those to have to pay full tuition. The Category 'Funded' includes any student, either individual funded through one of the Grant funding schemes or students on funded programmes. Figure 4.3 shows the patterns of payment types over the five years of the study.   Students in ITT are funded by a variety of mechanisms which can be broken into three broad categories.

(i)   Completely self-funded for tuition (SELF/ SPEC)

(ii)   Paying student contribution but not full tuition (REGS)

(iii)   Funded by Grant Agency (SPON_X,NTCB)

Figure 4 3 Registered first year entrants by year and payment codes
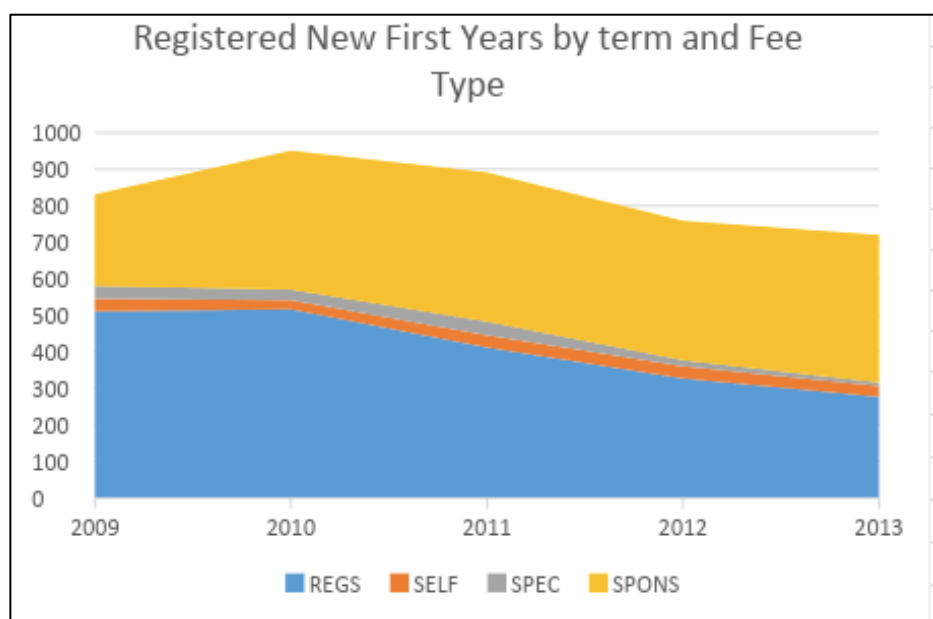
Source: Business Information System at ITT

The rate codes above include the following: (1) Students paying full fees as they do not qualify under 3 of last 5 years residency rule for government support (SPEC), (ii) Grant Supported Students (SPON), (iii) Students Paying the student contribution but with no grant support (REGS), and (iv) Students who already received support for 3rd level in another college (SELF). Table 4.3 shows the numbers of students who fall into these categories for each term and exclusions include Repeat Tuition and Repeat Exam Only students.

Table 4 3 Year One entrants filtered by payment codes Academic Years 2009-14

Rate Code Academic Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
REGS **(no grant support)**	511	516	411	326	277
SELF	35	25	34	34	29

(already received support for 3rd level, now on full fee)					
SPEC-(paying full fees not resident for 3 of last 5 years)	34	30	37	17	10
SPONS (Grant Supported)	251	380	409	382	404
TOTAL	831	951	884	750	720

Source: Business Information System at ITT

Table 4 4 Percentage of year one students in receipt of financial aid

Year	Number of students	Students receiving financial aid	% of students receiving financial aid
2009	831	251	30%
2010	951	380	40%
2011	884	409	46%
2012	750	382	51%
2013	720	404	56%

Source: Business Information System at ITT

It has become clear at this point in the data analysis that the proportion of fee paying students entering ITT has decreased over the five years of the period of the study while the number of students entering ITT in receipt of financial support has increased over the same period (Table 4.4). In 2009 30% of the year one students were in receipt of financial aid and this increased each year of the study as seen in Table 4.5, reaching 56% of year one students in the 2013 academic year. This research was carried out just as the global and national economic crisis had occurred and this is a significant factor to be taken into consideration with regard to the increase in sponsored students and a decrease in fee-paying students in a period of increased unemployment. The demand for programmes decreased while at the same

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time the proportion of students eligible for grants increased, the number of Back-to-Education and Mature applicants increased. An increased number of families, due to unemployment, were eligible for Student Universal Support Ireland SUSI) scheme. This aligns with the HEA (2015) study which found that Institutes of Technology have the highest proportion of students receiving grants (56 per cent of all first years) while universities have the lowest level (36 per cent). ITT, according to the HEA data, shows 57% of students in receipt of a student grant for 2012/13.

4.3.3 Comparison of the funding status of Access and non-Access students.

Over the five-year period of the study, the number of students entering ITT from the Access school, has grown from 4% of the overall year one student population in the 2009-2010 academic year to over 7% of year one in the 2013-2014 academic year. Table 4.5 shows the number of Access students for each year of the study which will be usd as the baseline figures to be analysed for the purposes of the research.

Table 4 5 Numbers of Access Students Registered 2009-2014

Academic Years	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-1014
Student Numbers	831	951	891	759	720
Of which Access	34	55	40	44	52

When the data is examined with regard to funding of access and non-access year one students, it is not surprising that the proportion of students who are funded is higher among access than non-access students given that the access schools are located in areas of economic disadvantage. Establishing this data set is important as it will allow an examination of the different funding sources of the students and later in our research to track those students from a completion perspective. Figure 4.4 and Table 4.6 show the percentage of students from access schools who are funded and the figure shows that on average between 70-80% are in receipt of funding as compared to 40% average among non-access students

Figure 4 4 The percentage of year one students from access schools receiving financial support from for the academic years 2009-14
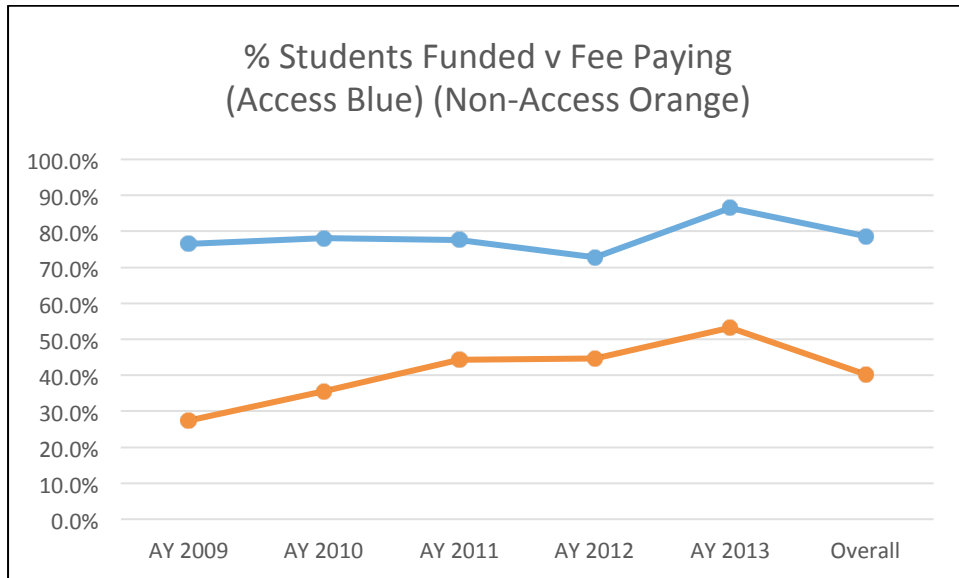
Source: Business Information System at ITT

Table 4 6 Percentage of year one students from access schools receiving a grant 2009-13

	AY 2009	AY 2010	AY 2011	AY 2012	AY 2013	Overall
Access Schools	26 (76.5%)	43 78.2%	31 77.5%	32 72.7%	45 86.5%	78.7%
Non-Access Schools	225 28%	337 37.6%	378 44.4%	350 48.9%	359 53.7%	42.9%
Total	251	380	409	382	404	

Source: Business Information System at ITT

Figure 4.4 and Table 4.6 above are significant to the research and a number of elements are clear.

- A substantial portion (78.7%) of students from access schools entering year one at ITT do not have to pay fees and are in receipt of financial support.

- On average 40% of students entering ITT from non-access schools are funded.

- The proportion of students from non-access schools in receipt of financial support entering ITT is increasing during the period of the study.

- As noted earlier the proportional growth of funded students actually reflects a fall in non-funded students entering year one at ITT.

4.3.4 Registered Student Numbers by Academic School and Department

A further analysis of the year one data was carried out, filtering by academic school and department. This is important in order to consider the breakdown of year one student numbers by Academic School and Department in which they are studying and subsequently to examine any patterns which may emerge between the general student population and the students entering from the access schools. This analysis will establish if particular departments are experiencing an increase or decrease in the number of year one entrants. Studying patterns of completion in individual schools and departments is important to the research as the research seeks to examine habitus and its potential impact on student completion. The qualitative research will examine reasons for departure and how particular departmental habitus may influence individual student completion. Figure 4.5 shows the count of full time first year registered students broken down by the three Academic Schools. This establishes the pattern of applicants electing to study a particular discipline in a particular School.

Figure 4 5 Count of First Year Full Time Registered Students by School 2009-13
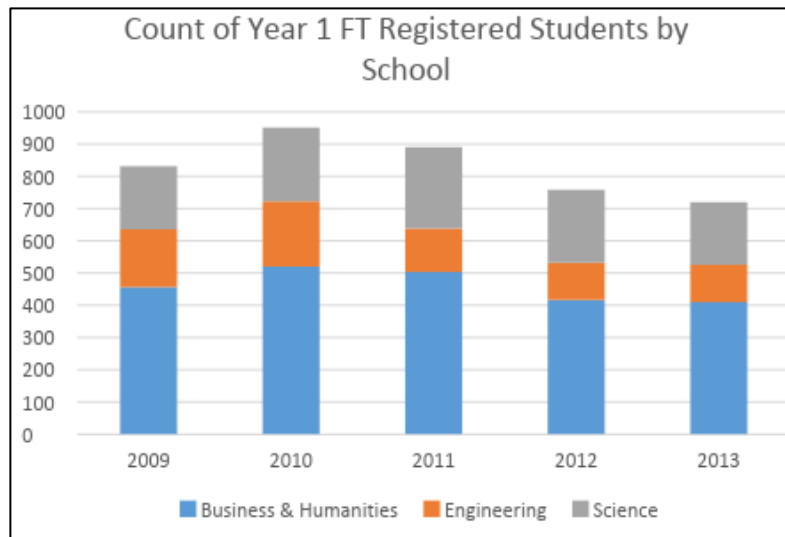
Source: Business Information System at ITT

Table 4.7 presents the breakdown of registered students by Academic school which are the baseline numbers used to carry out further analysis by academic department and programmes later in this chapter. It should be noted that there is a small degree of variation in the numbers of registered students as gathered from the School and Academic Department data presented in Table 4.7 and the total number of registered students presented in Table 4.3 earlier. This is due to local administrative issues such whereby the year one student registration data includes students deemed to be 'Eligible to Register', 'No Shows' and 'Deferrals', 'EL's, 'NS's and 'DE's on the Banner system.

Table 4 7 Numbers of Registered students by Academic School for the academic years 2009-2014

School/ Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
School of Business and Humanities	457	520	503	417	410
School of Engineering	179	202	136	115	116
School of Science and Computing	195	229	252	227	194
Totals	n=831	n=951	n=891	n=759	n=720

The data in Table 4.7 shows a general decrease in the numbers entering each academic school over the five year period. The School of Business and Humanities reached a peak in 2010 with a year one intake of 520 and followed by an annual decrease and dropping by 21% in 2013. Over the period of the study, the School of Science and Computing reached a peak of new entrants in 2011 at 252 and by 2013 had experienced a 23% decrease in the number of new entrants. The largest decrease in the number of new entrants occurred in the School of Engineering. The highest number of new entrants over the period of the study occurred in 2010 with an intake of 202. By 2013 this had fallen by 43% to 116 new entrants.

The three Academic Schools in ITT are sub-divided into departments and within each School there is also a department trend available from the data. Thus, any emerging patterns by subject disciplines over the five-year period can be observed. The data allow to establish if there are particular disciplines and programme offerings within ITT which display different or significant patterns of completion. The academic Department and Academic Schools data includes all rate codes and all registration statuses outlined earlier. The figures and tables that follow examine the School of Business and Humanities which is comprised of four academic departments, the Department of Marketing and Business Computing, the Department of Accounting and Professional Studies, the Department of Management and the Department of Humanities.

Figure 4 6 Registered new first year numbers by department and term-School of Business and Humanities

Year 1 Students by Department in Sch of Business
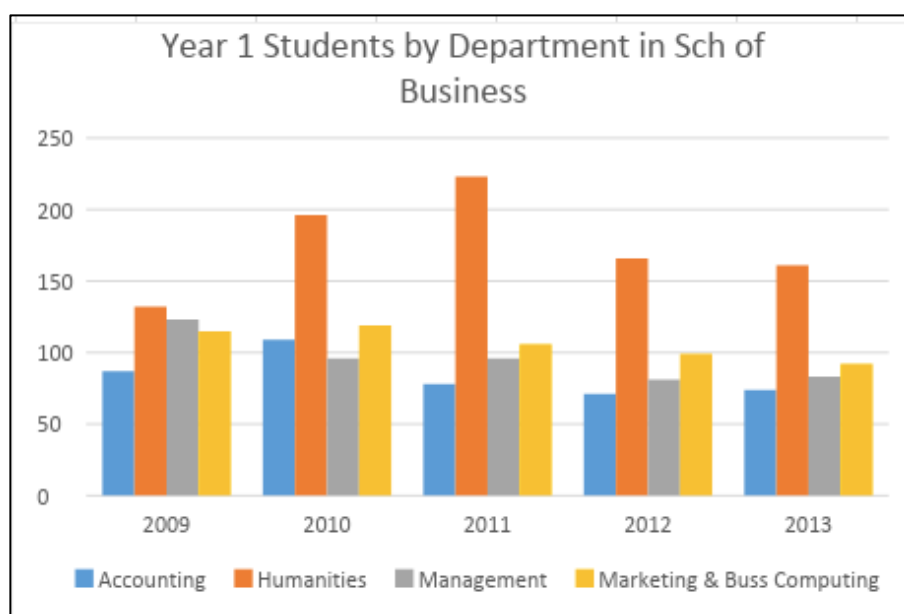
Source: Business Information System at ITT

Table 4 8 Year one entrants filtered by department and term--School of Business & Humanities

Dept./ Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Accounting & Prof. Studies	87	109	78	71	74
Humanities	132	196	223	166	161
Management	123	96	96	81	83
Marketing and Business Computing	115	119	106	99	92
total	457	520	503	417	410

Source: Business Information System at ITT

As illustrated by Figure 4.6 and Table 4.8, over the period of the study the four departments in the School of Business & Humanities experienced a decline in the number of year one entrants. The Department of Accounting and Professional Studies, having reached a peak in 2010 with 109 new entrants, dropped by 29% in 2013 to 74 new entrants. The Department of Management, dropped by 32.5% from 123 new

entrants in 2009 to 83 new entrants in 2013. The Department of Marketing and

Business Computing experienced a drop of 20% from 115 new entrants in 2009 to 92

in 2013. The Department of Humanities had a decrease of 27% by 2013 when it had

161 new entrants falling from a peak of 223 in 2011. On examination of the School

of Engineering which comprises the Departments of Electronic Engineering and

Mechanical engineering, Figure 4.7 shows a noticeable decline in student numbers as

outlined in Table 4.9.

Figure 4 7 Year one Entrants to the School of Engineering filtered by academic department 2009-
2013
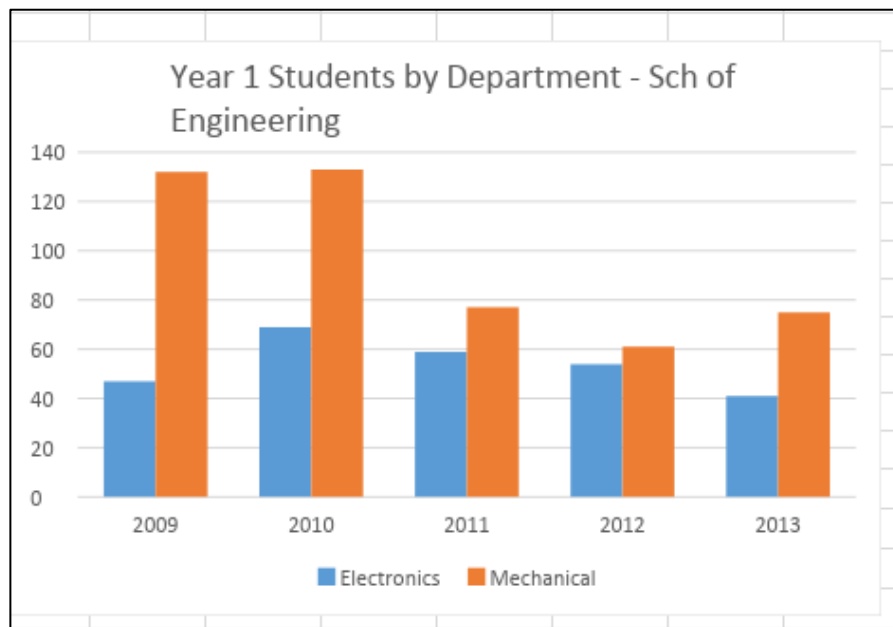
Source: Business Information System at ITT

Table 4 9 Year One entrants by department and term in School of Engineering.

Dept. / Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Electronic Engineering	47	69	59	54	41
Mechanical Engineering	132	133	77	61	75
Total	179	202	136	115	116

Source: Business Information System at ITT

As with the intake of new entrants to the School of Business and Humanities, the data from the School of Engineering also establishes a pattern of a decreasing year one student intake. However, the decrease is greater in this School. The Department of Electronic Engineering over the period of the study, reached 69 new entrants in 2010 and dropped by 40% in 2013 with an intake of 41 new entrants. The Department of Mechanical Engineering had a decrease of 43.6% in the number of new entrants in 2013 with 75 new entrants, falling from 133 in 2010. Figure 4.8 and Table 4.10 relate to the student numbers in the School of Science and Computing over the five-year period of the study.

Figure 4 8 Year one Entrants to the School of Science and Computing filtered by academic department 2009-2013
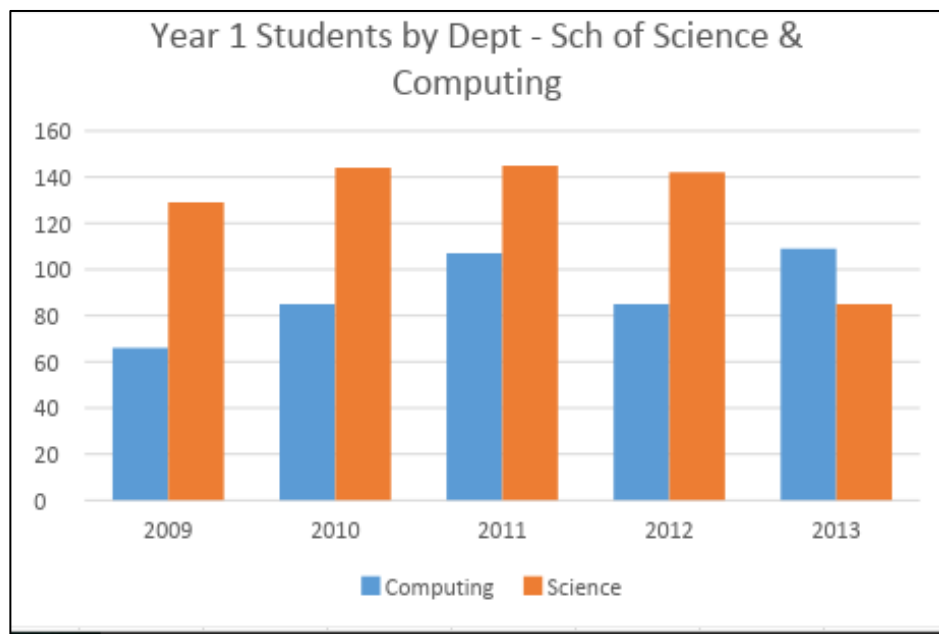
Source: Business Information System at ITT

Analysis of the data from the School of Science and Computing proved very interesting. The two academic departments, Science and Computing displayed very different patterns of year one intakes over the period of the study. The Department of Computing was the only department to experience an increase in the number of year

one entrants, increasing by 65% over the period studied. In 2009 there were 66 new entrants and in 2013 there were 109 new entrants. However, the Department of Science experienced the largest decrease in new entrants of all the eight academic departments in ITT, dropping by 41% in 2013 over the period studied. In 2011 there were 145 new entrants and by 2013 this number had decreased to 85.

Table 4 10 Year One new entrants by department and term in School of Science and Computing.

Dept. / Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Computing	66	85	107	85	109
Science	129	144	145	142	85
Total	195	229	252	227	194

Source: Business Information System at ITT

This data relating to the three Academic Schools shows patterns of student registration over the five-year period with different levels of decrease and increase. The next section seeks to examine how the students who did register performed and if they successfully completed year one.

4.4   Retention Rates 2009-2013

Having established, using Banner, the quantitative data relating to the registration status of year one entrants in ITT from 2009-2013, this section seeks to examine retention rates during the five-year period of the study. The research examines retention measured initially against academic performance, then against financial aid provision. Comparisons are also made between the retention rates of those students who are self-funded and those who are in receipt of financial aid.

In addition, retention rates of non-Access entrants and Access entrants are compared over the five-year period of the general year one students in the period of the study to establish whether there are any differences between the two groups. Finally, the association between CAO points on entry of the Access and non-Access students is examined so as to ascertain the levels of successful completion and if significant differences exist.

4.4.1 (Non)-retention and Academic Performance

This section takes the data presented in Section 3 of this chapter and examines the retention and academic performance of those who registered over the five-year period. For the purpose of this study, it is important to establish the extent of completion in year one mapped against the following:

(a) student funding

(b) success rates by school type

(c) success rates by previous attainment (CAO)

(d) success rates by previous attainment (CAO) by school type

(e) success rates by programme of study

Each piece of data gives different overall retention rates when we filter according to the various categories listed above (Table 4.11). An overall pattern became apparent from the data set showing an upward trend in retention rates over the period of the study. When we measure retention according to funding, the rate increases by over 10% for the period of the study, from 57.8% in 2009 to 68.5% in 2013. Equally, when school type is taken into account, there is an increase of almost 9% in the five-

year period, from 61.1% in 2009 to 69.9% in 2013. CAO points association with year one success reveals a 7% increase over the period of the study.

Table 4 11 Retention Rates 2009-2013 filtered by category

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Funding (See Table 4.12)	57.8	63.7	63.8	66.1	68.5
School Type (Figure 4.11/Table 4.14)	61.1	65.1	67.5	68.5	69.9
CAO (Table 4.16)	69	69.7	73.3	73.3	76.9
CAO (Table 4.18)	61	63	67.2	68.2	69.4
CAO and school type (Table 4.19)	60	63	67.2	68.2	69.4

4.4.2 Financial aid and success

An analysis was carried out to examine an association between funding mechanism and year one entrants' success. Success is based on academic performance, in other words, measuring if the year one student has obtained a pass on the overall stage of the programme, who had earned 60 credits and with a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

Those being regarded as not having achieved success are those who completed the year but did not earn 60 credits and or those who did not achieve a GPA of 2.0 or higher and or those who left early in the programme.

All students whose registration status was equivalent to registered or withdrawn were included over the five year period of the research. Registered or withdrawn were selected as these students were considered to have engaged with their programme to some extent. Appendix E presents the complete Data Success rate graphs that support the summary that follows. The data in these Tables is based on Enrolment-Registerd ('RG'), Temporary Registration ('TR'), and Withdrawn ('WD') where school type is

available. There are gaps in the record on occasions where the applicant data has not been loaded through ITT's CAO load process. These are shown as 'N/A' in tables. Data is included in table or graph only where complete data is available. The success rate graphs in Figure 4.9 exclude Repeat tuition and Repeat Exam students and cases where CAO points were not loaded for students.

Figure 4 9 New entrants' success rate by funding academic years 2009-2013
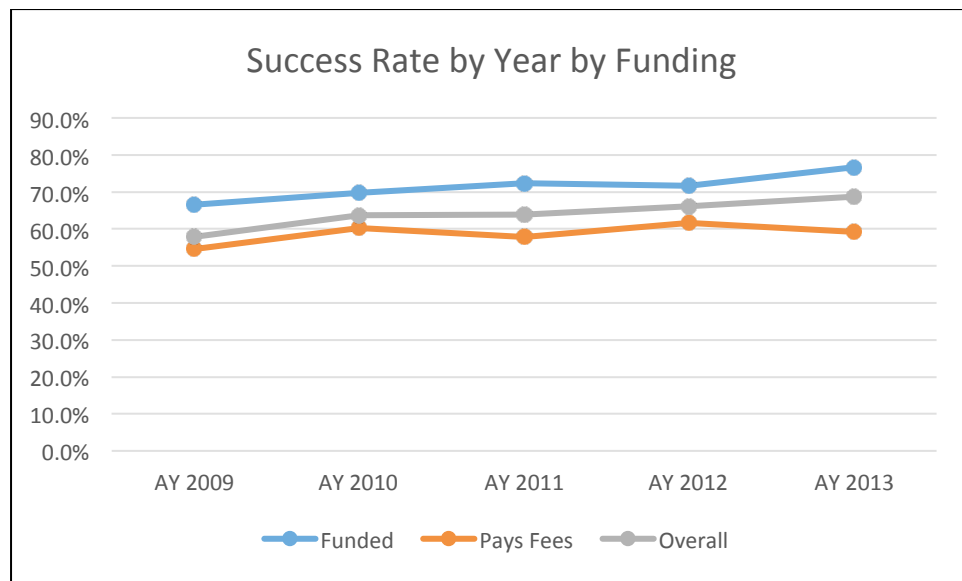
The average success rate of those who pass year one and who are funded is 71.4% over the five year period and considerably higher than the average success rate of those who are not funded (58.7%). In addition, for each year of the study, the success rate of funded first year students is higher than the combined overall rate for ITT as illustrated in Figure 4.9 and shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4 12 New entrants' success rate by funding academic years 2009-2013

	AY 2009	AY 2010	AY 2011	AY 2012	AY 2013
Grant Funded	167 66.5%	265 69.8%	296 72.3%	274 71.7%	310 76.7%
Pays Fees	316 54.5%	344 60.2%	217 57.8%	227 61.6%	187 59.3%
Overall	57.8%	63.7%	63.8%	66.1%	68.8%

Source: Business Information System at ITT

This data reveals a number of significant details regarding the success and completion of new entrants relative to their funding mechanism over the five academic years studied. A number of key points become clear from Table 4.12. Firstly, the overall year one students' success rates show an improvement over the five-year period. The overall completion rates for year one entrants increased from 57.8% in 2009 to 68.8% in 2013, an 11-percentage point increase overall. Secondly, with regard to grant-funded year one entrants, the overall success rates are higher than the success rates for fee-paying students. With regard to fee-paying year one entrants, success rates cannot be said to have increased over the five-year period of the research.

In 2009 66.5% of grant-funded new entrants progressed and almost each year this group displayed a steady increase so that, by 2013 the success rate had reached 76.7%. Finally, the overall success rate appears to be related to (i) an increasing success rate for grant-funded students and (ii) an increasing proportion of grant-funded students over the five-year period of the research

4.4.3 Success rates comparison of access and non-access year one entrants

Further data analysis was undertaken to compare success rates for year one students from the socio-economically disadvantaged access schools to success rates for year one students from non-access schools. Success rates are comparable with access students displaying a higher success rate (>70%) in four of the five years of the study as seen in Figure 4.10 and Figure 4.11 (see also Table G1 in Appendix G). This is a key finding of the research showing that students entering year one at ITT display on average 5% higher success rates over the five-year period of the study. In 2009, the success rates among the access students was 10% higher than that of the non-access students, 8.1% higher in in 2010, 5.3% higher in 2011 and 7.6% higher in 2013. The only year of the study where the rates among the non-access students was higher was in 2012, with a 6% higher success rate displayed.

Figure 4 10 Year One Success Rates Access v Non-Access School of origin 2009-13
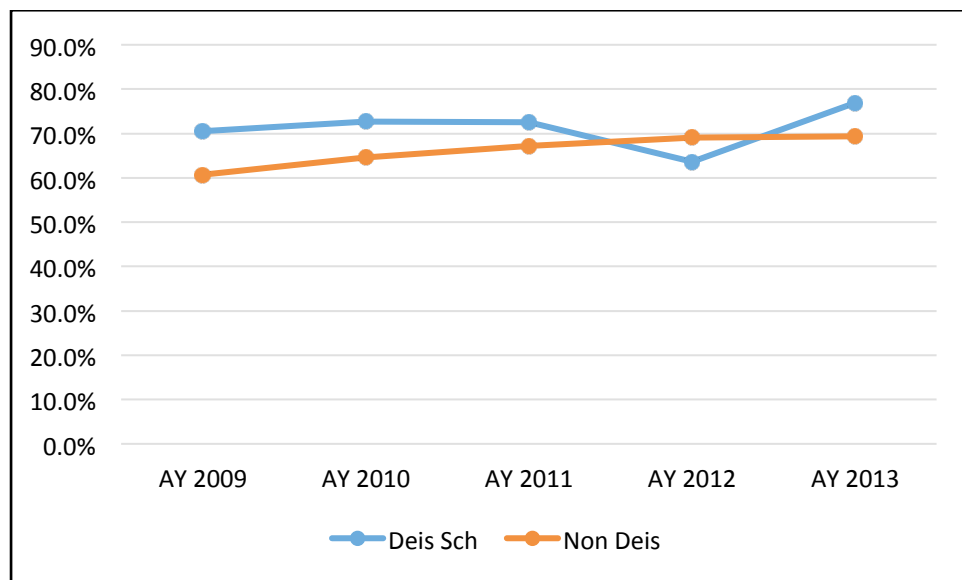
Source: Business Information System at ITT

Figure 4 11 Number of Successful and Incomplete Students, 2009-2013: Students from Access and Non-Access Schools
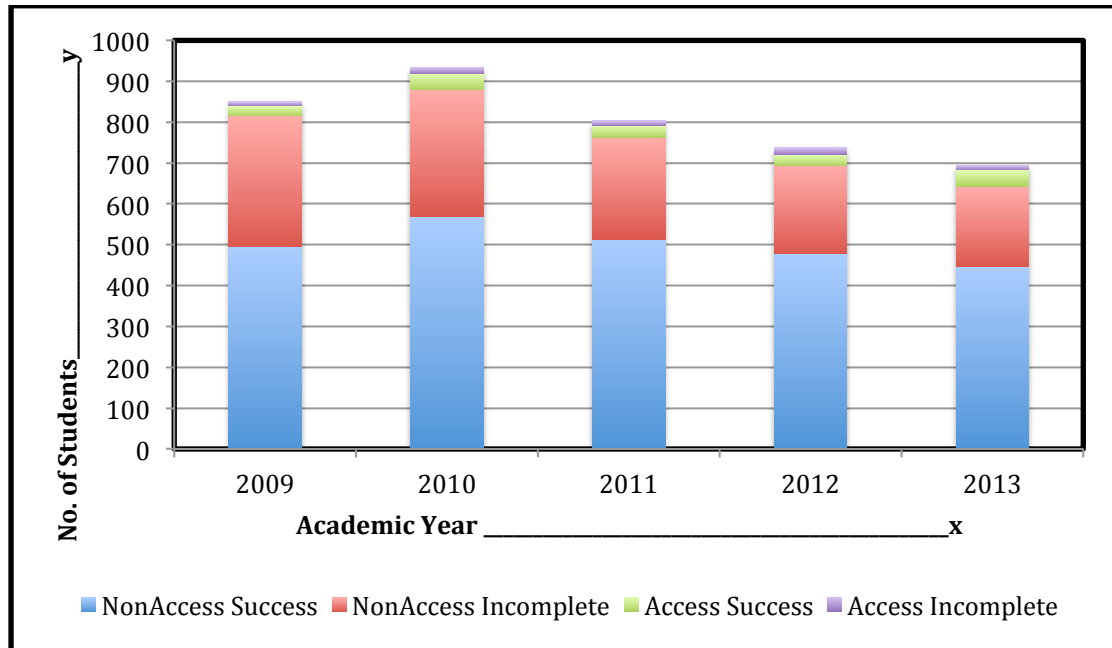
Here we can clearly see that over the five years of the study, the breakdown of numbers of students successfully completing year one (Figure 4.11) with the average percentages of students presented in Table 4.14. These figures show that students entering year one from access schools have year on year, higher rates of completion that those entering from non-access schools.

Table 4 13 Percentage success rate of year one Access vs Non-Access for the five years

	AY 2009	AY 2010	AY 2011	AY 2012	AY 2013
Access	70.6%	72.7%	72.5%	63.6%	76.9%
Non Access	60.7%	64.6%	67.2%	69.1%	69.4%
Total	61.1%	65.1%	67.5%	68.8%	69.9%

Source: Business Information System at ITT

4.4.4 The association between CAO Points attainment and student success

When data from all five years of the study are combined and pooled, the larger sample allows for a better statistical pattern to emerge. Points obtained by leaving certificate students were examined to see if there was a statistically significant connection between CAO points obtained and subsequent success in Year One over the five year period of the research. In order to carry this part of the research out, the average points of registered students who were successful were compared to the average points of registered students who were unsuccessful. The results obtained are shown in the Table 4.15 below.

Table 4 14 Average CAO points of year 1 'successful' students vs Average points of year 1 'unsuccessful' students

Success	Number of Students	Average of CAO Points	Standard Deviation
Non-Pass	973	265.4	61.1
Pass	2547	313.5	61.7

The filtering by academic year of the research shows in detail the success rate correlated to CAO points on entry as outlined in Table 4.16 below.

Table 4 15 Annual correlations of CAO entry points and successful completion

Year	No.of Students	Pass	Non-pass	Success rate	Avg PS Pts	Avg Non-Pass Pts
2009	710	490	218	69%	306	263
2010	802	559	241	69.7%	315	264
2011	772	566	204	73.3%	313	263
2012	648	475	173	73.3%	317	268
2013	594	457	137	76.9%	317	273

Source: Business Information System at ITT.

An unpaired Student t-test was carried out on the difference in CAO points between Pass students and Non-Pass students which was shown to be highly significant

(P<0.0001). Withdrawn students also demonstrated lower average CAO points (AVG = 276, SDev = 64, N = 479). Table 4.17 shows that the average CAO points of access school students for successful students was compared to that for unsuccessful students. The average points for subsequently successful students in Access schools was 299 vs. 262 for unsuccessful students, Table 4.17. A Student t-test shows this result to be significant at the P=0.0005 which is extremely statistically significant.

Table 4 16 Average CAO points for Access school students separated into Pass/ Non-Pass.

Success	No. Students	Average of CAO Points	StdDev of CAO Points
Not Pass	46	262	67
Pass	110	299	55

Detailed analysis for each individual year of the study was used to establish the association between CAO points at entry and successful completion. Findings show that the students who do not successfully complete have lower CAO points that those who do successfully complete. Table 4.18 shows the CAO points data alongside successful completion for the students from access schools and that the association is the same for those students from non-access schools.

Table 4 17 Year One Student Success and CAO points association 2009-2014

CAO points	All Students	Avg Pts	SD Pts
2009	795	289.8	66.1
Non-Prog	308	262.8	67.7
Prog	485	307.0	59.2
2010	827	298.1	62.0
Non-Prog	305	269.6	62.1
Prog	521	314.8	55.6
2011	752	299.0	60.6
Non-Prog	245	267.9	54.7
Prog	506	314.2	57.5
2012	668	304.1	67.5
Non-Prog	212	271.8	55.2
Prog	456	319.1	67.5
2013	651	305.2	67.7
Non-prog	199	276.5	60.4
Prog	452	317.8	67.0
Grand Total	3693	298.8	64.9

4.4.5 CAO points attainment for access schools students and non-access school students.

Many of the discussions around completion focus on the CAO points of entrants to year one as a key predictor of success. For this research, a comparison was made between the average CAO points attainment for access schools students and non-access school students over the five year period.

Table 4 18 Average CAO points 2009-2013 between access schools students and non-access school students.

Row Labels	Num of Students	Average of CAO Points	StdDev of CAO Points
Access School	162	289	61
Non-Access School	3646	298	65

Source: Business Information System at ITT.

While the average CAO points obtained by non-access school students is higher than that obtained by access school students a Student t-test comparison of the two sets of data indicates that this difference is not statistically significant (P=0.07) based on the pooled data as shown in Table 4.19 over the five year period. The researcher wished to examine the association between CAO point attainment on entry and retention, and whether there is a difference between the Access and non-Access students in year one. The next section shows the results of this analysis of the data.

4.4.6 Comparison of access and non-access CAO points attainment and success

The data allows an examination of differences between the success of assess and non-access students mapped against their CAO points attainment. Figures 4.12 and 4.13 show the yearly progression rates for the two groups of students (see also Table G2 in Appendix G). Progression is defined as the academic standing of the year one student at the end of the academic year. If a student's status is categorised as 'deferred',

'absent', 'incomplete', 'granted exemptions', 'failed' or 'withdrawn', s/he is counted as 'not progressing'. The only other academic standing is 'Pass'. In theory, the student only attains academic standing if s/he has gone through the academic year.

Figure 4 12 Number of Progressing and Non-Progressing Students 2009-2014: Access Only
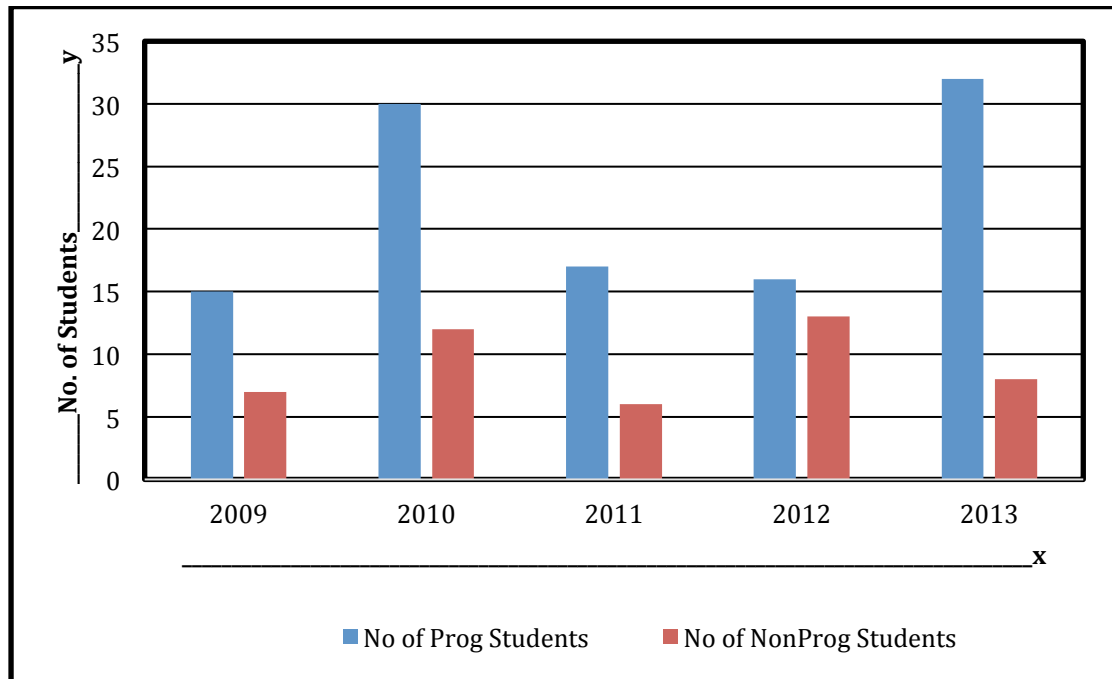
Figure 4 13 Average CAO Points for Access Students 2009-2013 by Progression Status.
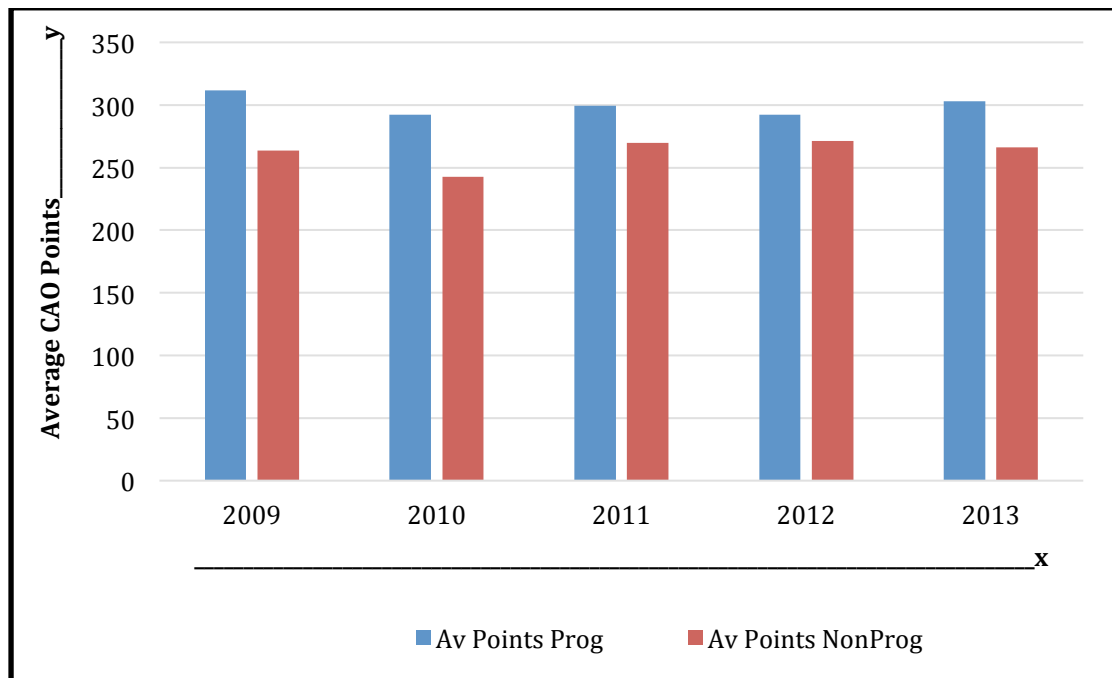
What is of interest to the research is that it shows that the associated impact of CAO point attainment on entry is indeed a factor where student success in year one at Higher Education is concerned regardless of whether the student is entering from an Access or a non-Access school.

The positive story this data shows is that students entering Higher Education on low CAO points, in many cases between 200-300 CAO points are successful and do progress into year two of their programme of study.

Figure 4 14   Number of Non-Access Students 2009-2013, by Progression Status
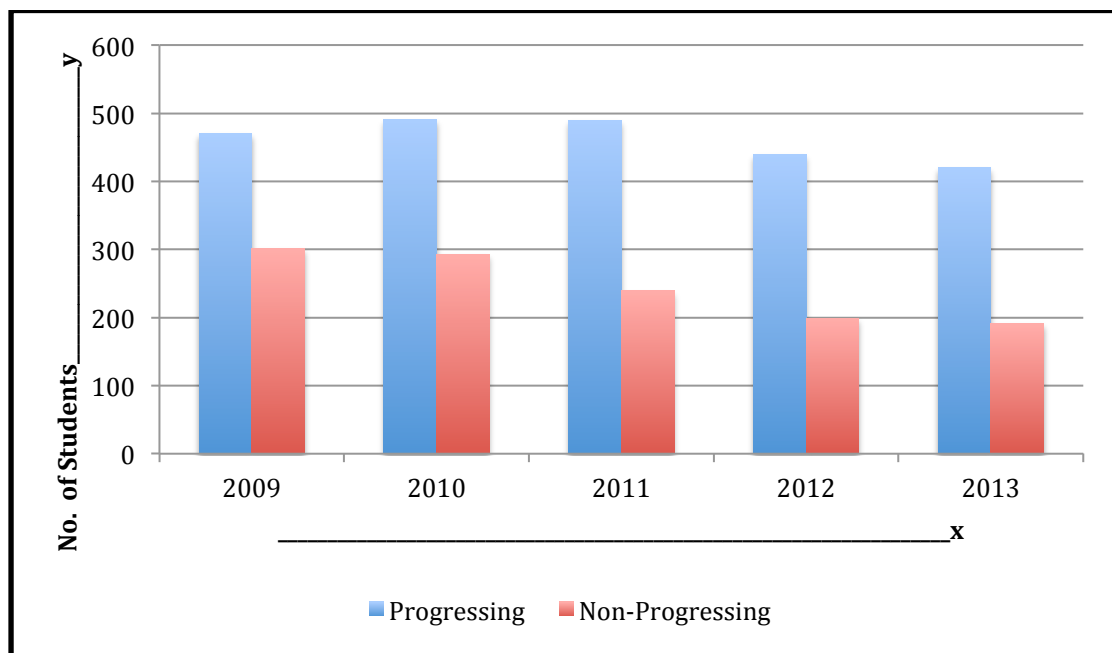
Figure 4 15   Average CAO Points for Non-Access Students 2009-2013, by Progression Status
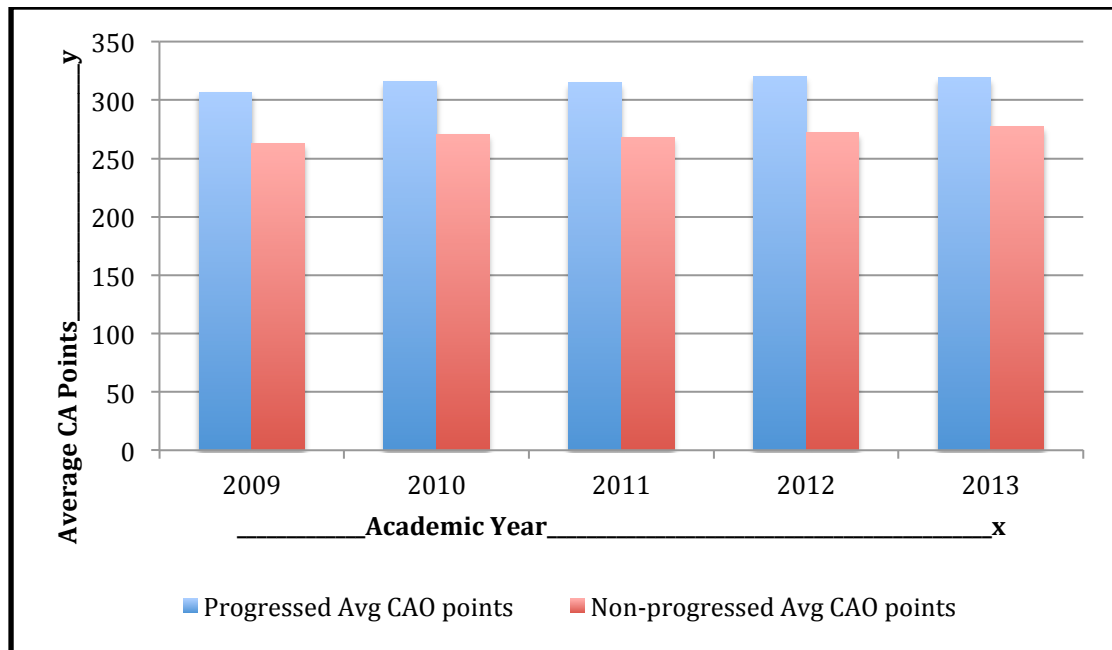
Figures 4.14, Figure 4.15 and Figure 4.16 show the numbers of year one access and non-access students successfully completing year one and presented as a percentage of the year one student population (see also Tables G2 and G3 in Appendix G). We can see that the students from the access schools show higher rates of successful completion as compared to those from non-access schools. The average successful completion rate over the five years of the study is 71.2% for the access students as compared to 66.2% for the non-access students. The data in these tables includes all Registered 'RG', 'TR' and Withdrawn 'WD' students where the last School and CAO points are available.

Figure 4 16 Number of Students (Access and Non-Access) by Progression Status, 2009-2013
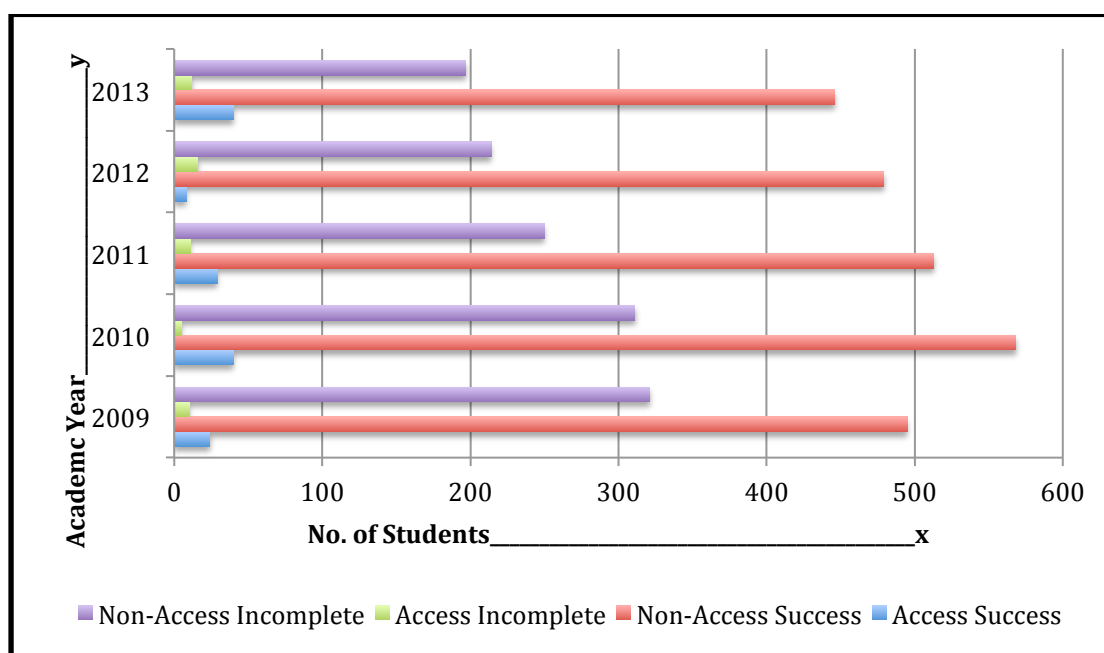
Here we can clearly see that over the five years of the study, the breakdown of numbers of students successfully completing year one (Figure 4.16) (see also Table G4 in Appendix G) with the average percentages of students presented in Table 4.23). These figures show that students entering year one from access schools have year on year, higher rates of completion that those entering from non-access schools.

Table 4 19 Percentage success rate of year one Access vs Non-Access for the five years

	AY 2009	AY 2010	AY 2011	AY 2012	AY 2013
Access	70.6%	72.7%	72.5%	63.6%	76.9%
Non Access	60.7%	64.6%	67.2%	69.1%	69.4%

Establishing that there are particular programmes where there are patterns of low progression will inform the qualitative part of the research when an examination of the reasons behind these rates can take place. Expressions of habitus in the institution and in individual academic schools will be analysed against Bourdieu's theoretical framework.

4.5   CONCLUSION

The data presented an overview of completion among the general student body in year one. This Chapter established that the number of students entering and registering in year one over the period of the study with a pattern of slow decline from 2010, while at the same time, the number of year one entrants on Temporary Registration 'TR'' status increased substantially during the period of the study. This increased number reflects the increased number of year one students applying for, and awaiting, the outcome of a student grant applications.

This chapter examined the success rate in year one among students entering Higher Education from access second level schools compared with the non-access student population. In examining and analysing the quantitative data, it established the influence of funding mechanisms on student success as well as CAO points on entry into year one at ITT.

The research explored: (a) success rates by student funding; (b) success rates by school type; (c) success rate by previous attainment (CAO); (d) success rates by previous attainment (CAO) by school type.

The quantitative data is relevant to the research questions which sought to examine the extent of non-completion among access students in year one. The student records system, the business information system (Banner) at ITT contains relevant data regarding student history, registration and admission data. The data needed to be accessed and filtered so as to ascertain the level of success in year one among the access students as compared with the general student population.

Each set of analyses present a different overall success rate for each year. Each piece of data provided different overall retention rates when filtered according to the various categories for the purpose of the research. The overall students' success rates shows an improvement over the five-year period. An upward trend in retention rates became apparent over the period of the study, with overall students' success rates showing an improvement over the five-year period. When retention rates were measured according to funding type, the rate increased by over 10%, for the period of the study. Equally, when school type is taken into account, there is an increase of almost 9% in the five-year period. CAO points association with year one success reveals a 7% increase over the period of the study, moving from 69% in 2009/10 to 76.9% in 2013/14.

The association of funding mechanism and year one entrants' success revealed significant findings regarding the success and completion of new entrants relative to their funding mechanism over the five academic years studied.

The research also examined the success rates for year one students from the socio-economically disadvantaged access schools to success rates for year one students from non-access schools. Success rates are comparable with access students displaying a higher success rate (>70%) in four of the five years of the study as seen in Figure 4.10 and Figure 4.11. This is a key finding of the research showing that students entering year one at ITT display on average 5% higher success rates over the five-year period of the study. In 2009, the success rates among the access students was 10% higher than that of the non-access students, 8.1% higher in in 2010, 5.3% higher in 2011 and 7.6% higher in 2013.

It is positive to see that the overall year one students' success rates show an improvement over the five-year period. An examination of data relating to grant-funded year one entrants showed that overall success rates are higher than for fee-paying students. The next chapter will present the findings of the surveys of staff and students.

Chapter 5   *'Habitus'* in action

5.1   Introduction

The first research question sought to establish the extent to which non-completion is an issue and the second research question sought to establish if there were differences in completion rates among access students as compared with the general students population in year one. The quantitative data gathered in Chapter Four established that access students typically had a higher retention rate than non-access students. The third and fourth research questions now seek to establish the factors that have a positive or negative effect on student completion as seen from the first year students' perspectives, from academic and support staff. In addition, the research seeks to examine if the habitus of an institution influences completion, and if it does, are there differences where access students are involved.

To achieve this, quantitative research was carried out involving year one students, the academic staff involved with year one entrants as well as the support and administrative staff. This chapter presents the findings of the research. The research instruments included a brief online questionnaire via Moodle distributed to all students who had entered year one. This questionnaire was entitled 'Early Days'. A further questionnaire 'Checking Back' was circulated to the students later in the academic year. Another questionnaire was distributed to the academic staff. Finally, a questionnaire was distributed to support staff drawn from student services who have responsibility for first year student services. The themes of the questionnaires related

to the overall perception of Institutes of Technology, of ITT and of students who choose to study in an Institute of Technology as well as interactions with staff and whether they had, at this stage had any thoughts of dropping out. The 'Checking Back' questionnaire focused on how the first year students had integrated both academically and socially, how they interacted with others, whether they felt part of a community and levels of happiness with being at college. The questionnaires completed by staff had themes around the perception of Institutes of Technology, around students who attend Institutes of Technology and how they regarded IoTs as a place of education for themselves or their families.

Gathering data on these themes captured the perspectives of students, academic and support staff, and allowed for enhanced data integration across the research.

5.2 Evaluation Cycle and Pilot

The first pilot evaluation cycle took place in February 2009, during the spring semester of the academic year 2008/09. It took the form of a brief online questionnaire entitled 'Early Days'. This initial pilot for the 'Early Days' questionnaire took place among the Humanities department as there is a high number of students in that department registering on a diverse range of programmes. It is also the department where the researcher worked at the time, so gaining access to year one students was not an issue. 260 students were invited to participate in the initial pilot questionnaire, 140 participated and of that sample from whom data was collected 102 (73%) were female and 38 (27%) were male, 28 (20%) were from access schools. The mean age for the group was 18.6 years. This initial pilot was very useful in

ascertaining the likely response rate for the survey to be carried out among the larger students population in year one as well as the suitability of the survey as a research instrument. The feedback and participation rates for the pilot were high and the students found the questionnaire easy to access via Moodle during class time, so this greatly facilitated the research. Following on the review from this pilot, the questionnaire was distributed to the entire year one student cohort. It should be noted that students can access Moodle only when they have registered on their academic programmes and it is a requirement of all students to engage with Moodle so that they can fully engage with their learning. If students have outstanding fees awaiting payment, they will not be able to access Moodle. ITT regards this 'blocking' as a useful means to deter students from not paying fees. All academic staff have access to Moodle and use it as a teaching resource. For the administrative staff, only certain sections require access to Moodle, such as staff in the registration, admission Access office as well as staff engaged in the Centre for Teaching and Learning office.

5.3   Findings of the 'Early Days' Questionnaire

Following on from the testing of the survey in the pilot phase, the 'Early Days' questionnaire was circulated to all first years students across the five years of the study, with 413 students participating in total, 25% of whom were from the access schools. , In 2009, 94 students completed the questionnaire, response rate of 11.3%, 74 from non-access schools and 20 (21%) students who had entered ITT from the access second level schools. In 2010, 95 students completed the questionnaire, response rate of 10% of which 71 participants were students who had entered from non-access schools and 24 (25%) were from access schools. In 2011, 77 students

completed the questionnaire, with a response rate of 8.7%, of which 58 participants were students who had entered from non-access schools and 19 (24.7%) were participants from access schools. In 2012, 70 students completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 9.3%, of which 52 participants were students who had entered from non-access and 18 (25.7%) were participants from access schools.   In the final academic year of the study, 2013, 77 students completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 10.7%, of which 56 were students entering from non-access schools and 21(27%) were from access schools (see Figure 5.1). While the annual response rates are low, the participants were randomly selected and are representative of the year one student population. "The ability to measure attitudes or opinions of a population through a relatively small representative sample is a powerful too," (Ruel, Wagner and Gillespie, 2016, p.7). All students, regardless of school of entry or programme of choice received the notification to get involved through their Moodle account. Access students receive laptops to support them in their studies so they had immediate access to their Moodle online account. The sample over the five years drew participation from all programmes of student and with good gender balance and involved all school types, access and non-access.

The purpose of the 'Early Days' questionnaire was to ascertain the students' sense of identity and self-perception as Higher Education students, to measure the students' level of satisfaction at college in particular at an Institute of Technology and to identify the likelihood of the students leaving Higher Education early. The questionnaire also sought to assess what similarities and differences may exist between the views of the general first year student population and the students entering from the access schools.

The questions posed in the questionnaire were informed by Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and probe the potential tension between how and to what extent practice and behaviours are driven by individual agency or shaped by the structures around the students in year one. The following areas relate to the year one students' individual perceptions of themselves, of the institution s/he is currently attending, their sense of happiness and if they are considering leaving or staying.

(i) General views of an Institute of Technology:

Participants were asked whether they believed that there is a positive view of Institutes of Technology. This was asked to establish whether the year one students have a positive or negative view of their choice of Higher Education sector. Connell (1993) in his deliberations on how social justice is an inextricable part of any educational system, argues that the focus should be on to how inequalities are produced and examines the influence of the institutional character of the institution systems and the cultural processes that occur in them. Class inequality is a problem that concerns the institution system as a whole. Students from areas of disadvantage are not facing a separate problem but rather they face the worst effects of a larger problem. Disadvantage is often seen as a sign of something else for example cultural or psychological deficit. This has implications for student integration because as Tinto has stated, students who develop negative feelings about their institution become 'less socially or academically integrated and are more likely to leave before completion'. (Tinto, 1987, p.34). The findings to the question asked of the participants in Figure 5.1 reveal a contrast between the views of the access and non-access students surveyed (see also Table G5 in Appendix G). When asked about the perceived view of Institutes of Technology in general and of the students who attend Institutes of Technology, the results of these questions reveal that on average over the

five years of the study 17.9% of all year one survey participants stated that they have a positive view of the IoT sector, this ranged from 25.5% in 2009/10 to 11.4% in 2013/14.

Figure 5 1 Number of Students who had a Positive or Negative View of IoTs, 2009-2013
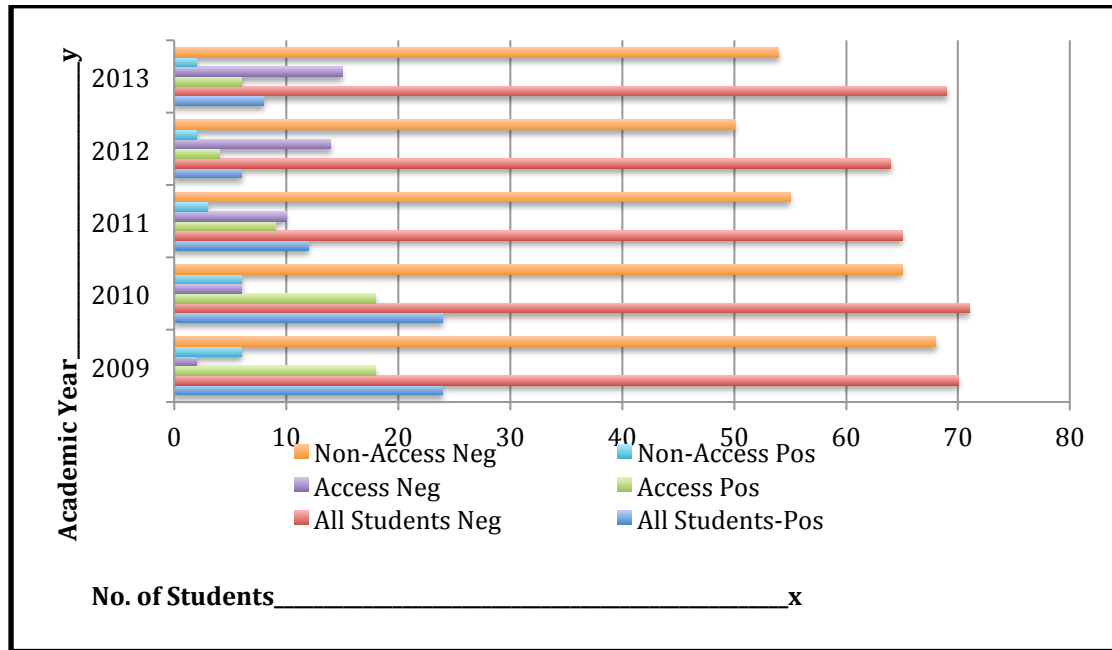
Source: *: Early Days Questionnaire*

When the one hundred and two access students are extracted from the survey of all year one participants and analysed, 53.9% on average, over the five years of the study, stated they had a positive view of the IoT sector, ranging from 90% in 2009/10 to 28.5% for the final year of the study.

Comparing this to the 311 non-access students extracted from the participant group of first years, 6.1% on average over the five years expressed a positive view of the IoT sector, ranging from 8% in 2009/10 to 3.7% in 2013/14.

These findings clearly show that the access participants are displaying much more positive views of the IoT sector than their non-access counterparts over the five years of the study. However, the findings present what is a declining positive perception of

the IoT sector over the five year period of the study and this decline is evident among both the access and non-access student participants; the decline being greater among the access students.

(ii) Perceptions of self

Bourdieu argues that when an individual encounters an unfamiliar field, habitus is transformed. He also writes about how the movement of habitus across new unfamiliar fields results 'in a habitus divided against itself' (Bourdieu, 1999a). Wilson (1997) has suggested that how students perceive themselves can impact on the integration process; if they see themselves as being 'different' this can affect the process of fitting in. Thomas (2002) found that socialisation was an important aspect of integration into a Higher Education community with positive impacts on academic motivation, willingness to look for help and achievement. Forsyth and Furlong (2003) found that students that were not able to find or fit in with other similar students were in danger of becoming socially isolated which could eventually have a negative impact on their confidence and commitment to their chosen programme of study. The level of social integration is identified as being influenced by economic factors, having enough disposable income as well as by cultural factors. Living at home is often the profile of many students nowadays, this is an economic decision but can contribute to social isolation (Forsyth and Furlong 2003, Quinn et al 2005). Those students who do seek to become involved in college life can find themselves trapped between two worlds but belonging to neither. Robert Connell (1993) in his deliberations on 'compensatory programmes' demonstrates that very often they can run the risk of reinforcing patterns of inequality since they function within existing institutions that force students to compete although the resources they draw on are unequal. Rather the focus, according to Connell should shift to how inequalities are

produced and examine the influence of the institutional character of the institution systems and the cultural processes that occur in them. The next question the year one participants were asked whether they believe there are positive or negative views about students such as themselves who attend an Institute of Technology as their Higher Education sector of choice. Figure 5.2 shows once again a noticeable difference in the year one students' sense of being a student in an Institute of Technology (see also Table G6 in Appendix G).

Figure 5 2 Number of Students who had a positive or negative view of IoT students
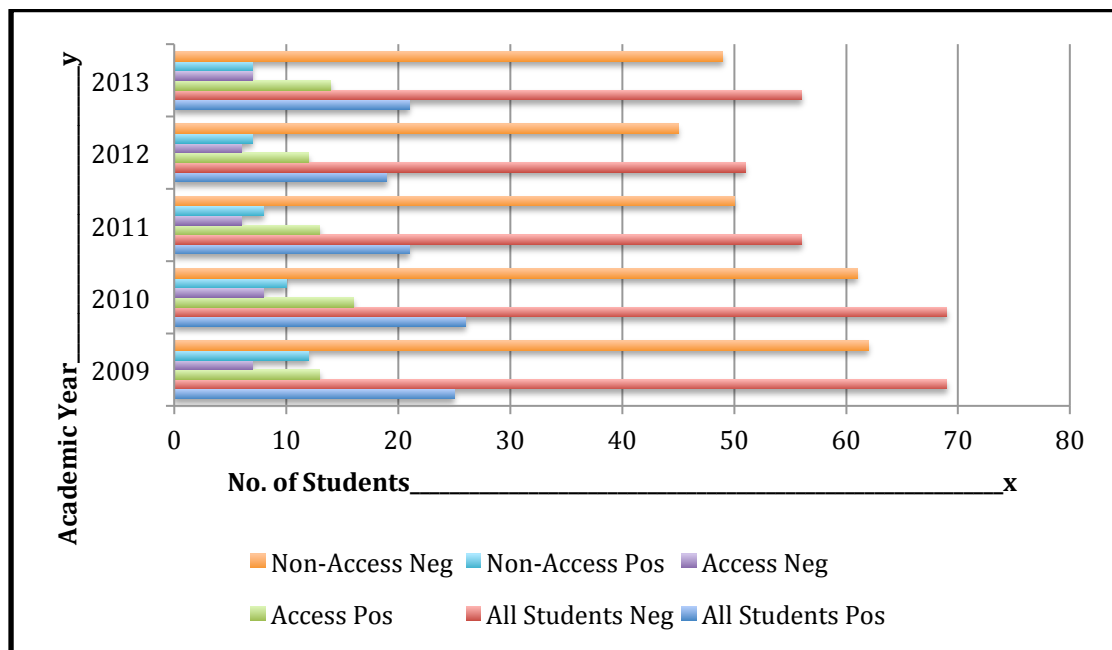
Source: Early Days Questionnaire

The findings of these questions reveal that on average over the five years of the study 27.1% all year one survey participants stated that they have a positive view of students who attend an IoT, this ranged from 26.6% in 2009/10 to 27.2% in 2013/14.

Over the five years of the study there has been a consistently positive rating with regard to the view held by the student participants of themselves as students in an IoT.

Among the access year one participants, 66.6% on average, over the five years of the study, stated they had a positive view of the IoT sector, ranging from 65% in 2009/10 to 66.6% for the final year of the study.

Among the non-access first year group, 14.1% on average over the five years expressed a positive view of the IoT sector, ranging from 16.2% in 2009/10 to 12.5% in 2013/14.

These findings clearly show that the access participants are displaying much more positive views of themselves as students in an IoT than their non-access counterparts over the five years of the study. While Reay (2003) explains how working-class students feel excluded or like 'aliens' in middle-class traditional universities, this research finds that working class students are in fact positive about attending an IoT which typically draws a working class intake while the more advantaged students feel less positive. The researcher has found in her experience that a personal bias can prevail among educators in IoTs who come from traditional university backgrounds. They are now working in non-traditional Higher Education Institutions and that bias can be apparent in their outlook that the students accessing through the links schemes have little or no entitlement to Higher Education and this can have detrimental effects on students' expectations of themselves. The working class students are positive about having accessed Higher Education but the prevailing climate or ethos among the educators they encounter may be less so.

There may be a lack of identification of teachers with young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Certain academics might not be sensitive or knowledgeable regarding lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Indeed, there may exist, not only a lack of identification but instances of conflict between learners and lecturers. This can be expressed, for example, in the manner in which the system

reacts to the non-participation of its clients: to the researcher it appears to be ambiguous to say the least. Refusal to teach certain students or exclusion from certain modules results in students experiencing conflict and they "vote with his/her feet" sometimes bunking off class. That feeling that "no-one cares", where is no "real" tracking of non-attendance and they are unchallenged creates a system that seems to collude with the students' non-participation on different levels. By opting out of particular classes their non-attendance appears to collude in it but does not deal with it in a real way. In ITT, students encounter support staff in administration, in the caretaking and grounds staff and catering who are familiar to them and ITT is 'their' college from a real physical and proximity perspective.

(iii) Levels of Happiness

The sense of happiness or contentment at being a student in Higher Education is a simple but important question to ask in order to establish the likelihood that students will remain. The students surveyed were asked two questions (i) are you happy to be attending an IOT and (ii) are you happy to be attending this IOT. Katherine Eccleston (2007) has examined how developing emotional well-being and emotional engagement is a powerful discourse in personalised student learning. This issue, Ecclestone argues, should be a prominent educational goal. According to the World Health Organisation, the state of well-being is part of positive mental health in which we realise our own abilities, "being engaged, autonomous, and resilient" (Huppert, 2005 p.24). The leading proponent of teaching emotional well-being and ex-president of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman, argues that learned optimism is at its heart. Emotional well-being comprises components that can be taught and measured. According to Felicity Huppert, it is possible to assess resilience, stoicism, a positive and optimistic outlook, an ability to be in the moment

or 'in flow', as well as feelings of satisfaction, feelings of being supported, feeling loved, feeling respected. In Ecclestone's inaugural speech, she tries to show that counselling-based approaches brought private, emotional aspects of students' lives into the assessment process. They also made inclusion, being motivated, participating or being engaged, feeling confident, safe and esteemed, more important than subject knowledge. The question itself are you happy? What is happiness dependent on in year one at college? It is how the experience at the institution makes them feel about themselves. The social process in ITT, the way in which the single behaviours, words or signs, become representative of the self of the year one student is important. Bernstein (1971) in his critique of compensatory programmes states that it serves to direct attention away from the internal organisation and the educational context of the establishment and focus our attention upon the families and children. It implies that something is lacking in the family, and so in the child. "If only the parents were interested in the goodies we offer; if only they were like middle-class parents, then we could do our job. Once the problem is seen even implicitly in this way, then it becomes appropriate to coin the terms 'cultural deprivation', 'linguistic deprivation', etc. And then these labels do their own sad work" (Berstein,1971, p.192). Essentially, he criticises the concept of 'compensatory education' as it distracts attention from the deficiencies in the institution itself. If students are labelled in this way, then the spontaneous realisations of their culture, its images and symbolic representations are of reduced value and significance. Teachers will have lower expectations of them. All that informs the student and that gives meaning to him outside the institution ceases to be valid and accorded significance within the institution, he is obliged to orient towards a different structure of meaning, in the form of language-use and dialect, or in the patterns of social relationships.

Bernstein (1977) advocates thinking most seriously and systematically about the conditions and contexts of the educational environment. If students are labelled in this way, then the spontaneous realisations of their culture, its images and symbolic representations are of reduced value and significance. Teachers will have lower expectations of them. All that informs the student and that gives meaning to him outside school ceases to be valid and accorded significance within the institution, he is obliged to orient towards a different structure of meaning, in the form of language-use and dialect, or in the patterns of social relationships. Bernstein (1977) advocates thinking most seriously and systematically about the conditions and contexts of the educational environment. His basic question concerns what the potential is for change within educational institutions, as they are presently constituted (p.194). He distinguishes between uses of language which can be called 'context bound' and uses of language which are less 'context bound'. The meanings in 'context bound' tend to be implicit whereas in less context bound language the meanings are explicit. He states that he does not mean that working-class children do not have in their passive vocabulary the vocabulary used by middle-class children. Rather we have differences in the use of language arising out of a specific context. In middle-class families the child is oriented towards universalistic meanings which transcend a given context, whereas working-class children are oriented towards particularistic meanings which are closely tied to a given context and do not transcend it. This does not imply linguistic deprivation only linguistic difference. However, it does lead to difficulty in school since school is generally concerned with the transmission and development of universalistic orders of meaning. The working-class student may be placed at considerable disadvantage in relation to the total culture of the school since it is not

made for him and he may not answer to it. If the contexts of learning, the examples used, are not contexts the student is familiar with.

The findings of the question as to how happy they are to be studying at an IoT reveal that on average over the five years of the study 63.9% of all year one survey participants stated that they are happy to attending an IoT, this ranged from 63.8% in 2009/10 to 63.6% in 2013/14. Once again there is a consistency of positive responses over the five year period among the first year student participants.

Among access first year students, 77.4% on average, over the five years of the study, stated they are happy to be studying at an IoT, ranging from 86% in 2009/10 to 76.1% for the final year of the study. This shows a slight decline over the period of the study. Among the non-access first years, 59.4% on average over the five years stated they were happy to be studying in an IoT, ranging from 59.45% in 2009/10 to 58.95% in 2013/14.

Figure 5 3 Number of Students who are happy to be attending an IoT

Source: Early Days Questionnaire

200
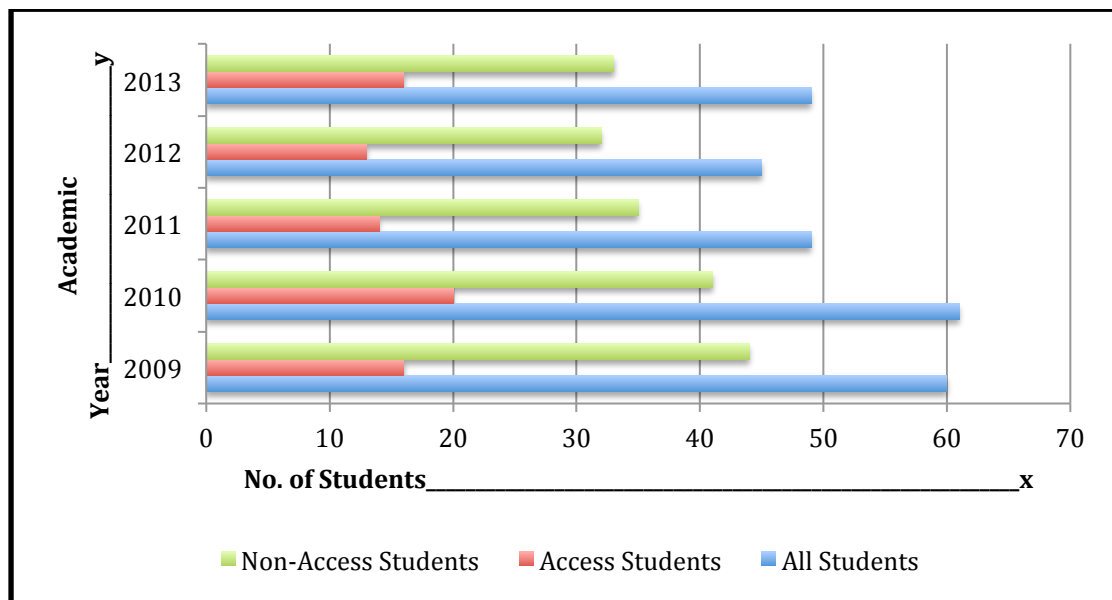
Considering the data is gathered in the very early weeks of the first year, it was deemed important to establish what the initial feelings of contentment are among the first year student population. These questions asked of the participants was whether they are happy to be studying at an IoT and if they are happy to be studying at the Institute. The findings are shown in Figure 5.3 (see also Table G7 in Appendix G).

The findings, as seen in Figure 5.4, clearly show that the access and non-access participants are displaying quite high levels of happiness at being a student in an IoT with on average higher levels among the access group of students surveyed over the five years of the study (see also Table G8 in Appendix G).

Figure 5 4 Number of Students who are happy to be attending ITT
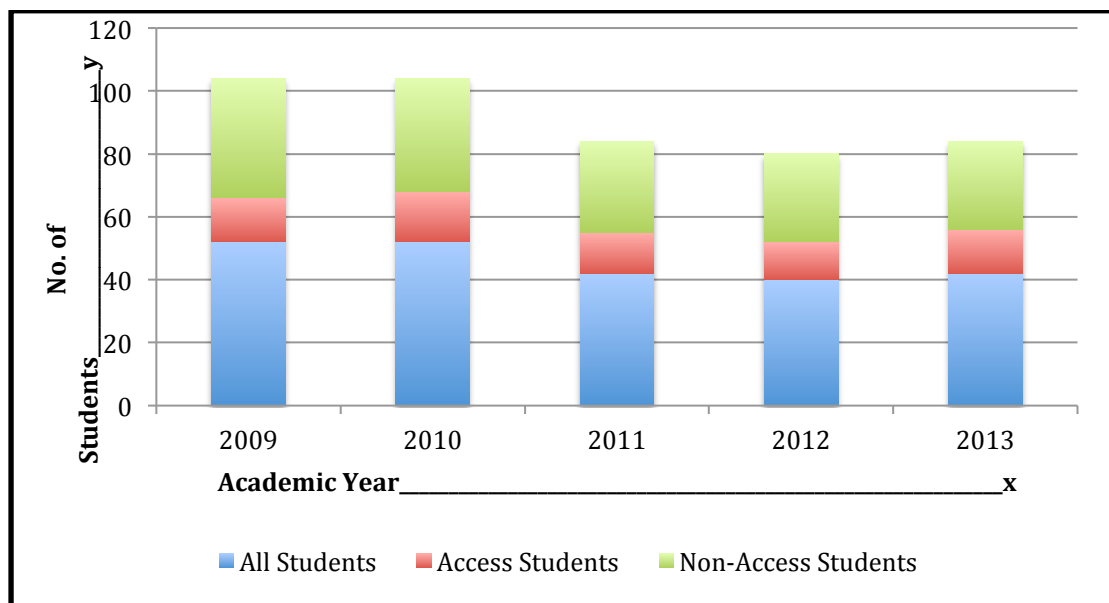
Source: Early Days Questionnaire

When asked about their level of happiness at ITT, the findings reveal that on average over the five years of the study 55.2% of all year one survey participants stated that they were happy at ITT, this ranged from 53.5% in 2009/10 to 54.5% in 2013/14 (see Figure 5.3). Among access year one participants, 67.6% on average, over the five years of the study, stated they were happy to be studying at ITT, ranging from 70% in 2009/10 to 66.6% for the final year of the study. Among non-access year one

participants, 51.1% on average over the five years stated that they were happy to be studying at ITT, ranging from 51.3% in 2009/10 to 50%% in 2013/14. These findings clearly show that the access participants are displaying higher levels of happiness as students of ITT than their non-access counterparts over the five years of the study.

(iv) Likelihood to Leave

This simple question "are you thinking about leaving?" seeks to establish if, at this early stage in year one, what percentage of the year one student participants are considering leaving Higher Education. Identifying the at-risk students, those who are considering leaving early, is important in providing a sample for the follow-on focus groups and interviews.

Figure 5 5 Number of Students who are Thinking of Leaving
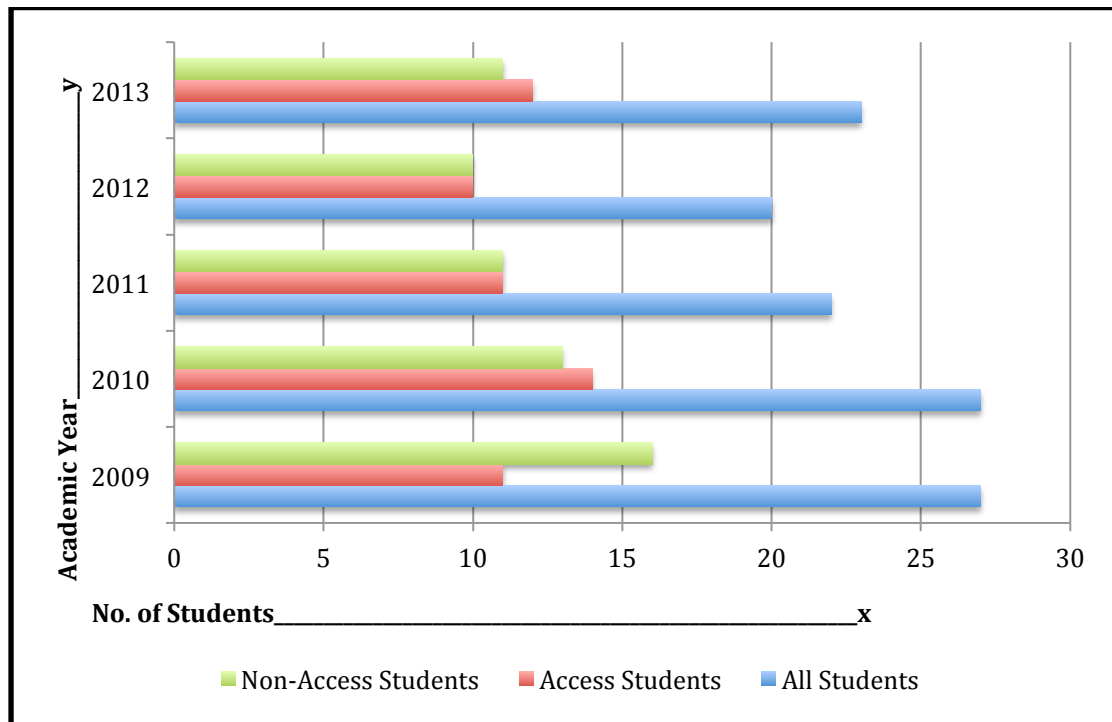
Source: Early Days Questionnaire

The findings of the question as to whether students are considering leaving college reveal that on average over the five years of the study 28.8% of the year one student

participants are, at this early stage, considering leaving (see Figure 5.5). this ranged from 28.7% in 2009/10 to 29.8% in 2013/14 (see also Table G9 in Appendix G). Among the access student first years, 56.8% on average, over the five years of the study stated they are considering leaving, ranging from 55% in 2009/10 to 57% for the final year of the study. Although they had expressed positive views about the IoT and their levels of happiness at being a student in an IoT, a high percentage are still considering leaving college. In contrast, when we examine the survey findings regarding the 311 non-access students in the participant group of first years, 19.6% on average over the five years stated they were considering leaving college ranging from 21.6% in 2009/10 to 19.6% in 2013/14. Although they had expressed low levels of positivity about the IoT sector and about being a student in an IoT as compared to the non-access group, fewer non-access students are considering leaving when surveyed at the early stages of their year one.

The findings from the 'Early Days' survey suggest that non-access students are displaying their cultural disposition and are more negative towards the IoT sector and ITT than the access students. However, a very important finding from the research is that more access students than non-access students have expressed a desire to leave college in spite of the fact that they express positive views about the IoT sector and ITT. This finding will be further examined in the later survey 'Checking Back' to ascertain whether their sense of self-confidence and engagement with Higher Education has improved or not. In addition, the interviews, focus groups and online diary will allow for further exploration as to the reasons for this finding.

5.4 Findings of Questionnaires to Staff both academic and support

Bourdieu consistently exposes the hidden stakes behind cultural practice, the incentives that we often do not notice that drive people, exposing the social constraints and conventions that sustain. Bourdieu encourages us to look at the hinterland-the conditions in which these students circulate. Bourdieu and Passeron (1972) argue that the educational institution incorporates the cultural dispositions of the upper class and not those of the working class. Based on findings presented in the previous section, the research finds that non-access students are displaying their cultural disposition and are resisting the more working class Higher Education institutional context of the IoT believing that they are better suited to a traditional university. Much research has been carried out in the international context regarding the role student-staff interaction plays in promoting student completion and educational attainment but less so in the Irish context. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) state that at least two dynamics are at work: the socialisation of students to the normative values and attitudes of the institution, and the bond between student and institution that positive student-staff interactions appear to promote. Indeed, a few of their studies suggest that even students' perceptions of staff availability and interest in them may be sufficient to promote successful completion. Student-staff interactions come in many forms: formal and informal, social and academic. These interactions have an effect on the various student outcomes. Kuh (2006) found, for example, that informal student-staff interactions have an impact on aspects of students' self-concept, such as self-worth and confidence, as well as on their academic skills. Working on a research project with a lecturer, talking with instructors outside of class, serving on committees with faculty all are cited as positively correlated to student success and involvement (Kuh, 2006). A brief online questionnaire was also

circulated to the academic staff involved with first year students, 85 lecturers involved with year one students received the questionnaire and 36 lecturers completed the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 42%.

5.4.1 Findings of Questionnaires to Academic Staff

To test whether there was dissonance between the student and staff views on being a student in an Institute of Technology, a brief online questionnaire was completed among staff. In year one of the research, academic year 2009-2010, and in the second academic year 2010-2011 academic staff participated in the online Moodle quiz as well as support staff who had experience of dealing with new entrant students. The research questions sought to ascertain what the causes of non-completion were according to academic staff and support staff as well as their perceptions of students at an Institute of Technology. They were also required to rank the causes of non-completion in year at an Institute of Technology.

Table 5 1 Profile of Academic Staff Participants in Questionnaires

2009	2010
Acad01 Marketing Male	Acad19 Management Female
Acad02 Humanities Female	Acad20 Science Female
Acad03 Mechanical Engineering Female	Acad21 Computing Female
Acad04 Electronic Engineering Male	Acad22 Humanities Male
Acad05 Computing Male	Acad23 Electronic Engineering Male
Acade06 Science Female	Acad24 Accounting Male
Acad07 Humanities Male	Acad25 Science Female
Acad08 Accounting Female	Acad26 Management Male
Acad09 Computing Female	Acad27 Humanities Female
Acad10 Mechanical Engineering Male	Acad28 Marketing Male
Acad11 Electronic Engineering Female	Acad29 Science Male
Acad12 Management Female	Acad30 Mechanical Engineering Female
Acad13 Humanities female	Acad31 Marketing Female
Acad14 Science Male	Acad32 Electronic Engineering female

Acad15 Computing Male	Acad33 Humanities Male
Acad16 Humanities Male	Acad34 Management Female
Acad17 Science Female	Acad35 Accounting Female
Acad18 Marketing Female	Acad36 Science Male

In total 36 academic staff from across all disciplines participated (Table 5.1). The findings of the questionnaires from academic staff are combined for the two sessions and are summarised below.

(i) General perception among academic staff of Institutes of Technology

In order to establish what the prevailing view of the academics of ITT are regarding the general perceptions of an Institute of Technology the questionnaire asked whether the lecturing staff considered The Institutes of Technology as having a positive image in general.

Figure 5 6 Overall responses to questions posed to academic staff
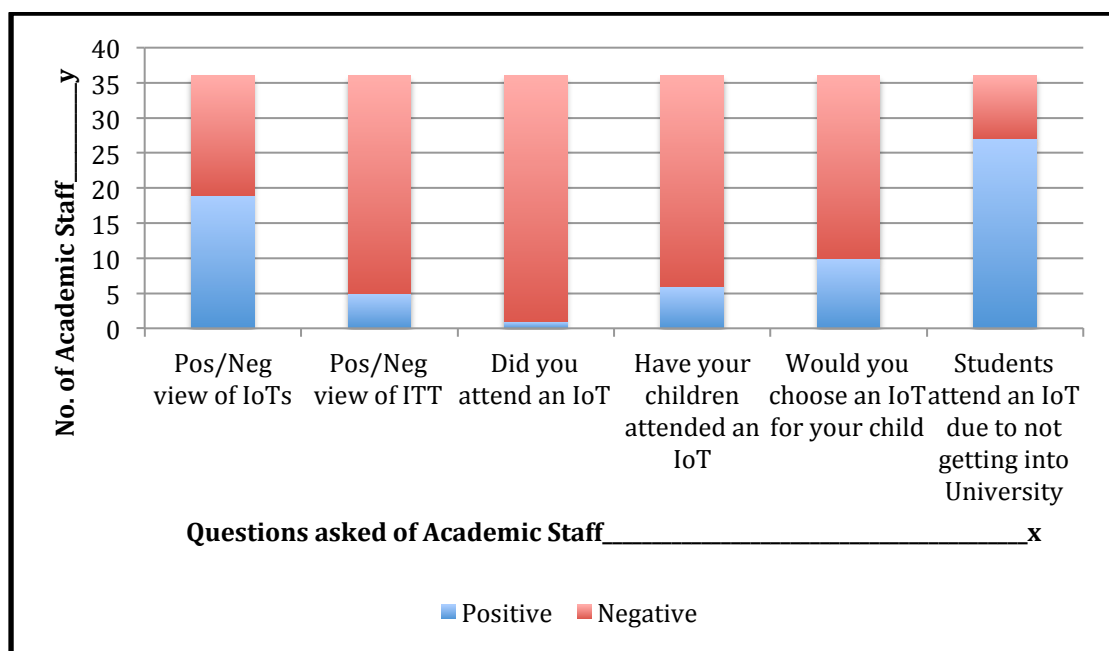
Source: Academic Staff Surveys

There is generally a positive image of The Institutes of Technology as a sector of Higher Education among the academic staff surveyed as seen in Figure 5.6 and 5.7 (see also Table G10 in Appendix G). However, almost half, 47.2% of the staff have a negative image of the sector in which they are employed. The reasons for this negative view will merit further examination in the interviews and focus groups with staff.

Figure 5 7 Overall Image of IoTs -Academic staff
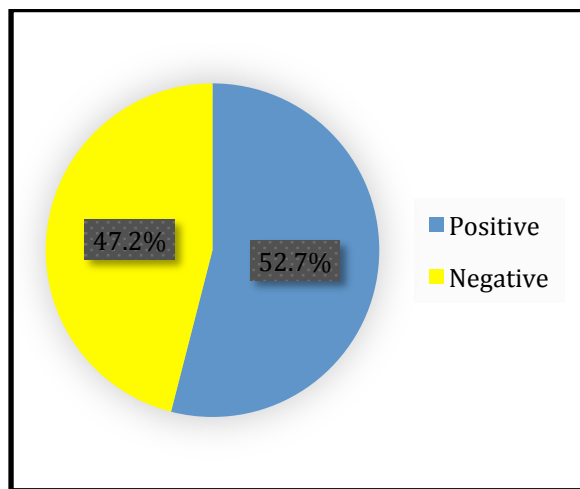
Source: Academic Staff Surveys

When questioned about the image of ITT, the academic staff had a predominantly negative view (86.1%) as shown in Figure 5.6 and in Figure 5.8.

Figure 5 8 Image of ITT-Academic Staff
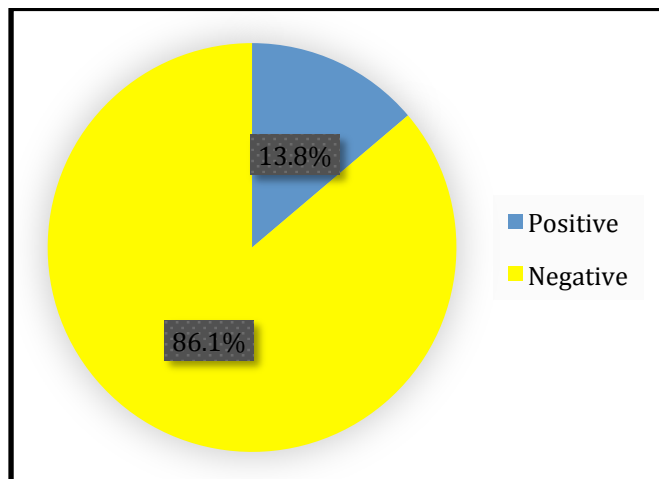
Source: Academic Staff Surveys

A similarly negative view was expressed by academic staff when asked if their children had attended an Institute of Technology. Only 16% have had children who attended an Institute of Technology, Figure 5.9 and Figure 5.6.

Figure 5 9 Have your children attended an IoT-Academic Staff
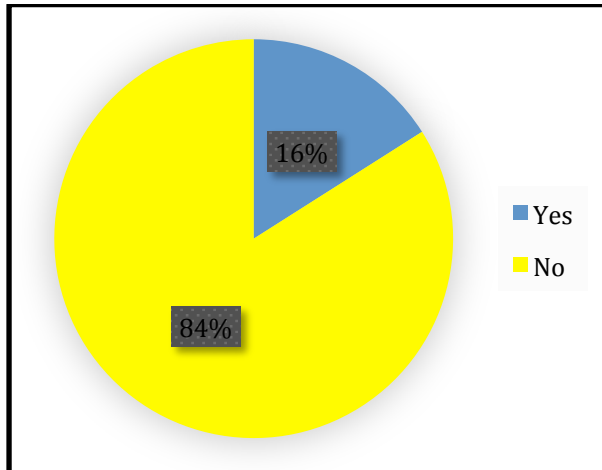
Source: Academic Staff Surveys

This question was probed further and academic staff were asked if they would choose an Institute of Technology as a Higher Education option for their son or daughter, almost 72.2% stated that they would not choose an IoT for their son or daughter to attend as a Higher Education option as seen in Figure 5.6 and Figure 5.10.

Figure 5 10 Would you choose an IoT?-Academic Staff
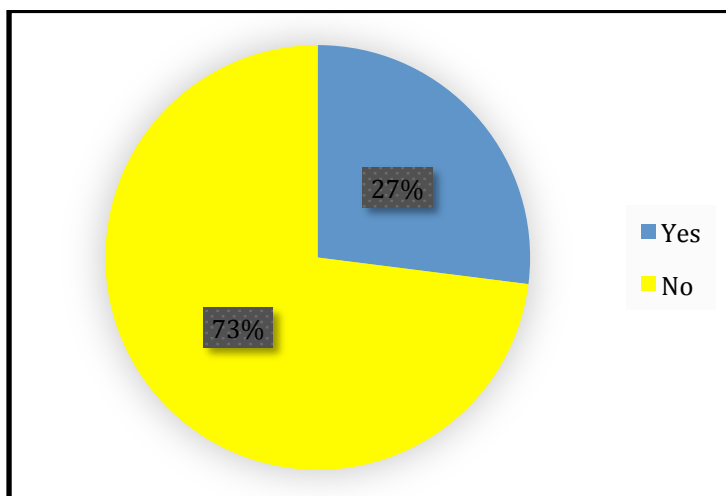
Source: Academic Staff Surveys

The next question related to the academic training and education received by the academic staff surveyed and whether they themselves had attended an Institute of Technology. Only 3% of the academic staff had attended an Institute of Technology as part of their academic preparation, as seen in Figure 5.6 and Figure 5.11.

Figure 5 11 Did you attend an IoT?-Academic Staff
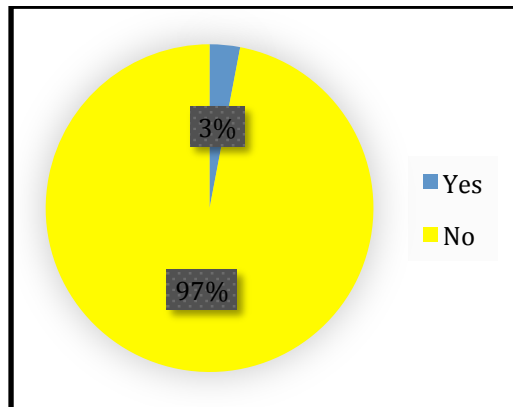
Source: Academic Staff Surveys

The final question related to perceptions of academic staff of those students entering an Institute of Technology. Did they view students who entered an Institute of Technology as those who had not 'succeeded' in entering a traditional university. 75% of the academic staff agreed that this was the case, Figure 5.6 and Figure 5.12.

Figure 5 12 IoT students have not succeeded in entering university-Academic Staff
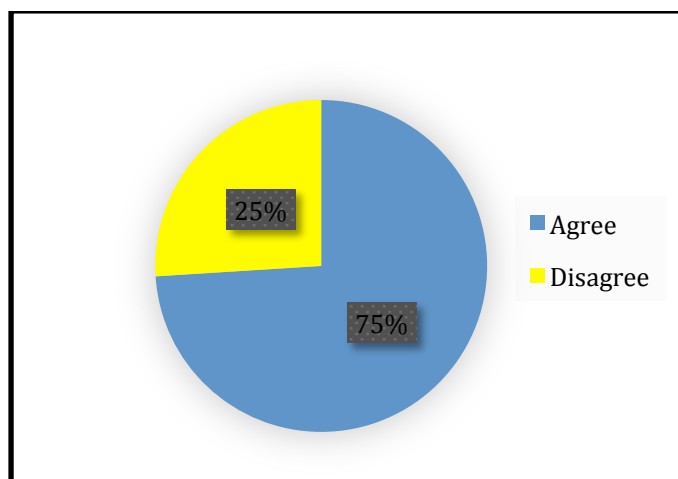
Source: Academic Staff Surveys

There is generally a positive image of The Institutes of Technology as a sector of Higher Education among the academic staff surveyed as seen in Figure 5.6 with the composite view in Figure 5.7. However, almost half, 47% of the staff have a negative image of the sector in which they are employed. The reasons for this negative view will merit further examination in the interviews and focus groups with staff.

Discussion of Findings

(ii) Perception of academic staff regarding ITT

Here the research seeks to capture the views of the academic staff about the particular institution in which they work and establish whether there is a positive or negative view of ITT. Bourdieu talks about the dissonance between the 'feel for the game' and 'the game itself' (Bourdieu 1990b). The access school students, when they arrive at Higher Education, move across two different worlds. Finn (1989) describes two models that seek to explain the process of "withdrawal" which he perceived as the converse of engagement. The frustration-esteem model identifies educational failure as the starting point in a cycle that may culminate in the individual rejecting or being rejected by the institution. The young person has poor academic performance, which leads to low self-esteem, and eventually to a rejection of the system they perceive as responsible for his or her poor performance. This blame for poor performance is often attributed to the institution's failure to provide adequate instruction, or sufficient emotional or environmental support. The participation-identification model focuses on student's involvement in the educational institution, incorporating both behavioural and emotional elements. It posits that increased participation in classroom activities results in students deriving a significant part of their identity from

the institution, and therefore they are less inclined to leave. A key part of withdrawal is disengagement, and is students remain engaged, they are less likely to drop out.

How committed the students and staff are to the particular institution, to what extent they feel they are real members is important to be measured in the context of student completion. Since ITT is located in an area of socio-economic disadvantage, the academic staff were surveyed as to the general view of ITT.

(iii) Influence of previous academic background of academic staff

Drawing on Bourdieu, who argues that familial, cultural and social capital as well as habitus impact on the educational experience to such an extent that students from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds who are not familiar with its particular kind of socialisation, will experience school as a hostile environment. (De Graaf et al., 2000). Success in Higher Education presupposes familiarity with the dominant culture and possession of cultural capital, therefore students from lower socio-economic backgrounds lack cultural capital and familiarity with the dominant culture, and so they usually have lower performance (Katsillis and Robinson, 1990).

Given that the research has found that access students have higher retention rates than the non-access students at ITT, they also appear to be happier in an IoT culture than the non-access students

Many lecturers at ITT hold the view that non-completion among students in year one is due to personal factors in the student-lack of academic ability and poor leaving certificate points. This is borne out in responses to interview questions posed to

academic staff, when asked what, in their view, are the issues that can affect student completion in year one.

There is a general view that the student himself/herself is responsible for the non-completion and there is little discussion or debate around the fact that lecturers play a very important role in retention and completion. Many lecturers are unaware of the impact they have on retention and completion. After all, who is the person that the student interacts with most on a daily basis? Lectures also influence the other interactions a student may have with other institutional staff-learning support, including tutor, library and student services.

Since lecturers are responsible for assessing and evaluating their students, they have great potential to have an impact on students' self-esteem and some students may feel in awe of such high academic credentials displayed by the faculty members.

Added to this powerful role of the academic member of staff, is the fact that the majority of the lecturing and academic staff have been educated in the traditional university system rather than in The Institute of Technology sector.

The value system is different and already biased towards the traditional university approach to education. Given that ITT is relatively young and that the faculty staff now have the option to encourage their own family members, sons and daughters, to attend an Institute of Technology, the question was posed to academic staff if they 'Would you choose an Institute of Technology as a Higher Education option for your son or daughter?' The results confirm that there is a stronger bias towards the university system of Higher Education, and therefore a negative view of The Institutes of Technology as a provider of Higher Education with only 27% of the academic staff

stated that they would choose an Institute of Technology for their son or daughter as a Higher Education option as seen in Figure 5.9 above.

To further examine the level of bias, participant academic staff were surveyed so as to capture their views on why students might choose to study at an Institute of Technology. The question asked if the academic staff agreed that the first year entrant was studying in an Institute of Technology because h/she had failed to gain entry to a traditional university. The majority of the academics surveyed (75%) agreed with the statement. This confirms a further bias among the academic staff that the students are studying at an Institute of Technology because they had 'failed' to enter a university.

Philip Wexler (2005) in his case studies, talks about the 'kids' who do not look at themselves as the establishment, as part of the authority and he emphasises the importance of a sense of image and of how this self-image can bring self-confidence. The participation in the activities of the institution can lead to a change in image and increased self-confidence. Wexler states that a lack of caring, from the 'system', a lack of caring is contagious as such attitudes become instilled in about six months. He likens running the school as a company and he describes the public versus private conflict-authentic, organic interactional process has broken down and been replaced by an institutional mechanical process. The importance of the quintessential social relation between student and teacher-if the emotional commitment is lacking the teaching and learning relation will be unsuccessful. Bernstein (1977) talks of educational crises as relational matter-there is a class difference of codes which seals the pact of absence, the non-caring mutual withdrawal which can be demonstrated in simple ways for example not knocking on doors, not clean enough. Communicative competence, linguistic similarity and or difference is an ingredient of the relational

process. The caring does work through communication, but less in linguistic code similarity and more in emotional commitment dimension of the relation that is signified by the other's willingness to listen. Wexler also talks about the reinforcement of identity 'labels' and the 'attacks' on the self: hidden assumptions of student inferiority accompanied with indifference. Wexler speaks of the erosion of the institutional mechanisms and processes that build social commitment and affirms the need to rebuild the institutional core.

"The main thing about schools is that they are one of the few public spaces in which people are engaged with each other in the interactional work of making meaning. These are the places for making the CORE meaning, of self or identity among young people" (Wexler, 1992, p.155)

Here is where young people are trying to 'become somebody' While they are aware of the occupational world of work, and in varying degrees acknowledge interest and attention to the learning of school subjects, their central and defining activity in school is the establish at least the image of an identity. There are distinct processes of an unintended but patterned withdrawal of people's energies from education.

5.4.2   Findings of Questionnaires to Support Staff

Why involve support staff in this qualitative research? Berger and Milem (2002) outline organisational behaviour, organisational culture and organisational climate as crucial to understanding the effect the campus organisation had on the student. "Organisational culture represents patterns of organisational behaviour that have become institutionalised as structures…organisational climate represents current perceptions about organisational behaviour that are less permanent and more transitory than the patterns of behaviour that have already become enculturated on campus." (p.275). This includes a variety of organisational features and behaviours

that have an impact on student experiences and outcomes and it has been used as a framework for examining the impact of the college environment on student outcomes, including student retention. Apart from the daily interactions with the lecturing staff the first year students meet the support staff for various reasons, including routine administrative reasons as well as for individual personal and learner support.

This part of the research involves surveying the support staff involved with year one students. The sample is taken from the administrative school secretarial staff, the student services staff in the admissions office and the library staff. 8 members of support staff received the questionnaire and 6 completed the questionnaire, staff were drawn from a variety of student support services in ITT (Table 5.2).

Table 5. 1 **Profile of Administrative Support Staff Participants in Questionnaires**

Admin01-Registrar's Office-Front Desk Student Queries
Admin02-Access Office
Admin03-Finance-Student Fees
Admin04=Registrar's Office-Examination queries
Admin05-Library-Student Services
Admin06-Student Learner Support

The following is a presentation and analysis of the findings of these qualitative questions to support staff.

(i) General perception among the support staff of The Institutes of Technology

In order to establish what the prevailing view of the support staff regarding the general perceptions of an Institute of Technology the questionnaire asked whether the support staff considered The Institutes of Technology as having a positive image

generally. The data in Figure 5.13 shows that the overall image of The Institutes of Technology as a sector is very positive at 83.5% of the sample surveyed.

Figure 5 13 General View of IoTs Support Staff
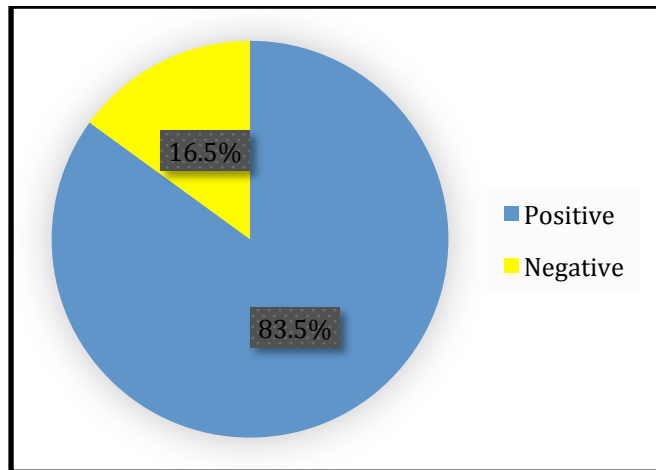
Source: Support Staff Surveys

The composite view of responses is presented in Figure 5.14 (see also Table G11 in Appendix G). Although a small number of participants, it is a valuable finding. Another important factor to be noted is that a high number of the support staff reside or originally resided in the local catchment area of ITT.

Figure 5 14 Overall responses to questions posed to support staff
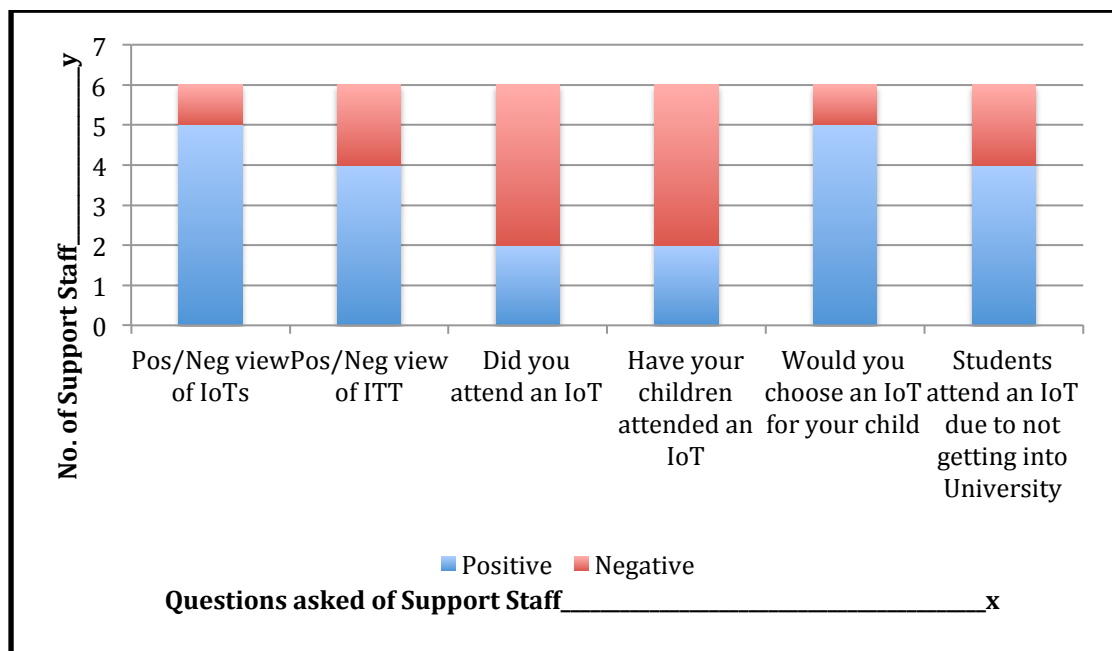
Source: Support Staff Surveys

(ii) Perception of support staff regarding ITT

The particular IoT being researched is located in a socio-economically disadvantaged area and the staff were surveyed as to the general view of ITT.

The findings reveal that a very positive view exists among the support staff of ITT as compared with that of the academic staff. In addition to the fact that many of the support staff reside or originally resided in the area, many have undertaken further study or are currently registered on part time programmes in ITT. This leads to the findings in the next question posed relating to the influence of the previous academic background of the support staff, whether they had personally attended an Institute of Technology.

When questioned about the positive or negative view of ITT, the support staff had a very positive view of ITT (66.6%) with only 33.3% expressing a negative view. Figure 5.15.

Figure 5 15 View of ITT-Support Staff
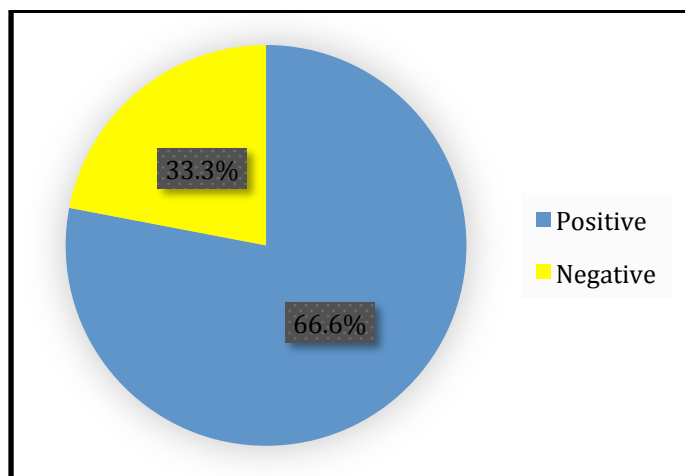
Source: Support Staff Surveys

(iii) Influence of previous academic background of support staff

The support staff where asked whether they had attended an Institute of Technology as part of their education or training. 33.3% of the support staff who had attended third level had attended an Institute of Technology, as seen in Figure 5.16.

Figure 5 16 Did you attend an IoT-Support Staff
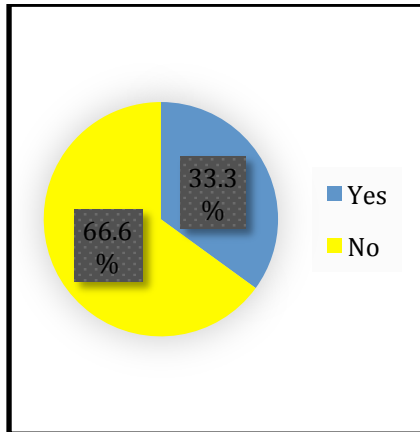
Source: Support Staff Surveys

33.3% of the support staff had a son or a daughter who had attended an Institute of Technology (see Figure 5.17) and 83.3% stated that they would recommend an Institute of Technology to their son or daughter as a Higher Education option (see Figure 5.18).

Figure 5 17 Have your children attended an IoT? Support Staff
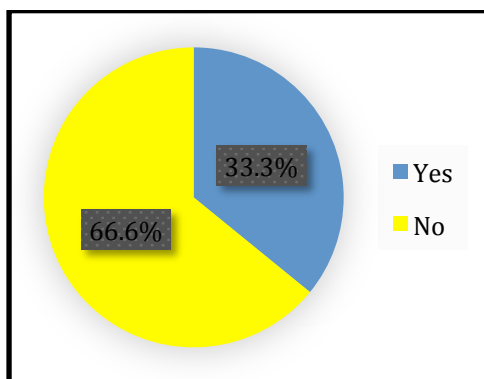
Source: Support Staff Surveys

Figure 5 18 Would you choose an IoT?-Support Staff
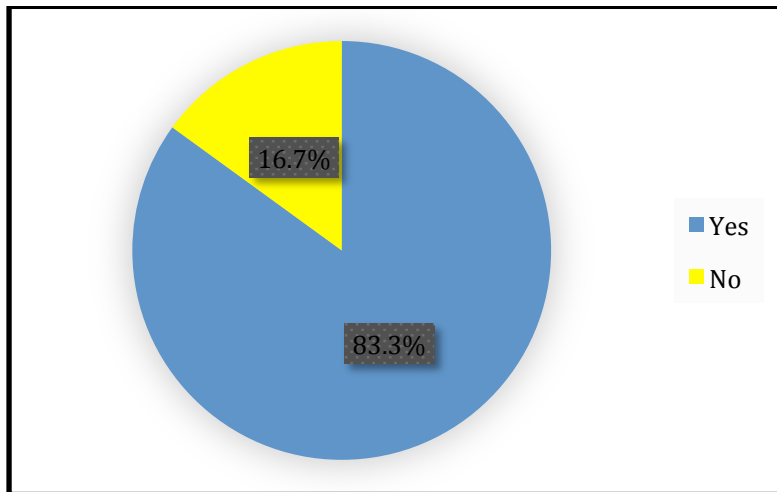
Source: Support Staff Surveys

In response to the final question, are students who attend an Institute of Technology do so because they have not 'succeeded' in entering a traditional university, 66.6% of the support staff disagreed with this while 33.3% agreed that this is the case, Figure 5.19.

Figure 5 19 Students who attend an IoT have not succeeded in entering university-Support Staff
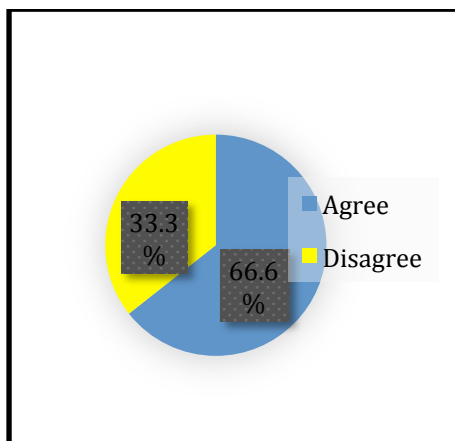
Source: Support Staff Surveys

Once again, the bias towards the university as the sector for the 'successful' second level student and The Institute of Technology as the sector the 'failed' second level student prevails among the support staff, but it is less nuanced among the support staff than the academic staff.

5.4.3 Comparisons regarding students, academics and support staff

Bourdieu in how work on 'reproduction' in education states that middle-class-led institutions reproduce middle class values. In ITT, the staff comprise a diversity of socio-economic backgrounds. Comparing the views of both lecturing and support staff as well as students from access and non-access schools, reveal attitudes and perspectives that Bourdieu refers to as 'dispositions'. There is a predominance of working class backgrounds among the student population and among many of the administrative staff.

Students from access schools and working class backgrounds are more positive about the IoT sector as well as ITT in which they are studying that are the non-access students in year one. Support staff were also more positive about the IOT sector than the academic staff. That is, 4 out of 6 (66.6%) of the support staff stated that there was a positive view of ITT while only 5 of the 36 (13.8%) academic staff stated that ITT had a positive image. It is almost completely the inverse where the view among academic and support staff regarding the image of ITT is concerned. Furthermore, when asked if any of their children had attended an IoT again differences appeared and traditions of sending their children to universities were common among the academic staff while one-third of the support staff 33.3% had already sent a family member to an IoT

5.5 Checking Back' Questionnaire to Students

Entry to a higher education institution is determined by passing examinations and meeting the formal requirements for entry to that institution. Entry and belonging is also influenced by the prevailing academic culture of an institution because that culture helps to identify for the formal structure what constitutes competent membership and what does not. If we consider the particular programme on which the student is registered as a community, this is one form of affiliation that ties the individual student to the life of the institution. Another form of affiliation is the network inherent in the community to the centre of the institutional life. Being part of this programme-driven affiliation although a secondary minimum condition for successful completion is not enough, it is dependent on the centrality of that community in the system of the institution. To measure to what extent that 'belonging' process is progressing, a second evaluation phase took place early in the spring semester of each year 1 for the academic years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. At this stage of the academic year the first semester examinations are completed and results have been published to students. The research instrument was a follow-up online questionnaire circulated via Moodle. In total, over the five years, each first year student in year one who had participated in the 'Early Days' questionnaire and had answered that they were considering leaving college was asked to complete the online questionnaire. One hundred and nineteen questionnaires were completed. It was only distributed to those one hundred and nineteen students who had indicated that they were considering leaving college in the 'Early Days' questionnaire. Making the survey available on Moodle greatly facilitated the high response rate of 100%. The survey was brief and asked questions relating to indicators of positivity with regard to successful first year completion. The following is a presentation of the results of the 'Checking Back' survey over the five years.

Student Attendance:

With the growing awareness of the importance of student engagement, how students engage with learning and with the learning community is a strong indicator of the quality of the first year experience. A simple measure is to estimate the amount of time that students spend on campus. The following activities can be used to estimate the amount of time spent on campus: - the amount of time spent studying as well as those activities that happen outside the class when students engage with their class colleagues in meaningful ways. The simplest quantifiable indicator of engagement is time spent directly on activities connected to student learning, i.e. class contact hours and study. This is measured and the findings show that students never spend five complete days on campus and the pattern is that students spend less time on the physical campus. The average time spend on campus is 3.5 days per week as seen in Figure 5.20.

Figure 5 20 Number of Days per week on Campus
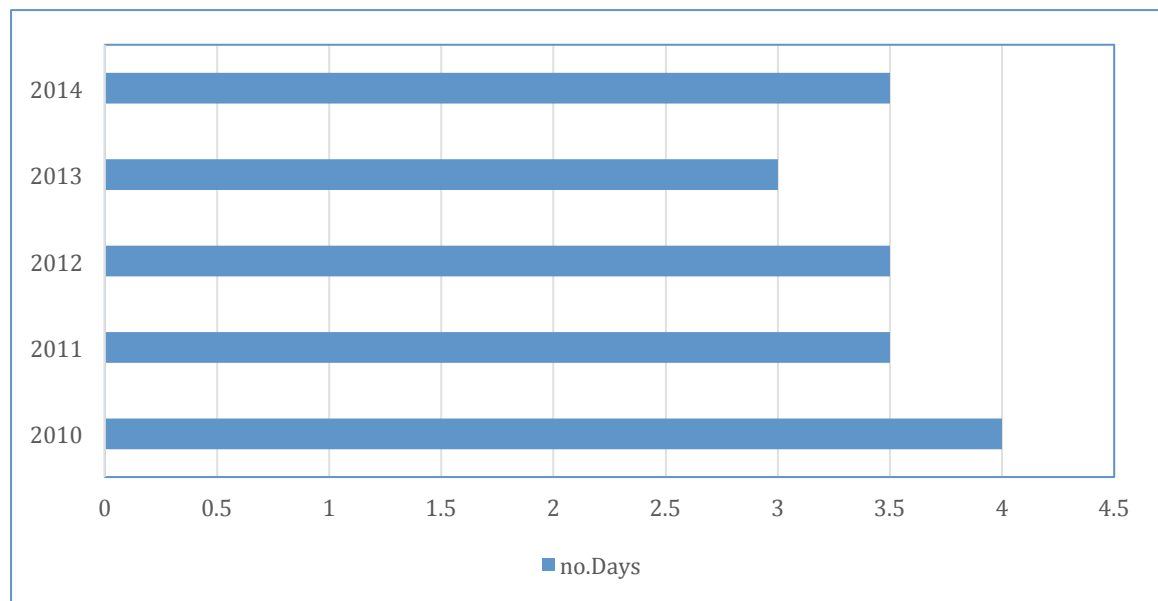
Despite the increase in online communication technologies there still is a strong argument linking the presence of students on campus and their involvement in and

integration with the learning community. Students who spend less time on campus are less likely to ask questions in class or contribute to class activities. Equally, those who spend four of five days on campus are more likely to study and to discuss class material with peers. First years who spend more time on campus are more likely to say that they feel that they belong to a learning community. It is not surprising then that they say that they feel they have a strong sense of student identity and have made some friends at college and have got involved in a club or association in college (Astin, 1984).

5.5.1 Sense of 'Belonging'

Another contributory factor in students' engagement is the fostering of an environment in which students participate actively and feel as if they 'belong' to the community of learning whether it is in big or small group settings. Asking questions in class or contributing to class discussion, making class presentations all are indicators of engaging with peers in the learning community. Research indicates that the more frequently students interact with their peers in educationally meaningful ways, the more they are likely to engage with their learning (Krause, McInnis et al 2003, Tinto 1998). In recent years, the concept of social capital has been closely associated with the promotion of learning especially among socially excluded communities. Since social capital is perceived as the "glue" that helps more people through participation to feel more included and less excluded. In an academic context, relationships with peers and academic staff can have substantial benefits on academic progress. The research by Thomas (2002) showed how an enhanced relationship with teaching staff can improve motivation to learn and can increase confidence to look for help all of which contribute to improved academic performance. Social capital can also be of value and be developed through

relationships with peers within the classroom setting through small group learning or what Tinto described earlier as "learning communities". Not only are the students learning but also they are creating networks of peers that they feel attached to and look to for support. In addition, in order to allow all students develop their social capital, the institution should provide "free" space for student interaction, for establishing a more inclusive students' union that would help local students to compensate for the reduced social interaction which is a consequence of not living in shared student residential accommodation.

Figure 5 21 Number of Students who engaged with class colleagues
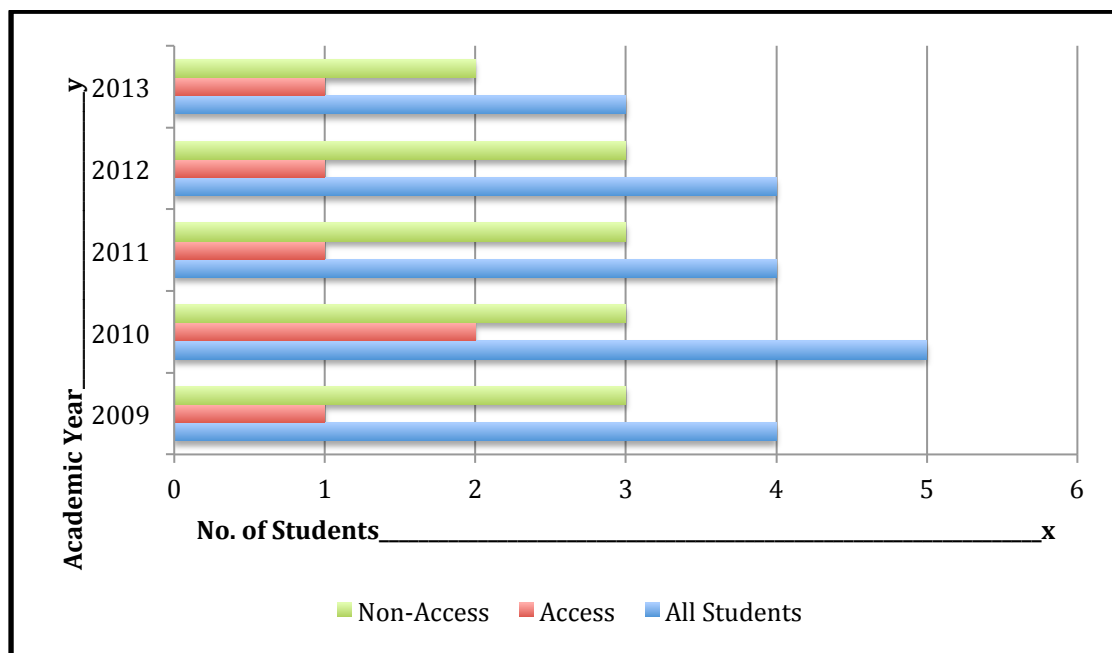
Source: Checking Back Questionnaire

Figure 5 22 Number of Students who engaged with social media
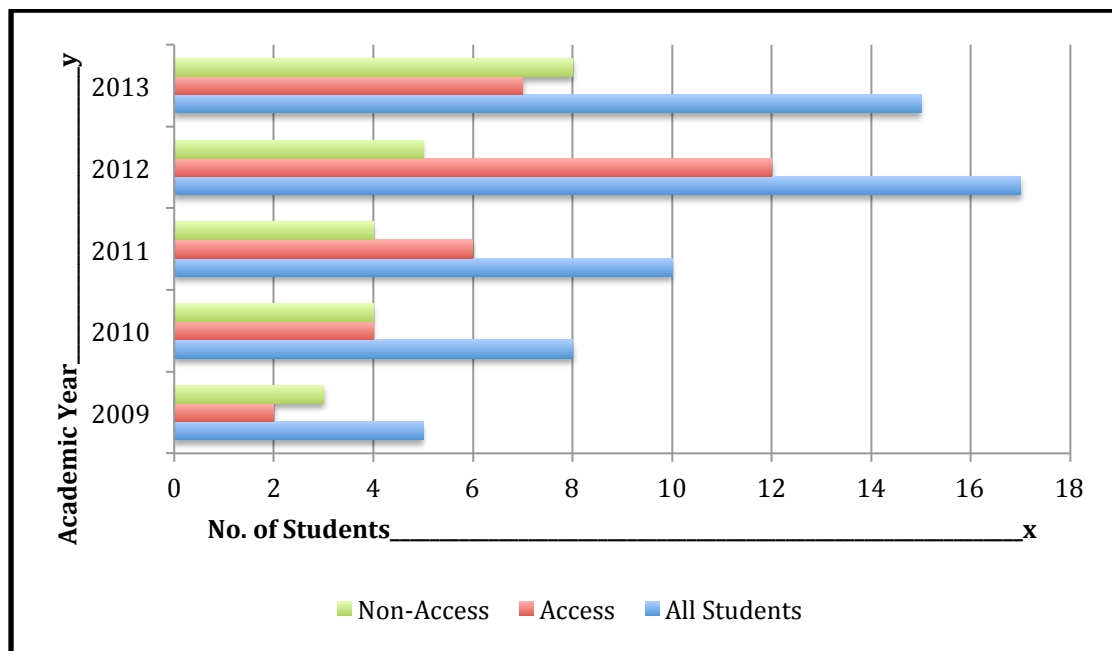
Source: Checking Back Questionnaire

The findings in Figures 5.21 and 5.22 drawn from the 119 students surveyed through the 'Checking Back' questionnaire show considerable limits in the sense of 'belonging' among the general student population, with an average over the five years of the study of 16.8% of the student participants stating that they had worked with class colleagues (see also Table G12 in Appendix G). The pattern over the period of the study is one of decreasing levels of this sense of 'belonging' as exemplified in the collaborative work with classmates, 16.6% in 2009/10 and 15% in 2013/14. Findings presented in Figures 5.21 and 5.22 also show that on average over the five years, a greater share of non-access students, 11.7%, are working with classmates compared to 5% of the access students. Findings with regard to engagement via social media with class colleagues varied from year to year over the five years, with an average of 46.2% over the five-year period. Interestingly, this mode of engagement was more

actively pursued by access students (26%) than by non-access student participants (20.1%). In both groups over the five-year period there was an upward growth in engagement with social media.

5.5.3 A Culture of Care

Creating a culture of 'care' is central to students entering Higher Education from second level schools where they have been cared for, particularly for those entering from the access schools where the level of support and care was high. That is, Figure 5.21 shows that over half (58.8%) of students in each year indicate that there is care from academic staff to all students. Figure 5.23 (see also Table G13 in Appendix G) also shows that when students from the access schools were asked about their perceptions about the level of care from academic staff towards them, responses varied across each of the years, with an average of 26.9% over the five years, compared to that among non-access students with an average of 31.9%. That is, non-access students seem to indicate slightly higher levels of care from academic staff towards them that access students.

With regard to the responses received from the students surveyed about their perceptions of care shown to them from the non-academic staff, students report high levels with an average of 68% over the five years of the study. Furthermore, responses indicate that care shown by non-academic staff towards access students is marginally higher (37.8%) than that shown by non-academic staff towards non-access students (30.2%) as seen in Figure 5.24 (see also Table G13 in Appendix G).

Figure 5 23 Number of Students with positive perceptions of care from academic staff
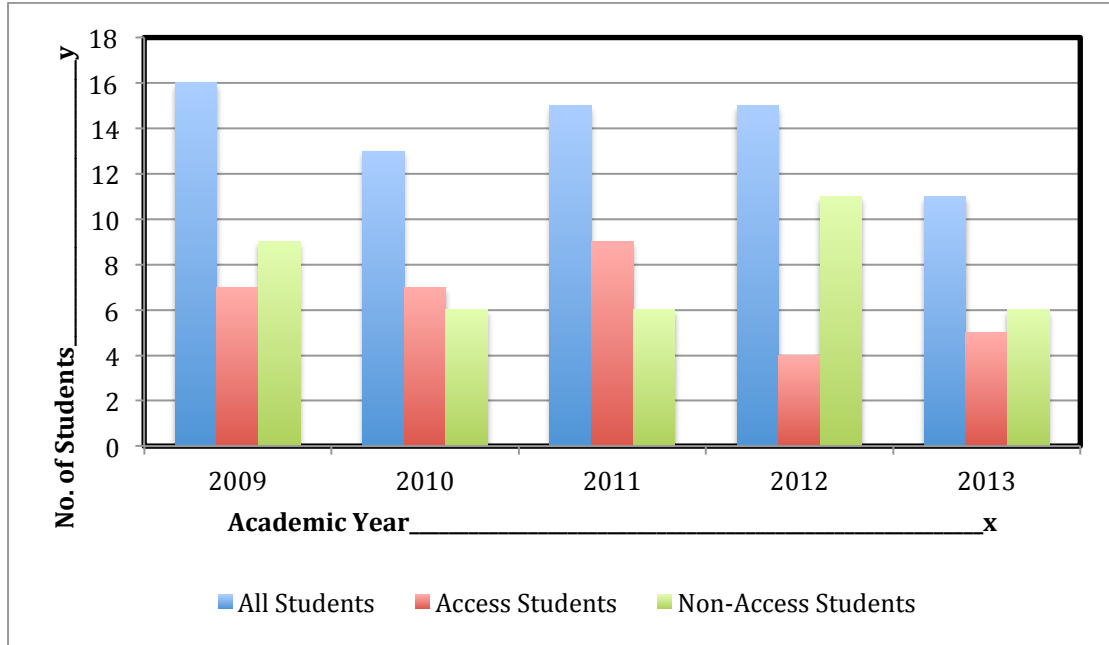
Figure 5 24 Number of Students with positive perceptions of care from support staff
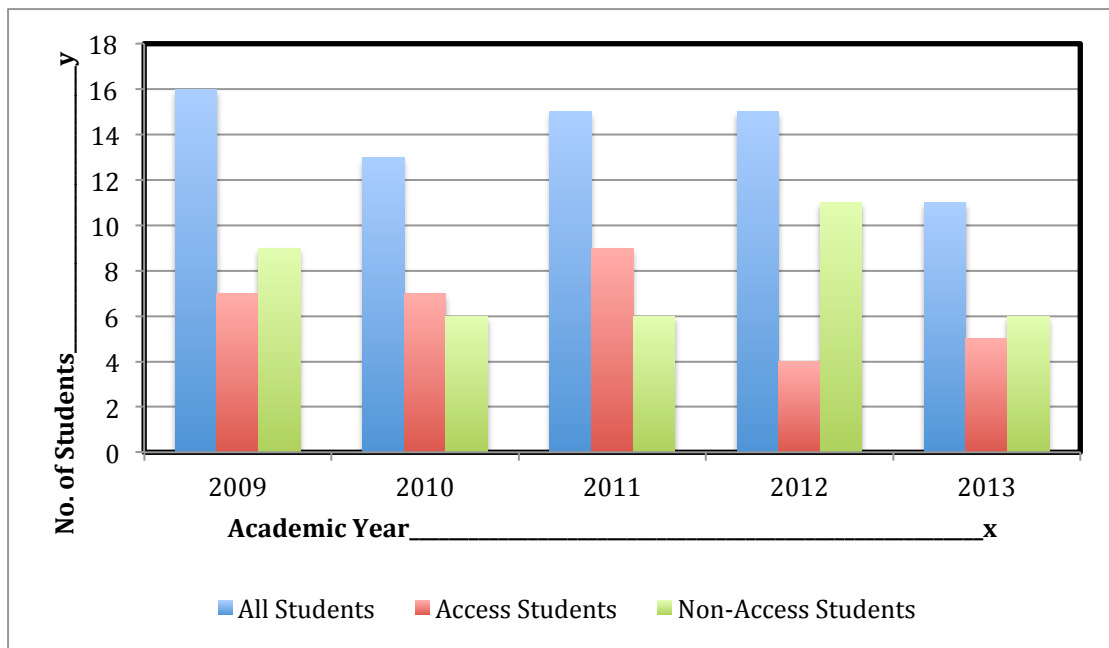
5.5.4 Sense of Confidence

Bourdieu states that social capital is the "aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationship of mutual acquaintance and recognition or, in other words, to memberships in a group-which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit-in the various senses of the word" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 251).

In real terms, this means that parents with high levels of social capital can benefit from these networks to gain access to valuable information about the educational system. Gaining benefit from such types of capital is essential in Higher Education.

Research that uses Bourdieu's conceptual tools has shown that the privileged middle class can mobilise their capitals and gain advantage in the transition from Higher Education to the labour market, since having "a feel for the game" they had "internalised the logic of the game and played accordingly" (Bathmaner et al., 2013, p. 741). "The habitus of upper and middle class students equips them with specifics as regards their education and the transition into the labour market" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.64-65). Having successfully completed the first semester it is important to measure the level of confidence the year one students possess at the start of the second semester. Levels of confidence and self-esteem are linked to the students' sense of identity and this confidence fuels their motivation to successfully complete.

Figure 5 25 Number of Students who stated their confidence had increased
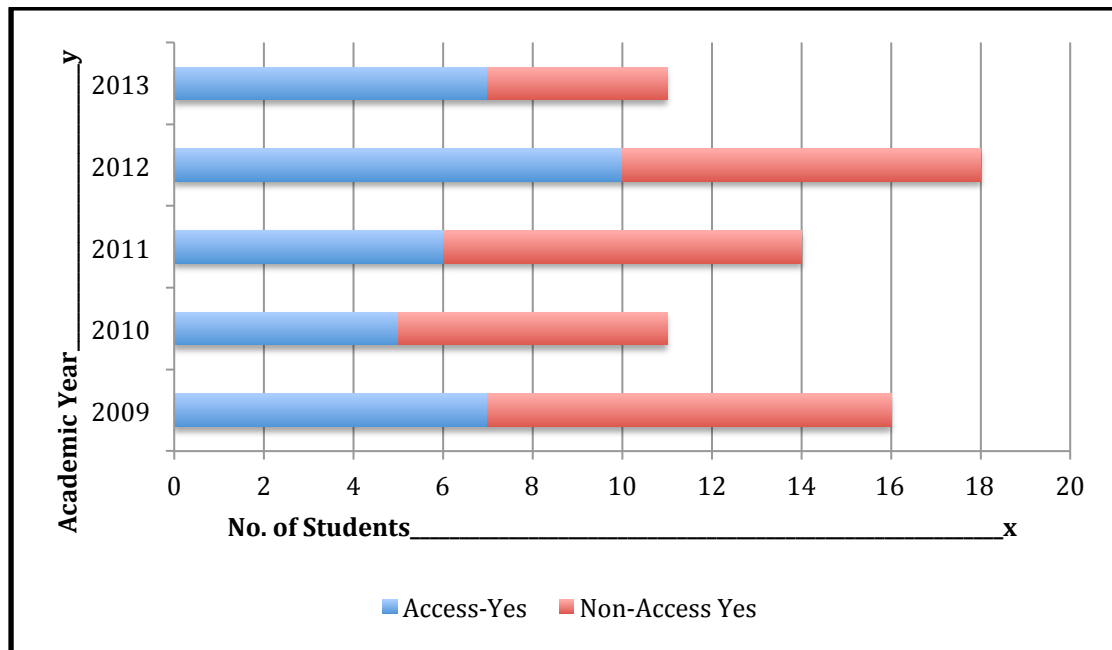
Source: Checking Back Questionnaire

Generally, the first year student participants are experiencing low levels of confidence with an average of 29.4% in both access and non-access groups over the five year period as seen in Figure 5.25 (see also Table G14 in Appendix G). By February of each academic year students have spent five months at Higher Education and it would be expected that they would have adjusted to the new environment at Higher Education, making the transition to the new environment. The survey asked students were asked about how well they felt they were coping with this transition and how they are coping with the new environment.

Figure 5 26 Number of Students who are coping well with the new environment
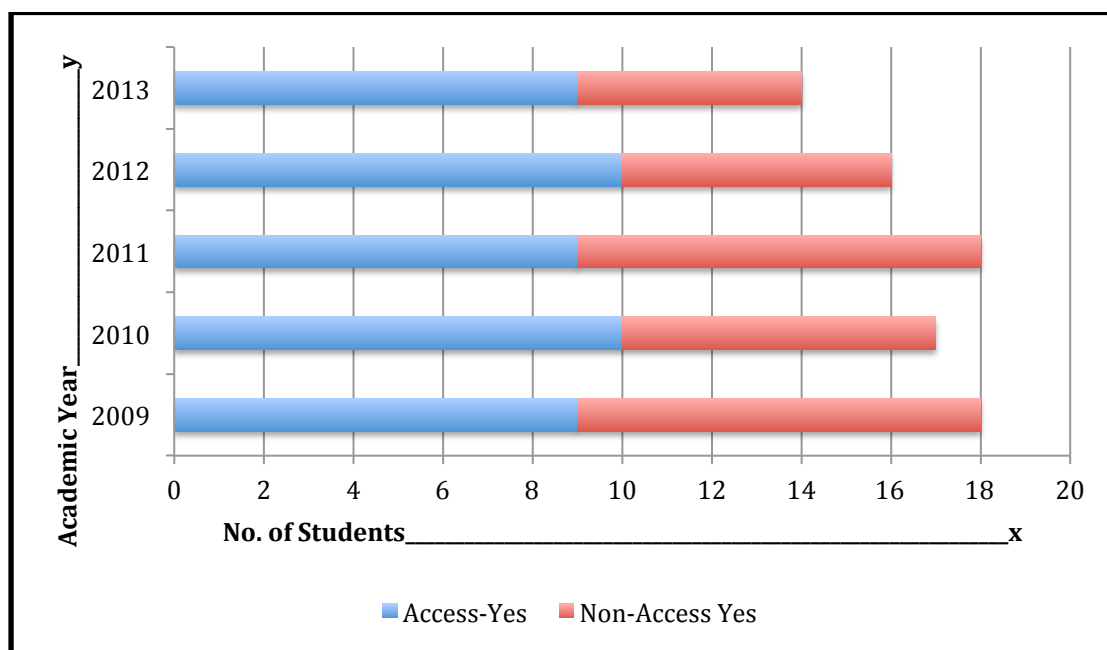
Source: Checking Back Questionnaire

The findings in Figure 5.26 show that on average over the five years of the study 39.5% of the access students stated that they are coping well with their new environment as compared to 30% of the non-access students (see also Table G15 in Appendix G).

5.5.6 Commitment to programme of study and sense of contentment

The level of commitment to a programme is an important indicator as to the level of general contentment with being at Higher Education. Levels of engagement are measured nationally by the Irish Student Survey of Engagement (ISSE). The level of satisfaction with student-staff interaction again result in low scores at 22.8% for ITT (ISSE 2017).   When compared with the different types of Higher Education institutions, the Institutes of Technology sector score slightly higher (24.3%) than the university sector at 23.4%) where staff-student interactions are concerned (ISSE

2017). Linked to this general sense of engagement among the students, a basic but important question was asked of the year one students mid-year in year one, 'Are you happy at college?"

Figure 5 27 Number of Students who are said they are happy at college
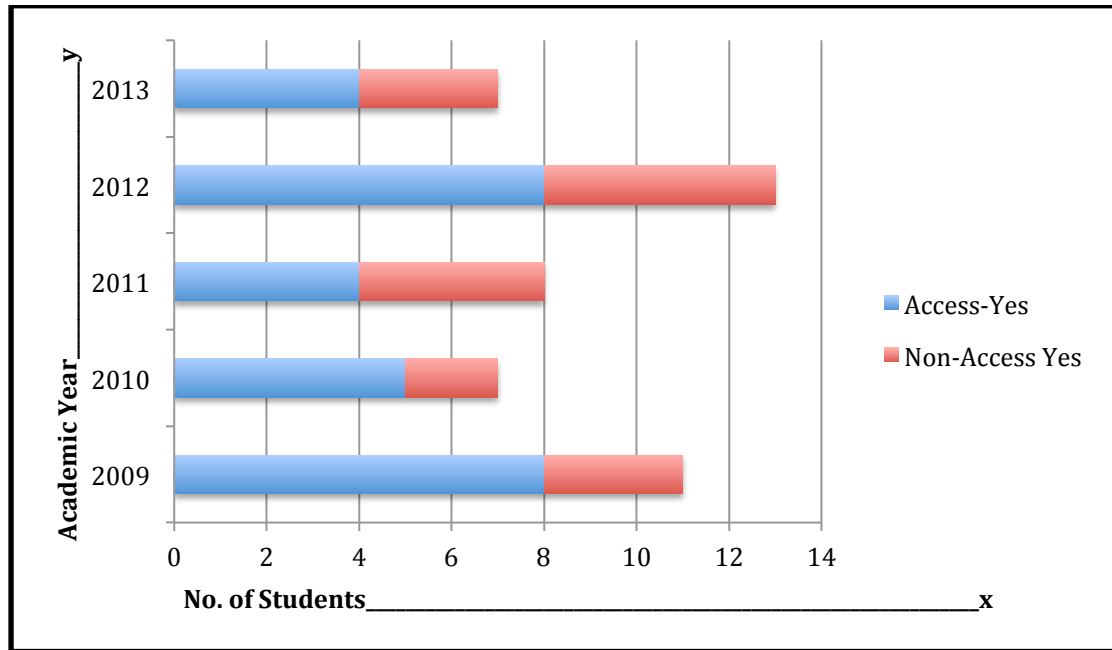
Source: Checking Back Questionnaire

The levels of contentment at being at college, the level of 'happiness' among the year one students is quite low. With regard to the responses from the access students, it varies over the five years, reaching a high of 33.3% in the academic year 2009/10 and dropping to a low of 16.6% in the 2011/12 academic year, with an average over the five years of 24.4%. Among the non-access students, the average who are happy is even lower at 14.3% over the period of the study as displayed in Figure 5.27 (see also Table G16 in Appendix G).

Another key question asked relates to the possibility of the students considering leaving college. Specifically, participants were asked 'Have you considered leaving college?'

Figure 5 28 Number of Students who said they are considering leaving.
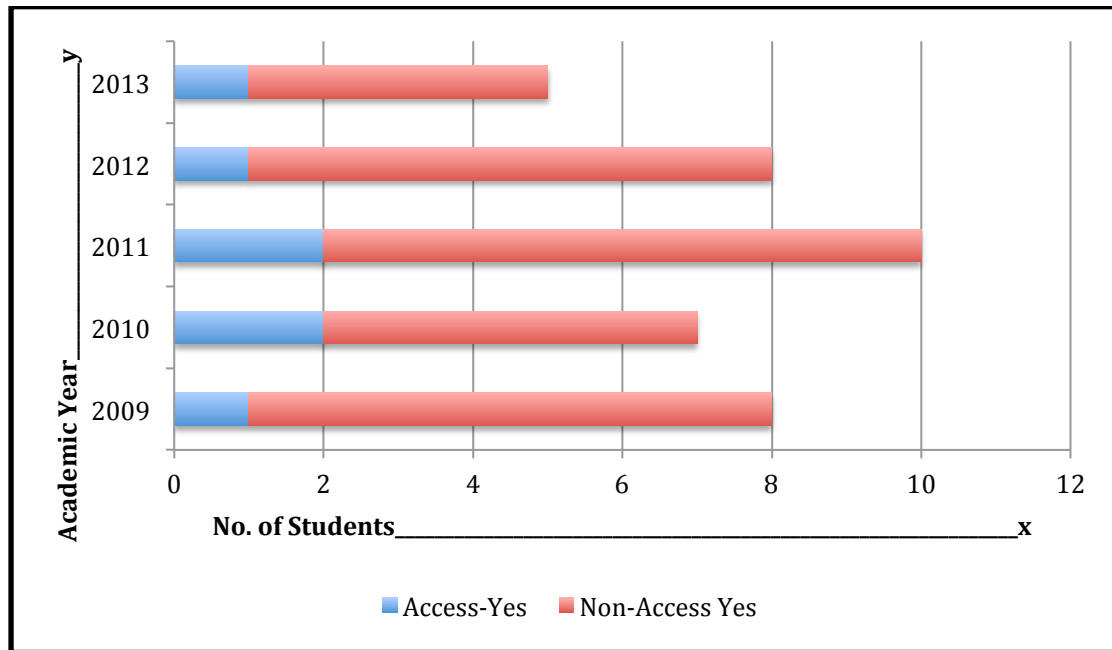
Source: Checking Back Questionnaire

A marked contrast exists regarding the intention to leave college among the non-access student population in year among and the access students. Figure 5.28 shows that the access student participants display an intention to remain and complete year one, as on average just 5.8% state that they are considering leaving (see also Table G17 in Appendix G). The pattern of response is quite different for non-access students as on average 26% state that they are considering leaving college. This is a reversal from the 'Early Days' survey results that were presented where 56.8% of access students indicated that they were thinking of leaving compared to 19.6% of non-access students.

The findings here are worthy of further analysis in the focus groups, interviews and reflective online diaries.

5.6 The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)

The development of the ISSE was informed by experiences gained from other jurisdictions where similar surveys have been undertaken and is a comprehensive and robust survey instrument designed to elicit feedback on multiple complex themes that are pertinent to monitoring the experience of the students enrolled in our Higher Education institutions.

It contributes to a substantial dataset to inform discussion of the experiences of students in Irish Higher Education Institutions. Almost 60,000 students responded to the original ISSE questions from 2013-2015 (ISSE archives). Where Students-Staff Interactions are concerned:

1. 59.4% of students surveyed at ITT stated that they had never talked about career plans to academic staff

2. 71% of students surveyed at ITT stated that they had never worked with academic staff outside of their coursework

3. 50.5% of students surveyed at ITT stated that they had never discussed course topics, ideas or concepts with academic staff

4. 45.2% of students surveyed at ITT stated that they had never discussed academic performance with academic staff

The survey findings for ITT for 2016 and 2017 showed how often the students had interacted with staff/faculty. The responses to the survey questions 1-4 can be seen along with the options available, ranging from very often to never as seen in Figure 5.29 below (see also Table G18 in Appendix G).

Figure 5 29 Percentage of Students who answered 'never' to student-staff interaction
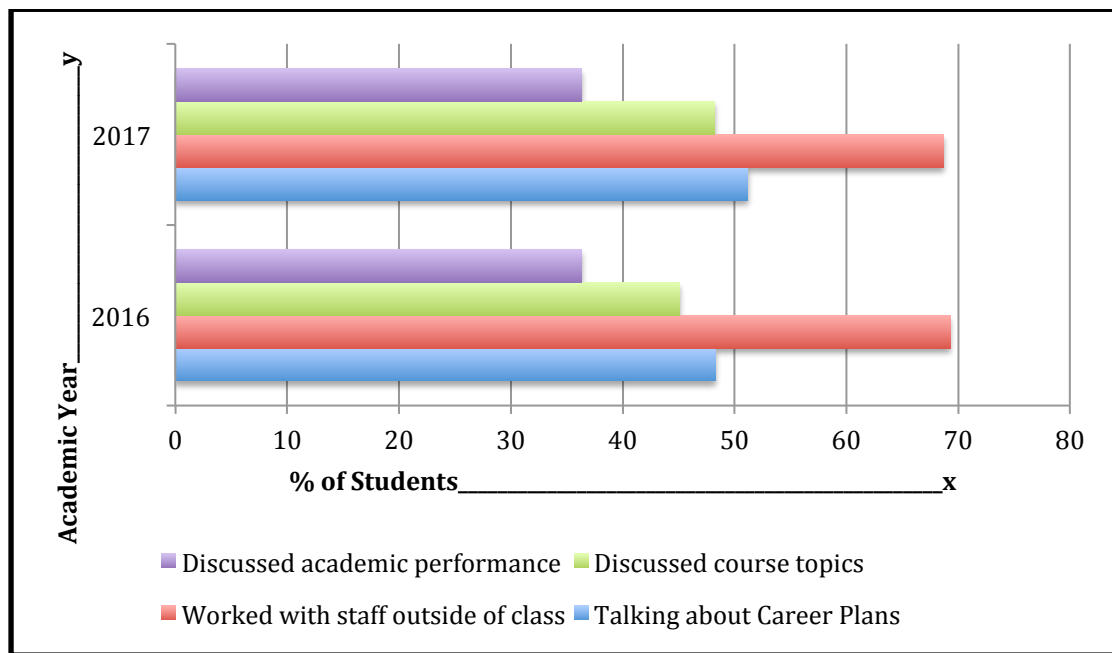
Source: Irish Survey of Student Engagement Findings for ITT 2016/17

When asked how they would evaluate their entire educational experience in this institution, 35% (2017) and 32% (2016) said 'excellent' as compared to 33.6% in all ISSE institutions and 36.7% in all Universities and 31% in all IoTs. When asked if they could start again would they go to the same institution 35% replied 'Definitely yes' 2017 and 37% in 2016 compared with the Universities where 'Definitely yes' was 53.6% and in the IoTs 39% replied as 'definitely yes'.

The survey demonstrates at a national level, poor levels of staff-student interaction, as perceived by the students surveyed across all years of programmes in all Higher Education institutions, as illustrated by Figures 5.30 below.

Figure 5 30 Engagement 2013-2015 National (Irish Student Survey of Engagement)
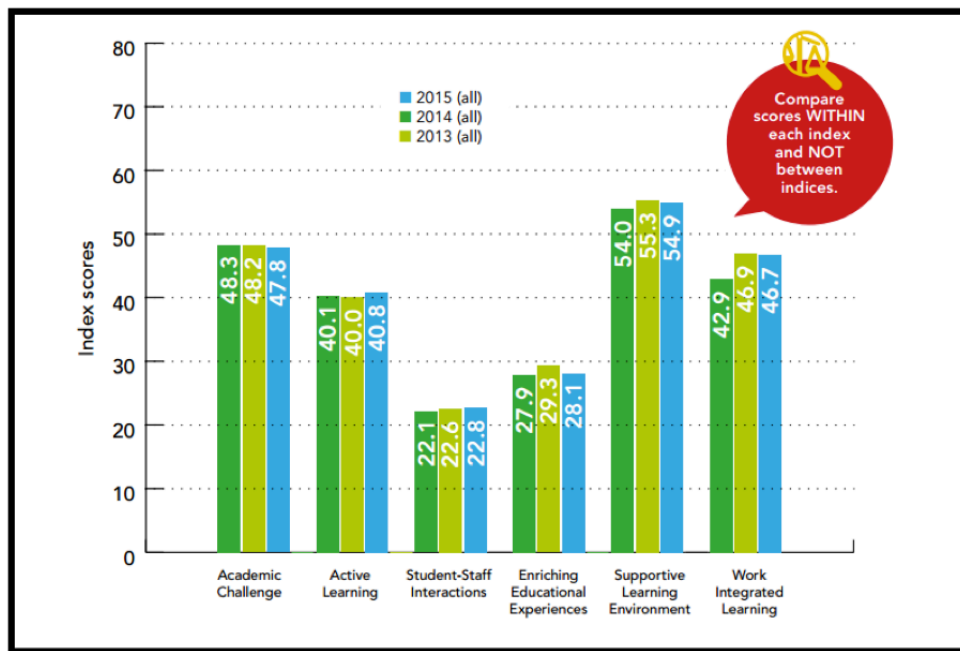
Source: The Irish Survey of Student Engagement, HEA, 2017

When ISSE compared these indicators of student engagement by institution type, there is very little variation in the rates of satisfaction between students in universities and in Institutes of Technology across all areas listed in the table above including student-staff interactions and enriching educational experiences (see Figure 5.31). Despite acute financial pressure, many students succeed in Higher Education; and the institutional habitus, the extent to which students feel they belong, can be of prime

importance. The difficulty can be that these relational issues are not tangible and so solutions can be difficult. What is frequently ignored is that the changing characteristics of the student population are now providing challenges to the traditional student-student relationships and student-institution relationships. The changing demography and lifestyles of new entrants is often ignored and the institution needs to adapt to provide "socialisation" opportunities for the non-traditional students. The model of a truly inclusive Higher Education system is one that challenges elitism and really promotes and facilitates the retention of students from non-traditional groups.

Figure 5 31 Engagement Institution Type (Irish Survey of Student Engagement)
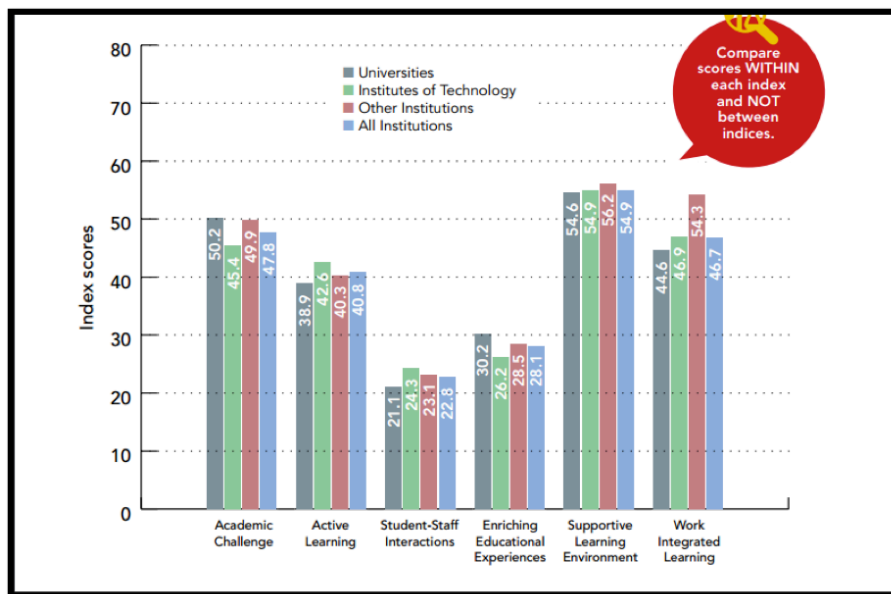
Source: The Irish Survey of Student Engagement, HEA, 2017

The students surveyed in the ISSE survey were asked if they had been offered opportunities for peer collaboration-how often they worked with class colleagues outside of class on group assignments or work with other students on projects in class,

study with other students or borrow notes from class colleagues, if they have opportunities to present findings and discuss. All of these opportunities assist in fostering the sense of 'belonging'.

Again, the ISSE survey shows that student-staff interactions were lowest among the first year students, the crucial time when students require the highest level of support, to find their feet and get to know the 'rules of the game' (See Figure 5.32).

Figure 5 32 Overview of Student Staff Interactions (Irish Survey of Student Engagement)
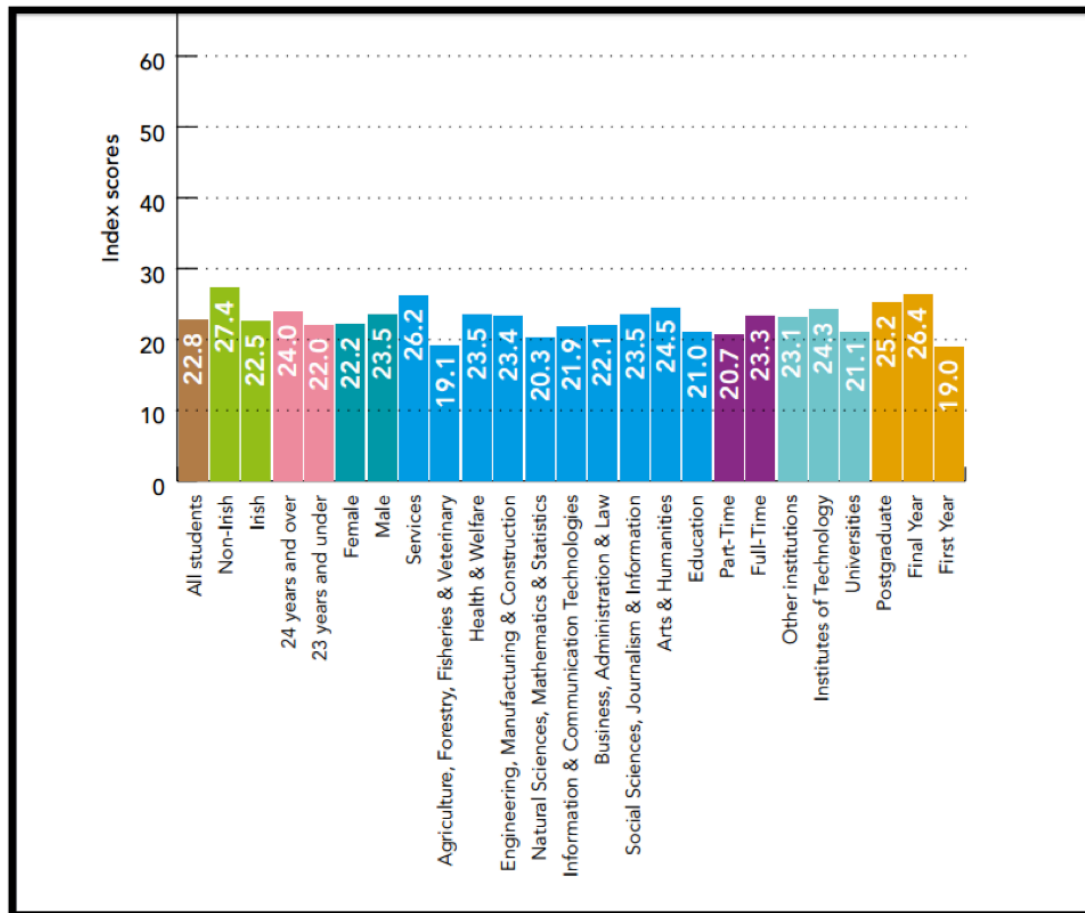
Source: The Irish Survey of Student Engagement, HEA, 2017

## 5.6	Conclusion

This chapter sought to address research questions three and four, namely what are the factors that have a positive or negative effect on student completion as seen from the perspectives of year one students themselves, academic and non-academic staff; does the 'habitus' of an institution influence student completion and if it does, is there any difference between access and non-access students.

These research questions were examined using questionnaires distributed to year one students, academic staff and administrative support staff in ITT. The following findings were presented:

-It presented the student and staff perspective regarding the general view of the IoT sector

-It presented students' perceptions of themselves as students in an IoT as well as staff perspectives of students in IoTs

-It presented the levels of happiness among year one students

-It presented how likely the year one students were to leave college

The patterns that emerged from 'The Early Days' questionnaire showed that where the student perspectives regarding the general view of an IoT are concerned, access students have a more positive view of IoTs, an average of 17.9% over the five years while 6.1% of the non-access students displaced positive views of the IoTs over the five years. Both access and non-access show a pattern of decline in positivity rates over the five year period, the access students dropping from 25.5% in 2009/10 to

11.4% in 2013/14 and the non-access students dropping from 8% in 2009/10 to 3.7% in 2013/14.

Where the perceptions of themselves as students attending an IoT are concerned, there was a 27.1% positivity response among the first years students and remaining consistent over the time. Again, the rates of positivity were higher among access students at 66.6% on average, while 14.1% of non-access students expressed positivity about themselves as students in an IoT

The findings with regard to the levels of happiness showed that 63.9% of year one students stating that they are happy with 77.4% levels of happiness among access and 51% among non-access students. There is a slight decline in rates of positivity over the period of the study, dropping to 76.1%. 55.2% stated that they are positive about ITT and this rate remained consistent over the period of the study, higher among access students at 67.6% as compared to 51.1% of non-access students.

As to likelihood to leave, 28.8% responded stating that they were considering leaving with a greater share of access students indicating that they are considering leaving (56.8%) compared to non-access students (19.6%). This finding with regard to the access students is notable given that they have expressed high levels of positivity about the IoT sector and ITT.

The 'Checking Back' questionnaire was a follow-up online questionnaire circulated via Moodle over the five years to those students in year one who had participated in

the 'Early Days' questionnaire and had answered that they were considering leaving college. One hundred and nineteen questionnaires were completed. It sought to measure this sense of 'belonging', commitment and sense of care among the year one second semester students, factors that all combine to contribute to how the students experience the sense of habitus of the institution.

Findings with regard to the rates of belonging, there was an average over the five years of the study of 16.8% of the student participants responding that they had worked with class colleagues. There is a pattern over the period of the study of decreasing rates of 'belonging' from 16.6% in 2009/10 to 15% in 2013/14. On average, over the five years, a greater share of non-access students, 11.7%, are working with classmates compared to 5% of the access students.

The access students also expressed a lower sense of belonging as displayed through collaborative work with class colleagues or engagement with them via social media. Where engagement via social media with class colleagues was concerned, findings show that rates varied from year to year over the five years, with an average of 46.2% over the five year period; access students at 26% and non-access student participants at 20.1%, both groups displaying an upward trend in engagement with social media over the time.

58.8% of year one students indicated that they have a sense of care from academic staff to all students, with an average of 26.9% among access students over the five years as compared to 31.9% among non-access students who indicated slightly higher levels of sense of care from academic staff towards them.

Findings with regard to the students' level of confidence showed that in general they are experiencing low levels of confidence with an average of 29.4% in both access and non-access groups over the five years of the study. This is linked to the findings of the next survey question as to how they felt they are coping with the transition to college, 59.5% of the access students stated that they are not coping well with their new environment but with an even higher rate among the non-access students at 70%.

Measuring the levels of happiness among the students showed an average over the five years of 24.4% with a decline over the five years, dropping from 33.3% in the academic year 2009/10 to 16.6% in the 2011/12 academic year. The non-access students' average is even lower at 14.3% over the period of the study.

When asked if they were considering leaving college the findings showed a contrast between the non-access student population in year one among and the access students. The access students displayed an intention to remain and complete year one, as on average just 5.8% stated that they are considering leaving while 26% of the non-access students stated that they are considering leaving college. This is a reversal from the 'Early Days' survey results where 56.8% of access students indicated that they were thinking of leaving compared to 19.6% of the non-access students. Overall, the 'Checking Back' findings indicate a less favourable experience for the non-access students who were considering leaving college.

When we examined the perceptions of academic and support staff, the findings reveal a divergence of views. The academic staff had a relatively positive view of the general IoT sector at 52.7% but a negative view of ITT at 86.1%. Only 2.7% had attended an IoT as a student themselves. 27% stated that they would choose an IoT

for their son/daughter and 75% agreed that students attend an IoT as a result of not having succeeded in entering a traditional University.

On the other hand, the support staff displayed very positive attitudes towards the IoT sector in general at 83.3% with 66.6% being positive about ITT. In addition, a higher percentage 33.3%, of the support staff attended an IoT themselves and stated that their son/daughter had attended an IoT, 83% said they would recommend an IoT to their son/daughter. However, a high percentage, 66.6% stated that they agreed that students who attend an IoT, do so because they have not succeeded in entering a traditional university.

What is evident from the surveys is the negative view of The Institutes of Technology in general among academic staff and most negative among the students themselves. A further significant finding relates to how the students are viewed by the academic staff revealing that students who study at an Institute of Technology have not succeeded' and have therefore 'failed' to gain access to university. Furthermore, the data revealed a bias that exists among the academic staff of ITT in favour of the traditional university sector, particularly as a sector of choice for their own son or daughter. This finding contrasted with the positive views of the support staff, some of whom have already registered on programmes in the sector and who would recommend the sector to their son or daughter.

The findings of these questionnaires assisted in measuring the students' level of satisfaction at Higher Education, particularly at an Institute of Technology. The data

collected identified students who were already considering leaving Higher Education early. This data is valuable to the next phase of the research, the interviews, focus groups and reflective diaries.

The answers to these surveys yielded valuable information with regard to the sense of identity and the perceptions of those attending Higher Education at an Institute of Technology. This data in turn informed the design of the qualitative instruments, the interviews, the focus groups and later the reflective diary in order to answer the research questions appropriately.

Where the findings regarding access students in year one are concerned, the access students express more positive view of themselves, of the IoT sector, they have higher levels of happiness and intend to complete their course which has been shown to the case elsewhere (Thomas, 2002). The findings from the research were shown to be comparable to the ISSE findings where the quality of student-faculty interactions are concerned.

What the 'habitus' of the non-access students and academic staff seems to show is that there is a stronger predisposition among that class to the traditional university and this leads to a negative view of the 'other' sector seen to be perceived as 'second grade'. Similar attitudes have been found to prevail among middle class students in research carried out regarding the polytechnics in the UK (Troschitz, 2017). The findings from the research were shown to be comparable to the ISSE findings where the quality of student-faculty interactions are concerned. The ISSE survey showed

that student-staff interactions were lowest among the first year students, the crucial

time when students require the highest level of support.

Chapter 6   *Habitus* in Words

6.1   Introduction

The quantitative data gathered in the previous chapters sought to address the research questions regarding the extent to which is non-completion was an issue in first year, whether there were any differences identified between access and non-access students, what the views of the students, staff both academic and support were regarding the factors that have a positive or negative influence on student completion as seen from the first year students' and the influence of 'habitus' in ITT.

In this current chapter the focus now turns to addressing the remaining research questions. What are the factors that have a positive influence on student completion in year one as seen from the perspectives of both academic and support staff but primarily from the perspectives of the students themselves? The qualitative research aspect of the study examines the student perspectives as to the perceived obstacles to successful completion, among first year students coming from the access second level schools into Higher Education and comparing them to the non-access students. It is important to see what are the first year students' own personal perspectives because this aspect has been missing from research on completion and finding out what has a significant impact from the habitus of the students and the insituturion in which they are studying. Ultimately, a key objective of this research is to ascertain the strategies and practices that individual institutions can develop in order to better accommodate the learning experience of all year one students.

The approach to the research analysis is one that shows how an understanding of Bourdieu's concepts is defined by its application to this analysis.   Having chosen

Bourdieu's theoretical framework to underpin the research, the objective here is to demonstrate how these concepts are defined by their use in this piece of research and by how they are applied to and work in this research. To achieve this objective, interviews, focus groups and online reflective diaries were undertaken with relevant individuals and groups in order to gain insight into the reasons for non-completion in year one. This chapter is based on the analyses of the qualitative interviews, focus groups, and the online reflective diary entries.

6.2 Thematic Analysis

For the qualitative data gained during the interviews and focus groups, the researcher carried out thematic analysis. This began with a stage of familiarisation with the data by listening to the interviews multiple times, reading and re-reading the transcripts which allowed for themes and ideas to 'bubble up' (Sellers, 2013) which in turn allowed for an initial mapping of the first year perspective. This also generated themes as well as similarities or differences between the student groups around these themes. Thematic analysis was carried out for the purpose of identifying patterns or themes within the qualitative data, the most widely used qualitative approach to analysing interviews and focus groups based on the methodological positions of Braun and Clarke (2006) who argue that thematic analysis is a method used for 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within the data' (2006, p.79). In addition, this method was chosen since a "rigorous thematic approach can produce an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.97) A theme encompasses a key idea about the data as related to the research question/s and demonstrates a 'patterned response' or meaning within the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82). Maintaining consistency is of primary importance in establishing these themes or patterns. We are reminded by Bazeley (2009, p.6) that

identifying themes can only be considered significant when they can be connected to an explanatory model. Since the research questions are very real and pragmatic, what is of importance and of interest is the students' own versions of their experiences and their own perspectives. Consequently, this determined the types of questions that were asked, as well as the choice of analytic strategy. Braun and Clarke (2006) differentiate between a top-down or theoretical thematic analysis which is determined by the particular research question/s and on the other hand, a bottom-up or inductive thematic analysis that is determined by the data itself. For the purposes of this research, the analysis is driven by the research question/s and as such are top-down in its approach. As soon as the interview and focus groups were conducted, the researcher read and re-read the transcript data as well as listening back to the interviews themselves in order to become deeply familiar with the data. Through this process, she began to note emerging thematic patterns. The aim was to reduce the data into small chunks of meaning and code each segment that was considered relevant to the research question/s. An open coding system was used, not pre-set codes, developing and changing codes as the researcher worked through the process. This was done manually, working through hard copies of the transcripts using pens and highlighters. A decision was made not to use software packages as the transcripts were available in small batches in each year allowing for the manual categorisation to occur. Furthermore, "Nvivo is just another set of tools that will assist a researcher in undertaking an analysis of qualitative data. …Inevitably, the software cannot replace the wisdom that the researcher brings to the research because at the back of every researcher's mind lies his or her life history that will influence the way he or she sees or interprets the world" (Ishak and Baker, 2012, p.102). The following sections

presents the main themes and sub-themes which emerged from the interviews and the focus groups.

6.3   Key themes

Key themes emerged through the process of thematic analysis and the current chapter presents these key themes. The over-arching and crosscutting theme that emerged in all the data collection was that of care; care as viewed from the students' perspectives, care from the perspective of staff and care as expressed through the habitus of the organisation. Within this overarching theme of care are key themes and sub-themes. Care is expressed and experienced through the following themes (i) relationships, (ii) identity as students in ITT, (iii) the culture of ITT and (iv) learning. Figure 6.1 below shows the four themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data collection and are interwoven in the interviews, focus groups and online diary over the five years of the study. There are, inevitably, cross-thematic intersections as the themes relate to each other in many ways and are experienced in many forms by the participants.

Figure 6 1 Key Themes and Sub-Themes in Qualitative Data Collection
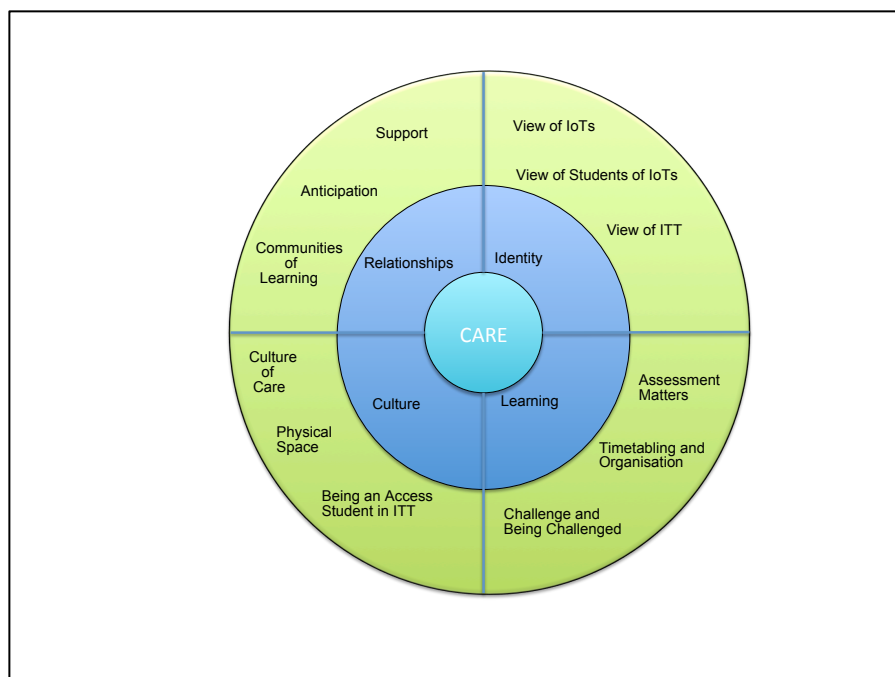
6. 4   Theme One: Relationships

The overarching theme of care appeared throughout the interviews and care was most keenly felt in the relationships and interactions between students and staff of ITT. As was seen from the findings of the questionnaires, students really value the quality of staff-student interactions and many felt that there should be a greater focus on this in year one. What emerged in the student interviews was the difficulty they encountered in building relationships a difficulty that was due, in their view, to the heavy workload, poor timetabling and lack of opportunities to work as part of a team. As Liz Thomas has put it "…relationships and positions are at the heart of student success; institutions must be willing to examine their internal structures of power and representation, including the sphere of governance, curricula and pedagogy" (2002, p.427).

The quantity and quality of student to staff interactions particularly featured in many of the interviews and diary entries. Student participants who had been identified as 'at riak' of leaving expressed disappointment at the fact that staff-student interactions tended to be confined to the more formal lecture halls. Their expectation had been that there would be more interaction and opportunity for engagement with lecturers than they experienced. They felt that the reality for them was that discussions or meetings rarely took place outside of the formal settings of lectures. There was, however, a general desire expressed for teamwork, group work and collaborative work that could enhance their sense of belonging and community. "Today we had a group work session as part of our lecture and it was so enjoyable, I hope we get to do more of that. It's much better than taking down notes all the time". "We have a lot of different lecturers for all the modules, I don't even know most of their names. Our tutor is friendly and sends us email every so often" (Diary170A). Those students who have frequent interaction with faculty members expressed greater satisfaction with all

aspects of their institutional experience, including student friendships, variety of courses, intellectual environment and had made new friends. "A few, but not really, everyone just turns up for the lecture and then head off disappearing into their own thing and since hours are so blocked, we just end up going to lecturers and then heading home exhausted." (Diary13A).

The analysis of the theme of relationships provided sub-themes that include support, anticipation and communities of learning.

6.4.1 Support

Support emerged as the most common sub-theme in the group discussion with regard to relationships and successful completion in year one. A very significant difference in the findings of the focus group held with the access group and the non-access group is the importance placed on relationships; the quality of the relationships and the link to successful completion and the sense of support it provided. Support in the form of interaction with lecturers, contact with class tutors or from the Access office or Counselling it was agreed, when provided, had a very positive influence but when it is not provided had a negative influence. "You have to ask and then you will get help" (Focus2, Business Student, F1, Access, line 120).

The focus group participants related their positive relationships with teacher/s or mentors at their second level school-someone who had watched out for them, encouraged them to progress to Higher Education-and the difference that relationship had made to their decision to take that step. "It's very different to school-nobody is keeping an eye on you and nobody really notices you, sometimes I miss my teachers" (Focus4, Business Student, F3, Access, Line 16). Many felt that they now missed that level of daily individual support but others felt they had made the transition to Higher Education and were ready for the challenge ahead. The participants suggested that in

many cases year one students attend induction sessions and receive so much information which they then immediately forget. "I wouldn't really know where to go to get help" (Focus2, Science student, M3, Non-Access, line 254).

The participants stated that at the time when they need to access these supports, it is often difficult to know who is 'the go-to person' and not wanting to draw attention to themselves, they often suffer in silence and try to continue themselves. "The school offices send you the Reg. office and the Reg. office send you back to the school office, so I just gave up" (Focus2 Computing Student, F4, Access, lines 165-166).

Many of the access student participants expressed feelings of isolation, the feeling that no-one really knows them, and this sometimes led to a belief expressed that no-one really cares if they are attending or not. When prompted as to what might help them in feeling less isolated, many suggested that mentoring by other students would help, especially from peers who had already come into ITT from their schools and were now successfully in year two or three of a programme. Some of the access students commented that they had kept in touch with their second level school and some of the teachers for support and that was perceived to a help. Support from families was mentioned as important to all the students interviewed. Suggestions regarding information days to be offered by ITT for students and their families was welcomed as, in some cases, parents have not attended Higher Education and were not familiar with the workings of the system. Many of the access students mentioned the sense of low expectations among the lecturing staff and the lack of challenging opportunities to engage more in class activities. "Sometimes I feel as if the lecturers think we're thick and they expect us to fail" (Interview4NALine38).

The transition away from the second level-personal support was certainly missed by many of the students but more so among the access students. "I'm lucky that my career guidance teacher still keeps in touch with me to see how I'm getting on" (Interview2ALine43). However, many remarked that once they learned the right place to go and they gained access to the services, the level of support was very good and personal. "Everyone I have met is very helpful especially in the fees office and in the people in the school office and the counsellor helped me a lot" (Interview1NALine17). In the interviews, Access students mentioned the added benefit of formal peer support. Some of them had managed to meet up with students on other years of the programme but this happened only by chance and they benefited from the experience and advice of those older students. "It was great the way our head of department set us up with buddies, students from year two, we got to hear what it was like for them and to have someone to chat to if we needed help" (Interview2ALine52).

When asked about the support of class tutors, there were mixed responses. Some of the students had positive experiences of supportive tutors who met regularly and maintained contact with the students. There appeared to be a lack of consistency in approach and level of support. "I haven't met my tutor yet, don't know who it is" (Interview5ALine82). "Our head of department emailed us the name of our tutor and said to email them if we had any questions" (Interview3, NA, Line 63).

The participants who had already withdrawn from ITT, blamed themselves for that but also said that they did not understand what supports they could have benefited from and where to access those supports. "I know now that I should have looked for help but I felt embarrassed and wasn't very good at that sort of thing,"(WD2)

The lack of financial support was mentioned by the withdrawn student participants as an added pressure. In addition, getting a part-time job gave them a taste of financial independence which they enjoyed. "I needed to be earning so I wasn't always asking me [sic] ma for money so it was great when I got a part-time job in the local garage, at least that was a little less pressure and I could give something" (WD1). One of the withdrawn student participants had achieved high Leaving Certificate points and had chosen to attend an IoT preferring the idea of small classes since s/he suffered from anxiety issues. However, those personal anxiety attacks caused him/her to leave college as his/her mental health was suffering. "It was getting too much to take and the easiest thing was to stop going but I felt so guilty, I knew I would regret it and I do" (WD2). Many of the lecturer participants perceived that there was an increase in the number of year one students entering with personal problems and with greater learning supports requirements. One lecturer interviewed commented that she felt under-qualified to provide the level of support some of the year one students require. "There's no doubt that we are getting more students with more issues over the years that I have been here. I'm here to teach and I am not a social worker" (Lint1).

Those members of administrative staff interviewed, some of whom had at some point attended ITT themselves, commented that they had benefited from such support. Some of the administrative staff interviewed had relatives who currently attend ITT. Many reported considerable variations in the levels of support, dependent on which department the programme of study was placed. The majority agreed that supports should be consistent across ITT and not programme-based.

The natural supports of family and college are sometimes lacking as we can see from comments such as these: "They are proud of me making it here and I'm the first in the family and that's great. They don't really understand when I say it's hard and stressful

so I just stop saying that, they think I have nothing to do all day and they don't understand CAs and all that stuff goes over their heads. (Diary176NA).

Regarding the positive or negative impact of supports as expressed through the physical space available to them right through to timetabling, access students mentioned the need for more supports and how they missed the secondary teachers who mentored them.

6.4.2 Anticipation

The students throughout the interviews and in the online diary showed a great sense of anticipation of starting out on their journey into college, learning new things, making new friends, joining in college life and gaining self confidence. "What I'm looking forward to most is meeting new people and making new friends" (Focus1, Computing Student, M3, Access, Line 24). "I hope to join some clubs and maybe get involved with the students' union" (Focus1, Business Student, Non Access, F4, Line 32). The first focus group with the first year students which took place early into the first semester, revealed high levels of anticipation and expectation; students looking forward to the new challenges ahead and to learning new things and of 'being a student'. All of the students interviewed talked about how attending higher education was a means of meeting new people, making new friends and engaging with new experiences, the social side of being a student was as important as gaining a qualification. In the online diary there were over six hundred entries that related to making friends and over eight hundred that related to clubs and societies in college.

"One of the reasons I was looking forward to going to college was to make new friends and join a few clubs" (Interview4NALine74). When asked if they had made many new friends, the access students said it was more difficult to make friends than

they imagined it would be. "It's kinda hard to make friends, everyone heads off after class and we don't really interact that much, I don't think it's going to happen" (Interview3ALine86). Many spoke of the workload and juggling part time jobs with college work made it difficult to stay in college to meet people outside of class. "Everyone is so busy doing CAs, heading off to work or family and catching the Luas, it's not easy to make friends" (Interview2NALine102). Participants stated that in class there are little or no opportunities for socialisation since they do not work in groups. Attempts to join a club were made by some and they had made new connections when that happened. "I'm so glad I play basketball, I have joined the college team and made lots of friends" (Interview2ALine87). Interactions with staff outside of lectures was low among the general student year one group, some not recognising the names of their lecturers when asked. "I don't know any of the lecturers the way I would have known my teachers and that's okay, but I was expecting a bit more support or contact" (Interview4ALine125).

6.4.3 Communities of Learning

The concept of a community of learning emerged among the students and staff interviewed as important in connecting student to student and student to staff. Where such communities of learning occurred as part of deliberate curriculum design, students reacted positively about it saying it greatly helped and reassured them, sometimes giving them the confidence they felt they lacked. Many mentioned their attempts to work together outside of formal class which were unsuccessful as there was no actual physical space created for that purpose. All interviewed administrative support staff interviewed mentioned the importance of making year one students feeling like they belong to the community of ITT and not only to a programme of

study. "What I find works best is when they feel someone is on their case, in a nice way, dropping an email if they haven't registered for their exams or missed a CA, they really thank you for that. After all, we are all the same, we like to know someone cares" (Sint4). In order to make this happen, the participants suggested that year one students must be provided with and have access to high standard facilities, with access to computers and Wifi areas. "If they feel we are treating them with respect, they will respect us back. If they don't have proper facilities or access to wifi, they feel like it's second class" (Sint4). Many interviewees agreed that many students left the campus to return home or go to the local shopping centre due to lack of community spaces to meet. According to one participant who summarsed it very well: "Being a part of the ITT community is important for them to want to stay and all students deserve this" (Sint1). Having a sense of community and of belonging, feeling the 'right to be there' participants responded quite negatively. A typical comment from the online diary: "Sometimes I go home when I've a free class between lectures, that's how bad it is, and that means sometimes I don't bother going back" (Computing Student, *M2, Access, lines 692-694)*. Creating a strong sense of community is key to completion as students are more likely to engage and be motivated to succeed.

Teaching styles were often mentioned as influencing the students' reaction to the teaching material and their involvement with it, not only in the module but also in the institution as a learning community. Many lecturers commented, as did the students, that learning can be perceived as a spectator sport in which the lecturer dominates and where few students actively participate. Many student participants said that they often experienced learning as isolated and disconnected, one module not connected to another.

Key to this sense of community is the attitude of the lecturing staff/and their expectations of the year one students. In quite a large number of diary entries we see students expressing that many lecturers do not have high expectations of them and that they (students) then feel that they should not even consider striving for excellence. "The funny thing is that I want to do well and I am working hard but when I ask for feedback on my essays it's like 'what would you want that for?' like I should be happy just to pass" (Diary57A).

The student focus group revealed very interesting findings regarding the expectations of the students in general regarding year one in college. "Can't believe I'm at college, so delighted" (Focus1, Business, M2, Non Access Line15). All participants had positive expectations about going to college. "Really looking forward to being a student, yeah, really looking forward to it" (Focus1, Humanities Student, F1, Access Line19). Many participants expressed concern that expectation of students studying in Institutes of Technology are often very low and this does not reflect the many successful graduates who gain high level of awards, progress to postgraduate study and gain high level employment. "I always knew it was going to be different from school but in a better way" (Focus2 Engineering Student, M3, Non-Access, line 57).

Many of the participants felt that because the majority of the lecturers themselves were university graduates, the lecturers had a more positive view of that sector than they had of the Institute of Technology sector. "There's not much chance to have fun" (Focus3 Humanities Student, F1, Access, line 66). A certain level of disappointment and disillusionment was evident in the tone of the focus group. "Lectures can be boring and some of the teachers are good at getting us involved, others just put up slides and I see loads of my class on their phones" (Focus 2

Business Student, F2, Access, line 58). This led the discussion to the area of expectations among academic, lecturing staff. Some participants were unaware of the level of expectation among the academic staff and referred to the programme handbook that is distributed at the start of the semester, outlining the assessments types and submission dates. One participant mentioned a particular experience with one lecturer when he sought feedback on his grades and requested guidance as to how he could improve his performance. This participant was shocked to be told that he should be satisfied with the grade he achieved which the lecturer considered a great achievement, 'for someone coming from your background.' One student remarked that when he asked his lecturer what he needed to do to achieve an A grade he was told "if you were able to get an A grade you wouldn't be here you would be in UCD" (Focus4, Business, M4, Access, Line 103).

When lecturers were asked about the level of expectation they have of year one students, many stated that the students themselves did not have high expectations. "I really don't believe they have any expectations of themselevs to start with, in fact, they almost seem to apologise for their existence, sounds sad to say but that's what I feel" (Lint3). Certain lecturers added that the difficulty related to the fact that the particular programme of study was often not the first preference on the student's CAO listing, some had been unsure of what the particular programme they had chosen is about. "In my experience, a lot of them end up filling out the CAO not really understanding or knowing much about the courses. Others end up with their fourth or fifth choice or get in through AQA which is a diasster as they end up doing something they knew nothing about at all" (Lint1). Asked if the semesterised system added to poor completion rates, many lecturers said the semesterised system was preferable to one final set of examinations at the end of the academic year which would put weaker

students, coming from the Access schools, under greater pressure. "When you think about it we end up putting anout 12 different obstacles in their way in their first year all because of the semesterised system that is loaded with CAs and projects as well as exams. They fall at the first hurdle of a CA and their confidence is shattered. They end up not coming in anymore" (Lint5). Many lecturers expressed their frustration that many of their first year students still act like second level students and expect the same level of 'hand-holding' and 'spoon-feeding' that they received while at second level. "They just expect it to be the same as their secondary school where they will be minded and it's just not the same" (Lint2).

This low level of expectation in turn leads to lower levels of participation in class activities and in some cases poor attendance. Participation levels in student interactions reduce. "They don't think I'm worth asking like they already have made up their mind I'm stupid" (Diary19NA). Having a sense of community and belonging or entitlement to be at college is very much questioned by the diary participants. Some students feeling so lacking in confidence often leave college during the breaks between lectures rather than remain on campus: "We head over to the Square S.C. when we are free and we end up having to force ourseleves to go back, sometimes we end up not going back" (Diary103A). It was evident in the interviews that there is, among the lecturing staff, a strong bias in favour of traditional Universities and against the IoT sector with low levels of expectations of the students they teach in year one. Many perceiving that the lack of knowledge of the system and being first generation entrants cause these students to fail even before they start.

6.5 Theme Two: Sense of Identity

The students in ITT are learning to acquire academic knowledge to complete a programme of study, but they are also developing as individuals. Over a thousand entries in the diary related to identity and self-confidence. "Of course my main thing is to get a good degree and get on in life but I want to learn other stuff too and make new friends, get more confident in myself. I feel less confident now than ever" (Diary20NA). Their sense of identity as a student is important to them and is expressed through their sense of confidence. "Sometimes I feel as if I am just an ID number, nobody literally knows my name. I feel like I have no personality anymore" (Diary72A). Allied to this desire to develop on a personal level, the participants also expressed disappointment with the negative view of IoTs and of those students like themselves who study there. "I am fed up with having to field such negativity all the time about IoTs and how only stupid people study in an IoT, it's just depressing." (Diary125NA). Many of the diary entries reflect a lack of self-confidence regarding their participation in class activity. "I feel embarrassed about speaking out in class, like everyone thinks I'm stupid just because of the way I talk so I just keep quiet" (Diary 96A). The 'Checking Back' questionnaire the participants' first year experience and their sense of belonging, of care, self-confidence, their level of happiness including whether they were considering leaving college. Equally, in the interviews with students who had withdrawn, they stated that they experienced a feeling of not fitting in, not belonging to the college in which they were students. "When I even walked through the door, I felt I shouldn't be there, like everyone was asking what's she doing here? I didn't have my own self-belief that I was entitled to be there" (WD1). Many of the current student participants also spoke of 'feeling right to be here' and over three hundred diary entries related to this. Some of the student

participants stated that they feel lonely and isolated, particularly during the first weeks of term.

This theme of identity expresses itself through the sub-themes of the general view of the IoT sector, how students who attend IoTs are perceived and their view of ITT.

6.5.1 Views of IoTs

The general view of the academic staff of the sector was positive and many mentioned the very applied nature of the learning, the practical opportunities to have work placement and the small class groups which support students. However, all also acknowledged that it is difficult to overcome the negativity that exists regarding IoTs and the binary system that perpetuates this. "There are so many positive things happening in IoTs like work placement, engagement with industry and the community, small classes with a lot of support and yet the message just doesn't seem to get out there. All parents hear about are the universities and they want the best for their kids" (Lint1). The interviews with the support staff revealed a very positive view of the Institutes of Technology sector in general. "Having this college here on our doorstep is just great for the area, kids who never considered college as an option are now going to college, it's great" (SInt1). Many support staff participants commented that they had personally experienced the educational programmes offered either as a part time student or as a full time student on a level 6 or 7 programme of study, some had completed the ITT Preparatory programme for Higher Education. "The whole reason I am working here is because of this college, I was that student. If it wasn't here I would never have done the preparatory course and all the rest, no doubt about it" (Sint2).

In addition, some of the support staff participants had attended the access schools at second level. "I came from that school; I know what it's like to be labelled like that

and it's hard to shed that" (Sint3). When asked whether students from the access schools experience difficulty in completing year one, the majority answered that the same issues present themselves regardless of school of origin, in their professional experience with front of house services with the students. "I don't think kids from those schools find it any harder than any of the others, they are all finding their feet, that's normal for anyone changing from second to third level" (Sint1).

Among the student participants there were mixed views expressed regarding the general view of an Institute of Technology. Many of the students agreed that IoTs are not really 'ranked' by schools, career guidance teachers or parents and yet, they said that they are happy to be studying in an IoT. "I'm happy to be here but still having to explain what it is" (Focus1, Engineering Student, Non Access, M1, Line 43).

General perceptions of the IoT Sector across all year one students was seen as negative among the groups of students across the five years of the study. "Most people don't even know what an IoT is and if they do, they think it's like another version of secondary school" (Interview1NALine14). All referred to their experience at second level schools where there was a noticeable difference between the experience of the students from the access schools who had already had been introduced to the CAO options at IoT, some had either had a visitor to their school or had a family member who already attended an IoT. "There's this idea that you aren't doing a real degree if you're in an IoT" (Interview1ALine5). Non-access school participants mentioned not having talks by career guidance teachers about IoTs as part of their CAO preparation where university options were mostly presented. Some lecturers agreed that the IoT sector is sometimes perceived among parents as a less favourable option than a university education, and it was perceived that this was due to a lack of marketing of what the Institutes actually do. "In many cases the negative

view out there is because we don't sell ourselves enough-we are doing great stuff but we don't market it enough or in the right way maybe" (Lint2). Lecturers mentioned that many students enter on lower Leaving Certificate points than those entering the university sector and from lower socio-economic groups; which was perceived to add to the public perception that IoTs are for weaker students, and that the standards are therefore lower. "Their general perception, rightly or wrongly, is that IoTs are for 'thicker' students who don't do well in the Leaving so it become a vicious circle-I wouldn't want my son or daughter to be with low points students or labelled that way" (Lint3).

When asked to expand on whether they would encourage their own son or daughter to attend an Institute of Technology, the majority admitted that their son or daughter would consider universities first and would only apply to study at an Institute of Technology if they were not admitted to a university or if there was a particular specialist programme on offer. "I have to be honest, my own kids go to UCD and even slag me for working in an IoT, they tell me their career guidance teachers don't really sell IoTs, most of ter classmates applied for Universities" (Lint4). One member of the lecturing staff admitted that if his son was not studying sufficiently hard for his Leaving Certificate, he would 'threaten' that he would send him to an Institute of Technology. "I even ended up using it as a threat to him saying if you don't do your study, you'll end up coming with me to college every day-just to bring it home to him" (Lint5).

6.5.2 Views of students of IoTs

When asked about the perceptions of those students who attend IoTs, all participants revealed negative views. When expressing the sense of enjoyment or level of

happiness regarding their programme, most participants are generally happy but with reservations. "...Overall yes, but still don't know if it is for me. "(Diary76A). Expressing what their goal is in attending college, it is almost always linked to employment. "To get a degree and graduate, get a good job" (Diary201NA). Whether they enjoy being a student, most respond positively and say they enjoy being described as 'student'. "Yes, it still sounds funny to be saying that" (Diary118A).

Having opportunities to engage in clubs and societies, most students complain about how little time they have to get involved. "Too little time here and timetables are very blocked, Friday afternoon everybody is working or legging it home" (Diary50A).

What most students find most challenging is the lack of familiarity or knowledge among lecturing staff of the student him/herself as compared to second level. "Not having someone who knows you, in second level teachers have known you for six years, learning how to do stuff on your own" (Diary 155A). Key to this sense of community is the attitude of the lecturing staff/and their expectations of the year one students. In quite a large number of diary entries we see students feeling that lecturers do not have high expectations of them and that the students then feel that they should not even consider striving for excellence. The following sample entry exemplifies this attitude. "The funny thing is that I want to do well and I am working hard but when I ask for feedback on my essays it's like 'what would you want that for?' like I should be happy just to pass" (Diary57A)

The student focus group revealed very interesting findings regarding the expectations of the students in general regarding year one in college. "Can't believe I'm at college, so delighted" (Focus1, Business, M2, Non Access Line15). All participants had positive expectations about going to college. "Really looking forward to being a

student, yeah, really looking forward to it" (Focus1, Humanities Student, F1, Access Line19). Many participants expressed concern that expectation of students studying in Institutes of Technology are often very low and this does not reflect the many successful graduates who gain high level of awards, progress to postgraduate study and gain high level employment. "I always knew it was going to be different from school but in a better way" (Focus2 Engineering Student, M3, Non-Access, line 57).

Many of the participants felt that because the majority of the lecturers themselves were university graduates, the lecturers had a more positive view of that sector than they had of the Institute of Technology sector. "Sometimes I just wish we could have time to just enjoy being at college, not always wondering when the next test is" (Business Student, F1, Access, line 42). A certain level of disappointment and disillusionment was evident in the tone of the focus group. "Lectures can be boring and some of the teachers are good at getting us involved, others just put up slides and I see loads of my class on their phones" (Focus 2 Business Student, F2, Access, line 58). This led the discussion to the area of expectations among academic, lecturing staff. Some participants were unaware of the level of expectation among the academic staff and referred to the programme handbook that is distributed at the start of the semester, outlining the assessments types and submission dates. One participant mentioned a particular experience with one lecturer when he sought feedback on his grades and requested guidance as to how he could improve his performance. This participant was shocked to be told that he should be satisfied with the grade he achieved which the lecturer considered a great achievement, 'considering where you started from' One student remarked that when he asked his lecturer what he needed to do to achieve better grades he was told "you should be delighted, those

are good grades for a IoT student in my experience." (Engineering, F4, Access, Line 76).

When lecturers were asked about the level of expectation they have of year one students, many stated that the students themselves did not have high expectations. "I really don't believe they have any expectations of themselevs to start with, in fact, they almst seem to apologise for their existence, sounds sad to say but that's what I feel."(Lint3). Certain lecturers added that the difficulty related to the fact that the particular programme of study was often not the first preference on the student's CAO listing, some had been unsure of what the particular programme they had chosen is about. "In my experience, a lot of them end up filling out the CAO not really understanding or knowing much about the courses. Others end up with their fourth or fifth choice or get in through AQA which is a diasster as they end up doing something they knew nothing about at all" (Lint1). Asked if the semesterised system added to poor completion rates, many lecturers said the semesterised system was preferable to one final set of examinations at the end of the academic year which would put weaker students, coming from the Access schools, under greater pressure. "When you think about it we end up putting anout 12 different obstacles in their way in their first year all because of the semesterised system that is loaded with CAs and projects as well as exams. They fall at the first hurdle of a CA and their confidence is shattered. They end up not coming in anymore" (Lint5). Many lecturers expressed their frustration that many of their first year students still act like second level students and expect the same level of 'hand-holding' and 'spoon-feeding' that they received while at second level. "They just expect it to be the same as their secondary school where they will be minded and it's just not the same" (Lint2).

This low level of expectation in turn leads to lower levels of participation in class activities and in some cases poor attendance. Participation levels in student interactions reduce and the sample statement again highlights how participants feel about this issue. "They don't think I'm worth asking like they already have made up their mind I'm stupid" (Diary19NA). Having a sense of community and belonging or entitlement to be at college is very much questioned by the diary participants. Some students feeling so lacking in confidence often leave college during the breaks between lectures rather than remain on campus: "We head over to the Square S.C. when we are free and we end up having to force ourseleves to go back, sometimes we end up not going back" (Diary103A). It was evident in the interviews that there is, among the lecturing staff, a strong bias in favour of traditional Universities and against the IoT sector with low levels of expectations of the students they teach in year one. Many perceiving that the lack of knowledge of the system and being first generation entrants cause these students to fail even before they start.

6.5.3 View of ITT

Many referred to the lack of understanding among the general public and in second level schools about what the Institutes of Technology are and what they do. "Even though I'm at college and my family are very proud of me, some people think because we live where we live, all we do here is stab each other and live on the dole" (Interview1ALine10). Some confuse them with colleges of further education delivering Post Leaving Certificate programmes, unaware that degree programmes are available and postgraduate opportunities exist. Many referred to the negative reputation attached to the area with the media often paying attention to the negatives and very little focus on the positives. "I usually tell people I'm studying in ITT and

hope they won't ask me what that stands for because when they do you can see their reaction" (Interview1NALine8).

Some of the students from the access schools who live in the area, talked about the pride their families felt about having their own college in the area and many of their families work in the college or attend part time or undertake Continuing Professional Development training in ITT. Some of the access students as children attended the on-site crèche facility. All staff interviewed agreed that the prevailing negative bias towards the Institute of Technology is further aggravated by the negative view of the area in which ITT is located. "Look, it doesn't help that there is such a negative view of this area of Dublin, we get even our international students googling it before they come and they are shocked by the mentions of crimes with the area. When you are an IoT to start with and add in that you are in a very disadvantaged area, there is bound to be a lot of prejudice to overcome" (Lint3). Although there are many positive community partnerships, the media often only presents the negative image and it is a constant struggle to counter this negative image. "I live locally and there are so many good things happening in the area but they rarely get noticed in the media, it's a pity" (Lint2). When asked if this was a factor in the completion of year one students, the general view was that it it was not a factor since many of the students entering ITT came from the area and the surrounding region. "No, I don't think it's a factor for those already here but it puts off others from coming here. On the other hand, I know the students do feel labelled and they don't like that for sure" (Lint4). Questions were asked of the lecturing staff about their perceptions of year one completion among students entering ITT from the access schools. Most of the lecturers stated that access students struggle to complete their studies and this is partly due to their poor leaving Certificate performance. "College isn't for everyone and if a student has low CAO

points getting in here, they are already starting from a lower base and it's harder for them to keep up and pass" (Lint1). Others cited the lack of preparedness for Higher Education as a factor in non-completion. "Many of these kids are the first in their family to do to college so they don't have the 'know-how' that others have, so they struggle because they just aren't ready" (Lint5).

Many believed non-completion is due to the fact that many did not choose the correct programme for study. "When they end up choosing a programme that they don't really know what it is, there might be a lot of Maths in it for example and they struggled with Maths at school, then they end up dropping out. It's just lack of understanding of what the preogramme is about. They might have just drifted into it" (Lint3). Many of the interviewees perceived that there was an increase in the number of year one students entering with personal problems and with greater learning supports requirements. One interviewee commented that she felt under-qualified to provide the level of support some of the year one students require. "There's no doubt that we are getting more students with more issues over the years that I have been here. I'm here to teach and I am not a social worker" (Lint1).

The staff interviewed expressed satisfaction with their role in ITT and although many agreed that the negative view of the area was a challenge, it did not detract from the many successful graduates from ITT. "Even though this college is giving an education to kids who would never have had a chance, there is still very negative views of IoTs which I presonally think is igmorance or snobbery" (Sint5).

When asked if they would recommend ITT to their families or friends, all of the administrative staff interviewed agreed that they would be happy to do this, in fact, many already had sons or daughters or relatives attending ITT in both full time and

part time modes of study. "Yes of course I would, sure my daughter has already graduated from here and has a good job now. My niece is in first year social care and loves it "(Sint1). One online diary participant illustrated how this sense of pride of being at college is conflicted with perceptions about ITT and about the area. "When you say you go to ITT you can see straight away people's reaction, like they are judging you…they think everyone here is on drugs or out stabbing people at the weekend and that we don't have normal families" (Diary42A).

6.6   Theme Three: The College Culture

The culture of the college was mentioned by all participants as being very important to how they felt part of the community and wanted to continue to be part of that community. This sense of culture expressed itself though a culture of care, the physical space provided to year one students and how the access students felt they were welcomed into higher education

6.6.1 Culture of Care

The interviews with the students who had already left year one revealed personal issues of mental health, financial pressure and lack of confidence to 'be at college', poor preparation and research into the programme of study. They also revealed the sense that at college, 'no-one really knows me' and 'who really cares if I am here or not?" The general year one students mentioned the administrative support offered by the various academic school and student services and how they can be difficult to navigate and to find where to access the different supports, it is not very clear if they are going to the right place or the right person which makes them feel stupid. Many of the staff interviewed spoke of the importance of the role of a 'mentor' especially

among year one students in the first semester, someone who watches out for them, contacts them regularly and lets the students know they are there, in a real sense. The staff interviewed from the registrar's office service desk who often handle student applications for withdrawal, spoke of the many reasons cited by students for leaving. In particular, the lack of a culture of care, the difficulty of managing the workload and financial reasons were the most common reasons cited.

The online diary recorded between 700-900 entries that related to a culture of care. Participants talked about the importance of respect and care towards one another; expressing feelings of having experienced care through interactions with those members of staff who had treated them as an individual and with respect.

All students mentioned the 'jargon' and 'language' around college as being a barrier to fitting in. The Access students talked about the type of language or 'jargon' that is used at ITT, many commented that it is like learning a new way of speaking, 'Modules' 'CA' 'Assignments', 'Semester' many wondering why the words they are already familiar with cannot be used. "Yeah, it took getting used to all the jargon and to know how to get into Moodle and all that, we don't have a computer or internet at home and everybody presumes you know everything" (Interview1ALine27).

6.6.2 Physical Space

All student participants mentioned their preference for more improved physical space, spaces 'to be' outside of the formal lecture theatres and laboratories. "We need more spaces to hang out, there's only the canteen and it's always full" (Interview2NALine26). Sometimes students ended up leaving the campus to socialise due to the lack of appropriate places to gather as students. This led to poor attendance

because some students admitted that when they left the campus they were reluctant to return. "If we had somewhere to socialise we wouldn't leave the college, sometimes I leave and forget to go back" (Interview3ALine49). Many of the staff interviewed spoke about the comments they have heard from year one students that there is a lack of study spaces and that the library is the only place to go. "It's the simple things and getting them right, like having places to hang out, to be together, if they don't they will just all head to McDonalds" (Sint3). The diary participants expressed aspirations to get involved in college life but many were finding it difficult to integrate. "I was so looking forward to making new friends and getting involved in some way in a club or sport but it's not that easy for me. Time is slipping by and I've still no new friends" (Diary62A). Living at home is often the profile of most of ITT students, this is an economic decision but emerged as contributing to their sense of social isolation. Those students who tried to become involved in college life expressed feelings of being trapped between two worlds but belonging to neither. "Right now I feel like I don't belong to either my old friends or my new life in college, it's hard to describe but it's like turning your back on all you knew" (Diary181A). Social involvement through team sports, friendships are important to sense of commitments to the Institution. "A lifesaver has been the SVP and getting to know others from all over the college" (Diary89NA).

6.6.3 Being an Access Student in ITT

Many of the access students talked about the lack of 'familiarity' with Higher Education in general, as somewhere they could go to college. The big difference between second level for the access students was the sense of 'Who cares?' "Who worries whether I am here or not, whether I fail or not". "I miss having someone who knows my name and watches out for me like in my old school, there was always a

teacher who knew if you were missing or in bad form, or something going on at home" (Interview2ALine20). Unlike their experience at second level, the amount of feedback they feel they receive is poor, and in some cases, no feedback at all. The general student body mentioned that they do not feel that they are encouraged enough to speak in class. The access students referred to the disappointment of not working together as a way of learning and meeting new friends. A very common concern across the interviews was the time taken to commute to college even if they are only living a few miles away, the public transport links are very difficult and entail travelling connecting with public transport links to ITT.   "One of my lecturers wouldn't let me in to class because I was too late, she didn't know that to get there, I had to get two buses and one was late, I was so embarrassed I didn't feel like going to class again" (Interview 2ALine14).

Added to the time factor, many students complained about the cost factor attached to commuting, certain interviewees admitting that on certain days they were absent from ITT because they simply did not have the bus fare. Timetable issues were raised with some students interviewed complaining that they had large gaps to fill in their timetables while others complained that they had too many block hours. Many discussed changes that took place in programme timetables, often at very short notice. All agreed that the students should be included in timetabling planning or modifications. "There are gaps in the timetable and a lot of the class don't hang around…nothing on Friday morning and then two hours on Friday afternoon when we all need to be working" (Interview3ALine11).

The students who had withdrawn referred to the fact that they were not 'ready' for college and that they had just registered for a programme that they did not really understand, and as a result they stated that they had become disengaged. "I just

started to lose interest, I can't say it was one particular thing but a general feeling of being out of my depth and not knowing where to turn' (WD1). Similarily the participants mentioned the fact that they had not really engaged with career guidance at their school as going to college was rarely spoken about as a real option and as a result the participants felt badly prepared for the experience. "It just was not really the done thing, nobody ever admitted that they were thinking of doing it" (WD2).

When asked about what they felt about their time at college, the participants talked about feeling 'isolated' and 'lonely in many cases, having almost a sense of loss. "Funny as it sounds, I was missing having someone there who knew me and was watching out for me" (WD1). Participants in the online reflective diary made inclusion, being motivated, participating or being engaged, feeling confident, and valued, more important than subject knowledge.

When asked for example, if it was easy to approach lecturers the majority referred to the advantage of small group sizes and the familiarity of lecturers, students allowed to address lecturers by first names and that in most cases, appointments to meet their lecturers were not required. When prompted to reflect on how available lectures were, the majority responded that lecturers provide an email address and encourage the students to email if there is a problem. However, few students make contact with their lecturers outside of the lecture hall. "Yes, and most are friendly and tell us to email us if we are having any problems" (Computing Student *M6, Non-Access, lines 677-679*). Regarding the role of the Class Tutor, most had little formalised contact with the tutor and some do not even know or remember who the tutor is. "I just met him at the start and he told us his email and let him know if we are in trouble" (Business Student, *F23, Access, lines 313-314*).

6.7 Theme Four: The Learning Environment

The final key theme emerging from this particular focus group is that of the learning environment and the consequent learning experience for students in year one. When questioned about the relationship between the learning experience and successful year one completion, the student participants expressed a variety of opinions on this theme. Many of the participants question the added value of learning and are constantly asked by family and friends why they are studying instead of getting a job. One participant expressed a desire to have better connections between the content of lectures and 'real life'. Another participant said that greater variety of teaching methods should be used as many lecturers resort to 'boring powerpoint'. "I love working in the labs, you get to know your class" (Focus4, Science Student, F2, Non Access, Line 65). Some paricipants stated that they would prefer if the lecturers were to focus less on class content and techniques but more on what they as students are doing and how motivated they are and how much time and energy they are devoting to the learning process. "Sometimes all we get are lots of powerpoint slides and you might not have spoken one word to anyone all day" (Diary19A). Lecturing staff can focus too much attention on the final examination as a mechanism to monitor learning when in reality it is too late in the learning process to have any value to the individual student. "All we hear abot is CAs and tests, it gets me down a lot" (Diary27A).

Associated with this theme of the learning environment are assessment matters, timetabling and the level of challenge applied to year one students.

6.7.1 Assessment matters

The general issues mentioned here regarding factors having a positive or negative influence on completion focussed on the fact that the programme content was not as expected, the programme title sometimes not being understood and many not having researched the programme in detail before applying. Again, the issue of feedback was highlighted. Student recalled that while they were attending second level, the homework they completed was graded and returned each week and sometimes on a daily basis. At ITT, however, student participants mentioned that often feedback is late and comes in the form of a grade or a percentage issued via Moodle with little guidance as to how to make improvements. "Getting a grade without telling us why and what we can do to get a better grade seems stupid, and it's usually ages after we give in the assignment. One of my lecturers is great at giving feedback but most don't bother" (Interview3ALine32). By the time feedback is received, some students felt they could be on the way to failing the first semester. The semester system entailed a lot of CAs, one student stating she had 16 different pieces of assessment to do in two months, with many lecturers setting assessments all at once, putting even the best students under pressure. "It's crazy having up to 12 different CAs or tests to do in one semester and they all come together which puts us under a lot of pressure" (Interview4ALine42).

According to many of the interviewees, certain modules were interesting and added value, while others found that modules were unproductive and boring. Attendance they all admitted is a problem across year one among all students. "The course is very different to what I expected but it wasn't my first preference" (Interview4NALine21).

The students in receipt of a SUSI grant said they were obliged to attend or they risked not receiving their full grant, with many admitting this was sometimes the only reason they attended certain lectures. All students regretted the fact that there was little or no group work in their classes, this led to some lectures being very non-participative and, in their view, less productive and engaging than anticipated. "Some of the subjects are interesting but some are boring and are going over some stuff we already did at secondary school, I have to attend or I won't get my grant but some of the class just attend for CAs" (Interview4NALine34).

Good advice and lecturers waiting outside lectures for students to chat to them particularly in the early weeks is very important in which they can stressing a positive 'you can do this' attitude and letting students know that they, as lecturers, are willing to help by making their subject relevant and how it is so. Praising students, well-timed encouragement all can make the difference. Using a variety of methodologies in lecture delivery is key along with lecturers being available to consult with students and being approachable. It is important to remember that when the students were at second level they were used to getting regular feedback. The lack of indication of performance is a major shock at Higher Education where feedback is often lacking.

Part of this learning experience is working in a group. "We haven't done any of that yet probably next semester or next year" (Diary 61A). In many of the online diary entries regarding teaching and learning was concerned 'uninspiring', 'boring', 'poorly structured teaching,' 'poor course organisation,' 'timetabling' and ''large gaps in student timetables' appeared on numerous occasions.

6.7.2 Timetabling and organisational systems

Organisational behaviour, organisational culture and organisational climate as crucial to understanding the effect the campus organisation had on the student. This includes a variety of organisational features and behaviours that have an impact on student experiences and outcomes and it has been used as a framework for examining the impact of the college environment on student outcomes, including student retention

Financial difficulty appears in many of the entries and students talk about their need to have a part-time job. With increased working hours, the students attend less and this impacts on their performance. Ultimately grades suffer and students who miss lectures for more than one week feel embarrassed about returning to class. "I have to work as I don't have a SUSI grant but lecturers don't seem to take that into account" (Diary55NA). "Yes, I have to pay for bus and phone credit and nights out, can't be asking at home." (Diary124A). There was a divided view regarding the semester system and many prefer dividing the examination workload in half. "It's a killer-all you do is spend your time getting ready for one exam after another" (Diary16NA). As a result of having to work part time, many worry about keeping up with the workload. This reveals great concerns about the large volume of examinations and assessments to be completed over the academic year. It also reveals that many lecturers fail to recognise that there is a combined workload from other colleagues. "I don't know, I don't think so it just goes by so quick you think a semester is forever and now it's nearly Christmas. Every lecturer thinks they are all you have and forget that we have 3 or 4 tests or bits of work for everyone, it can be hard, it adds up to about 15 tests to do every semester and to get through and study and go to class too before you even study for end of semester exams-I worry that I will fall so far behind that it will be too hard to catch up" (Diaty146A).

All students spoke of timetabling having a negative effect on attendance and over-timetabling preventing them from integrating into college life. Interstingly, all student participants spoke of the importance of developing relationships in engaging with their students and wanting to stay or leave. Where there were feelings of isolation or loneliness, students stated they were considering leaving and they were dealing badly with the transition. It was a very interesting finding that access students were particularly concerned as to how committed they were to the programme and to the Institute, finding it difficult to fully integrate.

Participants in the focus group discussed how many year one students arrive into Higher Education and look forward to living the student experience in the broadest sense. "Very little time to do anything extra with all the classes, CAs and getting to and from college" (Focus2 Humanities Student, F1, Access,, line 76).

Soon after they arrive, they realise that engaging in extra-curricular activities is too difficult due to the workload, the time to commute to college and the commitments to part time work or family. This leads to a less rich student experience in the view of the group as it meant that they were missing out on being a student in the full sense, it was not meeting their expectation of college life. "I tried to join one, but my part-time job meant I couldn't really plan and I gave it up" (Focus3 Business Student, F2, Access, line 64).

6.7.3 Challenges and Being Challenged

The participants all expressed a desire to learn, and to grow and to change. Many expressed disappointment and frustration that the type of learning they are engaged in is not very productive. Where lecturers allow students to interact in group work, practical workshops and discussion or debate the feedback is very positive. "Wish

they (lecturers) would use more examples to explain difficult things" (Focus3 Business Student, F2, Access, line 4). Many participants feel that the small groups can be an advantage in certain cases but all expressed a desire to be involved in larger groupings that exposed them to different points of view and the possibility of extending themselves academically and socially. "I thought we would be doing more work together with other students in the class" (Focus2 Humanities Student, F1, Access, line 41). Reliance on powerpoint by lecturers was seen as a negative by all. Most agreed that Moodle was an added support to their learning but some access students said this could be problematic where access to a computer or wifi off-campus is not freely available. Most of the participants requested increased group work and peer teaching, while online and blended learning had already been available to them at their second level school. Indeed, many commented at what they considered 'more old-fashioned teaching techniques' used than they has experienced while at second level. "Some staff are very interesting and love their area but others just don't seem to care" (Focus4, Science Student, M2, Access, Line 91).

Some students suggested that some of their year one class colleagues were 'turned off' by the poor level of teaching on some programmes and this had a negative influence on their completion. When asked about issues related to learning many lecturer participants commented on poor time management among year one students. "They just don't seem to know how to manage their time and it all becomes too much for them. There is in fairness a lot to learn, it's all new and new terminology as well as everything else that's going on in their lives" (Lint5).

Again, poor attendance was often cited as the major cause for poor successful completion, often due to part time jobs and family commitments. "When students don't attend, it impacts on their results and it then has a knock-on effect-you give out

to them for not attending and then they end up disappearing altogether" (Lint1). Students deemed by the interviewees to be successful were good at planning their learning and their assignments, who engaged with their learning. "The ones who attend pass and the ones who don't attend, fail, it's as simple as that" (Lint3). According to most of the lecturers interviewed, students who are at risk of not successfully completing year one are students who do not want to engage in their learning and do not want to be challenged. "They want to be spoon-fed lke they were at school and that's not my job" (Lint2).

Many lecturer participants viewed access students as lacking the preparedness that is required in order to succeed, through family support and knowledge of Higher Education. One of the participants commented that access students have something to prove by being successful and getting a degree. "The students from the access schools have too much baggage to to get through. They don't have that family knowledge of college and what it entails. Some can surprise you, but they are usually the exception who feel they have something to prove" (Lint4). Regarding challenges presented to them to engage with their learning and with others, there were not many opportunities to engage with learning, but all were prepared to engage with new ways of learning and with class colleagues. "Getting used to lectures idea but funny not to be talking to others in class or working in groups" (Focus1, Science Student, F3, Access, Line 53).

Many focus group participants referred to an excessive workload, with multiple assignments and continuous assessments to the extent that the main part of their time in ITT is spent being assessed or preparing for assessment. "Too many CAs to do" (Focus3, Humanities Student, F1, Access, line 29). "We always seem to be doing exams" (Focus2 Engineering Student, M3, Non-Access, line 15). Added to this,

many expressed their frustration at receiving varying level of guidance as to how to attain high grades or to improve on performance. "I want to do better but no-one tells me how to" (Focus3, Business Student, F2, Access, line 21). Most of the students did not feel challenged academically and were expecting that the programme of study itself would have been more challenging. While all agreed that managing time and workload was difficult, the actual content and assessment requirements of their programmes was not proving too challenging. "There's never a week without a test or multiple tests some weeks." (Focus4, Engineering Student, F1, Access, Line 76).

With respect to how it might negatively impact on completion, the group agreed that it is the workload model and excessive accumulation and timetabling of assessments that causes most stress to students at certain critical points in the academic year. "Its not that the stuff is that hard, there's just so much of it and all the time" (Focus4, Business Student, M2, Non Access, Line 87).

The level of study and effort made by year one students was often mentioned by the lecturing staff when asked about factors that influence positively or negatively on student completion. "They just don't put in the effort as they end up failing and they will blame everyone except themselves" (Lint2). Many lecturers mentioned that students lack the necessary study skills, particularly those entering from the access schools where many of the students are 'first generation' students. "Those students are first generation college students, so they are bound to find it harder to get through first year" (LInt3).

Another factor that, according to many lecturers interviewed, can assist in improving successful completion is looking for help from peers and using the on-line resources provided through the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CeLT). "Setting up CeLT

has been a great help to students in teaching them how to write academically and helping with Maths. They learn from other students which is a great way for them to help themselves. Getting notes on Moodle is another way of supporting them" (Lint5). Comments regarding student motivation and commitment were made during the interviews, with many questioning the levels of same among many year one students when so many are working long hours in part time employment. "Sometimes I think students drop out because they lack motivation and too many are working ridiculous number of hours in part time jobs that are really full-time jobs. There's no hope of them passing at that rate" (Lint2).

6. 8   Understanding of Habitus as transmitted through Care:

In this section the mapping of Bourdieu's concepts against the key themes in the data gave the research direction and assisted in answering the research questions-what are the factors that can have a positive influence on student completion in year one as seen from the perspectives of both academic and support staff but primarily from the perspectives of the students themselves.

Bourdieu states that cultural capital encompasses familiarity with the dominant culture in society and in particular, the capacity to understand and make use of "educated" language. The variation in levels of cultural capital is often not taken into account in the Higher Educational institutions since they pre-suppose a requisite cultural capital, making it difficult for students from lower socio-economic groups to be successful in the system. "By doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give. This consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.494). It was

evident in the interviews, focus groups and online diary that there is, among the lecturing staff, a strong bias in favour of traditional universities and against the IoT sector with low levels of expectations of the students they teach in year one. Many perceiving that the lack of knowledge of the system and being first generation entrants cause these students to fail even before they start.   These perceived "gaps in pedagogic transmission" in Higher Education where, according to Bourdieu, students are reluctant to reveal their lack of knowledge so as to "…minimise the risks by throwing a smoke-screen of vagueness over the possibility of truth or error" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p.114). In this way, it maintains the status quo since "education is in fact one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social patterns, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a social gift treated as a natural one" (Bourdieu, 1974, p.32). It is clear that there is an expression through the student voice that there is a very tangible and indeed, in some cases, a very physical, impact of these very theoretical concepts in their daily lives as students in year one. "The same academic qualifications receive very variable values and functions according to the economic and social capital (particularly the capital of relationships inherited from the family) which those who hold these qualifications have at their disposal" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.506). Where expectations of students are concerned, access students worried particularly about fitting in and about not understanding the 'rules of the game' they feel they lack the 'social capital' needed to succeed.   All students mentioned the 'jargon' and 'language' around college as being a barrier to fitting in. Regarding the positive or negative impact of supports as expressed through the physical space available to them to timetabling, access students mentioned the need for more supports and how they missed the secondary teachers who mentored them.

All students spoke of timetabling having a negative effect on attendance and over-timetabling preventing them from integrating into college life. Interestingly, all student participants spoke of the importance of developing relationships in engaging with their students and wanting to stay or leave. Where there were feelings of isolation or loneliness, students stated they were considering leaving and they were dealing badly with the transition. It was a very interesting finding that access students were particularly concerned as to how committed they were to the programme and to ITT, finding it difficult to fully integrate.

6.9 Towards a Way Forward

This chapter revealed findings that assist in answering the research questions relating to the 'why' students decide to leave Higher Education; the staff at ITT views of the issue of non-completion through interviews and focus groups held with all stakeholders and through an online diary provided by year one students. The interviews with the students showed very positive views of the IoT sector and of ITT itself particularly among the access students, considering it "their college". The interviews did, however, also reveal their personal concerns about their lack of college 'know-how' centring around some of the terminology and language used and those students who were not in receipt of a student grant and were obliged to work part time, worried about their ability to commit sufficient time and effort to their studies. Other factors that emerged in the interviews with the students included the difficulty they encountered in building relationships that were due, in their view, to the heavy workload, poor timetabling, lack of opportunities to work as part of a team. The interviews with the students who had already left year one revealed personal issues of mental health, financial pressure and lack of confidence to 'be at college', poor preparation and research into the programme of study. They also revealed the

sense that at college, 'no-one really knows me' and 'who really cares if I am here or not?"

The interviews with lecturing staff to capture their views on non-completion, revealed quite negative views about the IoT sector in general and about ITT due to the location having a negative connotation in the media. Staff also expressed the view that Access students have lower rates of completion in year one due in their view to poor attendance, lack of family knowledge of Higher Education. Responses regarding expectations of students generally stated that the students themselves have low expectations of themselves. The final set of interviews with the administrative support staff revealed very positive views of the IoT sector and of ITT; staff asserting that they would recommend ITT to their family and many indeed have already attended.

The focus groups allowed us to pursue some of the themes that emerged from the student interviews. The first focus group with the first year students which took place early into the first semester and revealed high levels of anticipation and expectation; students looking forward to the new challenges ahead and to learning new things and of 'being a student'. The subsequent two focus groups took place in the second semester and a noticeable change was revealed with many participants discussing the lack of opportunity to make new friends, the low expectations of staff, the excessive workload and the lack of project or team work.

The online reflective diary gave participants the space and empowerment to express their own ideas and concerns, providing valuable data about the experience of first year students in ITT. It afforded an opportunity to express insights into their own personal experiences allowing us to drill down further into issues that were highlighted in the other interactions with them through surveys, focus groups and

interviews. It allowed space, privacy and empowered the students to make a contribution to the research.

Combined with these other methods of data collection, the reflective diary is a very useful method and an excellent research opportunity to capture the student voice which is often missing from this research on non-completion. The examples above demonstrate how the online diary enabled the collection of data that is contextualized within the experiences of the participants. This type of data would be difficult to obtain in either focus groups or interviews. Many of the issues brought up by the individual students were repeated in multiple diary entries thus enabling a perspective in which we can gain insight into the personal experiences of the year one student in ITT.

The findings also support the findings in the questionnaires, focus groups and interviews while at the same time providing deeper insights into the personal concerns of year one students transitioning into Higher Education in ITT. Underpinned by Bourdieu's notion of habitus and reproduction in education, the research findings demonstrate the personal dispositions of the first year students, staff both academic and support, alongside the institutional systems and practices that seek to support the students but may also thwart their progress.

Chapter 7 Discussion and Conclusion

7.1   Introduction

This thesis examined the issue of non-completion among first year students in an Institute of Technology which includes students who enter higher education through the access schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. The literature suggests that non-completion is highest in first year (Blaney and Mulkeen 2008, Mannan 2007, Yorke and Longden 2008). Most of the research regarding as to why students leave college is relatively recent and usually quantitative in nature (Redmond 2011).   This research wished to establish the first year retention rates over the five years of the study and if there were any differences in those rates among the access students. In addition, the research explored what influences student retention in first year by capturing the student voice for the most part but also with findings from administrative support staff and lecturing staff.

The research adopted an innovative approach to this issue of student non-completion and utilises new and different methods of capturing that voice through reflective online diary. A key objective to this research was to capture the first year student voice which, as was shown in earlier chapters, to be lacking from current research.

The studies referred to above and many others, highlight the different reasons such as personal difficulties with a new environment away from family supports (Bozick 2007), students experiences of emotional transitions (Carolan and Kruger 2011) as

well as interactions with academics and other members of staff (Blaney and Mullkeen 2008)

To meet this key objective of the study, a qualitative approach was required to gather information directly from year one students on their experiences and perspectives regarding the first year in an Institute of Technology using an innovative approach, an online reflective diary accessed through the Moodle virtual learning platform used by all students and academic staff at ITT.

For the purposes of this research the measurement of non-completion started in the first month of the academic year when the students registered on a given programme at ITT. This measurement was established in order to gain a true picture of the extent of non-completion among first year students, as a general population and ultimately among first year students. The Higher Education Authority takes March 1st as the date at which it measures student retention numbers. The researcher believed that an examination of the student record system, the management information system as well as examination broadsheets would establish the non-completion rates of first year students.

The research took place over an extended period, over five years commencing in 2009 and this period of time allowed for gathering of this quantitative data and to carry out the necessary qualitative research that this thesis required.

The main motivation for this research was the researcher's real interest in the student learning experience and personal identities, having spent over thirty years working with students who have come predominantly from socio-economically disadvantaged

backgrounds and understanding the important transformative role that education can play in people's lives. The researcher was always driven by the desire to understand why when one student walks through the door on the first day of college, s/he manages to stay and complete but another student walking through that same door that day does not manage to complete.

This research used Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework to investigate this issue of non-completion among year one students. Bourdieu offered a valuable and pragmatic framework to critique education by allowing us to see the narrative of students through the social reproduction lens. This supported the research objective to seek answers as to why certain students feel like a 'fish in water' during their first year when "*habitus* encounters a social world of which it is the product it's like a 'fish in water Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127. Yet, for other students, from the lower socio-economic groups the outcome can be one of alienation, an unfamiliar place and can ultimately result in non-completion. Despite criticism of the work of Bourdieu particularly from those who claim his work was based in different country and at a different period in time (Adkins and Skeggs, 2004 Reay, 2004 Reed-Danahay, 2005) his particular concept of habitus is very valuable as it assists in understanding what it is that makes the difference in the 'field' that a student finds him/herself in at higher education especially when coming from lower socio-economic groups. The social inequality and injustice and the reproduction of social class around which Bourdieu's concepts are based are extremely pertinent to this research. His work continues to be used in the canon that is educational and sociological research.

7.2   Summary of Thesis Structure

Chapter One- introduced the motivation for this research, the rationale, the purpose and the structure of the thesis. Also included is the current national literature on retention that has come from the most recent national reports on retention at higher education in the Irish context. In spite of the prolonged and sometimes arduous nature of the research, the researcher remained motivated by her interest in the research question and by her interest in the students as members of ITT.

Chapter Two presented the review of literature. The research sought to test findings on student retention in an Irish higher education context against Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. Decisions to leave or stay are influenced by *habitus* both individual and institutional. Institutional habitus is more than the culture of an institution. It also includes relational issues and institutional priorities that are often deeply embedded and inform practice. The focus in this chapter was on the student and how the institution reproduces existing social relations in society and how this impacts on the student experience.

Chapter Three consisted of a presentation of the research methodologies used in carrying out the research. Both quantitative and qualitative data was required in establishing the extent of low retention among the group studied as well as the reasons behind that data. Different methodologies were necessary in order to carry out a complete analysis of both data sets. The researcher examined and investigated many research methodologies and consulted with peers and supervisors for advice on this matter. The research questions covered a five-year period in the same institution, and for this reason a case study design was chosen as the most appropriate to the

particular research questions. Making use of a case study approach entailed using methods with a wide range of participant experiences and ensuring that the voices of students coming from access schools in the area are captured as well as those from more advantaged school contexts. Once the data had been gathered, the research focused on carrying out an analysis to establish what the 'habitus' of the agents is, the agents in this case being, year one students, by way of interviews, focus groups and an online reflective diary that investigated the 'background, trajectory, positioning' (Grenfell, 2008, p223) of the students as agents.

Chapter Four presented the quantitative research data gathered from ITT's management information system and reports generated around year one students as well as from registration and examination documentation. The data was gathered over a five-year period. This chapter aimed to quantify the extent to which non-completion was an issue in ITT and what patterns or trends were evident from the data comparing the general first year student population to the student group from the access schools.

Having carried out the preliminary analysis and identified the main issues from the students' perspective the extent to which non-completion is an issue, **Chapter Five,** presented the detailed analysis of the findings of the questionnaires completed by students and staff.

Chapter Six- the qualitative research data was presented in this chapter gathered by means of interviews and focus groups with students and staff, academic and administrative as well as students who had already left their programme of study before completing year one, as well as through an online reflective diary.

In **Chapter Seven** the author examined how the thesis contributes to current literature on the subject of student retention as well as what future research developments may exist.

7.3 Summary of Findings

The key findings from the research are as follows:

1. There is an overall pattern showing an upward trend in retention rates over the period of the study.

2. The success rate of funded first years is higher than the combined overall rates for ITT.

3. Access students entering year one display higher success rates than non-access students over the five years of the study.

4. There is an association between CAO points on entry and levels of successful completion in year one in both groups

5. Habitus does have a significant impact on the cohort of students and the students' quality of experience in year on.

6. There is a notable gap between the perceptions of staff and the students' reality in year one.

7. There is a misconception among academic staff about the success of disadvantaged students in the sector.

7.4 Implications of Findings

This research addressed the increasingly important issue of student retention in higher education, particularly with regard to representation from disadvantaged areas in Irish

higher education. It examines the perceptions of the Institute of Technology sector and afforded a voice to the student in year one and in doing so, examined the very real way in which 'habitus' is experienced in an IoT. With the Higher Education and Innovation Fund to support student retention and progression in individual institutions and encourage institutional collaboration, this research sought to make a positive contribution to that effort in a pragmatic way. Higher Education Institutions are obliged, through their individual Mission-based Performance Compacts submitted annually to the Higher Education Authority to report on retention and what the institution is doing to actively address low retention. In tandem with this, the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education requires that institutions continue to increase representation from all under-represented groups, including students from DEIS schools. The key findings in this study on how disadvantaged students perform in Irish higher education has value in showing how students entering an IoT from a highly disadvantaged area fare and what factors aid or obstruct their success.

 The researcher acknowledges that at a national level, there is a need to examine and re-evaluate the current binary system of higher education where the initial inferiority is engendered. Creating opportunities for enhanced student engagement in the systems of the Higher Education should be promoted as a very positive development and one that would create real equity of representation.

At academic management level, the researcher sees great benefit in addressing potentially negative cultural biases in an institution through engagement in 'unconscious bias' training with staff akin to the template that has proven successful in the Athena Swan training for equality and diversity training. Alongside this, curriculum reform that incorporates diversity of teaching approaches is very

important and involves the approaches outlined in section 7.5 below. It is vital that higher education institutions remember that retention of students has to be owned by all, it must permeate an entire campus, if it is to be truly successful.

Drawing from the interviews, the focus groups and the reflective online diary, the research identified particular recurring issues that could be within the control of an institute. The qualitative research carried out showed Bourdieu's concepts being defined by their application to the analysis. In order to achieve this objective, interviews, focus groups and an online reflective diary were used, involving students and staff so as to gain further insight into the reasons for non-completion in year one. Using thematic analysis, themes were generated, and analysis allowed for similarities and differences between the year one students access and non-access. Key themes emerged through the process of thematic analysis with the over-arching and theme of care emerging in all the data collection; care as viewed from the students' perspectives, from staff but also as expressed through the habitus of ITT. Underlying the overarching theme of care are key themes of (i) relationships, (ii) identity as students in ITT, (iii) the culture of ITT and (iv) learning. The data showed very positive views of the IoT sector and of ITT itself particularly among the access students, considering it "their college". However, it also revealed their personal concerns about their lack of college 'know-how'. Those students who were not in receipt of a student grant and were obliged to work part time, worried about their ability to commit sufficient time and effort to their studies. Other factors that emerged included the difficulty they encountered in building relationships that were due, in their view, to the heavy workload, poor timetabling, lack of opportunities to work as part of a team. Those students who had already left year one revealed

personal issues of mental health, financial pressure and lack of confidence to 'be at college', poor preparation and research into the programme of study. They also revealed the sense that at college, 'no-one really knows me' and 'who really cares if I am here or not?' Creating a culture of 'care' appeared to be central to students entering higher education from second level schools where they have been cared for, particularly for those schools entering from the access schools where the level of support and care was high. The lecturing staff displayed quite negative views about the IoT sector in general and about ITT due to the location having a negative connotation in the media. Staff also expressed the view that access students have lower rates of completion in year one due in their view to poor attendance, lack of family knowledge of Higher Education. Responses regarding expectations of students generally stated that the students themselves have low expectations of themselves. The administrative support staff revealed very positive views of the IoT sector and of ITT; asserting that they would recommend ITT to their family and many indeed have already attended.

7.5   Reflection on the researcher's own engagement and learning with the research.

As a member of the academic staff for many years, the researcher noticed that at examination boards at the end of an academic year some students who names still appeared on the examination broadsheets but who had not sat the final examinations and these students just seemed to have 'disappeared' somewhere during that first year. Some students had officially withdrawn through the registration and admissions office, and were noted as such on the records system, but others had just quietly left. The researcher wanted to identify what the numbers of students was across all

programmes in ITT and more importantly was driven by the search for reasons for non-completion. It was very beneficial to the researcher to constantly remember that the research was not about her, that it was about the student experience and those elements that play a part in that experience. Gaining ethical approval from ITT and having the trust of colleagues was also key in feeling confident in pursuing the research in her own place of work. This was something which the researcher did not take for granted and acknowledged this by making sure to keep colleagues updated through appropriate forums.

The researcher will be forever grateful for the insight and understanding she gained, through the research, of the student experience and the importance, for the students of relationships and of having a culture of care. The learning from the research was very helpful to the researcher when she became a head of department and head of school as she had acquired the ability to navigate the management information systems easily, this was beneficial in monitoring and tracking retention in the department and school she managed. Identifying if there were 'at risk' student or poor attendance, particularly in the early months of their first year, was very important. The necessity and importance of providing prompt and comprehensive feedback to students, which arose in the qualitative research findings, was recognised by the researcher in her role as a lecturer and academic manager. This led to setting up formal structures of communication and enhancing the tutor role for supporting students.

Added to that, from a pedagogical perspective, the researcher as a manager incorporated the feedback from the research into curriculum reform by making programmatic changes during reviews. Other initiatives to incorporate the research findings into real changes and that proved positive involved getting more first year students working in groups, directing their own learning by choosing the content of

particular modules rather than being entirely lecturer-led; visiting second level local schools where there had very low participation rates; setting up transition year projects with the access schools and inviting them on campus to start them thinking that this was their college and this is where they could attend as college students. Addressing the excessive workload and number of assessments that arose in many of the interviews with students entailed reducing the number of stand-alone continuous assessments and creating joint assessments across modules. This greatly assisted in still testing all learning outcomes; it also had the added benefit and making the linkages and relevance between modules more evident for the learners. In a few cases, the researcher also reduced the number of modules on programmes and remove duplication where it existed. There was also a review of the type of assessments and in many cases essays were traditionally, there was a move away from this to include more interactive assessments such as presentations, group projects and online tests all of which greatly improved the performance of many students.

When elected to academic council and governing body the researcher successfully advocated for student membership on all bodies and programme boards and the researcher volunteered to provide training to students regarding participation on boards so that they would feel comfortable in their role.

To address the low levels of self-confidence that arose in the study, the researcher set up work placements to link theory to practice and create those networks that are taken for granted but are essential in supporting students. Another method of building student confidence and networks the researcher implemented was to set up volunteering committee that involved students in helping their own community groups and giving back, building their own confidence and ITT valuing the work they and community groups were doing in the local area. The researcher also set up

student ambassador and leader roles with participants drawn from all schools including access schools who would address second level visitors to ITT.   This proved positive in valuing the students' knowledge and understanding of their counterparts and built confidence and networks.

With regard to changing the cultural bias that emerged in the research, the researcher as head of school attempted to create a culture among heads of department within her school whereby the student is put front and centre of everything done as a collective-enhancing tutor support and learner support, moving away from big examination-only testing, exploring creative ways of teaching with more online provision, field visits and placements. Very importantly the researcher as head of school recruited a greater mixture of academic staff including more from an IoT background and from the local region.

7.6   Addressing the Research Questions:

At this point in the research a review of whether the various research questions were addressed adequately is in order.

Research Question One and Two:

To what extent is non-progression an issue in first year among those students accessing Higher Education in an Institute of Technology and is there a difference in non-progression rates between all first year students and those entering from access schools?

It was important to identify and quantify the extent to which non-completion was an issue among registered students entering year one at ITT in general as well as through

the access schools' programme. By using data gathered through ITT information system, a clear picture of non-completion rates was presented.

This first research question was concerned with the establishment of high quality, robust administrative data on programme completion among first year students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds compared to the general student population. This data was collected over a five-year period. Difficulties in gaining access to student records were challenging but were overcome. The researcher had access to the raw data which needed to be filtered and presented in report format aligned with the research questions. The data was filtered according to the number of students each year who were offered a CAO place on a programme in ITT, then the number who accepted a place, the number from access schools who accepted a place, the number of general students in year one who sat examinations at the end of the first semester, the number then who sat examinations at the end of the year from the general student population and from the access schools.

Filtering also took place regarding the CAO points on entry, gender and age as well as socio-economic status. An analysis was carried out to examine the impact of funding mechanism on year one entrants' success and this revealed significant details regarding the success and completion of new entrants relative to their funding mechanism over the five academic years studied. The overall year one students' success rates show an improvement over the five-year period.
i) the number of students who accepted a CAO offer 2009-2013: on average, around 1,000 students each year, reaching its height in 2010 with acceptances at 1,178 and dropping to 835 in 2013.

(ii) the number of registered students 2009-2013: the number of students entering year one over the period of the study peaked in 2010 with 951 new entrants. However, the numbers of new entrants started to decline each later year of the study, dropping by 24% for the 2013/2014 academic year.

(iii) the number of registered students by payment code (in receipt of financial aid) 2009-2013: the proportion of fee paying students entering ITT decreased over the five years of the period of the study while the number of students entering ITT in receipt of financial support increased over the same period. In 2009 30% of the year one students were in receipt of financial aid and this increased each year of the study reaching 56% of year one students in the 2013/14 academic year.

Each of these analyses compared access students and the general student population. Baseline registration figures were also disaggregated by academic school and department. A substantial portion (78.7%) of students from access schools entering year one at ITT did not have to pay fees and were in receipt of financial support. On average 40% of students entering ITT from non-access schools are funded. The proportion of students from non-access schools in receipt of financial support entering ITT increased during the period of the study. The proportional growth of funded students actually reflects a fall in non-funded students entering year one at ITT.

Section 4.4 of Chapter 4 highlighted retention rates 2009-2013. We can see that the students from the access schools show higher rates of successful completion as compared to those from non-access schools. The average successful completion rate over the five years of the study is 71.2% for the access students as compared to 66.2% for the non-access students. Success rates were compared between the general year

one entrants and year one students from non-access funded schools. Success rates are comparable with access students displaying a higher success rate (>70%) in four of the five years of the study than non-access students (see Figure 4.11). An unpaired Student t-test was carried out on the difference in CAO points between Pass students and Non-Pass students. This was shown to be highly significant (P<0.0001). Withdrawn students also demonstrated lower average CAO points (AVG = 276, SDev = 64, N = 479). This key finding showing that the perceptions among the academic staff are coloured by their own habitus, as there is a prevailing view that access students are weaker and fewer complete year one than non-access. There is also a view held that students coming from the access schools enter on lower points and struggle to succeed whereas the findings show that they in fact, they fare very well and exceed expectations.

A CAO points comparison was made between the average CAO points obtained by access school students and non-access school students over the five-year period (see Table 4.19). While the average CAO points obtained by non-access school students is higher than that obtained by the Access school students a Student t test comparison of the two sets of data indicates that this difference is not statistically significant (P=0.07).

The average CAO points of access school students, as successful students, were compared to that for unsuccessful students. The average points for subsequently successful students in access schools, was 299 vs. 262 for unsuccessful students (see Table 4.17). A Student t test show this result to be significant at the P=0.0005 which is statistically significant.

The impact of funding mechanism on year one entrants' success revealed significant findings regarding the success and completion of new entrants depending on their funding mechanism over the five academic years studied. The overall year one students' success rates showed an improvement over the five-year period and an examination of data relating to grant-funded year one entrants showed that overall success rates are higher than for fee paying students. The average success rate of those who pass year one and who are funded is 71.4% over the five year period and considerably higher than the average success rate of those who are not funded (58.7%). In addition, for each year of the study, the success rate of funded first year students is higher than the combined overall rate for ITT, the overall year one students' success rates showing an improvement over the five-year period. The overall completion rates for year one entrants increased from 57.8% in 2009 to 68.8% in 2013, an 11-percentage point increase overall. Secondly, with regard to grant-funded year one entrants, the overall success rates are higher than the success rates for fee-paying students. With regard to fee-paying year one entrants, success rates cannot be said to have increased over the five-year period of the research.

In 2009 66.5% of grant-funded new entrants progressed and almost each year this group displayed a steady increase so that, by 2013 the success rate had reached 76.7%. Finally, the overall success rate appears to be related to (i) an increasing success rate for grant-funded students and (ii) an increasing proportion of grant-funded students over the five-year period of the research

When retention rates were measured according to funding type, the rate increased by over 10%, for the period of the study and similarly, when school type was taken into account, there was an increase of almost 9% in the five-year period. While the average CAO points obtained by non-access school students is higher than that obtained by access school students the research showed no difference between the two groups; the positive story this data shows is that students entering Higher Education on low CAO points, in many cases between 200-300 CAO points are successful and do progress into year two of their programme of study When retention was measured according to CAO points association there is a success rate increase of 7% over the period of the study from 69% in 2009/10 to 76.9% in 2013/14..

 Where CAO points association are concerned, year one success reveals a 7% increase over the five-year period of the study.

It was positive to see that the overall year one students' success rates show an improvement over the five year period. The research also found that on examining the data relating to grant-funded year one entrants, overall success rates were higher than for fee paying students. The overall success rates are higher than the success rates for fee-paying students. With regard to fee-paying year one entrants, success rates cannot be said to have increased over the five-year period of the research.

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Research Question Number Three and Four:

What are the factors that have a positive or negative effect on student completion among first year students coming from access schools into Higher Education as seen from the first year students' perspectives; does the habitus of an institution influence completion?

The quantitative data gathered through the surveys and questionnaires completed by both students and staff showed emerging patterns of negativity with regard to the IoT sector and ITT in which they were studying or working. For example, the 'Early Days' questionnaire findings showed the students' general view of an IoT and the access students displayed a more positive view of IoTs than the non-access students. The findings showed that where the student perspectives regarding the general view of an IoT are concerned, access students have a more positive view of IoTs, an average of 17.9% over the five years while 6.1% of the non-access students displaed positive views of the IoTs over the five years. Both access and non-access show a pattern of decline in positivity rates over the five year period[the access students dropping from 25.5% in 2009/10 to 11.4% in 2013/14 and the non-access students dropping from 8% in 2009/10 to 3.7% in 2013/14.

Where the perceptions of what they believe others think of them as students in an IoT as students attending an IoT are concerned, there was a 27.1% positivity response among the first year students and remaining consistent over the time. Again, the rates of positivity were higher among access students at 66.6% on average, while 14.1% of non-access students expressed positivity about themselves as students in an IoT

The findings with regard to the levels of happiness showed that 63.9% of year one students stating that they are happy with 77.4% levels of happiness among access and 51% among non-access students. There is a slight decline in rates of positivity over the period of the study, dropping to 76.1%. 55.2% stated that they are positive about the Institute in which they are studying, and this rate remained consistent over the period of the study, higher among access students at 67.6% as compared to 51.1% of non-access students.

When questioned as to their likelihood to leave, 28.8% responded stating that they were considering leaving with a greater share of access students indicating that they are considering leaving (56.8%) compared to non-access students (19.6%). This finding with regard to the access students is notable given that they have expressed high levels of positivity about the IoT sector and ITT.

When those students, who had stated in the 'Early days' questionnaire that they were considering leaving, were surveyed at a later date in the academic year through the 'Checking Back' questionnaire, the findings overall indicated a less favourable experience for the non-access students who were considering leaving college.

Regarding rates of belonging, there was an average over the five years of the study of 16.8% of the student participants responding that they had worked with class colleagues, revealing a pattern over the period of the study of decreasing rates of 'belonging' from 16.6% in 2009/10 to 15% in 2013/14. A greater share of non-access students, 11.7%, were working with classmates as compared to 5% of the access students. The access students also expressed a lower sense of belonging as displayed

through collaborative work with class colleagues or engagement with them via social media.

Rates of engagement with colleagues on social media showed that rates varied from year to year over the five years, with an average of 46.2% over the five year period; access students at 26% and non-access student participants at 20.1%, both groups displayed an upward trend in engagement with social media over the time.

Where the students' perception as to the sense of care, 58.8% of year one students indicated that they have a sense of care from academic staff to all students, with an average of 26.9% among access students over the five years as compared to 31.9% among non-access students who indicated slightly higher levels of sense of care from academic staff towards them.

Findings with regard to the students' level of confidence showed that in general they are experiencing low levels of confidence with an average of 29.4% in both access and non-access groups over the five years of the study. 59.5% of the access students stated that they are not coping well with their new environment but with an even higher rate among the non-access students at 70%.

There was a decline in the levels of happiness over the period, an average of 24.4% dropping from 33.3% in the academic year 2009/10 to 16.6% in the 2011/12 academic year. The non-access students' average was lower at 14.3% over the period of the study.

Where intentions to leave college were concerned, the findings showed a contrast between the non-access student population in year among and the access students. The access students displayed an intention to remain and complete year one, as on average just 5.8% stated that they are considering leaving while 26% of the non-access students stated that they are considering leaving college. This is a reversal from the 'Early Days' survey results where 56.8% of access students indicated that they were thinking of leaving compared to 19.6% of the non-access students.

Findings regarding the perceptions of academic and support staff reveal a divergence of views. The academic staff had a relatively positive view of the general IoT sector at 52.7% but a negative view of ITT at 86.1%. Only 2.7% had attended an IoT as a student themselves. 27% stated that they would choose an IoT for their son/daughter and 75% agreed that students attend an IoT as a result of not having succeeded in entering a traditional University.

In contrast, the support staff displayed very positive attitudes towards the IoT sector in general at 83.3% with 66.6% being positive about ITT. In addition, a higher percentage 33.3%, of the support staff attended an IoT themselves and stated that their son/daughter had attended an IoT, 83% said they would recommend an IoT to their son/daughter. However, a high percentage, 66.6% stated that they agreed that students who attend an IoT, do so because they have not succeeded in entering a traditional university.

What became evident from the 'Early Days' questionnaire was the negative view of The Institutes of Technology in general among academic staff and among the students

themselves. A further significant finding related to how the students were viewed by the academic staff and support staff revealing that students who study at an Institute of Technology have not succeeded' and have therefore 'failed' to gain access to university. The answers to these general 'big questions' yield valuable information with regard to the sense of identity and the perceptions of those attending Higher Education at an Institute of Technology. This data in turn informed the design of the qualitative instruments, the interviews, the focus groups and later the reflective diary in order to answer the research questions appropriately. In addition, the data revealed a bias that exists among the academic staff of ITT in favour of the traditional university sector, particularly as a sector of choice for their own son or daughter. This finding contrasted with the positive views of the support staff, some of whom have already registered on programmes in the sector and who would recommend the sector to their son or daughter.

The overall findings of these questionnaires assisted in measuring the students' overall level of satisfaction at Higher Education, particularly at an Institute of Technology. The data collected also identified students who had already considering leaving Higher Education early. This data was valuable to the next phase of the research, the interviews, focus groups and reflective diaries.

Research Question Five:

What strategies and practices can individual institutions develop that can better accommodate the learning experience of this particular group of students and to what extent can the adoption of such strategies and practices provide solutions to the

problem of first year retention and have an effect on successful completion rates among those students?

A key factor that emerged from the research is that all first year students respond positively when they feel that the institution strives to create a culture of 'care'. This culture of 'care' is experienced through the relationships they have, the value that is placed on their own identity as students in ITT as well as through the overall culture of their college and the type of learning that takes place.

If the institution identifies 'at risk' students through reliable attendance monitoring, particularly in the first semester, the students will feel that level of care immediately, knowing that it matters to someone that s/he is not there. Institutions also have the capacity to carry out curriculum reform that incorporates a diversity of teaching approaches that both challenge and support students at every level of their learning. That caring learning environment and culture provides feedback to students, sets up formal structures of communication and enhances the tutor role to support students. In addition, pedagogical practices can incorporate group work, online research and self-directed learning which show that different ways of learning are celebrated and valued. In reducing the student workload by creating joint assessments there is the added benefit of collaborative learning, and adjusting the type of assessments to include more interactive assessments, work placements, site visits and group projects build self-esteem among first year students.

Where institutions recruit staff from diverse backgrounds, the students from all backgrounds feel that they are represented at all levels of the organisation where they

study. It is important for all members of an organistaion to engage in 'unconscious bias' training so that complacency does not set in and awareness is raised of potential cultural bias.

Institutions have to operate within the restraints that currently exist in higher education such as limited resources both in staffing, funding and physical space and this is indeed a challenge for all. There is indeed a challenge and managers need to be very creative in their response to these circumstances and still deliver academic quality in programmes. The research findings underline the fact that students need physical spaces to work collaboratively and to socialize so that they want to remain on campus and engage in a more holistic way in their learning. Lecturers also highlight the lack of space to meet students outside of the lecture theatre. Again, the institution showing that they care about the environment their students enter. Creating a timetable that enables the students to attend while giving them space for involvement in college life and leads to a more positive experience of care.

7.7 Contribution

Contributions of this thesis are many. It examined year one students at an Institute of Technology and identified the extent of non-completion in year one, it gave a voice to the all students including those who had left or who were at risk of leaving as well as lecturing and administrative staff.   This research attempted to be innovative in its use of an online reflective diary as an instrument of research as a means to allow even more students to contribute in a free manner that was safe and individual to them. All

research, particularly new and exploratory research such as this, has its limitations and in some of the data collection for this study there are limitations of scale. However, the research findings establish recurring themes over the five years of the study that would indeed merit further research.

The aim of this thesis was to investigate both quantitatively and qualitatively the issue of non-completion among first year students with a particular focus on students from the access schools. What it revealed is that a matrix of factors have an impact on whether students complete or not, some that are personal and outside the control of the institution such as the personal habitus of the access and non-access student; the access students feeling proud to have entered ITT while the non-access students feeling more positive about traditional universities. Other factors that had an impact are the capacity to belong, to feel confident to make new friends are determined again by personal dispositions of the students with the access students struggling to belong and finding it difficult to integrate. When the habitus of the access students encounters the habitus of the academic staff it was found that the academic staff held negative views of the retention rates of the access students, holding lower expectations of them and not providing challenging learning opportunities.

An analysis of the findings in the previous chapters shows that there are factors that are personal to each individual student in year one and these are often not within the control of the institution. The research also shows us that successful completion in year one is higher among the group of students who are in receipt of student grant support and that those students who struggle financially and are obliged to work for long hours each week do not complete their first year successfully. In addition, the research found that the students entering year one with lower CAO points have lower

success rates in year one that those with higher CAO points on entry. What the research also reveals is that there are very diverging views of the IoT sector and of ITT in general; positive views among the access students and the administrative staff interviewed countered by very negative views of the academic staff and how levels of pride in their own institution which is often translated into low levels of expectation of the students and low levels of engagement with the students. This in turn leads to low levels of engagement among the students and attendance becomes poor and has an impact on performance and on success rates. It also showed that students from non-access schools are more negative about the sector they are studying in and their dispositions are more favourably disposed to the traditional university model of higher education.

The HEA measure retention figures by using March 1st as the counting date. This research presents statistical data that starts the counting from September to November and significant student exit between this period and of that number a significant proportion are from the access schools. Bourdieu's conceptual framework of 'habitus' proved valuable in highlighting the deep social and cultural inequalities and injustices in higher education. Diane Reay in her examination of institutional habitus summarises it as that interplay between the student identity and the institutional culture in higher education. Reay affirms through her research in the UK, that higher education is typically welcoming for those whose dispositions are familiar with an environment rich in cultural and social capital and equally alienating for those whose dispositions may not include the values, attitude and tastes that are valued, not only by academics and administrators but also by other students. (Reay 2005)

Respectful connections with academic faculty are particularly important to learners' construction of their relational identity (Kaswonn 2010). The search for authenticity and legitimacy within the cultural context of a university is likely to be different from that of an Institute of Technology and the impact that has on learner identity. (Kaswonn 2010, p.143)

Bourdieu also advocated a pragmatic approach to all research and the necessity to constantly marry research and theory. This is an approach that was appropriate to this thesis and the need to continue to focus on the real-life situations of the first year students.

Bourdieu's work served as a tool to focus on the ways in which the socially advantaged and disadvantaged demonstrate attitudes of cultural superiority and inferiority engrained in their *habitus* in their daily interventions as a means to re-think the student experiences of this particular group of students in relational terms. Given that ITT is situated in an area of high socio-economic disadvantage, Bourdieu's framework on social reproduction in education serves as a valuable measurement instrument for this research. In the Irish Higher Education context, universities are referred to as 'first tier', offering traditional academic programmes and attract high CAO point achievers. Institutes of technology are known as 'second tier' and in contrast provide a wider range of non-traditional academic programmes at both degree and sub-degree level to a greater number of students from underrepresented groups including economically disadvantaged locations (McCoy and Smyth 2010) the statistics show that students in IoTs are significantly more likely not to complete compared to their University equivalent. There are high levels of non-progression among Level 7 and Level 6 participants compared to Level 8 programmes. One of Pierre Bourdieu's main theoretical reasons for developing his social theory was to

overcome dualisms that are present brought about in society he was preoccupied with binary oppositions and explanations. The dynamics of social reproduction are 'so integrated into our everyday consciousness that it is extremely hard, not to say, impossible, to raise oneself to the point of view of reproduction' (Althusser, 1971) Bourdieu explored the dynamics of social class and how members of the higher social groups could adopt a variety of measures to protect and essentially 'reproduce' their given social positions. In seeking to better understand the first year student experience and why they complete or not, we need to uncover those aspects associated with the fact that learning at higher education takes place within an institutional context which is itself part of a wider context in society. "The danger with individualising the problem, and thus problematising the individual, is that it allows traditional, elitist and exclusionary practices to continue within the education system" (Thomas, 2001, page number). In other words, in order to understand a student's experience, we need to understand it as something that happens in an immediate context, the context of the institution and within the wider cultural and societal context. The immediate context tells us about the specifics of who is involved in a given activity. The institutional context tells us that the particular activity is taking place within the context of higher education with its particular economic and social functions, its ways of organising, communicating and validating knowledge. Bourdieu, in his notion of habitus, seeks to examine how the dynamics of commitment and disaffection might be different in socially disparate schools. He states that the way students engage is different depending on where their school is located in the larger societal pattern of organised social differences and inequalities.

The social process in the institution: the way in which the single behaviours, words or signs, become representative of the self. By focussing our attention upon the families and children it implies that something is lacking in the family, and so in the child. Once the problem is seen even implicitly in this way, then it becomes appropriate to coin the terms 'cultural deprivation', 'linguistic deprivation' thus distracting attention from the deficiencies in the institution itself.

Bourdieu continues to identify a further barrier to completion is the fact that that there is a middle-class culture in higher education where for the most part, staff are from middle class backgrounds, and the ethos is predominantly middle class. Indeed, the curriculum does not reflect the lifestyle, culture and values of this group. This is what is referred to as 'cultural deficit' leading to a 'them versus us' situation, where the perceived lack of commitment among lecturers who have no expectations educationally for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Language is part of the complete habitus of a person and cannot be isolated on its own. Bernstein (1977) makes the argument that this "reproduction" is further codified through the use of language. The distribution of knowledge among classes includes "at the level of the meta-languages of control and innovation, whereas the mass of the population has been socialised into the knowledge at the level context tied to the operation" (Bernstein, 1977, p.477).

Of all the distancing techniques, with which the institution equips its officers, "magisterial language" as Bourdieu calls it is the most efficacious and the most subtle (p.109/110). If a student fails to "be what he ought to be, which is nothing more than his 'being-for-the-teacher' then all the faults are on his side." (Bourdieu, 1977, P.112). The barrier to communication with lecturers is, according to Bourdieu, due to

social class differences between lecturers and students. Lecturers may often focus on 'deficits' of disadvantaged culture thus compounding the sense of 'being an outsider' in an insiders' world. Many of the students self-excluded themselves from the more traditional universities and selected institutions where they felt they could 'fit in.'

Bourdieu believes that generating and maintaining a distance between academic staff and students is a fundamental part of higher education practice. Even through the use and layout of the built environment. Part of this power is undoubtedly due to the fact that the academics control the examinations process, the results of which have a significant effect on the future of students.

7.8 Further Work:

This thesis output could include examining non-completion across two or more Institutes of Technology with varying demographics. This would be very valuable in establishing comparisons and patters of completion or non-completion. However, the researcher is aware from many years of working in the sector, that getting agreement to collaborate on such research can be difficult due to a reluctance to allow access to data.

Another possible output might be a comparison between completion causes between an Institute of Technology and a University again to identify if there are differences and what they might be.

Of course, there are always limitations to all research especially when we are dealing with individuals as we do in an educational context. We cannot manage or predict what decision-making processes control an individual in their daily lives.

7.9 Closing Comments

As is often the case in all relationships, the obvious simple things done well can make such a big difference such as being aware, fostering a real institutional-wide culture of care, making the students feel valued, like they 'belong' to something, providing quality feedback, having time for students, fostering a sense of pride in being a student at an Institute of Technology, showing respect. These simple things done well need to be embedded in the systems of the institution and visible through the timetable, the spaces made available, the curriculum that incorporates collaborative work, a semesterised system that does not punish students through excessive and unrealistic workloads, allowing lecturers spaces and time to meet with students which when combined make for a positive community of learning.

The quantity and quality of student to staff interactions particularly featured in many of the interviews and diary entries with a general desire expressed for teamwork, group work and collaborative work that could enhance their sense of belonging and community. Students who felt that someone cared if they were there or not, that they had meaningful relationships with staff and peers, were more positive about staying at college. This was even more significant in the findings of the access students, many

felt that they now missed that level of daily individual support. Increased mentoring by other students, especially from peers who had already come into ITT from their schools and were now successfully in year two or three of a programme was suggested by many participants along with information days to be offered for students and their families particularly given that many parents have not attended Higher Education and were not familiar with the workings of the system.

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Appendix A Early Days Questionnaire

EARLY DAYS QUESTIONNAIRE

Important: Please read the information sheet about this questionnaire and if you are happy to participate please sign the consent form.

Q.1 What age are you?

Q.2 Are you male or female?

Q.3 What second level school did you attend before coming to The Institute?

Q.4 Do you feel you were adequately prepared for coming to college?

Q.4 If you came to The Institute through the CAO, what number choice of programme was it?

Q.5 Do you think there is a positive or negative view of The Institutes of Technology?

Q.6 Do you think there is a positive or negative view of those students who choose to attend an Institute of Technology?

Q.7 Are you happy to be studying at an Institute of Technology?

Q.8 Are you happy to be studying in this particular Institute of Technology?

Q.9 Do you work part-time?

Q.10 Have either of your parents or guardians attended college?

Q.11 Are you managing your course workload?

Q.12 Have you met your year tutor or other student supports yet?

Q.13 Have you thought about dropping out of college?

Appendix B Checking Back Questionnaire

Checking Back Questionnaire

Q.1 Have you made any new friends at college?

Q.2 Have you joined any clubs or societies?

Q.3 Are you enjoying your course?

Q.4 How did you do in your January exams?

Q.5 Do you feel you are managing your workload well?

Q.6 Have your got quality feedback from your lectures on your work?

Q.7 Have you met your course tutor?

Q.8 Do you feel you are growing in self-confidence since starting college last September?

Q.9 Are you feeling part of a community at college?

Q.10 Are you happy at college?

Appendix C Questionnaire to Institute Staff-Academic

Q.1 Do you think there is a positive or a negative view of Institutes of Technology generally?

Q.2 Is there a positive or a negative view of ITT?

Q.3 Did you attend an Institute of Technology or a University?

Q.4 Have any of your children attended an Institute of Technology?

Q.5 Would you choose an Institute of Technology for Higher Education for your son or daughter?

Q.6 Students generally attend an Institute of Technology because they have not been successful in applying to Universities. Do you agree or disagree?

Questionnaire to Institute Staff-Support

Q.1 Do you think there is a positive or a negative view of Institutes of Technology generally?

Q.2 Is there a positive or a negative view of ITT?

Q.3 Did you attend an Institute of Technology or a University?

Q.4 Have any of your children attended an Institute of Technology?

Q.5 Would you choose an Institute of Technology for Higher Education for your son or daughter?

Q.6 Students generally attend an Institute of Technology because they have not been successful in applying to Universities. Do you agree or disagree?

Questions Index Cards (Students)

1. How do you fell the transition from second level to Higher Education has gone for you?

2. What have you found the most challenging?

3. Are you enjoying your programme of choice?

4. What is your goal in terms of your Higher Education?

5. Are you enjoying being a student?

6. What clubs or extra-curricular activities are you involved in?

7. Do you work part-time?

8. How does your family feel about you being at college?

9. Are you managing to keep up with your assessments?

10. Have you made many new friends at college?

11. Do you find it easy to approach your lecturers?

12. Have you met your class tutor?

13. Do you know where your School office is?

14. Have you enjoyed working in a group?

15. Have you availed of any of the student support services here at ITTD?

16. Is college what you imagined it would be?

17. Is there anything that you feel could make life at college easier for you?

18. Would you recommend ITT to others?

19. Has coming to college changed you?

20. If you have a free period/hour, what do you normally do?

Interview Questions Guide (Staff)

1. What is retention like in year one? Are there any particular programmes or levels that do better or worse and if so, why?

2. What in your view are the issues that can affect or impact student completion in year one?

3. How do you think students from the local access schools do in year one? Are there differences compared with the general year one student population?

4. Have you experience of attending an IoT as a student or as a parent of a student? If so, describe your experience and what you have learned about the sector and how we manage student success.

Appendix D Research Ethics Approval

Institute of Technology Tallaght
Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Tamhlacht

Date: Oct. 8th 2008
To: A. Feeney
Department: Humanities

Dear Jimmy

REC Reference No: *Please quote this ref on all correspondence*	REC-A5-08
Project Title:	*Getting in, getting through and getting out': persistence retention and completion among socio-economically disadvantaged students in higher level education.*
Principal Investigators Name(s):	Angela Feeney

Thank you for submitting your amended application. The corrections have been signed off and your study can begin.

Any adverse events or changes which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported immediately to the Research Ethics Committee, and a new application submitted for consideration.

Approval is given on the understanding that the guidelines for Good Practice in Research outlined in the Institute Code of Conduct for Researchers are adhered to.

Yours sincerely

Mary Deasy B.Sc. PhD CChemMRSC
Research Ethics Committee Secretary
Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT Dublin)

Ph.   +353 1 404 2803
Fax   +353 1 404 2700
Email: mary.deasy@ittdublin.ie

June 20, 2008

To: Ms. Angela Feeney
Department of Humanities
Institute of Technology Tallaght

Re. REC-A5-08: *Getting in, getting through and getting out': persistence retention and*
completion among socio-economically disadvantaged students in
higher level education.

Dear Angela

The Institute Research Ethics Committee reviewed your application above at its meeting of
June 19th last. The following is the decision reached by the committee:

Decision on Application 5 [REC-A5-08]:
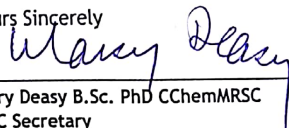
Approved subject to the following:

1.   Small amendments are made to the form as follows:
       Section 4.3   **Click YES instead of NO**
       Section 6.4   **Click NO and delete the YES and associated text box**
       Section 7.3   **Click NO**

2.   The applicant gets the sign-off of the proposed external supervisor, as the staff
research is leading to an academic award at another HEI. The signature can be
submitted to me on the attached sheet by post or fax. This will be attached to the
original application form, so you do not need to get the HOD to sign again.

The REC does not need to review the application again. Once the amended form and sign-
off has been received by the secretary, the REC will be notified and your study can begin.

Any problems let me know.

Yours Sincerely

Mary Deasy B.Sc. PhD CChemMRSC
REC Secretary
Institute of Technology Tallaght
Ph.   +353 1 404 2803
Fax   +353 1 404 2700
Email: mary.deasy@ittdublin.ie

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, MAYNOOTH
MAYNOOTH, CO. KILDARE, IRELAND

NUI MAYNOOTH

RESEARCH & GRADUATE STUDIES
Dr. Carol Barrett
Entreprise Officer

Ms. Angela Esther Feeney
Department of Education
N.U.I. Maynooth

October 8th 2008

RE: Application for Ethical Approval for a project entitled: *Getting in, getting through and getting out: A Study on Retention among year one students at an Institute of Technology in Ireland.*

Dear Angela,

The Ethics Committee evaluated the above project for ethical approval and we would like to inform you that ethical approval has been granted.

With kind regards,

Dr. Carol Barrett
Secretary to the Ethics Committee

cc. Professor Tom Collins

Information Sheet for participants

Information Leaflet

Letter of Consent

Dear

I am a lecturer in the Department of Humanities at the Institute of Technology Tallaght and am conducting some research on student retention and persistence as part of a doctoral thesis. The purpose of such research is to ascertain which causes of student withdrawal are within the influence or control of an institution; what makes the most difference to student completion and withdrawal; understand why the majority of students complete programmes and where could an institution concentrate its energies to make improvements.

Your participation will involve completing a brief questionnaire on-line and meeting with me in the middle of semester one for a short interview which will be recorded. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. The results of the research study may be published, but your name will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning this research study, please call me at extension 2868 or by e-mail angela.feeney@ittdublin.ie

Sincerely,

Angela Feeney

I give my consent to participate in the above study.

_____ (signature) _____ (date)

Consent form for participants

Letter of Consent

Date

I, (print name in full) _____ am a student registered at the Institute of Technology Tallaght. In signing this consent form, I agree to volunteer in the research project being conducted by Angela Feeney September 2008 and June 2009.

I understand that the research being conducted relates to the experiences of students at third level and in particular the factors that contribute to student attrition and persistence. I understand that excerpts from my written transcripts and recorded verbal communications with the researcher will be studied and may be quoted in a doctoral dissertation and in future papers and journal articles that will be written by the researcher.

I grant authorisation for the use of the above information with the full understanding that my anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved at all times. I understand that my full name or other identifying information will never be disclosed or referenced in any way in any written or verbal context. I understand that transcripts, both paper and electronic versions, will be secured in the privacy of the researcher's office and that any audio tapes of my conversations with the researcher will be erased no later than 2012.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw my permission to participate in this study without explanation at any point up to and including, the last day of September 2008.

_____

I give my consent to participate in the above study as described above.

_____ (signature) _____ (date)

Focus Group Consent Form

Focus Group Purpose:

To hear your views on year one student completion and retention in your college.

I agree to take part in the research project Student Retention Year One as specified above. I have read and understand the study purpose as described. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

1. I agree to be involved in a focus group

2. I agree to allow the focus group to be recorded.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any stage of the research project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the focus group for research purposes or publication will not, in any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

Participant Name:

Participant Signature:

Date:

Appendix E Data used for Tables

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Term	201300										
2	Rate Code	(All)					U23 Admissions					
3	Enrol Status	(All)					Row Labe Count of Student Id					Row Labels
4			2725				DE	82	1.7%			DE
5	Row Labels	Count of Student Id					EL	59	1.2%			REGS
6	School of Business& Humanities	470					NS	258	5.3%			Supported
7	Accounting & Prof. Studies	80					RG	2633	54.4%			EL
8	Humanities	187					TR	1257	26.0%			REGS
9	Management	97					WD	554	11.4%			Supported
10	Marketing	106						4843				NS
11	School of Engineering	142										REGS
12	Electronic Engineering	54	0.111570248	304	0.11156							Supported
13	Mechanical Engineering	88		920			Over 23 Admissions					RG
14	School of Science & Computing	223					Row Labe Count of Student Id					REGS
15	Computing	121					DE	60	6.6%			Supported
16	Science	102					EL	17	1.9%			TR
17	Grand Total	835					NS	60	6.6%			REGS
18							RG	529	57.9%			Supported
19							TR	157	17.2%			WD
20	RATE CODES:						WD	90	9.9%			REGS
21	Repeat Codes Excluded		0.106060606	125	0.13587			913				Supported
22	Enrolment			1341								
23	TR/RG/WD											
24												REGS
25												Supported
26												
27												total
28												
29												
30			0.098039216	#REF!	#REF!							

Sheet1   All_lessChina   o23pivot   All_o23_Jan1   u23Pivot   ByCounty_Code   ALL_u23_Jan1

PivotTable Field List

Choose fields to add to report:
- Address Line 2
- Address Line 3
- Address Line 4
- Phone No.
- Email Address
- D.O.B.
- AD_Yr
- Age_1Jan_yrAdmit
- FT/PT Ind.
- Admit Type
- Enrol Status
- CAO Number
- CAO Points
- Resd. Code
- Rate Code
- Student Type
- Credits
- Last School Role Code
- Last School

Drag fields between areas below:
Report Filter: Term, Rate Code, Enrol Status
Column Label
Row Labels: School, Department
Values: Count of Stu...

Defer Layout Update

Home | Insert | Page Layout | Formulas | Data | Review | View | Developer | Options | Design

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Term	201300					U23 Admissions					
2	Rate Code	(All)										
3	Enrol Status	(All)					Row Labe	Count of Student Id				Row Labels
4				2725			DE	82	1.7%			DE
5	Row Labels	Count of Student Id					EL	59	1.2%			REGS
6	School of Business& Humanities	470					NS	258	5.3%			Supported
7	Accounting & Prof. Studies	80					RG	2633	54.4%			EL
8	Humanities	187					TR	1257	26.0%			REGS
9	Management	97					WD	554	11.4%			Supported
10	Marketing	106						4843				NS
11	School of Engineering	142										REGS
12	Electronic Engineering	54	0.111570248	304	0.11156							Supported
13	Mechanical Engineering	88		920			Over 23 Admissions					RG
14	School of Science & Computing	223					Row Labe	Count of Student Id				REGS
15	Computing	121					DE	60	6.6%			Supported
16	Science	102					EL	17	1.9%			TR
17	Grand Total	835					NS	60	6.6%			REGS
18							RG	529	57.9%			Supported
19							TR	157	17.2%			WD
20	RATE CODES:						WD	90	9.9%			REGS
21	Repeat Codes Excluded		0.106060606	125	0.13587			913				Supported
22	Enrolment			1341								
23	TR/RG/WD											
24												REGS
25												Supported
26												
27												total
28												
29												
30			0.098039216	#REF!	#REF!							

Sheet1 | All_lessChina | o23pivot | All_o23_Jan1 | u23Pivot | ByCounty_Code | ALL_u23_Jan1

PivotTable Field List

Choose fields to add to report:
- Address Line 2
- Address Line 3
- Address Line 4
- Phone No.
- Email Address
- D.O.B.
- AD_Yr
- Age_1Jan_yrAdmit
- FT/PT Ind.
- Admit Type
- Enrol Status ☑
- CAO Number
- CAO Points
- Resd. Code
- Rate Code ☑
- Student Type
- Credits
- Last School Role Code
- Last School

Drag fields between areas below:

Report Filter: Term, Rate Code, Enrol Status
Column Labels:
Row Labels: School, Department
Σ Values: Count of Stu...

Defer Layout Update

Progression Data Table Format

Term
School
Department
Program
Class
Student Id
Address Line 4
Phone No.
Email Address
D.O.B.
AD_Yr (Year of Admission)
Age_1Jan_yrAdmit (Age, Jan 1)
FT/PT Ind. (full or Part Time)
Admit Type
Enrol Status
CAO Number
CAO Points
Resd. Code
Rate Code (Rate of fees/ grant rate)
Funded – Calculated: =IF(OR(S26="SPONS";S26="SPONT";S26="SPON2");1;0) Used to determine if student in receipt of grant support ('Funded') or not.
Funded Text
Last School Role Code (Last school taken as School)
SchCategory
Last School
Acad. Stnd. (One of PS– Pass, DE – deferred, AB – absent from examinations, IN – incomplete, EX – exemptions granted (credits gained), FL – Fail, WD – Withdrew/
Progression – Calculated (Based on attaining PS): =IF(OR(Y4981="DE";Y4981="AB";Y4981="IN";Y4981="EX";Y4981="FL";Y4981="WD";Y4981=0);"Non-Prog";"Prog")
Engagement – Calculated: =IF(OR(Y4977="DE";Y4977="AB";Y4977="IN";Y4977="FL";Y4977="WD";Y4977=0); "Non-Engaged";"Engaged") (Non-Engaged based on no academic credits earned).
Reqd Credits (generally 60 credits)
Acc Credits
Area GPA (Average GPA Score GPA = 2 required for Pass, 4 = Maximum GPA)

Data Used for Schools

Term	200900
Row Labels	Count of Student Id
School of Business& Humanities	**593**
Accounting & Prof. Studies	**115**
DE	4
NS	12
RG	71
RP	8
TR	9
WD	11
Humanities	**196**
DE	2
NS	10
RG	154
RP	3
TR	7
WD	20
Management	**142**
DE	4
NS	4
RG	106
RP	7
TR	6
WD	15
Marketing	**140**
DE	1
EL	2
NS	9
RG	95
RP	7
TR	2
WD	24
School of Engineering	**212**
Electronic Engineering	**59**
DE	2
NS	6
RG	29
RP	3
RX	1
TR	3
WD	15

Mechanical Engineering	**153**
DE	1
EL	1
NS	4
RG	113
RP	9
TR	11
WD	14
School of Science & Computing	**252**
Computing	**97**
NS	7
RG	59
RP	16
TR	3
WD	12
Science	**155**
DE	3
NS	7
RG	119
RP	10
TR	3
WD	13
Grand Total	**1057**

Data for entrants filtered by programme codes 2009

	A	B	C	D	E	G	H	I	L	M	O
1	Term	200900				U23 Admissions					
2	Rate Code	(Multiple Items)									
3	Enrol Status	(Multiple Items)				Row Labe	Count of Student Id		Row Labels	Count of Student Id	200900
4				2725		DE	82	1.7%	DE	82	DE
5	Row Labels	Count of Student Id				EL	59	1.2%	REGS	68	REGS
6	School of Business& Humanities	457				NS	258	5.3%	Supported	13	SPEC
7	Accounting & Prof. Studies	87				RG	2633	54.4%	EL	59	EL
8	Humanities	132				TR	1257	26.0%	REGS	33	REGS
9	Management	123				WD	554	11.4%	Supported	19	SPON
10	Marketing	115					4843		NS	258	NS
11	School of Engineering	179							REGS	216	REGS
12	Electronic Engineering	47	0.111570248	304	0.11156				Supported	30	SPEC
13	Mechanical Engineering	132		920		Over 23 Admissions			RG	2633	RG
14	School of Science & Computing	195				Row Labe	Count of Student Id		REGS	783	REGS
15	Computing	66				DE	60	6.6%	Supported	1656	SPEC
16	Science	129				EL	17	1.9%	TR	1257	TR
17	Grand Total	831				NS	60	6.6%	REGS	898	REGS
18						RG	529	57.9%	Supported	73	SPEC
19						TR	157	17.2%	WD	554	WD
20	RATE CODES:					WD	90	9.9%	REGS	360	REGS
21	Repeat Codes Excluded		0.106060606	125	0.13587		913		Supported	143	SPEC
22	Enrolment			1341							
23	TR/RG/WD										
24									REGS	2358	
25									Supported	1934	
26											
27									total		
28											
29											
30			0.098039216	#REF!	#REF!						

Sheet1   All_lessChina   o23pivot   All_o23_Jan1   u23Pivot   ByCounty_Code   ALL_u23_Jan1

Data for entrants filtered by programme codes 2010

Row Labels	Count of Student Id	C	D	E
Term	201000			
Rate Code	(Multiple Items)			
Enrol Status	(Multiple Items)			
			2725	
Row Labels	Count of Student Id			
School of Business& Humanities	520			
Accounting & Prof. Studies	109			
Humanities	196			
Management	96			
Marketing	119			
School of Engineering	202			
Electronic Engineering	69	0.111570248	304	0.11156
Mechanical Engineering	133		920	
School of Science & Computing	229			
Computing	85			
Science	144			
Grand Total	951			
RATE CODES:				
Repeat Codes Excluded		0.106060606	125	0.13587
Enrolment			1341	
TR/RG/WD				
		0.098039216	#REF!	#REF!

U23 Admissions

Row Labe	Count of Student Id	
DE	82	1.7%
EL	59	1.2%
NS	258	5.3%
RG	2633	54.4%
TR	1257	26.0%
WD	554	11.4%
	4843	

Over 23 Admissions

Row Labe	Count of Student Id	
DE	60	6.6%
EL	17	1.9%
NS	60	6.6%
RG	529	57.9%
TR	157	17.2%
WD	90	9.9%
	913	

Row Labels	Count of Student Id	200
DE	82	DE
REGS	68	
Supported	13	
EL	59	EL
REGS	33	
Supported	19	
NS	258	NS
REGS	216	
Supported	30	
RG	2633	RG
REGS	783	
Supported	1656	
TR	1257	TR
REGS	898	
Supported	73	
WD	554	W
REGS	360	
Supported	143	
REGS	2358	
Supported	1934	
total		

Data for entrants filtered by programme codes 2011

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	Term	201100													
2	Rate Code	(Multiple Items)					U23 Admissions								
3	Enrol Status	(Multiple Items)					Row Labe Count of Student Id					Row Labels	Count of Student Id		20090
4				2725			DE	82	1.7%			DE	82		DE
5	Row Labels	Count of Student Id					EL	59	1.2%			REGS	68		REC
6	School of Business& Humanities	503					NS	258	5.3%			Supported	13		SPE
7	Accounting & Prof. Studies	78					RG	2633	54.4%			EL	59		EL
8	Humanities	223					TR	1257	26.0%			REGS	33		REC
9	Management	96					WD	554	11.4%			Supported	19		SPC
10	Marketing	106						4843				NS	258		NS
11	School of Engineering	136										REGS	216		REC
12	Electronic Engineering	59	0.111570248	304	0.11156							Supported	30		SPE
13	Mechanical Engineering	77		920			Over 23 Admissions					RG	2633		RG
14	School of Science & Computing	252					Row Labe Count of Student Id					REGS	783		REC
15	Computing	107					DE	60	6.6%			Supported	1656		SPE
16	Science	145					EL	17	1.9%			TR	1257		TR
17	Grand Total	891					NS	60	6.6%			REGS	898		REC
18							RG	529	57.9%			Supported	73		SPE
19							TR	157	17.2%			WD	554		WD
20	RATE CODES:						WD	90	9.9%			REGS	360		REC
21	Repeat Codes Excluded		0.106060606	125	0.13587			913				Supported	143		SPE
22	Enrolment			1341											
23	TR/RG/WD														
24												REGS	2358		
25												Supported	1934		
26															
27												total			
28															
29															
30			0.098039216	#REF!	#REF!										

Data for entrants filtered by programme codes 2012

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	Term	201200													
2	Rate Code	(Multiple Items)					U23 Admissions								
3	Enrol Status	(Multiple Items)					Row Labe	Count of Student Id				Row Labels	Count of Student Id		20090
4				2725			DE	82	1.7%			DE	82		DE
5	Row Labels	Count of Student Id					EL	59	1.2%			REGS	68		REG
6	School of Business& Humanities	417					NS	258	5.3%			Supported	13		SPE
7	Accounting & Prof. Studies	71					RG	2633	54.4%			EL	59		EL
8	Humanities	166					TR	1257	26.0%			REGS	33		REG
9	Management	81					WD	554	11.4%			Supported	19		SPC
10	Marketing	99						4843				NS	258		NS
11	School of Engineering	115										REGS	216		REG
12	Electronic Engineering	54	0.111570248	304	0.11156							Supported	30		SPE
13	Mechanical Engineering	61		920			Over 23 Admissions					RG	2633		RG
14	School of Science & Computing	227					Row Labe	Count of Student Id				REGS	783		REG
15	Computing	85					DE	60	6.6%			Supported	1656		SPE
16	Science	142					EL	17	1.9%			TR	1257		TR
17	Grand Total	759					NS	60	6.6%			REGS	898		REG
18							RG	529	57.9%			Supported	73		SPE
19							TR	157	17.2%			WD	554		WD
20	RATE CODES:						WD	90	9.9%			REGS	360		REG
21	Repeat Codes Excluded		0.106060606	125	0.13587			913				Supported	143		SPE
22	Enrolment			1341											
23	TR/RG/WD														
24												REGS	2358		
25												Supported	1934		
26															
27												total			
28															
29															
30			0.098039216	#REF!	#REF!										

Data for entrants filtered by programme codes 2013

Excel spreadsheet screenshot:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
	Term	201300										
	Rate Code	(Multiple Items)					U23 Admissions					
	Enrol Status	(Multiple Items)					Row Labe	Count of Student Id				Row Labels
				2725			DE	82	1.7%			DE
	Row Labels	Count of Student Id					EL	59	1.2%			REGS
	School of Business& Humanities	410					NS	258	5.3%			Supported
	Accounting & Prof. Studies	74					RG	2633	54.4%			EL
	Humanities	161					TR	1257	26.0%			REGS
	Management	83					WD	554	11.4%			Supported
	Marketing	92						4843				NS
	School of Engineering	116										REGS
	Electronic Engineering	41	0.111570248	304	0.11156							Supported
	Mechanical Engineering	75		920			Over 23 Admissions					RG
	School of Science & Computing	194					Row Labe	Count of Student Id				REGS
	Computing	109					DE	60	6.6%			Supported
	Science	85					EL	17	1.9%			TR
	Grand Total	720					NS	60	6.6%			REGS
							RG	529	57.9%			Supported
							TR	157	17.2%			WD
	RATE CODES:						WD	90	9.9%			REGS
	Repeat Codes Excluded		0.106060606	125	0.13587			913				Supported
	Enrolment			1341								
	TR/RG/WD											
												REGS
												Supported
												total
			0.098039216	#REF!	#REF!							

PivotTable Field List

Choose fields to add to report:
- Address Line 2
- Address Line 3
- Address Line 4
- Phone No.
- Email Address
- D.O.B.
- AD_Yr
- Age_13an_yrAdmit
- FT/PT Ind.
- Admit Type
- ☑ Enrol Status
- CAO Number
- CAO Points
- Resd. Code
- ☑ Rate Code
- Student Type
- Credits
- Last School Role Code
- Last School

Drag fields between areas below:

Report Filter:
- Term
- Rate Code
- Enrol Status

Column Labels

Row Labels:
- School
- Department

Σ Values:
- Count of Stu...

Sheets: Sheet1, All_lessChina, o23pivot, All_o23_Jan1, u23Pivot, ByCounty_Code, ALL_u23_Jan1

CAO Association for all students Year One

Early Days Survey Data

ID Code	Q.1 AGE	Q.2 M/F	Q.3 SCH	Q.4 Prep	Q.5 CAO Choice	Q.6 POS/NEG IOT	Q.7 POS/NEG STD IOT	Q.8 HAPPY IOT	Q.9 HAPPY HERE	Q.10 P/T JOB	Q.11 PRNTS COLLEGE	Q.12 TUTOR	Q.13 LEAVE
09001	18	F	A	Y	2	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
09002	18	F	N.A.	N	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
09003	18	M	A	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
09004	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
09005	18	M	Y	N	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
09006	18	F	Y	N	4	Pos	Pos	N	N	N	N	N	Y
09007	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
09008	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
09009	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
09010	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
09011	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
09012	18	F	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
09013	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
09014	18	M	Y	N	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
09015	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
09016	18	F	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
09017	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
09018	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
09019	18	F	Y	N	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y
09020	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
09021	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
09022	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
09023	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
09024	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
09025	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
09026	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
090 27	18	F	Y	N	5	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
090 28	18	F	Y	N	4	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
090 29	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
090 30	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
090 31	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
090 32	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
090 33	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
090 34	18	M	Y	Y	3	Pos	Neg	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N
090 35	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
090 36	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
090 37	18	M	Y	N	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
090 38	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
090 39	18	M	Y	Y	5	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
090 40	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
090 41	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	N	N	N	N	N	Y
090 42	18	M	Y	N	1	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
090 43	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
090 44	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	Y
090 45	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
090 46	18	F	Y	N	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	Y
090 47	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
090 48	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
090 49	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
090 50	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y	N	Y
090 51	18	F	Y	N	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
090 52	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
090 53	18	F	Y	N	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
090 54	18	M	A	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
090	18	M	N.	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
0905 55			A.										
0905 56	18	F	A	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
0905 57	18	M	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
0905 58	18	F	Y	N	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
0905 59	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
0906 60	18	M	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	N	N	N	N	N	Y
0906 61	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y	N	N
0906 62	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
0906 63	18	M	Y	N	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
0906 64	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
0906 65	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
0906 66	18	F	Y	N	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
0906 67	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
0906 68	18	M	Y	N	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y
0906 69	18	M	Y	N	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
0907 70	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
0907 71	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
0907 72	18	F	Y	N	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y	N	Y
0907 73	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
0907 74	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
0907 75	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
0907 76	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
0907 77	18	F	Y	N	1	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
0907 78	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
0907 79	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
0908 80	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
0908 81	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
0908 82	18	M	Y	N	5	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	Y
0908 83	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N

0984	18	M	Y	N	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	Y
0985	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
0986	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
0987	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	N	N	N	N	N
0988	18	M	Y	N	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
0989	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	Y
0990	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
0991	18	F	Y	Y	5	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
0992	18	F	Y	N	5	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
0993	18	F	Y	N	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
0994	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
10001	18	F	A	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10002	18	M	N.A.	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10003	18	F	A	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10004	18	M	Y	Y	2	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N
10005	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N
10006	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	Y	N
10007	18	M	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10008	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N
10009	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	Y	N
10010	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10011	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10012	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	Y	N
10013	18	M	Y	Y	3	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10014	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N
10015	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10016	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10017	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10018	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10019	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10020	18	M	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10021	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10022	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10023	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10024	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N
10025	18	F	Y	Y	5	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10026	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10027	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10028	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10029	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10030	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y
10031	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10032	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10033	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10034	18	F	Y	Y		Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y
ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
10035	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10036	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10037	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10038	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10039	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10040	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10041	18	M	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10042	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10043	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10044	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10045	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10046	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10047	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10048	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10049	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y
10050	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10051	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10052	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10053	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N
10054	18	M	A	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10055	18	F	N.A.	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10056	18	F	A	Y	2	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
10057	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10058	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y
10059	18	M	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10060	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10061	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10062	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10063	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10064	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10065	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10066	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10067	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Neg	Y	N	Y
ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
10068	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	N	N
10069	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10070	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10071	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10072	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10073	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10074	18	F	Y	Y	5	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N
10075	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10076	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10077	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10078	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10079	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N
10080	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N
10081	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10082	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N
10083	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N
10084	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10085	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10086	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	N	N
10087	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y
10088	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N
10089	18	M	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y
10090	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N
10091	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10092	18	F	Y	Y	5	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y
10093	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N
10094	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y
10095	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
11001	18	F	A	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11002	18	F	N.A.	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11003	18	F	A	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11004	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	Y	N
11005	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11006	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
11007	18	M	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11008	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11009	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
11010	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
11011	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
11012	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11013	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11014	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
11015	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11016	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
11017	18	F	Y	Y	4	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11018	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11019	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
11020	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11021	18	F	Y	Y	1	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11022	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11023	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11024	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11025	18	M	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11026	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
11027	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
11028	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
11029	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
11030	18	F	Y	Y	1	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11031	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
11032	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11033	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11034	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	N	Y	N		N
ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	N
11035	18	F	Y	Y	4	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11036	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
11037	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11038	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
11039	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11040	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
11041	18	F	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11042	18	F	Y	Y	4	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11043	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11044	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
11045	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11046	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11047	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11048	18	F	Y	Y	1	Pos	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
11049	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	Y
11050	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11051	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
11052	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11053	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11054	18	F	A	Y	2	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11055	18	F	N.A.	Y	1	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11056	18	F	A	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N

11057	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
11058	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11059	18	F	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
11060	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
11061	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11062	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
11063	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	Y	N
11064	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	Y	N	N	N	N	N
11065	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
11066	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11067	18	F	Y	Y		Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N		
1D	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q5**	**Q6**	**Q7**	**Q8**	**Q9**	**Q10**	**Q11**	**Q12**	**Q13**
11068	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
11069	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
11070	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	Y
11071	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
11072	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
11073	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
11074	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
11075	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
11076	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
11077	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
12001	18	F	A	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
12002	18	F	N.A.	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12003	18	F	A	Y	2	Pos	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
12004	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
12005	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
12006	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
12007	18	M	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
12008	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
12009	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12010	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
12011	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12012	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
12013	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	Y	N	N	N	N
12014	18	F	Y	Y	1	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
12015	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
12016	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
12017	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
12018	18	F	Y	Y	4	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
12019	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
12020	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12021	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Pos	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
12022	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
12023	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	Y	N	N	N	N
12024	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
12025	18	F	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
12026	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	N	N	N	N	N
12027	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
12028	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
12029	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
12030	18	F	Y	Y	1	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12031	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
12032	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
12033	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	Y
12034	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N		
ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
12035	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12036	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
12037	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
12038	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
12039	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12040	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
12041	18	F	Y	Y	5	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12042	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
12043	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12044	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
12045	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
12046	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	Y	N	N	N	N
12047	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
12048	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
12049	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
12050	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
12051	18	F	Y	Y	4	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12052	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
12053	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
12054	18	F	A	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12055	18	F	N.A.	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12056	18	F	A	Y	2	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
12057	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
12058	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
12059	18	F	Y	Y	5	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
12060	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
12061	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
12062	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12063	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	Y	N
12064	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
12065	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
12066	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
12067	18	M	Y	Y		Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N		
ID	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q5**	**Q6**	**Q7**	**Q8**	**Q9**	**Q10**	**Q11**	**Q12**	**Q13**
12068	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
12069	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
12070	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
13001	18	F	A	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
13002	18	F	N.A.	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
13003	18	F	A	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
13004	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
13005	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
10006	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
13007	18	F	Y	Y	5	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
13008	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
13009	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
13010	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y
13011	18	F	Y	Y	1	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
13012	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
13013	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
13014	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	Y
13015	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
13016	18	M	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
13017	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
13018	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
13019	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
13020	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
13021	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
13022	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
13023	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
13024	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
13025	18	M	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
13026	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
13027	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
13028	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
130	1	F	Y	Y	1	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
1029	8												
1030	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
1031	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
1032	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
1033	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	Y
1034	18	M	Y	Y		Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N		
ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
1035	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
1036	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
1037	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	N	N	N	N	N
1038	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
1039	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
1040	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
1041	18	F	Y	Y	5	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
1042	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
1043	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
1044	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
1045	18	F	Y	Y	1	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
1046	18	M	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
1047	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
1048	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
1049	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
1050	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
1051	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
1052	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
1053	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
1054	18	F	A	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
1055	18	F	N.A.	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
1056	18	M	A	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
1057	18	F	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
13058	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
13059	18	F	Y	Y	5	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	N	N
13060	18	M	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
13061	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
13062	18	M	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
13063	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
13064	18	F	Y	Y	1	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
13065	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
13066	18	F	Y	Y	3	Pos	Pos	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y
13067	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	
ID	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q5**	**Q6**	**Q7**	**Q8**	**Q9**	**Q10**	**Q11**	**Q12**	**Q13**
13068	18	F	Y	Y	2	Pos	Pos	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
13069	18	M	Y	Y	3	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
13070	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
13071	18	F	Y	Y	4	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
13072	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
13073	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	N	Y	N
13074	18	F	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	N	N	Y	N	N	N
13075	18	M	Y	Y	1	Neg	Neg	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
13076	18	F	Y	Y	2	Neg	Neg	Y	N	N	N	N	N
13077	18	M	Y	Y	3	Pos	Neg	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
		ACC 134-18/37/18/26/35 **N/A** 279-76/58/59/44/42			**Composite** Positive 74 Negative 339 **Per Year… Access: Non-Access:**	**Composite:** Neg 301 Pos: 112 **Per year… Access:** 67%Pos NA ….Pos	**Composite** Yes 364 No 149 **Per Year… Access N/A**	**Composite** Yes 227 No 186 **Per Year Access N/A**			Composite Yes 120 No 293 **Per year Access : 57% n/a 43%**	

Survey responses from Staff

Code	Q1 Pos/Neg IoT	Q2 Pos/Neg of ITT	Q3 Attend and IoT	Q4 Children attend an IoT	Q5 Choose an IoT for son/daughter?	Q6 Reason for attending an IoT?
Acad01	pos	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad02	pos	Neg	N	N	Y	N
Acad03	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad04	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad05	pos	Pos	Y	Y	Y	N
Acad06	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad07	pos	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad08	pos	Pos	N	Y	Y	N
Acad09	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad10	pos	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad11	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad12	pos	Pos	N	N	N	Y
Acad13	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad14	pos	Pos	N	Y	Y	N
Acad15	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad16	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad17	Pos	Neg	N	N	Y	N
Acad18	pos	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad19	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad20	pos	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Subtotal						

Code	Q1 Pos/Neg IoT	Q2 Pos/Neg of ITT	Q3 Attend and IoT	Q4 Children attend an IoT	Q5 Choose an IoT for son/daughter?	Q6 Reason for attending an IoT?
Acad21	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad22	pos	Neg	N	N	Y	N
Acad23	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad24	pos	Pos	N	Y	Y	N
Acad25	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad26	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad27	pos	Neg	N	N	Y	N
Acad28	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad29	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad30	pos	Neg	N	Y	Y	N
Acad31	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad32	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad33	Pos	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad34	pos	Neg	N	Y	Y	Y
Acad35	Neg	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Acad36	pos	Neg	N	N	N	Y
Total						

Code	Q1 Pos/Neg IoT	Q2 Pos/Neg of ITT	Q3 Attend and IoT	Q4 Children attend an IoT	Q5 Choose an IoT for son/daughter?	Q6 Reason for attending an IoT?
Admin01	POS	POS	Y	Y	Y	N
Admin02	NEG	NEG	N	N	N	Y
Admin03	POS	POS	Y	N	Y	Y
Admin04	POS	POS	N	Y	Y	N
Admin05	POS	NEG	N	N	Y	Y
Admin06	POS	POS	N	N	Y	Y

Programmes Levels 6, 7 and 8 Pass rates for 2009-2014

Programme	60	Grand Total	% Pass
TA_HCART_C - Higher Cert in Culinary Arts	107	164	65.2%
TA_BMKTG_C - Level 6 Business (Marktg)	55	91	60.4%
TA_BACCT_C - Level 6 Business Accounting	48	84	57.1%
TA_BADMN_C - Level 6 Business (Bus Adm)	45	79	57.0%
TA_SSCIE_C - Level 6 Hig Cert in Science	77	146	52.7%
TA_EEMSY_C - Level 6 Electro Mech Eng	29	59	49.2%
TA_EMECH_C - Level 6 Hig Cert Mec Eng	112	236	47.5%
TA_KCOMP_C - Level 6 Higher Cert Computing	40	87	46.0%
TA_EELEC_C - Level 6 Electronic Eng	111	302	36.8%
			52.4%
	624	1248	50.0%

Programme	60	Grand Total	% Pass
TA_HSOCA_D - Level 7 Social Care Practice	2	2	100.0%
TA_SASCI_D - Level 7 Abinitio Deg in Scienc	61	76	80.3%
TA_SASCH_D - Lvl 7 Ab Dg in Sc Sprt and Hth	142	188	75.5%
TA_SAPHR_D - Lvl 7 Ab Dg in Sc in Phrma Sc	86	124	69.4%
TA_EAELE_D - AbInitio Ord Deg Elec Eng	38	60	63.3%
TA_SADNF_D - AbInitio Ord Deg DNA & Forensi	52	83	62.7%
TA_EAMEC_D - Level 7 Abinitio Deg Mech Eng	53	86	61.6%
TA_HHOTM_D - Lvl 7 Abinitio Int Hosp & Tour	107	176	60.8%
TA_BAACC_D - Level 7 Abinitio Ord Deg Acct	143	242	59.1%
TA_BAFIN_D - Lvl 7 Ab Initio Bus Fin Serv	10	17	58.8%
TA_EAEEE_D - Lvl 7 Enrgy Environmental Eng	141	246	57.3%
TA_BAMNG_D - Level 7 Abinitio Ord Deg Mgt	169	297	56.9%
TA_KITMG_D - Level 7 BSc IT Management Ord	42	74	56.8%
TA_KACOM_D - Level 7 Abinitio Degree Comp	132	247	53.4%
TA_BAMKT_D - Ab Initio Ord Degree in MKTG	91	202	45.0%
			64.1%
	1269	2120	59.9%

Programme	60	Grand Total	% Pass
A_HSOCA_B - Level 8 Social Care Practice	236	274	86.1%
A_HAVAB_B - Lvl 8 Abinitio Creat Digit Med	156	191	81.7%
A_SASCH_B - Lvl 08 Abinitio Deg in SS&H	45	56	80.4%
A_SPHAR_B - Level 8 BSc Science-Pharma Prd	99	127	78.0%
A_SABIO_B - Level 8 Abinitio Deg in Bioana	10	13	76.9%
A_KAITM_B - Level 8 Abinitio Degree IT Mgt	43	57	75.4%
A_EAMEC_B - Level 8 Abinitio Deg Mech Eng	51	68	75.0%
A_BAACC_B - Level 8 Abinitio Hons Acct	133	185	71.9%
A_EAELE_B - AbInitio Hons Deg Elec Eng	35	50	70.0%
A_BAMNG_B - Level 8 Abinitio Hons Mngt	170	243	70.0%
A_SADNF_B - Ab BSc Hons DNA & Forensic	70	102	68.6%
A_KACOM_B - BSc (HONS) Compuitng: Abinitio	143	211	67.8%
A_BAMCO_B - Lvl 8 Abinitio Hons Mkt & Adv	188	283	66.4%
A_HHOTM_B - Lvl 8 Abinitio Int Hosp & Tor	59	93	63.4%
A_BAFIN_B - Lvl 8 Abinitio Hd Bus Fin Serv	28	48	58.3%
A_BAMKT_B - Level 8 Hons Abinitio in Mkt	49	92	53.3%
A_EAEEE_B - Lvl 8 Enrgy Environmenal Eng	22	42	52.4%
A_HEURS_B - Level 8 Abinitio Euro Studies	148	301	49.2%
			65.6%
	1149	1788	64.3%

APPENDIX F THEMATIC ANALYSIS SAMPLE

DATA EXTRACT	CODED FOR
INTERVIEW 2 "Since starting college, I have done a lot of class tests and I was happy with most of the results but some of the results didn't make sense. There was just a grade at the end with no comments. **I want to do better but no-one tells me how to.** It's kinda frustrating when nobody tells you why you got that grade". (Access student)	Expectation Support Learning Access
INTERVIEW 6 "It takes a bit of getting used to at the start. You think everyone else knows everything and you feel lost. Even to know where to go to get infor is hard. **The school offices send you the Reg. office and the Reg. office send you back to the school office, so I just gave up**." (Non-access student)	Relationships Support Belonging/coping Non-access
INTERVIEW 5 "When I found out I got a place in college, I was so thrilled, I couldn't believe it. Noone else in my family has gone to college so everyone is so happy for me. I'm really looking forward to being a student, yeah, really looking forward to it. Even though they don't really know what an IT, sometimes I just say I'm at uni.." (Non-access student)	Expectations Views of an IoT Sense of identity as an IoT student Non-access
INTERVIEW 8 "I knew it would be different here but it's very different to school-nobody is keeping an eye on you and nobody really notices you, sometimes I miss my teachers, I never thought I'd be saying that (laughs). At least Miss (name concealed) would get on my case if I was out" (Access student)	Support Care Relationships IoT culture Access student

Appendix G Tables to accompany Figures in Chapters 4 and 5

Table G1 Number of Successful and Incomplete Students, 2009-2013: Students from Access and

Non-Access Schools

Year	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
Success	Access	Non-A	Access	Non-A	Access	Non-A	Access	Non-A	Access	Non-A
Incomplete	10	321	15	311	11	250	16	214	12	197
Success	24	495	40	568	29	513	28	479	40	446
Total	34	816	55	879	40	763	44	693	52	643
Success rate	70.5	60.6	72.7	64.6	72.5	67.2	63.3	69.3	76.9	69.3

Table G2   Average CAO Points for Access Students 2009-2013 by Progression Status.

CAO points	Student No.s	Av Pts	SD Pts
2009	22	296.4	69.5
Non-Prog	7	263.6	84.9
Prog	15	311.7	58.0
2010	42	278.2	57.0
Non-Prog	12	242.5	70.0
Prog	30	292.5	44.6
2011	23	291.7	54.3
Non-Prog	6	270.0	77.0
Prog	17	299.4	44.3
2012	29	283.1	57.9
Non-Prog	13	271.5	64.5
Prog	16	292.4	52.1
2013	40	295.6	68.1
Non-Prog	8	266.4	54.3
Prog	32	302.9	69.9
Grand Total	156	288.1	61.3

Table G3   Average CAO Points for Non-Access Students 2009-2013, by Progression

Status

CAO points	Student No.s	Avg Points	SD Pts
200900	773	289.6	66.1
Non-Prog	301	262.8	67.4
Prog	470	306.9	59.3
201000	785	299.1	62.1
Non-Prog	293	270.7	61.6
Prog	491	316.1	56.0
201100	729	299.3	60.8
Non-Prog	239	267.9	54.3
Prog	489	314.7	57.9
201200	639	305.1	67.8
Non-Prog	199	271.9	54.8
Prog	440	320.1	67.8
201300	611	305.8	67.7
Non-Prog	191	277.0	60.8
Prog	420	318.9	66.7
Grand Total	3537	299.3	65.0

Table G4 Number of Students (Access and Non-Access) by Progression Status, 2009-2013

Year	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
Success	Access	Non-A	Access	Non-A	Access	Non-A	Access	Non-A	Access	Non-A
Incom Succ.	10	321	15	311	11	250	16	214	12	197
Success	24	495	40	568	29	513	28	479	40	446
Total	34	816	55	879	40	763	44	693	52	643

Table G5 Number of Students who had a Positive or Negative View of IoTs, 2009-2013

Responses	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Total
All participants	94	95	77	70	77	n=413
negative	70	71	65	64	69	339
positive	24	24	12	6	8	74
% All students Positive view	25.5%	25.5%	15.58%	8.5%	11.4%	17.9%
Access response	**20**	**24**	**19**	**18**	**21**	**n=102**
negative	2	6	10	14	15	47
positive	18	18	9	4	6	55
% Access students with positive view	90%	90%	47%	22%	28.5%	53.9%
Non access response	**74**	**71**	**58**	**52**	**56**	**n=311**
negative	68	65	55	50	54	292
positive	6	6	3	2	2	19
% Non-Access students with positive view	8%	8.4%	5.1%	3.8%	3.7%	6.1%

Table G6 Number of Students who had a positive or negative view of IoT students

Responses	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Total
All participants	**94**	**95**	**77**	**70**	**77**	**n=413**
Positive	25	26	21	19	21	112
Negative	69	69	56	51	56	301
%All students Positive view	26.6%	27.3%	27.2%	27%	27.2%	27.1%
Access	**20**	**24**	**19**	**18**	**21**	**n =102**
Positive	13	16	13	12	14	68
Negative	7	8	6	6	7	34
% access students with positive view	65%	66.6%	68.4%	66.6%	66.6%	66.64%
Non-access	**74**	**71**	**58**	**52**	**56**	**N=311**
Positive	12	10	8	7	7	44
Negative	62	61	50	45	49	267
% Non-Access students with positive view	16.2%	14%	13.7%	13.4%	12.5%	14.1%

Table G7 Number of Students who are happy to be attending an IoT

Responses	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Total
All participants	94	95	77	70	77	n=413
Happy	60	61	49	45	49	264
Not happy	34	34	28	25	28	149
% All students Happy	63.8%	64.2%	63.6%	64.2%	63.6%	63.9%
Access	20	24	19	18	21	n =102
Happy	16	20	14	13	16	79
Not happy	4	4	5	5	5	23
% Access students Happy	80%	83.3%	73.6%	72.2%	76.1%	77.4%
Non-access	74	71	58	52	56	N=311
Happy	44	41	35	32	33	185
Not happy	30	30	23	20	23	126
% Non-Access students Happy	59.45%	57.7%	60.35	61.55	58.95	59.45

Table G8 Number of Students who are happy to be attending ITT

Responses	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Total
All participants	94	95	77	70	77	n=413
Happy here	52	52	42	40	42	228
Not happy here	42	43	35	30	35	185
% All students Happy	53.5%	54.7%	54.5%	57.1%	54.5%	55.2%
Access	20	24	19	18	21	n =102
Happy here	14	16	13	12	14	69
Not happy here	6	8	6	6	7	33
% Access students Happy	70%	66.6%	68.4%	66.6%	66.6	67.6%
Non-access	74	71	58	52	56	N=311
Happy here	38	36	29	28	28	159
Not happy here	36	35	29	24	28	152
% Non-Access students Happy	51.3%	50.7%	50%	53.8%	50%	51.1%

Table G9 Number of Students who are Thinking of Leaving

Responses	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Total
All participants In Early Days Survey	94	95	77	70	77	413
Yes I am thinking of Leaving	27	27	22	20	23	119
No, I am not thinking of Leaving	67	67	55	50	55	294
% All Students Thinking of Leaving	28.7%	28.2%	28.5%	28.57%	29.8%	28.8%
Access	20	24	19	18	21	n=102
Yes I am thinking of Leaving	11	14	11	10	12	58
No, I am not thinking of Leaving	9	10	8	8	9	44
% Access Students Thinking of Leaving	55%	58.3%	57.8%	55.5%	57%	56.8%
Non-access	74	71	58	52	56	N=311
Yes I am thinking of Leaving	16	13	11	10	11	61
No, I am not thinking of Leaving	58	58	47	42	45	250
% Non-Access Students Thinking of Leaving	21.6%	18.3%	18.9%	19.2	19.6	19.6

Table G10 Overall responses to questions posed to academic staff

Questions	Q1 Positive or negative view of IoTs	Q2 Positive or Negative view of The Institute	Q3 Did you attend an IoT	Q4 Have your children attended an IoT	Q5 Would you choose an IoT for your child	Q6 Students attend an IoT due to not getting into university
Responses	Positive: 19 (52.7%)	Positive: 5 (13.8%)	Yes: 1 (2.7%)	Yes: 6 (16.6%)	Yes: 10 (27.7%)	Agree: 27 (75%)
	Negative: 17 (47.2%)	Negative: 31 (86.1%)	No: 35 (97.2%)	No: 30 (83.3%)	No: 26 (72.2%)	Disagree: 9 (25%)

Table G11 Overall responses to questions posed to support staff

Questions	Q1 Positive or negative view of IoTs	Q2 Positive or Negative view of The Institute	Q3 Did you attend an IoT	Q4 Have your children attended an IoT	Q5 Would you choose an IoT for your child	Q6 Students attend an IoT due to not getting into university
Responses	Positive: 5 (83.3%)	Positive: 4 (66.6%)	Yes: 2 (33.3%)	Yes: 2 (33.3%)	Yes: 5 (83.3%)	Agree: 4 (66.6%)
	Negative: 1 (16.6%)	Negative: 2 (33.3%)	No: 4 (66.6%)	No: 4 (66.6%)	No: 1 (16.6%)	Disagree: 2 (33.3%)

Table G12 Number of Students who engaged with class colleagues and social media

BELONGING AY	Work with classmates all	access	non-access	Engage on social media with classmates-all	access	non-access
09/10 n=24	4 (16.6%)	1 (4.16%)	3 (12.5%)	5 (20.8%)	2(8.3%)	3(12.5%)
10/11 n=24	5 (20.8%)	2 (8.3%)	3 (12.5%)	8 (33.3%)	4(16.6%)	4(16.6%)
11/12 n=24	4 (16.6%)	1 (4.16%)	3 (12.5%)	10 (41.6%)	6(25%)	4(16.6%)
12/13 n=27	4 (14.28%)	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	17 (62.9%)	12(44,4%)	5(18.5%)
13/14 n=20	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	15 (75%)	7(35%)	8(40%))
Total 119	Average 16.8%	5%	11.7%	46.2%	26%	20.1%

Table G13 Number of Students with positive perceptions of care from academic and

support staff

AY	Care from academic staff to all students	Care to access students	Care to non-access	Care from support staff to all students	Care to access students	Care to non-access
09/10 n=24	16 (66.6%)	7 (29.1%)	9 (37.5%)	18 (75%)	10(41.6%)	8(33.3%)
10/11 n=24	13 (54.1%)	7 (29.1%)	6 (25%)	16 (66.6%)	8(33.3%)	8(33.3%)
11/12 n=24	15 (62.5%)	9 (37.5%)	6 (25%)	17 (70.8%)	10(41.6%)	7(29.1%)
12/13 n=27	15 (55.5%)	4 (14.8%)	11 (40.7%)	18 (66.6%)	9(33.3%)	9(33.3%)
13/14 n=20	11 (55%)	5 (25%)	6 (30%)	12 (60%)	8(40%)	4(20%)
Total: 119	Average: 58.8%	Average 26.9%	Average 31.9%	Average: 68%	Average 37.8%	Average (30.2%)

Table G14 Number of Students who stated their confidence had increased

Has your confidence increased? Academic Year	access students who answered yes	Non-access who answered yes
2009/10 n=24	7 (29.1%)	9 (37.5%)
2010/11 n=24	5 (20.8%)	6 (25%)
2011/12 n=24	6 (25%)	8 (33.3%)
2012/13 n=27	10 (37%)	8 (30.4%)
2013/14 n=20	7 (35%)	4 (20%)
Total: 119	Average 29.4%	29.4%

Table G15 Number of Students who are coping well with the new environment

Are you coping well with the new environment? Academic Year	access students who said yes	non-access who said yes
2009/10 n=24	9 (37.5%)	9 (37.5%)
2010/11 n=24	10 (41.6%)	7 (29.1%)
2011/12 n=24	9 (37.5%)	9 (37.5%)
2012/13 n=27	10 (37%)	6 (22%)
2013/14 n=20	9 (45%)	5 (25%)
Total: 119	Avg: 39.5%	Avg: 30%

Table G16 Number of Students who are said they are happy at college

Academic Year	access students who said yes	non-access who said yes
2009/10 n=24	8 (33.3%)	3 (12.5%)
2010/11 n=24	5 (20.8%)	2 (8.3%)
2011/12 n=24	4 (16.6%)	4 (16.7%)
2012/13 n=27	8 (29.6%)	5 (18.5%)
2013/14 n=20	4 (20%)	3 (15%)
Total: 119	Average: 24.4%	Average: 14.3%

**Table G17 Number of Students who said they are considering leaving.**

Have you considered leaving college? Academic Year	access students	non-access
2009/10 n=24	1 (4.1%)	7 (29.1%)
2010/11 n=24	2 (8.3%)	5 (20.8%)
2011/12 n=24	2 (8.3%)	8 (33.3%)
2012/13 n=27	1 (3.7%)	7 (25.9%)
2013/14 n=20	1 (5%)	4 (20%)
Total: 119	Avg: 5.8%	Avg: 26%

**Table G18   Percentage of Students who answered 'never' to student-staff interaction**

Question	2016	2017
1 Talking about career plans	Never: 48.3%	Never:51.2%
2. Worked with staff outside of classroom	Never: 69.3%	Never: 68.7%
3. Discussed course topics	Never: 45.1%	Never: 48.2%
4. Discussed academic performance	Never: 36.3%	Never: 36.3%

# Appendix H Online Reflective Diary Sample Pages

H1 Homepage on Moodle VLE with supports for participants

H2 Access page to online reflective diary on Moodle

H3 Reflective Diary introduction for year 1 student participants

H4 Diary entry related to feelings of isolation