Transitions Toward Transformation: Exploring Continuing Professional Development for Teachers in Ireland (2 Vols.)

Volume 1

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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Aistear	Early Childhood Curriculum
BC	British Columbia
CBR	Country Background Report
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPPD	Continuing Personal and Professional Development
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills
EC	Education Centre
EI	Education International Research Institute
EPV	Extra Personal Vacation
EU	European Union
FCL	Fostering Communities of Learning
GTCS	General Teaching Council for Scotland
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICDU	In-career Development Unit
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFTRA	International Forum of Teaching Regulatory Authorities
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
IPPN	Irish Primary Principals' Network
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LDS	Leadership Development for Schools
Misneach	Support Programme for Newly-Appointed Principals
NAPD	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
NBPTS	National Board for Professional Teacher Standards
NBSS	National Behaviour Support Service
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NWP	National Writing Project
OECD	Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development
OPCS	Office of Public Census and Surveys
P	Parent
PCSP	Primary Curriculum Support Programme

PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PDU	Professional Development Unit
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PM	Primary Management
PPDS	Primary Professional Development Service
PPM	Post-primary Management
PT	Principal Teacher
SDPI	School Development Planning Initiative
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SLSS	Second Level Support Service
SS	Support Service
SSE	School Self-Evaluation
TAP	Teacher Assessment Programme
TC	Teaching Council
TE	Teacher Educator
TES	Teacher Education Section
TL21	Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century
TN	Teacher Network
TPN	Teacher Professional Network
TPC	Teacher Professional Community
TU	Teacher Union
WSE	Whole-School Evaluation

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Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

Dedication

In loving memory of Maurice

with love to

my children

David, Anne-Marie and Catherine

my son-in-law

John

my two wonderful granddaughters

Juno and Ruth

Declaration

I hereby certify that this thesis, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is my own work and all sources of information used have been acknowledged within the text of my work. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any award.

Abstract

This thesis addresses the question of a national framework for continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers in Ireland. The framework aims to make provision for CPD that would be transformative in its impact on teachers, improving the quality of teaching for the benefit of the young people in the education system and enhancing the personal and professional well-being of teachers. In that context, the literature on adult education as transformative learning was examined in constructing the conceptual framework underpinning the research.

Three methods are used to address the research question: a questionnaire survey to teachers, individual interviews with stakeholder representatives and focus group interviews with teachers. In building the foundation for meaningful CPD, the research takes an overview of the teacher's career, looking at what motivates people to be teachers, how their programmes of initial teacher education prepare them and how they see themselves as professionals in their career. It then goes on to examine teachers' experiences of CPD to date and the perceived benefits of those experiences. Finally, teachers' and stakeholders' thoughts on CPD in the future are examined.

The research findings show that, while teachers are highly motivated to work with young people and to make a difference in their lives, a framework for CPD is urgently required if transformation of the profession is to happen. In particular, the research establishes that: a significant number of teachers do not have a strong sense of professional identity: the notion of being lifelong learners has not been internalised by all teachers, albeit that there is much engagement in professional learning; a culture of collaboration among teachers is not yet embedded in schools in Ireland.

The areas identified are in need of attention in the context of a CPD framework for teacher transformation. A number of ideas, based on the principles of adult education, are put forward in this thesis to address these areas. Suggestions are also offered in relation to the practicalities of progressing a CPD framework for teachers.

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

Introduction

This thesis seeks to answer the question "what would be necessary for the creation of a national framework for continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers in Ireland which would ensure their transformative development, in the interest of facilitating high quality education for young people throughout their careers?" This research question is premised on the conviction that teachers need to be lifelong learners to ensure the quality of their teaching. As teachers are members of school communities, their learning is an interactional rather than an isolated process, albeit at times an individual pursuit. It is intended, therefore, that the personal dimension of professional development will be to the fore in this study. This study explores teachers' CPD mainly through the lens of Transformation Theory which was introduced by Mezirow (1995) in the early 90s as "a theoretical model of how adults learn" (p.1). Much has been written about adult education since the 90s and the literature on transformative learning in this context is explored in Chapter 3.

This introductory chapter sets out the importance of the research question and the rationale for choosing the topic of teachers' CPD for this thesis. Secondary questions arising from the main question are also set out, together with a brief outline of the relevance of each. The choice of research subjects and research methods, together with the reasons for choosing them, are outlined. There is a brief summary of each chapter as a guide to the content of the thesis.

The idea of "transformative learning" is explored in Chapter 3, but it is necessary here to say a few words of clarification about the notions of "CPD framework", "development" and "quality", particularly as employed in this research study. Firstly, a "framework" is not a static entity. It is a fluid, dynamic system which encompasses and accommodates the complex nature of CPD and multidimensional provisions for teachers' CPD. This is not to suggest that a CPD framework lacks stability or consistency. Its firm foundations will be the principles on which it is built and its supporting pillars will be stakeholders and others who work with teachers to ensure that the vision for transformative CPD is realised.

Secondly, as regards "development", much has been written in the context of teacher education, distinguishing between professional learning and professional development. This is dealt with in more detail at a later stage in the study. Essentially, development implies growth, growth brings change and change, when truly productive, means transformation. Good CPD can transform teachers and impact positively on the quality of teaching and learning for young people in the classroom. Hargreaves (2003) holds that "Professional development involves more than learning knowledge and skills…[it is] a personal path toward greater professional integrity and human growth" (pp.62-63).

Thirdly, in relation to "quality", an explication of what this concept implies for teaching is found in Berliner's (2005) three components of good teaching:

> the logical acts of teaching (defining, demonstrating, modelling, explaining, correcting, etc.); the psychological acts of teaching (caring, motivating, encouraging, rewarding, punishing, planning, evaluating, etc.); and the moral acts of teaching (showing honesty, courage, tolerance, compassion, respect, fairness, etc. (p.207).

One may argue with Berliner's definition of the components of quality teaching, and one may find words such as "punishment" objectionable, but he himself agrees that when these three components are "coupled with demonstrations of student learning, we have a start towards a definition of quality in teaching" (p.207).

1.1 The importance of the topic being researched

The topic of teachers' CPD was chosen for this study because of the importance of quality teaching in the lives of pupils and students in schools. It can be argued that teachers, after parents, have the greatest responsibility for the educational and all-round development of young people. The education system, therefore, must ensure that teaching is of the highest quality, facilitated by excellent teachers who are well prepared for their role in the ever-changing world of the 21st century. The rapid changes in society are manifested in the rapidly changing needs of young people, not from generation to generation as happened long ago, but almost from year to year. This is evident in students' use of technology, social media, classroom interactions, leisure pursuits, etc. Teachers have to respond to the changing needs of their pupils and students, helping them to live fulfilled lives as young people now and as adults in the future. This requires that teachers are transformed in their adoption of new ways of relating to, and working with, students, parents, colleagues and the many people who form the school community.

1.2 The rationale for the choice of topic

In almost all professions, e.g., medicine, nursing, dentistry, law, CPD is undertaken by the members of the profession and, in most cases, it is a requirement for the continuation of their registration with their professional body which gives them a licence to practise. It is recognised that new knowledge and practices are continually being researched and discovered. Therefore, it is incumbent on professional practitioners to keep abreast of new developments and CPD provides opportunities to do so. While CPD is not yet a mandatory requirement for teachers in Ireland, it is expected that the Teaching Council will require evidence of CPD for renewal of registration from 2016.

When this study was initiated, I was CEO of the Teaching Council. It is within the statutory[1] remit of the Teaching Council in Ireland to promote the continuing professional development of teachers. It was hoped that the findings from the study, albeit undertaken in a personal capacity, would contribute to the Council's formulation of policy on teachers' CPD. The Council has issued an initial document, *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education*, (2011a), but there has been little in-depth study to date on CPD for teachers in Ireland which might inform the work of the Council. It is intended that many of the ideas and insights yielded by this research will be centrally relevant to the Council's work in promoting the continuing professional development of teachers.

Apart from initially being work-related, the topic of transformative CPD was chosen for this study because of my personal lifelong commitment to professional development. I have a passionate interest in CPD for teachers, developed over a 42-year career in teaching and education. This career included 21 years as a School Principal, 6 years as National Co-ordinator of the largest in-service programme undertaken in the State and 7 years as the first CEO of the Teaching Council. The journey of learning and developing as a teacher, alone and with others, has been a lifetime of exploration of which this study is a part.

1.3 Refining the research question

In order to refine the research question, the context for teachers' CPD was considered. Information was gathered from policy and discussion documents, from Irish and international sources, in relation to historical and current developments. A focused

[1] Teaching Council Act, 2001, "39.—(1) The Council shall promote the continuing education and training and professional development of teachers….conduct research into the continuing education and training and professional development of teachers… review and accredit programmes relating to the continuing education and training of teachers"

selection of literature which was of relevance to teachers' CPD was also examined. There was much interesting and valuable information in the documentation and in the literature, particularly from international publications. A significant gap, however, was evident in the published material on the provision for CPD for teachers in Ireland. No CPD framework for Irish teachers has been developed, in so far as the pursuit of it through documentary evidence could ascertain.

The initial consideration of the context and the examination of the literature, not having yielded any evidence of a CPD framework for teachers in Ireland, led to the question: what research would need to be conducted to inform policy on the establishment of a CPD framework which would facilitate transformative CPD for teachers? In considering what research would need to be conducted, a number of questions related to the main research question came to the fore:

1.3.1 Questions related to the main research question:

(a) What motivates a person to be a teacher?
(b) How well does Initial Teacher Education (ITE) prepare teachers for their role?
(c) What are teachers' perceptions of their professional identity?
(d) What has been teachers' experience of CPD during their career to date?
(e) How are the benefits of CPD manifested in teachers' practice?
(f) How can we move forward in developing a CPD framework?

These questions are important because the line of argument being advanced and explored in this thesis is that a framework for CPD which is successful in enabling teacher transformation is contingent on teachers who: enter the profession for the best of motives; experience programmes of initial teacher education that prepare them well; have a highly developed sense of professional identity in their discourse and actions as practitioners; are willing to engage in meaningful professional development on an on-going basis throughout their career. It is anticipated that the insights and information which the responses to these questions might yield will contribute significantly to answering the main research question. Each question is discussed more fully in the following paragraphs.

The question "What motivates a person to be a teacher?" matters in that the motivating factors in choosing teaching as a career will greatly determine the level of interest and passion with which a teacher undertakes his/her work. Motivation can change as one progresses through the teaching career, sometimes waning in face of personal circumstances or professional challenges. Anecdotally, it is generally believed that teachers

are motivated by a desire to make a difference in the lives of young people. A range of explanations can be attributed to this aspiration but it usually translates as giving young people life chances of which they might otherwise have been deprived. Linked to motivation, the questionnaire survey also explores "Who" influences people to be teachers and this is of relevance, particularly if family tradition is cited. When people enter a career which has been part of their lives through their formative years, it is likely that they have a good knowledge of what the work involves. They will also have been party to family conversations and conversations between family members and teaching colleagues from which they will have gained insights and formed opinions about the profession. This enables someone to make an informed choice to be, or not to be, a teacher.

The area of ITE is included in the research as it is at the beginning of the continuum of teacher education. As such, it sets the foundation for the teacher's journey of lifelong learning. Currently, there is much attention focussed on ITE in Ireland as programmes are being extended and reconceptualised. Teachers' reflections on their own ITE experiences and stakeholders' perceptions of ITE could be informative as part of the research. They could indicate the areas which may not have been addressed adequately, or at all, in ITE and which are now central to the teacher's role, thus requiring attention through CPD. In this study, it is not intended to carry out an in-depth investigation of ITE programmes in the State but to acknowledge their place in the teacher education process.

The question of the teacher's identity is also central to the consideration of teachers' CPD needs. Professional identity changes as the teacher grows and develops in his/her role. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) explain that "identity shifts may occur throughout a teacher's career as a result of interactions within schools and in broader communities" (p. 175). The exploration of professional identity in this study relates to the teacher's own awareness of the complexity of teaching, the body of professional knowledge and the extensive range of professional skills he/she has developed, the multiplicity of decisions made on a constant basis in the practice of teaching every day and, above all, the moral purpose inherent in teaching. Beijaard et al (2000) explain that it is important that teachers are keenly aware of their professional identity because "…perceptions of their own professional identity affect their efficacy and professional development as well as their ability and willingness to cope with educational change and to implement innovations…" (p.750). Battey and Frank (2008) also link professional identity with professional development, pointing out that "Identity is shaped by the knowledge and skills we acquire

and shapes the knowledge and skills we seek to develop…professional development is a space for acquiring new knowledge, re-crafting identities, and challenging existing cultural and social practices" (p.128).

1.4 Choice of research participants and research methodology

It was decided to collect data on the experience of teachers in Ireland, in the context of the continuum of teacher education, to identify teachers' professional learning needs. Questions in relation to who might participate in the research and how the research data might be gathered were considered. Two sources of information on teachers' learning needs were identified, these being teachers themselves and the stakeholders in education. Teachers have personal knowledge of their learning needs, in so far as they reflect on their practice, individually and with colleagues. The stakeholders have knowledge of teaching from their interaction with teachers, from their observation of what happens in schools and from cross-sectoral dialogue and discourse. The stakeholders' insights on teachers' professional learning needs offer an added dimension to teachers' beliefs regarding their own learning needs. It was decided to seek information from teachers and stakeholders using the following research methods: (i) a questionnaire survey with teachers at home and abroad; (ii) individual interviews with key stakeholders in Irish education and (iii) focus group interviews with teachers in Ireland. These three methods, defended in Chapter 4, were combined with a view to yielding a rich harvest of data, the analysis of which might suggest productive ways ahead in creating a framework for transformative CPD for teachers.

In collecting the research data, teachers' engagement in lifelong learning through non-formal and formal CPD opportunities is explored. The research also seeks to ascertain the perceived benefits of CPD, from the teachers' perspectives and from the stakeholders' perceptions. Opinions are sought as to how it might be possible to move forward in developing a CPD framework. The findings from the three research sources, together with an analysis of the findings, are set out in in Chapters 5 – 9. An outline of these, and all other chapters, is set out in the overview of the thesis that follows.

1.5 Overview of Thesis

Chapter 1, this chapter, introduces the research questions, sets out the purpose of the study and provides a preliminary exploration of the research areas which are related to the main question.

Chapter 2 sets the background and context for the development of a CPD framework for teachers in Ireland which could enable the transformation of teaching and learning in the State. This involves the careful selection and examination of relevant documentation from Irish and international sources. It also looks at the development of CPD opportunities, through the structures and provision for CPD, for teachers in Ireland from the late 90s onwards. The range of documentation on teachers' CPD is evidence of the enormous interest in teachers and quality teaching worldwide over the past two decades. The proliferation of publications on education systems, on the work of schools, on the role of the teacher and on student performance is unprecedented. Teachers' professional learning needs, in the interest of improving the quality of teaching, are the subject of much public scrutiny and debate. The documentation selected for consideration in the second chapter consists of significant policy and discussion papers, many of which have been the subject of public debate in Ireland, e.g., the OECD *Teachers Matter* (2005).

Chapter 3 constructs the conceptual framework for this study through the lens of adult education, and more particularly Jack Mezirow's theory of transformative learning. The focus of the study is the creation of a framework for teachers' CPD which would enable the transformation of teaching and learning in our schools. There will be some elaboration on the difference between learning and development in Chapter 3 but, for now, the terms are used interchangeably. When teachers engage in CPD, they are engaging as adults. Teacher's CPD, therefore, is adult education. There is a vast body of literature on adult education and also on teachers' continuing professional development. The literature is examined in Chapter 3 with a view to constructing a theoretical framework for teachers' professional development in the context of adult education. The areas being considered in the literature are: teachers' professional identity; the transformative potential of adult education as a process of change for teachers and Continuing Professional Development as the nucleus for teachers' professional learning.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology used for this study. Three methods are employed to gather data: a questionnaire survey with teachers in Ireland, Canada, Scotland and Australia; individual interviews with key stakeholders in education in Ireland and with a key educator from each of Canada, Scotland and New Zealand; focus group interviews with primary and post-primary teachers in Ireland. The international dimension of the survey is undertaken to establish a baseline, looking at whether or not there are significant differences between Irish teachers and teachers in other education systems which are broadly similar to our own. In the questionnaire, the information being sought relates to

teachers' motivation to enter the profession, teachers' initial teacher education, teachers' professional identity, teachers' experiences of CPD and their opinions on policy aspects of CPD provision. The questionnaire survey is foundational to the individual interviews and to the focus group interviews and contributes to informing the structure and content of both sets of interviews. The interviews follow similar lines of enquiry to those of the questionnaire. The personal interactions during the interviews allow the author to probe more deeply into interviewees' responses and this facilitates the emergence of key insights into interviewees' thinking on teachers, on teaching and on teachers' professional learning.

Chapter 5 presents and analyses the findings from the questionnaire survey. A vast amount of data was generated from the 168[2] completed questionnaires which were returned. The data chosen for inclusion in the thesis are those which were most significant, i.e., the responses which are ranked highest, and in some cases those ranked lowest, by the survey participants. Stacked bar graphs illustrate the responses for all questions and are included in Chapter 5. 215 charts representing the findings for each possible response, differentiated across the four jurisdictions surveyed, are included in the Appendices. A summary of the findings from the questionnaires shows that: teachers are motivated to be teachers because they want to work with young people and make a difference in their lives; teachers have a strong sense of professional identity in relation to their professional role but they do not believe that they are held in high esteem by the public; staff meetings are the occasions when teachers most frequently engage in non-formal professional learning; in recent years, the majority of teachers have engaged in school-based CPD, followed closely by optional CPD organised nationally or regionally; interactive seminars are the most frequently experienced format of CPD and collaboration with colleagues is the most beneficial form of CPD, according to the respondents.

Chapter 6 covers the first part of the individual interviews with the stakeholders. Response charts were constructed to indicate the comments and the level of response from the interviewees. The interviewees' perceptions of the following aspects of the teaching profession are presented and analysed: people's motivation to become teachers; initial teacher education; the public perception of teaching/teachers and teachers' professional identity. According to the research findings, the stakeholders believe that the motivation to teach arises mainly from a desire to work with young people and to share their own love of learning, particularly in relation to their favourite subject(s). Stakeholders' priorities in

[2] In the Questionnaire, there were 22 questions with a total of 215 suggested responses. Therefore, the 168 completed questionnaires yielded over 35,000 pieces of data.

relation to the reconceptualised programmes of ITE centre on partnership between teachers/schools and teacher educators/HEIs with teachers having a designated role in relation to student teachers. There is a general belief among the stakeholders that teachers are highly regarded by their pupils'/students' parents but not so by the media. A number of interviewees are concerned that newly qualified teachers do not seem to have well-developed interpersonal skills in dealing with parents and the wider community. For that reason, it is suggested by the stakeholders that greater attention needs to be paid to student teachers' personal development during their ITE. The interviewees, for the most part, perceive that teachers do not have a strong sense of teaching as a profession nor do they portray a strong sense of their professional identity.

Chapter 7 continues with the presentation and analysis of data from the stakeholder interviewees. This includes the stakeholders' perceptions of: teachers seeing themselves as lifelong learners; the State's provision for teachers' CPD from the mid-90s to date; the development of a collaborative culture among teachers in Irish schools and the impact on schools of good CPD. The stakeholder interviewees believe that teachers' interest in CPD has grown in recent years but they are not convinced that teachers see themselves as lifelong learners. The stakeholders comment on the level of teachers' engagement in non-formal professional learning in support of their views, e.g., teachers as reflective practitioners, reading professional material, being members of professional bodies. The stakeholders, on the whole, have positive views of the State provision for CPD but it is largely perceived in utilitarian rather than transformative terms. Collaboration is not seen by the stakeholders to be embedded in school practice and the issue of time is raised in this regard. While the word "transformative" is not used by any interviewees in relation to the impact of CPD, it could be inferred from some responses that good CPD would bring about a change in a number of areas of teachers' practice and school life.

Chapter 8 is the first part of the presentation and analysis of the interviews with the focus groups of teachers. The areas covered with the focus group participants mirror those pursued with the stakeholder interviewees, i.e., people's motivation to become teachers; initial teacher education; the public perception of teaching/teachers and teachers' professional identity. The findings indicate that the influence of their own teachers, when they themselves were pupils/students, can be a motivating factor, as well as wanting to work with young people and to make a difference in their lives. In speaking of ITE, a number of teachers express negative views of their own experience of ITE. Teachers in the Focus Groups are interested in being more involved in supporting student teachers rather than

being passive observers as they currently are, to a large extent. With regard to the public perception of teaching, the focus group interviewees believe that teachers are highly regarded at local level but not in the media. The latter is a source of hurt and annoyance to them. When speaking of professional identity, the focus group participants do not articulate clearly their sense of their professional role. The participants' sense of identity, as they expressed it, lacked a proactive dimension. It was influenced mainly by how the teachers believe others see them.

Chapter 9 is the second part of the presentation and analysis of the interviews with the focus groups of teachers. Here, the areas explored are: teachers as lifelong learners, teachers' experience of CPD, the effects of CPD and the development of a collaborative professional culture among teachers in Irish schools. In relation to teachers as lifelong learners, the area most frequently referred to by the participants in the Focus Groups was that of postgraduate studies. In relation to CPD in general, the findings indicate that all primary teachers have experienced sustained CPD, mainly in relation to a revised curriculum, over a lengthy period of time from the late 90s. By contrast, the official CPD provision for post-primary teachers is seen to be largely confined to those teachers where the syllabi for their subjects have been revised. In speaking of the benefits of CPD, the participants in the four focus groups exhibited a certain level of satisfaction and positivity as they listed a number of benefits resulting from CPD, e.g., sharing their experiences and ideas. There is evidence in the findings that collaborative practices are beginning to develop but an embedded culture of collaboration is not evidenced in the participants' responses.

Chapter 10 highlights the main issues and concerns identified in the research data that need attention. This chapter seeks to identify what would be needed to address these areas. The issues emerging from the research relate to teachers' professional identity, teachers and the continuum of teacher education, teachers as lifelong learners and teachers' professional responsibilities. The subsections identified within each area of issue are considered. The issue of teachers' professional identity in the research relates to teachers' self-confidence, their sense of professional competence, the effect of the current economic situation on teachers and teachers' relationship with the Teaching Council. The issues connected with the continuum of teacher education in the research include the perception of a top-down and a one-size-fits-all approach to nationally-facilitated CPD, the lack of sustained support to implement and embed new initiatives in schools and the allocation of time for CPD. Lifelong learning issues in the research show the need to pay

attention to teachers' reflective practice, to teachers' engagement in research and to a career path for the teaching profession. The issue of teachers' professional responsibilities in the research relates to the changing role of the teacher in the twenty-first century. In that regard, the need for teachers to work collaboratively and to support new entrants to the profession is highlighted.

Chapter 11 examines how an enabling provision for CPD could transform teachers and teaching. Constructive possibilities through transformative CPD for making progress on the issues identified in Chapter 10 are suggested. These suggestions include the transformation of teachers' sense of professional identity in the context of teachers' awareness of their role and in teachers' evaluation of their practice. Learning and CPD opportunities and professional designations for teachers are proposed, to promote and enhance a culture of lifelong learning in the teaching profession. The promotion of teachers' CPD through the creation of professional learning communities and the potential for transformation as a learner in a learning community are discussed.

Chapter 12 looks at some practical issues in creating a framework for transformative CPD for teachers. Ideas are presented on the issues of developing teachers' and stakeholders' awareness of the transformative potential of CPD for teaching and learning in schools. The creation of consultative structures for CPD which could inform CPD policies and processes are also discussed. Other areas for consideration in the creation of a CPD framework are identified: the role of school leadership; accreditation of CPD providers; recognition of CPD towards academic and professional awards/qualifications; teacher foreign exchange programmes; funding and time. The issue of finding time for teachers' CPD is considered in some detail and, in that context, new ways of working in schools and classrooms are advocated.

Chapter 2

Historical and Current Context

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set the context for this thesis on teachers' continuing professional development. In Ireland, the concept of teachers' CPD became part of the education agenda in the early 70s. The catalyst for this was the launch of the New Primary School Curriculum (1971) with the promise of a supporting programme of in-service education to facilitate its implementation. However, a contemporaneous oil crisis and a downturn in the economy meant that the supporting CPD programme was not facilitated on a systematic scale, as intended. Thereafter, the remaining years of the 70s and the 80s saw little organised provision for teachers' CPD.

This chapter, then, will look at developments in relation to CPD for teachers from the 90s onwards. References to relevant aspects of the international situation on teachers' CPD will also be included. The chapter will be set out in three main sections as follows:

2.1 Irish and international policy and discussion documents from 1990 onwards
2.2 Bodies that support provision for teachers CPD in Ireland
2.3 Conclusion

2.1 Irish and international policy and discussion documents from 1990 onwards

There is an extensive range of policy and discussion documentation from the 90s onwards, devoted wholly or in part to CPD for teachers. For this study, the documents are broadly grouped as:

2.1.1 Irish Government/Department of Education documents
2.1.2 Documents from international sources
2.1.3 Teaching Council documents
2.1.4 Documents produced by other groups in Ireland

2.1.1 Irish Government/Department of Education documents

The documents referred to in this section are:

- *Education for a Changing World,* the Green Paper on Education (1992)
- the *Report on the National Education Convention* (1994)
- *Charting Our Education Future,* the White Paper on Education (1995).

The essence of the proposals in these documents of the 1990s will be presented in an effort to portray the seriousness with which the subject of CPD for teachers was being considered by the government and by the participants in the National Education Convention.

In the Foreword to the Green Paper, *Education for a Changing World* (1992), the Minister for Education referred to the need for change in certain areas in the education system. To that end, one of the six key aims of the Green Paper was "to train and develop teachers so as to equip them for a constantly changing environment" (p.5). On the one hand, the Green Paper appeared to promote a functional approach to in-service training, i.e., the development of teachers' competence and the updating of knowledge and skills. On the other hand, this was balanced by the recognition that "personal and professional development is also decisively important in sustaining and enhancing teachers' motivation and in helping teachers to respond positively to the changing role of the school" (p.166). The reference to personal development was interesting at a time when teachers' personal development was not high on the education agenda. The Green Paper also offered some promising considerations with regard to school staff working together to identify their development needs, the strengthening of resources to support in-career development, including the involvement of other agencies and the establishment of a specialist in-career development unit in the Department.

In his *Report on the National Education Convention* (1994), (the Convention was held in Dublin Castle from 11th to 21st October 1993), Professor John Coolahan (1994), its Secretary General, declared it to be "an unprecedented, democratic event in the history of Irish education" (p.1). The Convention was a landmark event in two particular aspects of its proceedings: it steered the public discourse on education along new pathways of thinking and the consultative nature of the convention opened up the partnership process in Irish education. The Convention took place over nine days of plenary sessions which were open to the public and it continued at roundtable discussions over the following months. Some important new directions for the Irish education system were proposed in the *Report on the National Education Convention* (1994) and most of these were subsequently articulated

in the White Paper, *Charting Our Education Future* (1995). The Convention addressed various aspects of the teaching profession, including in-career development and the proposed Teaching Council. Coolahan (1994) stated that:

> To ensure that the teaching profession would be in a position to respond satisfactorily to the challenges which lie ahead, it was generally agreed that a number of initiatives should be undertaken. There was wide support for the policy proposal of the Green Paper which viewed the teaching career as a continuum involving initial teacher education, induction processes, and in-career development opportunities, available periodically throughout a teacher's career (p.85).

The Convention discussed a wide range of ideas on teachers' CPD including: types of professional development activities; school-based in-service provision; a co-ordinating agency for CPD; teacher access to CPD on a regional basis through "harnessing" of the providers; priorities for CPD with training for school management and leadership to the fore; evaluation procedures; flexibility to accommodate proposals other than those prioritised; possibilities of new technology, particularly with regard to distance learning; certification of in-service education and the introduction of suitable substitution arrangements for teachers attending CPD courses. The Convention foresaw the possibility of in-service provision complementing initial teacher education and providing for its restructuring. There was confidence that Ireland "might be entering a new era for in-service education, which could yield significant breakthroughs in the general education of pupils and in the greater professional satisfaction of teachers" (p.88).

Adopting much of the thinking of the National Education Convention, the White Paper on Education, *Charting Our Education Future* (1995) stated that:

> the fundamental aims of in-career professional development programmes are to equip teachers with the capacity to respond effectively to major changes in the education system, including changes in curriculum, teaching methodologies, assessment, school organisation and management, and to provide for teachers' personal and professional development needs (p.135).

While it was acknowledged in the White Paper that much good work was being done, there was criticism of the fragmented nature of the provision for CPD. The White Paper promised that future policy would ensure the involvement of teachers, parents and boards of management in influencing CPD programme content. Here we see the developing partnership role of the stakeholders in the area of policy formulation.

With regard to the teachers' role, the White Paper stated that teachers "have a personal responsibility to keep themselves abreast of new developments in their profession" (p.136),

similar to other professions, but that they should also be given opportunities to engage in structured CPD activities. It further stated that "the strong message emerging consistently from all quarters is that the approach to professional and personal development should be decentralised, school-focused and conducive to high levels of teacher participation in all aspects of the process" (p.137). Subsequently, the design and facilitation of system-led CPD aimed to address the White Paper's intentions with regard to decentralised, school-focused and participative CPD, as outlined in section 2.2 on CPD Provision, in this chapter.

The White Paper referred to the role of Education Centres in planning for the provision of CPD to school clusters in their areas. It promised that the Department of Education would set out a strategic framework for CPD for teachers, in consultation with the partners in education. It clearly saw that "structured staff development" (p.138) would be an important part of the school's plan for the provision of quality education. The White Paper named school principals, primary and post-primary, as key people in the change process and said that they would be supported in their role by CPD programmes specifically designed to suit their needs. It further proposed that:

> The promotion of more collegiality and co-operation among teachers in schools in the development of whole-school approaches to educational provision and school planning, including the identification of curriculum leaders in particular specialisations, will be a particular emphasis of school-based in-career development (p.139).

Reading the White Paper (1995), it is clear that the government had considered teachers' CPD from many angles and firmly intended to put a system in place which would address the breadth and depth of the issues involved. While the approach was largely aimed at teachers' adoption of change to cater for the emerging needs in the system, there was an understanding of the importance of personal as well as professional development for teachers.

It is important to note that these three documents, the Green Paper on Education, *Education for a Changing World* (1992), the *Report on the National Education Convention* (1994), and the White Paper on Education, *Charting Our Education Future* (1995), gave an impetus to a re-imagining of teacher education in Ireland. Since their publication, we have seen the establishment of the Teaching Council, a reconceptualisation of Initial Teacher Education and the intention to create a CPD framework, the subject of this thesis.

2.1.2 Documents from international sources

The documents referred to in this section include a wide range of policy and discussion papers which are relevant to CPD for teachers. For the purpose of probing the context for teachers' CPD in Ireland, a careful selection had to be made, choosing those of most relevance to the Irish situation. The selected documents are:

European Union (EU) documents:

- *Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications* (2005)
- *Council conclusions on the professional development of teachers and school leaders* (2007a)
- *Education and Training 2010 Programme: Cluster 'Teachers and Trainers' – Main Policy Conclusions 2005-2007* (2007c).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and associated documents:

- *Review of National Education Policy – Ireland* (1991)
- *STAYING AHEAD; In-service Training and Teacher Professional Development* (1998)
- *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005): *Country Background Report for Ireland* (2003)
- *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005)
- *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS* (2009)
- *OECD Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS): Summary Report for Ireland* (2009). Shiel et al.

McKenzie and Company:

- *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top* (2007)
- *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better* (2010).

Education International Research Institution (EI):

- *The Future of the Teaching Profession,* MacBeath, (2012), University of Cambridge.

Looking firstly at The *Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications* (2005), these were devised as a response to the European Council and the

European Commission's work in relation to *Education and Training 2010*[3]. Despite the connotations of the word "competences" as performance indicators, the language of the document takes a well-rounded, holistic approach to the work of teachers. It states that "Their profession, which is inspired by values of inclusiveness and the need to nurture the potential of all learners, has a strong influence on society and plays a vital role in advancing human potential and shaping future generations" (p.1). The document goes on to identify the principles which should underpin policies that will enhance the teaching profession: qualifications; lifelong learning; professional development; teacher mobility; project participation and study exchanges with other European countries; partnerships between teacher educators and schools; reflection on practice (pp.2-3). Three key competences are named in the document, i.e., Teachers should be able to: work with others; work with knowledge, technology and information; work with and in society (pp.3-4). The Common European Principles and Competences provide a broad overview of the thrust of the EU's aspirations for teacher's CPD and they are a useful reference and guide for the creation of a CPD framework for teachers.

The EU document, *Council conclusions on the professional development of teachers and school leaders* (2007a), adopted the recommendations of *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education* (2007b), the latter being a communication from the EU Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. The adoption of the *Council conclusions on the professional development of teachers and school leaders* is indicative of the seriousness with which the subject of teacher education is treated at EU level. Again, the language in the document is encouraging in that it portrays an understanding of the purpose of education beyond the functional aim of employability and competitiveness. In particular it recognises that:

> The knowledge, skills and commitments of teachers, as well as the quality of school leadership, are the most important factors in achieving high quality educational outcomes. Good teaching and the ability to inspire all pupils to achieve their very best can have a lasting positive impact on young people's futures (p.6).

[3] *Education and Training 2010 - The Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms* was adopted as a programme of work by the European Council and the European Commission in 2004, for which "common references and principles are being developed with regard to a number of major aspects of lifelong learning as part of the implementation of the work programme…They relate to…the competences and qualifications needed by teachers and trainers in order to fulfil their changing roles" 2.2.3 (2004/C 104/01)

The continuum of teacher education is acknowledged and, in that context, it is recommended that "efforts should be made to ensure that…all teachers receive regular feedback on their performance, together with help in identifying their professional development needs and establishing a plan to meet these" (p.9). Currently, once probated, teachers in Ireland do not engage in performance appraisal and neither are they obliged to develop a CPD plan. The EU document goes on to indicate the action that should be taken to provide learning opportunities for practising teachers and the role of school leaders gets special mention in this regard. It is suggested that school leaders would benefit from "collaborative learning with their counterparts in other Member States" (p.10). This point is worth noting when considering specific CPD for school Principals and other leaders in schools in Ireland.

A further key EU document is *Education and Training 2010 Programme: Cluster 'Teachers and Trainers' – Main Policy Conclusions 2005-2007* (2007c). This is a review of the work of the EU Commission's 'Teachers and Trainers' Cluster[4] which was undertaken through Peer Learning Activities[5] (PLAs). While a report was compiled on the outcome of each PLA[6], this document gave a composite picture of the themes that were common to all. These included the themes of: teachers' and trainers' lifelong learning; teaching in a culturally diverse classroom; ownership, self-esteem and self-accountability of teachers; leadership; partnerships; trust; how to stimulate, support and resource the whole of the education system. Seven issues were identified for attention: the continuum of teacher education; teacher education institutes' support for teachers' CPD; teachers' leadership, entrepreneurship and self-accountability; teacher mobility; partnerships between schools and teacher education institutions; practice-oriented research and teacher educators as role models for student teachers with regard to standards, action research and peer learning, among others. The summary of the PLAs' comments and recommendations on these themes is of interest to this thesis as each area could, potentially, be the subject of CPD for teachers in Ireland.

[4] An EU Cluster is a group of representatives from member states who share a common interest in a theme, come together and learn from each other.
[5] An EU PLA is a thematic working conference where policy issues are discussed following presentations of policy examples by the host country and by representatives from other countries.
[6] *Continuous Professional Development for Teachers and Trainers,* Ireland, September 2005; *Schools as learning Communities for their Teachers*, The Netherlands, May 2006; *Partnership between Schools for Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Companies*, Austria, March 2007; *Preparing Teachers to Teach Effectively in Culturally Diverse Settings*, Norway, May 2007 and *Relationships between Teacher Education Institutes and Schools*, Denmark, October 2007.

In the OECD *Review of National Policies for Education – Ireland* (1991), a number of points were made which would have been quite novel ideas in Ireland at that time. One was that various forms of in-service education should be provided for teachers as a right and a responsibility, within a national policy framework (p.101). Another point was that the "need for the school to be seen as a learning institution for all of its members, teachers as well as students, must be underlined."(p.102). A further point related to the issue of time, where the OECD examiners commented on "the generally unimaginative and inflexible way in which the school day is organised…[and] the limitations of a school day model which in general totally ignores the professional development needs of the teachers themselves" (p.102). It is noteworthy, for future reference, that the OECD examiners also recommended the training of principals and the development of middle management in larger schools to cope with the demands of school life. They suggested that

> The training and retraining of teachers should emphasise their role as articulators, managers and organisers of learning and not purveyors of facts and coaches for examinations, in order to enable them to cope positively with parent and community involvement in schooling and to acquire more democratic and co-operative values (p.63).

The promotion of differentiated forms of CPD and the recognition of the school as a learning community, as suggested in the OECD (1991) report, have been significantly advanced in this country since the report was written. The issue of time, however, and the organisation of the school day, still remains unchanged in Irish schools, 23 years later, despite changes to the composition of the school day in many other parts of the world.

The OECD document, *STAYING AHEAD; In-service Training and Teacher Professional Development* (1998), reports on a study which outlined the provision for teachers' CPD in eight countries, including Ireland. It looked at how CPD lends itself to school improvement and change, stating that "Teachers' in-service development is part of a wider enterprise to adapt education to new challenges and new circumstances" (p.11). It identifies these challenges in the context of the changing social, economic, educational and political environment. It recognises the dilemma for some countries in balancing student achievement against creativity and flexibility. It advocates that schools should work in partnership with parents, guardians and others outside education and that students should be actively involved in the learning process. Many other issues of relevance to teachers' CPD are also covered, e.g., new technology and the Information Society.

In relation to Ireland, *STAYING AHEAD* commented on the provision for teachers' CPD with regard to the continuity of summer courses, the setting up of the in-Career Development Unit (ICDU) and the desirability of establishing a Teaching Council. It attributed the increased provision for CPD programmes to the availability of EU Structural Funds under the Human Resource Operational Programme and the use of Capital Funds for the development of Education Centres. It highlighted a number of factors influencing the need to provide CPD for teachers, e.g., the necessity to introduce programmes for an increasing student population with diverse abilities. The OECD, similar to its comments in the 1991 review, identified the length of the school year, particularly at post-primary level, as an inhibiting factor with regard to teachers' availability to engage in CPD activities. The final comment on the Irish situation stated that "In-service training is no longer seen as a luxury in Irish education...it is perceived as essential for professional and school development" and it recognised the challenge "to co-ordinate resources to further both individual and system needs" (p.90).

The OECD Report, *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005) was the outcome of a review of teacher policy in 25 countries which was launched in 2002. The composite report was based on 25 Country Background Reports (CBRs). Ireland's CBR, *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2003) was authored by Professor John Coolahan, who said that "the mid-nineties can be regarded as a landmark in the historical development of continuing professional development in terms of acceptance by national government of its importance" (p.43). Coolahan (2003) recognised the setting up of the ICDU, and the investment in it, as positive indicators of the Department's good intentions with regard to CPD.

Coolahan (2003) gave a brief summary of the main areas being supported by state-funded CPD programmes, i.e., revised curricula and syllabi, ICT, school leadership and school development planning. In looking at the CPD methodologies, he welcomed the school-based and cluster-based organisation of CPD activities and acknowledged the abandonment of lecture-style presentations to large groups. The CBR for Ireland highlighted the CPD methods of small-group work, skills experimentation, and identification of areas for attention, and the report noted that "course participants are very much encouraged to engage with the issues by questions, discussions, exchange of experience and engaging in problem solving" (p.47). The use of these methods, which are very much in line with the principles of adult education, was an encouraging development in the area of CPD.

The OECD international review*, Teachers' Matter* (2005), found that "school-based professional development activities, involving the entire staff or significant groups of teachers, are becoming more common" (p.122) and that "most countries now link professional development to the developmental priorities of the school" (p.123). The 0ECD found that:

> The most effective forms of professional development seem to be those that focus on clearly articulated priorities, provide ongoing school-based support to classroom teachers, deal with subject matter content as well as suitable instructional strategies and classroom management techniques, and create opportunities for teachers to observe, experience and try new teaching methods (p.129).

A significant finding in *Teachers Matter* was that "in many countries teachers can get a leave of absence, a sabbatical or a research grant to pursue study and research activities" (p.123). This is not quite the case in Ireland where unpaid study leave for approved courses *is* available but sabbatical leave and research grants are not, unless one acquires the latter from philanthropic sources.

The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey - *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS* (2009) involved 23 countries and aimed "to help countries review and develop policies to make the teaching profession more attractive and more effective" (p.3). The report collated the extensive data generated from a sequence of surveys conducted with teachers in the participating countries. The professional development of teachers is covered under a number of headings in the report and an examination of how Irish teachers responded may be very informative for the future development of teachers' CPD in this country. Shiel et al (2009), in the TALIS *Summary Report for Ireland,* showed that 86% of Irish teachers surveyed attended CPD courses and workshops during the 18 months prior to the TALIS survey. In the five years prior to the TALIS survey, 51% of Irish teachers surveyed had participated in professional development networks, 42% had attended education conferences and seminars and 26% had participated in individual and collaborative research. These figures highlight the need to develop CPD opportunities for Irish teachers which encourage them to embrace more participative and collaborative types of CPD, particularly in the area of research.

The McKenzie Report, *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top* (2007), was based on an analysis of the achievement of the top performing schools in the Programme for Student International Assessment (PISA), together with a survey of literature, and interviews with over one hundred policy makers and practitioners. For this

study on teachers' professional development, the following points from the McKenzie Report (2007) are of particular interest:

> Individual teachers need to become aware of specific weaknesses in their own practice…need to gain understanding of specific best practice…in an authentic setting…[and] need to be motivated to make the necessary improvements…Such changes come about when teachers have high expectations, a shared sense of purpose, and above all, a collective belief in their common ability to make a difference to the education of the children they serve (p.27).

While there may be hints of a mechanistic approach to teacher's professional development in this report, there are also intimations of transformation in some of the statements. The report offers suggestions on school leadership and on enabling teachers to learn from each other.

The further McKenzie Report, *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better* (2010), builds on the 2007 study and focuses on 20 school systems from around the world which had improved significantly. Four levels of improvement were determined and graded as, "Poor to fair", "Fair to good", "Good to great" and "Great to excellent". The McKenzie report examines 575 reform interventions within the schools in the study to discover how they impacted on school improvement. For the purpose of this study, it is interesting to note the following elements of the report pertaining to teacher development. In the school systems that were ranked as moving from "Good to great", the McKenzie Report (2010) found that:

> …the good to great journey marks the point at which the school system comes to largely rely upon the values and behaviours of its educators to propel continuing improvement. To this end, in systems on the good to great journey, the center employs a cluster of interventions aimed to make the apprenticeship and mentorship of educators as distinct as that seen in other professionals such as medicine or law (p.40).

The school systems that moved from "Great to excellent" were found to "focus on creating an environment that will unleash the creativity and innovation of its educators and other stakeholder groups…[and] to enhance the educators' responsibility for looking after each other's development" (p.42). The report cites South Korea as an instance of exemplary practice where action research which is conducted by teacher in their schools is funded as part of teachers' professional development. Other schools are invited to peer-review the research. Inter-school learning is encouraged and joint research projects between schools in a district may also be funded. The report tells us that, in the interest of making practice

public, “schools encourage their teachers to open up their classrooms to others two or three times a month, at which time other teachers can come and visit and observe their lessons” (p.44). Another interesting point made in the report is that there is looser control in schools where teachers have higher educator skills. This indicates that where teachers can exercise professional freedom, and are trusted to do so, the result will be greater innovation and learning in the classroom.

The final document being considered in this section is *The Future of the Teaching Profession* (2012) by Professor John MacBeath, commissioned by the Education International Research Institution (EI). Macbeth was asked to reflect on what governments, communities and the teaching profession could do “to enhance the learning, efficacy and status of teachers” (p.3). EI’s General Secretary says of the report that “this is a profoundly practical study…there to place the voices of teachers centre stage in the arguments around shaping the teaching profession in the 21 century” (p.4). MacBeath looks at many aspects of the teaching profession but one very interesting part, particularly for an audience of teachers in Ireland, is the section on School Self-Evaluation (SSE). He recognises that SSE can be a tick-box exercise and his valuable exposition of the alternative is worthy of a lengthy quote here:

> Self-evaluation can, however, assume a more dynamic form. It understands the iterative relationship between classroom life and school life, between school learning and out of school learning. It recognises that students’ learning and teachers’ learning are integrally connected and that teachers’ learning feeds from, and feeds into, organisational, or community, learning. It is a process by which schools make their intellectual and moral journey; measuring the distance they have travelled, not in the simplistic trajectory of aggregated attainment scores, summative tools that say little about deep learning. The tools of authentic, professionally driven self-evaluation, by contrast, are set in a social context. They encourage dialogue. They serve a primarily formative purpose. They are congenial, flexible and adaptable to new situation and new challenges. They measure how teachers are progressing in their thinking and practice and how the school is developing as a community of learners. They relish accountability because it is the platform for telling a story rooted in evidence of the most profound kind. It is this complexity and dynamic that is the missing ingredient in the ritualised and formulaic approaches to self-evaluation (p.68).

This is just a sample of MacBeath’s insight and suggestions on changes that might be made in the practice of teaching based on his observations on the shortcomings in the current system.

2.1.3 Teaching Council documents

The documents referred to in this section are the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* (2012), the *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011a) and *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Teacher Educators* (2011b).

The *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* (2012) is perhaps one of the most significant documents to be considered in examining policy and discussion documents on teachers' CPD. It has a statutory basis under the Teaching Council Act, 2001, and it is, therefore, incumbent on teachers to take cognisance of it and abide by it. The Code sets out teachers' professional responsibilities under six separate headings, including "Professional Development" and "Collegiality and Collaboration". The Code speaks of teachers' responsibility for "sustaining and improving the quality of their professional practice" (p.8) and working "in a collaborative manner with pupils/students, parents/guardians, school management, other members of staff, relevant professionals and the wider school community, as appropriate, in seeking to effectively meet the needs of pupils/students" (p.8). Improving their practice and working collaboratively are inextricably linked in teachers' engagement in CPD. In that respect, the Code is timely as we face into a new phase of teacher professional responsibility where it is expected that CPD will be a requirement for teachers' renewal of their registration with the Council from 2016 onwards.

The *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011a) was published by the Teaching Council following a lengthy and in-depth consultative process with the partners in education. It acknowledges the traditional definition of the continuum, encompassing the three Is, i.e., Initial, Induction and In-service Education. The Council set out a number of key principles which, with a further three Is, i.e., Innovation, Integration and Improvement, underpinned the policy. Because of its significance in relation to this study, it is important to set out here the Council's proposal for CPD as a right and a responsibility for teachers:

> CPD is a right for all registered teachers. In that context, an allocation of time for individual and/or staff group CPD should be built into teachers' scheduled non-teaching time. The allocation of time should be significant and should reflect the importance of CPD for effective professional practice.
>
> CPD should be based on teachers' identified needs within the school as a learning community.
>
> CPD is a responsibility of all registered teachers. In that context, a registered teacher should take reasonable steps to maintain, develop and broaden the

professional knowledge, skill and capabilities appropriate to his or her teaching (p.19).

The Council goes on to state the need for a national CPD framework and it is expected that there will be further consultation and extensive drafting of documentation in the process of creating the framework.

The Council's follow-on document, *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (2011b), is important in looking at the context for CPD as, for the first time in this State, a set of learning outcomes for graduating teachers has been composed. The outcomes are deemed to be the competences necessary for teaching, with the word "competences" being understood as "statements of the attributes, skills and knowledge that teachers as professionals should possess and exemplify"[7]. These learning outcomes may be, accordingly, the foundation upon which continuing professional development for teachers may be built. If we accept that the learning outcomes outline the breadth and depth of the role of the teacher, then there is ample scope to consider how they might be further developed as points of reference for teacher reflection and CPD.

In relation to the context for CPD, another area of the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) guidelines which holds much promise for teachers' learning is that of the school placement for student teachers. The Council proposed that "new and innovative school placement models should be developed using a partnership approach, whereby HEIs and schools actively collaborate in the organisation of the school placement" (p.15). The potential for rich shared learning is encapsulated in the suggestions that there might be "facilitation by the HEI of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Co-operating Teachers…for other members of school staff…[and] accommodation by the school of HEI personnel wishing to update their teaching experience" (p.16).

2.1.4 Documents produced by other groups in Ireland

The documents referred to in this section are the Irish National Teachers' Organisation's (INTO) *Professional Development of Teachers: Issues in in-service education* (1993), the Education Centre Network's (EC) publication *Continuing Personal and Professional Development Needs of Teachers in Ireland*, (2010) and the report of the Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century (TL21) project from the Education Department at NUI

[7] The Teaching Council *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* states that "Competences are statements of the attributes, skills and knowledge that teachers as professionals should possess and exemplify. The achievement of competence is a developmental process that continues throughout a teacher's career" (p.5).

Maynooth - *Learning Anew: Final Report of the Research and Development Project, Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century,* 2003-2007 (2007).

The INTO's *Professional Development of Teachers: Issues in in-service education* (1993) was selected for this chapter as it illustrates the positioning of a teacher union in the professional space of CPD for teachers. The deliberations in this document bring together the union's interest in supporting the enhancement of teachers' professionalism while holding a firm line on the accompanying material considerations, as one would expect from the union standpoint. A number of barriers to professional development were identified by the INTO, among them the issue of time, possible resistance and insecurity related to change, the lack of resources and the absence of guidelines. The INTO supported the emerging school-based model of professional development, albeit with reservations, conceding that:

> while the autonomy of the individual teacher may be somewhat reduced by a process of school based collaborative planning, the increased control over the broader school context will be considerably enhanced, creating a professional community capable of communicating its practices and procedures effectively and coherently to the community (p.29).

The central role of the Principal teacher in the process of staff development was acknowledged by the INTO while recognising the difficulty this might pose for Principals due to the varied and demanding duties of their role. It accepted, with caution, the concept of school advisors whose roles would be clearly defined in the context of tasks such as subject methodologies, decision-making and problem-solving. It also acknowledged that teachers learn from each other but questioned how this could be accommodated given the isolated nature of teachers' practice. The INTO further advised that individual and system needs needed to be reconciled to ensure that teachers' motivation, learning styles and responsibility for their own learning were not ignored.

It was clear from this document that the INTO was seeking to influence the upcoming policy on CPD and positioning itself to shape its implementation. In anticipation of that, it exhorted teachers to become involved "in the planned construction of any new nationwide in-service system" bearing in mind that the "teacher child relationship should…be at the heart of the professional development of the teacher and…should inform and guide the future development of in-service provision" (p.124). The INTO subsequently set up a Professional Development Unit (PDU) which prepares tutors who facilitate in-service education courses designed under the aegis of the INTO.

The EC Network's *Continuing Personal and Professional Development Needs of Teachers in Ireland*, (2010) is the report of research conducted with 969 primary and 945 post-primary teachers in relation to their CPD needs. The rationale for the study was the EC Network seeking to inform itself on the future learning needs of teachers, given the central role that ECs play in facilitating CPD for teachers. The main findings of the EC Network research were that teachers want more accredited courses, including affordable postgraduate programmes, and more courses on Inclusion and Special Education Needs. The EC Network research data also shows that:

> many teachers now find themselves challenged by having to incorporate other adults and outside agencies into their everyday classroom work…[and] teachers in classrooms seek assistance with a range of student issues which may include depression, drug addiction and related behavioural challenges (p.17).

The report links the latter with the need to support teachers' personal development and points out that "self-knowledge, self-esteem, stress management, conflict resolution and mediation skills need to be included and prioritised in the lexicon of Continuing Personal Professional Development (CPPD) programmes both at a national and local level" (p.17). It is in that context that the EC Network includes the extra P (Personal) in CPPD. Apart from the brief reference to teachers' personal development, the report did not give a perspective on the transformational possibilities of CPD that one might have expected from EC Directors as leaders in the area of teachers' CPD.

In *Learning Anew: Final Report of the Research and Development Project, Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century,* 2003-2007 (2007), Hogan et al report on and analyse a specific partnership between a university and schools. At its inception in 2003, the TL21 Project involved 15 schools, each school having ten frontline participants, i.e., the Principal and Deputy Principal and two teachers of each of the subjects Irish, English, Mathematics and Science. Other subject teachers became involved when the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strand was introduced in 2005. The project initially had two main aims: "(a) to strengthen teachers' capacities as the authors of their own work; (b) to encourage students to become more active and responsible participants in their own learning" (p.4). An additional aim was added later, i.e., developing innovative teachers as a strategic national resource. TL21 exemplifies the development of professional learning communities in schools, between schools and between schools and the university. The benefits of projects such as TL21 are significant in terms of students' learning, teachers' professional development and as a research focus for a HEI. TL21, in particular, provides an

exemplar of the rich possibilities for teachers' professional development that exist in Higher Education Institutions (HEI)-school alliances.

2.2 Bodies that support provision for teachers' CPD in Ireland:

In considering the context for the creation of a framework for CPD for teachers in Ireland, this chapter thus far has perused a selection of relevant documents from Irish and international sources. This section will give a brief outline of the bodies that support the provision for teachers' CPD in Ireland:

2.2.1 The Teacher Education Section, Department of Education and Skills
2.2.2 The Education Centre Network
2.2.3 The National Support Services for In-Career Development
2.2.4 The Higher Education Institutions
2.2.5 The Stakeholders in Education
2.2.6 Private Organisations

2.2.1 The Teacher Education Section, Department of Education and Skills

The Teacher Education Section (TES) was established in the Department of Education (DES) in 2004, replacing the In-career Development Unit (ICDU) which was established in 1994 at a time when the EU was disbursing funds for training. The establishment of the ICDU was a significant and purposeful attempt by the Department to support teachers' CPD by initiating and managing national programmes of in-career development. In 2004, the ICDU was reorganised within the Department and given added responsibilities in the area of teacher education, as its new name, the Teacher Education Section implies.

The current functions of the TES embrace the management of the continuum of teacher education, i.e., initial teacher education, induction of newly qualified teachers and in-career development. Some of the TES responsibilities transferred to the Teaching Council on its establishment in 2006. In the area of in-career development, the TES has developed, managed and evaluated national CPD programmes which have catered for system needs in relation to revised curricula and syllabi, school leadership and school development planning, special education, information and communication technologies and teacher induction. While the TES funds and oversees the national programme of in-service education, it devolves regional and local administration matters to the network of Education Centres (ECs).

The TES also supports CPD through the Summer Course Programme for Primary Teachers. The summer courses have enjoyed a high level of participation over the years as they engage teachers in CPD activities of their own choosing with regard to teaching, learning and assessment, relevant to the school as a whole and to the individual teacher in the classroom. Figures show that 753 courses were held in 2010 with a total of 26,949 teachers participating. Three extra personal leave (EPV) days were granted for attendance at a week-long course. Another support for CPD offered by the TES is that of the Teacher Refund Scheme which contributes to fees on successful completion of courses where the qualifications awarded do not carry allowances. In 2010, over €530k in funding was provided by the Department to a total of 450 successful applicants under this Scheme. Further information on the programmes supported by the TES will be covered at a later stage in this chapter.

2.2.2 The Education Centres

The Education Centres, mentioned previously, are statutory bodies under the Education Act (1998), funded by the TES in the Department of Education & Skills and managed by voluntary Management Committees. They were originally known as Teachers' Centres, set up by teachers who came together in the early 70s in study groups to discuss new curricula. Reflecting on these study groups, Gerard McHugh (2010), Director of Dublin West Education Centre, believes that when teachers came together "they engaged in professional learning communities before such activities attracted a label" (p.47). In the late 90s the network was extended and there are now 21 full-time and 9 part-time Education Centres divided into six regions. They administer the national programmes of in-career development at regional and local levels, on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. They also plan and facilitate CPD in their regions, based on known emerging needs and on the identified needs of teachers, school management and parents and these are scheduled as seasonal and summer courses.

A key feature of Education Centres is their availability and accessibility to teachers: EC rooms are available for networking with other teachers; resources can be accessed and research can be carried out in the EC library; there are EC spaces and facilities for preparing teaching materials. The ECs have been instrumental in formalising the development of Teacher Professional Networks (TPNs) for second level teachers and Teacher Professional Communities (TPCs) for primary teachers. These teacher groups are supported by CPD support services, as appropriate, but the intention is to empower them to be independent

and self-sustaining as they focus on themes common to the group and share and develop their practice. McHugh (2010) says that in the future "teachers will be expected to take more responsibility for their own CPD and, where interdependence may become the norm, professional learning communities of teachers will provide a forum for self-initiating learners working collaboratively with their peers" (p.47).

Education Centres are making a significant contribution to the development of collaborative learning communities through the initiation of joint projects such as that reported on in *The Learning School Project* (2008). This project involved the four Education Centres in the South-West working with fifteen schools from 2007-2008. The Learning School was "conceptualised as a community of practice which respects and values learning and where the culture is one of: continuing reflection and enquiry; commitment to the process of review and self-evaluation and participation in ongoing development" (p.3). Each school focused on a particular theme, directed specifically at either student learning or teacher learning, and a whole-school approach was adopted. The report on the project indicated that it provided new experiences for teachers in working as a team and in engaging in more meaningful dialogue on the practice of teaching. It was found that "the context of the project gave the teachers an opportunity to speak to one another in a different way, and about issues that were not regular topics of conversation" (p.17).

2.2.3 The National Support Services for In-Career Development

A number of major national support programmes have been supported by the Department over the past fifteen years, commencing with the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) in 1998. The main focus of the support programmes has been to support the introduction and implementation of new national initiatives, i.e., revised curricula and syllabi, school development planning, school leadership, special education, and other areas in education. As the work of support services for professional development at primary and post-primary level developed, the Department progressed its plan to rationalise provision in the interest of a coherent approach to CPD for teachers. This came to fruition in 2010 with the amalgamation of the Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS) and the Second Level Support Service (SLSS) as the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).

The PDST team of advisors is comprised of seconded primary and post-primary teachers, working regionally under a National Director, serving teachers in first and second-level schools. As with previous system-based CPD, the PDST conducts its work under the aegis of

the TES and in co-operation with the Education Centre Network. As well as responding to national system priorities and CPD needs identified by schools as heretofore, it also responds to the needs identified as part of the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) process conducted by the Department's Inspectorate. The previous support services which are now enfolded in the PDST are listed in Appendix 1 (p.1, Vol.2). There are also a number of the Department's national support services which are independent of the PDST and these are also listed in Appendix 1 (p.1, Vol.2). The number of support services in Ireland is testament to the government's commitment to teachers' CPD but it also indicates that greater cohesion and coherence in the provisions for CPD are still needed. Another challenge for the Department is to increase the number of personnel in the PDST to ensure that it can respond, and intensify its response where necessary, to the many demands for its services. A challenge for the PDST will be to continue its work of enabling teachers and schools to build learning communities. These learning communities could transform how teachers and schools address the teaching and learning needs in their education communities.

2.2.4 The Higher Education Institutions

The Higher Education Institutions which have supported CPD for teachers are mainly the Universities and the Colleges of Education with some input also from Institutes of Technology. The HEI provision for teachers' CPD is largely in the areas of postgraduate programmes at Masters and Doctorate level which teachers undertake in their own time and at their own expense. HEIs have also provided CPD certificated programmes in specialist areas such as Early Childhood Education and Special Education Needs. In the future, there will be further opportunities for HEIs to engage with teachers on Initial Teacher Education in the proposed HEI-school partnerships for student teachers' school placements.

HEIs can make a significant contribution to teachers' CPD through research and practice projects as exemplified by the *Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century* project at NUI Maynooth, outlined previously.

2.2.5 The Stakeholders in Education

The group of stakeholders in education in Ireland is comprised of the school management bodies, teacher unions, principals' organisations, national parent associations and teacher educators at primary and post-primary levels. Some of these groups have already been

referred to in this chapter. Each of these groups contributes, directly and indirectly, to the provision of CPD for teachers. While the details of such activates are too extensive to record here, the work of two bodies will be mentioned as examples. These are the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) at post-primary level and the Irish Primary Principals' Association (IPPN) both of which facilitate CPD for school leaders through dedicated CPD programmes, conferences, journals, mentoring and other supports.

2.2.6 Private Organisations

Traditionally, as well as the programmes organised by the Department, by Colleges/Universities and by Education Centres, a number of private providers, i.e., non-statutory bodies and personnel, design and facilitate summer courses for primary teachers. The courses have to be approved by the Department to qualify for teachers' extra personal vacation (EPV) in lieu of attendance. A new development in the early 2000s was the introduction of on-line summer courses, the first ones being in the area of Special Education, which also had to be approved by the Department for EPV days. The Department sets down the criteria for approval of summer courses which usually require that a Department priority of the time is given attention in the course, e.g., school self-evaluation. The Department also inspects the summer courses. When Section 39 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, dealing with CPD, is commenced, it will be the responsibility of the Council to accredit providers of officially recognised CPD.

Conclusion

It is evident from the selected documentation, and other information on CPD for teachers presented in this chapter, that the momentum for teachers' CPD has been gathering apace, at home and abroad, over the past twenty to twenty-five years. There is much evidence of system-led CPD activity for teachers in Ireland, albeit fragmented and ad hoc to some extent, to support teachers' work in the classroom in implementing national initiatives. The international drive has been largely led by reform movements to improve student performance in international assessments in the interest of competitiveness and of effectiveness more so than creativity. Ireland needs to protect its rich heritage of creativity in music and the arts, much of which is nurtured and developed in school. Teachers and all the stakeholders in education share this responsibility. Creating a framework for teachers' CPD which accommodates teachers exercising professional responsibility, and being trusted to do so, will be an important step in transforming teaching and learning in our schools.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Perspectives: The Transformative Potential of CPD as Adult Professional Learning

Introduction

In addressing the research question, "What would be necessary for the creation of a national framework for continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers in Ireland which would ensure their transformative development", this chapter examines research and other literature with a view to providing a theoretical and practical context for elucidating teachers' CPD as a transformative undertaking. The literature explored for this purpose sought to address the main research question outlined in Chapter 1, namely, how can transformative CPD for teachers in Ireland contribute to the creation of an excellent teaching profession to facilitate high quality teaching for young people in the education system? A broad selection of literature was examined in relation to three main areas, each of which seeks to illuminate an important aspect of the main research question: 3.1 Teachers' professional identity; 3.2 The transformative potential of adult education as a process of change for teachers; 3.3 Continuing Professional Development as the nucleus for teachers' professional learning. These three areas are intrinsically linked but for purposes of clarity this review will consider each separately, in so far as that is possible.

3.1 Teachers' Professional Identity

The rationale for including teacher identity in this thesis has been outlined in Chapter 1, identity being a key feature in exploring teachers' CPD needs in the interest of addressing the research question. The questions to be addressed here are, "What is meant by teacher identity?" and "what are the connections between teacher identity, teacher learning and teacher transformation?" This section will review some aspects of teacher identity as presented in the literature for the purpose of addressing these questions, illustrating the multifaceted and complex nature of teacher identity and establishing the links between teacher identity, teacher transformation and teacher learning.

In his introduction to a volume of articles on teacher identity, Olsen (2008) makes the connections between teachers' identity, their learning and the potential for transformation when he argues that

> Teacher identity is a useful *research frame* because it treats teachers as whole persons in and across social contexts who continually reconstruct their views of themselves in relation to others, workplace characteristics, professional purposes, and cultures of teaching. It is also a *pedagogical tool* that can be used by teacher educators and professional development specialists to make visible various holistic, situated framings of teacher development in practice (p.5).

Olsen's statement proposes that teacher identity is not static but involves teachers in changing their perceptions of themselves depending on who they work with and where and how they work. Olsen also raises awareness of the importance of recognising the role of professional identity in the context of professional development.

Day (2004), captures the personal, professional and social dimensions in teachers' professional identities as

> who and what they are, their self-image, the meanings they attach to themselves and their work, and the meanings that are attributed to them by others…associated with both the subject they teach (this is particularly the case with secondary school teachers), their relationship with the pupils they teach, their roles, and the connections between these and their lives outside school (pp. 52-53).

The connection between teacher identity and professional development is emphasised by Beijaard et al (2000) who found that "Teachers' perceptions of their own professional identity affect their efficacy and professional development as well as their ability and willingness to cope with educational change and to implement innovations in their own teaching practice" (p.750). It may be inferred from Beijaard's words that a key role for CPD could be to enable teachers to explore their professional role and come to new understandings of themselves as practitioners.

Kelchtermans (2009) uses the words "self-understanding" instead of "identity" when examining teachers' personal interpretative framework. Kelchtermans identified five aspects of teachers' self-understanding - self-image, self-esteem, task perception, job motivation, and future perspective (pp.261-262). His expansion of these areas is summarised briefly here: *self-esteem* denotes how one feels about oneself and is based on the teacher's evaluation of his/her performance which can be influenced by how others see him/her; *self-image* is descriptive and emerges in teachers' stories about themselves as teachers, their narratives being strongly influenced by others' perceptions of them; *task perception* refers to teachers' beliefs about what it is to be a good teachers and it is closely

bound up with teachers' values and the moral purpose of their teaching; *job motivation* relates to the desire to become a teacher which shifts and develops over time, particularly for secondary school teachers, from an interest in a subject to an understanding of the importance of their work; *future perspective* "reveals a teacher's expectations about his/her future in the job" (p.263). Kelchtermans emphasises that the component of *future perspective* explicitly

> refers to the dynamic character of self-understanding. It is not a static, fixed identity, but rather the result of an ongoing interactive process of sense-making and construction...one's actions in the present are influenced by meaningful experiences in the past and expectations about the future…. This 'historicity' deeply characterises every human being and should therefore be included in our conception of professional self-understanding… (p. 263).

The personal interpretative framework elaborated by Kelchtermans resonates with Mezirow's frame of reference which will be used later in this chapter. Furthermore, the elaboration by Kelchtermans of the components of self-understanding gives us a lens through which we can identify the link between teachers' identity and the potential for teacher transformation through CPD with regard to how teachers think, feel and act as professionals.

Similar to Kelchtermans, Canrinus et al (2011) reveal some layers of teachers' identity in explaining that teachers see themselves in relation to their "interpretations of their continuing interaction with their context…[and] this interaction manifests itself in teachers' job satisfaction, occupational commitment, self-efficacy and change in the level of motivation." (p.594). In identifying these areas of identity, Canrinus et al provide us with a strong link between identity and CPD in the sense that meaningful CPD may have a transformative effect on teachers' personal and professional positivity and fulfilment in their teaching role.

Recognition of the importance of teacher identity is supported by Clarke (2009) who believes that "If the commitment to identity is…a serious recognition that our work as teachers shapes and is shaped by the very mode of our being, then thinking about the formation of our identities is crucial for all of us in education" (p.186).

The insights into teacher identity which were chosen from the literature illustrate that teachers' identity originates in their frames of reference or personal interpretative frameworks as espoused by Mezirow and Kelchtermans respectively. A number of other

authors, e.g., Day, Beijaard, Canrinus, and others, were quoted to further develop the questions being addressed. In summary, the literature reveals that teachers' identity is manifested in how teachers see themselves as teachers, how they think others see them as teachers and in how they experience their teaching at a personal, professional and social level. Teacher identity is not static but changes and develops. This change and development may be experienced at a deeply transformative level when teachers examine the frames of reference which underpin their knowledge, values and actions. It may be concluded that good CPD has the potential to facilitate and enable the transformative process for teachers which, in turn, can lead to a well-developed professional identity.

3.2 The transformative potential of adult education as a process of change for teachers

There are two aspects to the change process in relation to CPD for teachers, i.e., personal change which is transformative at the individual level of the teacher's identity and learning, and systems change in relation to CPD which encourages and accommodates personal change. It may be worth noting that some forms of system change could frustrate rather than promote transformative change. The focus of this thesis is teachers' personal transformation or change. While systems change is relevant it is not the subject of indepth focus in this thesis but reference is made to it, as appropriate.

Jack Mezirow (1991) explains Transformation Theory as "a theory of adult learning. As such, it attempts to describe and analyse how adults learn to make meaning of their experience" (p.198). The following illustration of Mezirow's theory is intended to set the scene for understanding how CPD which is transformative can promote important shifts in teachers' frames of reference with consequent changes in their values and actions.

Speaking at a conference on adult education and community development in Maynooth, in 1995, Mezirow quoted Socrates:

> A person can learn only that which he doesn't know,
> but if he doesn't know it,
> how does he know what he is seeking to learn?

Mezirow (1995) introduces Transformation Theory as "a theoretical model for how adults learn", explaining that "we 'learn what we seek to learn' as the result of transforming our frame of reference…and, we come to see our learning needs from a different perspective…" (p.1). Mezirow (1997) points out that our "frames of reference are the structures of

assumptions through which we understand our experiences" (p.5). He goes on to explain that a frame of reference "is composed of two dimensions: *habits of mind* and a *point of view*", the former being more durable and the latter being "more accessible to awareness and to feedback from others" (pp 5-6). In considering the potential for teachers' transformation through CPD which facilitates the examination of their frames of reference, it is encouraging and exciting to reflect on Mezirow's words that

> Transformative learning experiences are emancipatory in that they free learners from the constraints and distortions of their own frames of reference. A more fully developed and dependable frame of reference is one that is more inclusive, differentiating, more open to alternative perspectives and more integrative of experience (p.2).

In being emancipatory, transformative learning accomplishes not merely a change in one's point of view, but also a change at a deeper level; a change in the underlying habits of mind. This is relevant in teachers' adoption of new ideas and ways of working.

Mezirow's theory of transformation is summarised as follows:

- Differentiating between instrumental learning which is task oriented and communicative learning which is based on values, attitudes and beliefs
- Knowing that the goal of communicative learning is "to assist learners to negotiate their own meanings and values rather than to passively accept social reality as defined by others" (Mezirow, 1995, p.3)
- Being critically reflective through communicative learning where people reflect together on the assumptions underlying values, attitudes and beliefs which guide their work
- Engaging in critical discourse where people critically examine evidence, arguments and alternative points of view
- Becoming autonomous thinkers whereby people develop the understanding, skills and dispositions necessary to become critically reflective and to engage in critical discourse
- Providing the conditions for transformative learning to take place since "learners need practice in recognizing frames of reference and using their imaginations to redefine problems from a different perspective" (Mezirow, 1997, p.10)
- Ensuring that learners "have full information; are free from coercion, have equal opportunity to assume the various roles of discourse…become critically reflective of assumptions; are empathetic and open to other perspectives; are willing to listen and to search for common ground…and can make a tentative best judgment to guide action" (Mezirow, 1997, p.10)

Mezirow (1990) emphasises that

> Because we are all trapped by our own meaning perspectives, we can never really make interpretations of our experience free of bias. Consequently, our greatest assurance of objectivity comes from exposing an expressed idea to rational and reflective discourse (p.10).

Such discourse may be facilitated when teachers collaborate and reflect critically on the teaching and learning in their schools. Critical reflection and critical discourse are central to Mezirow's theory of transformation and in them we find an important contribution to the development of transformative CPD for teachers.

Our understanding of Mezirow's work on critical reflection and critical thinking is further enhanced by the writings of Stephen Brookfield, his colleague at Columbia University. Brookfield (1987) stresses the point that "critical thinkers are actively engaged with life", and that they are positive, creative and innovative, open and confident (p.5). He argues that critical thinking "is a productive and positive activity…a process, not an outcome…varies according to the contexts in which it occurs…is triggered by positive as well as negative events and is emotive as well as rational" (pp. 5-7). Brookfield further points out that challenging assumptions, examining the influence of context on our thoughts and actions, exploring different ways of thinking and acting and reflecting with sceptism are central to critical thinking (pp. 7-9).

Brookfield's writing on the "discussion method" in adult education supports Mezirow's work on critical reflection and critical thinking, Brookfield (1986) argues that discussion is "a powerful support for adults who wish to experiment with ideas, opinions, and alternative interpretations and to test these out in the company of others engaged in a similar quest" (p.135). He further argues that this requires that adults have courage, analytical ability and willingness "to examine the cultural origins of many of their beliefs…to participate…in the collaborative externalization, exploration, and critical analysis of personally significant meaning systems…" (p.140).

Brookfield (1987), in his preface to *Developing Critical Thinkers*, acknowledges that "every page contains ideas developed in the course of my conversations with Jack [Mezirow]" (p.xiii), his colleague. When taken together, Mezirow's and Brookfield's theories provide a rich and incisive perspective for understanding transformative learning and its potential for CPD. They also open avenues for the development of teachers' professional identity at a deeply meaningful, transformative level.

Transformation, however, is not necessarily comfortable or easily embraced. Palmer (1998) speaks of:

> the fear that a live encounter with otherness will challenge or even compel us to change our lives…otherness, taken seriously, always invites transformation, calling us not only to new facts and theories and values but also to new ways of living our lives – and that is the most daunting threat of all (p.38).

In this comment, Palmer is raising an issue that goes deeper than up-skilling, namely the issue of the teacher's self-understanding, or sense of identity.

E.W. Taylor (2008) writes that "thirty years ago, when Jack Mezirow (1978) first introduced a theory of adult learning, it helped explain how adults changed the way they interpreted their world. This theory of transformative learning is considered uniquely adult…" (p.5). Kitchenham (2008) researched the development of Mezirow's work from 1978-2006 and concluded that "transformative learning theory has undergone modifications and incorporated new constructs as they are debated and tested and will, undoubtedly, continue to influence adult learning praxis across many disciplines" (p.120). In considering Mezirow's work, Taylor (2008) acknowledges the argument that

> there are a variety of alternative conceptions of transformative learning theory that refer to similar ideas and address factors often overlooked in the dominant theory of transformation (Mezirow's), such as the role of spirituality, positionality, emancipatory learning, and neurobiology (p.7).

In this thesis, it is not intended that alternative conceptions of transformative learning such as spirituality, positionality and neurobiology will be explored. The emphasis will rather be on the core theme of transformative learning itself in the context of CPD for teachers.

3.3 Continuing Professional Development as the Nucleus for Teachers' Professional Learning

Having explored the nature of transformative learning and its connection with teacher identity, the examination of the literature now turns to the role of continuing professional development in pursuit of a deeper understanding of its application and possibilities in relation to teacher's professional learning. This section, therefore, will cover contributions from the literature on teachers' professional learning and development from the following viewpoints:

3.3.1 Understanding what is meant by Continuing Professional Development

Taken literally, the words continuing professional development (CPD) indicate that a person's learning which is related to his/her professional practice is a continuous process throughout the career. Some writers call it continuing professional learning (CPL) and, in so doing, distinguish between the process of development and that of learning. Fraser et al (2007), in a passage that is resonant of Mezirow and Brookfield, examined models of professional learning and, in clarifying the difference between them, suggest that:

> Teachers' professional learning can be taken to represent the processes that, whether intuitive or deliberate, individual or social, result in specific changes in the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or actions of teachers. Teachers' professional development, on the other hand, is taken to refer to the broader changes that may take place over a longer period of time resulting in qualitative shifts of teachers' professionalism (pp.156-157).

The terminology used by the Teaching Council, referred to in the previous chapter, is Continuing Personal and Professional Development (CPPD). For the purpose of this literature review, the terminology used by the author(s) in the literature being quoted will be retained; otherwise, the term continuing professional development (CPD) will be used.

Teachers' CPD can take many forms and there can be engagement at many levels, at various sites, in a passive or participative mode, as a solo practitioner or as a member of a group. CPD engagement can include: attending lectures or demonstrations; participating in workshops; being a member of a learning network; working in a school-university partnership; reading professional material; keeping a professional journal; observing other teachers teaching and being observed; recording/videoing good practice; engaging in professional discussions with colleagues or other teachers; mentoring newly qualified teachers; studying for a post-graduate qualification; conducting action research and much more.

In many countries, including Ireland, the traditional mode of CPD until the mid-90s was mainly the lecture format, delivered to teachers who were usually passive, non-participative recipients. It was aimed at the transfer of knowledge and based on the

assumption that transmission would lead to implementation of change. Stephen Brookfield (1986) compares this form of CPD, i.e., bringing in an expert to give a lecture to teachers to tell them how they should do their job, to the teaching methodology used by teachers in their own classrooms. He decries the fact that in this type of CPD teachers were not involved in planning the programme; that the issues of concern to them from their own classroom were not addressed, that they did not identify with the content and that the modus operandi contradicted the spirit and the form of effective facilitation (p.249).

Day and Sachs (2004), capture the multidimensional nature of CPD, including that of adult learning, and provoke a myriad of attendant questions:

> Continuing professional development (CPD) is a term used to describe all the activities in which teachers engage during the course of a career which are designed to enhance their work. Yet this is a deceptively simple description of a hugely complex intellectual and emotional endeavour which is at the heart of raising and maintaining standards of teaching, learning and achievement in a range of schools, each of which poses its own set of special challenges. Moreover, because teachers, like the students they teach, think and feel, are influenced also by their biographies, social histories and working contexts, peer groups, teaching preferences, identities, phase of development and broader socio-political cultures, the purposes, design and processes of CPD will need to mirror these if it is to result in effective outcomes (p.3).

These particularly powerful and challenging comments set out a framework of ideas for further exploration in this study, of which the following is a selection: What are the CPD activities in which Irish teachers, and indeed teachers internationally, most often engage? How do these activities enhance their work? To what extent can CPD activities take cognisance of and accommodate the multiplicity of personal and professional aspects of teachers' lives? Do they influence practice mainly at the level of effectiveness, or efficiencies? To what extent do they promote qualitative transformations – in the outlooks and practices of teachers and in the learning environments in which they work? Some of these questions will be addressed in this study while others are beyond the scope of this work.

Many other writers have proposed definitions of CPD which are similar to, or have elements of, that proffered by Day and Sachs. Guskey (2000) defines professional development as "those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students" (p.16). Guskey argues that teacher learning and student learning are inextricably linked and this is increasingly a recurring feature in discussions on CPD, namely,

how the benefits of teachers' CPD are manifested in the classroom. This will be further explored in this chapter in the section on the envisaged outcomes of CPD.

More recent approaches to CPD have collaborative processes at their heart. CPD as a collaborative process, or collaborative processes as a vehicle for CPD, are documented and supported by many writers. Formal and purposeful opportunities for teachers to engage collaboratively in CPD are fairly common in parts of the US and other countries, including networks, research groups and school-university partnerships. Nieto (2003) argues that many teachers receive their greatest inspiration from other teachers, rather than from outside experts, as they work on day-to-day problems together. They find opportunities for collaborative professional learning when "they join inquiry groups and professional organisations; they attend and participate actively in conferences; they present workshops together; and, in a myriad of other ways, they demonstrate that collegiality is essential for good teaching" (p.58). Although she does not refer to Mezirow's theory, Nieto's writings have strong transformative resonances. There are shades of critical reflection and critical discourse, advocated by Mezirow, in Nieto's work with an enquiry group where teachers "participated spiritedly" in their conversations (p. 78). Nieto acknowledges that "adult conversations, while necessary, can also be troubling" (p. 78) and cites question of race and social class as being "tough for many teachers to face" (p. 79). She argues that "in spite of the complications involved in talking about, writing on, and puzzling over persistent dilemmas, however, the process can be uplifting and transformative" (p. 79).

Teacher networks provide a particular forum for teachers' CPD based on collaborative processes. Lieberman (2000) contrasts the activities of these groups with the traditional "one size fits all" CPD delivered by outside "experts" without regard for the individuality of schools and their differing needs. In focusing on teachers' learning networks, Lieberman took, as an example, the National Writing Project (NWP) in the U.S. which then had 161 sites, having been in existence for 25 years. She explained that the programme begins with a 5-week workshop held on a university campus and, from the beginning, the activities are aimed at promoting the community aspect of the group. The teachers take turns in the author's chair, teaching a model lesson and logging each day's activities. They write letters, they discuss and give feedback on each other's work. They work in small groups and alone, developing awareness of the development of personal relationships and cultural norms in the group (p.224).

The literature shows that CPD is a complex multidimensional process. It is clear that the model of CPD as the transmission of knowledge, which prevailed in the 60s and 70s, is no longer regarded as being adequate or appropriate in addressing teachers' learning needs. It is being replaced by interactive CPD activities and by teachers working collaboratively with colleagues in schools and engaging in learning networks beyond the school. There is potential for transformation in these approaches to CPD.

3.3.2 The importance of Continuing Professional Development for teachers

The importance of CPD for teachers is very well illustrated in the many accounts of CPD found in the literature. It is intended that the selections from the literature which are referenced in this section will illustrate the transformative dimension of professional learning for teachers. The literature quoted illuminates the promotion of a deepening sense of professional self-understanding, or identity, as distinct from merely an increase in skills, competences and efficiencies.

In reflecting on teachers as lifelong learners, we trust that student teachers are helped to understand that initial teacher education is the beginning of their journey of lifelong learning as teachers. Their awareness of the continuum of teacher education may be heightened when, as newly qualified teachers, they take on their first teaching responsibilities. As they grow and mature into their role, teachers may realise that they are in need of regular professional nourishment. Well-conceived CPD may be teachers' lifeline to this nourishment, to the renewal of purpose in their teaching, to reinvigoration of their practice through new knowledge and skills development and to the replenishment of the mental, physical and emotional wellspring of their teaching.

The importance of enabling teachers to grow and mature, personally and professionally, is reflected in the words of Parker Palmer (1998):

> As a young teacher, I yearned for the day when I would know my craft so well, be so competent, so experienced, and so powerful, that I could walk into any classroom without feeling afraid. But now, in my late fifties, I know that day will never come. I will always have fears, but I need not be my fears - for there are other places in my inner landscape from which I can speak and act.
> Each time I walk into a classroom, I can choose the place within myself from which my teaching will come, just as I can choose the place within my students towards which my teaching will be aimed. I need not teach from a fearful place: I can teach from curiosity or hope or empathy or honesty, places that are as real within me as are my fears. I can have fear, but I need not be fear - if I am willing to stand someplace else in my inner landscape (p.57).

One of the aims of high-quality CPD could be to develop that "inner landscape" so that teachers feel confident, in themselves and in their students, and can bring creativity and imagination to their work. There may be a certain element of risk-taking by a teacher in doing things differently. Mezirow (1991) points out that "the strong feelings that impede action must be dealt with before transformation can occur…transformative learning may involve progressively greater risk taking in deciding action steps" (p.140). Teachers may feel bound by prescriptive curricula and syllabi which could stunt and stultify their own and their students' development. Ideally, the development of the "inner landscape" would facilitate attention to the outer landscape as the teacher's capacity to adapt to the ever-changing educational scene is enhanced through CPD.

The importance of teachers' ability to cope with change, i.e., to become shapers of change as distinct from mere victims of it, is highlighted by Fullan (1993), who deals with it in the context of the moral purpose of education "to make a difference in the lives of students, regardless of background, and to help produce citizens who can live and work productively in increasingly dynamically complex societies" (p.4). Fullan says that this puts teachers in a situation where they have to manage educational change on a continuous basis as skilled change agents. While Fullan writes mainly on the leadership of change in the context of educational reform, the potential for teacher transformation is implicit, to some degree, in his work on change agentry, e.g., he identifies "four core capacities required as a generative foundation for building greater change capacity: personal vision-building; inquiry, mastery and collaboration" (p.12). Fullan argues that "working on a vision means examining and re-examining, and making explicit to ourselves why we came into teaching…it forces us to come out of the closet with doubts about ourselves and what we are doing" (p.13). Here, Fullan's words resonate with Mezirow's concept of people examining their frames of reference as a result of which they may change their values and attitudes. However, apart from these intimations of transformation in the first book of Fullan's trilogy on *Change Forces*, there is little exploration of the transformative dimensions of professional learning in the second (1999) and third (2003) books in the series.

Hargreaves (2003) is more incisive on the issue of transformation believing that there is a moral imperative that teachers attend not only to their own professional learning but also to their own personal and professional development. In so doing, he distinguishes between professional learning as skills, on the one hand, and knowledge-based learning and professional and personal development through which "teachers build character, maturity, and other virtues in themselves and others, making their schools into moral communities"

(p.63). Thus, he argues, teachers who have developed a secure sense of identity, through professional development and personal growth, can engage as confidently with adults as they do with children. In that context, he notes the importance of senior teachers being available to support younger teachers and would welcome retaining them for this purpose through post-retirement initiatives. He claims that "Professional learning and professional development *both* matter in the knowledge-society school" (p.63). Hargreaves further expands on the importance of the whole school, not just individual teachers, engaging in learning as an organisation, where "They would operate as genuine communities that drew on their collective intelligence and human resources to pursue continuous improvement" (p. 127).

Fullan (1993) perceptively points out that the school as a learning organisation enables teachers to see the whole picture and their individual parts therein and prepares them to collectively adapt to rapidly changing scenes in education. According to Fullan

> Our high-quality teaching force – always learning – is the *sine qua non* of coping with dynamic complexity, i.e., of helping to produce citizens who can manage their lives and relate to those around them in a continually changing world. There are no substitutes to having better teachers (p.104).

In a similar vein of thought, Guskey (2000) says that teachers' professional development is extremely important as it is central and fundamental to improvements in education. He does not agree with those who regard CPD as the remedy for perceived deficiencies in teachers' work but rather views it as important in the context of a "growing recognition of education as a dynamic, professional field…(where) new types of expertise are required of educators at all levels" (p.16).

Good teachers have been described as those who "make magic" but Nieto (2003) points out that this does not happen in isolation; rather in their work in a community. Nieto set up an inquiry group to investigate what keeps teachers going, from which emerged *What Keeps Teachers Going*? (2003), and found that teachers need to engage in learning on a continuous basis, in community with others. She says that "Viewing teachers as members of an intellectual community means understanding that teaching is enriched not only by individual excellence also by collective effort" (p.90). Such initiatives highlight the merits of developing a culture of CPD through group processes, be they whole-staff, inter-school or based on other commonalities.

Another reason why CPD as a collaborative process is important is that it can give a voice to unrepresented individuals or groups. Johnson et al (2000) in the U.S. discuss this in relation

to the nature of participative collaborations such as school-university partnerships where teachers who may be isolated in their classrooms are empowered to reflect on the circumstances which curtail them. Johnson et al comment, in particular, on female teachers who are in the majority in the teaching profession but were quite silent until they began to develop a public voice on school policies and other matters, through collaborations. They say that "collaboration, which is constitutive of our most life-supporting and growth-producing values, offers those of us who care about children and schooling a potentially powerful tool for transforming our environment" (p.37).

Lieberman (2000) agrees that collaborative groups are perceived to be more amenable to facilitating beneficial change in schools and also acknowledges that they alleviate the isolation many teachers feel in their classrooms, as they take cognisance of, and build on, teachers' needs and interests. She believes that schools do not always recognise the importance of developing a supportive culture for learning. She sees that, by contrast, informal and more formal CPD networks consciously build relationships towards achieving their goals and that "enabling members to participate in creating and sustaining a group that advanced their professional identity, interests, and learning, released great energy and power" (p.223).

In the Preface to *Learning Anew* (Hogan et al, 2007), Professor John Coolahan states that

> whole-hearted engagement with well-designed continuing professional development activity can be a catalyst that unleashes new energies, fosters fresh enthusiasm, cultivates deeper understating and fine-hones pedagogical skills. The nature of teaching requires such re-invigoration on a periodic basis (p.i).

The importance of CPD for teachers is related to their changing role and their concept of themselves as professionals in the context of a changing world. Davies (2013) says that "to maintain pace with fundamental shifts in local and global societies, it requires teachers themselves to be creative in the ways they conceive and carry out their role and in the ways they develop their key relationships with learners and with other stakeholders" (p.52).

It is clear that CPD is important in maintaining teachers' commitment to the moral purpose of teaching in making a difference in students' lives.

3.3.3 Key features of good professional development for teachers

Opportunities for CPD take many forms and are facilitated in varying situations, at different levels, through multifaceted structures and systems. While the traditional form of CPD as

knowledge transmission does not accord with transformative CPD, it may be argued that information-giving sessions are still necessary in some instances. However, participative methods of CPD which reflect Mezirow's and Brookfield's writing on communication and reflection can bring a new dimension to lifelong learning for teachers. This is highlighted in the following extracts from some of the literature on CPD.

Butt et al (1992) commented that CPD programme developers concentrated on changing teachers' beliefs, attitudes and practices and implied that this was the most appropriate approach, arguing that

> Seeing the teacher as an adult learner entails acknowledging that she holds an articulate and elaborated practical knowledge of classroom practice that, if examined on its own grounds, might not be organized in terms of 'beliefs', 'attitudes', 'instructional practices'. Seeing the teacher as an adult learner implies that teachers will seek a kind of knowledge that can, in some way, be incorporated in the structure of knowledge they have developed; it also means that they will learn in several ways, from several sources and in various manners at different moments in their careers (p.54).

Brookfield is concerned that mandatory continuing education, i.e., compulsory CPD, may "act as a major block to effective learning" (p. 175). When considering the role of critical reflection and critical thinking in relation to transformative CPD for teachers, it is useful to remember Brookfield's (1987) insight that

> Trying to force people to analyse critically the assumptions under which they have been thinking and living is likely to serve no function other than intimidating them to the point where resistance builds up against this process. We can, however, try to awaken, prompt, nurture, and encourage this process without making people feel threatened or patronized (p. 11).

In that context, Brookfield's (1986), six key principles of effective practice in adult education/facilitated learning are particularly relevant and applicable to CPD for teachers and are summarised as:

- participation is voluntary – the learner makes the decision to engage in the learning process
- participants respect each other's self-worth – criticism may be part of a discussion but it is offered without belittling others in the process
- facilitation is collaborative – leadership and facilitation roles may be shared and there is a continuous negotiation of activities and priorities
- praxis is engaged in – there is a cyclical process of engaging, applying, analysing and reflecting on an idea

- adults engage in critical reflection – people question their values, beliefs and behaviours

- people are supported in becoming self-directed, empowered adults – they learn how to be proactive rather than reactive (pp.9-11).

Brookfield's principles are fundamental to facilitating CPD opportunities which have the potential to be transformative. It is intended that they will underpin whatever suggestions emerge in this study in relation to the creation of a CPD framework for teachers. In that context, it is hoped that they might be brought to the attention of policy makers, facilitators and teachers engaged in CPD activities in this country and be incorporated into a set of principles around which a CPD framework might be created.

Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) argue that professional development should provide opportunities for teachers' critical reflection which deepen teachers' understanding of the processes of teaching and learning and of the students they teach. They speak of effective professional development accommodating teachers as learners and as teachers, allowing them "to struggle with the uncertainties that accompany each role" (p.2). They define a number of characteristics of effective CPD which have resonance with Brookfield's principles of adult learning including: tasks of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection; participant-lead inquiry, reflection and experimentation; connected to teachers' work with their students; being sustained and supported and being connected to other aspects of school change.

Equally true to the principles of adult learning, a key feature of good professional development is the opportunity it provides for teacher interaction, sharing of knowledge and experience and discussion on classroom practice. Teacher inquiry groups provide this opportunity and Crockett (2002) reports on a year-long study of one such group. Her article focuses, in particular, on the specific activities that generate critical reflection within inquiry groups. The purpose of the study was "to generate dilemmas regarding teacher's beliefs and practices about mathematics teaching and learning in and through the activities that constitute their daily work – planning lessons, teaching lessons, and assessing students' work as they interacted in weekly inquiry groups" (p.610). She describes how the group argued, challenged assumptions, reached consensus at times, planned lessons, put ideas into practice in the classroom, discussed the outcomes and jointly assessed students' work. Thus, professional conversation, as a key aspect of CPD, generated an opportunity for

teachers' increased learning of mathematical subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and facilitated an enriched teaching/learning experience in the classroom.

Writing in the late 90s on their work with teachers who were learning skills towards using Instructional Conversations (ICs) in their classrooms, Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991) found that "Staff development…must be grounded in the mundane but very real details of teachers' daily work lives and in a form that provides the intellectual stimulation of a graduate seminar"(pp.69-70). The authors met with a group of teachers, once a week, after school hours, over a period of a year and found that teachers' engagement with each other and with an outside expert must have a number of important features. These features require that it must: be sustained over a period of time; be based on teachers' classroom situations; be goal-oriented and focused towards learning new knowledge and skills and be intellectually stimulating, where teachers develop a conceptual understanding of pedagogical processes. They found that teachers must study the intellectual substance of what they are teaching and that recording lessons for review and analysis is critical, albeit uncomfortable, at times.

Johnson et al (2000) declare that collaboration reflects "life-supporting and growth-producing values" (p.37) and empowers people to change their environments. They point out that people working together can achieve more than people working alone. They acknowledge, however, that some are ill-prepared for the potential discomfort inherent in working relationships in collaborative groups and the result may be that some teachers leave the group and return to the relative comfort of working alone in their classrooms. They claim that action research on collaboration points to its benefits and they caution that avoiding collaborative engagement can be to the detriment of teachers learning to grow together as a community. They foresee that as more school-university collaborations develop and become well-known, they may be more highly valued and appreciated (p.38).

The foregoing extracts from the literature on features of good CPD identify what might be deemed desirable such as communication, collaboration and changing attitudes and beliefs. These contribute towards transformative learning. The following extracts in this section give some examples of how the environment may be created and the means may be developed whereby this transformation may occur.

While collaboration in professional learning communities is promoted as a means of engaging in professional learning, Dooner et al. (2008) found that little is known about setting up and sustaining such groups and for that reason they analysed a small group of

teachers working together over a two-year period. In tracing the group's development, they used Weick's (1979) four stages of collaborative groups, i.e., *diverse ends* where members identify what motivated them to join the group, *common means* by which members understand how to support each other's learning, *common ends* to which the members were committed in face of the potential for separate purposes and *diverse means* when the group broke into smaller groups in which they felt more comfortable. Dooner's research will be drawn on at a later stage in this study in the context of making suggestions on the development of collaborative learning groups.

Duncombe and Armour (2004), in relating their experience of researching CPD for Physical Education (PE-CPD) in two primary schools, highlight key aspects of CPD or CPL (Learning). These are tradition, structure, management and personal factors. The traditional approach to CPD has been off-site courses which centre on giving teachers new facts and skills but they assert that "by focusing on how teachers learn as well as what it is they need to learn, more effective learning might occur" (p.156). With regard to structure, teachers cited lack of time and opportunity as barriers to teachers' learning in school. This leads the authors to argue that:

> The whole point of CPL is that teachers learn from one another by observing each other, discussing problems and reflecting on practice together. It involves the sharing of ideas and resources and is only possible if there is time in the school day for teachers to engage in such activities" (p.158).

In relation to management, one head teacher was receptive to proposed CPD while the other was less accommodating. Duncombe and Armour (2004), suggest that "for CPL to be effective and accepted, its merits as a form of CPD need to be acknowledged and encouraged by head teachers and other management structures within the school" (p.159). Personal factors can include teachers themselves being opposed to collaborative practices, staff members being unapproachable and teachers deeming it unprofessional to offer advice without being asked. Here, the point being highlighted is that teachers need to trust one another before they will engage in school-based CPD. Duncombe and Armour (2004), argue that professional learning needs to be seen as part of teaching and not an add-on and more CPD/CPL activities need to be incorporated into school life. They believe that positive school-based CPD experiences will help to convince teachers that it is worthwhile.

The nature and extent of teachers' informal learning in school is frequently determined by the culture of the school. In studying teachers' informal learning in three schools - a relatively new school in the US Midwest and two in Lithuania, one of these being a Russian

school - Jurasite–Harbison and Rex (2010) based their analysis on written and verbal accounts using a framework that included the school mission, traditions, building layout, organisational arrangements and professional relationships. These will be further explicated in making suggestions for the future of CPD in Ireland.

Guskey (2000) states that an important aspect of CPD is being clear about its goals. Goals ensure that the purpose and the intention of the process are understood and they guide the content, methodology and evaluation of the endeavour. Guskey is particularly interested in evaluating the consequences or effects of CPD and he finds that having clear goals makes it easier to decide what information needs to be collected to ascertain outcomes. He also recommends that CPD be seen as ongoing, with learning opportunities being present in all the activities with which teachers engage, e.g., teaching a lesson, conducting an assessment, reading professional material, having a professional conversation with a colleague. He considers that professional development should be a systemic process, envisaging change over an extended period of time that takes into account all levels of the organisation and accommodates individual and organisational development. He further advocates that parents be involved in professional development activities, as appropriate, together with the occasional involvement of other adults in the school community who interact with students. He recognises that promoting these aspects of CPD is a radical departure from the traditional experiences of CPD but believes that such a systemic approach is necessary if we are to address the complexity of improvement in the education system.

3.3.4 The envisaged outcomes of transformative professional development

McKenzie (2007) and others have highlighted that the quality of education is dependent on the quality of teaching, which is in turn dependent on teachers who are consistently engaged in professional development. Professional development contributes to the health of schools' ecology which is described by Eisner (2000) as including the school's aims, structure, curriculum, teaching and evaluation. He argues that:

> If intentions are shallow, programmes and practices are likely to be shallow also. If school structure inhibits teachers from learning from each other, the quality of teaching is likely to be unremarkable. If pedagogy is unremarkable, interest by students in what they study is likely to be meagre and if evaluation practices belie deeper aspirations, both teachers and students will attend to evaluation practices and neglect those aspirations. Developing effective schools requires attention to the configuration among these dimensions. It requires an orchestration of these aspects of schooling (p.355).

Quality CPD, involving whole-staff collaboration on aims, structure, curriculum, teaching and evaluation, can ensure that their "orchestration", advocated by Eisner, takes place.

The release of teachers' and students' creativity was documented by Davies (2013), with regard to a collaborative project involving teachers and students with language and communication difficulties in an English special school. Teachers appreciated each other's strengths and expertise, they felt comfortable in questioning each other's ideas in an open manner, they developed a shared sense of responsibility for the success of the project, there was a sense of learning together and being part of a group ensured that the momentum was maintained. The learners, some with severe learning difficulties, grew into interacting more meaningfully with each other, with teachers and with other partners, at a social and cultural level. The teachers were surprised by the students' engagement, by the rapid development of their confidence and by their ability to take the lead. All of this contributed to teachers' deeper understanding of the relationship between teacher professionalism and their sense of identity as teachers "as they focused ever more closely on personalised approaches to learning and empowering learners through sharing the responsibility for learning with them" (p.55). The project gave teachers the opportunity to work through "a period where together they have been developing a theory of learning constructed around their experiences and reflections" (p.68) and allowed them "to become transformative agents as they exercise the necessary risks with learners without fear of failure and allows any failure to be harnessed for the purposes of learning" (p.68). The teachers also learned that they could work creatively around legal requirements and prescriptive curricula and that "reciprocity between teachers and learners had become the most powerful catalyst for learning" (p.68).

Nieto (2003) points out that "teaching can be the loneliest of professions" (p.77) and finds that this is largely attributable to the busyness of daily life in school where teachers do not have time to converse with colleagues. Consequently, it is usually at home at the end of the day, tired and away from their colleagues, that teachers reflect and ponder on the events of their teaching day. Having worked with Boston public school teachers on what sustains them in their professional role, Nieto proposes that teachers need to meet and have "conversations about teaching, about the problems teachers face when they enter their classrooms and the resolutions to them…[this] creates community among teachers" (p.78). While recognising the value of collaborative processes as CPD endeavours, Nieto also acknowledges that the process is not without its drawbacks. Teachers' conversations

on their practice are not always comfortable as some find it difficult to admit that they are struggling with certain problems. A high level of trust needs to be built up in the group before honest and meaningful dialogue can take place (p.78). Nieto concludes that "In spite of the complications involved in talking about, writing on and puzzling over persistent dilemmas, however, the process can be uplifting and transformative" (p.79).

Professional portfolios are usually associated with the teacher as an individual but they can also be undertaken as a whole-school collaborative staff process. An account of the experiences of six schools in the U.S. that engaged in a portfolio project is given by Craig (2003) and illustrates, from teachers' own accounts, what they learned during the process. In one case, it became clear to the teachers

> that the school portfolio needed to be re-framed with productive inquiry questions which would confront critical issues facing the school as an organisation and themselves as educators working in face-to-face relationships with underserved children…(and)…this re-focusing of purpose allowed the teachers to more ably differentiate cosmetic portfolio construction from inquiry deeply rooted in their educational practices as teachers (p.821).

Another group of participants in the same project decided to conduct a survey on teaching and learning in their school which involved teachers and students in vigorous discussions. As a result, the teachers constructed a Venn diagram which illustrated powerful learning and positive engagement. This diagram, based on many hours of debate, formed the basis of further discussion and encouraged the development of "inquiry as a habit and collaboration as a way of knowing" (p.822). Yet another school decided to contribute individual topics of interest, including teachers' personal professional narratives, to the school portfolio, e.g., one teacher "chronicled his personal journey from that of an unenthusiastic participant to passionate supporter/leader in a well-known writing project…(and) mapped his students' progress in their journal writing.." (p.824). Further learning/discovery was "the notion of resilience as a personally constructed, socially funded phenomenon", "connections between teacher resilience and student resilience", "the layered nature of knowledge development" and how "personal pursuits informed a larger whole" (p.825).

Professional Development Schools (PDS), commonplace in the USA but not in Ireland, are worthy of inclusion in the literature review, in considering the outcomes of CPD activities and experiences they engender. These are ordinary schools with an extra dimension formally incorporated into their structures and procedures. They were also known as

clinical schools, partner schools, and professional practice schools. Basically, their purpose is to facilitate partnerships between schools and universities/colleges, including greater involvement of teachers in the preparation of student teachers and greater interaction between school and university personnel, including the facilitation of teachers' continuing professional development.

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (1995):

> PDSs create settings in which novices enter professional practice by working with expert practitioners while veteran teachers renew their own professional development as they assume roles as mentors, university adjuncts, and teacher leaders. Professional development schools also provide serious venues for developing teaching knowledge by enabling practice-based and practice-sensitive research to be carried out collaboratively by teachers, teacher educators, and researchers. PDSs enable teachers to become sources of knowledge for one another and to learn the important roles of "colleague" and "learner" (p.3).

In reporting on a PDS relationship between Teachers College (TC), Columbia University and the Beacon School in New York, Crocco et al (2003) outline a joint intern action research project, action research being seen as "critical to providing both the interns and faculty at Beacon a means of sustainable, well-integrated professional development to help the school deal with its own pressing educational issues" (p.20). The results highlight the opportunity provided by a PDS for educators to examine their practice through a systematic process of reflection, observation and collaboration.

Having reviewed the literature on school/university collaboration, Dickens (2000) concluded that "Collaboration, which is constitutive of our most life-supporting and growth-producing values, offers those of us who care about children and schooling a potentially powerful tool for transforming our environment" (p.37).

Examining the effects of professional development on teachers' instruction, Desimone et al (2002) undertook a 3-year longitudinal study using a sample of 207 teachers, in 30 schools, in 10 districts, in 5 states in the U.S. They based their research on what they described as structural aspects of CPD (form, duration and collective participation), and core aspects (active learning, coherence and content), albeit acknowledging that these are not the only important features of CPD. They found that "professional development focused on specific teaching practices increased teachers' use of those practices in the classroom" (p.102) and point out that "change in teaching would occur if teachers experienced consistent, high quality professional development" (p.105). They also highlight the dilemma of whether

investment in CPD should provide in-depth, sustained support for a small number of teachers or short-term, limited support for a large number of teachers. According to Desimone et al (2005), the issue of the deployment of resources is largely one of funding (p.105) and funding will be of interest when commenting on provision for CPD at a later stage in this study.

In discussing the National Writing Project (NWP) in the U.S., Lieberman (2000) says that the project's methodologies and activities have the effect of developing new awareness for group members of being both a teacher and a learner in the group. They feel valued as members and as colleagues in the NWP community and they value being able to share "their passionate concern for the success of their students". Lieberman sums it up saying "The NWP is a prime example of how networks can build and sustain the concept of community, be responsive to varied contexts, and provide a powerful nexus for teacher learning" (p.224). In studying the NWP, Lieberman and fellow researchers observed participant teachers in their classrooms and found that they were using many of the strategies they had learned in the network and it had "renewed their excitement about teaching, contributing significantly to their connection to their students and to their effectiveness as classroom teachers" (p.224). They had also become leaders in their schools and communities and were engaging other teachers in improving their practice.

In summary, the foregoing extracts from the literature illustrate to a greater or lesser extent that adult learning has a transformative dimension which Mezirow (1991) expressed as:

> the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action…making a decision, making an association, revising a point of view, reframing or solving a problem, modifying an attitude, or producing a change in behaviour (p.12).

This is particularly relevant to teachers as they engage in CPD activities to which they bring an array of prior knowledge, skills and attitudes upon which they can reflect individually and collectively, leading to deeper and more meaningful development in their teaching. It is worth noting also that a distinction is made by Drago-Severson (2004) between "transformational learning – learning that helps adults to develop capacities to better manage the complexities of work and life – and informational learning - increases in knowledge and skills that are also important and can support changes in adults' attitudes and possibly their competencies" (p.23).

Conclusion

The selections from the research literature discussed in this chapter are intended to provide insights which assist in addressing the research question, "What would be necessary for the creation of a national framework for continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers in Ireland which would ensure their transformative development?" The review of transformative principles of adult learning also provides a context for the data analysis to be undertaken in the main body of the research.

In summary, an overview of the literature shows that the importance of continuing professional development can be analysed at individual, school and system level. Learning for individual teachers can be both personally and professionally enriching, with the acquisition of new knowledge and additional skills bringing renewed enthusiasm and fresh approaches to their work with young people. Teachers have greater confidence in their work with students and adults resulting in a positive transformation in their relationships and in their practice. When there is a whole-school approach, i.e., when the school is a learning organisation, the school community enjoys the multiplier effect of the individual benefits of personal and professional learning and development where staff work in a spirit of co-operation and collaboration. A positive school ethos is palpable when whole-school policies and practices which are learner-centred and respectful of all stakeholders are developed and embodied in the life of the school. At system level, the benefits of whole-school and individual teacher learning and development should be evident in effectiveness though this is not always measurable.

Chapter Four

Harvesting the Data: Methodology Used

Introduction

This chapter will describe the methodology used in the study. Three methods of research are employed, i.e., a questionnaire survey of teachers, interviews with individual stakeholders in the education system and focus group Interviews with teachers. It is important to note that the author, as is permissible in social science research, is not seeking generalisability in a strictly scientific sense for the findings, nor for universalisability in any absolute or *a priori* sense but for a rational approach within clearly defined terms. That is, the claims to knowledge being made here are advanced as warrantable claims to *professional* knowledge in the field of educational practice. in other words, the epistemological basis for their warrant includes an ethical, or professionally committed dimension from the start. This would also be true, though in different ways, of other practices like nursing, social work, medicine. Where education is concerned, authors like Mezirow and Brookfield, as we have seen in the previous chapter, have explored in some detail the import of such an epistemological-ethical orientation for practices of adult learning. From a methodological perspective however it is important to stress here that the knowledge claims made for a transformative learning proceed from a stance which is intentionally non-partisan between educational "isms"; knowledge claims however which seek an ever-provisional universalisability, i.e. open to rational criticism, revision and improvement. In this thesis, such a standpoint is informed not only by adult learning theorists like Mezirow and Brookfield, but also by authors like Palmer (1998), Day (2004), Nieto (2003) and others. From the point of view of making advances in professional practices of CPD, it also seeks to draw on the work of researchers such as Darling-Hammond, DuFour, and Guskey. Finally, my own experiences in a range of professional educational roles seeks to make its own contribution in elaborating the professional knowledge base for a transformative kind of CPD for teachers.

Within the context set out above, the research methods were designed to maximise the gathering of relevant information to address the research question "What would be necessary for the formulation of a national framework for CPD for teachers in Ireland which would ensure teachers' transformative development throughout their careers?" As stated in the Introduction to this study, if CPD is to be fruitful in the fullest sense, the transformative dimension needs to be acknowledged from the start. Where this is the

main emphasis, other aspects of CPD, such as up-skilling, are seen in a different context, i.e., the main emphasis in CPD moves from instrumental concerns such as effectiveness to enhancing the quality of the educational experiences provided in schools.

In light of the foregoing, relevant information would include the thoughts, opinions, attitudes and experiences of teachers and key stakeholders, focusing on the teaching profession and on teachers' CPD. The study seeks to ascertain the motivating and influencing factors which inspire people to enter the teaching profession, as told by teachers themselves and as perceived by people outside the profession. This is important because if the motivating factor is the moral purpose of teaching then CPD will be building on a strong foundation. The study further seeks to gather information on initial teacher education, this being the first step on the continuum which is a lifelong learning process throughout the teaching career. Teachers' professional identity is probed, in the belief that this is of paramount importance with regard to teachers' understanding of the need to engage in CPD. This leads to an exploration of teachers' engagement in CPD, the preferred methodologies and the perceived benefits to the practice of teaching. Finally, respondents' ideas on teachers' CPD into the future are queried.

As stated at the outset in Chapter 1, I have a personal professional interest in the subject of teachers' CPD. I was employed in the field of education for over forty two years - as a class teacher for the first 6 years of my career, a school Principal for 21 years, the Deputy National Co-ordinator of an In-service programme for 2 years, the National Co-ordinator of an in-service programme for 6 years and Chief Executive Officer of the Teaching Council for 7 years from its foundation in 2004. Also, the subject of my thesis for an M.A. in Adult Education was partnership between the home and the school and this further developed my interest in CPD for teachers.

I have experience of nurturing and mentoring newly qualified teachers at the beginning of the CPD continuum and of leading and supporting many teachers at other stages along the continuum. I am aware of the transformative potential of CPD from personal and professional experience. The wide-ranging experiences I was privileged to enjoy as practitioner and leader, as policy-maker and implementer, in the field of teachers' CPD, have shaped the approach to this study and influenced the theoretical perspective underpinning it. That perspective is derived from the principles of adult education which have been referred to in the previous chapter, arising largely from the work of Mezirow and Brookfield.

Having been closely involved with the subject matter, I had to be mindful of the potential for bias in designing and conducting the research. Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013) encapsulate the research difficulties for someone in my position. Far from suggesting that valid research is not possible in such circumstances, they highlight the necessity for a self-critical, circumspect approach, especially where one's own presuppositions might be concerned:

> Understanding researchers' views and perspectives reflects deep-seated beliefs and values. Researcher beliefs and values affect the way research is designed, planned, undertaken and written up. As a result, it is important for researchers to understand themselves and their stances, so that they come to know the ways in which stances influence the research lens adopted. Qualitative researchers need to understand themselves since this affects the research and its processes – far more than often is realized. Yet the self-reflection needs to be purposeful, otherwise it risks being self-indulgent (p.82).

Based on my experience in the field and in discussion with my supervisor and with critical friends, I reflected on my beliefs and values with regard to teachers' CPD. I also considered the subject from a 360 degree perspective, acknowledging the multiplicity of stances and viewpoints surrounding it. I aimed to maintain a distance between participants' responses and my reactions to them and I remained alert to the continuing necessity for this throughout the research. I developed a critical stance which enabled me to view responses through the lens of "why might this be so?" thus broadening and deepening my understanding and interpretation of the data.

4.1 Research Methods Chosen

The methodology uses three main research instruments, these being: 4.1.1 a Questionnaire Survey of Teachers; 4.1.2 Interviews with Individual Stakeholders in the education system and 4.1.3 Focus Group Interviews with teachers. These three instruments enable some searching explorations of CPD to be carried out with a range of educational professionals in Ireland and internationally, as detailed towards the end of this paragraph. In all cases, purposeful, or purposive, sampling was used, concurring with Merriam (1998) that this was "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p.61). Merriam further states that the criteria one establishes for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study was to consider the provision of CPD for *all* teachers and the selection criteria reflected this in the inclusion of teachers of

varying sectors, ages, gender and teaching experience. As the provision of CPD involves all stakeholders, the criteria for their inclusion covered representatives from the Department of Education and Skills, teacher educators, school management, teachers' professional bodies, teacher unions and CPD providers. Cohen et al (2007) support this method of selection where "the concern is to acquire in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it" (p.115).

The questionnaire was issued to teachers in four areas of the world, i.e., Ireland, Scotland, Canada and Australia, for reasons which are dealt with below. However, as the main research question related to Ireland, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 key stakeholders in the field of education in this State and with 3 from other jurisdictions. Four focus group meetings were held with primary and post-primary teachers in Ireland. The extensive evidence provided by the research is presented as quantitative and qualitative data. This approach reflects Smith's (2006), comment on Multiple Methodology in Educational Research, which acknowledges the stance that "mixing methods is largely a practical matter…qualitative and quantitative researches are not distinct, but part of the whole thinking process…" (p.460). Smith further distinguishes "sequential designs (where the qualitative method either preceded or followed the quantitative method with data from the first informing the conduct of the second) from concurrent designs…" (p.462). This study fits within the "sequential design" method where the results of the Questionnaire Survey influenced the framework of enquiry and highlighted and refined the areas of questioning to be pursued subsequently in the semi-structured interviews and the focus group interviews.

The analysis of the data, in the context of the theoretical discussion in Chapter 3, forms the basis for drawing conclusions and making suggestions on a framework for teachers' CPD. The analysis undertaken here is based on three legs, where an initial quantitative method is used both to garner broad information in relation to the question being answered by this thesis, and then to inform the two qualitative methods so as to elicit deep information around the issues raised. The research methods used for this study accord with Smith (2006) who argues that

> …construction of knowledge is quite possible through less mechanical, standardized, and controlled means. Humans' perceptions, conceptual and pattern-recognizing abilities have developed through evolutionary processes, and though fallible, they are still capable of constructing truthful knowledge, knowledge that maps the real world well enough to take action and solve problems (p.473).

The following paragraphs will outline the development of each of the three methods in the following sequence: the reason for choosing the research method; the design of the research method; the criteria and the conduits for selecting participants; contacting the participants and conducting the research; recording the research findings.

4.1.1 Questionnaire survey of teachers

There were a number of reasons for choosing to issue questionnaires to teachers as a means of gathering information. The questionnaire provided access to the thoughts and opinions of a number of teachers in Ireland and in Scotland, Canada and Australia, giving a national and an international dimension to the study. It made it possible to garner a significant amount of information in a concise format, on motivation, teacher education, teacher identity and CPD, albeit that this might need to be filtered to select the most relevant data. It gave the respondents an opportunity, in their own time, and in the privacy of their own place, to study the questions without the perception of pressure from an observer or interviewer. While acknowledging the benefits of completing a questionnaire in the presence of the researcher who can offer immediate clarification, if needed, Cohen at al (2007) believe that "…having the researcher present may be threatening and exert a sense of compulsion, where respondents may feel uncomfortable about completing the questionnaire, and may not want to complete it, or even start it" (p.344).

The information collected through the questionnaires would be of value in gathering evidence of teachers' experiences and opinions. However, the variability of response is endemic to questionnaires and strengthens the need to bolster the research with other methods likely to yield deeper information. Therefore, a particularly important purpose of conducting the questionnaire survey, as indicated previously, was to set up the framework for the individual interviews with stakeholders and the focus group interviews with teachers whereby the findings could be probed at a deeper, qualitative level.

Where the use of questionnaires as a research instrument is concerned, Cohen et al. (2007) help to identify a "staged sequence for planning a questionnaire" (p.318) which can be summarised as follows: deciding the purpose of the questionnaire; planning the population sample to be used; generating the topics to be addressed; deciding the format of responses; writing the questionnaire items; checking that all issues have been included; piloting and refining the questionnaire and issuing the final questionnaire. On the whole, this sequence was adhered to in planning the questionnaire for this study.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit information which spanned a wide range of areas of the teacher's professional life, all aimed at determining teachers' preparedness and readiness to engage in professional development. I saw teachers' motivation to teach, their initial teacher education programme and their professional identity as being inextricably linked to their engagement in professional development. With a view to ensuring validity as well as thoroughness in designing the questionnaire then, I wanted (a) to establish the professional disposition of teachers on entering their career in teaching, (b) to get some information on the content and facilitation of their teacher education programmes, (c) to ascertain their subsequent engagement in lifelong professional learning activities and their experience of continuing professional development and (d) to gather their views with regard to future provision for CPD. In these questions I specifically did not ask respondents explicitly if their experiences of initial teacher education or of CPD to date had been transformative for them. But I remained on the alert for any indication in their responses, in the Comment section of the question, that this was so.

The full questionnaire can be found at Appendix 2 (p.2, Vol.2) and for the reader's convenience it is summarised as follows, using the questionnaire section and subsection headings:

Section A.	Personal and Professional Details
Section B.	Qualifications and Teaching Experience
Section C	Becoming a Teacher
Section D	Your Initial Teacher Education Programme / Course
Section E	Teaching as a Profession
Section F	CPD Experiences
Section G	Future Provision for CPD

The questionnaire was designed to yield both quantitative data from the responses and qualitative data from the open-ended Comment section in each question. I was conscious that the completion of the questionnaire would be dependent on the simplicity of the design and the number and type of questions. Therefore, to facilitate respondents, I used a number of types of questions and offered suggested responses to each question which could be rank ordered, selected or ignored, as appropriate. In my communication with respondents (Appendix 4, p.22, Vol.2), I allowed for non-responses, advising them to skip any question or response they did not wish to address, as I know from experience that having to leave a box blank, for want of information, can cause people to abandon a questionnaire. This approach is supported by Cohen et al (2007), who state that "the opportunity should be provided for respondents to indicate that they have no opinion, or

that they don't know the answer to a particular question, or to state that they find that the question does not apply to them" (p.322).

With regard to the Comment section referred to previously, this provided an opportunity for respondents to add their own responses and/or to comment on the area being covered, if they so wished. This was not availed of by many but where comments were added they were valuable in illustrating the responses.

The first draft of the questionnaire was evaluated by my supervisor who made a number of recommendations which were subsequently adopted. To further ensure reliability, as advised by Bell (1987), the amended draft was then trialled over a number of weeks by a total of 14 teachers who were identified using personal contacts and included male and female teachers from the primary and post-primary sectors in Ireland. The questionnaire was sent by email together with a covering letter which asked the pilot group to give feedback on the following: length of time it took to complete the questionnaire; whether any questions presented the respondent with a difficulty and in what way; whether there were sections or questions omitted which they would have wished to see included and whether any technical (IT) difficulties were encountered in completing the questionnaire.

The feedback from the pilot survey was very positive and informative. Respondents found that it took between 30 minutes and one hour to complete the questionnaire and no one experienced technical difficulties. The feedback informed the amendments which were incorporated into the revised and finalised questionnaire. These included: asking respondents the number of schools in which they had taught in Question 8; including "sibling" as a person who influenced the decision to be a teacher in Question 10 and explaining "awarding body" by adding "college/university" in Question 7. One suggestion that was not adopted was that there should be an incentive offered to potential respondents, e.g., inclusion in a raffle for a prize.

As can be seen from the sequence of the questions, the design of the questionnaire was intended to have a biographical trend. It was hoped that this would encourage respondents to reflect on their career to date, i.e., why they pursued teaching as a profession, who influenced them, what they experienced in their initial teacher education and their perception of teaching as a profession. It was intended that this would set the context for the teacher's own thinking on his/her CPD and raise his/her awareness as the questionnaire was being completed. This focus was also planned for the purpose of the study which was aiming to determine teachers' experience of CPD, their beliefs with regard

to the type and format that they found most beneficial and their views with regard to the provision of CPD in the future. This would enable the author to form conclusions and make suggestions with regard to teachers' CPD needs. This approach is reflected in the advice given by Cohen et al (2007):

> Completing a questionnaire can be seen as a learning process in which respondents become more at home with the task as they proceed. Initial questions should therefore be simple, have high interest value and encourage participation. This will build up the confidence and motivation of the respondent. The middle section of the questionnaire should contain the difficult questions; the last few questions should be of high interest in order to encourage respondents to return the complete questionnaire (p.337).

I would like to draw attention to Question 21, in particular, where respondents' personal experience of the value of CPD is queried. In the range of responses, I allowed as many options as possible without mentioning the transformative perspective on CPD in an explicit way. I could have included responses such as: "I have developed new awareness…"; "I engage in new ways of working…"; "I have a different attitude to …"; "my behaviour as a teacher has changed…", but I refrained from doing so in the interests of ensuring a greater validity in the response. I wanted to see would respondents see this lacuna themselves and feel moved to include any extra dimension, for which there was provision in the Comment section.

In setting the criteria for the selection of a sample of respondents, I regarded it as important that the completed questionnaires would include teachers from both primary and post-primary levels, male and female, at varying stages in their career, with varying degrees of engagement (or none) in CPD activities. I included a substantial number of people teaching in Ireland as the outcome of the research would be most relevant to their situation. I also chose to issue the questionnaires to teachers in Scotland, Canada and Australia as I wanted an international comparative dimension to the study. The comparative element was intended to ascertain whether or not Irish teachers differed substantially from teachers in jurisdictions similar to Ireland. The teacher education systems in these regions have much in common with Ireland and they also have Teaching Councils, or their equivalent, similar to the Teaching Council in Ireland. I will outline later in this chapter how the questionnaire findings were recorded and presented for analytical and comparative purposes.

A number of channels were used to select the personnel to whom questionnaires were issued in the chosen jurisdictions. In all contact and correspondence, I stated that I was

undertaking a PhD on CPD for Teachers and that I was doing this in a personal capacity, outside of my employed position at that time. I outlined the criteria, previously listed, which I had set out in the hope of compiling a cohort of data-rich respondents which would include a broad spectrum of the teaching profession with regard to sector, age, gender, qualifications and experience.

The majority of Irish respondents were selected by Education Centre Directors[8]. I chose the Education Centre network and the Directors therein as a possible conduit for accessing questionnaire respondents because of their access to teachers at local level. The Directors of all centres were contacted by letter (Appendix 3, p.21, Vol.2) explaining that I was asking for their co-operation in each finding approximately six teachers, based on the criteria for selection of respondents outlined previously, who would be willing to engage with the questionnaire and complete it. I asked that the names and email addresses of those who agreed to participate would be sent to me and I would make direct contact with them. I believed it was important that the Directors would know that I hoped the study would be of interest and benefit to the Teaching Council in developing a national framework for CPD for teachers, in consultation with teachers, Education Centre Directors and the partners in education.

A small number of respondents In Ireland were assembled through two other sources. I was particularly interested in including the views of a group of teachers with proven commitment to CPD; in other words, exemplars among practitioners of a lifelong professional learning philosophy. I met such a group at a course seminar when they were undertaking a university postgraduate programme on mentoring and they expressed an interest in supporting my research. Contact was subsequently made with this group through their course leader. I was also interested in including the views of teachers from a school which was in an area designated as disadvantaged, where particular challenges requiring innovative intervention are encountered. Such a group emerged through a contact who also offered to source respondents in the interest of supporting my research. With both cohorts, the contact persons distributed details of the research, similar to those distributed to all other respondents. Those who wished to participate made direct contact with me and the contact people were not necessarily aware who had done so.

[8] In Ireland, there are 21 full-time Education Centres whose core function is the provision of CPD for teachers. Each Centre has a Director and a designated catchment area of schools.

The Scottish contacts were sourced through the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) was given information about the study similar to that given to the Education Centre Directors in Ireland. I asked for his co-operation in finding a group of teachers, using the criteria outlined previously with regard to the diversity of respondents. I was given contact details for 23 randomly selected teachers of whom 12 returned completed questionnaires.

The Canadian and Australian respondents were sourced through the International Forum of Teaching Regulatory Authorities (IFTRA), bodies which are similar to the Teaching Council in Ireland. I met the CEOs from the respective bodies in Ontario, British Columbia and Southern Australia at an IFTRA conference in Cardiff in June 2009 and I spoke to them about my research on teachers' CPD. At their suggestion, I arranged to contact them to formally request their co-operation in sourcing teachers in their jurisdictions who might be willing to complete the survey questionnaire. In my subsequent communication with them I used the same information as that given to personnel in Ireland and Scotland. The Teaching Council in British Columbia (BC) had a formalised system for dealing with research requests which I was able to avail of. On payment of a fee of $105, the BC Council contacted teachers whose names they held on a database as teachers who had indicated their willingness to participate in research. These teachers were given details of the study and they were invited, if interested, to make direct contact with me. 41 teachers responded and they were issued with questionnaires, of which 26 were completed and returned to me. The respondents from Ontario were randomly selected by the College of Teachers in Ontario. I was given contact details for 66 teachers in the Ontario area to whom I sent questionnaires, of which 34 were completed and returned to me. 12 teachers in Southern Australia were contacted, of whom 6 returned questionnaires to me. While this is a small number, I regarded it as important that they would be included, as their opinions are as valid as all others. In presenting the findings, all regions will be identified by number and by percentage to ensure that the reader is fully aware of the sample size.

I received teachers' contact details, mainly email addresses, through the conduits outlined above, and I emailed each teacher. I thanked them for their willingness to participate in the research and for their agreement to complete the questionnaire. I attached the questionnaire and requested that it be completed and returned to me by email at their convenience.

Table 4.1, gives an account of the number of questionnaires issued and returned from each area together with the relevant percentages.

Table 4.1: Questionnaires issued and returned

	Sent Oct/Nov 2009	Returned Nov/Dec 2009	Reminder Sent Aug 2010	Returned Aug/ Sept 2010	Reminder sent April 2011	Returned after April 2011	Total Issued	Total returned
Ireland								
Education Centres	102	54	48	10	37	10	102	74
School	8	5	3	1			8	6
Postgraduate Students	23	6	17	4			23	10
	133	**65**	**68**	**15**	**37**	**10**	**133**	**90**
		48.87%		**11.27%**		**7.5%**		**67.66%**
Canada								
British Columbia	41	22	19	4			41	26
Ontario	63	28	35	6			63	34
	104	**50**	**54**	**10**			**104**	**60**
		48%		**9.61%**				**57.69%**
Scotland	**23**	**10**	**13**	**2**			**23**	**12**
		43.47%		**8.69%**				**52.17%**
South Australia	**12**	**2**	**10**	**4**			**12**	**6**
		16.66%		**33.33%**				**50%**
Totals	**272**	**127**	**145**	**31**	**37**	**10**	**272**	**168**
		46.7%		**11.4%**		**3.7%**		**61.74%**

The first issue of the questionnaire took place between late October and early November 2009. The overall response rate at the end of December 2009 was 46.7%. A reminder, including the questionnaire, was sent in August 2010 and this brought a further response of 11.4% by September 2010, the accumulated response then being 58%. At the risk of harassing people, a final effort to increase the response rate was made in April 2011 with reminders and repeat questionnaires being sent to Irish respondents only. This was supported by my supervisor who agreed that the validity of the Irish response would be strengthened by an increased return of completed questionnaires. This brought a further 7.5% response which increased the Irish response from 60% to nearly 68%.

The overall total number of questionnaires issued was 272 of which 168 were completed and returned yielding a response of nearly 62%. Cohen et al (2007) quote the Office of Population Census and Surveys (OPCS) which typically receives 40% return following the

original dispatch of a public survey, with three subsequent reminders yielding a further 20%, 10%, and 5% respectively, totalling 75% (p.346). The initial response to the questionnaire issued as part of this study exceeded that of the OPCS but did not match it in the follow-up receipts. This may have been due to the time lapse between reminders.

At varying stages, a number of respondents gave reasons why it had not been possible to complete the questionnaire and they promised that it would be done within a given period ranging from days to weeks. A number of people made no response to the first or second issue. A number promised to make a return but all did not do so. The latter was disappointing and somewhat frustrating but I had to accept that it would not be appropriate to make further contact. It brought home to me how dependent a researcher is on the willingness and goodwill of survey participants and I appreciate that much gratitude is owed to those who become involved.

The questionnaire respondents were guaranteed that their responses would be treated as anonymous and that any data being used would be anonymised. For the purpose of recording incoming completed questionnaires, and to facilitate categorisation for analysis of the data, it was necessary for me, as researcher, to be able to identify respondents. To this end, an Access Spreadsheet was set up to record the names, email addresses and region/category from which the respondents were drawn. A reference code was given to each participant, based on the initials of the region/category together with a number. As the questionnaires were returned by email, the reference code was entered as a Footer to the questionnaire, preserving the anonymity of the respondents as promised, where access to the original returns might be required by my supervisor or external examiners. The questionnaires were marked "returned" on the Access Spreadsheet and they were stored in a Returned Questionnaires electronic folder. They were also printed and the hard copies were filed according to region.

This questionnaire, dealing as it did with the subject of CPD for teachers, was highly relevant to the respondents as teachers and that, I believe, would have enticed them to treat it seriously, to consider their opinions carefully and to choose their responses with honesty and integrity. I also became aware, from the many notes and messages accompanying the returned questionnaire, that teachers were indeed very interested in the topic and many expressed a wish to read the thesis following its completion. Having said that, I also recognise that for some it may have been a chore to which they attended without wholehearted interest or diligence. Cohen et al (2007) are clear in their

understanding of this position when they state that “Respondents cannot be coerced into completing a questionnaire. They might be strongly encouraged, but the decision whether to become involved and when to withdraw from the research is entirely theirs.” (pp.317-318).

The questionnaires generated a very large amount of data. There were 22 questions, each with a number of potential responses, so the total number of responses from a participant could be 215. While all responses were not going to be discussed in the analysis of the findings, it would be necessary to give the overview of responses from the aggregated whole, i.e., all respondents from the regions surveyed. It was also deemed necessary to be able to query the data across a range of criteria, i.e., by individual region, by gender, by age, by sector, by qualifications, by experience and by a combination of any one or more of these, if necessary.

An IT programmer set up the data entry system for me. An Excel Spreadsheet with drop-down menus customised to the questionnaire was created to enter the data from the completed questionnaires and I personally entered all the data manually. A computer package could have been used for this purpose such as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), which is commonly used nowadays. In handling the large volume of material manually, I wondered would an IT package have been a more efficient way of doing it so I sought the advice of an IT consultant with a view to converting the data into SPSS, if feasible. Having seen the work to date, the consultant was satisfied that converting the data to SPSS would not give me any advantage with regard to the processing and presentation of the data over and above the system which was created for me by the IT Programmer. I was happy to proceed as initially planned and I recognised that my own handling of the data, rather than processing it through a standardised computer package, helped me to become familiar with emerging trends in the responses.

It is important to state at this stage that the statistical evidence produced by the questionnaire data was not going to be defined, analysed or summarised according to technical formulae, discussed by Cohen et al (2007), concerning “descriptive and inferential statistics”, “one-tailed and two-tailed tests”, “dependent and independent variables” and suchlike (pp.503-505). The empirical dimension of the research was not the centrepiece of the study, but was largely preparatory to the qualitative study. The questionnaire was chiefly used to establish the attitudes of a wide sample of teachers to CPD.

However, in preparation for setting up the interviews, the presentation of the statistical evidence as stacked bar charts and pivot tables would satisfy that which Cohen et al (2007) describe as

> a form of analysis which is responsive to the data being presented, and is most closely concerned with seeing what the data themselves suggest, akin to a detective following a line of evidence. The data are usually descriptive. Here much is made of visual techniques of data presentation. Hence frequencies and percentages, and forms of graphical presentation are often used (p.506-507).

I conducted a final check on the accuracy of all data entered with the assistance of a colleague. This involved looking at more than 35,000 response boxes. It was a painstaking exercise and required high levels of concentration. A small number of errors was detected and corrected. This checking exercise also provided an opportunity to make final decisions with regard to ambiguity in some responses where people simultaneously indicated agreement and disagreement with some statements. Where the respondents' intentions were not absolutely clear, the response was omitted. This is in line with decisions made by returning officers at election counts where ballot papers have not been completed as directed but the voter's intention is obvious, e.g., an x instead of 1 where only one person is being voted for. Despite being a time-consuming exercise, I regarded it as being worthwhile as it enabled me to state with assurance that all data from the questionnaires had been entered accurately.

4.1.2 Interviews with individual stakeholders

Interviews were chosen as a research method to elicit the views of key stakeholders in education with regard to teaching and teachers' professional development and, in so doing, to collect qualitative data for the study. Cohen et al point (2007) point out that:

> interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view…In these senses the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life…it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable (p.349).

The stakeholder groups in Ireland are, to a large extent, partners in the process of education policy formulation and this is implemented through their participation in statutory bodies such as the Teaching Council and in State agencies such as the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). Bearing in mind their potential contribution to, and influence on, future policy on teachers' CPD I knew it would be

important to interview key people in each of the stakeholder groups. Consequently, the number selected for interview was quite large but the omission of any of them could have served to denigrate the group's role in the Irish education scene. It would also have diminished the representational nature of the data I hoped to garner as the range of stakeholder representation provided a rich and diverse set of perspectives on the subject of teachers' CPD.

The design of the interviews contained elements from the "Interview Structure Continuum", set out by Merriam (1998) as follows:

Table 4.2: Interview Structure Continuum Merriam (1998:73)

Highly Structured/ Standardized	**Semi-structured**	**Unstructured/Informal**
Wording of questions predetermined	Mix of more- and less-structured questions	Open-ended questions
Order of questions Predetermined		Flexible, exploratory
Oral form of a survey		More like a conversation

The wording of the interview questions was predetermined but the questions were open-ended to facilitate elaborated responses rather than closed questions, requiring "yes" or "no" answers. The order of the questions was predetermined as it aimed to follow a logical, sequential pattern. A copy of the interview agenda is available at Appendix 5 (p.23, Vol.2). There was provision for a mix of more and less-structured questions to facilitate supplementary questions to follow on from the interviewees' responses. This enabled the interviews to be flexible and exploratory, allowing the interviewees to give perspectives which were unique to their situation. While the interviews were not an oral form of the questionnaire, the set of questions was linked to the questions in the questionnaire in order to provide a qualitative dimension to the research which could be linked to the quantitative data. The aim was that the tenor of the interviews would be like a conversation where the interviewees would be at their ease and would feel free to speak candidly. Thus, while the interviews could largely be described as semi-structured, they conformed to Merriam's (1998) recommendation on a blended approach:

> In most studies the researcher can combine all three types of interviewing so that some standardized information is obtained, some of the same open-ended questions are asked of all participants, and some time is spent in an unstructured mode so that fresh insights and new information can emerge (p.75).

The majority of interviews were conducted with key stakeholders from the education scene in Ireland who held senior positions/leadership roles and were responsible for policy-making and strategic planning. A small number of interviews were conducted with personnel in the international jurisdictions, mainly where teachers completed questionnaires. The main stakeholders in education in the Irish system are the Department of Education and Skills, Teacher Educators, Teacher Unions, School Management Bodies, Parent Associations, Principals' Professional Bodies, the Education Centre network and the statutory and support agencies.

The interviewees were selected on the basis of the potential quality rather than the quantity of their contributions, concurring with Merriam (1998) that "the crucial factor is not the number of respondents but the potential of each person to contribute to the development of insight and understanding of the phenomenon" (p.83). In selecting the sample group for one-to-one interviews, "elite interviewing" described by Burnham et al (2004) was used. These authors say that

> This may be defined both in terms of the *target group* being studied, an "elite" of some kind, and the *research technique* used, most characteristically what is known as semi-structured interviewing…often the most efficient was to obtain information about decision-makers and decision-making processes… characterized by a situation in which the balance is usually in favour of the respondent...because of their high level of knowledge of the subject matter under discussion and their general intellectual and expressive abilities…some respondents may count more than others in terms of their influence on the decision-making process (p.205).

From my most recent and previous roles in the Irish education system, I was familiar with the roles played by various people in the stakeholder groups. I leveraged my network of professional contacts gained throughout my professional career as an education "insider". That is, I had access to domains of knowledge and personnel not readily available to other researchers. I identified the key people I wanted to interview, these being in very senior positions in the bodies/organisations identified above. I approached them in person, by telephone and/or by email, requesting their co-operation in agreeing to be interviewed. I was fortunate that I had direct access to each person I identified for interview and I received no refusal to my request. With regard to the number to be interviewed, I considered carefully who could contribute most to the research rather than deciding on a particular number to be interviewed. Burnham et al (2004) state that:

> researchers tend to undertake too many interviews, thus extending the completion time for the project…a point is reached where each additional interview yields diminishing returns. One needs to be able to recognize when the "saturation point" is reached in a series of interviews where each interview is adding relatively little to the stock of information or understanding. Bearing in mind all these caveats, 20-30 interviews might be a reasonable target for a project in which elite interviewing was the principal method (p.208).

While the foregoing may be valid, the interview schedule for this study was set up some weeks in advance of conducting the interviews and it would not have been desirable to cancel interviews at any stage on the basis of having reached "saturation point". It was inevitable that there would be some overlap and repetition, given the close-knit nature of the Irish education stakeholder community. However, this need not be construed as "adding relatively little to the stock of information or understanding". It was necessary to hear the views of each stakeholder group and any repetition which emerged reinforced some commonly held views and opinions about the teaching profession and teachers' CPD. As it happens, interviews were conducted with 28 people, coinciding with the range of 20-30 suggested by Burnham et al (2004). For the purpose of anonymity, I assigned an identification code to each participant, as outlined in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Identification codes for stakeholder interviewees

No.	Code	Group/Organisation
1	TE1	Teacher Educator
2	TE2	Teacher Educator
3	TE3	Teacher Educator
4	TE4	Teacher Educator
5	DES1	Department of Education and Skills
6	DES2	Department of Education and Skills
7	DES3	Department of Education and Skills
8	EC1	Education Centre
9	EC2	Education Centre
10	SS1	In-career Support Service
11	SS2	In-career Support Service
12	P1	National Parents' Association
13	P2	National Parents' Association
14	PPM1	Post-primary Management Body
15	PPM2	Post-primary Management Body
16	PPM3	Post-primary Management Body
17	PM1	Primary Management Body
18	PM2	Primary Management Body
19	TU1	Teachers' Union
20	TU2	Teachers' Union
21	TU3	Teachers' Union
22	PT1	Principal Teachers' Association
23	PT2	Principal Teachers' Association
24	TC1	Teaching Council (Ireland)
25	TC2	Teaching Council (Ireland)
26	Int1	Teaching Council (International)
27	Int2	Teaching Council (International)
28	Int3	Teaching Council (International)

It may be worth noting that there was a gap of some weeks between the first six and subsequent interviews. This allowed time to listen to the interviews and to consider the appropriateness of the style of interviewing, the content and sequence of the questions and the opportunities provided for interviewees to contribute relevant information above and beyond that which was explicitly sought. I considered that my input in a few instances, my own contributions, could be more concise and I resolved to be aware of this and to curtail my style of questioning.

The majority of interviews were conducted in the place of the interviewee's choosing. This was usually their place of work. Three interviews were conducted via Skype, one was by telephone and all were recorded. A number of interviewees requested and received the questions in advance. One could say that this afforded those participants an opportunity to prepare their answers while others had to reply spontaneously as the questions were posed during the interview. Some might say that the latter yields a more honest response. I respected that those being interviewed were responding with integrity, regardless of answers being prepared in advance or not. In any case, I could not risk refusing to give the questions in advance as this could in turn lead to a refusal to be interviewed. Also, from my previous personal knowledge of the interviewees' personalities and styles of communication, I judged that people were speaking from conviction rather than trying to compose the "right" answers.

At the beginning of the interview, the interviewee was thanked for agreeing to participate and the purpose of the study was outlined. Anonymity was promised and interviewees were assured that if the researcher wanted for any reason to quote them by name, their permission to do so would be sought in advance. The interviewees received explicit assurance with regard to the value of their contribution, but this was also implicit as the interviewees could assume they were selected on purpose because, as Merriam (1998) argues, they "had something to contribute…an experience worth talking about…an opinion of interest to the researcher" (p.84).

All 28 stakeholder interviews and the 4 focus group interviews were recorded with the agreement of the participants using an iPad and the recording was later transferred to a PC. Being recorded did not seem to interfere with any interviewee's engagement in the conversation.

At all times, I was conscious of maintaining a pace and flow which best accommodated the interviewee's consideration and processing of the question, according with Merriam's (1998) guidance that:

> Being sensitive in the data-gathering phase of the study involves a keen sense of timing…In interviewing it means knowing when to allow for silence, when to probe more deeply, when to change the direction of the interview. Every sense of the investigator must be alert to the cues and nuances provided by the context (p.22).

I considered the advantages and disadvantages of using the MaxQData software for analysing the qualitative data. While I could have used this package, I did not see that it would enhance the analysis of findings from the interviews as it appeared to be a very mechanistic method of measuring responses rather than allowing for professional judgement and discernment to be used in handling and interpreting the data. MaxQData also requires transcripts and I had decided at that stage, in consultation with my supervisor, not to transcribe the interviews because of the volume of data involved. I was also given to understand that listening to the recordings, or selections thereof, provides a richer experience for those with access to them than that gained when reading a transcript. This, of course, may be a matter of personal preference. However, as it happens, all of the recordings of the 28 stakeholder interviews and of the 4 focus group interviews were transcribed in full amounting to over 325,000 words. Hard copies of all the transcripts are being provided for the examiners as a case record for this thesis. An electronic version of the transcripts together with the audio recordings of the 32 interviews are also being provided on a USB Memory Key.

4.1.3 Focus group interviews with teachers

The reason for choosing focus group interviews was to engage with teachers "on the ground" in a face-to-face situation, to further explore some of the areas covered in the questionnaire survey. Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013) agree that focus group interviews "allow for in-depth discussion and for development of broad insights…(and) result in information being generated more quickly than from individual interviews…and have a high face validity" (p.389). The four focus groups comprised a total of 21 primary and post-primary teachers. The findings from the questionnaire survey set up the agenda of issues to be explored at these meetings.

The design of the focus groups interviews was based on a group of 4 – 8 teachers sitting around a table having a guided conversation on teachers' CPD. The duration of the session

would be around one to one and a half hours. The focus group interviews would be recorded on an iPad and later transferred to a PC.

The questions which were put to focus group participants followed the pattern of the survey questionnaire and the individual interviews. This accords with Savin-Baden and Howell Major's (2013) typification that "Focus group interview questions tend to follow the same categories that questions for individual interviews do" (p.380). It was important that this was so as the responses would be used in triangulating and/or differentiating the data which would result from the three research methods being used. The design of the focus group interviews allowed for only some participants to respond to every question as it was anticipated that there would be much repetition if everyone answered each question. This would also be tantamount to conducting a number of individual interviews simultaneously. To reduce repetition, it was planned that some individual responses would be followed by the researcher seeking an indication of agreement or disagreement from the other participants with interjections such as "is this broadly in line with what you all think or does anyone have a different view?" Through listening and observing, the researcher would have to make a judgement on the use of this strategy at any given time during the discussion.

As with the questionnaire survey, the aim was to have male and female teachers from the primary and post-primary sectors, from varying age-groups and with various experiences of initial teacher education and of CPD.

Table 4.4 gives the composition and coding of the focus groups:

Table 4.4: Composition and coding of the focus groups

Primary Focus Group A **Participant Codes**	**Primary Focus Group B** **Participant Codes**
P/A/1 = Primary/Focus Group A/No. 1 P/A/2 = Primary/Focus Group A/No. 2 P/A/3 = Primary/Focus Group A/No. 3 P/A/4 = Primary/Focus Group A/No. 4 P/A/5 = Primary/Focus Group A/No. 5 P/A/6 = Primary/Focus Group A/No. 6 P/A/7 = Primary/Focus Group A/No. 7	P/B/1 = Primary/Focus Group B/No. 1 P/B/2 = Primary/Focus Group B/No. 2 P/B/3 = Primary/Focus Group B/No. 3 P/B/4 = Primary/Focus Group B/No. 4 P/B/5 = Primary/Focus Group B/No. 5
Post-Primary Focus Group A **Participant Codes**	**Post-Primary Focus Group B** **Participant Codes**
PP/A/1 = Post-Primary/Focus Group A/No. 1 PP/A/2 = Post-Primary/Focus Group A/No. 2 PP/A/3 = Post-Primary/Focus Group A/No. 3 PP/A/4 = Post-Primary/Focus Group A/No. 4 PP/A/5 = Post-Primary/Focus Group A/No. 5	PP/B/1 = Post-Primary/Focus Group B/No. 1 PP/B/2 = Post-Primary/Focus Group B/No. 2 PP/B/3 = Post-Primary/Focus Group B/No. 3 PP/B/4 = Post-Primary/Focus Group B/No. 4

I used purposeful sampling as a guide in selecting the groups, but also availed of opportunity sampling, as my own professional role brought me into contact with a wide range of potentially data-rich informants. In one case, the Director of an Education Centre selected the teachers and organised the venue. In two cases, a lead person was asked to find a group. In another case, the researcher selected individual participants and brought them together.

Of the three research methods, the focus group interviews were the most difficult to organise. Furthermore, finding a willing group of teachers from the Teaching Council, namely Primary Group A, proved to be the most problematic. A number of Teaching Council personnel had been interviewed on a one-to-one basis, as stakeholders, but I also wanted to have a focus group interview with teacher members of the Council. I regarded this as important as the formulation of policy on teachers' CPD at national level is the Council's responsibility. A number of approaches were made mainly through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who explained about my research at a Council meeting. The CEO sought volunteers who would meet me on a date a month hence when I knew all the Council members would be meeting for part of the day. There was no response until the day of the proposed meeting and then only three primary teachers responded, a number that was not regarded as viable for a focus group interview. The CEO again reminded members about the study and asked anyone who was interested in participating to contact me. Again, the same three teachers responded and I decided to go ahead with this group with one of them agreeing to find others from among Council members to join them, which she did.

Focus group participants met over tea/coffee and refreshments before the focus group interviews began. This allowed introductions to be made where people did not know each other previously and it helped to put the participants at their ease. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher thanked the participants for agreeing to be present and for giving of their time so generously. The purpose of the research was outlined and participant confidentiality and anonymity in reporting the outcome of the interview were assured. Participants were asked to respect the confidentiality of what would be said and not to identify or disclose each other's contributions outside of the interview.

The focus group questioning sought to elicit the breadth of the respondents' perspectives as they were at the time of the interview, to allow them to speak with their full voice and to

give full expression to their views as currently held. These views could change over time. Even where elements of a transformational approach existed they might not have thought it through, e.g., what would this commit us to in practice? In posing the questions and prompting discussion where necessary, as researcher I assumed the role of researcher/moderator, as defined by Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013). They state that "The moderator has several important responsibilities just as with individual interviews, including listening, observing and note-taking" (pp.379-380). They further elaborate on the researcher's role as task master, encourager, prober and clarifier. In conducting the meetings, I adopted and integrated these roles with the exception of note-taking, which was not a significant task, except where I needed to jot prompts as reminders for myself with regard to supplementary questions arising from the discussion.

As with the individual interviews, the four focus group interviews were recorded on an iPad and transferred to a PC. A brief recording sound test was conducted with each participant in situ before the interview began to ensure that they were close enough to the iPad. Despite this, the quality of the recording was not as good in all cases as was achieved in the one-to-one interviews. This was sometimes due to the participant moving back from the iPad and in some cases the participant spoke in lowered tones.

4.2 Collating and analysing the data

The following paragraphs outline the procedures and methods used to analyse the data from the three research sources detailed in this chapter, namely the questionnaires to teachers, the individual interviews with stakeholders and the focus group interviews with teachers. While the findings from each will be presented separately in Chapters 5–9 inclusive, there will be cross referencing between them, as appropriate.

Firstly, the questionnaire data for every question and its subset of responses were collated and presented in stacked bar charts and pivot tables, looking at the composite picture across all four geographical regions and then at the regions as separate entities. Further comparisons within and across the regions were differentiated and presented according to teaching sector, qualifications, age and gender. From these charts and tables it was possible to harvest much information on the lives of teachers in relation to their professional journey, as told by the teachers themselves. The data which are most relevant to the study in addressing the research question on the transformational dimension of CPD are analysed and discussed in Chapter 5. It would not be feasible to present all of the data

in the text of this study. A full set of 187 Bar Charts, giving the composite response from each of the four jurisdictions, for each part of each question, is included in Appendices 9 – 22 (pp.27–146, Vol.2).

The interview recordings from the individual interviews and from the focus group interviews were listened to a number of times. For each interview, at the first listening, brief notes were made and the overall sense of the interview was recalled. At the second listening, more detailed notes were taken and responses were categorised and entered on a table customised to each section or theme of the interview. It then became apparent to me that I needed to be able to read as well as hear the full detail of the interviews to do justice to the contributions and to capture some fine nuancing. Therefore, I undertook to transcribe the individual and the focus group interviews in full. This was a mammoth task, amounting to over 264,500 words in the individual interviews and over 61,000 words in the focus group interviews.

When the transcripts were completed, the material from each individual interview and from each focus group interview was categorised according to the interview themes, i.e., motivation to teach; initial teacher education; professional identity; public perception of teaching; teachers' experience of continuing professional development; the benefits of continuing professional development; the development of a collaborative culture in Irish schools and future provision for teachers' continuing professional development in Ireland. The material for each theme was then collated, a) for the individual interviews and b) for the focus groups, containing a substantial bank of data for each theme. The individual interviewees' and the focus groups' identification codes were retained within the thematically collated data for the purpose of analysis. Each set of thematic data was scrutinised, interrogated and analysed to ascertain the interviewees' individual and collective thoughts, opinions and perceptions. Based on the analysis of the material, suitable quotes were selected which represented the interviewees' contributions and enabled the building of the research narrative in Chapters 6 – 9 inclusive. The data were also very valuable in providing details for the compilation of response charts which illustrated the findings from the interviews.

Conclusion

Having given an account and justification of the research procedure in this chapter, the next chapter, Chapter 5, will present and analyse the findings from the data which was

generated by the questionnaire survey. Chapters 6 and 7 will present and analyse the findings from the individual interviews with stakeholders. Chapter 8 and 9 will present and analyse the findings from the interviews with the teacher focus groups.

Chapter 5

Questionnaire Findings: Presentation and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings from the questionnaire survey conducted with teachers in Ireland, Canada, Scotland and Australia. The main findings from each theme in the completed questionnaires are set out in this chapter in the same sequence as the themes were set out in the questionnaire, i.e., motivation to teach, initial teacher education, professional identity, experience of continuing professional development and the future of CPD. It is intended that the analysis will sharpen the focus on a number of key issues under each of these themes. We will return to these issues in Chapter 10 where they will be considered in conjunction with the findings from the individual interviews with stakeholders (Chapters 6 and 7) and the focus group interviews with teachers (Chapters 8 and 9).

In this chapter, the sequence of the presentation of findings and the analysis for each theme will be as follows: (i) an introduction to the question(s) in each theme; (ii) the findings from the responses to the question(s) as illustrated in accompanying bar charts, charts labelled (a) representing the responses from the Irish teachers and those labelled (b) representing all 168 teachers who participated in the survey; (iii) a brief analysis of the most significant findings from each theme.

5.1 Overview of the Questionnaire Survey

A Questionnaire (Appendix 2, p.2, Vol.2) was issued to a total of 272 teachers in the four areas mentioned above. Further details of the survey are given in Chapter 4. It was intended that the responses to the questionnaire would inform the thrust of the individual interviews with stakeholders and the focus group interviews with teachers.

The following is a brief recap on the details of the questionnaire. There were 22 questions in all, beginning with the respondents' profiles and followed by the themes of: motivation to teach; Initial Teacher Education; professional identity; experience of continuing professional development and continuing professional development in the future. Each question had a set of proposed responses which the respondents could choose and/or rank

order, as appropriate. There was also an optional Comment space at the end of each question's set of responses. A small minority of respondents choose to use this.

The order of the questions was intended to create a chronological sequence, taking the respondent on a career-focused journey in relation to his/her experience of the continuum of teacher education. It was hoped that this would be a reflective process which would inform the respondent's thinking and, therefore, his/her responses.

The 168 completed questionnaires which were received from teachers equalled 62% of all those who were invited to participate across the four jurisdictions. When analysed separately, the total response rate from teachers in Ireland was 68%. The large volume of data which was generated by the completed questionnaires required a focused selection of the most relevant responses which would best address the research questions and the purpose of the study, i.e., to inform the formulation of a CPD framework which would facilitate transformative CPD for teachers.

5.2 Presenting and Analysing the Questionnaire Findings

The bar charts presented in this chapter feature the responses from teachers in Ireland separately from those of the combined 168 respondents (in which the Irish respondents are also included). Apart from the findings presented in this chapter, many responses have been further analysed for which charts have been included at Appendices 9-22 (pp. 27-146, Vol.2) as indicated in Chapter 4. Where any of these further analyses contribute to a deeper understanding of the findings presented in this chapter, they are referenced in this chapter. It would have been possible to produce many more charts, drilling into each response according to various criteria, e.g., age, gender, teaching sector and teaching experience. A judgement had to be made, however, with regard to the inclusion of those which would add greatest value to the thesis.

The following brief guide to viewing the data in the charts in this chapter may be helpful:

- These are colour-coded "stacked" bar charts
- The title of each chart corresponds with the relevant question in the questionnaire
- The bottom horizontal axis shows the number and text of each response, the text from the Questionnaire being abbreviated in some cases to fit the chart
- Each bar (column) represents the responses
- The colours on each bar indicate the choice and/or ranking of the responses
- The key to each colour is given in the "Legend" to the right of the chart

- There are two charts for each question:
  - the (a) charts represent the cohort of Irish respondents and
  - the (b) charts represent the combined responses of all 168 respondents.

5.2.1 Respondents' Profiles

This section dealt with Questions 1 - 8 and gathered information with regard to the respondents' personal and professional details. For the purposes of this chapter, it has been decided to include only the data from Questions 1 – 4 dealing with the education sector in which the respondent is teaching, i.e., primary or post-primary, number of years teaching experience, gender and age. Questions 5 – 8 relating to teaching and non-teaching qualifications, current teaching role and number of years service in each school where the respondent taught are being omitted. While it would be interesting to analyse this data, it would not add significant value to the study.

The tables are as follows:

Table 5.1 Number of respondents by teaching sector from 4 jurisdictions

Table 5.2 Percentage of respondents by teaching sector From 4 jurisdictions

Table 5.3 Number of respondents by teaching experience from 4 jurisdictions

Table 5.4 Percentage of respondents by teaching experience from 4 jurisdictions

Table 5.5 Number of respondents by gender/age from 4 jurisdictions

Table 5.6 Percentage of respondents by gender/ age from 4 jurisdictions

Table 5.7 Number of respondents by gender/sector/age from 4 jurisdictions

Table 5.8 Percentage of respondents by gender/sector/age from 4 jurisdictions

Table 5.1: Number of respondents by teaching sector from 4 jurisdictions

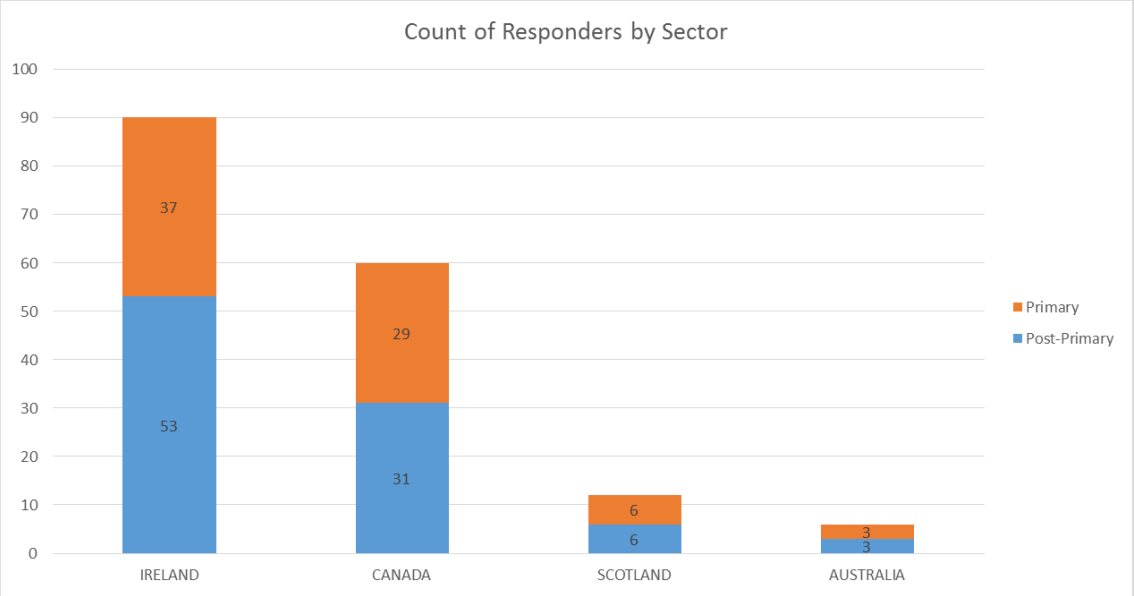


Table 5.2: Percentage of respondents by teaching sector from 4 jurisdictions

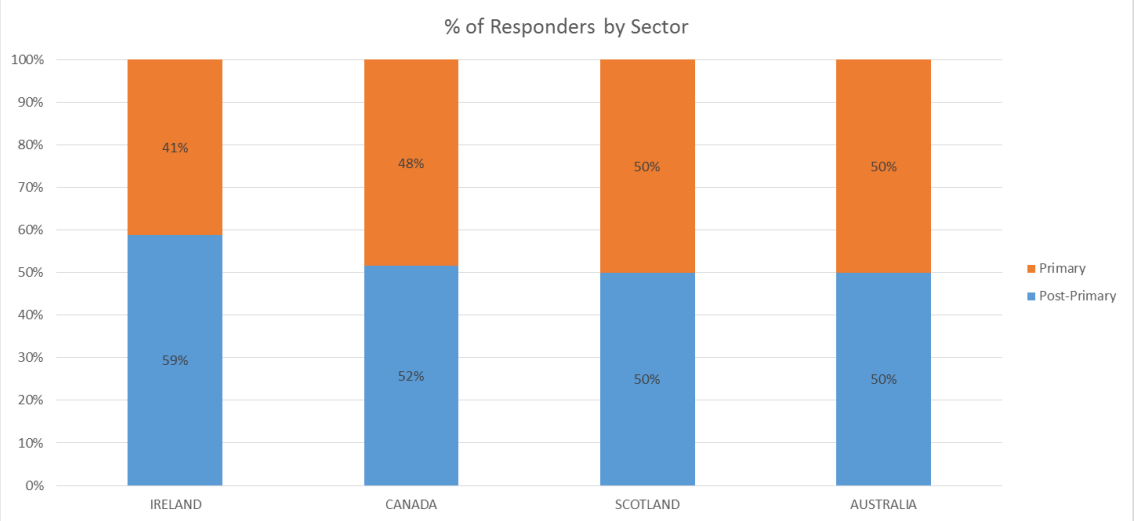


Table 5.3: Number of respondents by teaching experience from 4 jurisdictions

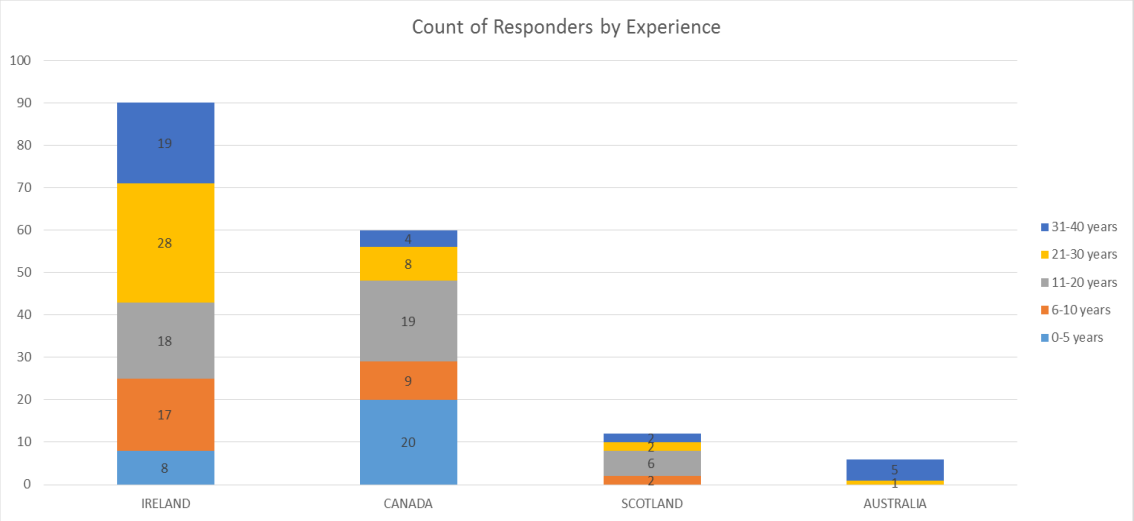


Table 5.4: Percentage of respondents by teaching experience from 4 jurisdictions

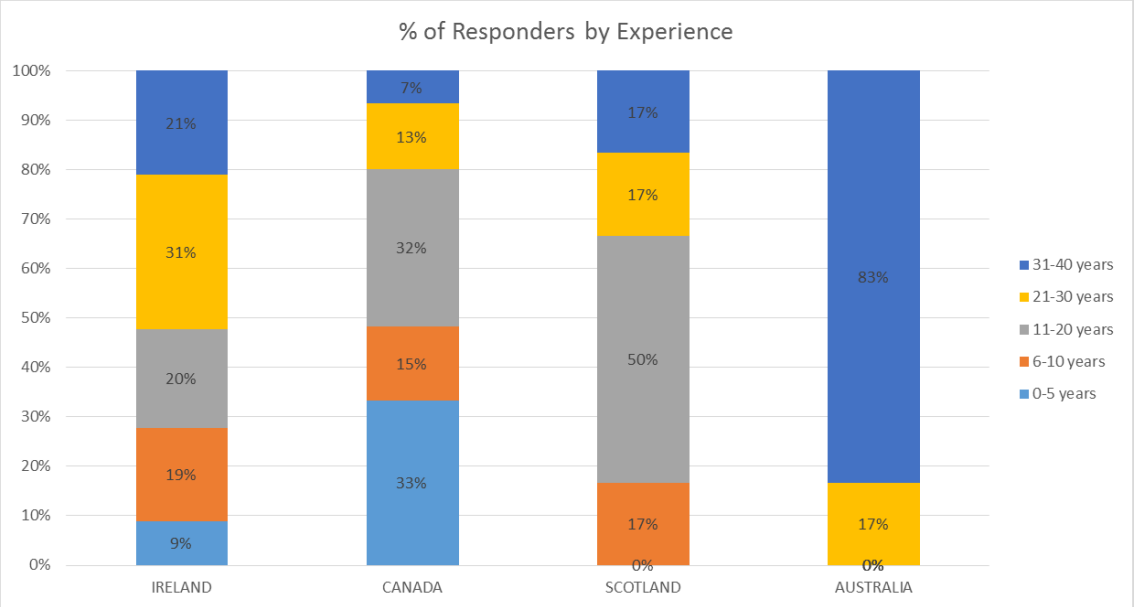


Table 5.5: Number of respondents by gender/age from 4 jurisdictions

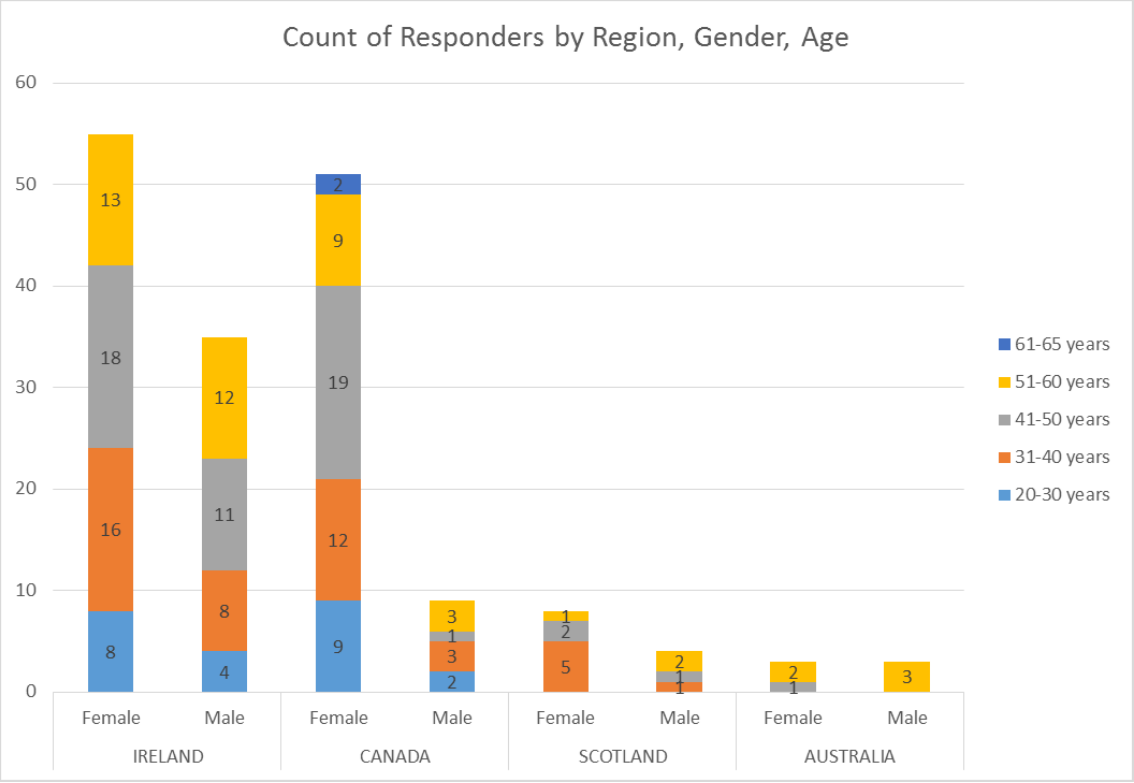


Table 5.6: Percentage of respondents by gender/ age from 4 jurisdictions

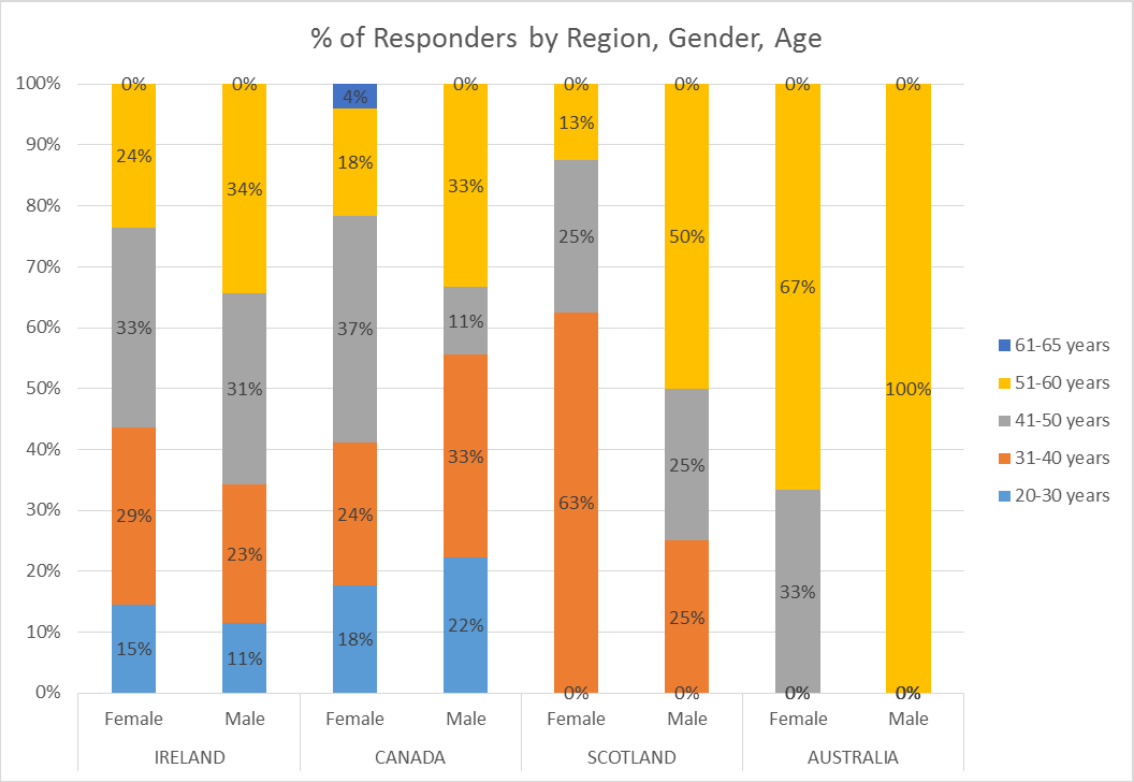


Table 5.7: Number of respondents by gender/sector/age from 4 jurisdictions

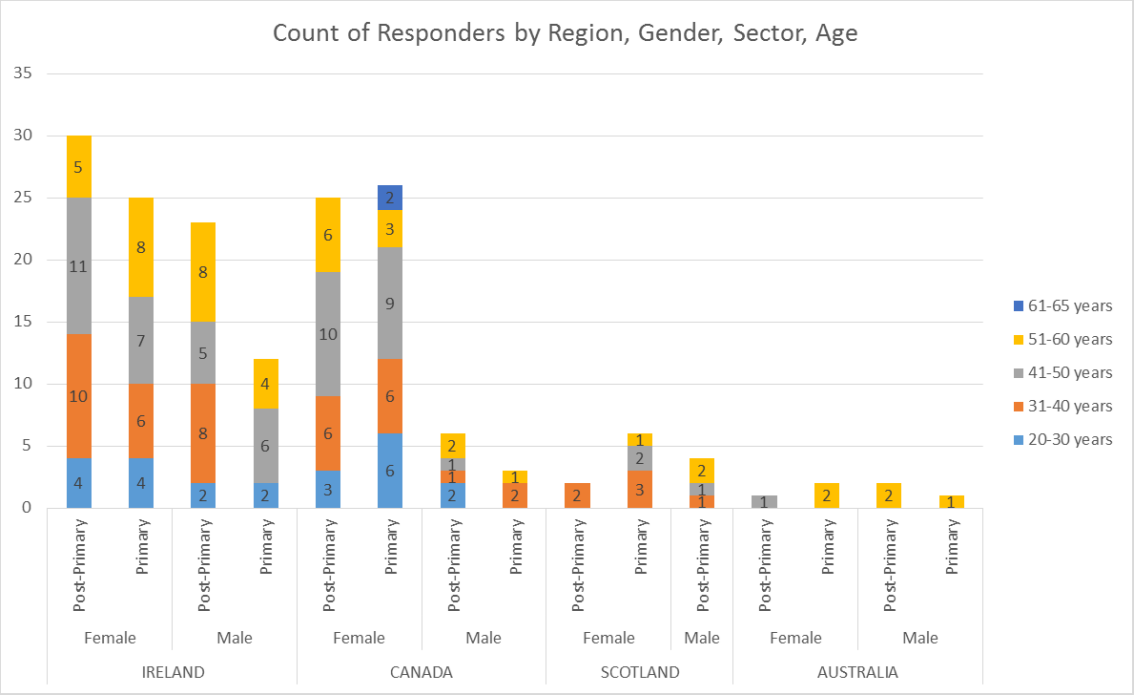
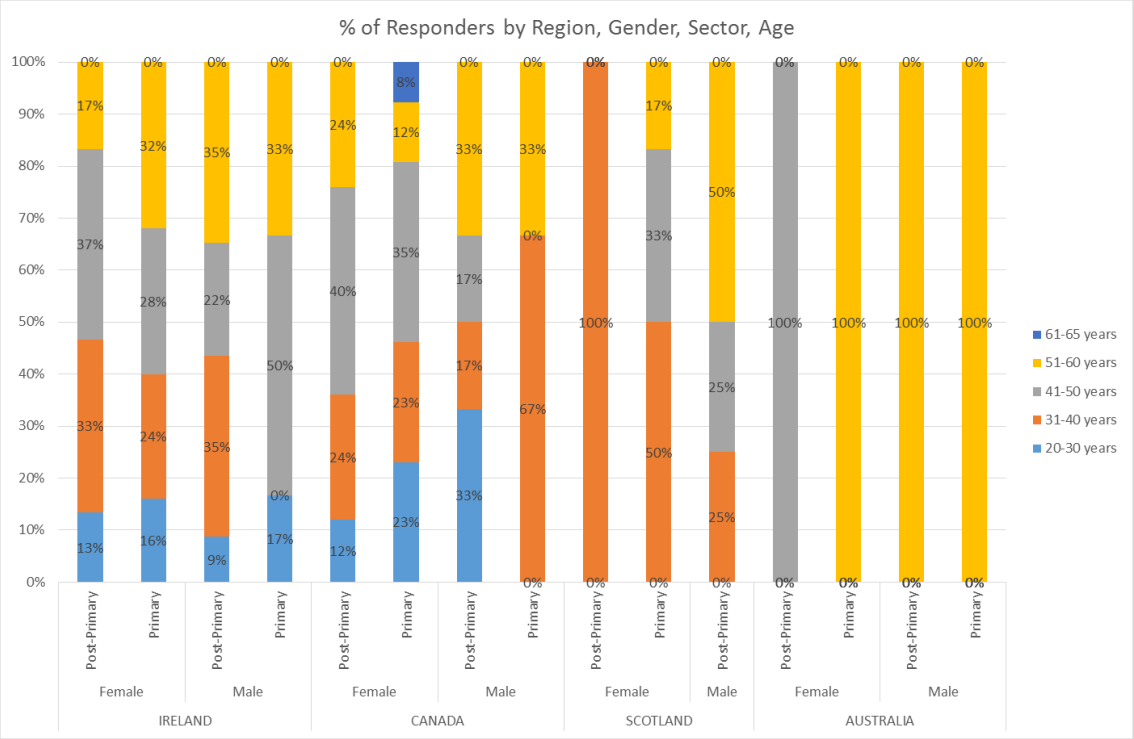


Table 5.8: Percentage of respondents by gender/sector/age from 4 jurisdictions



5.2.2 Motivation to Teach

This section deals with Qs. 9 and 10, documenting motivating factors in choosing teaching as a profession and the influence of significant people in making this choice. In Q.9 respondents were asked “On reflection, what motivated you to be a teacher” and the responses, 9.01 – 9.15, are charted in Table 5.9(a): Irish respondents and Table 5.9(b): all respondents. Question 10 asked “Who/what influenced your decision to be a teacher?” and the responses 10.01 - 10.8 are charted in Tables 5.10(a): Irish respondents and Table 5.10(b): all respondents. This information could be important when considering the need for opportunities for regenerative CPD where teachers may need to be refocused and re-enthused.

The reader is reminded here that in this chapter, the (a) tables refer to the Irish respondents only and the (b) tables refer to all respondents. A complete set of bar charts, illustrating the results for each proposed response in the questionnaire, analysed by region, is available for Question 9 at Appendix 9 (pp.27-35, Vol.2), and for Question 10 at Appendix 10 (pp.36-40, Vol.2) .

Both the Irish and international teacher participants in this study clearly stated that the most important reasons for wanting to be a teacher were “to make a difference" (9.01), "to work with children/young people" (9.02) and "to impart knowledge" (9.03). The lowest ranking reasons were given as "to have short working hours” (9.11) and “to have long holidays" (9.12). These results correlate closely with the findings of Canrinus et al (2011) from their research data on 1,214 secondary school teachers in the Netherlands in relation to teachers’ sense of professional identity where

> …the answers to the open-ended question on teachers’ reasons to become a teacher revealed that…*working with children and adolescents* had been mentioned by the highest percentage of teachers. *Love for subject matter, transfer of knowledge and skills* and *intrinsic career value* (referring to interest in teaching and always having wanted to become a teacher) are the three most mentioned reasons (p.602).

With regard to Q.10, on who/what influenced them to be teachers, the majority of Irish and international respondents chose 10.05, saying that they were self-motivated. After self-motivation, the questionnaire respondents said that teachers and parents had the greatest influence on their decision to become teachers.

Table 5.9(a): Motivation to be a teacher – Irish Respondents

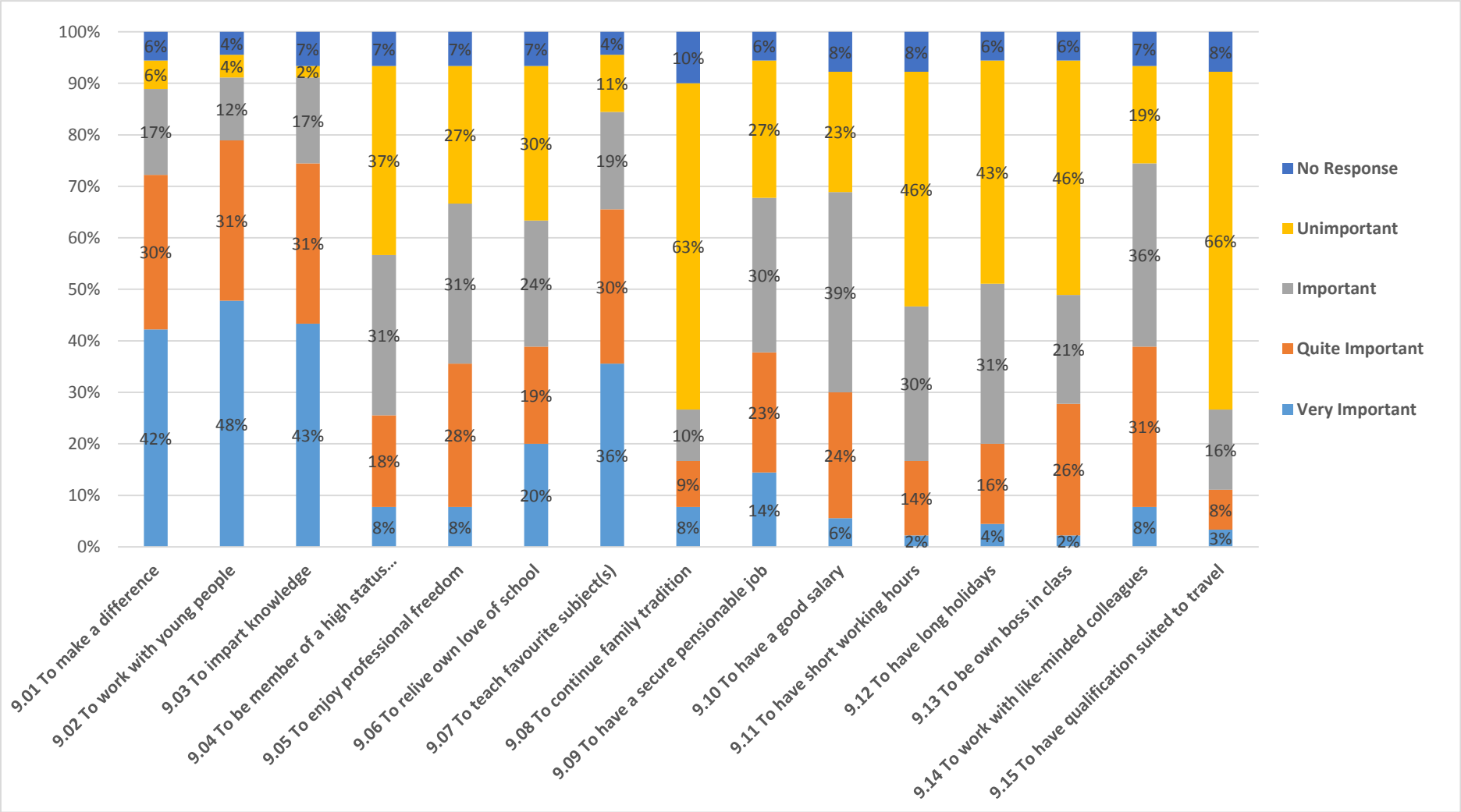
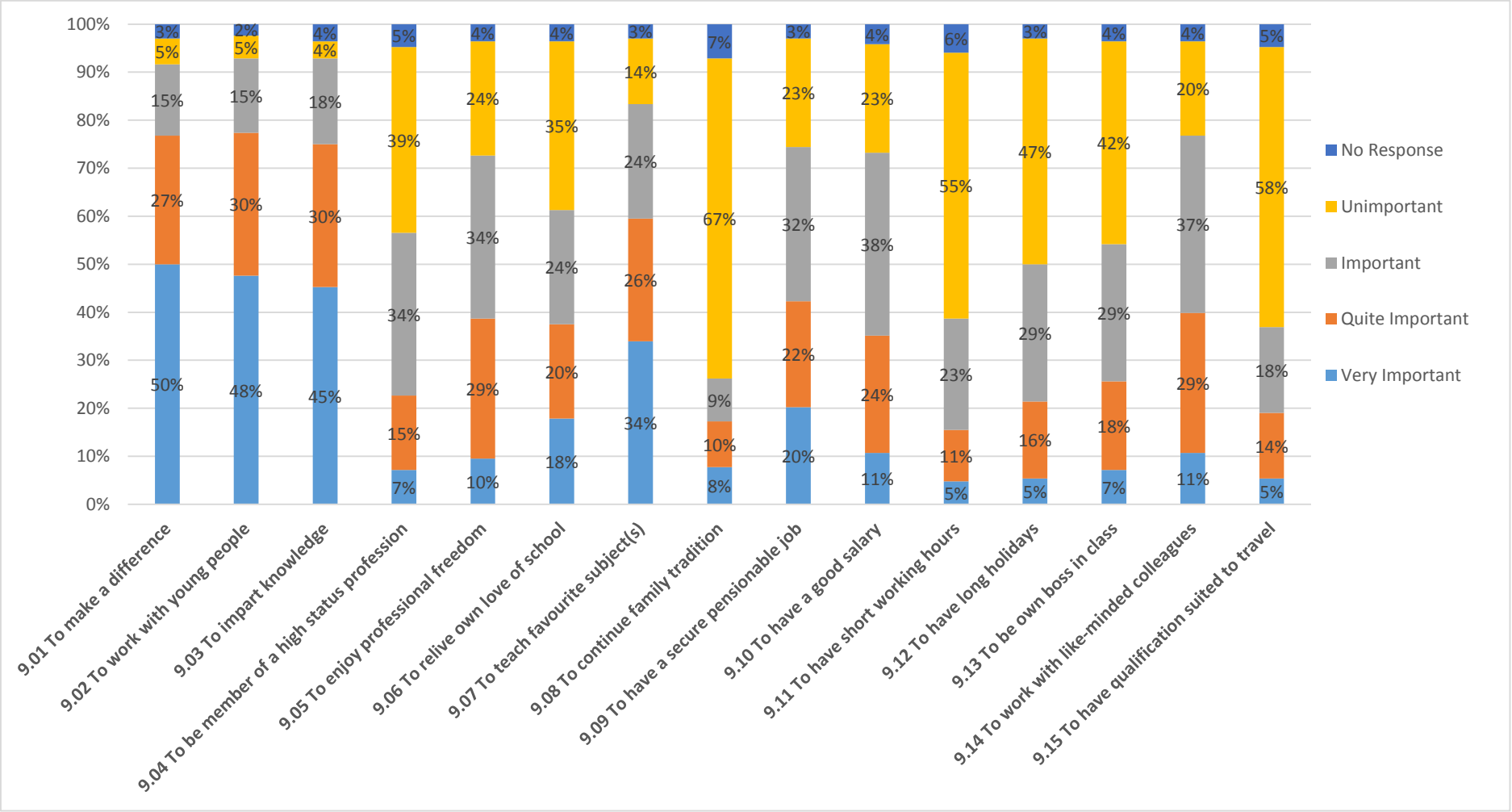


Table 5.9(b): Motivation to be a teacher – All Respondents



It is heartening that teachers want to impart knowledge, to share their own love of learning and to make a difference in their students' lives. This is also relevant to the development of a framework for transformative CPD for teachers. The importance of transformative learning for teachers, in relation to understanding students and making a difference, is highlighted by Cranton and Carusetta (2004) who state that

> As the frame of reference for the concept of student becomes more open and permeable through transformative learning, it allows for the development of genuine relationships with students in which the educator makes a difference in their lives and feels a difference in his/her life (p.291).

Making a difference is fundamental to the aims of education in the Introduction to the Primary School Curriculum (1999) which states that "Education is an important factor both in the day-to-day development of the child and in contributing to the personal, social, cultural and economic fulfilment of the future adult." (p.vii). In that context, in their professional role as educators of young people, teachers bear much responsibility for the fulfilment of the aims of education. Therefore, it is worth examining the principal factors in teachers' motives to enter the profession, as illustrated in Tables 9(a) and 9(b). To do this, the three highest ranking responses are considered separately at first and then as an integrated whole.

Firstly, "making a difference" can mean creating something new, bringing about change, being an agent of transformation or altering a situation. Where practice is in good order, this is facilitated through building productive relationships between the teacher and the pupil/student, and in co-operation with parents/guardians and the wider society, whereby teachers help young people to achieve their potential as people and as learners. Young people's lives as they are experienced currently, and the promise of their future lives, can be changed and transformed as a result of teachers' endeavours. For each young person, schooling is a unique experience and it is incumbent on the teacher to ensure that it is a positive experience as the school facilitates the young person's development as an individual and also as a member of society. At another level, for some children, making a difference can mean providing a safe environment where school is a haven of warmth, love and attention in contrast to a different atmosphere in the home.

Secondly, teachers' motivation "to work with children/young people" suggests that there is a caring, nurturing side to the teacher's personality. By virtue of their age and lack of experience in the world, young people need guidance, direction, supervision and leadership as they grow and mature. Young people also need personalised attention, they need to know that the

teacher cares, they need to be respected, they need to have fun, and they need the teacher to be kind and fair.

Thirdly, it was traditional that "imparting knowledge" was seen to be the teacher's job. It is interesting, but maybe not surprising, that teachers ranked this as being a very important motivator in their choice of career. While knowledge is central to teaching and learning, the act of "imparting" knowledge is no longer seen as being of paramount importance, to the same extent as it was in former times. Nowadays, it is increasingly recognised that education means facilitating young people's love of learning, developing their higher order thinking skills and enabling them to source knowledge via modern media.

Taken as an integrated whole, the role of the teacher in making a difference in the lives of young people, doing so because of a wish to work with young people and wanting to impart knowledge requires continuous reflection, together with personal and professional development on the part of the teacher. School can be the place where rapid changes in technology are first brought to the attention of the teacher and these can challenge the teacher if he/she is not as up-to-date as the students. Social and behavioural changes can also pose challenges for teachers in the classroom. While teachers have to pursue the common good in the classroom, they also have to be vigilant in ensuring that they understand and can cater for individual young people's needs. Broadly speaking, this is part of teachers' pastoral role and this requires teachers to understand society and how it impacts on young people. In their academic role, teachers must fulfil the requirements of the curriculum or syllabus and keep abreast of developments in subject pedagogy. In both the pastoral and academic roles, teachers will have CPD needs which are related to, and flow from, teachers' own identification of the reasons they wanted to teach, i.e., to make a difference.

Returning to the issue of identifying the people who influenced teachers to decide on teaching as a career, in most of the responses to Q.10, teachers declared themselves to be largely self-motivated. This resonates with teachers' responses to Question 9. It indicates a strong personal desire to be a teacher rather than being influenced by external factors or even by significant people in their lives. While the combined responses from all regions show the majority of teachers to be self-motivated, the disaggregated results show Ireland to be somewhat different. Here, parents and teachers in Ireland were slightly more influential than in other regions in their influence on would-be teachers.

Table 5.10(a): Influences to become a teacher – Irish Respondents

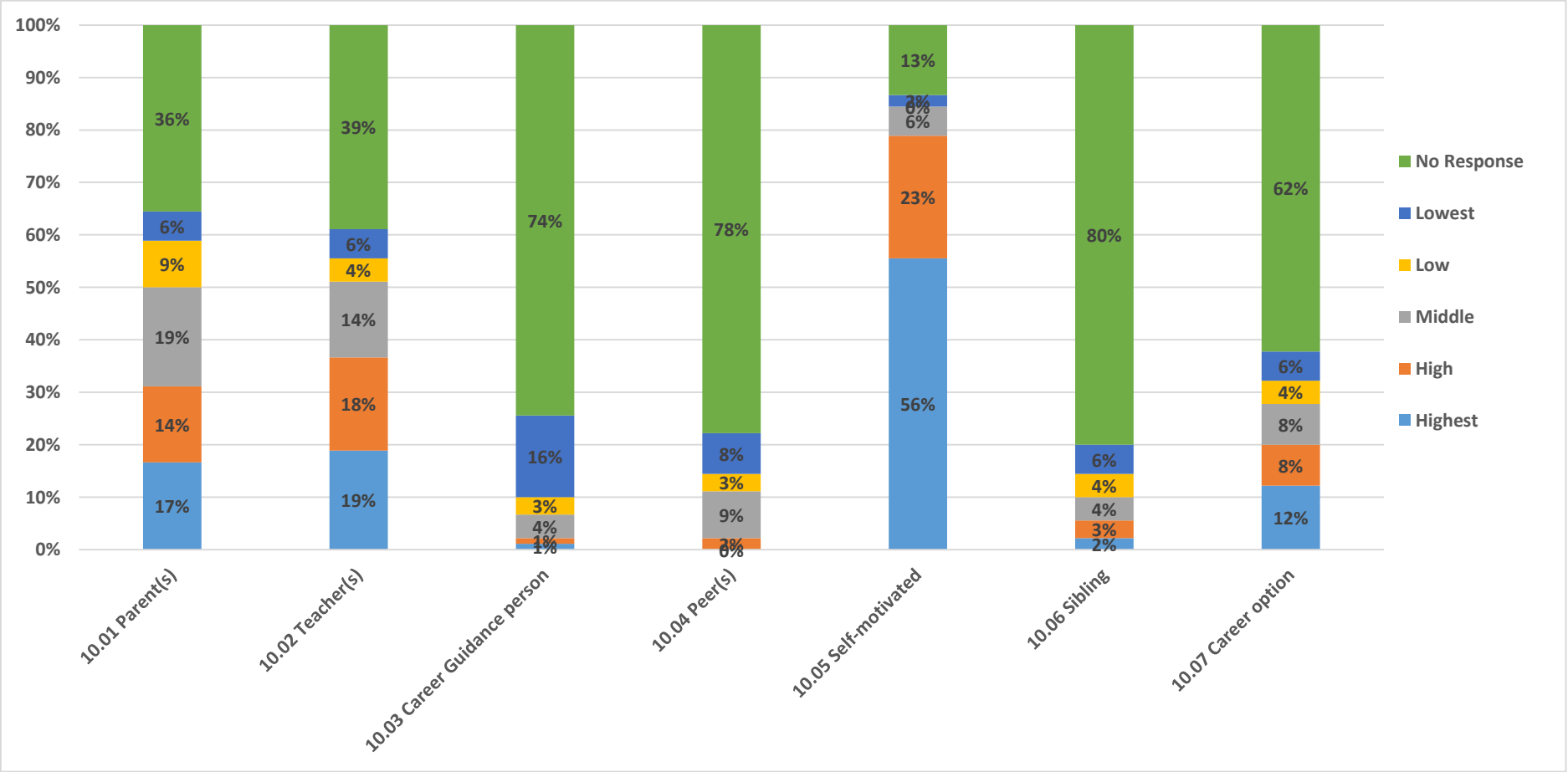
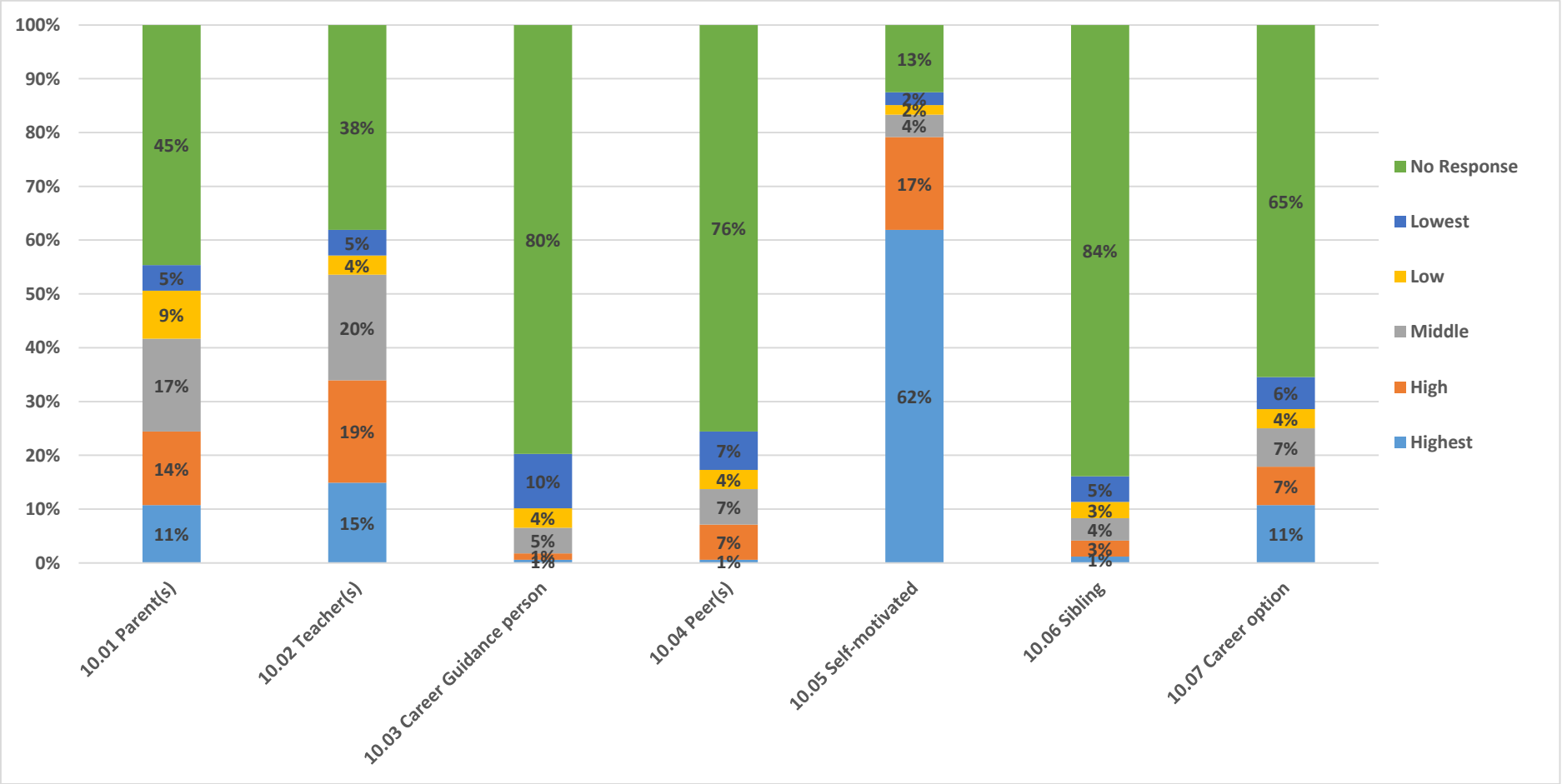


Table 5.10(b): Influences to become a teacher - All Respondents



Traditionally, in Ireland, having a secure pensionable job, such as teaching, was highly valued. Thus, many parents encouraged their children into the profession. Also, teachers who saw a potential aptitude for teaching in their students were in a position to encourage and influence them. Given the current straitened circumstances in the country in relation to the education system, together with economic and societal issues, the attraction of teaching as a profession may change for better or for worse in the future. Ideally, one hopes that teaching will continue to attract high calibre entrants and make teaching as a profession even more desirable, if possible. On the other hand, the economic downturn of recent years has impacted on teachers' conditions of service, including salaries, which are unlikely to improve in the foreseeable future. Also, speaking to teachers, some say they would not encourage their own children to enter the profession and teachers' own children have been heard to say that they would not want to experience the very demanding life of their parents, as they observe it. It is worth quoting Sahlberg (2012) who "noted the high calibre of entrants to ITE in Ireland and concluded that the academic standard of applicants is amongst the highest, if not the highest, in the world" (p.19). Sahlberg drew this conclusion from Hyland's (2012) research which found that

> Ireland is particularly fortunate that to date, virtually all its publicly-funded undergraduate primary teacher education programmes attract recruits from the top 15% of academic achievers in the (school) Leaving Certificate examination[9]. Competition is also very keen for entry to post-primary teaching, with many of the top achievers at undergraduate level accepting a place on the consecutive Professional Diploma in Education (p.8).

Happily, the attraction of teaching as a profession has not diminished in this country in recent years as is evidenced by the continuing high standards (measured by Leaving Certificate points results) achieved by students who go into undergraduate programmes of initial teacher education, mainly in the primary sector.

As they were self-motivated, it may be deduced that the respondents saw teaching as a career in a very positive light. Despite not ranking highly teachers' influence on them to become teachers, this is a particularly significant finding as their prior knowledge of teaching was most likely based on their own experience as students in school. That experience may have encompassed some or all of the following probabilities: they were happy in school; they admired their teachers; they liked learning; they enjoyed the social dimension of school and the camaraderie with fellow students; they gained recognition in school for their talents; they associated school with an interesting variety of activities and much more. In a minority of

[9] "The cut-off point in 2011 for B.Ed. programmes in colleges of primary teacher education was 470 out of 600 points. An analysis of CAO figures shows that only 15% of students who applied for a place in higher education achieved points equal to or higher than this." (Hyland 2011).

cases, some teachers with negative memories of their own schooling admit to entering the profession to change the system from within, ensuring that young people in their care will have a good school experience, unlike their own experience. This is supported by a strongly-worded comment from a Canadian respondent to this section of the questionnaire who said:

> I wanted to be a better teacher, than what [teachers] I had had, growing up. I think children deserve enthusiastic, knowledgeable and adaptable teachers, with consistent discipline, who change their curriculum to suit their classes, rather than teaching the exact same lessons every year for 15 years! Some of my own teachers were well-meaning but ill equipped to teach their assigned subject or grade levels, while others were boring, outdated, inappropriate, and even cruel. Some of my classmates 'fell through the cracks' because of those teachers, and I wanted to try to improve the odds for those kinds of children/youth now. Throughout my 22 years of primary, secondary and tertiary education, I have had only 12 excellent teachers, most of which were at the university level. With schooling getting tougher (more learning expectations, at earlier and earlier ages), I want to do my part to help children be successful (BC.35).

It may be noted that there has been greater elaboration of this section than will be afforded the sections that follow. The reason is that this represents the voice of teachers themselves giving expression to a very personal dimension of their beings, their motivation to teach. This may be of significance when considering teachers' potential readiness for transformative CPD which re-engages them with, and renews, that initial motivation in wanting to make a difference in the lives of young people.

5.2.3 Initial Teacher Education

This theme is covered in Q. 11 where respondents were asked to tick the areas of study covered in their programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), and to indicate how they were delivered or facilitated, i.e., were they dealt with as separate or as integrated areas of study or as a combination of both. The responses on ITE in Qs. 11.01 – 11.20 are charted in Tables 5.11(a) and 5.11(b). A complete set of bar charts, illustrating the results for each proposed response in the questionnaire, analysed by region, is available for Question 11 at Appendix 11 (pp.41-51, Vol.2).

This question is important for a number of reasons. It sought to identify the areas of study in respondents' programmes of ITE. It aimed to establish the first steps in translating the motivation to teach into the reality of being educated as a teacher. In the context of the research question specifically, it sought to ascertain whether or not there might be significant areas of learning for teachers which were not covered in their ITE programmes, e.g., Social Inclusion, Differentiation, etc. These areas might need to be addressed through teachers' CPD.

The responses in relation to ITE programmes indicate that the foundation studies, i.e., History of Education (11.01), Philosophy of Education (11.02), Sociology of Education (11.03) and Educational Psychology (11.04), were mainly covered as discrete areas of learning while a greater proportion of the Pedagogical and Professional Studies were studied in an integrated way. It is also clear from the survey results that some areas of study were treated separately to a greater extent than one would expect, or that is desirable and beneficial, e.g., Teaching Methodologies (11.09), Implementing a Curriculum/Syllabus (11.11), and Classroom Management Practices (11.13). This is true for all regions and, when examined separately, it also holds true for Ireland.

It is important to note that the separate attention to the foundation studies is not necessarily a cause for concern. However, it becomes problematic where the design of programmes of ITE results in fragmentation, i.e., where there is a lack of connectedness and coherence between the foundation studies and the pedagogical areas. In 2009, the Teaching Council, as part of its statutory remit, began the process of reviewing and accrediting programmes of initial teacher education. Following the initial reviews, in the majority of its review reports, the Council recommended that there would be greater integration of theory and practice. The Review Reports are to be found on the Teaching Council website at www.teachingcouncil.ie .

New issues in education are emerging and these have to be catered for in teacher education, as indicated previously. In Ireland, programmes of ITE are being reconceptualised whereby changes are begin introduced in light of research on teacher education and in the context of the extended programme duration. However, this will only benefit newly qualified teachers from 2014 onwards. As graduates of the re-conceptualised programmes take up teaching appointments in schools they will bring new thinking and new ways of working with them which will be observed, and may be adopted, by colleagues. Also, over time, as these graduates are promoted into senior positions, particularly as Principal Teachers, they will be in a position to lead the implementation of change in schools.

Table 5.11(a): Experience of Initial Teacher Education – Irish Respondents

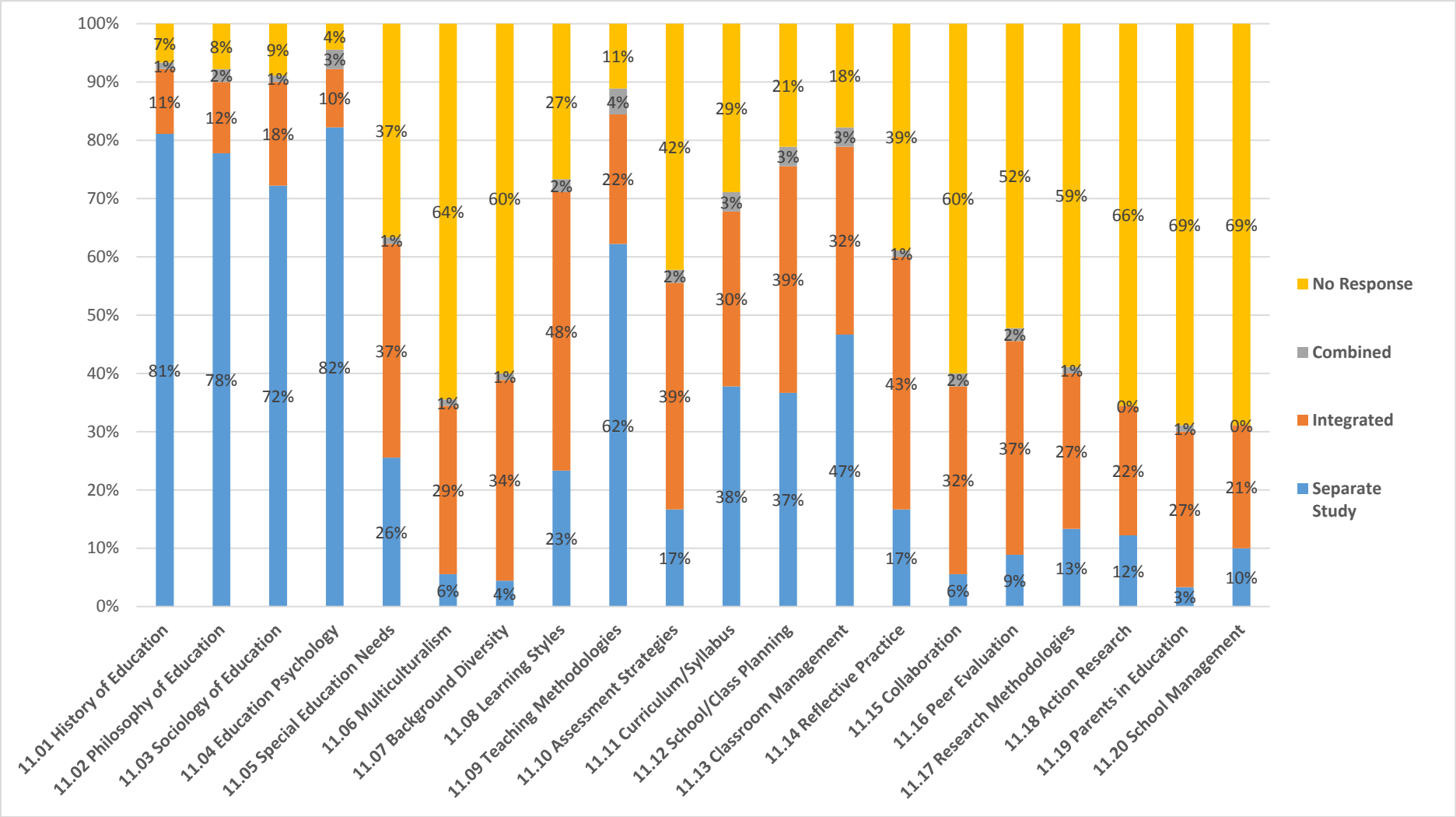
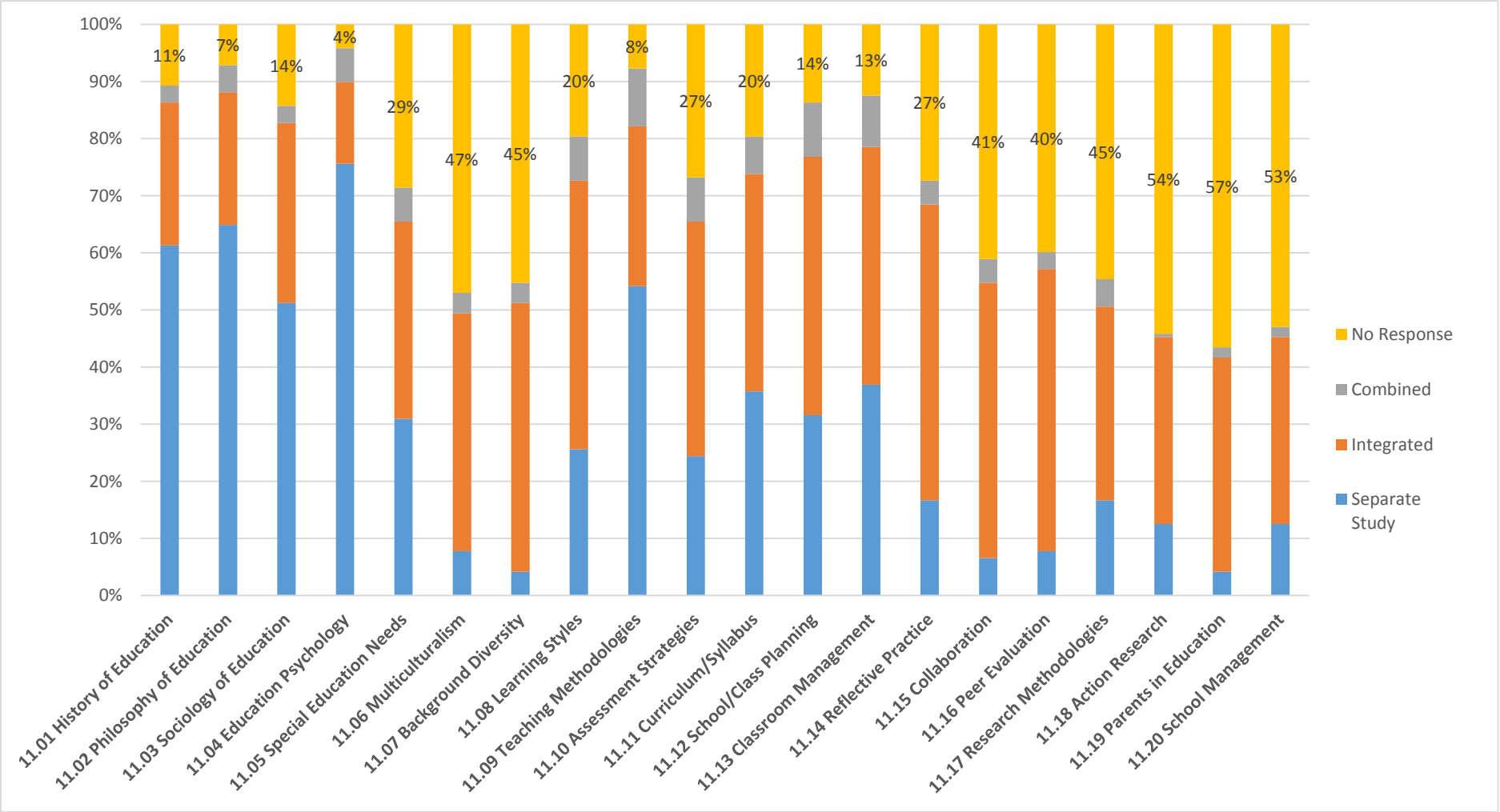


Table 5.11(b): Experience of Initial Teacher Education – All Respondents



5.2.4 Professional Identity

This theme is covered in Question 12 under the heading “Teaching as a Profession” where respondents were asked “Based on your personal and professional experience, and on your observation and knowledge of professional practice in teaching, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements…”. The statements related to teachers’ professional identity and also included aspects of the public perception of the teaching profession. The responses 12.01 - 12.30 are charted in Tables 5.12(a) and 5.12(b). A complete set of bar charts, illustrating the results for each proposed response in the questionnaire, analysed by region, is available for Question 12 at Appendix 12 (pp.52-67, Vol.2).

As can be seen from Tables 5.12(a) and 5.12(b), the most striking findings on teaching as a profession were that the majority of respondents strongly agreed with the statements that "teachers deal with complex situations" (12.10), that "the professional role of teachers extends beyond the transmission of knowledge" (12.13) and that "a teacher's role includes accepting and promoting the values of justice and equality" (12.24). These were followed closely by agreement that "classroom engagement is based on positive student-teacher relationships" (12.23) and that "teaching has a distinct body of professional knowledge" (12.11). While a sizeable number of teachers agree, only a small number strongly agree that "teaching is a high-status profession" (12.01) or that "teachers enjoy a high level of public trust" (12.05). The evidence also indicates that a significant number of teachers in all jurisdictions surveyed feel undervalued and under-rewarded.

These responses indicate that teachers have a strong sense of their professional identity with regard to professional knowledge, the complexity of the teacher’s role and the extension of the role of the teacher beyond the imparting of knowledge referred to in the responses to Question 9 on motivation to be a teacher. The agreement with the role of the teacher in relation to social justice also echoes the motivation to make a difference which was evident in the responses to Question 9. However, teachers do not seem to believe that the general public has a high regard for the profession of teaching. Teachers frequently cite media coverage of the profession as being negative, but this is just one perspective. An attitudinal survey on the public perception of teachers, conducted in 2009 by an independent company on behalf of the Teaching Council (Appendix 7, p.25, Vol.2) found that there was a high level of trust in teachers and a high level of satisfaction with their work. Relevant extracts from that survey show that teachers are ranked second to nurses in terms of people’s satisfaction with their work and teachers are ranked third after doctors and nurses in terms of people’s level of trust in them. A survey carried out on behalf of the Medical Council (Appendix 8, p.26. Vol.2),

Table 5.12(a): Teachers' opinions on teaching as a profession – Irish Respondents

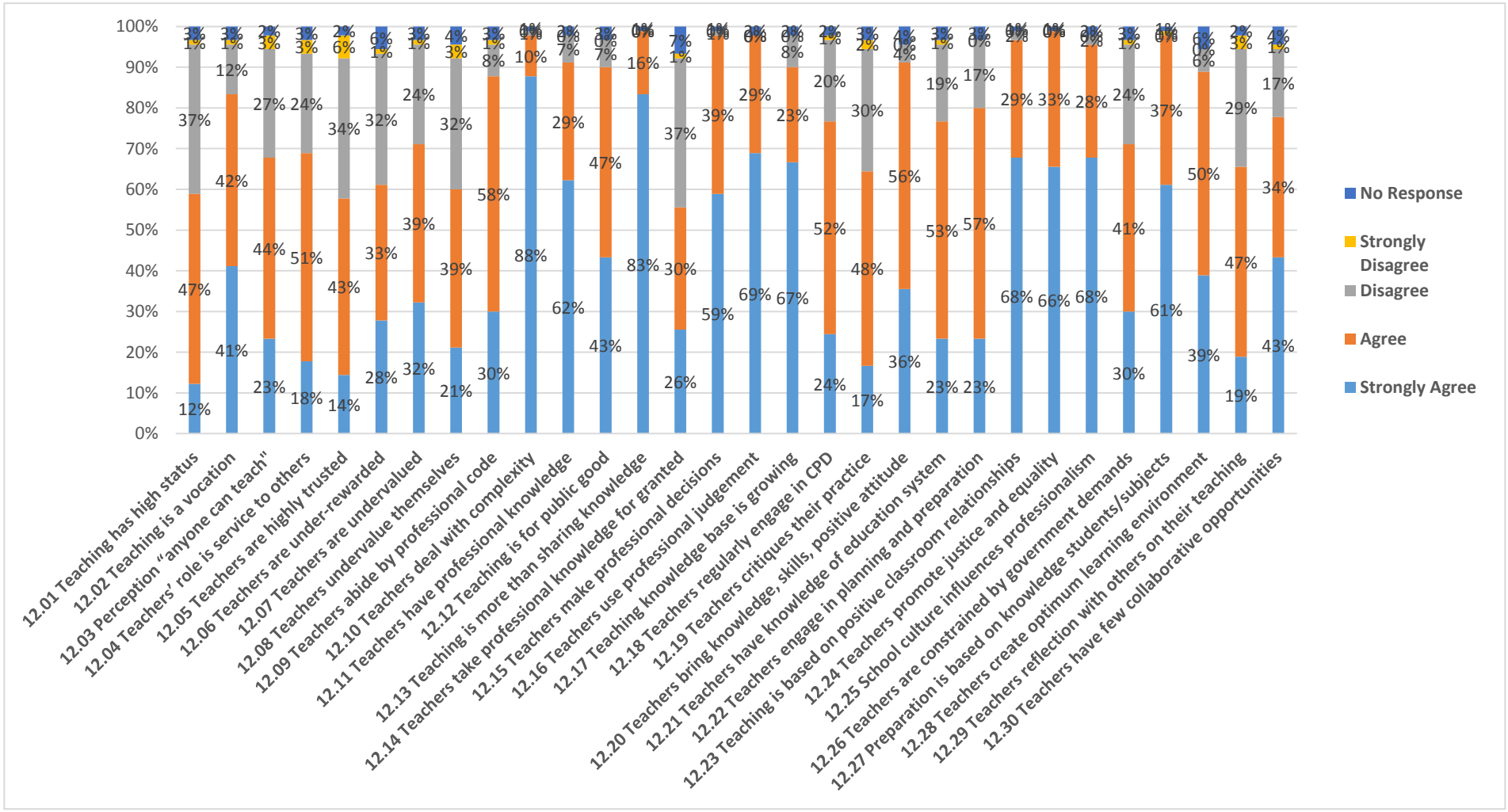
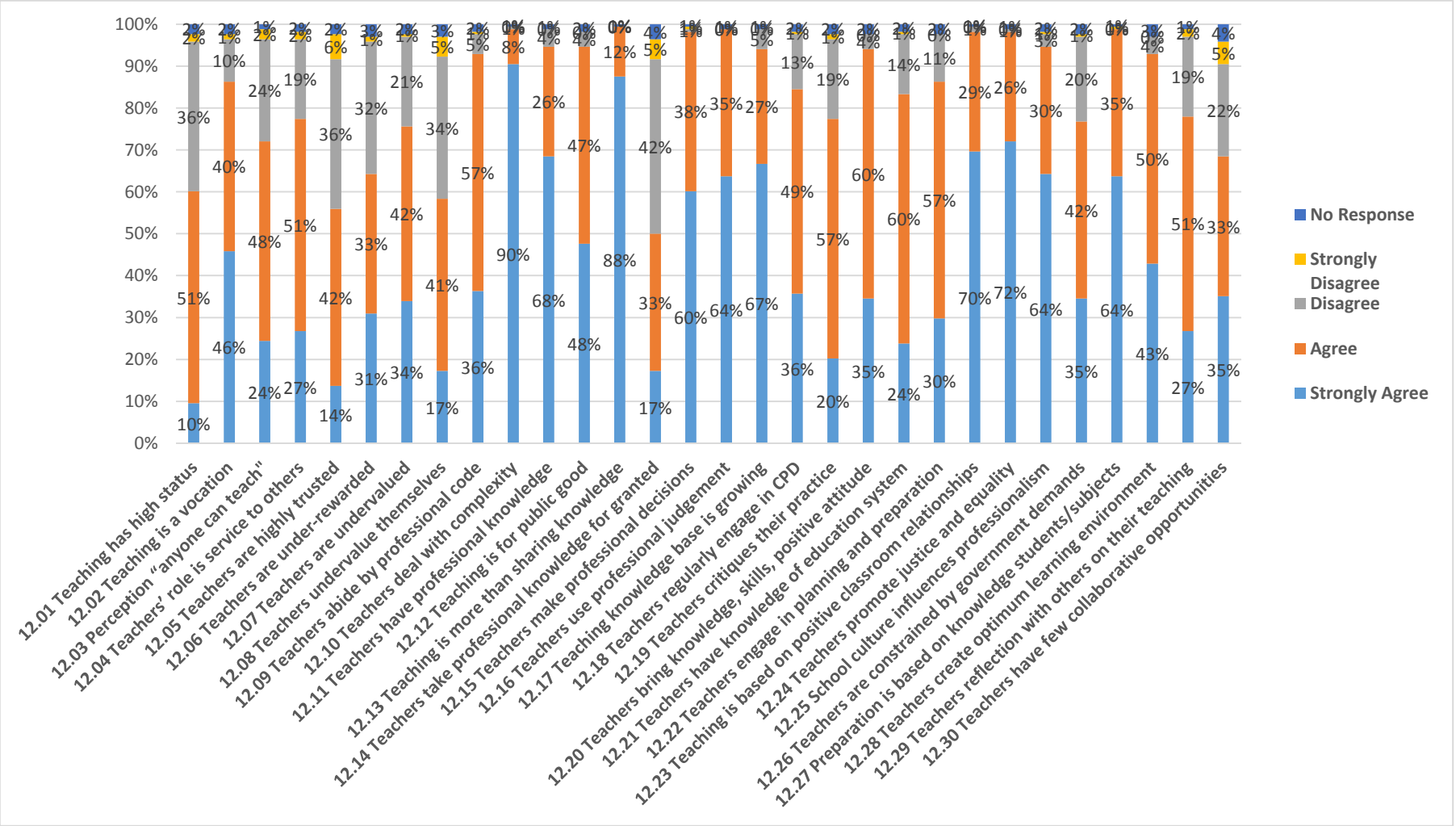


Table 5.12(b): Teachers' opinions on teaching as a profession – All Respondents



the professional body for doctors, in 2012 found that teachers were ranked second to doctors with regard to people's trust in them (nurses were not included in that survey).

A strong sense of professional identity is important as it influences the self-confidence of the teacher, which in turn is reflected in the teacher's professional relationship with students, parents and colleagues. Professional identity is also closely related to professional responsibility which is a key aspect of teachers' engagement in continuing professional development.

5.2.5 Experience of Continuing Professional Development

The theme, Experience of Continuing Professional Development, is covered in Qs. 13 – 21, and examines: respondents' engagement in non-formal professional learning; CPD experienced during the respondents' careers to date, including the format and methodologies used; the perceived benefits of CPD to respondents' professional practice; respondents' attitudes and values with regard to CPD and their perception of the support they received to facilitate their engagement in CPD. Teachers' responses to these questions are important because taking cognisance of teachers' views on their experience of CPD in the past will be valuable in shaping CPD for the future.

The specific focus of the questions under the theme of Experience of Continuing Professional Development was set out in the questionnaire as follows:

- Q.13 related to aspects of teachers' non-formal professional learning activities.
- Qs.14 and 15 dealt with frequency of engagement and types of formal CPD.
- Qs.16 and 17 dealt with the formats of CPD experienced and the perceived benefits of these.
- Q.18 dealt with the CPD methodologies perceived by respondents to be most suited to their learning styles and therefore most beneficial to them.
- Q.19 sought to elicit respondents' attitudes and values regarding CPD.
- Q.20 queried respondents' perception of sources of support for their CPD.
- Q.21 asked about respondents' personal experience of the value of CPD in their work.

Q.13 asked respondents to indicate the frequency of their engagement or association with a range of non-formal continuing professional development experiences. The responses from 13.01 - 13.05 are charted in Tables 5.13(a) and 5.13(b). A complete set of bar charts, illustrating the results for each proposed response in the questionnaire, analysed by region, is available for Question 13 at Appendix 13 (pp.68-76, Vol.2).

The responses to Q.13 indicate that staff meetings are the occasions which are the most frequent source of professional engagement for teachers, followed by school department meetings. The other areas with which teachers say they engage professionally, though to a significantly lesser degree, are elective and mandatory CPD activities respectively. Engagement with the latter may not always be wholehearted as there is little choice about participating.

The highest ranked areas of engagement identified in Q.13 may involve quite low level professional development as staff meetings may be based on an agenda of administrative rather than professional items. There may be little opportunity for professional dialogue which could greatly enhance the role of the teacher in the classroom and the quality of education in the school. Department meetings are more likely to be based on curricula and syllabi but teachers may be concerned with planning for the delivery of the subject(s) rather than sharing and interrogating each other's practice in the teaching of the subject(s).

The lowest ranked area of engagement was that of writing professional material. This covers many areas such as: journal writing which is private and personal to the teacher as in reflective pieces on their teaching; writing for academic purposes as in essays, assignments or a thesis as part of post-graduate studies and functional writing as in school planning and policies. Anecdotally, teachers are frequently heard to speak of their fear of writing and this is quite surprising considering that teachers teach their students to write, regardless of what level or subject(s) they teach.

Other less experienced areas of professional engagement were mentoring, liaising with Colleges of Education, Universities, the Teaching Council or a similar regulatory body. Engagement in these areas is dependent on the opportunities that are available to teachers. In that context, an official mentoring programme was not mainstreamed in the State until 2011 when an induction programme for all newly qualified teachers was introduced. The pilot programme on which it as based *did* afford some teachers the opportunity to be mentors. In the case of liaison with Colleges of Education and Universities, class teachers facilitate school placement for student teachers but, to date, in most cases, they do not partner HEIs in the process of monitoring and assessing these students. With regard to liaising with the Teaching Council, this is a relatively new body, having been established in 2006. While all teachers employed in State schools are now required to register with the Council, the majority of teachers have not developed a strong professional affinity with it, as yet.

One might have expected evidence of greater involvement in professional bodies, subject associations and professional support groups from teachers in the questionnaire responses. Such groups are usually organised by teachers for teachers and are normally found to be very

Table 5.13(a): Engagement in non-formal CPD – Irish Respondents

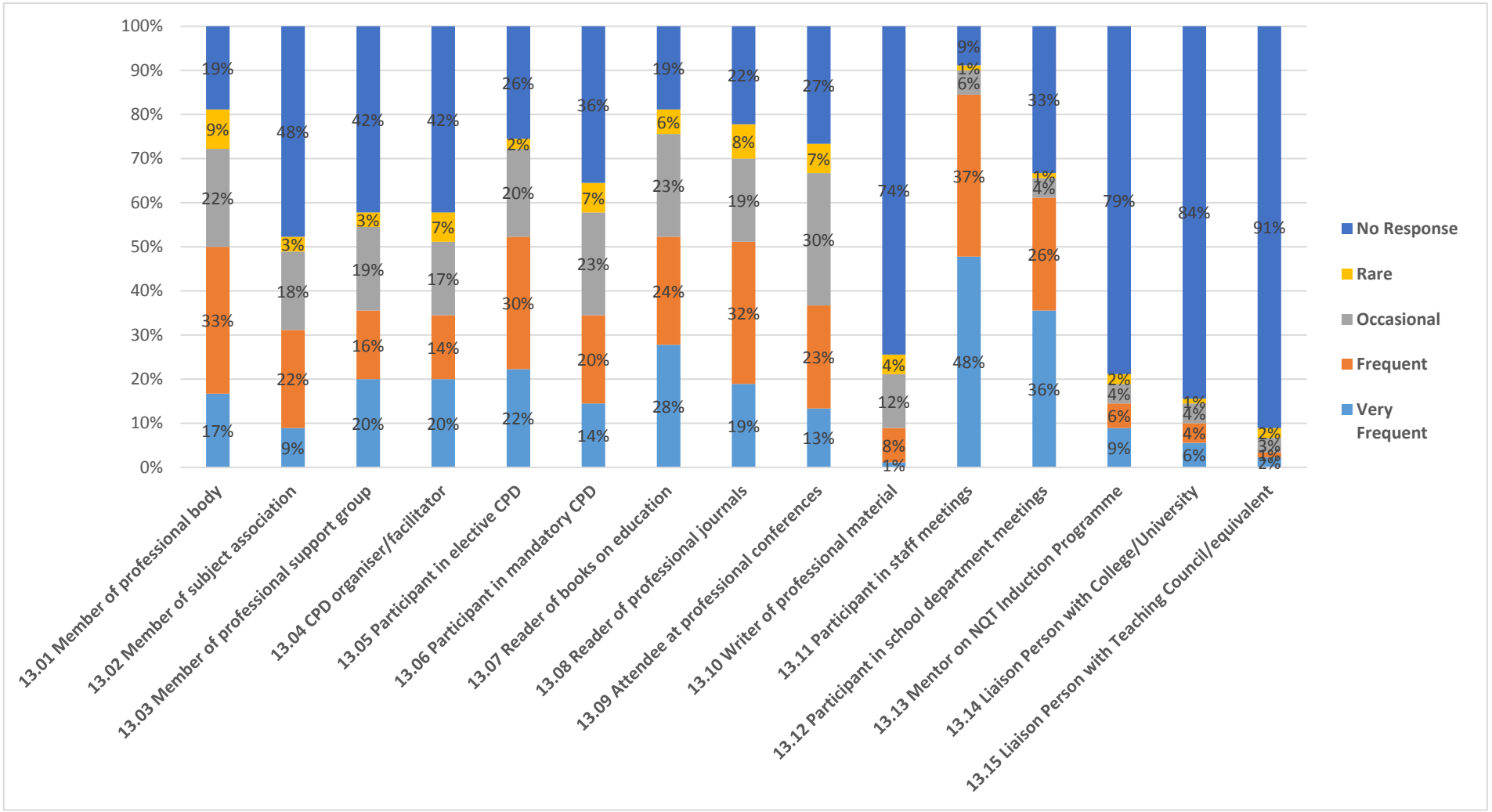


Table 5.13(b) Engagement in non-formal CPD – All Respondents

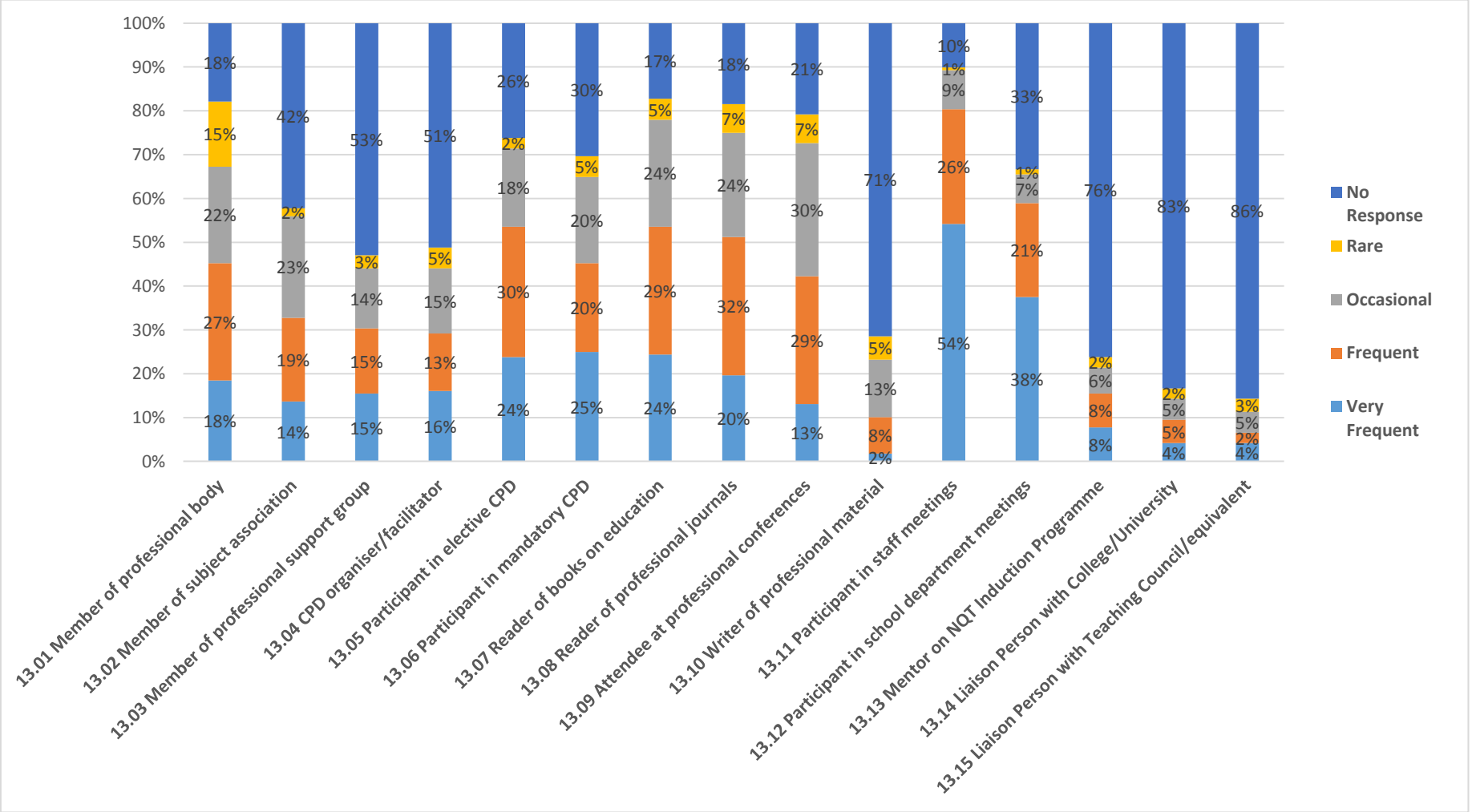


Table 5.14(a): Participation in formal CPD to date – Irish Respondents

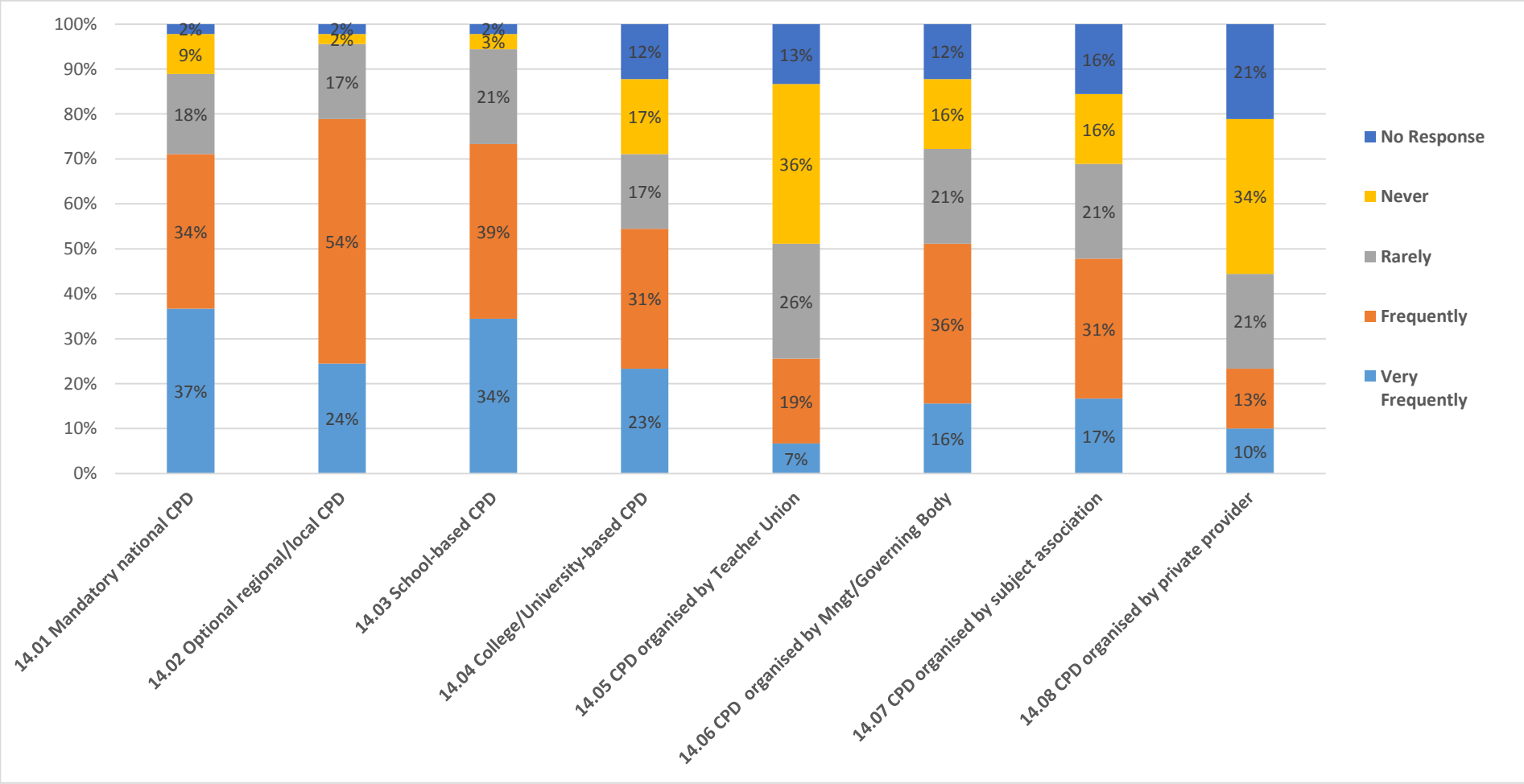


Table 5.14(b): Participation in formal CPD to date – All Respondents

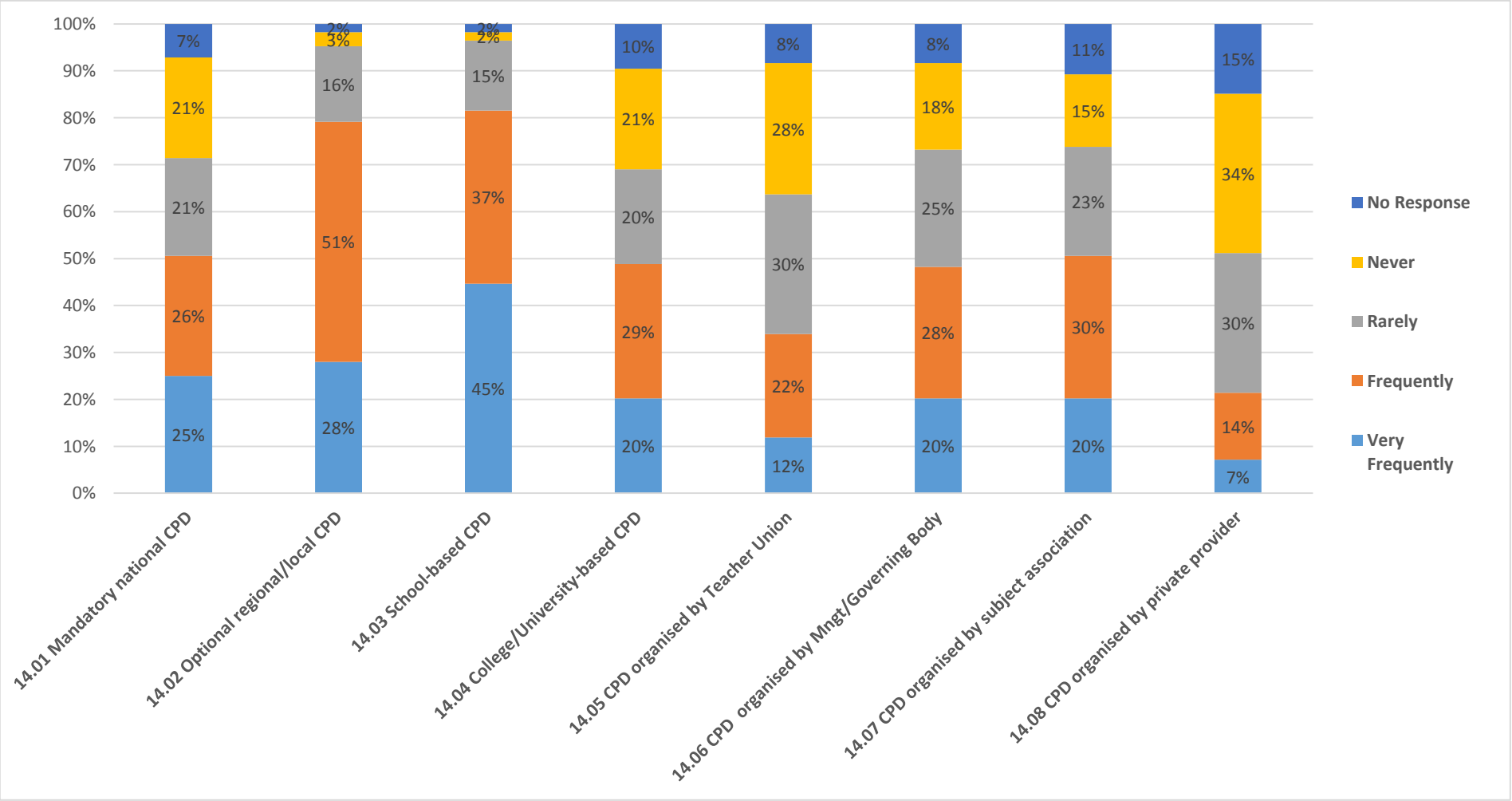


Table 5.15(a): Participation in formal CPD in recent years – Irish Respondents

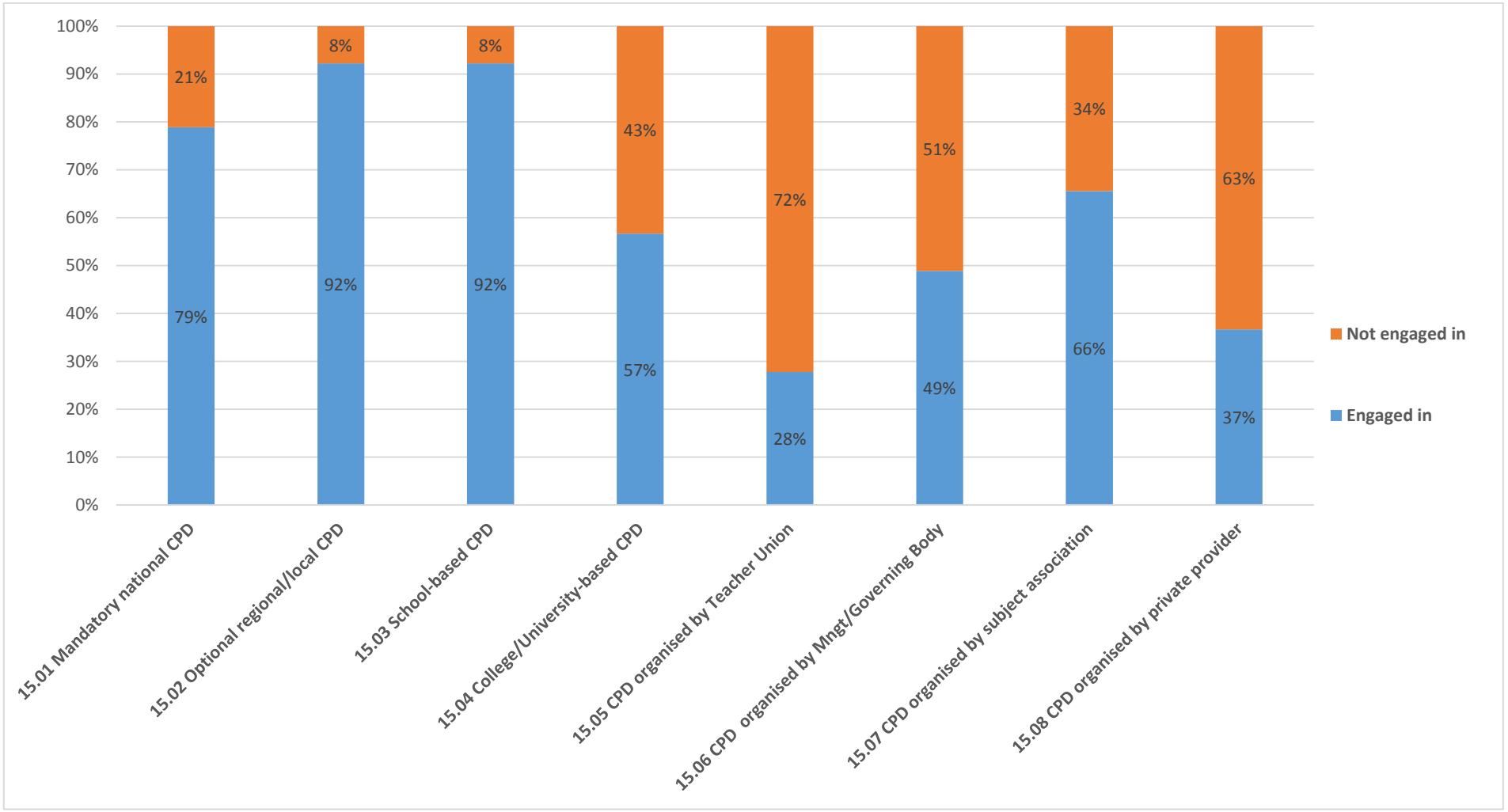
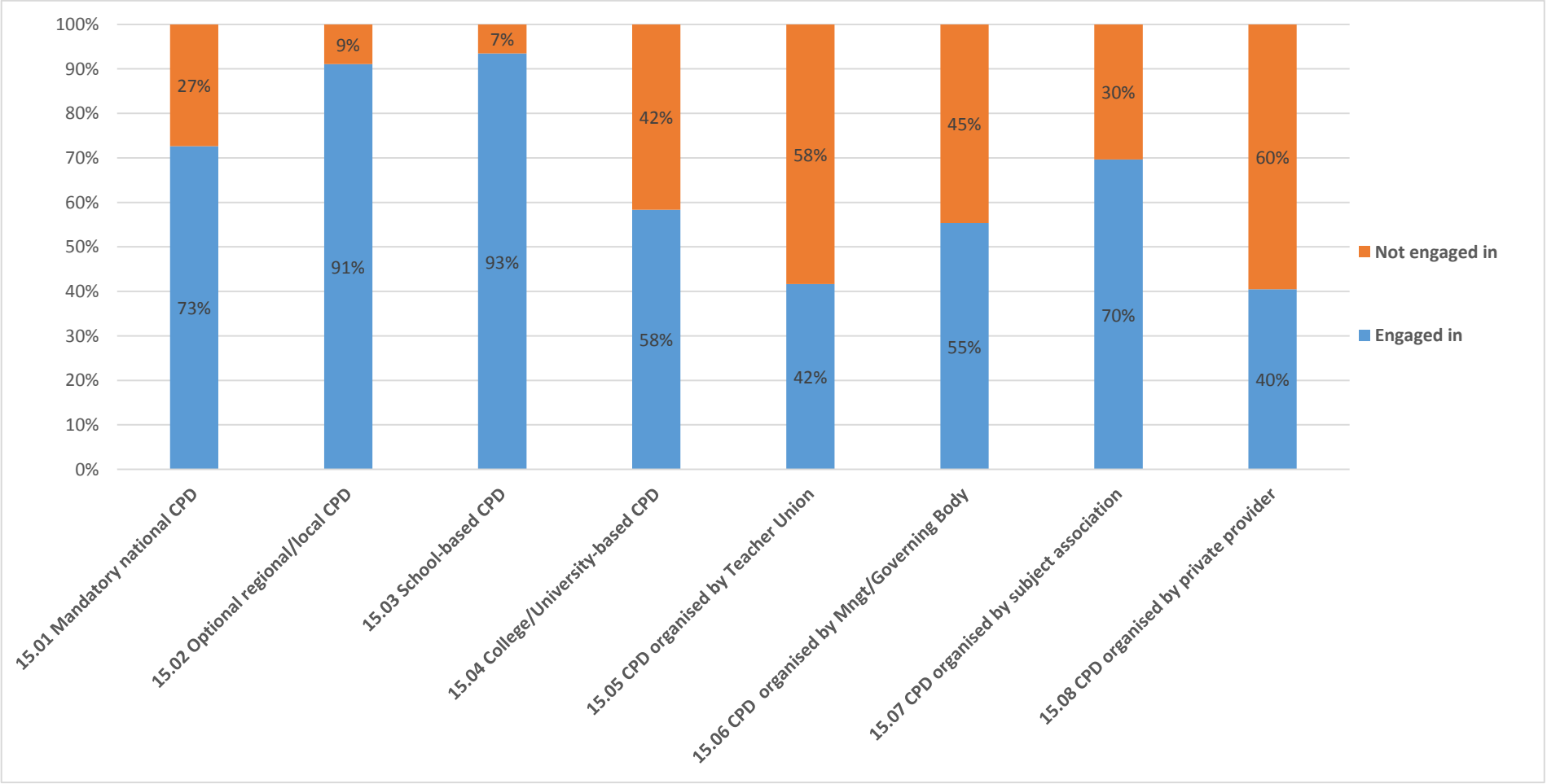


Table 5.15(b): Participation in formal CPD in recent years – All Respondents



beneficial by their members. Issues such as time, distance from the meeting venue and other commitments may be factors which contribute to non-participation. This will be explored further in the individual stakeholder interviews and in the focus group interviews.

Qs.14 and 15 were similar in so far as they presented teachers with a list of formal CPD provision. In Q.14, respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of their engagement, if any, with these CPD provisions over the span of their career. Q.15 sought a straightforward indication of engagement or non-engagement in the same type of provision over the previous five years. The responses from 14.01 - 14.08 and 15.01 – 15.08 are charted in Tables 5.14(a), 5.14(b), 5.15(a) and 5.15(b). Complete sets of bar charts for Questions 14 and 15 are available at Appendix 14 (pp.77-81, Vol.2) and Appendix 15 (pp.82-86, Vol.2), respectively.

In the Irish context, there has been a wide range of opportunities for teachers' engagement in formal CPD over the past 10 – 15 years. The national, system-based provision through the Department of Education and Skills and the local provision through the Education Centres have been outlined in Chapter 2 on the background and context for teachers' CPD in Ireland. Given the extensive provision, albeit sometimes on an *ad hoc* basis, it would be expected that the Irish responses would show active participation in CPD.

According to the responses to Q.14, from all participants, the CPD most frequently engaged with was school-based CPD activity, optional CPD organised locally or regionally and mandatory CPD organised nationally. The responses for Q.15 mirrored those for Q.14. Most teachers had engaged in school-based CPD followed closely by optional CPD organised nationally or regionally. These areas will be pursued further in the interviews and focus group meetings to establish, if possible, the types and levels of CPD engaged in at school level, regionally and nationally.

Qs.16 and 17 respectively, sought to identify the formats of CPD with which teachers most frequently engaged and the formats of CPD which teachers found most beneficial. The list of possible CPD formats is identical in both questions. The responses for 16.01 - 16.08 and 17.01 - 17.08 are charted in Tables 5.16(a), 5.16(b), 5.17(a) and 5.17(b). Complete sets of bar charts for Questions 16 and 17 are available at Appendix 16 (pp.87-91, Vol.2) and Appendix 17 (pp.92-96), respectively.

The CPD format most frequently experienced by all participants combined and by Irish respondents separately, was that of formal lectures, interactive seminars, CPD as a collaborative process with colleagues and information delivery seminars. The format of CPD found most beneficial was similar for both groups, i.e., CPD as a collaborative process with

colleagues, interactive seminars and professional network or support group discussion. Therefore, a parallel can be found in that that which was most frequently experienced was also that which was most beneficial in two areas, i.e., collaboration with colleagues and interactive seminars. It is significant that practising teachers rate collaboration with colleagues highly as it is noted that this did not feature highly as a motivating factor in Question 9.

Table 5.16(a): Format of CPD experienced – Irish Respondents

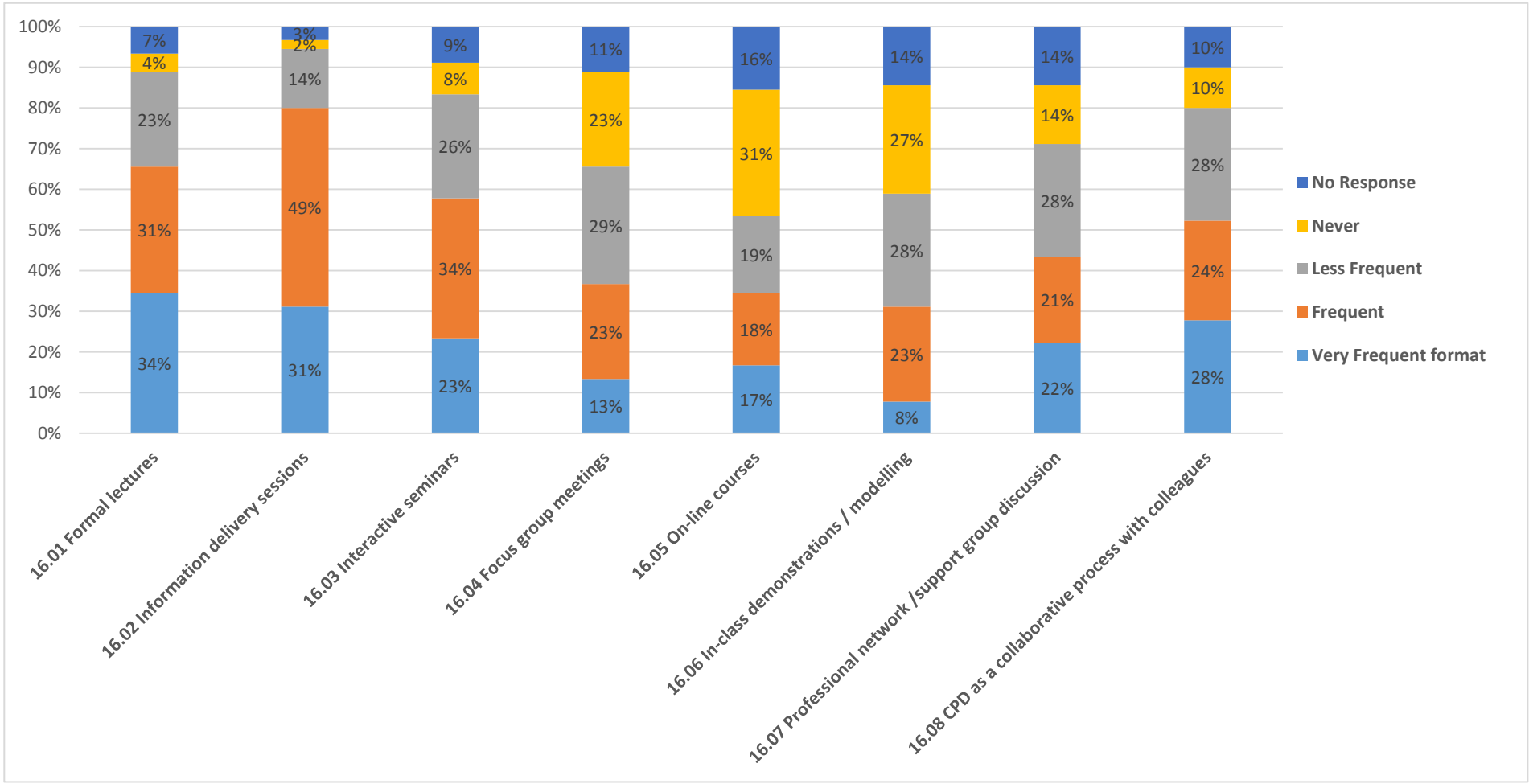


Table 5.16(b): Format of CPD experienced –All Respondents

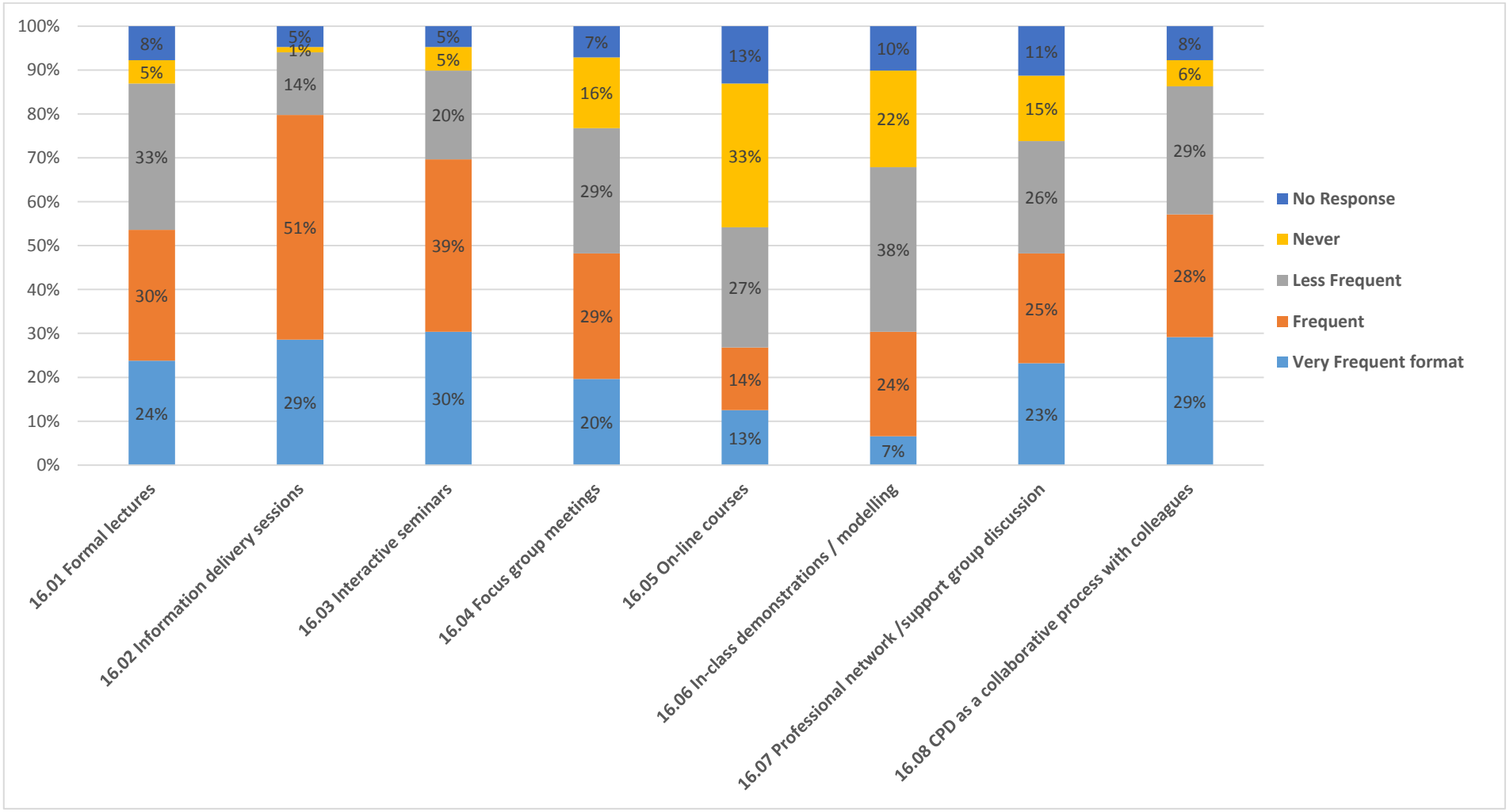


Table 5.17(a): Benefits of various formats of CPD – Irish Respondents

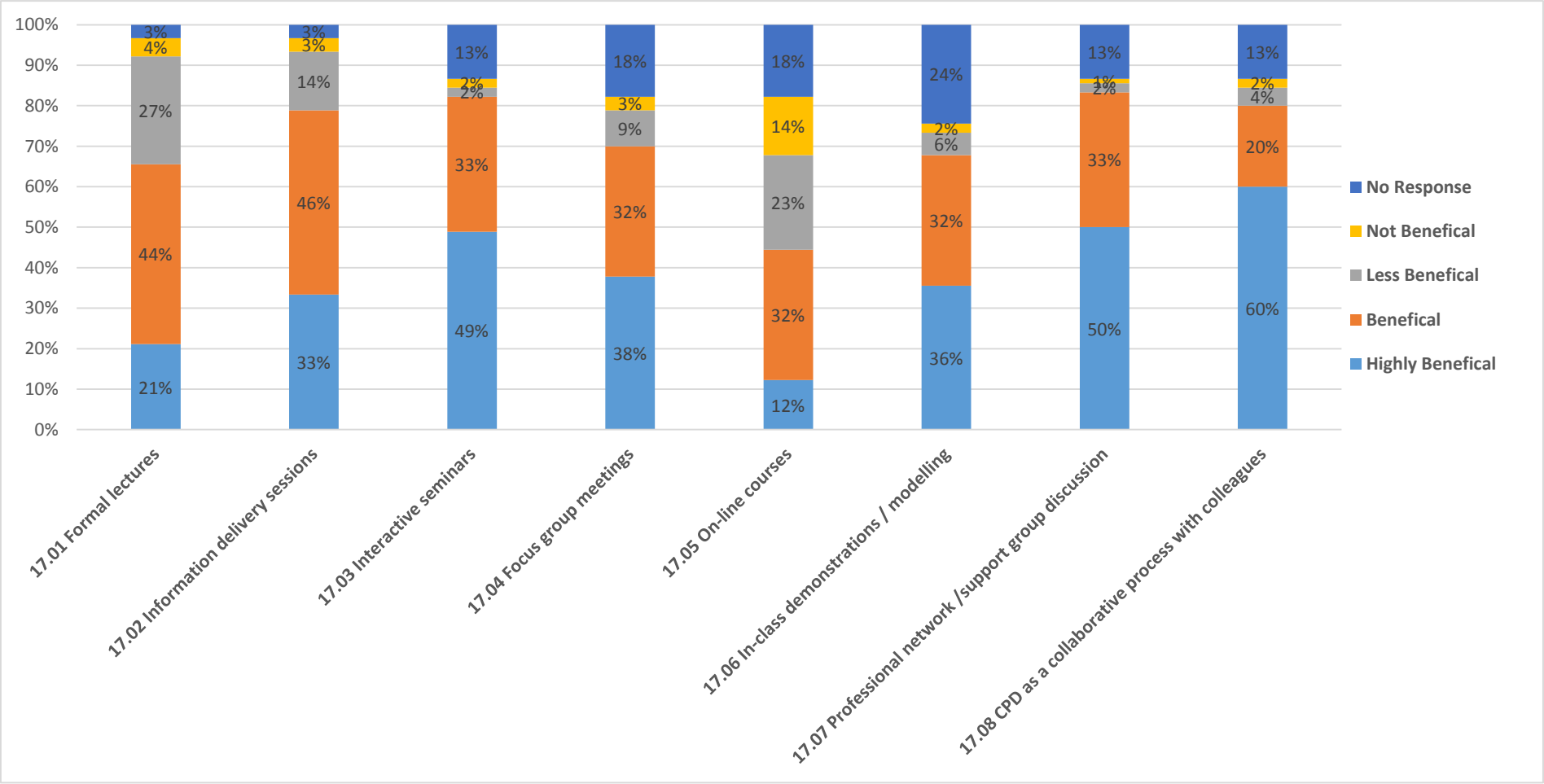
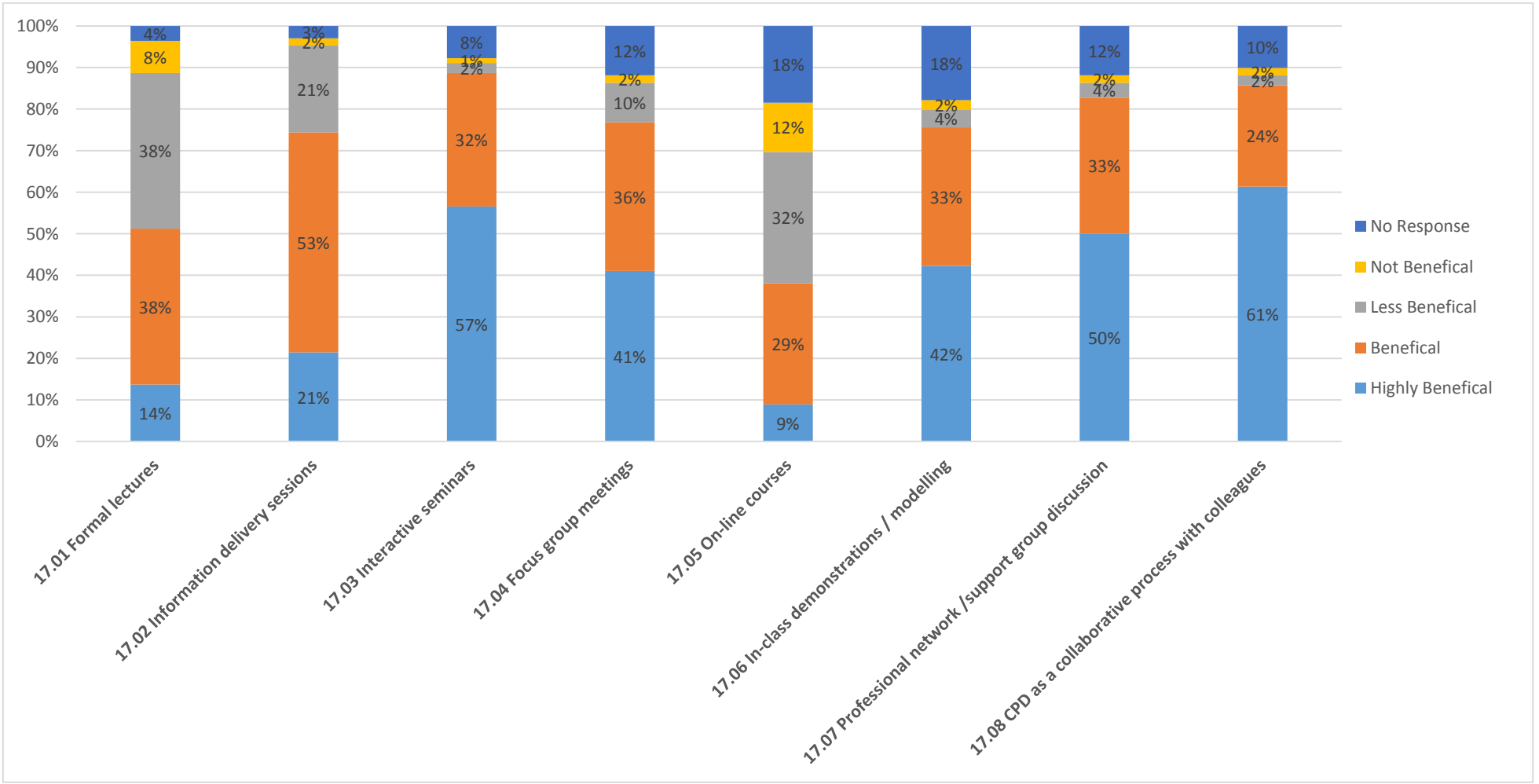


Table 5.17(b): Benefits of various formats of CPD – All Respondents



Q.18 aimed to ascertain the methodologies used in CPD activities which best suited the respondents' learning styles and which were most beneficial to them as teachers. The responses 18.01 - 18.15 are charted in Tables 5.18(a) and 5.18(b). A complete set of bar charts, illustrating the results for each proposed response in the questionnaire, analysed by region, is available for Question 18 at Appendix 18 (pp.97-104, Vol.2). While there is a clear distinction in the survey between Qs. 16 and 17 which pertain to the format of CPD and Q.18 which deals with CPD methodologies, there is also some overlap between these two aspects of CPD.

The survey findings from Q.18 show that the methodologies which teachers found best suited their learning styles and those that were most beneficial in their teaching were demonstrations/modelling, making and doing and small group activities. These usually provide concrete ideas which teachers can replicate in the classroom and, anecdotally, those engaged in facilitating CPD in Ireland find that, on the whole, this is what teachers want from CPD. Teachers' interest in CPD which provides practical ideas may be significant in the context of endeavouring to develop a culture of engagement in transformative CPD which may challenge teachers' thinking about their practice.

The lower ranking methodologies were writing activities, listening activities, on-line activities and role-play or simulations. The lack of interest in writing activities correlates with teachers' low level of engagement with professional writing as indicated in Question 13. As a CPD format, on-line activities had not been experienced very frequently according to the response in Question 16 nor were they highly regarded as being beneficial in Question 17. These opinions are reinforced here when on-line CPD activities are considered as a CPD methodology. This may be due to lack of opportunity for engagement in on-line CPD activities and this will be revisited in the context of future provision for CPD.

Table 5.18(a): Most beneficial CPD methodologies – Irish Respondents

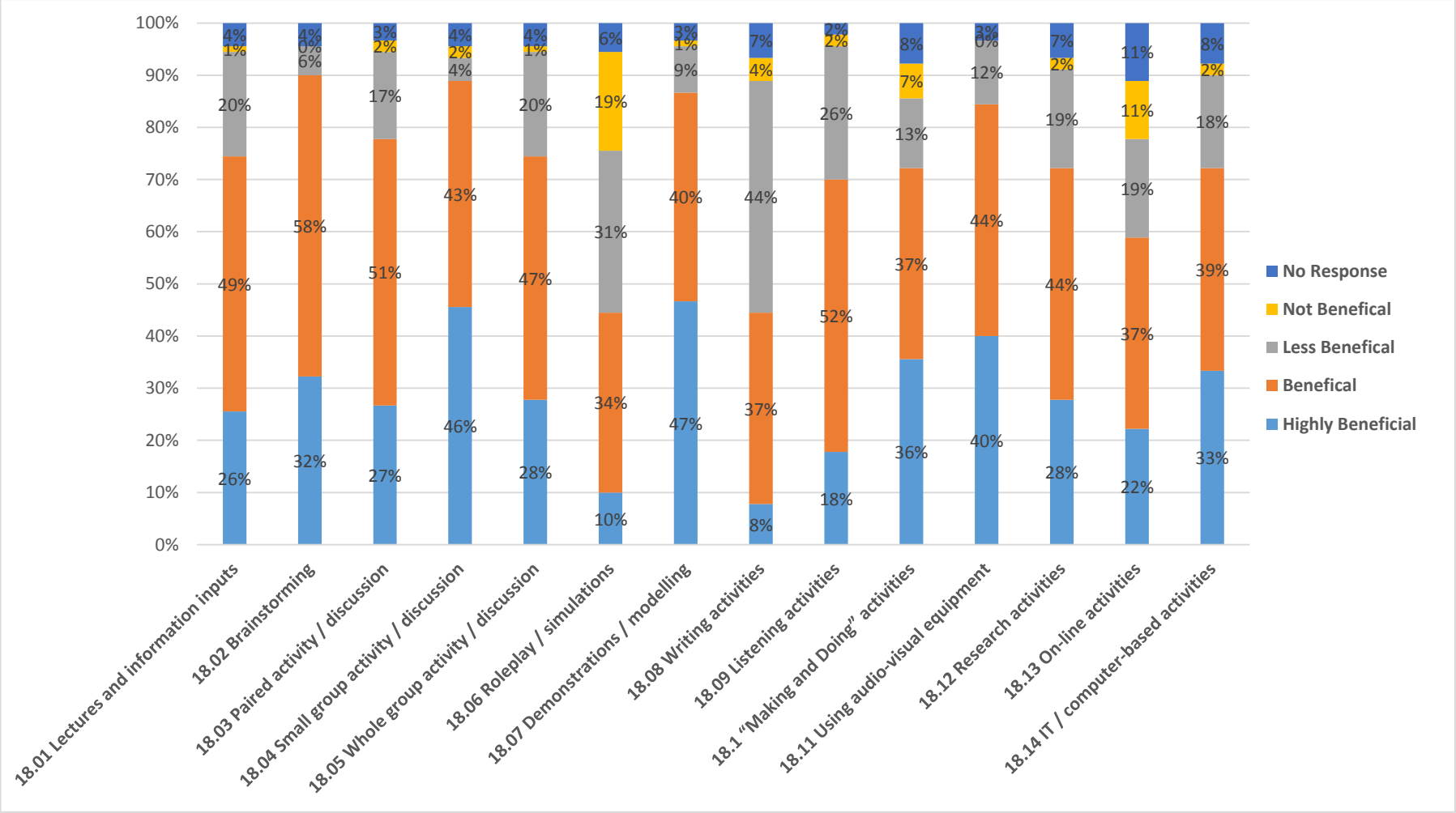
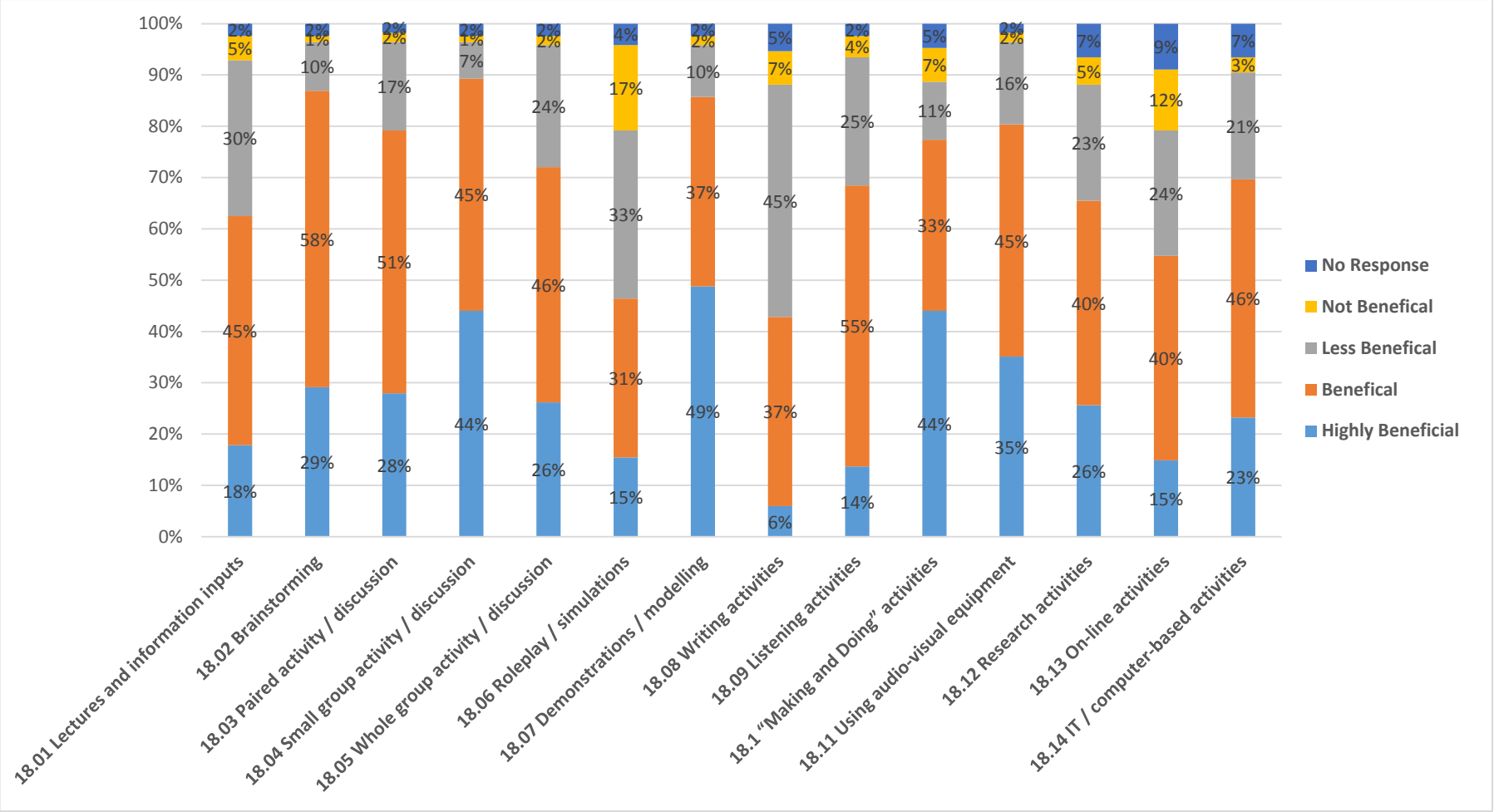


Table 5.18(b): Most beneficial CPD methodologies – All Respondents



Q.19 sought to elicit teachers' attitudes and values regarding CPD. The question asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with each statement in a set of responses. The responses 19.01 - 19.22 are charted in Tables 5.19(a) and 5.19(b). A complete set of bar charts, illustrating the results for each proposed response in the questionnaire, analysed by region, is available for Question 19 at Appendix 19 (pp.105-116, Vol.2).

The most significant findings in the responses to Q.19 were that respondents strongly agreed that “schools should have a CPD budget from state funds” (19.04), that "teachers' CPD should be supported by school management and the state” (19.03) and that "CPD should be linked to teachers' practice” (19.01). These views were common to all respondents as a group and to the group of Irish respondents. The respondents disagreed with the statements that "teachers should pay in full for CPD activities" (19.18), that “teachers should contribute to the costs of CPD” (19.19) or that "CPD should be undertaken during school holidays" (19.12). Perhaps these latter responses are predictable in that one could expect teachers, or any group of people, to want to retain and maintain the most advantageous conditions of employment possible. On the other hand, it may be significant that teachers do not appear to demonstrate a clear wish to maintain their professional autonomy and independence by retaining financial responsibility for their CPD.

Table 5.19(a) Attitudes and values regarding CPD – Irish Respondents

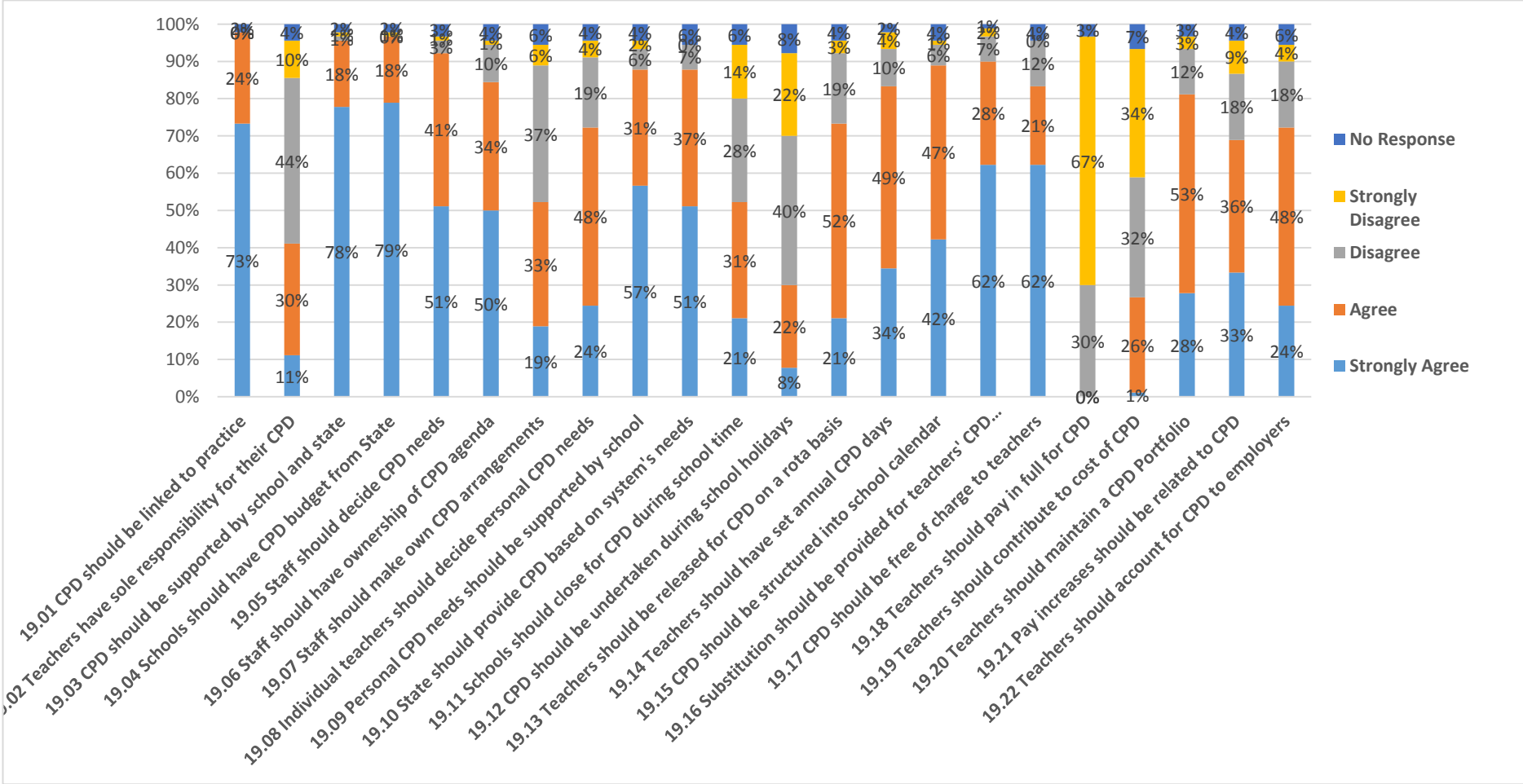
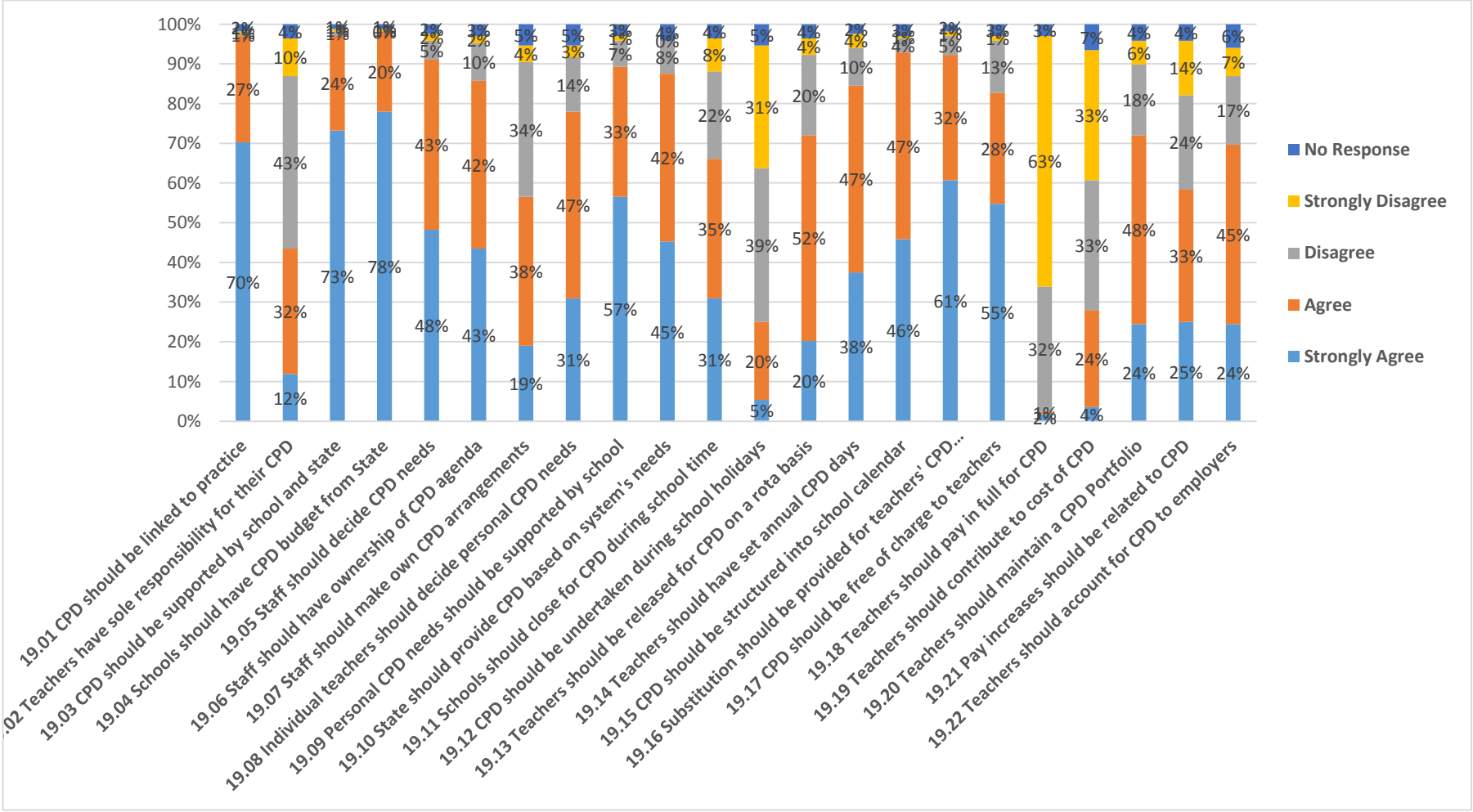


Table 5.19(b): Attitudes and values regarding CPD – All Respondents



Q.20 identified the sources of support for teachers in pursuing CPD. The responses, 20.01 – 20.12, are charted in Tables 5.20(a) and 5.20(b). A complete set of bar charts, illustrating the results for each proposed response in the questionnaire, analysed by region, is available for Question 20 at Appendix 20 (pp.117-123, Vol.2). The introduction to the set of responses suggested that any kind of support could be considered, e.g., finance, academic guidance, advice, encouragement, time, etc.

Respondents from both the combined group and the Irish group stated that the greatest support for their engagement in CPD came from family members. This was followed closely by support from the Head Teacher, from professional bodies of which they were members, from the Education Centres and from colleagues.

Teachers perceived that the least support was received from the government or from visiting school advisors/support persons. In the case of Irish teachers, the findings in these latter areas do not take cognisance of the government investment in teachers' CPD in Ireland from the mid-90s onwards, as outlined in Chapter 2 which deals with the Irish context. The perceived lack of support from visiting advisors may relate to a lack of access to such support rather than being an indication that the support received was inadequate. In Ireland, it *is* the case that the schools' demand for visiting support persons exceeds the capacity of the support services personnel to respond to all requests *or* to respond as frequently as the schools would wish.

Table 5.20(a): Support for CPD – Irish Respondents

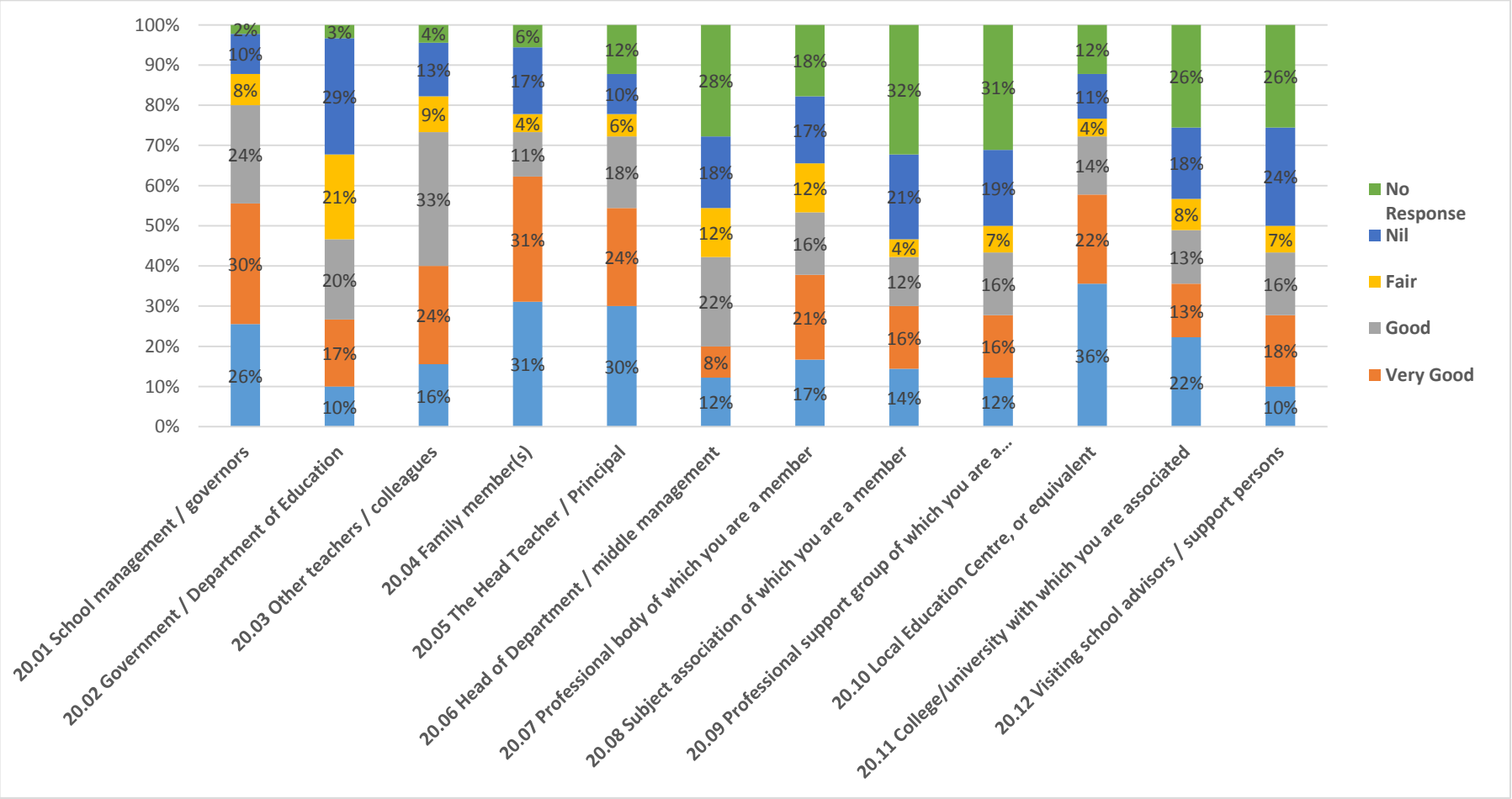
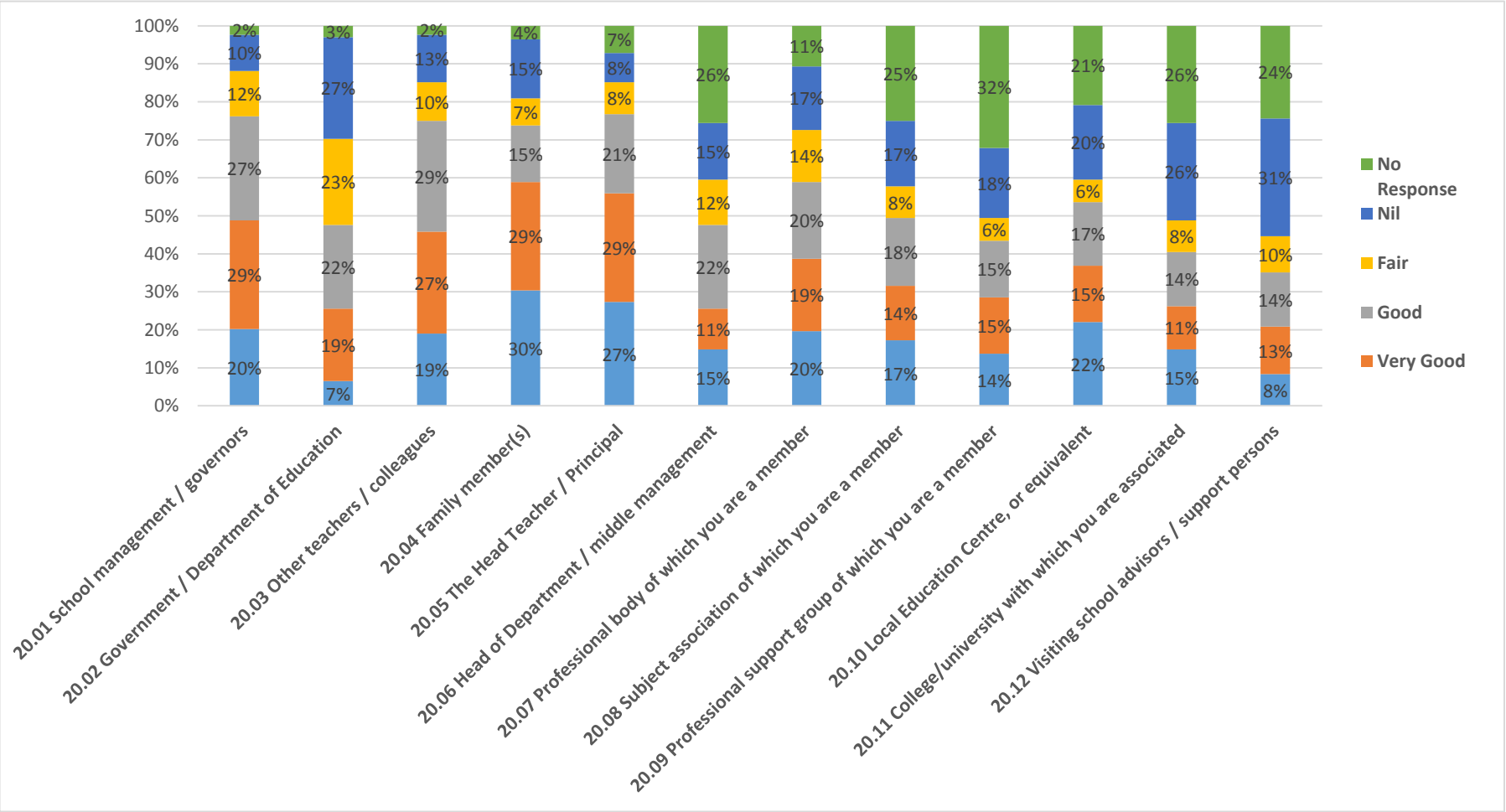


Table 5.20(b): Support for CPD – All Respondents



Q.21 aimed to elicit the impact of CPD on teachers' practice. The responses, 21.01 - 21.17, are charted in Tables 5.21(a) and 5.21(b). A complete set of bar charts, illustrating the results for each proposed response in the questionnaire, analysed by region, is available for Question 21 at Appendix 21 (pp.124-133, Vol.2).

Overall, there was a strongly positive response from teachers across all jurisdictions and from Irish teachers separately indicating that they benefitted greatly from their CPD experiences. Respondents strongly agreed that they were better teachers as a result of CPD, that they had developed new knowledge and skills and they had extended their teaching methodologies. To a lesser extent, they agreed that they understood the curriculum better, that students benefitted more from their teaching and that they felt more professional in their teaching role. The least impact of CPD was in the area of being less stressed as a teacher. The findings also indicate that teachers' welcome for parental participation did not increase significantly as a result of CPD. A small number of teachers commented that the latter was not relevant as they had always welcomed parental participation.

Rather than ask respondents direct questions about transformative CPD, the questionnaire was structured with a view to uncovering the underlying elements of what might constitute transformative CPD. A sample of responses which could be deemed to illustrate elements of transformation were "I engage more with my colleagues" (21.08) with which 46% of Irish respondents strongly agreed and "I feel rejuvenated in my teaching" (21.13) with which 52% of Irish respondents strongly agreed. An opportunity for further elaboration was also provided for in the Comments area of the responses but this was not availed of. This may be indicative of a dearth of reflection on the impact of CPD on teachers' practice or it may be indicative of a dearth of transformative CPD which *could* have impacted on their practice.

Table 5.21(a): Personal experience of the value of CPD – Irish Respondents

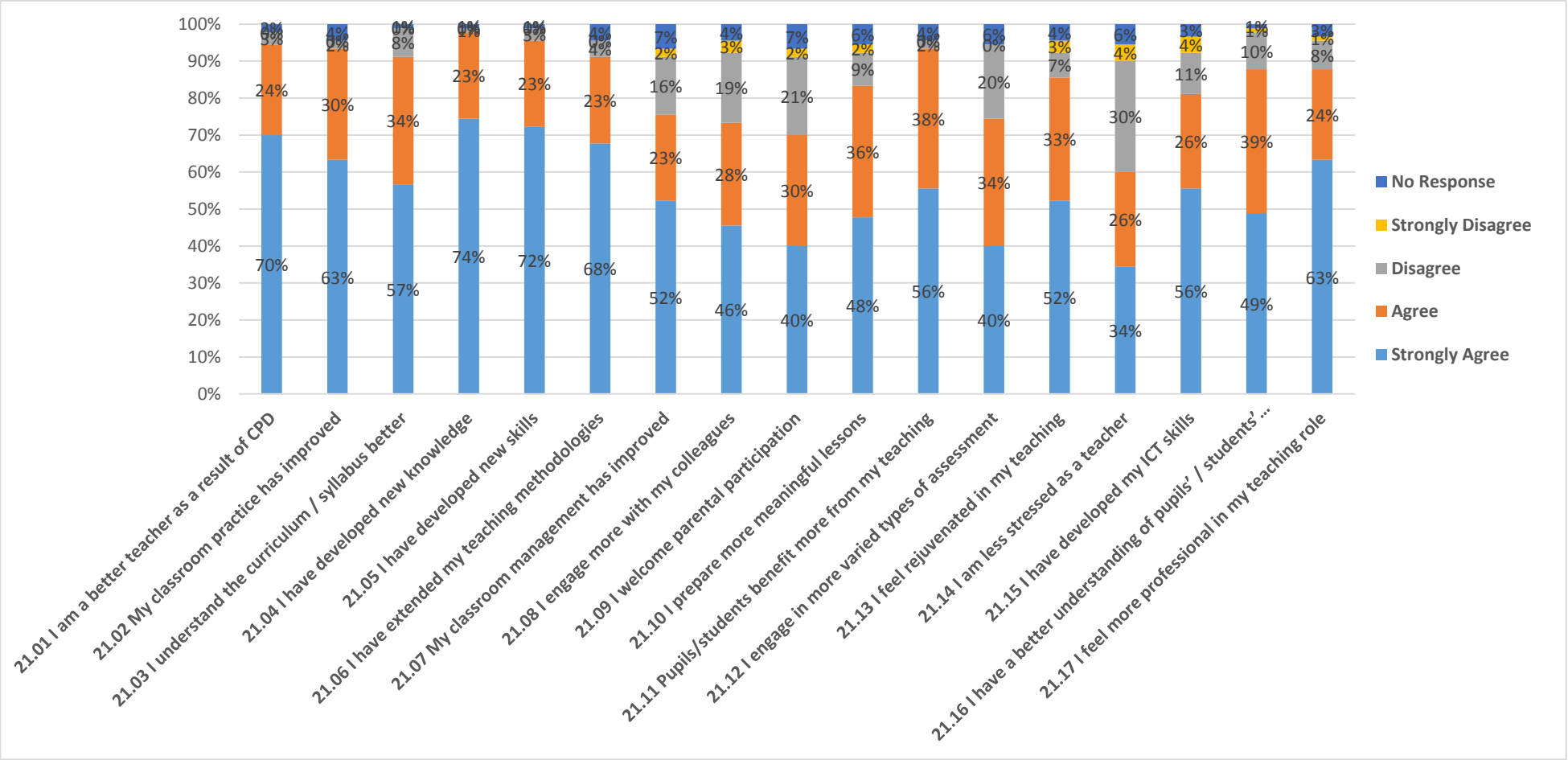
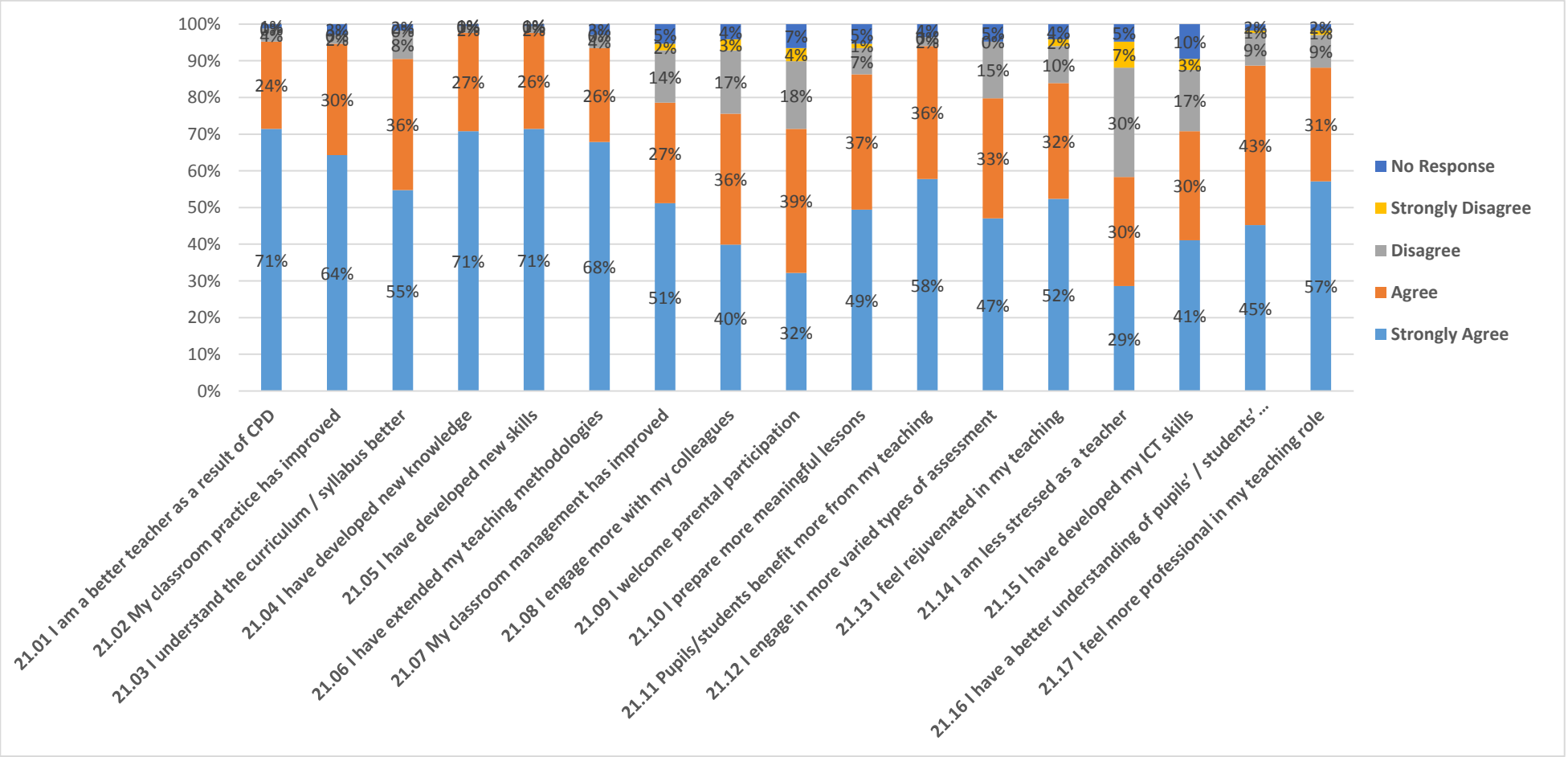


Table 5.21(b): Personal experience of the value of CPD – All Respondents



5.2.6 Continuing Professional Development in the Future

Q.22 asked teachers, in the context of the development of a CPD framework, to consider future provision for CPD. Their responses, 22.1 - 22.23**,** are charted in Tables 5.22(a) and 5.22(b). A complete set of bar charts, illustrating the results for each proposed response in the questionnaire, analysed by region, is available for Question 22 at Appendix 22 (pp.134-146, Vol.2). A number of the proposed responses to this question replicate those in Question 19. Question 19 deals with attitudes and values to CPD in the context of teachers' experience of CPD. Question 22 looks to the future development of a framework for CPD under the jurisdiction of the Teaching Council in Ireland.

The information gathered from the responses in this section could be important in giving Irish teachers a voice in the formulation of a CPD framework, providing ideas to promote a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach to future provision for CPD in the State. Teachers most strongly agreed were that "Every teacher should have access to relevant CPD" (22.10), that "Teachers as lifelong learners should be supported in developing a culture of engagement in CPD" (22.12) and that "Individual teachers should have the opportunity to identify their CPD needs and find a response" (22.03). On the whole, teachers strongly agreed with the questionnaire statements on CPD which dealt with teachers' enhanced professionalism. Statements with regard to responsibility for resourcing CPD were not received as favourably.

Table 5.22(a): Opinions on future provision for CPD – Irish Respondents

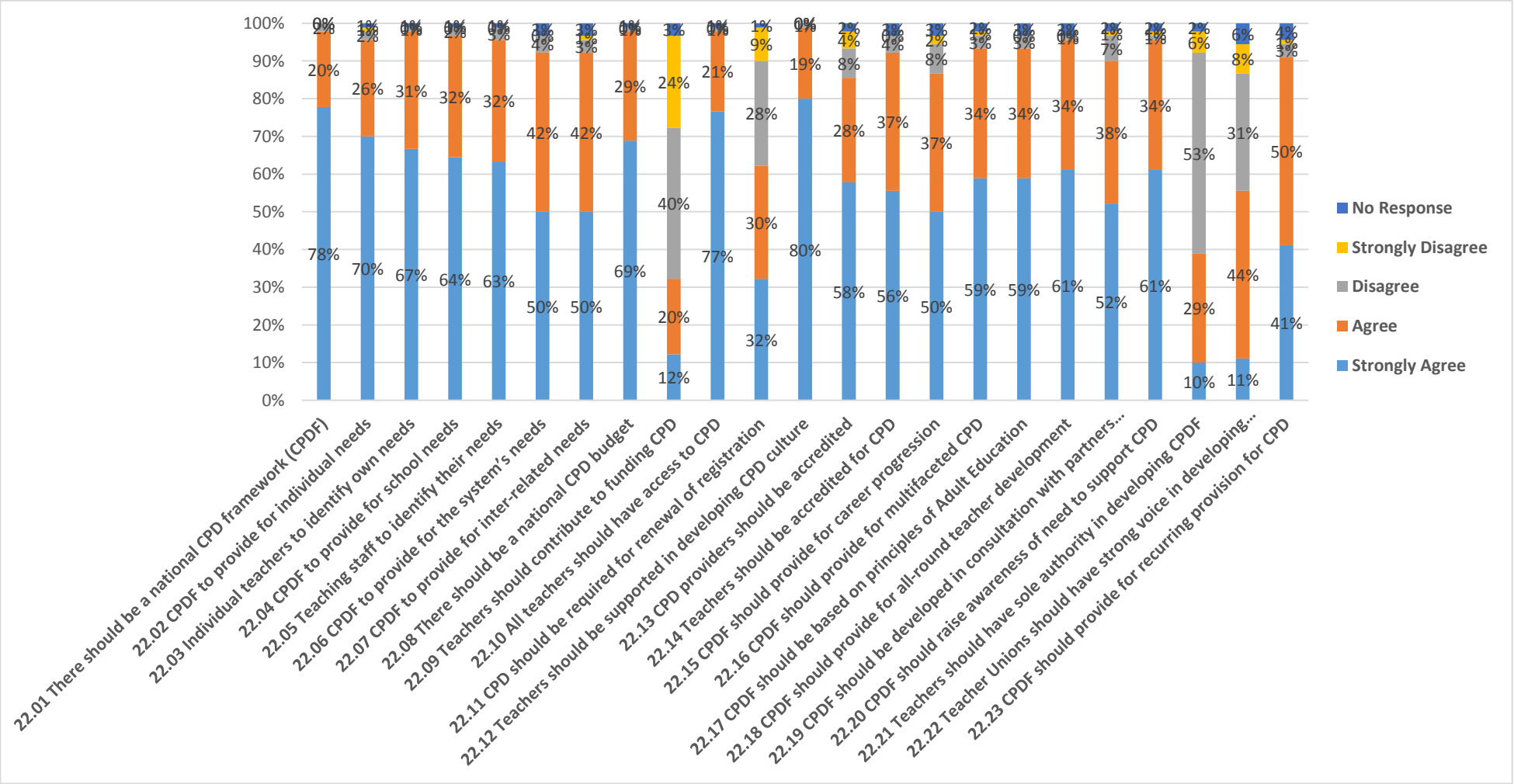
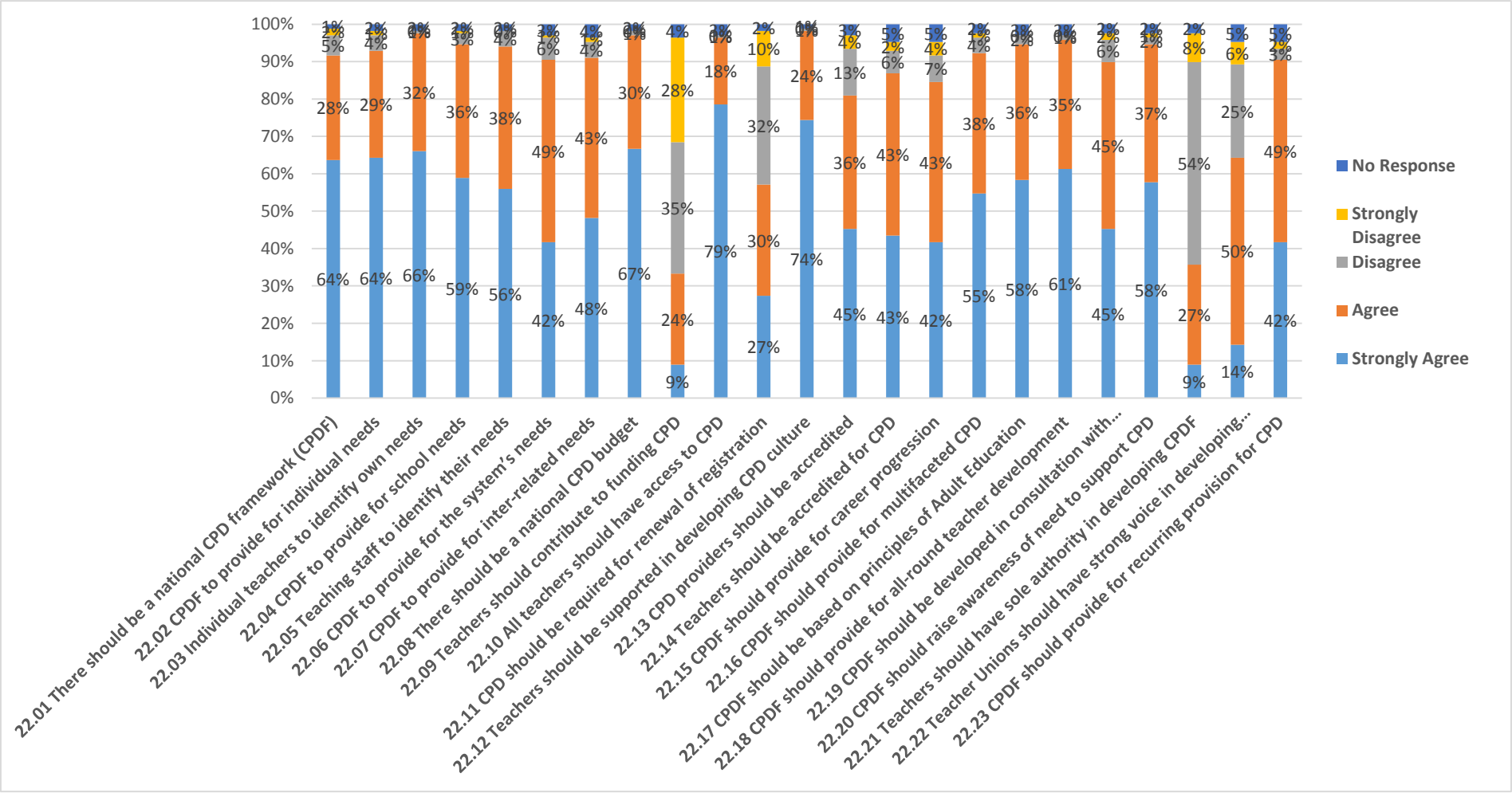


Table 5.22(b): Opinions on future provision for CPD – All Respondents



Conclusion

Reviewing. in summary, the main finding of the quantitative data, it was found, firstly, that teachers for the most part enter the profession for genuinely altruistic reasons; chiefly to work with young people and to make a difference in their lives. Secondly, in relation to initial teacher education experienced by the respondents, in many ITE programmes there appears to have been a clear delineation between theoretical domains and practical ones rather than a linked and integrated approach as is now advocated. Some areas of study which are currently regarded as vital, e.g., Special Needs Education and Multiculturalism, appear to have been omitted or given little attention. With regard to teachers' opinions on teaching as a profession, which also indicates their sense of professional identity, a high level of confidence is displayed with regard to teachers' professional knowledge and competence. However, teachers do not strongly believe that teaching is a high status profession or that teachers enjoy a high level of public trust.

In relation to non-formal CPD, staff meetings and school department meetings were the forms most frequently experienced by respondents and they indicated that professional writing and engagement with third level institutions were the forms least frequently experienced. Formal CPD activities at school level, together with local and nationally-organised CPD, had been experienced by a significant number of respondents. Teachers found interactive seminars and collaboration with colleagues to be the most beneficial forms. The CDP methodologies which were found to be most useful were those of a practical nature such as demonstrations, modelling, making and doing and small group activities. This is indicative of teachers wanting CPD which is functional and addresses their practical teaching and/or classroom needs. With regard to provision for CPD, the respondents displayed a desire to have good CPD which is related to their practice, funded by the State and accommodated within school time.

As expected, the findings in this chapter are important in setting up the interviews and focus group meetings to gain further knowledge and insight about what would be necessary to conceive and promote a transformative kind of CPD for teachers. As indicated previously, the next chapter considers the interviews, concentrating on the stakeholders' perceptions of a person's motivation to become a teacher, initial teacher education, the public perception of teaching/teachers and teachers' professional identity.

Chapter 6

Stakeholder Interview Findings (Part 1): Presentation and Analysis

Introduction

Building on the examination of the questionnaire data in Chapter 5, this chapter now begins the examination of the findings from the semi-structured interviews.

To recap, interviews were conducted with 28 people, 25 interviewees being key stakeholders in the Irish education system and 3 interviewees who were key people in education from other jurisdictions. The chosen interviewees were representative of the primary and post-primary sectors at national level and included: teacher educators (TE); the administrative and inspectorate sections of the Department of Education and Skills (DES); the Teaching Council (TC); Directors of Education Centres (EC); Personnel from national In-service Support Services (SS); the three Teacher Unions (TU); Principal Teachers (PT); Primary Management Bodies (PM), Post-Primary Management Bodies (PPM) and Parents (P). In so far as interviewees' responses are collated into tables, these tables will include only the 25 Irish interviewees as the responses relate mainly to the Irish situation. The views of the 3 interviewees from outside the Irish jurisdiction will be included in the analytical commentary in Chapter 10, (10.2.4, pp.230-232) and they will be referenced as international (Int).

It was originally intended that the totality of the interview findings would be presented in one chapter, as were the questionnaire findings in Chapter 5. However, because of the large number of interviews conducted, the volume of material was extensive, i.e., the combined interview transcripts totalled over 264,500 words. To do justice to the contributions of the interviewees, it is necessary to present the most relevant findings from the interviews in two chapters, this one and the next, Chapter 7. This chapter will deal with the interviewees' perceptions of the following: 6.1 Motivation to become a teacher; 6.2 Initial Teacher Education; 6.3 The public perception of teaching/teachers and 6.4 Teachers' professional identity. Thus, Chapter 6 will provide a backdrop, or lead in, to Chapter 7, which will continue to present the interviewees' thoughts on teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) under the broad headings of: interviewees' perceptions of

teachers as lifelong learners, the experience of CPD for teachers; the development of a collaborative culture in schools and the perceived benefits of CPD.

In this chapter then, the significant findings on the interview themes 6.1 – 6.4, outlined above, are presented and these are cross-referenced with the questionnaire findings for the same themes. Sample comments are included to represent the essential points reflected in the interviews. Each sample comment is referenced using the identifying code given to the interviewee together with the minute and second the comment was recorded during the interview. As stated in Chapter 4, the reader is being provided with the audio recordings of the interviews and the electronic transcripts (PDF files) on a USB Memory Stick. Printed copies of the transcripts are also provided. For each of the four themes there is: (a) an outline of the question which interviewees were asked; (b) a table to illustrate interviewees' responses where it was possible to categorise these; (c) an analysis of the findings including reference to the questionnaire findings in comparable areas and (d) a summary of the main findings in relation to the theme. With regard to (c), it was not always possible to compare like with like due to the differing approaches in the posing of questions in both situations, but similar trends in the responses from both sources of data are identified.

While the interviews followed a set pattern of questioning, they were semi-structured to allow for flexibility to pursue particular lines of thinking which evolved from individual responses. The author/interviewer was particularly interested in interviewees' perceptions of the potentially transformative dimensions of CPD but refrained from asking leading questions in this regard. Rather, an awareness of this aspect of CPD was kept to the fore, mentally. The duration of the interviews varied, the shortest being a 41 minute Skype call to Canada and the longest being 1 hour and 26 minutes. The interviewees were generous with their time and thoughts and their honesty was apparent and appreciated. Some interesting contributions, not directly connected to this study, had to be set aside in the presentation of the findings but they were valuable in enriching the author's understanding and interpretation of individuals' responses.

For purposes of clarity, the teachers who completed the survey questionnaire are referred to as "respondents" and the stakeholders who were interviewed individually are referred to as "interviewees".

6.1 Interviewees' perceptions of motivation to be a teacher

The question, "What do you think motivates people to be teachers?" was asked of interviewees without any suggested responses being offered by the interviewer/author. Table 6.1 gives an overview of the responses.

Table 6.1: Stakeholders' perceptions of motivating factors in choosing teaching as a career

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Participant Codes[10]	**Teachers want to work with children or young people**	**Teachers want to make a difference**	**Teachers want to impart their love of learning or their love of a subject**	**Teachers want to repeat their own positive school experience or change it for young people if their own experience was negative**	**For some teachers, it is a vocation**	**Some teachers want to follow a family tradition**	**Some teachers want to enjoy status or respect or security**
TE1	√	√				√	
TE2				√			
TE3		√		√			
TE4	√	√					
DES1			√		√	√	
DES2	√		√	√			
DES3	√	√					
EC1	√						√
EC2	√		√				
SS1	√	√		√		√	
SS2			√	√			√
P1	√		√		√		
P2	√		√				
PPM1	√			√			
PPM2	√		√			√	
PPM3	√			√			
PM1	√	√	√	√			√
PM2	√						√
TU1	√						
TU2	√	√	√		√		
TU3	√		√				
PT1		√	√		√		
PT2	√	√				√	
TC1	√			√			
TC2	√				√		
Total 25	**20**	**9**	**11**	**9**	**5**	**5**	**4**
Nearest %	**80%**	**36%**	**44%**	**36%**	**20%**	**20%**	**16%**

[10] TE = Teacher Educator; DES = Department of Education and Skills; EC = Education Centre; SS = Support Service; P = Parent; PPM = Post-primary Management; PM = Primary Management; TU = Teacher Union; PT = Principal Teacher; TC = Teaching Council

Q.9 in the questionnaire asked the same question, "What do you think motivates people to be teachers?" and offered respondents (teachers) a list of motivating factors from which they could choose and rank order those that applied. It was interesting that the interviewees, unprompted, gave responses similar to the list of motivating factors which *were* given for Q.9 in the questionnaire. This may not be surprising as 21 of the 25 interviewees were qualified teachers and had worked as teachers for a number of years. Had they been presented with proposed responses, it is likely that they would have nominated a more extensive range of motives. Table 6.2, while not strictly comparing like with like, was compiled to illustrate the similarities and/or differences in motivation to teach between the teachers' responses in the questionnaires and the stakeholders' responses in the interviews.

Table 6.2: **Comparison between Questionnaire Q.9, teachers' responses, and stakeholder interviewees' responses, on their perceptions of what motivates people to teach**

Q.9	Questionnaire Responses	Questionnaire Teachers agreed "very important"	Questionnaire Teachers agreed "quite important"	Interviews Motivation to teach as identified by Irish stakeholders
9.1	To make a difference	50%	27%	36% (9)
9.2	to work with children/young people	48%	30%	80% (20)
9.3	to impart knowledge	45%	30%	44% (11)
9.4	to be a member of a high status profession	7%	15%	16% (4)
9.5	to enjoy professional freedom	10%	29%	-
9.6	to relive/perpetuate love of own schooling	18%	20%	36% (9)
9.7	to work with favourite subject(s)	34%	26%	44% (11)
9.8	to continue family teaching tradition	8%	10%	20% (5)
9.9	to have a secure, pensionable job	20%	22%	-
9.10	to have a good salary	11%	24%	-
9.11	to have short working hours	5%	11%	-
9.12	to have long holidays	5%	16%	-
9.13	to be your own boss in class	7%	18%	-
9.14	to work with like-minded colleagues	11%	29%	-
9.15	to have a qualification suited to travelling	5%	14%	-

The closest consensus between the findings from the questionnaires and those of the interviews in relation to motivation to teach was that 2O of the 25 Irish stakeholder interviewees (80%) believed that motivation to teach stemmed primarily from people's interest in working with young people, while 48% and 30% of questionnaire respondents ranked this as "very important" and "quite important" respectively. 11 Interviewees (44%) believed the motivation to teach emerged from the love of learning and the desire to impart knowledge while 45% and 30% of questionnaire respondents ranked this as "very

important" and "quite important" respectively. 9 Interviewees (36%) believed teachers were motivated by a wish to make a difference to the lives of young people while 50% and 27% of questionnaire respondents ranked this as "very important" and "quite important" respectively. 9 Interviewees (36%) believed teachers were motivated by their own school experience while 18% and 20% of teachers ranked this as "very important" and "quite important" respectively. A small number of interviewees thought people followed a family tradition of teaching and a small number also believed that people were attracted by the status of teaching, the respect enjoyed by teachers and the element of employment security attached to it.

Many Colleges and Universities probe the area of motivation to be a teacher when conducting surveys with new entrants to programmes of initial teacher education at undergraduate and postgraduate level. These entrance surveys capture motivating factors while aspiring teachers are in the first flush of enthusiasm and while the reasons for wanting to be teachers are fresh in their hearts and minds. Comments from the Irish teacher educators in the interviews, then, are particularly significant as they are ideally placed to ascertain the factors which motivate people to enter the teaching profession. One teacher educator summed it up saying "My view is that to a very large degree people are motivated by a feeling of being anxious to contribute and to do good and particularly to work with young people" (TE1, 1.03 - 1.14). This person elaborated further that this view was supported by recent studies on the attitudes of the entrants into a B.Ed. programme which showed over 90% of students "wishing to make a contribution, anxious to work with young people, a sense of helping to shape the future, these kinds of highly idealistic motivations" (TE1, 1.36 - 1.48). This person believed that this motivation was "so strong and so consistent it seems to me to be the reality, it doesn't seem to be artificially contrived" (TE1, 2.05 - 2.13).

The transformative possibilities of teaching clearly underpin the concept of motivation coming from a deep-seated wish to help people develop. Another teacher educator echoes this, believing that the motivation to teach is "probably based on something more deep-rooted than just their love of children...it was because of a desire within them to do something worthwhile in life, a deep motivation to make a difference perhaps in life…" (TE3, 2.00 - 2.22). This person went on to say that "I don't want to say that it's vocational or spiritual but it's somewhere in between those two." (TE3, 2.48 – 2.57). On being queried with regard to the reluctance to say that teachers' motivation is vocational or

spiritual, the interviewee responded that these ideas might appear to be "like the old notion of being called, getting the call to become a teacher, and it being something that came from outside of you. Whereas in actual fact, I think it's something that's deeply inside you and maybe that's what spiritual is". (TE3, 3.09 – 3.28). Another teacher educator also talked about the vocational aspect of teaching and the "call to training" which came out of the tradition of vocation. In that context, this person spoke of the marginalisation in recent years of the vocational or moral commitment in teaching resulting from the rise of expert knowledge (TE2, 6.06 – 6.24).

Given the high motives of the entrants to teacher education courses, two questions then arise. Firstly, how can these motives be translated into professional capabilities? Secondly, what role can CPD play in ensuring that such capabilities are sustained and developed over the lifetime of a teacher's career? Day (2004) acknowledges that most teachers will experience a period when they are less than enthusiastic about their work and suggests that

> If teachers' personal lives and identities closely interact with their professional lives in a symbiotic relationship, as the overwhelming research and anecdotal evidence suggests, and if it can be predicted that almost all teachers will face a time when the well of passion runs dry, then it would seem reasonable for schools to plan to meet this eventuality. Certainly it would be in the interests of 'standards', the well-being of staff, and, ultimately, of pupils. This implies a managerial and a leadership commitment to the continuing professional development of all staff (p.159).

6.2 Interviewees' perceptions of Initial Teacher Education

The interviewees were asked to consider initial teacher education. They were reminded by the interviewer/author that currently, in Ireland, the duration of ITE programmes is being extended. Programme content, and how it is facilitated, is being reconceptualised. The interviewees were asked to prioritise the changes in ITE they hoped to see.

The stakeholders being interviewed would have been aware of the current and imminent developments in ITE as the bodies they represented were party to the Teaching Council's deliberations and guidelines on ITE. However, in identifying areas for priority attention in ITE, the interviewees appeared to largely confine themselves to an agenda which was influenced by their own sector's interests, and this was understandable. A summary of the interviewees' responses on Initial Teacher Education is illustrated in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Interviewees' priorities for re-conceptualisation of ITE programmes

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Code	**Greater attention to ethics, attitudes values, beliefs**	**Greater attention to personal development and development of professional identity**	**Greater attention to reflective practice and research**	**Greater attention to teaching knowledge and teaching skills**	**Greater attention to particular areas, e.g., ICT / Literacy / Numeracy / Special Needs / Inclusion / Parents**	**Development of HEI-School partnership and meaningful school placement**	**Greater attention to role of teachers in relation to ITE**	**Greater attention to preparing interested parties for change in ITE**
TE1	√					√	√	√
TE2	√		√			√	√	√
TE3	√	√	√			√	√	√
TE4	√	√	√			√	√	√
DES1			√					
DES2			√	√				
DES3	√		√				√	
EC1			√				√	
EC2	√	√	√			√	√	√
SS1				√		√		
SS2	√	√		√	√	√		√
P1					√		√	
P2					√			
PPM1								
PPM2	√	√			√			
PPM3				√	√			
PM1		√				√	√	
PM2		√						
TU1							√	√
TU2				√				
TU3					√			
PT1				√				
PT2		√			√	√	√	√
TC 1		√	√					
TC 2		√		√	√	√	√	
Total 25	**8**	**10**	**9**	**7**	**8**	**10**	**12**	**8**
Nearest %	**32%**	**40%**	**36%**	**28%**	**32%**	**40%**	**48%**	**32%**

The areas of ITE most frequently mentioned by the interviewees are noted as follows: 12 of the 25 Irish interviewees (48%) prioritised changes in the role of the teaching profession in relation to ITE. 10 interviewees (40%) wanted to see the development of partnerships between teacher educators and schools for the purpose of meaningful student teacher placements. 10 interviewees (40%) identified personal development as needing greater attention in ITE programmes. 9 interviewees (36%) wished to see research and reflective practice being given priority in ITE. 8 interviewees (32%) wanted the content of ITE programmes to include current issues of concern in education, mainly Literacy and Numeracy, Special Education Needs, Inclusion, ICT and Parent-Teacher collaboration. 8 interviewees (32%) wanted greater attention to be paid to ethics, values, attitudes and beliefs. 8 interviewees (32%) had concerns about the preparation necessary for the successful introduction of changes to programmes of ITE. 7 interviewees (28%) had

particular views on the development of the science of teaching and of the skills necessary for teaching.

For the purpose of finding common ground between the responses to Questionnaire, Q11, and the stakeholder interviewees' responses in relation to ITE programmes, the following procedure was adopted. In the Questionnaire, Q11, respondents could leave areas of study blank, indicating that these areas had not been included in their ITE programme. Parallel to that, the areas of ITE prioritised by the interviewees were areas which they believed were not currently covered, or were not receiving sufficient attention. It is reasonable to assume that there is common ground between the areas of study in the Questionnaire, Q11, left blank by respondents and the areas of ITE prioritised for attention by the interviewees. On that basis, these common areas are shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Areas common to questionnaire and interview responses in relation to ITE

Questionnaire Q.11 – Area of Study in Initial Teacher Education	% of Respondents who left these areas blank	Interviews – Area of Study in Initial Teacher Education	% of Interviewees who prioritised these areas
Reflective Practice	27%	Reflective Practice and Reseach	9 (36%)
Research Methods	45%		
Action Research	54%		
Special Education	29%	ICT / Literacy & Numeracy / Special Needs / Inclusion / Parents	8 (32%)
Multiculturalism	47%		
Background Diversity	45%		
Parents	57%		

In the following paragraphs, interviewees' priorities with regard to re-conceptualised ITE programmes are analysed, taking a representative sample of their contributions. The first areas to be looked at include the role of the teaching profession in relation to ITE and the development of partnerships between teacher educators and schools. Both of these areas are inextricably linked. Many stakeholder interviewees believed that for many student teachers the school placement is not as meaningful as it might be because it can be an artificial experience rather than an immersion in the reality of everyday school life. One interviewee echoed the views of others in saying that:

> …the biggest challenge is the profession taking responsibility for itself as a profession and all that comes with that. What that includes is the whole experience in schools, the profession seeing it as part of its role to induct, to mentor, to coach new or student teachers into the profession. I think

> that is absolutely key. The profession's concept of what its role is and its responsibility towards its new members will be addressed through their work with student teachers… (DES3, 7.19 – 8.08).

This was further elaborated by another interviewee who stated that it is crucial that "the school sees itself as a nurturing source for the new entrants to the profession, where teachers feel a sense of enthusiasm and a sense of outreach, where they see, as I say, a vocational opportunity to work with beginning teachers…"(TE1 [1], 13.00 – 13.16). Another interviewee understood the reservations that some teachers might have in relation to a new way of working with student teachers because "It does mean extra work for schools…a certain disruption for the class teacher…a perception that while the student teacher is there there's going to be some kind of a negative impact on attainment" (SS1, 5.58 – 6.10). Similarly, another interviewee had experience of teachers saying that they wouldn't give their class to a student teacher for ten weeks for fear "they would ruin it" and this interviewee believes that "you have to allay those fears first for teachers" (TC2, 12.40 – 12.43). The benefits of having student teachers in the school were highlighted by the interviewee who thinks that "it's really good for the teaching profession…I think it's always really good for a teacher to see, usually, huge amounts of energy from student teachers coming in to the classroom. There's a lot of learning on both sides" (TU1, 5.06 – 5.23). Another interviewee wryly commented that "we're presuming that *that* school has something to offer the student teacher…something to offer by way of experience and by way of learning…" (PM1, 6.30 – 6.38). In a similar vein of thought, another interviewee spoke of the need to ensure "that there is a seamlessness of the quality assurance that we're looking for between the college and the schools" (TE3, 13.47 – 13.54).

In relation to school-HEI partnerships on ITE, a number of the interviewees' comments indicate the perception that this will be seen as a one-sided contribution, i.e., teachers giving time, energy and expertise while students and HEIs receive the benefits. An alternative view is proposed by the interviewee, also a teacher educator, who believes that

> there's a right way to do this…It's about honouring the voices of people in both contexts and settings and working together…until you get people around a table co-planning, co-preparing and co-teaching, you don't build the necessary confidence and trust for anything to happen" (TE4, 14.55 – 15.56).

In that context, another interviewee wondered "if the colleges in some way would be able to perhaps offer the school some form of development or professional up-skilling in some way, if there could be an incentive for schools to be involved…" (SS1, 6.28 – 6.42).

With regard to student teachers' personal development, a significant number of interviewees had concerns which are represented by the comment from an interviewee who represented Principal Teachers, saying that

> [it was] the personal development I would have found lacking in lots of situations…the ability of the young teacher to deal with parents, to deal with other professionals, in a situation where we have so many other professionals interacting with us in schools because of the special needs situation now, just to have that personal confidence to be able to deal in a professional manner with other adults, that was very much a factor of their own personal development. I think that is something we have to look at very seriously in the future (PT2 [1], 4.04 – 4.47).

This was further elaborated by the interviewee who also prioritised personal development in ITE for student teachers: "It's the way you interact with people…your communication skills, your ability to build relationships, to broker relationships in difficult circumstances, to get behind and understand the child and understand the appropriate responses…" (SS2, 6.17 – 6.42). Another interviewee extended the idea of personal development for students saying "what we want is to have the students well-adjusted, well-rounded individuals, balanced, mentally and physically fit…the whole emotional and spiritual development of the student is as important as the cognitive development of the student" (TE3, 10.48 – 11.08). An interviewee from the school management sector noted that there are "many examples of teachers who are fantastic teachers of children but who really struggle when they have to interface or to manage the interface of the school with the parent body and the wider community" (PM2, 6.43 – 7.02).

The issues of reflective practice and research were high on some interviewees' list of priorities for re-conceptualised programmes of ITE. The thoughts of one interviewee on reflection were concentrated in particular on the teaching-learning process, saying:

> …teaching practice, while it's trying to look at what I'm doing, what I'm trying to do, it's not giving the opportunity maybe for the kind of reflection that asks us to challenge ourselves on our core attitude to the student. Is the student really at the heart of our learning? And if the student is at the heart of our learning well how are we showing this and what do we really mean by it?... what am I bringing to that whole process when I sit into the classroom other than knowledge, skills, and all those things? (EC2, 7.45 – 8.42).

In relation to reflection, another interviewee would like to see student teachers being more "self-reflective, working in small groups… where they can discuss the issues, the strengths, and [be] constantly oriented towards improvement…a more mature approach where the

student teachers are fine honed to become their own best critics…"(TE1 [1], 12.02 – 12.28). Another interviewee wants student teachers to be critical thinkers at a wider level because of the challenging influences in society, "where there are public opinion formers and there's the media, we need people who have discretion…[people] who are able to think, trained to think…that is one thing that I would hope would be in our initial teacher education" (EC1, 8.36 – 8.54).

Research was highlighted by a number of interviewees. A representative comment was that "action research is a really, really important skill for teachers. If they are to evaluate, if they are to take responsibility for evaluating their own practice, then action research is a very essential tool" (TE3, 9.44 – 10.02). Research was linked with reflection in the comment that

> it is what the person does on a day-to-day basis in their classroom, what motivates them to work in a particular way, what encourages them to take a reflective, research-based approach, that is all coming back to what drives them as a person and what drives their work and that is their values and beliefs (DES3, 5.08 – 5.33).

Echoing this, another interviewee stated that "unless we take seriously looking at practice, talking about it, but engaging with the research around the nature of that practice and trying to extend it in various ways, all we get is some other version of ritual performance…" (TE2, 10.46 – 11.03).

There were a number of comments from interviewees which were related to ethics, values, attitudes and beliefs in ITE. Shades of these areas can be found in previous comments quoted, particularly in the area of reflection. Broadly speaking, a concern was voiced by the interviewee who believed that

> there is a basic challenge for ITE to regard itself as the formation for a phase of a profession and I'm not entirely convinced that that's what they're about. I think there is a lot of rhetoric around it but I don't know that, I don't feel that, they are actually in the business of formation (DES1, 6.37 – 6.57).

The formative aspect of ITE was expanded by another Department interviewee who said that

> if you look at all of the research, it is the issue of the apprenticeship of observation that is really key, tapping into teachers' values and beliefs and their attitudes…and the research would indicate that unless you actually organise a programme of teacher education that enables people to query their values and beliefs and reflect on them, but also gives them a vision for

> doing things in a different way… an awful lot of what might happen might be for naught (DES3, 4.18 – 5.10).

A number of interviewees prioritised the need for ITE to include areas of education which have come to the fore in recent years as requiring dedicated attention in schools, e.g., Literacy and Numeracy, Special Education Needs, Inclusion, ICT and Parent-Teacher collaboration. With regard to inclusion, a number of interviewees highlighted the changing nature of Irish society and the following comment is representative of other interviewees' views that "teachers coming into the teaching system now must be prepared for a multicultural, multi-ethnic society [and] must have a broad understanding of the diversity that ranges right across the community…" (PPM3, 3.09 – 3.23). Another interviewee believes that another key issue is to "ensure preparation for the future education of young people, because with the developments in IT in particular and the digital age and the digital economy, the whole approach to education, to teaching, to learning, to life, to society, to whatever, is changing so rapidly" (PPM2 [2], 2.25 – 2.50).

There were a number of comments on the science of teaching, an area of study which is integral to ITE but which some interviewees believe requires particular attention in re-conceptualised programmes. One interviewee says that greater attention needs to paid to the pedagogical element, that "having a flair for a subject does not equal the ability to be able to teach it…it's the quality of the teacher in the classroom that really ultimately transcends everything else and makes the real difference to the quality of learning…" (SS1, 4.18 – 4.40). A DES interviewee worries that

> we have perhaps undervalued, in the education of teachers, the science of teaching and the set of skills and knowledge around how it is best to encourage learning…We have teachers now who, in Ireland anyway, are facing far more diverse classroom populations than they would have in the past and they need to capture that science of teaching and really ground their own practice in it…and I mean teaching, learning, assessment and all that goes with that and with recognising the difficulties that different learners have and how to tailor learning for them... (DES2, 4.45 – 6.32).

The broad skills of teaching outlined in the foregoing comment are acknowledged by another interviewee who adds that "the education of the whole child and the idea of equipping teachers to have a mind-set where they're willing to make professional judgements about the children, and stand over them, I think that's something that from the outset, could be an issue in initial teacher education" (PT1, 5.34 – 5.52).

There were many comments on the system's stage of readiness for the successful introduction of changes to programmes of ITE and the following comments capture the essence of the views of interviewees. A parent representative commented that "there's always resistance to change and, sadly, I think the teachers themselves can be a little fearful of it too" (P1, 7.20 – 7.29). In relation to the increased demands that re-conceptualised ITE will make on schools in the future, an Education Centre Director stated very clearly that "the teaching profession is not ready for this and it's certainly not professing either that it's ready for it" (EC2, 9.34 – 9.40). With regard to the slow pace of change, another Education Centre Director was critical of HEIs claiming that "third level institutions would be known for how difficult [it is] and how slowly change takes place" (EC1, 18.09 – 18.16). A union representative's perception was that "there's a lot more work to be done, I think, in preparing a welcoming ground…we're kind of in a transition" (TU1, 5.35 – 5.52). A teacher educator revealed that "…trying to get the teachers to step up into a mentoring role and possibly even a modelling role and a coaching role [is difficult]…the system is not entirely ready for that judging by the feedback we're getting" (TE3, 13.55 – 14.12). In a small number of interviews, the issue of resources to facilitate changes in ITE, mainly to support professional development for teachers, was mentioned. A Principal teacher believed that "that is the role really of the Department, to provide the resources for that professional development, both for the Principal and for the co-operating teacher, so that they can maximise the benefit to the student teacher and to the school" (PT2 [2], 4.47 – 5.01).

The areas of ITE which were prioritised by the interviewees as being in need of re-conceptualisation have been given much coverage in this section of the chapter. A purposeful decision to do so was made because of the importance of ITE as the first stage on the continuum of teacher education. The interviews with the stakeholder representatives were valuable in identifying the areas which they perceive to be most important, namely: partnerships between schools and HEIs involved in ITE; the role of the class teacher in working with student teachers; personal development for student teachers; greater attention to research and reflective practice in programmes of ITE; the exploration of ethics, attitudes, values and beliefs and the inclusion of newly-developing areas of study for schools such as multiculturalism and inclusion. Collectively, the interviewees covered

the major issues also identified by the Teaching Council[11], albeit from their own sector's perspective in many instances. The question which one might ask is, if the stakeholders' identified priorities for ITE are issues for current student teachers, are they also issues for current practising teachers? With regard to newly developing areas of learning for teachers, CPD must do for serving teachers what a re-conceptualised programme of ITE seeks to do for student teachers. The CPD approaches may vary as teachers will not have been working in a vacuum in these areas. They will have developed their attitudes and progressed their knowledge and skills through life experiences, through teaching experiences and, to some extent, through on-going CPD opportunities. But these prioritised areas will need to be addressed in a systematic and purposeful way for all teachers.

6.3 Interviewees' beliefs regarding the public perception of teachers

Interviewees were asked how they thought the public viewed the teaching profession. This question could also be interpreted as being about the public perception of teachers. Suggestions or prompts with regard to answers were not offered by the interviewer. The interviewees' responses to that question are given in Table 6.5.

In Table 6.5, "Views of parents at local level", 16 of the 25 Irish stakeholder interviewees (64%) believe that parents at local level hold their children's teachers in high regard. 16 of the 25 interviewees commented on the "Views of parents and the public in general about teachers". Of these 16, 7 interviewees (28%) believed that people are positively disposed towards teachers, 4 interviewees (16%) believed that people are negative and 5 (20%) believed some are positive and some are negative. It can be seen that 11 interviewees (44%) referred to the positive results of surveys[12] in support of their belief that teachers are well-regarded by the public. 11 interviewees (44%) held the view that the media regularly portray a negative attitude to teachers and teaching in this country.

10 interviewees (40%) connected the negative attitude towards teachers displayed by the media, and by some members of the public, to the perception of the generous conditions of service enjoyed by teachers, i.e., good salaries, short working hours and long holidays.

[11] *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011a) and *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers (2011b)*

[12] Teaching Council (2009) (Appendix 7, p.25, Vol.2) and Whole-School Inspections by the Inspectorate at the Department of Education and Skills (www.education.ie)

A few comments were made with regard to heightened negativity in the public mind around the time of the teacher unions' annual conferences. There were also a few comments on the need to market the teaching profession and a number of interviewees hoped that the Teaching Council would be effective in this regard.

Table 6.5: Interviewees' beliefs regarding the public perception of teachers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Code	**Views of parents at local level**	**Views of parents and public in general**	**Results of Teaching Council and other surveys**	**Media coverage of the teaching profession**	**The influence of Teacher Unions on public perception**	**The impact of issues re teachers' pay etc. on public perception**	**Interviewees' belief in need to develop teachers' public profile**
TE1							
TE2		**positive**			**negative**		
TE3		**pos. & neg.**	**positive**	**negative**			
TE4	**positive**	**pos. & neg.**					**positive**
DES1		**pos. & neg.**					
DES2	**positive**		**positive**				
DES3	**positive**	**positive**	**positive**	**negative**			
EC1	**positive**	**positive**	**positive**	**negative**	**negative**		
EC2		**pos. & neg.**					
SS1	**positive**		**positive**	**negative**			**positive**
SS2		**positive**					
P1	**positive**	**negative**	**positive**	**negative**		**negative**	**positive**
P2	**positive**	**pos. & neg.**		**negative**		**negative**	
PPM1		**positive**		**negative**		**negative**	
PPM2	**positive**					**negative**	**positive**
PPM3	**positive**					**negative**	
PM1	**positive**	**positive**	**positive**			**negative**	
PM2		**positive**					
TU1	**positive**		**positive**	**negative**		**negative**	
TU2							
TU3	**positive**	**negative**	**positive**			**negative**	
PT1	**positive**	**negative**	**positive**	**negative**		**negative**	
PT2	**positive**						
TC 1	**positive**	**negative**	**positive**			**negative**	
TC 2	**positive**			**negative**			
Total 25	**16 positive**	**7 pos. 4 neg. 5 pos.& neg.**	**11 positive**	**10 negative**	**2 negative**	**10 negative**	**4 positive**
Nearest %	**64% positive**	**28% pos. 16% neg. 20% pos. & neg.**	**44% positive**	**40% negative**	**8% negative**	**40% negative**	**16% positive**

The Questionnaire, Q.12, aimed to elicit teachers' view of teaching as a profession from their own personal and professional experience and from their observation and knowledge of the teaching profession. The results of the Questionnaire, Q.12, have been presented in

Chapter 5 but responses relevant to this section on the public's view of the teaching profession are set out again here in Table 6.6 for ease of reference.

Table 6.6: Questionnaire, Q.12 responses on the public's view of the teaching Profession

Q.12	Statement in Questionnaire to teachers	Teachers' Response: Strongly Agree	Teachers ' Response: Agree	Combined Responses Strongly Agree + Agree
12.01	Teaching is a high-status profession	10%	51%	**61%**
12.03	The public perception is that anyone can teach	24%	48%	**72%**
12.05	Teachers enjoy a high level of public trust	14%	42%	**56%**
12.07	Teachers are undervalued by society	34%	42%	**76%**

As with the previous comparisons of findings between the Questionnaire and the Interviews, the tables from both sets of data do not map onto each other precisely. However, the trends that can be discerned are quite clear. In the Questionnaire findings, most respondents do not believe that teachers are highly valued in the public mind. In the interviews, the stakeholder representatives differentiate and separate the public into three distinct groups: the public at local level (parents) which holds positive views of teachers; the general public which has mixed views about teachers and the media which is almost always negative with regard to teachers. There was general agreement among the interviewees that the media negativity is usually directed at teachers' remuneration and conditions of service. It is worth noting that the Questionnaire findings do not correlate strongly with the findings of the Teaching Council Survey (2009), Appendix 7 (p.25, Vol.2), mentioned in Chapter 5, which showed the public ranking teachers 2nd to nurses with regard to satisfaction with their work and ranking teachers 3rd to doctors and nurses as the most trusted profession of twenty listed. A Medical Council survey in 2012, Appendix 8 (p.26, Vol.2), also mentioned previously, ranked teachers 2nd to doctors as the most trusted of the professions listed. Nurses were not included in the Medical Council survey.

It would be interesting to delve deeper into the interviewees' responses and offer further quotes in support of their views. However, in the interest of adhering to the focus of this study which is teachers' CPD, it has been decided not to do so. Suffice it to say that the interview findings show that teachers are highly thought of by their pupils'/students'

parents, on the whole. This should be a source of encouragement for teachers and should enhance their professional identity, the focus of the next section in this chapter.

6.4 Interviewees' perception of teachers' professional identity

Interviewees were asked how they thought teachers saw themselves as professionals, in other words, what constituted teachers' professional identity? A number of prompts were given, such as, do teachers recognise the complexity of their work, the body of professional knowledge they have and the number of critical decisions they make every day, or are they (teachers) on auto pilot once they enter the classroom? Interviewees were also asked if they thought teachers saw teachers as being on a par with other professionals such as doctors, dentists, lawyers. Table 6.7 illustrates the interviewees' responses.

Table 6.7: **Interviewees' perceptions regarding teachers' professional identity**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Code	**Teachers have a strong conception of teaching as a profession**	**Teachers believe they enjoy the same professional status as doctors, lawyers, dentists**	**Teachers experience isolation and can lack confidence and self-esteem**	**Teachers have a deep awareness of the complexity of their work**	**Teachers have a deep awareness of their knowledge & skills**	**Teachers see themselves as lifelong learners**	**Teachers display professional autonomy / professional responsibility**	**Interviewees hope the Teaching Council will highlight teachers' role**
TE1	no	no					no	yes
TE2							yes & no	
TE3	no	no	yes	no	no	yes & no	no	
TE4		no	yes		no		no	
DES1	no				no	yes & no		yes
DES2	no	no	yes	no	no			
DES3		no	yes	no			yes & no	
EC1	no	no		yes	yes	yes		
EC2	no	no	yes	no	unsure			
SS1					unsure	yes & no		
SS2			yes	no	no	yes		
P1	no		yes	no	no			
P2		no	yes				no	
PPM1	no	no		no	no	no		
PPM2	no		yes			no		yes
PPM3		no			no	yes & no		
PM1	no		yes			yes & no		
PM2	yes						yes	
TU1	no		yes		yes	yes & no		
TU2	yes & no	yes & no		no		no		
TU3		no	yes			no		
PT1	yes	yes				yes & no	no	yes
PT2	yes	yes				yes		
TC 1	no					no	no	yes
TC 2	yes			no		no	yes	
Total 25	4 (16%) y 12 (48%) n 1 (4%) y&n	2 (8%) y 11 (44%) n 1 (4%) y&n	12 (48%) y	1 (4%) y 9 (36%) n	2 (8%) y 8 (32%) n 2 (8%) unsure	3 (12%) y 6 (24%) n 7 (28%) y&n	2 (8%) y 6 (24%) n 2 (8%) y&n	5 (20%) y

17 of the 25 Irish stakeholder interviewees commented on teachers' conception of teaching as a profession. Of the 17, 4 interviewees (16%) said yes, teachers have a well-developed concept of teaching as a profession, 12 interviewees (48%) said no, they don't, and I interviewee (4%) said that some do and some don't. 14 of the 25 interviewees commented on teachers' perception of the status of teaching compared to other professions. Of these 14, 2 interviewees (8%) said yes, teachers regard themselves as enjoying the same status as members of perceived "higher" professions such as medicine and law, 11 interviewees (44%) said no, they don't and I interviewee (4%) said that some do and some don't.

12 interviewees (48%) believe that teachers feel isolated in their work and suffer from a lack of confidence and self-esteem in how their work is perceived or valued. 9 interviewees (36%) believe that teachers are not fully aware of the complexity of their work while 1 interviewee (4%) believes that they are. 8 interviewees (32%) believe that teachers are not fully aware of the level of their professional knowledge and skills, 2 interviewees (8%) believe they are and 2 (8%) are unsure whether they are or not. 16 interviewees (64%) commented on teachers' perception of themselves as lifelong learners of whom 3 interviewees (12%) believe that teachers see themselves as lifelong learners, 6 (24%) believe that they do not and 7 (28%) believe that some teachers do and some do not.

10 interviewees commented on teachers' appreciation of their professional autonomy and professional responsibility of whom 2 interviewees (8%) believe that teachers exhibit an appreciation of their professional autonomy and professional responsibility, 6 interviewees (24%) believe that they do not and 2 (8%) believe that some do and some do not.

Table 6.8 provides the necessary information for comparisons to be made between the interviewees' perceptions regarding teachers' professional identity illustrated in Table 6.7 and the teachers' own expression of their professional identity as identified in the questionnaire. In Table 6.8, the relevant statements from the Questionnaire, Q.12, have been re-ordered and statements on similar areas of interest are grouped together.

In Table 6.8, teachers' responses at 12.01, 12.03, 12.05, 12.07 and 12.08 indicate that they do not have very high self-esteem and that they do not believe the teaching profession is held in very high regard. This concurs with the perceptions of a significant number of the stakeholders who were interviewed.

Table 6.8: Questionnaire Q.12 - Teachers' agreement with statements on teaching as a profession

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Combined
12.01	Teaching is a high-status profession	10%	51%	**61%**
12.03	The public perception is that anyone can teach	24%	48%	**72%**
12.05	Teachers enjoy a high level of public trust	14%	42%	**56%**
12.07	Teachers are undervalued by society	34%	42%	**76%**
12.08	Teachers undervalue themselves as professionals	17%	41%	**58%**
12.10	Teachers deal with complex situations	90%	8%	**98%**
12.11	Teaching has a distinct body of professional knowledge	68%	26%	**94%**
12.15	Teachers as professionals form opinions, make assessments and arrive at decisions	60%	38%	**98%**
12.16	Teachers use professional judgement in the interests of their pupils/students	64%	35%	**99%**
12.17	The professional knowledge base in teaching is continually growing and developing	67%	27%	**94%**
12.18	Teachers regularly engage in professional development courses and programmes	36%	49%	**85%**
12.19	Teachers examine critically the aims and outcomes of their practices	20%	57%	**77%**
12.20	Teachers bring professional knowledge, skills and a positive attitude to their work	35%	60%	**95%**
12.21	Teachers have knowledge of the education system as a whole and of their part in it	24%	60%	**84%**
12.22	Teachers engage in thorough planning and preparation for their teaching	30%	57%	**87%**
12.23	Classroom engagement is based on positive teacher-student relationships	70%	29%	**99%**
12.24	A teacher's role includes accepting and promoting the values of justice and equality	72%	26%	**98%**
12.27	Preparation is based on knowledge of the students, the subject(s) and the appropriate teaching methodologies	64%	35%	**99%**
12.28	Teachers create a teaching and learning environment conducive to maximum student participation and fulfilment	43%	50%	**93%**
12.29	Teachers reflect with others on their teaching and consequent student learning, thus informing their future work	27%	51%	**78%**
12.25	The school culture within which teachers work greatly influences their professionalism	64%	30%	**94%**
12.26	Teachers are professionally constrained by prescriptive government/state demands[13]	35%	42%	**77%**
12.30	Teachers have limited opportunities to engage in conversations with colleagues and others about the nature of teaching and the complexities therein	35%	33%	**68%**

[13] Legalisation, Curriculum/Syllabi, School Inspections/Evaluations, State Student Assessments/Examinations

Contrary to the perceptions of many interviewees, teachers' responses at 12.10, 12.11, 12.15, 12.16 and 12.17 indicate their belief that they have a very high awareness of the complexity of teaching and the knowledge base that underpins teaching. A significant number of interviewees believe that many teachers are not conscious of being members of a profession. Teachers' responses to the statements from 12.18 – 12.24 and 12.27 – 12.29, indicate that they have a deep awareness of the professional practice of teaching.

A wide range of issues came to the fore in analysing the comments made by interviewees on teachers' professional identity. Firstly, a significant number of interviewees did not believe that teachers have a strong conception of teaching as a profession. Interviewees were anxious to state that teachers work hard, and are dedicated and committed to the young people they teach but this does not necessarily correspond with their view of teaching as a profession. One interviewee saw that

> People look up to them and respect their work. But sometimes they themselves haven't internalised that sense of being a professional body with professional standards, with professional responsibilities towards the new entrants etc. I think it's a process in transition and it's not a black and white issue (TE1 [1], 22.03 – 22.24).

The point was made that, unlike other professions, teachers will be heard arguing in the public domain that they are professionals, as if they have to *prove* that they are: "they want to see themselves as professionals but somehow that full confidence isn't there" (TU1, 8.27 – 8.32). The submission made on behalf of teachers to the Public Service Benchmarking Body (2007) was referred to as "a watershed in the way teachers were positioning themselves in society as a profession…that the work we do is absolutely extraordinarily important to society" (TU2, 13.41 – 13.57). At another level, the opinion was voiced that "The profession didn't seem to have the faith in itself to assert its professional credentials" when they accepted that an Arts subject had to be included in the B.Ed. in the 70s, in support of academic rigour (DES1, 10.55 – 11.01). This interviewee also contended that as the teaching profession doesn't feel it is necessary for teacher educators to have a doctoral level education to teach other teachers this is "an indication that the professionalisation of teaching is not there yet. It's not complete" (DES1, 11.15 – 11.21). Further evidence of teachers not behaving in a manner similar to other professions was offered by the interviewee who spoke of

> the vacuum that's existing about assessment at the moment as a result of the Junior Cycle reform. And if people aren't willing to make professional judgements about the performance of their students, and stand over them,

> it's very difficult then to regard them as professional in the same way as a doctor or another professional making a judgement… (PT1, 11.58 – 12.18).

Teachers' negativity about the Teaching Council was also cited as evidence that teachers lack an understanding of belonging to a self-regulating profession and that they "see teaching as a craft. They do it. They're good. They're a master craftsman. They're very good. Once they learn the technique, they have it" (TU2, 15.26 – 15.35). Another interviewee quoted a teacher who said that the Council was "totally irrelevant" but at the same time declared that if teachers did not hold a majority of seats on the Council it would be "a total disaster". The teacher in question did not see the contradiction in these viewpoints (TC1, 13.30 – 13.44). On a positive note, according to another interviewee, "the teachers I come in contact with are very proud professionals…it's a job like no other and they appreciate that" (PT2 [2], 9.11 – 9.37).

Nearly half of those interviewed think that teachers do not see themselves as having the same professional standing as doctors, lawyers, dentists. Some interviewees believe that this is related to money, while another spoke of life and death situations in the medical world being "at a totally different end of the continuum of importance" from learning Mathematics or English (TE3, 26.45 – 26.50). In the order of importance, one interviewee believed teachers would place themselves "a few rungs down on the professional ladder. On 1- 6 they probably see themselves as 4 and the doctor at 6" (PPM3, 18.06 – 18.07).

In speaking about teachers' professional identity, a number of interviewees expressed a strong belief that many teachers experience isolation and can lack confidence and self-esteem. In this regard, a range of issues came to the fore in the interviews. A number of comments related to teachers' negative reaction to the Teaching Council proposal that schools would be responsible for probating newly qualified teachers. One interviewee was concerned that "it begs the question as to what level of esteem our teachers have about their capacity to act as custodians of the profession" (TE3, 21.43 – 21.54). Teachers' lack of support for the proposed Teaching Council's Droichead[14] Programme (2013) for the probation of newly qualified teachers may also be linked to an observation that "morale is quite low at the moment. Teachers feel themselves very much put upon. They feel that maybe there isn't a level of appreciation of what they do" (PPM2 [2], 14.26 – 14.38). Another interviewee perceived that teachers lack self-confidence because of the isolation of their role. This person stated that when you are

[14] Droichead (Bridge) at www.teachingcouncil.ie ,

> working in a team…you're giving and getting feedback all the time…you're constantly being reinforced in what you're doing and you're improving just by working within a professional team. Teachers go into a classroom and the door is closed…." (P2 [2], 11.28 – 11.58).

A similar view was expressed by the interviewee who attended a talk for parents and found that the teacher, despite her knowledge and expertise, was very nervous and this was attributed to the fact that teachers "don't get the same sort of affirmation that perhaps people *do* get in other professions" (P1, 17.44 – 17.51). Another interviewee summarised a number of reasons for teachers' lack of self-esteem as follows: in a well-funded school, parents from the "higher" professions may "regard teachers as being less than fully professional"; in an area that's very challenging, teachers may feel that "at system level there is not an appreciation of the sort of work they do, the complexity of the work they do and the constraints on the work they do"; when Post-primary teachers who regard themselves as subject experts see their students' examination results "they despair because they know the effort they [teachers] have put in… but they see the system as judging them unfairly" (TU3, 17.44 – 18.28).

There is a perception by more than one third of the 25 Irish interviewees that teachers do not have a deep awareness of the complexity of their work. The thinking of a number of interviewees on this topic was captured in the following comment by the interviewee who said of teachers:

> I don't think they appreciate just how complex the process that they're involved in is or how, if they applied what we know about learning and teaching, they could make their jobs richer, sometimes easier but certainly more effective with a greater number of children. Their own professional esteem about themselves could only grow. If you compare us to the medical profession I think, there's no doubt that medical professionals have a great sense of self-confidence and authority in their knowledge of their specialist skills. That's how they gain their recognition, it is their level of understanding and ability to apply very, very advanced knowledge, it's what gains them their status… And I don't think the same happens for teachers in the same way (DES2, 9.01 – 10.13).

Teachers as a whole may have some awareness of the complexity of their work but, according to one interviewee, it may be articulated in language such as "it's been really busy" or, "I've this and that and the other thing to do" (TE3, 24.33 – 24.37). Further evidence was put forward by an interviewee who believed that "if you're willing to work alongside people who are unqualified, and have done, you're making a statement about what you think it requires to be a teacher" (DES1, 10.01 – 10.10).

Almost a third of interviewees believe that teachers show a lack of deep awareness of their knowledge and skills. One interviewee admitted that "in my own case it was about training and the experience of training and how your opinions were never really valued and you stuck with the system and you didn't put your head above the parapet" (EC2, 20.05 – 20.17). This person believes that this type of experience has carried through to "when it comes to my opinion and somebody asks for it, like a parent, very often it's rejected and you feel it's not valued" (EC2, 20.43 – 20.57). According to another interviewee "with teachers, what has been absent is that opportunity to come out, to sit in a group with other teachers at similar stages in their own teacher development, and have that conversation about where they're at with their teaching, how they're faring" (SS2, 17.51 – 18.07). On a positive note, another interviewee believes that there is an "awareness that *that* body of knowledge is there and that maybe gradually we are beginning to do things as they do in other professions" (EC1, 25.10 – 25.21).

Interviewees displayed mixed views in their perception of teachers being lifelong learners. One interviewee believed that the idea of being a lifelong learner is a growing concept and distinguished between

> people who have an insatiable appetite for learning…they'll just continue to learn…people who'll come out exhausted out of the College of Education saying 'I never want to see a book again'…[and] people who just really want to learn about how they can improve their own teaching… (TE3, 27.52 – 28.13).

With regard to teachers who engage in learning so that they can improve their own teaching, an interviewee said that "teachers have challenges in their jobs, irrespective of what kind of schools they're working in. They now know that there are support services and there are Education Centres that are available" and they seek assistance (EC1, 29.52 – 30.05). An interviewee who disagreed with the view that teachers see themselves as lifelong learners stated that "It's a bit harsh to say they don't, but at the same time I don't believe they see themselves perhaps as they should, maybe to the level they should [as lifelong learners]" (PPM1, 11.13 – 11.23).

With regard to the perception that teachers' display professional autonomy and/or professional responsibility, the following opinion was voiced by a Department representative. This person believes that Primary teachers "fail to grasp the opportunities of that professional autonomy…there's a curriculum that's out there that provided for a great deal of professional flexibility and yet, the margin to which that flexibility is used is quite limited" (DES2, 11.31 – 11.52). In the case of post-primary teachers, this interviewee

said “we have a huge challenge here…to actually grasp the nettle of taking unto the school and the teaching profession the job of learning and assessing students’ work” (DES2, 12.37 – 13.00). Yet another interviewee expressed the opinion that teachers “can be very much supported in schools by the whole move towards school development planning, school self-evaluation…[and] they have an awful lot more autonomy than they maybe realise they have or maybe want to have” (DES3, 13.38 – 14.02).

The lack of teachers’ appreciation of the role of the Teaching Council has been equated by some interviewees to teachers’ lack of understanding of being members of a profession. An interviewee’s comment in this regard states that “the Teaching Council has been a huge important landmark development for the teaching profession in Ireland. Its potential is enormous but sometimes I don’t think that teachers fully realise that” (TE1, 22.47 – 23.00).

A number of Interviewees also believe that the teaching profession needs to be marketed in the public arena and they are hopeful that the Teaching Council will do this.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the stakeholder interviewees have contributed a rich and varied range of perceptions on teachers and the teaching profession. It is illuminating, in the context of considering a framework for teachers’ CPD, to capture the stakeholders’ opinions on the teaching profession. While individuals had specific sectoral viewpoints, there was a significant degree of agreement on key issues regarding teachers. The next chapter will continue with the presentation and analysis of the stakeholders’ interviews, concentrating on their perceptions of: whether teachers see themselves as lifelong learners and how this is demonstrated by their engagement in professional learning activities; the State’s provision for teachers’ CPD from the mid-1990s to date; the development of a collaborative culture among teachers in Irish schools and the impact on schools of good CPD.

Chapter 7

Stakeholder Interview Findings (Part 2): Presentation and Analysis

Introduction

Chapter 7 continues the work begun in Chapter 6, presenting and analysing the results of the interviews which were conducted with the key stakeholders in Irish education, and a small number from other jurisdictions. The analysis of the findings considered in this chapter is confined to the 25 interviewees who represented stakeholders in the Irish education system. Extracts from the 3 international interviews are included at a later stage in the study, i.e., Chapter 10, (10.2.4, pp.230-232).

In Chapter 6 the key findings from the first four themes of the interviews were presented, these being the interviewees' perceptions of: teachers' motivation to become a teacher; programmes of initial teacher education; the public perception of teaching/teachers and teachers' professional identity. Chapter 7 presents and analyses the interviewees' observations on the following four themes: 7.1 teachers as lifelong learners and their engagement in professional learning activities; 7.2 the State's provision for teachers' CPD from the mid-90s to date; 7.3 the development of a collaborative culture among teachers in Irish schools; 7.4 the impact on schools of good CPD.

In each of the four themes, the range of answers resulted in no one area within a theme being the subject of common comment from a majority of interviewees and this led to the findings being somewhat disparate. This in itself is significant as it indicates that, on CPD issues, the interviewees were predisposed to think and to talk from their own stakeholder's sectoral point of view. It became apparent from the emergent diversity in the responses that a rich debate on CPD had not yet taken place at national level. Such a debate would arguably have identified some deeper CPD themes that transcend sectoral considerations. Among such deeper themes is the transformative potential of CPD. As in Chapter 6, the author/interviewer did not ask specific questions on the transformative dimension of CPD but was on the alert for comments which referred to transformation. The word "transformation" was not used in any responses but there were intimations of it in some interviewees' comments on collaboration and on the benefits of CPD. This will be elaborated on towards the end of the chapter.

Due to the extensive range and diversity of responses, it was not possible to collate the interview findings for this chapter into tables, as was done in Chapter 6. A narrative form was chosen as a more illuminating way of presenting the findings. While the largely individual responses may appear to be a collection of random, lone statements, together they form an inclusive totality which gives a comprehensive overview of the stakeholder interviewees' perceptions, from their own perspectives, of teachers as learners, their engagement in CPD, the development of collaborative processes among teachers and the impact of teachers' CPD within schools. It is likely that if these responses had been made at focus group meeting with stakeholders, rather than in one-to-one interviews, there would have been much discussion with varying levels of disparity and congruence as happened when similar areas of questioning were pursued in the focus group interviews with teachers.

7.1 Stakeholder Interviewees' observations on teachers as lifelong learners

Interviewees were asked if they thought that teachers regarded themselves as lifelong learners and to what extent this was demonstrated by their engagement in professional learning activities. The interviewer/author suggested that the latter could include elective CPD opportunities, postgraduate studies, subject associations, professional networks or support groups and reading professional material. The interview questions could have been more specific in relation to the transformative dimensions of CPD but this would have been tantamount to asking leading questions and guiding interviewees towards preconceived rather than spontaneous responses.

In presenting the findings on the interviewees' perceptions of teachers as lifelong learners, the range of areas covered by the interviewees includes their comments on: (a) the shift from the historical "trained for life" attitude of teachers to their current interest in CPD; (b) teachers as reflective practitioners, readers of professional material and members of professional bodies; (c) teachers' awareness, or lack thereof, of themselves as lifelong learners and (d) the role of the Teaching Council in influencing teachers' engagement in CPD.

With regard to (a) teachers' interest in CPD, there was general acknowledgement among the stakeholder interviewees that there has been quite a change for the better in this regard, particularly over the past ten to fifteen years. The historical aspect of this is noted by the interviewee who says that "at one time it was the established pattern and

practice...that you were trained as a teacher and you carried on for 40 odd years as a teacher" (TE1 [1], 24.40 – 24.54). This interviewee thinks that now "Irish teachers deserve a lot of credit for the range of their engagement in in-service training and continuing professional development in all its forms" (TE1 [1], 25.35 – 25.45). The words "trained as a teacher" are significant as teaching was seen as a technical profession in the past, and is still seen as such in some quarters, e.g., the categorisation of teaching in the Irish Census Form. Teachers' growing interest in CPD is also reflected in the comment that "in conversations with Directors of Education Centres the numbers of people applying for their courses, despite the economic downturn, is on the up and up" (PM1, 9.57 – 10.07). Agreeing with TEI, DES1 believes that now "You very rarely will come across a teacher who thinks they are the finished product at 21" (DES1, 15.14 - 15.18). This is supported by a comment on postgraduate studies where an interviewee noted that the average age of those engaged in a Masters programme is now in the mid-20s where in the past this would normally have been undertaken during the mid-career years. This interviewee was satisfied that "that's some kind of recognition that professional learning is not something that you postpone any more" (TE2, 31.09 - 31.16).

Moving then to (b), teachers as reflective practitioners, readers of professional material and members of professional bodies, the following is a representative selection of interviewees' comments on these matters. The issue of teachers being reflective practitioners emerged in comments from five interviewees, each referring to different situations. DES1 stated that "teachers need to be reflective…particularly because of the level of interaction with other people and the extent to which they impact directly and long term on other people, [they] need to be very aware of what they're doing and how they're doing it" (DES1, 17.53 - 18.11). One teacher educator was rather sceptical about teachers being reflective practitioners and based this on visits to schools when supervising student teachers on Teaching Practice. In some schools, this interviewee met teachers who passed comments like "I see you're doing something now [in College]", quickly followed by "that will never work because…" (TE4, 27.55 -28.02). TE4 also met teachers who commented [about new initiatives] "now I know there's probably a theory behind this but I don't know it, nor do I want to know it…" (TE4, 28.15 - 28.22). TE4 sees this as an indication that these teachers "are aware of the theory-practice divide themselves and they have, as it were, signed up to be practitioners and not to look back there" [return to theory from initial teacher education days] (TE4, 28.23 - 28.34). It is evident that the word "practitioner" is used here in a limited sense, i.e., where teachers see themselves in the role of practitioner

when they engage in the activity of teaching as practised in the classroom without reference to the theoretical basis for their work.

There was divided opinion between the 4 interviewees who commented on teachers being readers of professional material, with two believing that they are and two quite adamant that they are not, the exceptions being teachers who are conducting literature reviews as part of their postgraduate studies. Both interviewees who were negative in this regard gave the same example to prove their point, saying that a broad spectrum of teachers with whom they had worked in a professional capacity had not read the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy issued by the Department of Education and Skills in 2011. Both were quite shocked to discover this. In that context, EC2 was quite forthright in challenging teachers, saying "if you don't read that report and if you're not responding to research in any way, how do you know what's evolving, what's coming on stream and how can you meet the challenges?" (EC2, 24.41 - 24.58).

There was some overlap between the 6 interviewees who offered opinions on Subject Associations and the 5 who spoke of Learning Networks/Communities and there were interesting comments on both. EC1 stated that "it would be a minority of teachers who engage in Teacher Professional Networks…[which] at Post-primary have grown out of the Subject Associations…one could argue that it is an elite that are involved in those…" (EC1, 31.37 – 31.56). Another interviewee who was familiar with Subject Associations said that "they do great work, and I'm not taking that from them…I'm not sure that everybody engages with them…they don't seem to gather the whole flock" (P1, 18.45 - 19.17). TU3's view of Subject Associations concurs with that of P1 who thinks that "Subject Associations, with very few exceptions, don't announce their presence as much as they should and sometimes…they can be a bit precious about what they perceive as being the important parts of the subject" (TU3, 20.33-20.52). Another interviewee believes that **"**the level of support for the Subject Associations [among teachers] wouldn't be huge" (PPM2, 22.23 - 22.30).

EC1 indicates that the scenario is different in relation to Principals' Support Groups and Principals' Networks, saying that "in Primary you have a majority of Principals who are engaging at that level but in the profession as a whole that wouldn't be the case" (EC1, 32.17 - 32.25). From personal experience, PT2 also agrees that Principals' Support Groups are very valuable, saying that "Probably the most important professional development when I became Principal was becoming part of a support group" (PT2, 13.30 - 13.38).

Looking then at (c) teachers' awareness, or lack of awareness, of themselves as lifelong learners, interviewees were not convinced that teachers see themselves as lifelong learners in their professional role, despite the fact that there is much professional learning taking place. While teachers' engagement in professional practices may have changed, SS1 believes that teachers are not fully aware of the multifaceted nature of professional development and says that

> Even the term Lifelong Learners is not something I hear a lot of teachers using. I think a lot of them are lifelong learners and they're behaving as lifelong learners, but I'm not sure they even consider themselves to be that, simply because they may not be doing a degree or they may not be doing a formal form of CPD (SS1, 12.29 - 12.48).

In a similar train of thought, in relation to teachers' perception of themselves as lifelong learners, TC1 believes that

> …if you ask them [teachers] the open question "are you a lifelong learner?", [the answer will be] "No I'm not". But actually if you talk them through their daily experience and their week in, week out experience in schools, you quickly find out they do *do* learning but it's almost subconscious or instinctive (TC1, 26.55 - 27.08).

Finally, (d), the role of the Teaching Council in influencing teachers' engagement in CPD was highlighted by three interviewees, one of whom noted that there is "pressure systemically from this body here [the Teaching Council]…if I have to produce my professional portfolio and keep it up to date, and I have to be re-accredited every so often, then that's going to promote more engagement" (TE2, 31.22 - 31.39). As well as formulating CPD policy, it is expected that the Teaching Council will be in a position to address teachers' identified CPD needs. The Council may also be in a position to influence solutions to some of the problems in relation to structural difficulties experienced by teachers wishing to access elective CPD, as enunciated by the interviewee who thinks that teachers

> do not have time or energy, or sufficient energy, to do that [CPD] within the school working year…the structure lends itself to what I would call a de-professionalisation of the profession…if there were a longer year with the same amount of teaching then it would create the spaces for the kind of CPD we're talking about, and the self-reflection we're talking about, and the reading up and so on, and the exchange and the interchange (PPM1, 12.38 - 13.28).

Overall, the main finding was that interviewees believe that the majority of teachers regard themselves as lifelong learners and their engagement in professional activities would indicate, at least on the face of it, that they are learning throughout their careers. However, the learning activities in which they engage are usually undertaken for pragmatic reasons, i.e., to address a pressing situation in the classroom or to up-skill on new developments in curricula or syllabi. This indicates a widespread tendency among teachers to be lifelong learners in a functional more than in a transformative or qualitatively richer sense.

According to interviewees, teachers' engagement in CPD has moved a long way from the historical base of believing themselves to be fully fledged on exiting their "training" to the current "appetite" for professional learning. While acknowledging teachers' engagement in CPD, it is recognised that the level of engagement varies. It is evident from the interviews that some teachers are seen to engage continuously in professional learning while other teachers engage on a need-to-know basis, to address their immediate teaching/learning situation. The interviewees' opinions are that teachers, by and large, are not seen to be reflective practitioners or avid readers of professional material and neither are Subject Associations perceived to be largely influential in teachers' professional development. Teachers are not perceived by interviewees to recognise that lifelong learning is central to their professional role.

7.2 Interviewees' observations on the State's provision for teachers' CPD since the mid-90s

Interviewees were asked to comment on the State's provision of CPD for teachers from the mid-90s to date. The findings indicate the broad spectrum of teachers' CPD activities of which the interviewees were aware. In presenting the findings, the range of areas covered by the interviewees includes their comments on: (a) the improvement in the provision for CPD from the early 90s onwards; (b) the purpose, form and impact of the State provision for CPD, and (c) interviewees' concerns in relation to the State provision for CPD. It is intended that the following comments will give a reasonably full account of the stakeholder interview findings on CPD. This account then will be interrogated with a view to establishing the extent to which CPD is seen by the interviewees as having the potential for transformation in teaching and learning in schools. Some comments are explicit on this, others are implicit. The composite information will hopefully be of value in drawing conclusions and making suggestions on future policy for teachers' CPD.

Firstly, in relation to (a) the improvement in the provision for CPD from the early 1990s onwards, there was general agreement that provision for teachers' CPD had come from a low base prior to the 90s to being a recognised entity in the education system over the past 10 -15 years. One interviewee summed it up well, saying

> there was a historic change…[in the 1970s] the level of CPD that was available in a systematic way to teachers was very limited...in terms of on-going, systematic CPD as part of professional life, it was very difficult to source it...if you look at the last 20 years, the amount of money and effort that went into the provision of more comprehensive CPD for the school system marks a very dramatic change in the landscape of the school system (DES2, 19.16 – 20.19).

One interviewee recalled the inadequacy of some of the CPD provision prior to the 90s, saying that

> …the introduction of the Junior Cycle in 1989 and the 2 year preparatory period…it was a wonderful opportunity that was lost because teachers were herded into rooms, you did a half day or a day [CPD] and that was it…it had no impact whatsoever… We simply took new content on board, we changed the name from Inter Cert to Junior Cert and we got on with what we'd been doing for the previous 20 years or so (PPM2, 24.15 – 24.58).

It is interesting to note that the current Junior Cycle reform is also accompanied by a programme of CPD which is expected to address the needs of teachers in a far more meaningful way that the CPD offered in the 80s. However, teachers are currently refusing to engage in this CPD largely because of their objection to a requirement that teachers will assess their own students' work for part of the Junior Cycle Student Award.

From this we see that the provision of curriculum content, without adequate discussion on the content, will not change the hearts and minds of teachers. The development of pedagogical content knowledge, exploration of new teaching and learning methodologies, shared learning by teachers, on-going support for teachers and attention to other relevant matters are essential in bringing about change.

In relation to (b), the nature of the State provision for CPD, its purpose, form and impact, the interviewees were familiar with the introduction of new national initiatives from the early 90s onwards. These were usually accompanied by the establishment of support services to assist teachers. The support service teams were established at national level with personnel being deployed regionally to work through the Education Centres serving schools locally, e.g., the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) and the School Development Planning Service (SDPS) commenced their work in 1999. One interviewee

welcomed the national provision for CPD as "…a very exciting piece…we had for the first time in our lives a cohort of support teams...That was really fantastic" (TU1, 12.05 – 12.15).

In the case of the PCSP, the initial support was in the form of seminars and one interviewee commented that "they were always well-conceptualised, in my own experience, always carefully and thoughtfully delivered, and I think generally speaking, very well received by teachers" (TE4, 32.24 – 32.39). One might regard the use of the word "delivered" as being indicative of the transmission model of CPD which was based on an information-based approach. The terminology is reflective of the common parlance around CPD rather than a lack of understanding of the facilitation of CPD by this interviewee. Following the early years of the PCSP initiative, from 2002 onwards the programme incorporated an advisory service to provide in-school support for the subjects which had been introduced through whole-school seminars. The advisory role was facilitated by Cuiditheoirí (support people) who visited and worked with teachers in schools at the school's invitation. This was seen by an interviewee as "a largely culture change here whereby peers could go in and work with peers…it seemed to me…to work remarkably well…tremendous work, as good as was happening anywhere in the world" (TE1 [2], 2.30 – 2.55).

It was also appreciated that CPD was facilitated by practising teachers who were expected to have particular expertise in the subject/area and to be *au fait* with schools' situations. An interviewee who commented on this said that "one of the great strengths in CPD has been that most of the CPD has been led and designed by serving teachers…It's practitioners enriching practitioners and of course enriching themselves as they do it" (DES2, 24.32 – 24.53). This comment is based on the perception that when CPD facilitators are currently or recently practising teachers they have greater credibility and enjoy greater respect from teachers engaging with them in CPD activities. This in turn is based on the assumption that the facilitator was an excellent teacher in the classroom and is now in a position to speak with authority and confidence about good practice in teaching. This is something which will be discussed later in the context of making suggestions on creating a framework for teachers' CPD.

With regard to the impact of State provision for CPD through the support services, it was evident that change was happening in schools. A number of interviewees made comments on this, represented by the observation that CPD

> changed language and that's a sign of cultural change as far as I'm concerned. People were actually beginning to speak the language of a new curriculum.

> They were beginning to use professional development. They were beginning to talk about planning days...they were gearing up to have their own planning days or even network with other clusters within the area…there was a mammoth cultural shift during that particular time (TE3, 31.13 – 32.10).

Another change that was observed was that of teachers querying the details of courses advertised in Education Centres to ensure they met their particular needs before they signed on for them, where formerly they would have accepted a course title at face value. It was recognised that "there was a sophistication developed among teachers during that period [1990s] whereas 10-15 years ago, because there hadn't been very much [CPD], teacher didn't discriminate, didn't differentiate" (EC1, 37.08 – 37.24). This is evidence of some transformation in teachers' reflection on their practice and identification of areas in which they wish to improve.

The importance of the support services was noted by the interviewee who said that "…those services have been very beneficial in different ways because they targeted specific needs at specific points during that particular timeframe..." (SS2, 25.08 – 25.18). These needs could be interpreted as being functional or utilitarian. However, a more significant impact was the encouragement of a collaborative staff culture in schools and this was recognised in the comment that "it *did* get teachers talking, it *did* get teachers collaborating, it *did* get teachers working in teams, it *did* get teachers to see other good practitioners…" (PM1, 11.25 – 11.42). This change in culture is also transformational for the staff involved. In further questioning the development of a collaborative culture among Irish teachers, the responses indicate that collaboration is strongest in the areas of school and classroom planning. There is little evidence that teachers are discussing their practice in sustained critical ways and this will be further elaborated upon in 7.3 in this chapter.

Coming then to (c), interviewees' concerns in relation to the State provision for CPD, a number of important issues were raised by interviewees. One such issue related to State funding where an interviewee believed that

> The budget for CPD, for mandated CPD, provided by the DES, has always been very poor, and now, because of the exigencies of the time, is a great deal poorer. And in a sense I think the Department operate very efficiently. Certainly there's a miracle of loaves and fishes that transacts every year but there's less fish and less bread going around [now] (TU3, 26.40 – 27.07).

Due to the nature of the CPD Support Services, some interviewees were concerned that State-funded CPD may be associated solely with the introduction of new initiatives rather

than seeing it as a process of capacity-building or quality enhancement for teachers. There is also concern that the Department's approach to offering CPD support "creates the assumption that once you've had the couple of days of whatever it might be, that that's fine now until there is a significant curricular change again, and it allows rust to form on the surface pretty quickly" (TU3, 28.03 – 28.16). This comment does not seem to anticipate the transformative potential of good CPD whereby there is a true change of heart and mind, leading to a change which becomes part of one's way of being as a teacher with little opportunity for the "rust to form".

An interviewee from the teacher education sector was concerned that teacher educators had not been actively involved in the nationally-established CPD Support Services. This interviewee declared that "we did not over the last 10-15 years or more do ourselves any favours by the way we have largely separated professional development from schools, colleges, and so on…we created two parallel systems" (TE2, 32.17 – 32.40). This comment indicates dissatisfaction with the Department's system of setting up CPD support services without reference to, or inclusion of, the Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) which were engaged in initial teacher education and in postgraduate programmes in teacher education. However, the importance of the Education Centres in facilitating CPD for teachers, be it nationally driven or locally initiated, was recognised by many interviewees and the expansion of the number of full-time centres in the late 90s was welcomed.

There were some negative comments from a parent's perspective about the provision for teachers' CPD, for example

> one thing you'd hear parents saying is "they're on another…in-service day and the kids weren't taught again today". So that's a negative that I think doesn't help...it wasn't that the teachers were being enhanced so that they would provide a better service to their child, it was that their child was left sitting in a room deprived of a teacher (P1, 21.34 – 22.05).

It is unlikely that parents reflect at a deep level on the purpose of CPD for teachers. Therefore, where CPD provision interferes with the integrity of the school year and/or causes disruption to family/child-minding arrangements, its potential for improving the teaching and learning situation in the school is not appreciated, as is reflected in the comment above.

The issue of building CPD capacity in the system received some attention from interviewees. During the early years of the 2000s, The Education Centres, at the behest of the Department of Education and Skills, selected and trained personnel who would form a

critical mass of CPD facilitators and would be available to schools, locally and regionally, as CPD needs were identified and responded to. However, one interviewee believed this intention failed to become a reality and commented that "[we had] no real sustainable mechanism, no register for these people initially, no progression routes for them to develop more, no follow-on cohort, you had to go back to the well again [when a new need arose] and start looking all over again" (EC2, 35.47 – 36.10). Another interviewee, commenting on the national Support Services, echoed the foregoing concern and asserted that "the emphasis was on providing a service. Yes, that service was intended to build capacity in the system. But we didn't make enough of effort, in my view, to document what was the impact of that and what were the processes that worked" (TE2, 32.52 – 33.14). The use of the words "training", "trainer" and "service", the language used in relation to "building capacity", does not lend itself to thoughts of transformation in the fullness of its meaning. They imply a mechanistic approach devoid of scope for creativity and flexibility but, as with the previous comment on CPD being "delivered", it was the parlance of the time. The preferred language now speaks of teacher education and transformation.

The potential for teachers' CPD to effect change in the education system was the subject of some interviewees' comments. One interviewee expressed the opinion that

> If you are trying to change the system you really should change it from within and there was that dilemma back in the 90s in planning for the Primary Curriculum introduction. What do you do? Do you make sure that everybody knows what the change is, what the changes are, or do you actually just try and support them at school level? It was a very pragmatic decision really to provide the same to everybody but there was an attempt to contextualise it for the individual school – trying to run the two paradigms together (DES3, 17.37 – 18.24).

In that context, the CPD seminars were labelled by some critics as being a "one-size-fits-all" approach rather than CPD which was customised to the individual or school needs. One interviewee explained the rationale for seminars saying that they "provided a mechanism for the dissemination of information…to give everybody an overview of that particular subject area, to give them a sample experience of the kinds of activities or strategies or methodologies that were actually advocated..." (TE3, 36.08 – 36.41). Another interviewee admitted quite honestly to being "one of those teachers I suppose who got very excited, very energised by those experiences, only to find on return to school reality kicked in and very often you didn't have time to really reflect on it and really put it into practice" (SS1, 15.01 – 15.15). On the other hand, another interviewee believed that a "number of schools

went back and did something about it. And that *did* make a difference" (EC1, 38.52 – 38.58). This last interviewee also believes that "we're now in a situation where we don't need the one-size-fits-all because, I think, we're at a higher level and we can do what might be done in other countries which is to establish what are the needs and then to address those needs" (EC1, 38.59 – 39.14). In addressing the needs, another interviewee would be "more interested in the other opportunities and ways in which CPD could be effected...groups of teachers together discussing, talking, arguing about specific issues in the classroom or whatever" (DES1, 22.42 – 22.56). CPD as a collaborative process of engagement in professional dialogue and discussion was also advocated by an interviewee who declared that "if I had absolute authority, I would take the first hour of every day [CPD] and the last hour of every day [CPD] and I would put it all into planning and reflection" (TE4, 33.42 – 35.41).

Despite the fragmented nature of the responses, as explained in the introduction to this chapter, there was a certain overall commonality in the interviewees' perspective on the purpose of CPD; it was largely perceived to be utilitarian in addressing the needs of the education system rather being transformative in addressing teachers' approach to the education of young people in school. On the other hand, the CPD experiences may have been the catalyst for real and meaningful change in the classroom. The key question here is, how can one ensure that CPD is truly transformative? Again, this issue will be explored further at a later stage in this thesis.

7.3 Interviewees' observations on the development of a collaborative culture among teachers in Irish schools

Interviewees were asked to what extent they thought that staff collaboration had been developed and was embedded in Irish schools. A supplementary area of questioning in the interviews related to the contribution of the Croke Park (2010) hours[15] to collaboration in schools. This section will present and analyse the interview findings on collaboration as follows: (a) interviewees' positive views on collaboration, with particular reference to initiatives that have contributed to its development; (b) interviewees' less positive views on the level of development of staff collaboration, with reasons for those views and (c) interviewees' perception on the Croke Park hours in relation to staff collaboration.

[15] The Croke Park Hours are part of an Industrial Relations agreement between the Teacher Unions and the Government which require teachers to spend extra non-teaching hours in school (36 hours at Primary and 33 at Post-primary per annum) during which time whole-staff work is undertaken.

In relation to (a), interviewees' positive views on collaboration, a number of initiatives were cited as having a positive influence on the development of teachers working collaboratively in schools. These included Misneach (Support Programme for Newly Appointed Principals), LDS (Leadership Development for Schools), TL21 Project (Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century), PCSP (Primary Curriculum Support Programme), DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), Aistear (Early Years Curriculum), SDPI (School Development Planning Initiative) and TPNs (Teacher Professional Networks). The following representative comments from interviewees on such initiatives serve two purposes. Firstly, they illustrate how the interviewees perceived that the aforementioned initiatives contributed to the development of staff collaboration and secondly, in so doing, they highlight some aspects of collaboration.

Leadership was cited by a number of interviewees as being of particular importance in the development of a collaborative culture in schools. It was recognised that "if you're trying to be the school leader, it's quite a different skills set to bring all of these staff members together and to challenge them…the Misneach [Leadership] programmes are really good…but we need to see more of them" (TU1, 16.13 – 16.37). Similarly, an interviewee praised the LDS programme for developing "more democratic leadership in organising regimes in schools" (TE4, 35.09 – 35.20).

The partnership element of collaboration was explained with reference to the TL21 Project where

> There was a partnership with the schools where teachers came together, worked together in clusters, came in to workshops and a lot of it [work] is shifting onto the schools now and the schools themselves [are] encouraged to work with their peers, observe each other, support each other, plan together, do homework between sessions, and so on (TE1 [2], 5.09 – 5.27).

A number of interviewees acknowledged that inter-school collaboration through clustering was becoming a feature of teachers' practice. One interviewee attributed the initiation of school clustering at primary level to the PCSP seminars, begun in the late 90s, at which "the suggestion was made for schools to cluster for their planning days...people were given the time…time to organise those meetings, and the time to have the conversations and the time to have the discussion and the dialogue" (TE3, 38.54 – 39.21). The result of those early days of clustering was identified by an interviewee who believes that "Particularly in rural Ireland I think we would have far more clusters of schools and networks of schools than we had a few decades ago" (EC1, 44.00 – 44.10). Another interviewee points to the

value of clustering, as demonstrated by the NCCA in its work, saying that "the networks that they have established are important and the clustering within those networks clearly is important" (TU3, 31.29 – 31.35).

The role of school planning as a vehicle for promoting and facilitating collaboration was viewed positively in the comment that "for many teachers it was probably the first occasion where they were sitting together [planning]…It has been very good and very positive where it's been well structured in schools" (TC2, 28.40 – 28.59). Another interviewee believes that "DEIS schools in particular have had their plans and I think collaboration happens there kind of automatically" (EC1, 42.05 – 42.11). This same interviewee also speaks about the contribution of Aistear (Early Years Curriculum) where "there has been an enormous amount of energy among teachers who are participating…[who] go to some in-service events and then return to their schools…get together and collaborate, and school plans emerge from that" (EC1, 43.18 – 43.48).

One interviewee saw team teaching as a vehicle for collaboration and says that "we have wonderful examples of tremendous work being done by teams of teachers in schools…it tends to be teachers who are taking up, or when a school takes up, a theme or a project that the full dynamic of these types of approaches come into fruition" (PM2, 27.35 – 28.05). Another interviewee sees the development of staff collaboration as being "quite well embedded" but is concerned that working collaboratively is more difficult for smaller schools (PM1, 13.06 – 13.07). The move towards collaboration is reflected by the interviewee who says "life is beginning to change…there is a greater…kind of an awareness of and acceptance of the real benefit from that kind of collaboration across classrooms" (TC1, 32.37 – 32.47). There are encouraging signs of the potential for transformation here.

In relation to (b), interviewees' less positive views on the stage of development of staff collaboration, there was reference to understanding what constitutes collaboration, the issue of leadership, the need to plan for collaboration and the need for the development of a culture of collaboration in schools.

With regard to understanding what constitutes collaboration, one interviewee believes that "what you have is greater co-operation between people, but I view collaboration as sitting down together and mutually agreeing what you should be co-operating about…we have better co-operation but the ideal of collaboration is still a long way off" (TE4, 35.54 –

36.14). This interviewee also believes that collaboration would be self-perpetuating if people understood that

> the concept is very, very simple. It's basically [developed] through conversation-building, through trusting other people's viewpoints and perspectives…despite what people think, there's an absolute thrill in working collaboratively with other people. So, if we can actually demonstrate that and show that, I think there would be no going back (TE4, 38.42 – 39.16).

Leadership featured strongly with regard to staff collaboration as is reflected in the comment that

> A huge amount of it [collaboration] hinges on the attitude of Principals as well. If you *do* have a school Principal who very much believes in collaboration, sees the value of it, is prepared to put the structures and the supports and the time in place for collaboration, I think that makes a huge difference…The collaborative effort in a school can rise or fall on the attitude of a school Principal (SS1, 17.04 – 17.36).

Another interviewee is "not sure, and this is based once again on visitations to schools, if a number of those leaders fundamentally believe or are confident in the distributed type of leadership that would facilitate collaboration to its ultimate" (TE4, 35.31 – 35.53). With regard to leadership, yet another interviewee believes that there are "a lot of challenges there…like the training for Principal Teachers in embedding the notion that you have to work with staff completely, the whole need to have a school plan, school development planning" (TU1, 14.06 – 14.24). One interviewee is dubious about the Principal exercising strong leadership for collaboration, believing that "we're still held back in this area from the…rather absurd concept of the Principal Teacher being the first amongst equals rather than the actual responsible leader of the teaching effort and teaching team in the school" (PM2, 26.36 – 27.20).

The need to plan and find time for collaboration was highlighted in the comment that "the structure [of the school day] goes against us…we haven't created the time and the opportunity. The only way we've done it [collaborated] is always at the expense of student contact time" (PPM1, 19.45 – 19.58). There was agreement that "if it's not timetabled and structured, sometimes it can just not happen…If it's not built into what people view as their work" (P2 [2], 15.23 – 15.32). It is recognised that those teachers who are reluctant need "a little bit more time and encouragement and inspiration before they're going to change" (TE3, 39.30 – 39.36).

Some interviewees spoke of the lack of a culture of collaboration in Irish schools and one interviewee remarked that "in some instances, again, it [collaboration] is well developed but as a culture, no. Collaboration, it's a bit like partnership, it will only work if there is a shared vision" (EC2, 41.22 – 41.50). The school culture was summed up by another interviewee as a "cellular [culture] rather than professional collaboration" (DES2, 31.27 – 31.33). An interviewee with experience of working with schools at international level said of collaboration in Irish schools that "there's probably not enough happening, probably not as much happening as in other countries, of people having opportunities to get together. It happens through seminars, through day courses, through conferences. But that needs to be supported" (PT2, 18.35 – 18.54).

With regard to (c), interviewees' perception of the Croke Park hours, a number of interviewees believed that the provision of in-school, non-teaching time provided an opportunity for staff collaboration hitherto not available to teachers. Interviewees also believed that the Croke Park hours were casting the mould for collaboration and also providing the scaffolding to facilitate staff working together. However, some interviewees said the hours were not being used as intended, that they needed to be more directed and that the guidelines on how to use the hours were not clear enough.

In looking at the benefits of the Croke Park hours, one interviewee believes that "it has helped to continue what had started [school planning]" (TC2, 28.18 – 28.22). The opportunity for whole-school planning was also referred to by another interviewee who reiterated that "the Croke Park hours have been very significant in creating dedicated time throughout the year that people use for collaborative planning" (DES3, 21.25 – 21.37). This interviewee adds that "by getting people to work together you're really maximising the effect of the whole school type of approach", but acknowledges that "It may need to loosen up a little bit", referring to the very prescriptive guidelines on how these hours are to be used. The hours are seen by another interviewee as "giving them [teachers] an opportunity to sit together…I think the more that develops you'll see more coming. I think that's in its infancy" (SS2, 31.45 – 31.56). One interviewee said that the Croke Park agreement had established the mould for collaboration. This person believed, however, that there would always be room for improvement while noting that "where it [collaboration] works well you can do anything you like with the Croke Park hours, where there is good relationship building in the school, where people are already happy working together" (PM1, 14.25 – 15.31).

The use, or mis-use, of the Croke Park hours was linked to leadership by the interviewee whose experience was that "the Croke Park hours are not being used for the original reasons they were intended…people are using them for things like supervision" (SS1, 18.53 – 19.11). This person had previously referred to the role of the school Principal and reiterated the importance of "what the Principal values in terms of staff development and the value the Principal places on meaningful reasons for teachers to come together" in the context of the use of the Croke Park hours**.**

One interviewee agreed that "it [use of Croke Park hours] has to be directed…you have to spend time with teachers talking about how they can build this additional support for their professional development and for the school…there perhaps is a feeling that it's a bit loose, you know" (P1, 25.03 – 25.51). It was suggested that it "would really be helpful from a system point of view… if there was a menu of…self-reflective tools…to take you through the process of looking at team dynamics or working as a team, or working towards improving X,Y or Z" **(**SS2, 31.58 – 32.30). According to another interviewee "Each school has to work out…what the need is and answer the need of the school. But I think the 1 hour a week has really only given people a taste of what it could be if proper opportunities were there and release time were there for people to get together" (PT2, 19.09 – 19.30).

Not everyone was totally positive about the Croke Park hours enabling collaboration, as demonstrated by the interviewee who says that "the jury would be out on Croke Park… In terms of embedding a culture, developing a culture, I think it's too early. We'd have a very mixed picture out there" (PPM2, 28.13 – 28.40). Another interviewee thought that there was a culture of collaboration at primary level but not to the same extent at post-primary level and on being asked directly if Croke Park hours were lending themselves to collaboration responded with an emphatic "No" (PPM3, 28.33).

About one third of the stakeholders who were interviewed believe that collaboration is a feature of school life for teachers and cited particular initiatives that have fostered and encouraged staff to work together. Two thirds of those interviewed have a less positive view of the current stage of development of staff collaboration and while they say that a start has been made they do not believe that it is commonplace. There was general positivity, with some reservations, with regard to the potential for the Croke Park hours to contribute to collaboration.

7.4 Interviewees' observations on the impact on schools of good CPD

The interviewees were asked what they would expect to observe or experience in a school where there was a vibrant culture of CPD among the staff members. No suggestions with regard to possible answers were proffered by the interviewer who was on the alert for comments with regard to the potential for teacher transformation as a result of good CPD. In the interviewees' responses, the four main areas which came to the fore were: (a) teachers' enhanced professionalism and the resulting beneficial outcomes for their students; (b) the development of staff collegiality and the school as a learning community; (c) teachers' development of new skills and (d) teachers being more reflective. The interview findings on each of these areas will be presented and analysed in the following paragraphs.

Before analysing the interviewee's comments on the positive effects of CPD, it is interesting to look at Table 7.1 which shows the findings from the Questionnaire, Q.21, giving the respondents' views on how they benefited from their CPD experiences.

Table 7.1: Questionnaire respondents' experience of the benefits of CPD

	Strongly Agree	Agree
21.01 I am a better teacher as a result of CPD	71%	24%
21.02 My classroom practice has improved	64%	30%
21.03 I understand the curriculum / syllabus better	55%	36%
21.04 I have developed new knowledge	71%	27%
21.05 I have developed new skills	71%	26%
21.06 I have extended my teaching methodologies	68%	26%
21.07 My classroom management has improved	51%	27%
21.08 I engage more with my colleagues	40%	36%
21.09 I welcome parental participation	32%	39%
21.10 I prepare more meaningful lessons	49%	37%
21.11 Pupils/students benefit more from my teaching	58%	36%
21.12 I engage in more varied types of assessment	47%	33%
21.13 I feel rejuvenated in my teaching	52%	32%
21.14 I am less stressed as a teacher	29%	30%
21.15 I have developed my ICT skills	41%	30%
21.16 I have a better understanding of pupils' / students' needs	45%	43%
21.17 I feel more professional in my teaching role	57%	31%

From the interview findings then, beginning with (a), the potential for teachers' enhanced professionalism through CPD is reflected by the interviewee who stated that "teachers

have become more enriched by the understanding of CPD and that enrichment works its way through, both directly and indirectly, in their engagement and encounters with the kids and with the colleagues in the schools" (TE1 [2], 10.27 – 10.40). This is reiterated by another interviewee who expects CPD to promote "a genuine sense of professionalism amongst teachers whereby they believe in the value of what they do, they believe in the value of lifelong learning, continuing professional development, and that they are inspiring towards the children that they teach" (TE3, 45.25 – 45.47). Yet another interviewee echoes the words of the two previous interviewees, saying that

> I would expect to have a more dynamic teacher, [a] more vivified teacher and therefore a more vivified workforce, that teachers would be happier at their work, that they would have job satisfaction. And therefore, arising from that they would be more confident, that they would be more competent and that they would be more professional (EC1, 47.54 – 48.18).

Also related to enhanced professionalism, another interviewee used the words "openness, openness to new ideas, thinking outside the box, being involved in projects...looking for the opportunities…" (EC2, 44.29 – 44.56) when considering the impact of CPD on teachers. According to another interviewee, in seeking evidence of teachers being actively engaged in CPD, the word "openness" should also extend to "the reception of you as a parent…the door is wide open…a staff that is engaging with development and sees you as a parent who has something to offer to the school and to your child first" (P2, 23.16 – 24.09).

The foregoing references highlight the relationship aspect of teaching, not just in teachers' engagement with students but also with colleagues and parents. The thoughts expressed by the interviewees indicate expectations of transformation through CPD, enabling teachers to be more open and flexible in the way they work.

In some interviewees' responses, the impact of CPD on teachers' enhanced professionalism was linked with students' enhanced education. One interviewee said of teachers' engagement in CPD that the "motivation for doing these things is to improve their teaching, and that's not necessarily just to have a better life for themselves, it is to enhance and to make that difference that we talked about" (EC1, 48.48 – 49.02). Similarly, another interviewee, speaking from a particular stakeholder's perspective, linked the impact of teachers' CPD with student development, saying that "fundamentally what we are trying to do is to inspire, inspire children…inspire them to have the courage to learn, to take responsibility for themselves and to have the skills to be able to ask the appropriate questions and to work together" (PM2, 32.17 – 32.43). Another interviewee spoke of the

impact of CPD on young people's education, putting it simply, "I think it'll just be a better school" (P1, 30.22 – 30.26).

With regard to (b), staff collegiality and the school as a learning community, while not specifying the development of teachers' professionalism as an outcome of CPD, a number of interviewees highlighted staff collegiality and staff learning, both of which have been gaining momentum in Irish education over the past two decades. This has been partly attributable to whole-staff CPD opportunities at Primary level and subject-based CPD at Post-primary level. Collegiality has also been fostered and developed through whole-school initiatives which require staff to discuss, plan and work together towards their implementation. Some of these initiatives have been system-driven, such as School Development Planning and the Home-School-Community Liaison Scheme, while others have been developed regionally such as the TL21 project, mentioned in Section 3 of this chapter, and the Learning School Project[16] (2008).

With regard to staff collegiality, one interviewee summed up the expectations with regard to the benefits of CPD saying

> I would expect to see a much, much greater collaborative culture in schools, in subject departments, between individual groups of teachers, and that there would be a continuous conversation about learning and about education rather than a continuous conversation about administration or discipline (PPM1, 21.36 – 22.00).

The latter part of this remark refers to staff meetings where teachers' discussions invariably revert to everyday issues, which may be necessary, but can become habitual agenda items rather than being assigned to a more appropriate forum for resolution. Indeed, one could question whether or not administrative and disciplinary matters may have been used subconsciously as avoidance tactics at staff meetings to divert attention from higher level professional matters. However, this interviewee, PPMI, expects that good CPD can bring about a change in this regard.

In the context of staff collegiality and the school as a learning community, one interviewee considered the impact of CPD from the perspective of the de-privatisation of practice, asserting that

> Your practice doesn't belong to you. Your practice belongs to the school. And everything we do in terms of our professional practice is leading towards a

[16] **The Learning School Project** is an action research project undertaken by the Education Centres in Cork, West Cork, Kerry, Limerick and Clare.

> better school and a better environment for the pupils to learn [within] and what it's exhibited in - open doors, open door policy, collaboration…the pupil is the focus and there's nothing else matters except the pupil in terms of their learning and the school (SS2, 35.33 – 35.51).

This epitomises the thinking of the interviewee who saw a good outcome of CPD as "a profession that was socialised to understanding that they worked with others" (DES1, 28.43 – 28.48). Another interviewee stated that the benefits of CPD would be evident in the hallmarks of a school that's very engaged in professional learning: "for teachers there isn't a fear of watching each other teach; there's a lot of team teaching; there isn't a fear of working with another adult in the same room; there isn't a fear of peer observation" (SS1, 21.16 – 21.35). While this type of collaborative engagement may be seen in a small number of schools in Ireland, it is not yet common practice throughout the profession. This is noted for future comment in this study.

The expectations that CPD would enable the development of teacher collaboration and the learning community is expressed in the comment that

> the adults and the young people are all learners and there is a commitment to learning…in all the plethora of activities in the school…there is a culture of learning…distributive leadership is actually working…there are leaders of learning right throughout the school community (PPM2, 35.28 – 36.03).

Another interviewee expects that the learning community developed through CPD would bring about "a greater sense of social capital, that people would know where, when and how to seek help, how to share it and basically…all of this openness would lead to a greater open mind on teaching itself" (TE4, 46.01 – 46.19).

According to another interviewee, where there is a culture of CPD in a school you will find "a happy cohort of teachers…you can actually define an atmosphere in a school very quickly" (PPM3, 33.39 – 34.48). This opinion is supported by the comment that teachers learning together create "a climate where people are willing to share and people revel in the success of what they're doing because of the joy and the feedback that they get" (PT1, 35.20 – 35.30).

With regard to (c), the development of new skills by teachers, the expectation that teachers would up-skill themselves through CPD featured quite strongly in the interviews. While some interviewees specifically mention the development of "skills", they are often linked with higher skills and there is an understanding that these are not stand-alone, mechanistic outcomes from CPD. This is evident, for example, in the comment that "that

kind of work [CPD] will of its nature work its way through and permeate their [teachers'] daily engagement with kids in the classroom and will broaden perspectives here and there, will give them new skills…" (TE1 [2], 8.01 – 8.13). One interviewee expressed a wish to see CPD focusing more on "group work, collaborative learning, co-operative learning and I would love to see teachers really using those…" (TE3, 44.55 – 45.04). Another interviewee believed the skills mentioned in the previous quotation were already common to teachers' practice and cited evidence of "…team teaching, station teaching…happening on the literacy [initiative]…that's very widespread now…I've seen it in action, I've seen it in a number of schools" (PT2, 25.00 – 25.30). Another interviewee would like to see more skills development through CPD in the area of Information technology and asked "How do we impart our subject, our area of learning that we're engaged in, in such a way that young people can receive it in a manner that they're used to receiving [knowledge]…that the Smartphone isn't something that we see as a potential disciplinary issue as it is at times (PPM2, 37.46 – 38.28).

Finally, with regard to (d), teachers being more reflective as a result of CPD, this was mentioned by a small number of interviewees. Based on experience in a profession other than teaching, a parent interviewee suggested that "that's the first professional development all teachers should be doing…it's nearly the cornerstone of being a professional, is reflective practice" (P2 [2], 30.36 – 30.46). An opportunity for teachers to engage in reflection is available in the context of School Self-Evaluation, according to another interviewee, where the first step of a six-part process is

> an internal, honest, warts and all reflection. How are we doing? And then you decide, as a staff, what is it you need to find more out about and that determines the tools that you'll use, whether it's a survey of the parents, whether it's a questionnaire for students. The information comes back. You sit down, preferably as a staff. You analyse and discuss it. And the reflection process starts again then (SS1, 24.25 – 24.52).

A similar set of questions, i.e., "what are we doing well, what are we not doing well, where do we need to improve, how can we do that, can we do it ourselves, can we help one another…?" (DES3, 26.22 – 26.32), which could be posed through the school planning process, was proffered by another interviewee who believed such reflection would help identify CPD needs. If such questions are probed with openness, honesty and integrity and responded to with appropriate CPD opportunities, it is possible that such CPD could indeed be transformative in helping teachers to find more creative ways of working. However, it can happen that CPD needs are seen in terms of specific problems to be solved, with

teachers seeking quick-fix solutions, replicating others' ideas rather than finding creative possibilities from within their own and their colleagues' personal and professional resources. The dissemination of ideas is a feature of CPD and one interviewee espoused its benefits saying that "teachers are practical" (TU1, 25.35), they will take up ideas, try them out and look for more if they work.

This section has presented the interviewees' perceptions with regard to the benefits of CPD. As with the Questionnaire Survey, the interviewees were not asked leading questions on transformation. While the word "transformative" was not used by any interviewee in relation to the impact of CPD, it could be inferred from some responses that good CPD would bring about significant change in a number of areas of teachers' practice and school life. Interviewees spoke of teachers' enhanced professionalism and worthwhile outcomes for students as a result of this. They spoke of greater collaboration and stronger collegiality where teachers are actively engaged in CPD. The interviewees commented on teachers developing new skills and being more reflective. The evidence in the majority of interviews, however, suggests that the benefits of CPD are seen by teachers primarily in functional terms, related to the development of new skills.

Conclusion

From the interviewees' comments reviewed in this chapter, it is clear that the purpose of much of the CPD which has been facilitated since the mid-90s has been directed towards introducing new curricula and syllabi, guiding teachers in the use of new teaching methodologies, raising awareness of the linkages between teaching, learning and assessment and enabling the process of school planning, to mention some of the areas included in the CPD agenda. It is interesting to note the change in the interviewees' answers over the course of the interview. Their thinking seemed to move from the functional aspects of CPD to the potentially holistic and creative benefits of CPD, particularly in relation to staff collaboration. It is possible that this change occurred when they were asked in the interview to consider the outcomes of good CPD, after they had discussed staff collaboration and the use of the Croke Park hours. At this later stage in the interview, interviewees' responses were appreciably more aligned with a transformative rather than a functional approach to CPD, as they reflected more deeply on the subject. Some Interviewees were making explicit, perhaps for the first time for themselves, something which may not have been at the level of explicit awareness for them previously. From that point of view, the interview process itself was serving a developmental or an

educational function for them. This highlights the need to provide broad-based forums for discussion on CPD where the stakeholders, key influencers in education, have an opportunity to listen, to share and to gain insights which would take their thinking on CPD from the basic skill level approach to a highly transformative level.

Chapter 8

Focus Group Interview Findings (Part 1): Presentation and Analysis

Introduction

Focus Group interviews were conducted with four groups of teachers as part of this study. The purpose of the focus group interviews was to explore further the themes covered in the questionnaires to teachers as reported in Chapter 5. The findings from the Focus Groups are presented and analysed in this chapter and in Chapter 9, the format largely mirroring that of Chapters 6 and 7 which dealt with the findings from the individual interviews with the stakeholders. This chapter presents and reviews the perceptions and opinions of the teachers in the focus groups on the themes of: 8.1 people's motivation to be teachers; 8.2 initial teacher education; 8.3 the public perception of teaching/teachers and 8.4 teachers' professional identity. Chapter 9 will continue with teachers as lifelong learners, teachers' experience of CPD, the effects of CPD and the development of a professional collaborative culture among teachers in Irish schools.

In the case of each theme covered in this chapter, there will be a) an outline of the question asked, b) a table and summary of the responses, c) a brief comparison with the responses to a similar question put to the individual stakeholder interviewees and with responses from the questionnaire survey where applicable, d) an analysis of the groups' responses to the themes explored with them. The latter will form a review of the insights in each group's responses, especially on the later themes such as their own experiences of CPD and professional culture, and their appraisals of professional cultures in Irish teaching at present. While a table of responses from individual focus group participants for each theme has been compiled, these tables are not fully representational of all group responses as they do not include participants' non-verbal acquiescence, as will be explained in a following paragraph.

As explained in Chapter 4, there were four focus groups, their members being selected in such a way as to include Principal Teachers and Classroom Teachers from the primary and post-primary sectors, as well as teacher members of the Teaching Council. Gender balance was also a consideration. There were two primary groups, coded as P/A and P/B, and two post-primary groups, coded as PP/A and PP/B, and each group participant is represented in

this study by the group code followed by a specific number, e.g., P/A/1. These codes will be used in this chapter when referring to a particular focus group and/or to individual participants. While the focus group interviews followed a set pattern of questioning, they were semi-structured to allow for flexibility to pursue particular lines of thinking which evolved from individual responses. As in the one-to-one interviews with the stakeholders, the interviewer/author was particularly interested in group members' perceptions of the potentially transformative dimensions of CPD. She carefully refrained, however, from asking leading questions in this regard but remained on the alert for references to transformation, or intimations of it. The duration of the interviews varied, the two post-primary focus groups being one and a half hours and two hours respectively and each of the two primary focus groups being a little over an hour. The members of the focus groups were generous with their time and thoughts and their honesty was apparent and appreciated.

The responses from the members of the focus groups and those of the stakeholder interviewees have been tabled in a similar manner. However, when examining the quantitative data in both sets of tables, it is necessary to consider the differing nature of both interview situations. In the individual interviews, it was possible to record in the tables every relevant response from *each interviewee*. This was not the case with the responses from the members of the focus groups. It is the nature of a focus group interview that some participants will not wish to repeat that which has already been stated but may murmur or nod in agreement with others. As every teacher may not have responded individually to every question, the reader will see many blank spaces in the focus group tables. This will inevitably do less than full justice to the focus group data. In deference to the integrity of the presentation of the focus group findings, consideration was given to omitting these tables. However, they are included as they represent the voices of the participants who spoke and it is intended that the author's narrative will reflect and represent the underlying tenor of the groups' responses overall.

It also happened, in some instances, that the first person in the focus group who responded to a question led the way for the other participants to pick up on a point he/she made and the group followed this point while ignoring the broader aspects of the question. This was dictated to some extent by group emotion where participants wanted to add their voice to a comment about which they felt strongly, even if it did not address directly the issue being probed. This resulted in some trends in the responses being particular to a given group and

this can be deduced from the flow of responses in the tables. In some responses, there seemed to be a stream of consciousness where members of the focus groups gave free rein to their thinking on a tangential aspect of a question rather than the question itself. It may also be the case, in some instances, that members of the focus groups chose to follow another line of thought, albeit subconsciously, as a diversionary tactic to avoid addressing the main point of the question. Avoidance can be the preferred option when one is unsure, unprepared or unwilling with regard to responding to a question. As the group facilitator, the interviewer/author attempted, within the bounds of courtesy, to be resolute and persisted in pursuing the main point of the questions even where this necessitated gesticulating, interjecting and refocusing the question. Despite the best endeavours, it was sometimes difficult to re-focus the group and elicit their responses to the main point of the question and she had to move on in the interest of progressing the interview.

8.1 Motivation to be a Teacher

The focus group participants were asked what they thought motivated people to be teachers. They were free to speak from personal experience and/or from their observation of colleagues and student teachers. Table 8.1 records the responses which were voiced by a number of participants but, as mentioned previously, this does not illustrate the non-verbal assent indicated by other members of the group. The table has been set out using the same headings as those in Table 6.1 in Chapter 6.

As can be seen in Table 8.1, of the 21 teachers involved in the focus groups, 9 (43%) identified the positive influence of teachers during their own school days as a motivating factor in the decision to become teachers, 8 (38%) said that teachers were motivated to work with young people and 7 (33%) said that teachers were motivated to make a difference in the lives of pupils/students. 6 (29%) teachers said that they themselves were always motivated to teach. 5 (24%) teachers, all from the post-primary sector, spoke of their love for a particular subject and their motivation to impart their knowledge of it to others. 4 (19%) teachers acknowledged the vocational element of teaching and 1 admitted to following the family tradition of teaching.

The findings from the Questionnaires, Q.9, the individual interviews and the focus group interviews on the motivating factors which attract people into the teaching profession were compared and are illustrated in Table 8.2.

Table 8.1: Focus groups' beliefs on the motivating factors in choosing teaching as a career

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Always wanted to teach	**To help / work with children / young people**	**To make a difference / be fulfilled/ give something back**	**Impart love of learning/ love of subject**	**Influence of own school experience (+ positive - negative)**	**Vocation**	**Follow family tradition**	**Enjoy status/ respect/ security**
P/A/1								
P/A/2			√					
P/A/3		√	√					
P/A/4								
P/A/5								
P/A/6		√	√					
P/A/7		√	√					
P/B/1			√		√+	√		
P/B/2	√							
P/B/3	√							
P/B/4	√	√						√
P/B/5	√				√+	√		
PP/A/1					√-			
PP/A/2				√	√+		√	
PP/A/3	√				√+			
PP/A/4	√				√+			
PP/A/5				√	√+			
PP/B/1		√		√	√+			
PP/B/2		√	√	√	√+	√		
PP/B/3		√						
PP/B/4		√	√	√	√+	√		
Total 21	**6 (29%)**	**8 (38%)**	**7 (33%)**	**5 (24%)**	**9 (43%) + 1 (5%) -**	**4 (19%)**	**1 (5%)**	**1 (5%)**

Table 8.2: Comparison of findings from the questionnaire, the individual interviews and the focus groups on motivation to teach

Motivation to teach	Questionnaire Respondents "very important"	Individual Interviewees' Perceptions of Motivating reasons	Focus Groups' Motivating reasons
To make a difference	50%	36%	33%
To work with young people	48%	80%	38%
To impart knowledge	45%	44%	24%
To be member of a high status profession	7%	16%	1%
To relive own love of school	18%	36%	43%

In the questionnaire findings, documented in Chapter 5, teachers ranked the motivation to teach as “to make a difference”, "to work with children/young people" and "to impart knowledge", as “very important” in that order. In the individual stakeholder interviews, documented in Chapter 6, the findings on motivation were ranked as “a desire to work with young people”, “to make a difference to the lives and life potential of young people” and “to pass on to others a love of learning”, in that order. In this chapter, we see that the focus group participants ranked motivation to teach as “the positive influence of teachers during their own school days”, “to work with young people” and “to make a difference in the lives of pupils/students”, in that order. We find that the two high-ranking motivating factors which are common to all three sources of data are the wish “to work with young people” and “to make a difference in the lives of young people”. These are altruistic reasons for wanting to enter the teaching profession and they provide a solid bedrock on which CPD can build to refresh teachers’ sense of purpose throughout their career.

The teachers in all four focus groups spoke with animation and a sense of purpose of their own and other teachers’ reasons for wanting to be teachers. It was noteworthy that the highest number of expressed responses referred to teachers’ positive experience of school and being inspired by particular teachers. Not everyone agreed with this. One person appreciated that this was the experience of many participants in the group but it was not his experience. The participants were quite animated as they referred to “the sense of fulfilment” (P/A/7, 6.02 – 6.06), “the interaction with young people” (P/A/6, 6.54 – 6.57), “caring for the children” (P/A/3, 7.30 – 7.32), “meeting different individuals, different challenges” (P/A/2, 8.15 – 8.18), and their “love of subject” (PP/A/2, 5.33 – 5.34), to quote a representative sample of comments on their own motivation to teach.

To illustrate the point made previously about a trend being pursued in a group, an interesting exchange took place in Group PP/B when a participant expressed the view that “…people who end up teaching generally like working with people rather than objects, say in a lab or anything” (PP/B/3, 2.53 – 2.59). A fellow participant picked up on the phrase ‘end up teaching’ and while he admitted that a few people “end up teaching” he believed that “there are a lot of other people who set out to be a teacher because they want to do it” (PP/B/2, 3.23 – 3.29). It was admitted that in times past it was more likely that post-primary teachers “ended up teaching”, as many of them undertook an undergraduate degree programme without being focussed on teaching as a career at the outset. Another participant in this focus group also agreed that in times past some post-primary teachers

"ended up" in teaching and also wondered "have people gone into teaching, not purely for the holidays, but I think the holidays are an issue" (PP/B/4, 7.22 – 7.26).

A number of teachers in two of the focus groups said they had "always wanted to be teachers" with one admitting to reading newspaper advertisements for teaching posts while still a teenager. Three teachers spoke of always wanting to be teachers but for various reasons they had not pursued teaching as a career immediately after school, or on completion of an undergraduate degree. They qualified and worked for a period in other occupations first and expressed great satisfaction with their change of career into teaching. A number of comments from the section on motivation have been reserved for inclusion later in this chapter in section 8.4 on teachers' professional identity, as they fit more appropriately there.

The responses on motivation to teach shone a revealing light on the heart of teachers' care, dedication and commitment to the young people they teach. It is significant that, apart from one suggestion with regard to holidays, no one mentioned status, conditions of service, financial reward or other material gains as being motivating factors in their choice of teaching as a career. In the context of engagement in meaningful CPD, these are promising findings, particularly when it comes to encouraging teachers to reflect on, to return to and to replenish the well-spring of motivation as a conduit for their personal and professional transformation.

8.2 Initial Teacher Education

The focus group participants were given a brief overview by the author/interviewer of the re-conceptualisation of programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) being undertaken in Ireland. They were asked what they would wish to see prioritised in the reconceptualised programmes of ITE. Table 8.3, set out using the same headings as those in Table 6.3, illustrates their responses.

As can be seen from Table 8.3, there was a limited range of responses in the conversations that followed this question. These responses revealed that participants had not given too much constructive thought to this issue. It is possible that they had not been aware, prior to the interview, of the developing situation in ITE, or, at least, not to the same extent as the stakeholder interviewees were aware.

Table 8.3: Focus groups' identification of areas for priority attention in initial teacher education

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Code	**Greater attention to ethics, attitudes values, beliefs**	**Greater attention to personal development and development of professional identity**	**Greater attention to reflective practice and research**	**Greater attention to teaching knowledge and teaching skills**	**Greater attention to particular areas, e.g., ICT / Literacy / Numeracy / Special Needs / Inclusion / Parents**	**Development of HEI-School partnership and meaningful school placement**	**Greater attention to role of teachers in relation to ITE**	**Greater attention to preparing for change in ITE**
P/A/1								
P/A/2								
P/A/3								
P/A/4								
P/A/5								
P/A/6								
P/A/7				√				
P/B/1		√			√	√		
P/B/2					√			
P/B/3		√			√		√	
P/B/4					√			
P/B/5		√			√	√		
PP/A/1					√	√	√	
PP/A/2						√	√	
PP/A/3						√	√	
PP/A/4						√		
PP/A/5								
PP/B/1				√	√			
PP/B/2				√	√			
PP/B/3				√	√	√		
PP/B/4		√	√	√	√	√		
Total 21		**4 (19%)**	**1 (5%)**	**5 (24%)**	**10 (48%)**	**8 (38%)**	**4 (19%)**	

In so far as a number of the 21 members of the four focus groups responded directly to the question on their priorities for re-conceptualised programmes of Initial Teacher Education, 10 participants (48%) listed programme content, 8 (38%) listed student teachers' school placement and 5 (24%) listed teaching knowledge and skills. These are broad spectrum areas and the focus groups' conversations will be probed to ascertain the respondents' particular concerns. It is interesting to note in Table 8.3 the clusters of responses which were particular to given groups. These bear out the reference in the introduction to this chapter with regard to a trend being followed within a group. It is significant that no one in the focus groups prioritised any of the following areas for attention in the re-

conceptualised programmes: Ethics, attitudes, values and beliefs; the potential role for teachers to work with HEIs in mentoring and assessing the student teacher; the need for adequate preparation for the changes in ITE. It is also significant that only one person in the focus groups mentioned reflective practice and research as areas of ITE needing attention. It is evident that only a minority of teachers are thinking constructively, or at all, about key priorities in teacher education.

The findings from the individual interviews and the focus group interviews on priorities in ITE were compared. As we saw in Chapter 6, in the individual interviews with the representatives of the stakeholder groups, the participants' priorities for re-conceptualised programmes of teacher education were ranked as the role of the teaching profession, the student teachers' school placement, student teachers' personal development and ITE programme content, in that order. Looking at the findings from the focus groups on ITE, the re-conceptualisation of the student teachers' school placement to ensure that it provided a meaningful whole-school experience was the response which was common to both the stakeholder interviews and the focus groups. Table 8.4 compares the responses of the questionnaire respondents , the stakeholder interviewees and the focus groups.

Table 8.4: Areas common to the questionnaire, the stakeholder interviews and the focus groups interviews in relation to ITE

1	2	3	4	5	6
Questionnaire Q.11 - Area of Study in Initial Teacher Education	**% of Respondents who left these areas blank**	**Interviews Area of Study mentioned re ITE**	**% of Interviewees who prioritised these areas**	**Focus Groups Area of Study mentioned re ITE**	**% of Focus Group Participants who prioritised these areas**
Reflective Practice Research Methods Action Research	27% 45% 54%	Reflective Practice and Reseach	9 (36%)	Reflective Practice and Reseach	1 (5%)
Special Education Multiculturalism Background Diversity Parents	29% 47% 45% 57%	ICT / Literacy & Numeracy / Special Needs / Inclusion / Parents	8 (32%)	ICT / Literacy & Numeracy / Special Needs / Inclusion / Parents	10 (48%)

In all four focus groups, the researcher invited participants to recall their own experience of ITE and/or from knowing student teachers and newly qualified teachers to consider the areas of study they would prioritise in the re-conceptualisation of ITE programmes. It was intended that the latter part of the question would dominate but the opposite happened.

In many cases, the participants had negative views on their own ITE. It could be inferred that in highlighting the perceived shortcomings in their own ITE they were inadvertently

prioritising aspects of ITE that they think need to be changed. Many acknowledged that there have been improvements in ITE since they graduated as teachers and this was summed up by the comment that "for the last two years, teachers coming into the profession are way more motivated, know exactly where to go and are ready to take up [and] to continue on everything that had been started in the colleges" (P/A/4, 10.21 – 10.32). There was a strong sense of the participants' discontent with regard to their own experience of ITE and they wanted to talk about it.

While individual comments are quoted in the following paragraphs, they are selected because they represent the verbal and non-verbal agreement that was in evidence in the group which concurred with what was being said. There was general agreement between the participants who commented on their ITE that they did not feel well prepared for the reality of the classroom on taking up their first teaching appointment. A teacher in Group P/A claimed that "we were trained to go in and teach the perfect well-behaved, middle-class, convent Third Class, and had we been lucky enough to be appointed to the position we'd have sailed through" (P/A/6, 14.00 – 14.13). Commenting on the feeling of inadequacy as a newly qualified teacher in the classroom, a teacher in Group P/B recalled that her awareness of Special Educational Needs (SEN) was lacking and she felt it was her fault if a child couldn't learn. Not understanding how or why some children cannot learn as easily or in the same way as others, she believed that if she "kept at it and kept at it and kept at it, that eventually they would get it" (P/B/4, 14.10 – 14.14). Another participating teacher said "I think I learned more in my first year teaching than I did in three years in college…It was the support of colleagues that got me through it" (P/A/5, 12.18 – 12.37). Another participant claimed that "my saviour was the love of the children and the love of imparting knowledge" (P/A/1, 13.07 – 13.10). However, the support of colleagues was not significant in the more distant past as enunciated by the participant who revealed that

> 43 years ago I first stood as an independent practitioner in a classroom and it was very much that. You were inside the four walls of a classroom and nobody came in and said 'can I give you a hand with this?' or 'how is this going?'…Things, I think, are very different now (P/A/7, 14.46 – 15.07).

In considering the foregoing comments, it is clear that many teachers experienced a sense of professional inadequacy, to a greater or lesser extent, in their first appointments. The question arises as to the extent to which this may have had a long-term effect on their professional self-esteem which they carry with them throughout their careers.

A further criticism of ITE by a teacher in Group P/A was that "We weren't encouraged to develop our own creativity or our own talents or our own leadership skills or anything like that. It was very authoritarian. Now it has changed" (P/A/3, 11.15 – 11.26). Based on this comment, it may be of interest to note that, up to the 1970s, many female student teachers in the Training Colleges (Colleges of Education) run by religious orders (nuns) likened the control within the colleges to that of boarding schools for teenagers. The negative effect of such control will appear again later in this chapter when the management of post-primary schools run by religious orders is referred to in a post-primary focus group.

A particular problem identified by teachers in the post-primary focus groups was the brevity of the Higher Diploma in Education (H.Dip.) which was a 1-year programme. This is illustrated by the following comment:

> In 1976 I did my H.Dip. and it was definitely part-time…The teaching practice was absolutely nothing. We had no preparation for the classroom. And the theory…it went over our heads because we weren't putting it into practice at all. The first day I ended up in a classroom I think was a nightmare. I definitely wasn't prepared. But I know from seeing students in school now that it has improved enormously" (PP/A/4, 14.47 – 15.25).

Some participants attempted to balance the negative comments in relation to their experiences of ITE by acknowledging the reality of ITE. A participant in Group P/A admitted that "the colleges can't prepare students for everything that's out there. I mean, sure even in our own schools, the classroom experience is so diverse depending on the group of children that are in any particular level" (P/A/6, 14.31 – 14.43). This was echoed by another teacher in that group who found that ITE was a positive experience but "patchy" and commented that "…initial teacher education is no more than that, initial. And no matter how it is designed it can be no more than that because you have to have the practical experience after that…in order to clarify your further needs" (P/A/2, 17.47 – 18.05). A participant in Group P/B acknowledged that being a teacher requires you to be a lifelong learner, saying, "I still think I'm not trained, or qualified, or finished learning, and that's after 38 years unbroken service" (P/B/3, 8.40 – 8.48).

In the first part of this chapter, the ideals which motivated these teachers in their choice of career were clearly evident. It is worrying then that they believed their ITE experience did not adequately facilitate the translation of their high-minded motivation into the reality of being well-prepared practitioners with responsibility for their own class. However, this should not come as a surprise when we consider teachers' responses in the questionnaire

survey on the content and methodology of their ITE programmes as documented in Chapter 5. The questionnaire responses indicate that areas of study in ITE which are considered essential nowadays were not addressed in the past, in many instances.

With regard to the specific priorities for the reconceptualised programmes of ITE, programme content featured strongly in focus group responses. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the responses covered a broad spectrum of content areas, some of which will be identified here. In that context, dealing with parents was named by a number of focus group participants. There was a concern that student teachers do not "understand that the parent is a partner in the [education] process…[their] communication skills are not necessarily brilliant" (P/B/1, 12.35 – 12.49). The issue of communications skills links with the focus group responses which identified the need for greater attention to be paid to student teachers' personal development.

Focus group participants prioritised student teachers' preparation for working in DEIS Schools [schools in areas designated as disadvantaged] for greater attention in ITE programmes. A teacher in Group PP/B believed that

> ITE should include some experience and exposure to DEIS, to disadvantage. It's very imbalanced really if you get a teacher who goes to a typical middle-class school and they don't end up working there. It's very difficult. It's a huge change. They need to experience different aspects, different types of schools (PP/B/3, 10.37 – 10.53).

This participant returned to the issue of preparedness for teaching in a DEIS school, adding that "In some cases it is a lack of interpersonal skills but in my experience it is a lack of understanding of what exactly disadvantage is. They don't really understand a typical profile of a child in front of them" (PP/B/3, 15.45 – 15.56).

This was elaborated on in greater detail by another participant in that group, a Principal teacher, who spoke of the importance of the teacher making a connection with the class. He stated that "if you come to school, you know your subject, you love your subject and you're full of it, but you can't deal with the class, forget it" (PP/B/2, 13.04 – 13.11).

Both of the foregoing comments were made by teachers who work in DEIS schools, hence their interest in, and understanding of, particular challenges facing teachers in areas designated as disadvantage. However, teachers in DEIS schools need to guard against appearing to be either martyrs or heroes in their particular situations. The real challenge for ITE is to develop student teachers' understanding of all children's and young people's

needs and to enable them, as teachers, to cater for the multiplicity of situations that they will experience in any given classroom, in any given school, in any given area.

Another area given priority by teachers in the Focus Groups was that of the School Placement for student teachers, formerly known as Teaching Practice. A number of participants advocated that student teachers should have experience of working in many types of schools, teaching a variety of classes. It was also agreed that much longer block periods of teaching were necessary. It was further suggested that the School Placement should provide the opportunity for student teachers to experience school life beyond the class(es) they teach. One post-primary participant advocated the importance of the whole-school experience. She explained that "[for] one particular college, we have to timetable them [student teachers] in the morning time so they never get to experience the full day" (PP/B/4, 13.43 – 13.54). This experience, the participant believes, does not allow for a relationship to be built up between the student teacher and the school.

Communication between the HEIs and the schools in which student teachers are placed was also discussed with particular reference to the need for a link teacher. A participant stated that the role of the link teacher is "really, really important because that person is close to the practice. They can see them [student teachers] on a daily basis and give them very good feedback and advice" (PP/A/2, 21.12 – 21.20). Another participant agreed that there should be a stronger connection between the schools and the colleges while foreseeing that it would create extra work for Principals and Deputy Principals in co-ordinating it (PP/A/1, 21.21 – 21.35).

It is noteworthy and praiseworthy that teachers in the focus groups were interested in being more involved in supporting student teachers rather than being passive observers as they currently are, to a large extent. It would seem obvious that experienced teachers are eminently suited to nurturing the fledgling professionals, including mentoring and assessing them, the latter being undertaken in a partnership role with supervising personnel from the HEI. Indeed, it is commonplace in many other professions that students and newly qualified personnel work under the supervision of an experienced practitioner. However, the profession's reaction to Droichead, the Teaching Council's recently proposed career entry professional programme, does not augur well for such developments in ITE in Ireland, in the near future. Until recently (February 2014), the INTO, the Primary Teachers' union, directed INTO members not to participate in the Droichead Pilot Scheme being proposed by the Teaching Council. This directive has now been lifted. Principal teachers were

concerned that they would have to sign off on the satisfactory professional service of a newly qualified teacher. The reasons for not wanting to do so were given as lack of time for classroom visits and fear of adverse relationship repercussions, should the newly qualified teacher prove to be unsatisfactory. If this negative attitude prevails in relation to newly qualified teachers, it may also extend to the class teachers' engagement with student teachers on school placements. This would be detrimental to the role of schools in relation to the proposed partnerships between schools and HEIs. It would also be a lost opportunity for schools and HEIs to collaborate which could, inherently, be an opportunity for CPD for teachers.

8.3 The Public Perception of Teachers

The focus group participants were asked what they thought was the public perception of teachers. One might ask what bearing the public perception of teachers has on the focus of this study which is CPD. The interviewer/author believes that public opinion can influence teachers' morale positively or negatively. This, in turn, can have a beneficial or a detrimental effect on teachers' sense of professional identity and self-worth. Table 8.5 illustrates the responses. The comparison between the responses of the focus group participants and those of the stakeholder interviewees are shown in Table 8.6.

Table 8.5 shows that 12 (57%) of participants believe that parents at local level are positive in their views about teachers, 10 (48%) believe that parents in general are positive in their views about teachers and 5 (24%) believe that the media coverage of the teaching profession is negative.

In Group P/A, one teacher believed that "the perception out there is that teachers are doing a very good job and that there is great trust there" (P/A/4, 21.23 – 21.32). In the same group, another teacher expressed the opinion that "the public perception is extremely positive and I think as a profession that we don't really realise that, to the extent that it is actually there, because what tends to get publicised are people who are negative" (P/A/2, 19.41 – 19.55). In Group PP/A, participants commented on parents being very supportive of teachers, even on occasions when they may have reasons to be critical of a teacher. One participant stated that "the parents I meet as a Deputy Principal are so fair. Even when you have a difficulty with a teacher, they are more than patient and tolerant and understanding of the difficulty, the difficulty for you as Deputy Principal trying to manage it." (PP/A/2, 44.28 – 44.42). This comment was supported by another participant in

the same group, also a Deputy Principal, who added "I would agree with that, yes. They are. And you only have to say 'well I have to get the other side of the story'. They'll wait until you get the other side of the story. They know you're being fair about it and they're very fair" (PP/A/1, 44.44 – 44.56).

Table 8.5: Focus group participants' beliefs regarding the public perception of teachers

1	2	3	4
Code	**Views of parents at local level**	**Views of parents and the public in general**	**Media coverage of teachers**
P/A/1	positive	positive	
P/A/2	positive	positive	negative
P/A/3	positive		negative
P/A/4	positive	positive	negative
P/A/5		positive	negative
P/A/6			
P/A/7	positive	positive	
P/B/1			
P/B/2			
P/B/3			
P/B/4			
P/B/5	positive	positive	negative
PP/A/1	positive	positive	
PP/A/2	positive	positive	
PP/A/3			
PP/A/4	positive	positive	
PP/A/5			
PP/B/1	positive		
PP/B/2	positive		
PP/B/3		negative	
PP/B/4	positive	positive	
Total 21	**12 (57%) positive**	**10 (48%) positive 1 (5%) negative**	**5 (24%) negative**

Table 8.6: Comparison between focus group participants' responses and the stakeholder interviewees' responses on the public perception of teachers

1	2	3	4
	Views of parents at local level	**Views of parents and public in general**	**Media coverage of teachers**
Interviewees' responses (out of 25)	**16 (64%) positive**	**7 (28%) positive 4 (16%) negative 5 (20%) positive & negative**	**11 (40%) negative**
Focus Group Participants responses (out of 21)	**12 (57%) positive**	**10 (48%) positive 1 (5%) negative**	**5 (24%) negative**

In Group PP/B one participant believed that parents "*do* realise that we are carers and that we *do* look after their sons or daughters when they are in school…Especially nowadays when there are so many things going through their life at home or personally" (PP/B/1, 20.33 – 21.04). In the same group, the appreciation shown by students for their teachers was noted, an example being the comment that "…the kids are crying leaving our place. When the kids found out I was retiring they were saying 'why are you going?'…" (PP/B/2, 21.24 – 21.31). The place of the school in the community was emphasised by the participant who said that "a lot of pillars have collapsed between the church, the politicians, the banks, but I actually *do* think that, in general, Irish society really does place a lot of trust in their teachers and that hasn't collapsed at all" (PP/B/4, 22.14 – 22.30). One teacher expressed annoyance about the negative public perception of teachers saying "They *do t*hink that it's such a cushy number…There's a misconception of the whole teaching profession in general out there" (PP/B/3, 23.11 – 23.30). With regard to media negativity, a participant in Group PP/A commented that "I think if we were to listen to the media, we would have a very low opinion of ourselves…But in my experience of working in disadvantaged schools, the students actually have a very high regard for the status of teachers in those schools, simply because they know how difficult they are themselves" (PP/A/2, 35.55 - 36.18).

The overall impression one gets from the conversations in the Focus Groups on the public perception of teachers is two-fold. On the one hand, teachers feel quite secure and comfortable in the belief that the majority of parents of pupils/students in the schools where they teach are satisfied with their work. They believe that they are trusted and respected at local level. On the other hand, teachers in the Focus Groups believe that there is evidence of significant negativity in the media, and among the public in general, about teachers. When the reasons for this negativity are probed further, the focus group participants admit that it mainly relates to teachers' conditions of service, particularly to the perception that teachers have a short working day and enjoy long holidays.

It is interesting to note from the focus group responses that teachers are confident and have a sense of self-worth with regard to their standing in the school community. With regard to their standing in the wider community, one might wonder why no one mentioned the positive results of the Teaching Council's Attitudinal Survey on Teaching (2009), Appendix 7 (p.25, Vol.2). Teachers act in the interest of the public good, i.e., the education of young people and it is important that they are held in high regard by the wider public.

To address this, it is important that teachers develop the confidence to address negativity in the public arena and deal openly and honestly, but not in a defensive manner, with issues for which they are criticised. The professional role of teachers could benefit considerably by being more exposed to the public in the interest of enabling and encouraging the public to support teachers and young people's education. The public's positive disposition towards teachers might also extend to being supportive with regard to promoting teachers' engagement in CPD in the interests of the young people in the education system.

8.4 Teachers' Professional Identity

The focus group participants were asked how they thought teachers saw themselves as professionals. Some prompts were offered to guide the participants in considering this question, e.g., were teachers aware of: the level of their professional knowledge and their skill and competence; the complexity of their work and the decision-making involved on a daily basis; their status by comparison with other professionals such as doctors, dentists, lawyers; the necessity to be lifelong learners and to engage in CPD.

Table 8.7 records the responses. Table 8.8 shows the comparison between the responses of the focus groups participants and those of the stakeholder interviewees regarding teachers' professional identity.

Table 8.7 captures the perceptions of the participants in the focus groups with regard to a number of elements of teachers' professional identity. The area of teachers' perception of teaching as a profession received the greatest number of comments. 12 focus group participants (57%) responded that teachers see teaching as a profession while 4 (19%) think teachers do not regard teaching as a profession. 6 participants (29%), all from one or other of the primary focus groups, believe that teachers see themselves as lifelong learners. In relation to enjoying professional status comparable to other "higher" professions, only 1 participant (5%) believed this was the case, 3 (14%) said teachers were not at the same level of status and 2 (10%) were undecided.

Looking at teachers' understanding of professionalism, a participant in Group P/A, voiced the opinion that

> …our understanding of teacher professionalism has grown hugely in the last 15 or 20 years but I don't think every teacher is in the same space in their head with regard to their own professionalism…it's through interaction with different programmes, or through CPD…that you grow, your head goes into a

broader professional space…school planning, mentoring, there is a whole load of things that come under our professional remit now (P/A/3, 28.12 – 28.48).

The idea that one's professionalism is defined or enhanced through the adoption of an expanded professional brief was endorsed by other members of the group who believed that "…with school planning and the freedom the curriculum gave you to actually plan at school level…it made you think, as the professional, this is my job, this is what I think is best, and I'm acting on my professionalism" (P/A/7, 27.20 - 27.46).

Table 8.7: Focus group participants' perceptions regarding teachers' professional identity

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Code	**Teachers have a strong conception of teaching as a profession**	**Teachers believe they enjoy the same professional status as doctors, lawyers, dentists**	**Teachers experience isolation and can lack confidence and self-esteem**	**Teachers have an awareness of the complexity of their work**	**Teachers have a deep awareness of their knowledge & skills**	**Teachers see themselves as lifelong learners**	**Teachers display professional autonomy / professional responsibility**
P/A/1	**yes**					**yes**	
P/A/2		**yes & no**	**yes**				
P/A/3	**yes**	**no**				**yes**	
P/A/4							
P/A/5							
P/A/6	**yes**					**yes**	
P/A/7	**yes**						**yes**
P/B/1	**yes**	**no**				**yes**	
P/B/2	**yes**		**no**				
P/B/3			**no**				
P/B/4						**yes**	
P/B/5	**yes**					**yes**	
PP/A/1	**yes**	**yes & no**		**yes**			
PP/A/2	**yes**	**no**					
PP/A/3	**yes**			**yes**			
PP/A/4	**yes**		**yes & no**				
PP/A/5	**yes**						
PP/B/1	**no**		**no**				
PP/B/2	**no**	**yes**		**yes**			
PP/B/3	**no**						
PP/B/4	**no**						**yes & no**
21	**12 (57%) y** **4 (19%) n**	**1 (5%) y** **3 (14%) n** **2 (10%) y&n**	**1 (5%) y** **3 (14%) n** **1 (5%) y&n**	**3 (14%) y**		**6 (29%) y**	**1 (5%) y** **1 (5%) y&n**

Table 8.8: Comparison between focus group participants' responses and the stakeholder interviewees' responses on teachers' professional identity

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Teachers have a strong conception of teaching as a profession	**Teachers believe they enjoy the same professional status as doctors, lawyers, dentists**	**Teachers experience isolation and can lack confidence and self-esteem**	**Teachers have an awareness of the complexity of their work**	**Teachers have a deep awareness of their knowledge & skills**	**Teachers see themselves as lifelong learners**	**Teachers display professional autonomy / professional responsibility**
Stake-holders Total 25	4 (16%) yes 12 (48% no 1 (4%) y&n	2 (8%) yes 11 (44%) no 1 (4%) y&n	12 (48%) yes	1 (4%) yes 9 (36%) no	2 (8%) yes 8 (32%) no 2 (8%) unsure	3 (12%) yes 6 (24%) no 7 (28%) y&n	2 (8%) yes 6 (24%) no 2 (8%) y&n
Focus Groups Total 21	12 (57%) yes 4 (19%) no	1 (5%) yes 3 (14%) no 2 ((10%) y&n	1 (5%) yes 3 (14%) no 1 (5%) y&n	3 (14%) yes		6 (29%) yes	1 (5%) yes 1 (5%) y&n

In Group PP/A one teacher admitted that "the word *profession* was something I wouldn't have associated with my job as such, when I started. I *would* now to a fair extent" (PP/A/1, 31.30 – 31.46). All participants in the group agreed with the person who said that he had begun to see himself as a professional now but "not initially - professions were jobs like doctors and engineers and dentists and solicitors - teachers, no" (PP/A/4, 31.55 – 32.05). Another participant in the group said that "it's probably getting more reflective nowadays…When I started out it wasn't…you knew the course that had to be covered…you did what you had to do each day. You never thought a whole lot about it" (PP/A/1, 37.10 – 37.37). A younger member of the group who had come into teaching from another profession commented that "From a status point of view, I think I would definitely see it as a profession and I would find it much harder than the accounting work I would have been doing" (PP/A/3, 39.06 – 39.16).

In Group PP/B, one participant said that

> if you look at the history of teaching…it's difficult for teachers to take on this image of themselves as professionals because they see the clichéd doctors, engineers, etc. as professionals. They don't see themselves in the same way because for so long there has been a management structure where there have been teachers and there's been management above (PP/B/3, 28.02 – 28.30).

This participant was referring to the voluntary secondary sector which had been managed by the religious orders, mainly, where teachers did not appear to enjoy professional autonomy. The authoritarian approach of the religious orders has been referred to previously in this chapter in the context of Training Colleges for initial teacher education.

In relation to how teachers value themselves and the extent to which they feel valued, the following comment encapsulates a number of relevant issues. A teacher in Group P/A believes that

> …teachers who have come into the profession over the past couple of years, I think that their feelings are in crisis in the sense that they feel that they are completely undervalued and they have huge difficulty with either being probated or getting employment. And I think that *that* has a huge demoralising effect. If you go to the other side of that subdivision and go to teachers who are in steady employment, they're moving up along the line in their school, I don't think they value themselves as doctors [would] in that level of profession, in that sense. I think in many senses they don't have the time, they're so busy as professionals they don't have the time to reflect in that particular way. But I think there is at the same time, there is a huge professional self-confidence (P/A/2, 31.46 – 32.46).

Another teacher in the same group queries what teachers were actually saying about their role in agreeing to the employment of unqualified personnel working as teachers in schools. He wonders is there an acceptance that anybody can do it [teach] and if there is, "So what can anybody do? Okay, they can care for children, they can physically be in the classroom…but the actual teaching is a totally different world and we didn't actually ever question what is the good teacher and what is teaching? (P/A/7, 33.46 – 34.09). A similar point had been made by a stakeholder interviewee, DES1, in relation to unqualified personnel working as teachers in schools.

In Group PP/A, a participant spoke of two particular aspects of school life that can adversely impact on a teacher's sense of self-worth: the status of the subject being taught and the allocation of classes. This participant's experience was "if you taught honours maths or honours something, you definitely would be an important person" (PP/A/4, 34.19 – 34.24). She observed, however, that teachers can "end up with timetables where they have maybe 15 or 16 hours of LCA [Leaving Cert Applied] in the week and they are completely demotivated, and you certainly don't see yourself as any kind of a professional" (PP/A/4, 35.24 – 35.41).

An example of a Principal teacher showing the staff how much they were valued was given by a participant in Group PP/B. He told of abandoning a regular staff meeting in favour of a four-hour staff session with Professor John Coolahan, interspersed with poetry readings and music, explaining that "the whole purpose of the afternoon was to affirm teachers in our staff in x School in what they do…their influence, their ability to make a difference in people's lives" (PP/B/2:26.20).

In relation to the pressurised nature of teaching, there was a sense of teachers being overworked and overwhelmed. This was portrayed in the comment that "it is really such an emotionally draining job working those groups in the classroom, monitoring the progress of every child, making decisions about them, communicating with parents, communicating with colleagues" (P/A/4, 36.43 – 36.56). Another teacher in that group spoke of not having time to reflect and not having time for professional conversation with colleagues except for "a quick chat at the classroom door with a cup of coffee in our hands rather than sitting down and having a professional conversation about really vital educational issues" (P/A/3, 35.22 – 35.32). In Group P/B, participants spoke of teachers being "high achievers…who hate to get anything wrong…[and] put pressure on themselves…seriously feeling the backlash of negative media publicity" (P/B/1, 26.45 – 27.07). In the same group, another participant said that "teachers take great pride in their work and are proud to be teachers...and will go to the ends of the earth to meet the needs of the children…it's very, very hurtful then when you get the media backlash" (P/B/4, 27.51 – 28.11). Teachers are hard on themselves, never feeling that they are good enough and never thinking of themselves as being brilliant in their profession, according to another member of that group (P/B/2, 28.20 – 28.35). It is incumbent on Principal teachers to affirm teachers and to tell them how well they are doing, another participant believes (P/B/3, 28.47 – 28.55).

Based on the foregoing comments, the pressure which teachers experience appears to be a combination of the multiple demands of teaching, lack of time to confer with colleagues, being criticised by the media and not being appreciated. There was no dissenting voice in any of the four focus groups in relation to the pressurised nature of teaching as experienced by the participants themselves and as they observed the experience of colleagues in this regard.

Looking at the focus group comments on the role of the teacher, a participant in Group PP/B, a Principal, told of asking teachers at interview what was their philosophy of education. He believes that "if they [teachers] are not thinking about…their own personal philosophy of education then they're not thinking of what they are as a teacher, what their role as a teacher is, because the two are absolutely interlinked" (PP/B/2: 27.5- 27.59). In Group PP/A, one participant commented that "I think they [teachers] see their role extended beyond the teaching of a subject…Every day you just walk down the corridor and you see the interactions between teachers and students and you'll see that" (PP/A/2, 46.00

– 46.12). A participant in Group PP/B believes that some teachers still see their role as being "bound up in the subject" (PP/B/4, 28.44 – 28.46) and spoke of the need for the role of the teacher to move from teaching the subject to teaching the student. This teacher sees that there is a shift in that now where newly qualified teachers *do* take responsibility for looking beyond the teaching of their subject to considering the needs of the learner. Another participant in that group reflected on the all-encompassing nature of teaching nowadays which leads some teachers to say "I'm an English teacher, I'm not a social worker, I'm not a nurse, I'm not his mother, I'm not his father…" (PP/B/2, 35.17 – 35.23). Elaborating on the student situations for which class/subject teachers offer support and guidance, this teacher explained that the numbers being dealt with increase for those teachers who are Year Heads, the Deputy Principal and the Principal.

The participants' understanding of their role came to the fore in a number of responses to the first question in relation to motivation to be a teacher. It was evident that teachers pride themselves on the role they play in influencing young people during their formative years. There was a well-articulated position on this in Group P/A where a participant summed it up saying "if you're that kind of person yourself that has a positive outlook on life, just passing that positivity on to young people, sometimes in a very negative type of world [is valuable]" (PP/A/1, 7.20 – 7.30). The influencing role of teachers was taken up by others in the group and another participant commented that "you are like a role model for some of them, you can influence them, you can guide them, you're more than just a teacher…they come to you for advice about something that has nothing to do with school" (PP/A/5, 8.20 – 8.41). General agreement was obvious in Group PP/A and was summed up by the person who said "It's beyond the curriculum. It's the daily interactions you have with them [students], shaping and developing them, and watching them develop over six years" (PP/A/2, 8.46 – 8.55). Another participant believed that "at the end of your career you can actually look back and say that you did have some huge influence on people and their place in society and their general well-being" (P/A/7, 6.16 – 6.31). It is noteworthy that these comments emanate from teachers' deeply-held belief in their identity as educators of the whole person. This professional identity goes beyond the perceived functional role of teachers delivering knowledge to young people, to that of caring about young people. In researching "Caring Teaching as a Moral Practice", Gholami and Tirri (2012) suggest that caring teaching can be recognised in personal care and in academic care. They found that personal care includes "responsibility for improving the social, emotional, intellectual and moral features of students and being sensitive to deal with their personal and interpersonal

problems" (p.2). They found that academic care involves teachers in "enriching the learning environment" (p.3).

The focus group participants did not articulate clearly their sense of professional identity under the various areas suggested in the prompts offered by the author and set out in Table 8.7. The participants' thoughts centred on teachers' understanding of professionalism, how teachers value themselves and the extent to which they feel valued, the pressurised nature of teaching and the varied role of the teacher. The responses tended to be in the affective domain, dealing with how teachers feel and how they think others see them rather than being any discerning analysis or exposition of the elements of the professionalism of teachers or their professional role.

Conclusion

The more substantive findings from the Focus Groups expose the heart of teachers' thinking on professional matters. The participants' conversations revealed teachers' emotions, thoughts and actions as members of the teaching profession and in relation to teaching as a profession. These were garnered from the passionate and spontaneous exchanges that took place and it was a rare privilege to be a witness to such honest contributions. The interviewer/author uncovered much which was to be commended by way of teachers' dedication and commitment to their work. It was evident that the teachers in the focus groups really cared about young people in their schools. From her research, O'Connor (2008) says that "by making the choice to care for their students, the teachers in this [her] study were able to construct and maintain a sense of professional identity which cohered with their philosophical or humanistic beliefs about the teaching role" (P.117).

However, the level of despondency, fatigue, frustration and helplessness which was overtly and covertly evident cannot be ignored or left without comment. Teachers' positive attitudes have the potential for CPD to be transformative while negativity can be stifling and destructive. Where teachers are open and receptive to new ideas, they are creative and willing to engage in learning how to work differently for the benefit of their pupils/students. This enhances their sense of professional worth and well-being. When they are negative, they are less likely to be receptive to new possibilities and they continue to work as they have always done in the belief that their way is best, or at least all

right. It is important that due consideration be given to these matters in this study in pursuit of the potential for CPD to be the key to teacher transformation.

Chapter 9 will continue to present and analyse the findings from the Focus Group interviews in relation to teachers as lifelong learners, teachers' experience of CPD, the benefits of CPD and the development of a collaborative professional culture among teachers in Irish schools.

Chapter 9

Focus Group Interview Findings (Part 2): Presentation and Analysis

Introduction

Chapter 9 continues the work begun in Chapter 8, presenting and analysing the results of the four focus group interviews which were conducted with 21 teachers from the primary and post-primary sectors, including teachers on the Teaching Council. In Chapter 8, the key findings from the first four themes of the focus groups were presented, these being the participants' perceptions on people's motivation to be teachers, initial teacher education, the public perception of teaching/teachers and teachers' professional identity. Chapter 9 continues with: 9.1 teachers as lifelong learners; 9.2 teachers' experience of CPD; 9.3 the benefits of CPD and 9.4 the development of a collaborative professional culture among teachers in Irish schools. In the case of each theme, there will be a) an outline of the question asked, b) a summary of the responses, c) a brief comparison with the responses to similar questions put to the individual stakeholder interviewees and with responses from the questionnaire where feasible and d) an analysis of the groups' responses to the themes. The responses for each theme will be grouped mainly on the basis of each of the four groups and it is intended that this will give the reader a sense of the flow of the conversations and the trends emerging in each of the groups.

9.1 Teachers as Lifelong Learners

It was seen in Chapter 8, (Table 8.7, p.197) that 6 focus group participants asserted that teachers see themselves as lifelong learners. Further comment was reserved for this chapter as the question on teachers as lifelong learners connects with the subsequent question put to all focus groups on teachers' experience of CPD. While the question on teachers as lifelong learners was not answered directly by a significant number of participants at this stage in the focus group interviews, there were intimations that teachers regard themselves as lifelong learners in the responses to the question which followed later, regarding their experience of CPD. Where this was the case, the relevant comments will be included in this section.

In relation to teachers as lifelong learners, the area most frequently referred to by the participants in the focus groups was that of postgraduate studies. This was mentioned

mainly in relation to staff colleagues rather than with reference to the participants themselves. The focus of the responses concentrated on the reasons why teachers were *not* actively engaged in professional lifelong learning and these reasons included, among others, work overload, shortage of time, lack of financial support and family commitments. By comparison, the individual stakeholder interviewees, as documented in Chapter 7, discussed a broader range of issues in relation to teachers as lifelong learners. These included: teachers interest in CPD; teachers as reflective practitioners, readers of professional material and members of professional bodies; teachers' awareness, or lack thereof, of themselves as lifelong learners and the role of the Teaching Council in influencing teachers' engagement in CPD.

With regard to lifelong learning, the participants in Group P/B shared a number of comments on teachers as lifelong learners. One participant in the group said that many teachers spend a lot of time surfing the internet, researching, but this person did not specify what was being researched (P/B/4, 29.25 – 29.32). Teachers' engagement in professional learning happens in cycles, according to another participant, depending on what is taking priority in their lives at any given time, such as family commitments, the demands made by young children, supporting a partner who is studying, etc. (P/B/5, 29.48 – 29.54). This person also believed that a change in one's professional role, e.g., moving from classroom to Learning Support teaching, can be the catalyst for engaging in necessary further learning. Another teacher in Group P/A believed that "the influence other colleagues will have on you is huge. If you see other colleagues studying and surviving it and enjoying it and bringing it in, that helps" (P/A/6, 27.08 – 27.18).

In Group PP/B, when discussing CPD, it became apparent that a significant number of the participants' colleagues were, or had been, engaged in postgraduate programmes. This, in itself, is an indication of these teachers' commitment to their own professional development, which is encouraging in the context of teachers being lifelong learners. One participant in the groups said that "it's amazing the number of people on our staff who, over the last five years, have taken on a Masters in Education. It's about seven of them I think" (PP/B/3, 45.01 – 45.08). Another participant stated that

> It's a cultural thing. I would notice in my own place when I came first, a lot of people hadn't done a lot of postgraduate work. So the people who started to take that on, they were doing it gingerly, worried that some people might snipe at them. And of course they were sniping at a sense of having sat there for thousands of years, [when they] hadn't done anything. But then, once more and more people did it [postgraduate work], and other people retired,

> that culture went and then they [postgraduates] have moved to centre stage at this stage in terms of it's kind of the thing to do now (PP/B/4, 47.17 – 47.47).

A Principal in that group said that "when the staff members come to me and they tell me they're doing a Masters, I always ask them can they include [do] their research within the school and they've mostly done that. It therefore incorporates the school staff as well so they're aware [of] what's going on" (PP/B/3, 48.09 – 48.28). The importance of teachers having relevant postgraduate qualifications when they are seeking promotion was commented on by another participant. This person had experience of shortlisting for Principal Teachers and Deputy Principals where the selection panel decided that "anybody who hasn't got a postgrad in educational management…let's put those aside for the moment and let's keep the ones who have it" (PP/B/2, 47.56 – 48.04).

In the comment in Group P/B about teachers surfing the internet for research purposes, it wasn't clear whether teachers were looking for teaching tips/lesson plans or seeking out educational research reports from the national and/or international scene. Therefore, to ascertain the participants' interest in reading international reports, the interviewer/author asked if research in education was widely read by teachers. The immediate response was that there was no time for this because "teachers become so involved in their own classes and the 30 children that are in front of them…trying to cater for all of their needs" (P/B/4, 32.33 – 32.42). Echoing this sentiment, another participant in the group said that "in general, teachers are spending so much time chasing their tail and trying to keep up with everything…they don't actually have time to go home at night and read" (P/B/1, 34.07 – 34.15). This was quickly followed by further reasons for not having time to read research, i.e., "the myriad of paperwork…not to mention Special Needs" (P/B/3, 34.15 – 34.23). Another participant in that group said that teachers will not read research unless it relates to their classroom: "they are more interested in finding out what will work in their classroom Monday morning" (P/B/5, 33.49 – 33.53). This participant *did* admit that occasionally a "teacher will come in and say they found something really good and other teachers will buy into that" (P/B/5, 33.38 – 33.44). Another participant added that teachers who are engaged in Masters or Doctoral programmes will come across something which gets "thrown in at a staff meeting" and this will sow seeds for further learning (P/B/1, 34.02 – 34.04). This teacher believes that teachers do not necessarily engage with international research but they *do* engage in research by talking to teachers in other schools, hence the importance of the summer courses where teachers meet each other and discuss their work (P/B/1, 32.49 -33.00).

As an aside to the main question on teachers as lifelong learners, one focus group participant decried the government's lack of financial support for teachers who are studying. This was a reference to the fact that teachers undertaking postgraduate studies do so in their own time, at their own expense. Since the economic downturn, a qualifications allowance which had been built into teachers' salaries has been discontinued for future postgraduate awards. In that context, this participant said that "because teachers give, they care, they attend to their own professional development [without financial support], we're still doing it and it's not fair" (P/A/3, 53.51 – 54.01).

The foregoing comments indicate a lack of in-depth consideration of what it means to be a lifelong learner in the teaching profession and to be responsible for seeking out and attending to one's own continuing professional development. The focus group participants who responded indicated an approach to their own needs as lifelong learners which appears to be on an *ad hoc* basis. A culture of lifelong learning in the teaching profession, in a more-than-instrumental sense, is not being manifested in the focus groups' responses, albeit that it may be the reality on the ground for some. Reading professional material does not feature strongly in teachers' professional activities and there were a number of reasons given for this. The Focus Group participants' reference to teachers' conversations when they meet at CPD courses as "research" indicates a loose approach to formal educational research, valuable though these conversations may be. The element of teachers being under time pressure, referred to in Chapter 8, surfaces here again. The reference to the influence of colleagues "studying and surviving it" is interesting and indicates the positivity with which staff members can encourage each other. However, as we saw in another comment, the opposite can also be the case, where teachers who are engaging in further studies, e.g., postgraduate work, are hesitant about telling colleagues for fear of setting themselves up for hurtful comments, i.e., "sniping", albeit under the guise of good-humoured teasing or banter. Some participants' comments indicate that the focus of post-primary teachers' engagement in postgraduate studies may be motivated by ambition for promotion rather than by personal and professional responsibility to be a lifelong learner as a teacher. This may also be true for primary teachers who engage in postgraduate studies.

In general, in the responses, there is an absence of an awareness of the necessity to be lifelong learners as teachers. There was little evidence of a shared view among the individual interviewees, or among the focus groups, that teachers' perceptions of

themselves as lifelong learners sprang from higher aspirations than the prospect of tangible benefits in the classroom. It is quite remarkable that professional people whose life's work is devoted to facilitating learning for others may not be looking searchingly at their own learning needs and their own learning journey.

9.2 Teachers' experience of CPD

The focus group participants were asked to comment on their experience of CPD. In general, the findings from the focus groups indicate that all primary teachers had experienced sustained CPD, mainly in relation to the revised curriculum, over a lengthy period of time from the late 90s. By contrast, the official CPD provision for post-primary teachers was largely confined to those teachers where the syllabi for their subjects had been revised. The experiences cited by the respondents in all four focus groups mainly related to CPD as fulfilling a functional need for teachers and schools, in relation to curriculum and subject syllabi. Apart from two low-key references with regard to professionalism and reflection respectively, there was little evidence of higher-order thinking with regard to CPD. The findings from the focus groups mirror those from the stakeholder interviews. In both, respondents were mainly concerned with the listing of initiatives as distinct from identifying the transformative potential of CPD for teachers.

In addressing the question on CPD experiences, the participants in Group P/A, focused in particular on their experience of Summer Courses and also the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP). Summer Courses were the most common source of CPD for Primary Teachers until the late 90s and one focus group participant said that "…in terms of summer courses, they were a lifeblood, because you looked into a bit of research and you heard other voices and you mingled with other teachers and that was really important" (P/A/2, 39.50 – 40.00). This teacher also commented that "the '72 curriculum was there as I was starting out in my teaching career...and there was little emphasis really on CPD" (P/A/2, 39.35 – 39.48). Agreeing with this, another teacher in that group thought that "…the Revised Primary Curriculum was launched properly and I think that it became embedded in the system very well. But it was because of the investment in CPD for teachers" (P/A/3:40.35).

The participants in Group P/B also referred to the PCSP but were not as wholly enthusiastic about it as Group P/A. One participant criticised the pace of the programme claiming that teachers received "too much too soon…you were no sooner out of one day than into

another" (P/B/3, 34.51 – 35.09). Another member of the group agreed with the issue of time and the timing of the PCSP programme activities saying that "it seemed like you were getting wonderful ideas when you were there, and you enjoyed it, but then by the time you went back to it [the subject] you might have forgotten a lot" (P/B/2, 35.50 – 36.02). It was also admitted that not all teachers engaged wholeheartedly in CPD programmes. One focus group participant experienced "a certain amount of negative energy in the room [at seminars] as well towards the whole idea of CPD and 'ah sure why would you be bothered doing it this way?'" (P/A/6, 45.32 - 45.40).

In Group PP/A, responding to the question on the participants' experience of CPD, one person referred to Project Maths and Junior Cert Irish as ongoing CPD programmes throughout the country, "all in school time, paid [for] by the Department of Education with substitution provided" (PP/A/1, 50.25 – 50.33). As a Deputy Principal, this teacher also attended the *Tánaiste* courses, a leadership programme organised by the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD), in co-operation with the Leadership Development for Schools (LDS) programme and found it very helpful. Another participant in that group, as well as doing a Masters degree programme, had also attended Tánaiste courses and found them very useful as she was a beginning Deputy. One teacher in the group spoke of having "a few days in Athlone for management in the classroom…different levels of learning… differentiation" when she was a Transition Year Co-ordinator (PP/A/4, 51.15 – 51.31). All of the Project Maths courses had been attended by another teacher in the group who was finishing a Masters degree programme.

Having given their accounts of their CPD experiences, which were limited and infrequent, the members of Group PP/A went on to propose that there should be much more professional development available to teachers. One participant voiced the opinion that all CPD cannot be undertaken during the school year and advocated that much can be done in the month of August (PP/A/1, 56.53 – 56.58). This drew a general murmur of agreement from the other participants all of whom also expressed the wish that CPD would be facilitated for all second level subjects. Even in the absence of new syllabi, the benefits of meeting up with colleagues other than your own school staff was mentioned.

The participants in Group PP/A were asked were they happy with the format of the CPD provision they had experienced. One participant in this group said that out-of-school seminars were what he had experienced most frequently but he "would not be hard and fast on any particular format". He was of the opinion that off-site seminars were good

“because you were learning as much in the coffee break as you were from the experience [seminar]” (PP/A/1, 1.00.18 – 1.00.24). Another participant in the group agreed that "what you learn from the colleagues you meet out is brilliant. I found that when I fell into TY...going to the in-service and meeting and finding out from others what worked and what didn't work, that was the best part of it” (PP/A/4, 1.00.47 – 1.01.02).

One participant in Group PP/B referred to the *Misneach* [Courage] programme which was designed to support newly appointed Principals. This person “found that very helpful…the most useful aspect of it was meeting other people and listening and sharing ideas” (PP/B/3, 38.10 – 38.22). Another participant in that group cited Project Maths and Irish as the “general in-service for the staff…experienced in the last few years” (PP/B/4, 40.00 – 40.10). Similar to a comment made by a participant in Group PP/A, this teacher spoke in very positive terms about the CPD for Maths and Irish.

Another participant in Group PP/B spoke in complimentary terms about the CPD provided by the managerial umbrella body for the sector to which his school belonged. He explained that an annual conference is organised by this body which is attended by the affiliated Principals and Deputy Principals. The participant commented that “that’s probably the best thing I attend ever because…you’re dealing with the stuff we’re all dealing with and it’s very focused” (PP/B/2, 41.40 – 41.50).

In relation to the format of CPD, one participant in Group PP/B spoke of having “experts among ourselves…who know what they’re talking about and they’re very acceptable [as in-school CPD facilitators]” (PP/B/2:45.46). In Group PP/B, a participant spoke of an IT project in his school where the whole staff’s IT skillset was audited and the ten best qualified in IT were selected and “they formed the core group of IT teachers to train the rest of us, and that was terrific” (PP/B/2, 43.17 – 43.24). While acknowledging the value of CPD being facilitated in-house by staff colleagues, another participant in the group favoured “a balance between in-school and out-of-school…[because of] the importance of going out and meeting other schools” (PP/B/4, 44.00 – 44.16).

It was unusual, but in an important sense telling, that the role of the Education Centres in facilitating CPD for primary and post-primary teachers was not referred to in any of the four focus groups. It was clear that both the primary and the post-primary teachers in all four focus groups associated CPD mainly with nationally organised in-service programmes. It was also evident that the majority of respondents were focused on CPD in terms of the

programme content that was relevant to their classroom/subject. This thinking is very much in the functional domain, i.e., what can I learn here that I can replicate in the classroom? However, there were some chinks in the comments through which some higher-order thinking was coming through. In that context, a comment from a participant in P/A is relevant. He believed that the PCSP enabled schools and staff "to look at themselves as professionals in charge of curriculum, that we actually looked at our needs as a staff. It's like you widened the scope of 'what do we actually need to do as teachers in this school?' It changed the focus, I think, somewhat" (P/A/7, 41.52 – 42.12). A parallel train of thought was pursued by a participant in Group PP/B with regard to the Project Maths CPD programme. While being very positive about the programme, this participant questioned why it provided "no space around things like what is it like to teach Maths in your school…it's so focused on the subject and the information and the content that it doesn't provide an opportunity to reflect on, well, what are you doing?" (PP/B/4, 42.02 – 42.32).

When teachers reflect on what they are doing and question what they need to do in their professional role, they become involved in a quest which usually leads them to working differently, to being better practitioners. That is transformation.

9.3 The benefits of CPD

The Focus Group participants were asked what they perceived to be the benefits of CPD or what changes they had made in their teaching as a result of CPD. The most striking finding was that teachers particularly valued meeting other teachers at CPD events where they shared experiences and learned from each other. The effect of CPD in changing the culture of a school and in enabling teachers to work collaboratively also featured in the focus group conversations. In the one-to-one stakeholder interviews, the main findings were that the interviewees would expect teachers' professionalism to be enhanced by CPD, that CPD would benefit their students, that they would work collaboratively with their staff colleagues and that they would develop new skills, including being reflective. The findings from the focus groups match those of the individual interviews in relation to collaboration and there are some other similarities, albeit that the responses are phrased differently. This is not surprising as the individual interviewees were largely speaking in terms of their observations and expectations while the focus group participants were speaking from their lived reality. Table 7.1, included in Chapter 7, shows the results from the Questionnaires,

Q.21, where the respondents, all of whom were teachers, indicated that they experienced very positive benefits from CPD, including collaboration with colleagues.

Speaking of the benefits of CPD, a participant in Group P/A said that "The spin-off from that [PCSP] was that actually it changed the environment, the professional culture in our schools, because we were all learning together for the first time and we were learning in our own schools" (P/A/3, 40.50 – 41.03). This was elaborated upon by another teacher in the same focus group who said that

> the introduction of the Revised Curriculum was seminal in terms of the whole attitude, like, it shook up the system, got people out of their classrooms who may have been in their classrooms for 40 years and never moved to do anything. And I think that was the best thing that ever happened in terms of launching, for want of a better word, a whole drive in terms of CPD in this country…it certainly set the scene for work at the workshops and follow-on back at school and all of that. But the whole system, I think, has changed since that. It was the best thing that ever happened, I think" (P/A/4, 42.37 – 43.25).

Another participant said that, as a newly qualified teacher, attending in-service with her colleagues "helped me a lot in terms of getting to know the strengths and the qualities of the people that I was on staff with" (P/A/5, 44.29 – 4.36). This person also acknowledged the shared learning that takes place between attendees at in-service activities saying that "…any course I've ever done I've gotten the most from the other people on the course" (P/A/5. 44.24 – 44.29). On a similar note, the benefit of CPD for another member of that focus group centred on "being [employed in] a small school, what I adored about it was the fact that we got to meet all the other local schools in the area and it got a lot of schools together" (P/A/6, 45.22 – 45.28).

In Group P/B, it was also acknowledged that there had been a positive effect in schools as a result of CPD. One participant saw "huge collaboration [and] people open to new ideas" (P/B/5, 37.24 – 37.29) as a result of CPD. For another participant, "the work of the National Induction Programme for Teachers has changed the culture in many, many schools, and so, we are aware of the teacher learning that goes on in our own schools during the day from each other" (P/A/3, 41.04 – 41.18). It was explained that the "mentoring programme helped that hugely…teachers modelled lessons for other teachers…teachers [were] saying 'can I go and look at you doing Circle Time?' (P/B/5:37.08).

Speaking of the benefits of CPD, a participant in Group PP/A spoke of the value of "meeting up with colleagues other than your own…" and said that "You even learn something from

talking to people here [in the Focus Group] from completely different schools" (PP/A/1, 58.05 – 58.10). However, another participant in the same group admitted that "It's very hard to change, the older you get. I think even if it's one snippet that you bring back [it's valuable]" (PP/A/4, 1.01.38 – 1.01.49) because "it's very difficult to introduce whole new strategies in your classroom as a result of your day out. It does sound grand but then in practice I suppose we all kind of revert to the talk and chalk" (PP/A/4, 1.02.10 – 1.02.27).

In Group PP/B, a participant who was a Principal felt that "there is a gap there too that we probably as Principals need to work on, to get people who go on CPD to come back and feed back to the group for their subject, or whatever" (PP/B/2, 38.47 – 38.57). In Group PP/A, a participant explained that in his school they used a staff planning day to give teachers an opportunity to share ideas they had "picked up" at in-service (PP/A/3, 1.03.00 – 1.03.10). While another participant acknowledged that little may change in teachers' practice immediately following a CPD event, it was her experience that "sometimes, a week or two later though, I find they start thinking about it again". (PP/A/2, 1.04.53 – 1.05.01). A participant in that group returned to another group member's comment about bringing back "even one snippet [from CPD]" and supported that idea. In that context, he spoke of his own excitement having attended CPD on Johnson and Johnson's methodologies [co-operative learning] and wanting to share what he had learned (PP/A/1, 1.05.28 – 1.05.35). This participant also believes that "sharing is very much dependent on everybody sharing" (PP/A/1, 1.03.32 – 1.03.35), as teachers can spend a lot of time preparing resources which they share, and they like their efforts to be reciprocated. In Group PP/B, a participant spoke of the number of staff members who had undertaken a Masters degree and said "this has really raised the discussion on educational issues in the staff room and informally. It really has improved the atmosphere of education in the school" (PP/B/3, 45.09 – 45.22)

A participant in PP/A who has responsibility for the promotion of staff CPD as part of her post in the school, spoke of being "a bit disillusioned" about the teacher learning that takes place at in-service. She found that teachers come back from in-service and say that it was brilliant but on being asked what they learned "they might tell you about one little online activity that is very lower order…it's one gimmick. That's what they got out of the day" (PP/A/2, 1.07.51 – 1.08.03). In a similar vein, a participant in Group PP/B found it "most demoralising as a Principal to release four teachers and put up with all the grief of [substitution] cover and all that and they come back, [when asked] 'well what was it like?', [they reply] 'A waste of time, forget it' " (PP/B/2, 38.57 – 39.06). On hearing that comment,

another participant in the group quickly rejoined with "I rarely get that" (PP/B/4, 39.10). However, it was admitted that CPD has effected little change in some teachers' practice. As one focus group participant said, "there are still resisters…[who] teach the way they always taught, [who] teach the way they were taught themselves and will probably go to their graves doing that" (P/B/5, 37.09 – 37.22).

On the whole, the participants in the four focus groups exhibited a certain level of satisfaction and positivity as they listed a number of benefits resulting from CPD. It was obvious that teachers very much enjoy meeting other teachers and that they learn from sharing their experiences and ideas at CPD events. The power of these professional conversations is widely recognised in the literature on adult education. It is also known from teachers' feedback on CPD seminars that participants would almost always welcome more time to talk during the seminar day. However, it is clear that the one-day and once-off character of so many of the CPD experiences that have been mentioned in this section are unlikely to have a lasting impact on teachers' practice in the classroom, i.e., to be transformative in their effects . The "Continuing" in CPD is unlikely to be meaningful unless the CPD is recognised as a process rather than an event. The process of CPD has to include sustained support. There was an acknowledgement that change happens slowly and that the school leaders need to provide opportunities for teachers to share with their colleagues what they have learned through CPD. However, the benefits cited by the focus group participants remained in the functional domain and there was no explicit reference to the potential for personal and professional transformation through CPD.

9.4 The development of a collaborative professional culture among teachers in Irish schools

The participants in each of the four focus groups were asked if they thought that there was a strong collaborative culture among teachers in Irish schools. They were further asked to what extent the Croke Park hours had provided an opportunity for staff collaboration and was there a possibility that schools would be amenable to these hours being extended to facilitate further opportunities for staffs to work collaboratively? It was acknowledged in the focus group participants' responses that in recent years there has been a change in the way that teachers work in schools. They spoke of an increase in collaborative practices especially in the areas of class/subject planning and in the development of school plans and policies. Unfortunately, the Croke Park hours dominated the focus group conversations to a large extent and overshadowed the more substantive question on collaboration. By

comparison with the focus groups' perception of an increase in collaboration, only about one third of the 25 Irish respondents in the one-to-one stakeholder interviews perceived that the development of a collaborative culture in Irish schools had begun and they did not regard it as being well established, as yet.

In Group P/A one participant spoke of the importance of collaboration saying

> it's critical because it's the way you can get business done in a coherent and cohesive fashion from the start of a child's schooling to the end of the child's schooling. And the planning for that is really key and the ability of teachers to sit down and to work together. Coming together for your Croke Park hours at the end of the day, there is a value there, there's certainly a limited value. But designating a day, designating two days where you can sit down and do that and plan properly and work together properly…[is needed]" (P/A/2, 50.52 – 51.34).

In the same group, another participant professed that she was "really committed to collaboration" but she didn't think that teachers "can give any more" and genuinely believed that teachers were "too tired at the end of the day for the Croke Park hours to be valuable" (P/A/3, 48.37 – 48.46). This teacher stressed that staff collaboration has to happen during the school day and feels that "the government are going to have to step up to the mark and if they want CPD to happen in our schools there has to be some form of release [time] from teaching" (P/A/3, 49.16 – 49.25).

In Group P/B, a participant acknowledged that teachers are very open to working collaboratively and that it has become part of the staff culture in many schools (P/B/4, 38.09 – 38.20). Another member of that group believed that staff collaboration was stimulated by "the onset of all those policies and inspectoral visits that are looking for policies and policy development" (P/B/1, 38.23 – 38.28) and that even resisters got involved in collaborating to formulate these policies. This participant also spoke of the collaboration that is happening outside of school staff situations, e.g., inter-school clusters of Principals or Learning Support Teachers. She expressed the view that "teacher [sharing] experience is where teachers learn most" (P/B/1, 39.25 – 39.29). Another area of collaboration discussed in Group P/B was that associated with Special Education Needs (SEN). It was generally agreed in this group that in-class teaching to support SEN pupils has largely replaced the withdrawal of SEN children from their classroom for support. Participants spoke of in-class support having led to the development of collaborative approaches in the form of co-teaching and team-teaching where teachers work together in the classroom in the interests of the inclusion of all pupils (P/B/3, 39.36 – 39.50). One

participant in the group, a Principal, admitted that in-class team teaching had not been achieved in her school. After four years of promoting this approach she said she "cannot get them to buy into it…[the] difficulty has been [the] core support staff have been resistant so it failed" (P/B/1, 40.07 – 40.18). This person later added, perhaps by way of explaining the resistance, that there is a significant number of pupils with special needs in her school, many at the severe end of the spectrum, and that it is more difficult to give individual support to these children in a classroom situation (P/B/1, 41.14 – 41.24). Another participant in that group shared the information that team teaching in her school had been "introduced in a small way with 6th class maths" and it was so successful it "snowballed" (P/B/5, 40.21 – 40.29). Yet another participant explained that she teaches in a big school and having four streams of each class grouping lends itself to staff collaboration for classroom planning and in-class team teaching. She said it is working so successfully for them that other schools are coming to see how they are doing it (P/B/2, 42.13 – 42.19).

On asking Group PP/A about staff collaboration, one participant said that the managerial umbrella body to which her school was affiliated, and the teacher union, had issued guidelines on the use of the Croke Park hours, which included CPD and planning (PP/A/2, 1.10.27 – 1.10.36). In this participant's school, 10 of the 33 hours designated by the Croke Park agreement were being allocated to CPD. This teacher went on to say that "Croke Park has not helped CPD because it is so fragmented [into hours]" (PP/A/2, 1.11.12 – 1.11.18), where previously teachers would have taken two whole days for collaborative work. Another participant in that group explained that in his school as few as 6 of the 33 hours were being devoted to collaboration on professional matters. The rest of the time was being given to student detention and to what had previously been voluntary activities (PP/A/1, 1.12.20 – 1.12.37). This participant would have preferred that CPD was not included in the Croke Park agreement. He believed that because of the negativity surrounding the Croke Park hours, CPD therein was also viewed negatively, by association (PP/A/1, 1.12.45 – 1.12.53). Another participant in the group agreed that when CPD was undertaken as part of the Croke Park hours the teachers' mind-set was not favourably disposed towards the CPD element, but rather, uppermost in their minds was resentment that this is part of the 33 [Croke Park hours] (PP/A/3, 1.14.15 – 1.14.23). None of the 33 hours were set aside in her school for CPD, according to another participant in the group and she believes that "because they are viewed negatively, I don't know if the Croke Park hours make any difference to us" (PP/A/4, 1.15.20 – 1.15.29). It was claimed in this group

that “Because of Croke Park people actually withdrew from doing things in their own time...they actually said, you know, where in the past they would have gone out in the evening to do courses…‘I'm not doing another thing beyond my 33 hours’ ” (PP/A/2, 1.16.19 – 1.16.36).

On a more positive note, it is worth including here a comment made by a member of Group PP/A at an earlier stage in the interview when she spoke of collaboration in her school saying, “we would have a lot of co-operation for programmes say like Transition Year (TY) and things like that where we'd kind of operate a theme across the board, across various subjects for different times. Basically we'd be in our subject departments for a lot of things but we would co-operate” (PP/A/4, 48.44 – 49.05). Another teacher in the group also spoke positively about finding opportunities for staff to meet during house exams when part-time people were employed to supervise the students and free up the teachers (PP/A/2, 1.17.06 – 1.17.27).

The interviewer/author raised the issue of teachers being in attendance in school during their “free periods”, during which time they could, perhaps, work in collaboration with other teachers. This was not deemed feasible by the participants, for a number of reasons, e.g., “people who live close to their work will go home or they’ll go off and do something” (PP/A/4, 1.18.31 – 1.18.37), it would be “too difficult to arrange” (PP/A/1, 1.19.27 – 1.19.31), and “to timetable that would be very difficult” (PP/A/4, 1.19.32 – 1.19.35). One participant gave as an example a situation where someone may be coming to the school to meet four teachers and “even arranging the [substitution] cover for four teachers” [is very difficult] (PP/A/1, 1.19.45 – 1.19.49). However, another participant in the group described a system in her school which accommodates staff collaboration using some teachers’ free periods and other teachers’ class time and the teachers are very agreeable to that arrangement (PP/A/2, 1.20.05 – 1.20.20).

On enquiring about collaborative processes in Group PP/B, a participant said that collaboration in his school has increased greatly in the past five years. He spoke of subject departments, known as “faculties”, holding meetings to plan as a unit and staff also collaborate on a cross-subject basis (PP/B/1, 50.45 – 51.05). Another participant in the group, a Principal, described the staff meetings in his school, including the meetings during the Croke Park hours. He explained that these meetings are used for staff discussion on school policies and plans, e.g., DEIS Plan, Code of Behaviour, Critical Incident Plan, Homework Policy, etc. where the staff divides into groups of approximately ten teachers

and each group works on the designated area (PP/B/2, 51.45 – 52.00). Another participant in Group PP/B agreed that there is an increase in collaboration in schools but finds a downside to the Croke Park hours, i.e., "we're now having staff meetings at the end of a long day and there's not the same amount of dialogue and interaction and feedback and open forum" (PP/B/3, 52.33 – 52.40). This participant attributes the lack of vibrant interaction to teachers' lower energy levels at the end of a teaching day.

The focus groups' conversations on collaboration were very much focused on the provision of time for collaboration and the time issue centred on the Croke Park hours. With hindsight, perhaps it would have been wiser to separate the discussion on collaboration from the issue of the Croke Park hours, the latter being highly emotive and controversial. In this case, the issue absorbed the participants' thinking and distracted them somewhat from the main point of the conversation.

Conclusion

Taking the focus group findings dealt with in this chapter as a whole, we have had contributions on teachers as lifelong learners, teachers' experience of CPD, the benefits of CPD and the development of a collaborative culture among Irish teachers. The level of discourse tended to be at the micro rather than the macro level, in the affective domain at a grassroots operational level rather than giving a view from the balcony or from the helicopter seat. This is not to denigrate the value of the contributions. However, it is indicative of the isolation of teaching where one becomes so absorbed in the everyday tasks that opportunities for dialogue at a higher level are not frequently initiated or availed of. Participants tended to follow the train of thought initiated by another participant and in many instances this was negative. Participants were frequently feeding off each other rather than trying to raise the thinking to new heights. No one said "let's forget the problems and think positively about what we can do to change things." This feeling of disempowerment was almost overpowering at time. A lot of what they lauded by way of "learning" from others they met at conferences, etc., seemed like it was no more than ideas on solving problems, mainly HR issues, they were experiencing in their schools. Valuable as this is, it cannot be construed as high-order professional development, much less transformation.

Chapter 10

Significant Findings from the Research Conducted for this Study

Introduction

This chapter and Chapter 11 draw together the results of the research for this study, Chapters 5 – 9 inclusive, and the theoretical underpinnings discussed in Chapter 3, thus reviewing the more salient points of the research as a whole and establishing a context for the final chapters which deal with conclusions.

This thesis set out to consider what would be necessary to create a framework for transformative CPD for teachers which would be comprehensive, robust, imaginative and implementable. Such CPD would truly strengthen the capability of Irish teachers to engage in high quality teaching and learning throughout their careers. As explained in Chapter 1, the word "framework" is intended to mean a dynamic, all-embracing system for the provision of CPD rather than a static grid or matrix, as the word might initially imply. So far in this work, the experience of CPD in the Irish context has been examined from the perspectives of the research participants, i.e., teachers at the grassroots, and from the viewpoint of the stakeholders who operate at the policy and delivery end of the spectrum. The emphasis in this chapter will be on capturing the main issues and concerns identified in the research data that need attention and asking what an imaginatively designed CPD provision, the kind envisaged in this thesis, can do to address these. Chapter 11 will further elaborate *how* CPD can help to transform teachers in the areas identified as needing particular attention.

The research evidence on motivation to teach gathered for this thesis - in the questionnaires to teachers (Table 5.9.a, p.89), in the stakeholder interviews (Table 6.1, p.135) and in the teacher focus group interviews (Table 8.1, p.184) - suggests that Ireland's teachers are motivated to be teachers for the most admirable of reasons, i.e., the moral purpose to work with young people and to make a difference for the better to their lives and to their life chances. It is also clear, however, from the research findings that the following aspects of teachers' professional lives will need sustained attention through a variety of transformative CPD opportunities to enable the rich, creative potential of teachers to be released more fully: 10.1 Teachers' professional identity; 10.2 Teachers and

the continuum of teacher education; 10.3 Teachers as lifelong learners and 10.4 Teachers' professional responsibilities. The following paragraphs will identify the relevant research findings and will explore and make suggestions with regard to what CPD, conceived in transformative terms, can do to enable teachers to advance and make progress in each of these areas, bearing in mind that they are inextricably linked in the context of teachers' professionalism.

10.1 Teachers' Professional Identity

In exploring teachers' professional identity in the literature, it became obvious that the subject is complex and it would require a separate research study to do full justice to the range and depth of such complexity. However, the literature findings most relevant to this study are referenced in Chapter 3 (3.1, pp.33-36). In that context, in conducting the research interviews, the author was mindful of Day's (2004) insight that

> …it is necessary for teachers to have a clear sense of identity. Knowing who you are, in what circumstances you teach and what are the influences on your teaching is essential to the practice of passionate professionalism (p. 52).

Irish teachers' responses to the research questionnaire in relation to their perception of teaching as a profession, (Table 5.12.a, p.101) showed that they appreciate the complexity of teaching and the level of professional responsibility and expertise they enjoy. However, only a small number strongly agree that teaching is a high-status profession or that teachers enjoy a high level of public trust. Overall, the research findings illustrate that the professional identity of teachers in Ireland is not as strong as it could be. This is curious given that, taken together, the selfless motivation teachers have reported, the high calibre of entrants to the profession[17], the academic rigour of an initial teacher education programme, and the ongoing demands of the practice of teaching should provide the foundation for the development of a strong professional identity.

In discussing the relationship between 'good teaching' and identity, Palmer (1998) points out that "Identity [has] as much to do with our shadows and limits, our wounds and fears, as with our strengths and potentials" (p.13). Bearing this in mind, if teachers' acknowledged strengths are not at present sufficiently robust to underpin a strong sense of professional identity, it may be fruitful to look to their perceived vulnerabilities to discover why this is so.

[17] as quoted previously in Chapter 5 where Sahlberg et al (2012) "concluded that the academic standard of applicants is amongst the highest, if not *the* highest, in the world."'

In this section, some of the "shadows and limits…wounds and fears" affecting teachers' professional identity will, therefore, be considered under the following headings: 10.1.1 Teachers' self-image and self-confidence; 10.1.2 Teachers' sense of their professional competence; 10.1.3 Teachers' reaction to the effect of the economic downturn on the teaching profession and 10.1.4 Teachers' relationship with the Teaching Council.

10.1.1 Teachers' self-image and self-confidence

The research for this study found that teachers' self-image and self-confidence, as elements of teachers' professional identity, can be quite dependent on the public's perception of them. This is evidenced in the stakeholders' interviews (Table 6.5, p.147) and in the teachers' focus group interviews (Table 8.5, p.194) where teachers were seen to be highly regarded in their local situations but portrayed negatively in the media at national level. The importance of this finding is supported by Kelchtermans (2009) who argues that because "emotions matter a great deal in teaching…negative public judgements, which for an outsider look almost trivial, may have a devastating impact on teachers" (p.262). Teachers appreciate affirmation but, as one stakeholder interviewee explained, since teachers work largely in isolation they are not in a position to receive regular positive feedback or compliments from fellow professionals.

Independent surveys on the professions carried out by the Teaching Council (2010) and the Medical Council (2012), previously referred to and available as Appendices 7 (p.25, Vol.2) and 8 (p.26, Vol.2) respectively, show a high level of public trust in teachers and a high level of satisfaction with their work. Based on the findings from both surveys, one would expect teachers to be very confident about themselves and about their professional work. A number of the stakeholder interviewees contrasted media negativity with the positive results of the Teaching Council survey but teachers in the focus group interviews did not make this connection. The research indications are that teachers feel put down by media criticism and that this is damaging to their self-esteem.

The research found that teachers did not link their professional practice with their professional identity, when asked how teachers saw themselves in their professional role. In the focus group interviews in particular, (Table 8.7, p.197), teachers did not articulate clearly their awareness of the complexity of teaching, the body of professional knowledge associated with teaching, the wide range of diverse skills which teachers develop and employ in their daily work and the multi-relational dimensions of their work. While the focus group participants' enthusiasm and professional commitment were evident in their

responses, it was clear that there was hesitancy in the articulation of thoughts, a dearth of use of professional language and a lack of reflective consideration on teacher identity, on the whole, in the conversations.

Teachers' self-image and self-esteem could be greatly enhanced through critical reflection and critical discourse on their professional practice, areas which are intrinsic to Mezirow's work on transformative learning and to Brookfield's work on how adults learn, as referenced in Chapter 3 (3.2, pp.36-39). Enriching, transformative CPD could enable teachers, explicitly and by osmosis, to understand themselves as practitioners who are overtly responsible: who take clear responsibility for, and remain openly answerable for their practice. Examples of practitioner work might be celebrated in CPD courses and used as a driving force. The driving force of CPD could enable teachers to share their practice with parents and with the wider public. At school level, this could happen through parent-teacher workshops and other learning activities which could greatly enhance the role of parents as educators of their children and could enhance the professionalism of teachers in the process.

At a broader level, CPD for teachers on media and communications matters might enable teachers to analyse public comment and to recognise the validity or otherwise of adverse comments. Teachers and the stakeholders in education might be enabled to develop a public voice for the profession, separate from the union voice, with which they could clearly address teaching issues which arise in the public domain. The professional confidence developed through appropriate CPD could provide teachers with the language to confront media issues concerning teachers and teaching in a positive, confident, respectful way and this could increase public confidence in the profession.

In finding their public voice, teachers might note the agenda which Hogan (2010) sets out for educational practitioners in advancing the heartwork of teaching. Hogan states that

> Examples of such heartwork in public arenas include: being thoroughly and courageously fluent in what the integrity of education stands for; being able to articulate and show the fruits of what is most defensible and promising in educational practice; being able to illustrate cogently what benefits might be gained…from recognizing education as a distinct office with its own purposes; being actively answerable to the public for education's pursuit of these benefits, and for the resources and trust required for that pursuit (p.166).

10.1.2 Teachers' sense of their professional competence

As with professional identity, there is a wide-ranging body of literature on teacher competence. For the purpose of this study, professional competence is understood through the definition taken from the Teaching Council's *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011a). The Council states that "Competences are statements of the attributes, skills and knowledge that teachers as professionals should possess and exemplify. The achievement of competence is a developmental process that continues throughout a teacher's career (p.5).

Teachers' sense of their professional competence is core to how they see themselves as teachers. However, from time to time, teachers' professional identity with regard to their competence can be dented when the quality of student learning in schools is criticised. This happened when the results of PISA 2009 showed a downturn in Irish students' performance following which the governments' *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for Learning and Life: the National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020* (2011) was published. In the introduction to the strategy, the Minister for Education and Skills stated that

> …we know that some children are not developing these skills as they should. Information from national assessments of reading and mathematics, from inspections in schools and from international studies have shown that many students in Irish schools are not developing literacy and numeracy skills to the best of their abilities. We cannot afford to allow this to continue (P.5).

The Minister did not criticise teachers in this statement and it is noteworthy that whenever he speaks publicly about teachers the Minister says that they are doing a good job. Despite that, the Minister's reference to young people's levels of literacy and numeracy was seen as being tantamount to criticism of teachers' work and detrimental to their professional identity with regard to their competence.

What then could CPD do to ensure that teachers' professional identity is not diminished by the public perception of their competence? While perceptions, valid or otherwise, may persist, it is important that teachers themselves are enabled to assess their own professional competence and that of their school, in the interest of student learning. Where CPD is organised on a highly participatory or workshop basis it can help to develop teachers' self-assessment skills and it can enable teachers and whole school staffs to assess their individual and collective competences with honesty and integrity. This requires the development of openness and trust between staff members working collaboratively. In the

exploration of the literature in Chapter 3, on the key features and beneficial outcomes of good CPD, working collaboratively with colleagues was highlighted by a number of authors, e.g., Nieto (2003), Guskey (2000), Lieberman (2000).

At an individual level, self-evaluation is a core function of teachers' professional responsibility and, at the level of the school, evaluation is a core function of leadership. Speaking at NUI Maynooth in 2012, the Chief Inspector, Dr Harold Hislop, stated that

> There is no doubt that if the school principal and other school leaders succeed in getting teachers to look at their own practice and the outcomes achieved by students in a critical and professional way, then a conversation on how practice and learning can be improved will flow naturally in the vast majority of cases. This can be a powerful agent for improvement (p.23).

The model of School Self-Evaluation, currently being pioneered in schools, could be the subject of CPD for all teachers, in addition to the specific CPD on SSE which has already been provided for Principals and some members of staff.

10.1.3 Teachers' reaction to the effect of the economic downturn on the teaching profession

The research data from the focus group interviews with teachers, reported in Chapter 8, showed that teachers' sense of their professional identity was diminished in the face of adverse circumstances arising from the economic crisis. They expressed feelings of disempowerment, disillusionment, disenchantment, oppression and anger in relation to: the impact on schools and teachers of the government's austerity measures; media criticism of the public sector as a whole with regard to perceptions of inadequate productivity, protected employment and secure pensions; being expected to bear the brunt of the economic reform measures through loss of income, increased productivity and less favourable working conditions. Participants in the focus group interviews in particular, all of whom were teachers, complained of being overworked and stressed due to the effects of the economic crisis on their personal and professional situations.

What can CPD, conceived of as a transformative endeavour, do to enable teachers to maintain their sense of worth as professionals, i.e., their professional identity, while coping with unfavourable situations outside of their control? CPD might play a very significant role in supporting teachers to maintain their professional aspirations in the face of adversity and to say "this is what the heart of my work is about", and to be able to separate that from personal hurt. Positive group emotion with regard to their work can be nurtured and

protected when teachers engage together in CPD which enriches their self-understanding and their understanding of the core of their work. This brings us back to the work of Mezirow (1997) as quoted in Chapter 3 (pp.36-37), in relation to frames of reference and understanding our experiences. Teachers might examine their frames of reference when engaging in transformative CPD, enabling them to stand aside and to have a more mature professional view of what they actually do. CPD can explore with teachers their initial motivation to teach and it can help to rejuvenate their sense of purpose. CPD can also enable teachers to develop coping strategies in stressful teaching situations, not least that of remaining positive.

10.1.4 Teachers' relationship with the Teaching Council

The Teaching Council has a significant role to play in promoting the professional identity of teachers. The lack of comment on the Council, in the research data, suggests that the Council has not been embraced by teachers as a significant aspect of their professional identity. In the interviews, teachers could have explicated their professional identity with reference to the Council's *Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers* (2012). They could have indicated their satisfaction that the Council is the professional body which promotes and protects teaching as a profession. They did not do so.

There may be a salutary lesson for Ireland in the abolition of the General Teaching Council in England (GTCE) in 2012. An editorial article in the *Times Education Supplement* (2011), entitled "Few mourned passing of GTC, but there's a gaping hole where independent regulator should be" is worthy of a lengthy quote here. The editorial says that

> Eight months before the curtain finally closes on the unloved council, the number of disciplinary cases awaiting judgment has soared by 50 per cent, the Government is reduced to advertising for teachers to serve on Robespierre-inspired "conduct panels" and nobody has a clue about who or what should police the register of qualified teachers when the GTC disappears. Nothing has proved the need for an independent regulatory body more than the Government's premature and thoughtless abolition of the one they had…The teaching unions, sniffing a possible rival, succeeded in nobbling it at birth. But this sad tale should have led to reform not abolition…It is generally accepted that an essential part of any profession is the existence of a regulatory body that holds it to account and controls entry to it. Such a body is always independent of government and while informed and paid for by the profession is not in hock to it… if teachers want to see their profession treated with enhanced respect they must accept a tough watchdog paid for by them to protect the public…Autonomy does not come cheap but in the long run it's a lot less expensive than infantilised dependence (TES: Gerard Kelly, 29 July, 2011).

It could be important that the teaching profession in Ireland recognises the professional independence and responsibility afforded it through the Teaching Council. As Wang et al (2010) explain, “Winning the political struggle for control of teaching and teacher education is crucial if teachers and teacher educators are to decide how they conduct their business and to gain the public’s support” (p.12). Control on the Council has already been achieved by teachers as they hold the majority membership of 22 out of 37 Council seats.

To summarise, much work remains to be done through transformational CPD in relation to strengthening teachers’ professional identity. As part of the personal dimension of professional identity, strong feelings of being overworked, underappreciated, oppressed and stressed might be counter-balanced with positive experiences of support, appreciation and affirmation of their good work. This obvious lack of professional reflection and discussion can be addressed in CPD forums where there is a culture of vibrant debate on professional matters. A key issue for CPD, arising from these findings on professional identity, is to ensure that teachers are confident in their role and that they inspire confidence in the young people they serve and in their parents and the wider community. It is important that teachers reflect on their professional identity and understand that how they think, feel and act in their teaching role contributes to, and develops, their personal and public identity as teachers.

10.2 Teachers and the Continuum of Teacher Education

This section deals with the in-career phase of the continuum with particular reference to the formalised CPD activities experienced by teachers over the past 10-15 years. Until recent years, the continuum was set out as the '3 Is', i.e., Initial Teacher Education, Induction and In-career Development. The Teaching Council, in its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011a), introduced the concept of a further '3 Is' to the Continuum of Teacher Education, i.e., Innovation, Integration and Improvement. The latter attributes could be applied to all aspects of a dynamic CPD framework for teachers.

A number of issues in relation to formal CPD emerged from the research data and these will need to be addressed in creating a CPD framework which will facilitate meaningful engagement for teachers and for school communities. These issues include: 10.2.1 The perception of a top-down and a one-size-fits-all approach to CPD; 10.2.2 The lack of sustained support to implement and embed new initiatives in schools and 10.2.3 The allocation of time for CPD. This section will also include at 10.2.4, a brief look at how

teachers' CPD is approached in New Zealand, Scotland and Ontario, as reported in the individual interviews which were conducted with key educators in those jurisdictions.

10.2.1 The perception of a top-down and a one-size-fits–all approach to CPD

The research findings from this study indicate that there is a perception of a top-down and a one-size-fits–all approach to CPD, to some extent. It is easy to understand how this impression was formed. The Department of Education and Skills, through its Teacher Education Section (TES), has responsibility for funding and implementing programmes of national in-service education, mainly catering for system-driven needs. System-led CPD programmes are facilitated through national support service teams, deployed locally through Education Centres, as mentioned previously. However, teachers at school level are not directly involved and therefore have little knowledge or insight into the collaborative and consultative process, usually involving the stakeholders in education, behind a national CPD programme. Similarly, the perception of a one-size-fits–all approach to the content and methodology of a CPD seminar stems from the belief that it has been planned with in-service support personnel at national level, without reference to local contexts. This belief is rooted in teachers' experience of CPD seminars which, though designed to facilitate a meaningful experience for teachers, include similar information and key messages for all participants. In exploring the literature on CPD, Brookfield (1986) was found to be highly critical of delivery-type CPD, comparing it with the more traditional teachers' own classroom methodologies, as referenced in Chapter 3 (p.41).

To counteract the perception of a top-down approach to system-driven CPD, a transparent mechanism might be devised which provides for a CPD partnership process at national, regional and local level, involving teachers from the grassroots. Furthermore, the facilitation of CPD programmes could be flexible enough to ensure that the group's identification of their stage of development in relation to the CPD subject/topic is recognised and respected. Teachers' preferred way of learning also could be accommodated. A flexible approach to CPD programmes would allow them to be customised to the identified needs of the participants.

10.2.2 The lack of sustained support to implement and embed new initiatives in schools

It was clear from the research findings reported in Chapter 9 (pp.208-209), that many teachers felt the pace of change in relation to the expected timeframe for the implementation of new programmes in schools was not realistic. The limitations of introducing an initiative through a once-off seminar, or even through a number of seminars, might be recognised and remedied. Many of the research participants who had experienced a number of seminars dedicated to a particular area said that seminars alone were still not effective in enabling teachers to change their practice. Teachers displayed a more positive attitude to in-school support, in so far as this was available.

From the research evidence, it emerged that teachers believe that there is a strong need for follow-on, sustained support for teachers to enable them to embed a new initiative in their practice. In-school support can be facilitated by visiting advisers and teachers can also avail of workshops in Education Centres as currently happens as part of the PDST. The school staff's professional expertise also needs to be identified, developed and supported. This could enhance the school's capacity to respond to their own CPD needs where possible. This would allow energies to be released from within the staff which, when tapped into, would change the balance of CPD direction and provision from the top-down model, mentioned previously, to a bottom-up or bottom-across approach.

10.2.3 The allocation of time for CPD

The allocation of time for CPD is almost always the subject of debate and concern when there are suggestions that teachers need to engage in professional development on an on-going basis. A new way forward in relation to the role of the teacher will have to be found if teachers are to be habituated into CPD as part of their professional lives. Over the past 10–15 years, time for CPD has been mainly accommodated through school closures at primary level and substitution has been allowed for teachers' CPD attendance at post-primary level. Both systems have advantages with regard to teachers' attendance at off-site CPD but they do not contribute to the development of a flourishing culture of collaboration and learning at school level. The evidence from the stakeholder interviews, Chapter 7 (pp.170-172), concurs with this view.

It was suggested by a number of research participants, mainly stakeholder interviewees, that the school day should be extended to allow for teaching and non-teaching time.

Students would attend for teaching time and teachers would spend the extra time on school-related work, including CPD. A step towards the longer school day appeared to have been found in the Croke Park Agreement (2010)[18]. However, the research data indicate that there are varied practices in schools with regard to the use of the additional hours. In some schools the extra time is well-organised and is very beneficial to teachers' CPD but in other schools there is resentful compliance with the requirement.

An alternative solution to the time issue is to reduce teaching hours for students and provide this 'extra' time for staff CPD through planning, collaboration and other learning processes. This may appear to be a revolutionary proposal but it is normal practice in some countries. In Finland, for example, Sahlberg (2010) tells us how the time in school is used by Finnish teachers, besides teaching:

> …there is also time every day to plan, learn and reflect on teaching with other teachers. Teachers...have many other responsibilities besides teaching: they assess their students' achievement and overall progress, prepare and continuously develop their own school curriculum, participate in several school health and well-being initiatives concerning their students and provide remedial support to those who may need additional help. Many Finnish schools are, by virtue of a unique definition of teachers' work and by their nature, professional learning communities (p.64).

OECD (2011) shows that 7 - 14 year olds in Finland had the least teaching hours, and students in Lower Secondary Education had the third lowest teaching hours of the selected OECD countries. Yet, as Sahlberg (2010) points out, "there appears to be very little correlation between intended instruction hours in public education and resulting student performance, as assessed by PISA study" (p.62). In fact, the PISA results up to and including 2009 show Finnish students performing in the top rankings.

The OECD (2011) figures for the time teachers spend teaching show 915 teaching hours per annum in primary schools in Ireland compared to 677 hours in Finnish primary schools. There are 735 teaching hours per annum in post-primary schools in Ireland compared to 592 hours and 550 hours, respectively, in Finnish lower and upper secondary schools. The Finnish "Less is More" approach to teaching time is worthy of exploration and consideration in relation to the school day in Ireland.

[18] The Public Service (Croke Park) Agreement (2010) which was reluctantly agreed to by the teacher unions, required of teachers "The provision, with effect from the start of the 2010/11 school year, of an additional hour per week to be available to facilitate, at the discretion of management, school planning, continuous professional development, induction, substitution and supervision…" (p.23).

10.2.4 Comparisons - a brief overview of CPD in other jurisdictions

It can be instructive to learn from the examples of CPD in jurisdictions like New Zealand, Scotland and Ontario. The following is a brief summary based on information from the interviews conducted with key people in the teaching regulatory bodies in these jurisdictions.

In New Zealand there is no requirement to do a set number of CPD hours, apart from mandatory CPD for the introduction of a new curriculum for which schools are closed. However, teachers are expected to engage in CPD to address professional needs that arise for them. This is queried every three years when they apply for renewal of their practising certificate[19]. At that stage, they are asked what they have done "to ensure that their practice is up to the renewal requirements" (Int3). The Head Teacher has to have "verifiable evidence…gathered from the work of teachers" before signing off on a teacher as being up to the required standard and worthy of receiving a new practising certificate (Int3). What we can learn from this is that teachers need to be afforded opportunities to reflect on their teaching situations, they need to be given the responsibility to identify their learning needs and they need to be supported in sourcing and engaging in the professional learning that addresses those needs.

In Scotland, under the McCrone settlement of 2001, teachers are required to engage annually in 35 hours of CPD outside of school time and at their own expense, as part of their employment contract. This was a negotiated settlement with teachers and, according to the interviewee, it was accepted by teachers as they were already engaging in this level of CPD, and more (Int2). In Scotland, teachers are asked to keep a profile or a record as evidence of what they've done during the 35 CPD hours and how seriously this is interrogated varies from authority to authority. Teachers are trusted to fulfil the CPD requirement. In Scotland also, apart from these 35 hours, there is extensive provision for teachers' CPD, including five in-service days during the school year. This raises a question about the length of the school year in Ireland and whether it should be extended to accommodate five dedicated CPD days for school staff. Perhaps such extra days could be negotiated in lieu of the restoration of teachers' pre-austerity income levels.

In Ontario, teachers do not have mandatory CPD but the interviewee from that region said that

[19] Renewal of a teacher's practising certificate in New Zealand is similar to renewal of a teacher's registration with the Teaching Council in Ireland.

> If you look at the number of teachers that engage in on-going professional learning in this Province, it is staggering…we have 172 District School Boards, we have 230,000 members of our profession and all those boards offer summer institutes which are all filled to capacity. There are often waiting lists (Int1).

Also in Ontario, subject associations are thriving. They offer ongoing professional development and, such is teachers' interest in CPD programmes, they cannot meet the demand. Teacher federations [unions] are also very involved in on-going professional learning and they offer summer institutes [courses] which continue to grow at a high rate. The Ontario College of Teachers [equivalent to the Teaching Council in Ireland] offers 365 additional qualifications courses in English and French, some of which are a requirement for certain posts, e.g., Special Education Teacher, Principal, teaching English as a Second Language. Over 30,000 teachers take additional courses every year at a personal cost of $600 - $800.

The information from Ontario highlights a number of considerations for the Irish situation with regard to teachers' CPD. The subject associations could be actively encouraging teachers to become members and they could be supported in playing a stronger role in facilitating transformative CPD for teachers, beyond sharing ideas on preparing students for examinations. Likewise, the teacher unions might be encouraged to adopt a twin-track approach to their role, being animateurs for teachers' CPD while still maintaining their industrial relations brief. This could enhance their standing in the eyes of the community and of the profession and draw greater numbers of teachers to be participative rather than passive union members. Traditionally, the INTO held such a CPD brief through the Professional Development Unit which has been actively promoting teachers' CPD since the early 90s.

In summary, when we look at some examples from abroad of teachers' engagement in CPD, it is evident that there is a culture of CPD in other countries which has not yet been fully developed in Ireland. Here, the provision of a meaningful system of CPD for teachers throughout their careers is still at an embryonic stage. We see that teachers in other countries give a lot of time to their own professional development outside of school time. It is worth considering what is happening in these countries and what can be learned that would be applicable in the Irish situation. Structures might be created to ensure that teachers at school level are consulted and involved in the design and facilitation of CPD which is responsive to their identified needs and to their preferred learning styles. It would

be desirable that CPD that is intended to embed the implementation of new national initiatives would enjoy the ongoing availability to schools and teachers of a capable, well-informed, creative support service such as the PDST. However, a new approach is needed to the issue of time for CPD, including the length and the composition of the school day, to provide space for teachers' non-teaching professional work of reflecting, evaluating, planning and preparing their work as individual teachers and collaboratively with colleagues. Some suggestions may be challenging and controversial and how these may be addressed, how obstacles may be overcome, will be looked at in Chapter 11.

10.3 Teachers as Lifelong Learners

The previous section on the Continuum of Teacher Education highlighted a number of issues with regard to the system-driven CPD which has been experienced by teachers. Because of the nature of the national CPD programmes, in particular, catering as they do for the introduction of new initiatives, many teachers associate their professional learning mainly with off-site attendance at CPD in-service courses, as evidenced in the focus group interviews with teachers reported in Chapter 9, (pp.208-211). While the majority of teachers engage in formal CPD on a regular basis, there is evidence in the research data that the majority of teachers have not internalised the concept of lifelong learning for themselves in their professional role. When asked about teachers as lifelong learners, teachers in the focus group interviews referred to teachers' engagement in postgraduate studies as evidence of their commitment to professional development (Chapter 9, pp.205-206). In establishing and promoting a culture of lifelong learning, it would be beneficial to broaden teachers' understanding and appreciation of the many learning opportunities open to them which are, in essence, facilitating their continuing professional development, some of which have been mentioned previously in this chapter. These include subject associations, professional learning networks, special interest groups and support groups, some or all of which may currently be engaging in professional learning activities on a functional basis to assist teachers in the classroom. In the context of lifelong learning, further exploration of these groups' potential will be necessary in order to expose teachers to their transformative possibilities. How this can best be done will be considered in this section in relation to: 10.3.1 Teachers' reflective practice; 10.3.2 Teachers' engagement in research and 10.3.3 A career path for the teaching profession.

10.3.1 Teachers' reflective practice

There is little evidence from the research data that the majority of teachers are reflective practitioners. This emerged in a number of individual interviews with stakeholders as reported in Chapter 7 (pp.159-160). Many of the teachers who participated in the focus group interviews said that they do not have time to think because they are so busy *during* the school day and they are so tired at the *end* of the day. However, just as teachers do not recognise that they are lifelong learners, they may not realise that they regularly engage in reflection, alone and with colleagues, albeit unplanned and unstructured. Reflection happens every day in the classroom as part of the teaching process where teachers observe and think about students' engagement with the learning process which they, the facilitators of that process, have designed. Further reflection usually takes place when teachers follow-on and plan the next stage of learning for their students. They may discuss with staff colleagues, even in a very general way, how a particular student, or group of students, is getting on. This does not happen in a mental vacuum. It involves reflection but what may be missing, in a more important sense, is the high quality of reflection. Day's (2004) research highlights the significance of this issue:

> Peer partnerships and networks, discussions and dialogues between practitioners with common purposes, and periods of sustained intellectual challenge through programmes of study in universities, are needed, first to move from routine to reflective practice in schools; and second, to combat the dangers of cultures that cut off teachers from opportunities to open up and review and renew core moral purposes, identity, and emotional commitments through interrogating their thinking and practices (p.114).

In Ireland, a type of reflection has been built into a number of teachers' school-based initiatives such as school self-evaluation (SSE) (www.education.ie). SSE has recently been introduced as a collaborative, inclusive, reflective process of internal school review for all primary and post-primary schools in the country. The approach to reflection in the SSE process, as set out in the Department's *School Self-Evaluation Guidelines* (2012), appears to be based on a functional and formulaic pattern of questioning which requires evidence-based answers. For SSE to be a transformative experience for teachers, the reflective process will have to adopt a holistic and multidimensional approach which is personally and professionally meaningful. The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) has adopted such an approach in its publication, *Teaching: The Reflective Profession,* published in the early 2000s. While this document sets out a set of competences, the GTCNI (2005) states that

> the teacher competences must be considered holistically and not treated as a set of discrete entities, divested of values or a sense of mission and professional identity…teachers, in discharging their responsibilities, engage first and foremost as individuals with a sense of moral purpose and responsibility and it is in the interaction between mission, ethical understanding and professional knowledge that the mystery that is never far from the heart of good teaching is to be found (p.5.).

In reflecting on the heart of their teaching, teachers in this country might find it useful to look at the Learning Outcomes for Graduates of Programmes of ITE as set out in *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (2011b) published by the Teaching Council. While intended for graduating teachers, these statements are applicable to all teachers. Individually or as a group, reflecting on their professional work, teachers could take any one of the statements and reflect in a deep and meaningful way on what the statement means for them in their teaching, e.g., "planning coherent, differentiated and integrated teaching programmes which are informed by ongoing reflection on professional practice" (p.25). Similarly, the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2012) could be a stimulus for teacher reflection, e.g., "create an environment where pupils/ students can become active agents in the learning process and develop lifelong learning skills" (p.7).

10.3.2 Teachers' engagement in research

It emerged from the research evidence that a significant number of stakeholder interviewees do not believe that teachers, in general, are actively engaged in research. Neither do teachers engage to a significant extent in reading professional literature or educational material, according to the research data. In the questionnaire to teachers, Irish teachers' responses on engagement in non-formal CPD (Table 5.13.a, p.105) showed that 28% of teachers frequently read books on education, 19% frequently read professional journals and 13% frequently attend professional conferences. It is evident that the teachers who engage in research are mainly those undertaking postgraduate studies. The question is, why are teachers not avid readers of educational literature, why are they not engaging in research and how can this be changed?

Engagement in research at the stage of their initial teacher education could set the foundation for teachers' lifelong engagement in research. This has been the case in Finland where, by the late 1970s, all teacher education was based in universities, a master's degree became the basic teaching qualification and, according to Sahlberg (2010), "the seeds were sown for believing that the teaching profession is based on scholarly research" (p.78).

Teacher education in Finland is research-based and one aspect of this is that student teachers conduct action research on their own work. Similarly, the structure of reconceptualised ITE courses In Ireland incorporates significant action research requirements as part of the programme. In future, newly qualifying teachers (NQTs) will have assimilated action research, the discipline of being one's own best critic, as part of their professional outlook. NQTs will carry the knowledge and understanding of action research with them to the schools where they teach but it will require appropriate CPD structures to enable them to further develop their action research capabilities within their practice. It will also require dedicated CPD to facilitate the development of the action research capabilities of serving teachers who have no previous experience of this discipline. CPD in future might also promote the use of action research within subject associations and learning networks where it is not already a feature of those groups' endeavours. Joint action research would give a purposeful focus to the work of these groups with transformational outcomes for the group and for the group members as a result of the insights they would gain into their practice.

The ability to conduct and make meaning of action research is an invaluable asset for teachers. It is personally and professionally rewarding for the teachers involved and it makes a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in a school. Teachers' action research projects may also provide opportunities to include stakeholders and other agencies in the school community. In that context, Day (1999) points out that

> action research relies both on the desire of teachers to engage in reflection as a means of development and the willingness of the school in which they work to provide appropriate support. It requires also that those from outside the school who participate in collaborative research with those inside schools engage in a synthesis of research activity with human correspondence. The former has often been over-emphasized at the expense of the latter (p.35).

10.3.3 A career path for the teaching profession

In Ireland there is no formal set of learning stepping stones to illustrate teachers' professional development throughout their career. Teachers who have a vision for advancement in their career may plan their journey of professional development accordingly, engaging in CPD as appropriate. In some professions, such as accountancy, a career path is clearly marked out and is clearly associated with promotion. A career path need not necessarily be associated with career advancement as in promotion to a more senior post. It is recognised that professional learning is a dynamic process and the

consideration of a career path for teachers is not intended to imply that there should be a rigid, linear process with clearly defined stages. A career path can illustrate the development of a wider and deeper understanding of one's area of work while remaining in the same post. Some teachers choose to be excellent class or subject teachers rather than seek promotion or move into other areas of education.

It would be desirable that the Teaching Council in Ireland would consider developing a professional award for teachers which might require evidence of the teacher's practice through action research, professional portfolios, or other methods. For information, it might be worth examining the design of the former Chartered Teacher award in Scotland. Possible professional designations for teachers in Ireland, such as Specialist Teacher and Consultant Teacher, will be discussed in Chapter 11. Developmental career designations could provide an incentive for teachers to: engage in professional learning; reflect on their practice; conduct action research in their classrooms and in their schools; share their practice with colleagues and with teachers in other schools through seminars and conferences; write about their practice or document it using the multimedia technology now available in many schools.

In summary, the research evidence shows that teachers in Ireland engage in elements of lifelong learning but the culture of lifelong learning has not yet reached a mature stage of development. One of the goals of CPD which is transformational for teachers might be the development of teachers' capacity to critically reflect on and analyse every aspect of their work. The main focus of teachers' reflection might be the educational benefits of their teaching for their students and it may be necessary to produce materials which could stimulate teachers' deeply thoughtful reflection on their practice. CPD for teachers on how to conduct action research could greatly enhance the development of a culture of lifelong professional learning in the teaching profession. Setting out a career path or professional development milestones for teachers could also provide a great incentive for them to engage in professional learning.

10.4 Teachers' professional responsibilities beyond the classroom

The changing role of the teacher in the twenty-first century presents one of the biggest challenges in creating a framework for CPD for teachers. It is widely recognised in policy documents and reports, and in the literature on teacher education, that we are living in an era of unprecedented change in society which is, in turn, reflected in our schools. This was

captured in documents referred to in Chapter 2, and in the Introduction to the Teaching Council's *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011a) which stated that, "the changes in an increasingly diverse society, changing family structures and the emergence of new societal and economic problems are contributing to the complexity of teaching in 21st century Ireland" (p. 6). The additional pressure being experienced by teachers was acknowledged In the Chief Inspector's Report (2013) when he said that "the period [2010-2012] has been one of very great challenge and change for everyone involved in Irish education and in the delivery of all public services" (p.5).

Teachers need to be flexible and adaptable to cater for young people's needs, while exercising professional responsibility and maintaining the highest standards of professional practice at all times. Professional responsibility extends beyond the classroom to teachers' colleagues, to parents, to school management, to the Department of Education and Skills and to the wider public, as set out in the Teaching Council *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* (2012). The wider public is sometimes overlooked when we speak about professional responsibility. Teaching is carried out in the interest of the public good. People in the wider public arena have a vested interest in ensuring that students receive the best possible education, for their own good as young people and also for the good of society, now and in the future. Therefore, it is in the interest of the public good that the wider society would support teachers' professional development, where feasible.

It has been acknowledged by the research participants in this study that teachers are motivated to enter the profession for the most altruistic of ideals. It is also acknowledged that the majority of teachers are caring and dedicated in their teaching role. However, it is also recognised that in a number of areas, in addition to the areas already discussed such as lifelong learning, professional responsibility is not being exercised to its fullest degree. These areas relate to: 10.4.1 Collaborative processes and 10.4.2 New entrants to the profession.

10.4.1 Professional responsibility in relation to collaborative processes

Whitcomb et al (2009) found that "a growing body of literature indicates that professional development experiences are particularly effective when situated in a collegial learning environment, where teachers work collaboratively to enquire and reflect on their teaching" (p.210). The research data show that while collaboration is happening, a culture of collaboration has not yet been embedded in Irish schools, as mentioned previously in this chapter.

Time to facilitate collaboration between teachers is a pressing issue and this has already been referred to in this chapter in relation to CPD within teachers' time in school. Teachers in the focus groups complained that they do not have time to collaborate properly on matters of educational importance, that professional conversation is frequently reduced to a few snatched moments when they meet on the corridor and that routine administrative tasks occupy much of their time. One of the key areas where collaboration needs to take place is in reflecting on the needs of the students in the school and the school's response to those needs.

A structure for teachers to reflect in collaboration with each other is found in professional learning communities. Du Four (2004) explains that

> The professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn. This simple shift – from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning – has profound implications for schools (p.8).

DuFour (2004) looks at the key questions on teaching and learning that need to be explored by a professional learning community in a school. His insight illustrates the transformative possibilities that emerge from questioning, e.g., he says that it is the way a school addresses the question "How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?" which "separates learning communities from traditional schools" (p. 8).

Apart from participating in formal collaborative structures, teachers might be encouraged to open their doors and their practice to each other, to discuss, to collaborate and to share their expertise in the interests of the students. Teacher collaboration through peer observation and peer evaluation may be difficult for teachers whose practice is largely conducted in isolation from other adults. This is not an entirely new concept in Irish schools. Some in-class team teaching is happening in the area of Learning Support, as we heard from primary teachers in the focus group interviews. In the mid to late 70s, collaborative teaching practices were experienced by some teachers in Ireland in shared-area classrooms: two teachers working cooperatively, team-teaching, engaging in peer observation and sharing peer evaluation. Over the years, shared areas were re-constructed but now may be an opportune time to return to the shared area concept in the interests of developing collaborative processes.

In summary, teachers have a professional responsibility to collaborate on the teaching and learning that is happening in the school and also in individual classrooms. Collaboration is

more than consultation or co-operation. Collaboration has its roots in partnership and where true partnership exists there are shared goals, mutual respect and a willingness to communicate. Over and above the issue of time, teachers might be facilitated to plan structures and processes which support collaboration and these might be factored into teachers' working life in schools.

10.4.2 Professional responsibility in relation to new entrants to the profession

Professional responsibility in relation to new entrants to the profession refers to the support that newly qualified teachers (NQTs) can expect to receive from their teaching colleagues when they take up their first teaching appointment in a school. It might be a reasonable expectation that all teachers and all schools are welcoming of student teachers and newly-qualified teachers. The role of being a mentor to an NQT on the induction programme has been willingly embraced by hundreds of teachers in this country in recent years. Mentors have acknowledged that the CPD they receive as part of their role benefits them as much as it benefits the inductees they work with. Another dimension of entry to the profession is that of being probated. Currently NQTs are probated by the Principal at post-primary level and by the inspectorate at primary level. Under its statutory responsibility for probation, the Teaching Council has introduced a career entry programme, Droichead [Bridge], on a pilot basis. It aims to be a very positive, encouraging experience for fledgling teachers. A well-designed CPD programme for Principals and member of staff with responsibility for probationary matters could alleviate teachers' fears and enable them to enthusiastically embrace the responsibility of nurturing the newcomers into the profession.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the main issues arising from the research data which will need to be looked at in creating a framework for transformative CPD for teachers. To recap, these issues include: strengthening teachers' professional identity; engendering in the teaching profession a culture of lifelong learning in the context of the continuum of teacher education and enabling teachers to become reflective practitioners working in collaboration with colleagues and others in the school community and beyond. A number of ideas have been put forward suggesting what transformational CPD might do to address these issues. These include: enabling teachers to release their creative energies through a new-found confidence in their professional identity; to articulate their role as practitioners and to

develop their voice in addressing public comment on teaching; to engage in learning networks where they share their expertise and learn from others; to collaborate within their school communities for the purpose of ensuring high quality learning for their students and to work with parents and the wider community for the same purpose. These areas will be further developed in Chapter 11 in looking at *how* they might become integral to a transformative CPD framework for teachers.

Chapter 11

Enabling Transformation within the Teaching Profession

Introduction

Based on the research data which this study yielded, Chapter 10 identified the key areas of teachers' practice and aspects of their professional lives which may be in need of attention. The chapter also made general proposals as to how these areas might be addressed. This chapter will offer specific suggestions as to how CPD could enable teachers to be transformed in their professional role and, accordingly, facilitate a dynamic change in the practice of teaching. The suggestions focus on: strengthening teachers' sense of professional identity; developing a culture of lifelong learning which is integral to teachers' professional lives and promoting teacher collaboration with colleagues and others in the school community.

When referring to CPD in this chapter, being mindful of the literature on CPD reviewed in Chapter 3, CPD will be understood to include the broad spectrum of professional learning which happens through planned programmes and activities at national, regional and local school level. It will also include the professional learning which happens at a semi-formal or incidental level when teachers meet in pairs or small groups and talk about their practice, e.g., at conferences, on the periphery of formal programmes, in the staffroom at lunch break, etc. It will further include the individual teacher's learning through studying at postgraduate level, the practice of teaching, reflecting, reading, writing, keeping a professional portfolio, and so on. This chapter will be set out in three main sections as follows:

11.1 CPD and the transformation of teachers' sense of professional identity:
- 11.1.1 The role of the teacher in the 21st century
- 11.1.2 The evaluation of the quality of teaching

11.2 CPD and the development of a culture of lifelong learning:
- 11.2.1 A range of professional learning and CPD opportunities
- 11.2.2 Professional designations accredited by the Teaching Council

11.3 CPD and teacher collaboration within and without the school community:
- 11.3.1 The creation of a professional learning community
- 11.3.2 Being a learner in a professional learning community

11.1 CPD and the transformation of teachers' sense of professional identity

In the analysis of findings from the research conducted for this study, it was noted that teachers' sense of professional identity in Ireland is not as strong as it might be, as evidenced in the stakeholders' interviews (Table 6.5, p.147) and in the teachers' focus group interviews (Table 8.5, p.194). The evidence indicated that teachers' sense of identity was diminished by negative media comments on the profession. The significance of this finding is supported by Kelchtermans (2009) who concludes that the way teachers see themselves as teachers is largely influenced by how others see them as teachers (p.259).

Also, as noted previously, Beijaard et al (2000) found that "Teachers' perceptions of their own professional identity affect their efficacy and professional development as well as their ability and willingness to cope with educational change and to implement innovations in their own teaching practice" (p.750). Elements of much of the foregoing concord in the literature on teachers' professional identity were also evident in the research findings from the present study. A key role for CPD in strengthening teachers' professional identity is to enable teachers to explore their professional role and come to new understandings of themselves as practitioners.

While there are a number of approaches through which CPD can enable teachers to have a strong professional identity, two will be considered in this section, 11.1.1 The role of the teacher in the 21st century and 11.1.2 The evaluation of the quality of teaching.

11.1.1 Teachers' identity in the context of the role of the teacher in the 21st century

Teachers' identity in the context of the role of the teacher in the 21st century requires that purposeful CPD will guide teachers through a process of developing their awareness of the breadth and depth of that role. Teachers might engage in a process of self-reflection on the "key characteristics required of teachers for today's and tomorrow's school" described by Coolahan (2002) as:

> a deep understanding of her/himself, and of the nature of her/his work…a wide range of professional skills in teaching, planning, assessment and personal relationships…flexibility, be open to self-renewal and be a lifelong learner…competent in subject areas and be prepared to co-operate as a team member…a repertoire of teaching skills, including those which can engage the sensibilities of alienated pupils or those with learning difficulties…skills in the application of ICT to education…an informed

> awareness of the social, cultural and political factors which impinge on her/his work…a good understanding of young people's intellectual and affective development and to be sympathetic to their culture and problems…skills in relating efficiently with parents and with other educational partners (p.12).

Teachers invariably have a tacit knowledge of their practitioner role. However, this may need to be made explicit through reflection and dialogue whereby they can articulate what they do, and identify their underlying assumptions and attitudes. Opportunities may need to be created where CPD guides teachers through reflection and stimulates dialogue on their practice, including the key characteristics of teachers outlined above, and more. The development of teachers' self-awareness could include reflection on the complexity of teaching in the context of the changing nature of society and of education.

In discussing and reflecting on their practice, most teachers will be aware that there is a dimension to how they work which cannot be anchored specifically in the formulaic and commonly used domains of attitudes, knowledge, skill and competence. This is what Schön (1987) refers to as "artistry…an exercise of intelligence, a kind of knowing, though different in crucial respects from our standard model of professional knowledge" (p.13). Giving teachers the confidence to know and appreciate how they use their artistry in what Schön (1987) calls the "indeterminate zones of practice – uncertainly, uniqueness and value conflict" (p.6) would be a powerful boost to their professional identity. Similarly, the experience of sustained, participatory CPD might fruitfully engage teachers in an exploration of Eisner's (1979) thesis that "teaching is an art guided by educational values, personal needs, and by a variety of beliefs and generalizations that the teacher holds to be true" (p.153). Eisner characterises the art of teaching as: being aesthetic as in a form of artistic expression; making judgments "that unfold during the course of action" in the classroom; teacher activity being influenced by "contingencies that are unpredicted" and achieving the ends "in the process of interaction with students" (pp.153-154).

If CPD is to be truly transformative, teachers will need to engage in reflection and discussion on their practice of teaching within the domain of teaching as an art, outlined above. CPD needs to take teachers beyond the practical, quick-fix ideas and activities for the classroom to an exploration of their role in the classroom at a deeper and more meaningful level.

11.1.2 Teachers' professional identity and the evaluation of the quality of teaching

Teachers' professional identity and the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in schools are inextricably linked in the context of teachers' perception of their effectiveness in their professional role. Teacher effectiveness is multidimensional and can include positive outcomes for students, beyond learning success, which are not measurable in the short term. However, the quality of teaching is frequently judged through the lens of students' learning outcomes. Positive professional identity, for some teachers, can be dependent on students' measurable success and on others' perceptions of their teaching prowess based on student success. A CPD process which enables teachers to contextualise, and to be the prime evaluators of teaching and learning in their classrooms and in their schools, could contribute to the transformation of teachers' professional identity and could greatly enhance their sense of professional responsibility.

Currently, albeit not intended, the system of external evaluation in schools through the Department's Whole School Evaluation (WSE), and other inspection processes, can be quite disempowering for some teachers. There is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that teachers make extraordinary efforts in preparing for a WSE to impress the inspector(s). It would be desirable that teachers would have confidence that their daily work would stand on its merit, as it does in an incidental (unannounced) inspection. However, teachers' professional identity and the school's reputation appear to be dependent, to some extent, on the WSE report, which is publicly available.

The Chief Inspector (2012) declares that "External inspection needs to be complemented by a commitment among teachers and managers in schools to keep the standards and work of the school under constant review" (p.26). Such internal school review is the main focus of the current phase of School Self-Evaluation, i.e., the Teaching and Learning Dimension, introduced by the Department in 2012. The move from less WSE to more SSE is seen to be desirable in the interest of teachers' development of their professional responsibility for the evaluation of teaching and learning in their schools. Furthermore, it might be desirable that teachers would ultimately be trusted to provide evidenced-based quality assurances to the Department, based on school self-evaluation. This would be in line with what is happening in Finland, where the school inspection system was abolished in the early 90s. According to Sahlberg (2010), Finnish school principals work with their teachers to identify areas that need to be improved and he further points out that

> The basic assumption in Finnish schools is that teachers, by default, are well-educated professionals and are doing their best in schools. In real professional learning communities teachers trust each other, communicate frequently about teaching and learning, and rely on their principal's guidance and leadership (p.91).

The language of the SSE (2012) documentation[20] speaks of a "collaborative, inclusive, reflective process" (p.12) with the focus on identifying pupils' and students' learning outcomes through "gathering evidence, analysing evidence and judging quality" (p.14). In the Foreword to the SSE Guidelines, the Minister states that

> When the self-evaluation conversation is really successful, school staffs will move on naturally to discuss *"What do we need to do now to improve?"* and they will work collaboratively to change their practice and improve the learning experience for students. This sort of collaboration is invigorating and professionally rewarding as teachers come to see how much it can support them in their work with students (p.3).

The SSE guidelines are vague with regard to the nature of the staff collaboration that will ensue to address the question "What do we need to do now to improve?" There is no suggestion that teachers will be expected to *evaluate their own learning.* If SSE is going to be a transformative process, it may require teachers to identify and address their own learning needs in order to "change their practice and improve the learning experiences for students". The Department may say that this is implicit in the SSE process. Equally, it could be argued that the staff could decide merely to adopt different teaching strategies for which no new professional learning would be required. In that event, the SSE process could be an impoverished exercise focused only on measurable outcomes for students. Ideally, the SSE process would be accompanied by a CPD programme for all teachers in the school that promotes teachers reflecting and learning about their own learning needs in order to address the students' learning needs. This view is supported by a review of articles in *Teaching and Teacher Education 2000-2010* where Avalos (2011) found that

> professional development is about teachers learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students' growth. Teacher professional learning is a complex process, which requires cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and

[20] School Self-Evaluation Guidelines for Primary Schools (2012). Department of Education and Skills School Self-Evaluation Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools (2012). Department of Education and Skills

> collectively, the capacity and willingness to examine where each one stands in terms of convictions and beliefs and the perusal and enactment of appropriate alternatives for improvement or change. All this occurs in particular educational policy environments or school cultures, some of which are more appropriate and conducive to learning than others (p.10).

In the context of the educational policy environment, SSE is a new and very important innovation in the education system. It is essential that it is supported by high quality CPD which enables teachers to recognise and bring to fruition its powerful potential for young people's learning and for the enrichment of the teaching profession. The ongoing development of the SSE process could enable teachers to move towards being respected evaluators of teaching and learning in their schools. Over and above the accountability aspect of evaluation, teachers' development and ownership of school evaluation could enhance their sense of professional responsibility and their pride in their work. This would greatly strengthen their professional identity.

11.2 CPD and the development of a culture of lifelong learning

The development of a culture of lifelong learning is explicitly part of the continuum of teacher education. While the continuum is understood to be the continuity of teacher learning, there is a risk that it may be seen as a phased approach with clearly delineated stages, as previously outlined in the 3 Is – Initial Teacher Education, Induction and In-service Education. It is somewhat understandable that the first two Is, being time bound, are seen as distinct phases of the teacher's career. The third I, In-service Education, has also tended to be cast as a phase with intermittent attention to teachers' learning needs as they arise, usually due to a new initiative which requires a change in teachers' practice.

Considerable progress has been made in recent years in helping teachers to realise that they have to constantly renew themselves as professionals. Increasingly, teachers know that to fulfil their role as teachers in the twenty first century they need to continually engage in professional learning. The research evidence from this study, particularly from the focus group interviews with teachers reported in Chapter 9 (pp.208-211), did not indicate that a vibrant culture of CPD has been embedded in the teaching profession in Ireland. Professional learning has not been integrated into teachers' daily lives as the everyday routines of teaching have been.

In this section, the development of a culture of lifelong learning in the teaching profession is explored through 11.2.1 A range of professional learning and CPD opportunities and 11.2.2 Professional designations accredited by the Teaching Council.

11.2.1 A range of professional learning and CPD opportunities

A range of professional learning and CPD opportunities is available to teachers to facilitate their journey of lifelong learning. These include the formal national provision for CPD offered by the PDST and other professional learning support teams, e.g., the Special Education Support Service (SESS), the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS). Coolahan (2002) agrees that lifelong learning is promoted through planned CPD programmes when he states that

> It is clear that improved and targeted in-service education for teachers forms a crucial and essential dimension in the promotion of a lifelong learning policy. It supports teachers to be themselves lifelong learners, improves motivation and morale, gives new empowerment, develops new skills and, accordingly, helps teachers to be animating promoters of learning and open to new developments. Lifelong learning should be regarded as the master principle for the future renewal of the teaching profession (p.27).

Other CPD opportunities for teachers' lifelong learning are available through the Education Centres' CPD programmes and courses which are held in the evenings, at weekends and during the summer holidays. Many schools also organise school-based CPD courses, particularly as summer programmes. A significant number of teachers undertake postgraduate studies in HEIs and many teachers engage in professional learning through membership of professional bodies, learning networks/subject associations, school-based action research, reading and attending conferences. As teachers have a wide range of CPD options available to them, they need to choose wisely what best suits their learning needs and their own particular learning styles. Avalos (2011) found that

> Not every form of professional development, even those with the greatest evidence of positive impact, is of itself relevant to all teachers. There is thus a constant need to study, experiment, discuss and reflect in dealing with teacher professional development on the interacting links and influences of the history and traditions of groups of teachers, the educational needs of their student populations, the expectations of their education systems, teachers' working conditions and the opportunities to learn that are open to them (p.10).

In determining the suitability of CPD, Bruce King (2002) suggests that "professional development that promotes inquiry will involve teachers in determining content and

process, will relate specifically to their students, will be sustained and systematic, and will entail active learning that may lead to important changes in beliefs and practices" (p.244).

11.2.2 Professional designations accredited by the Teaching Council

Professional designations, or titles, could be valuable in the context of strengthening teachers' professional identity and the development of their professional expertise. The Teaching Council is well placed to consider this idea as it is the body that would accredit such professional designations for teachers. In looking at the comparable role of the Institute of Teachers in New South Wales, Mockler (2005) states that

> Bodies that seek to regulate, accredit and register members of the teaching profession…have the potential to contribute significantly to the teaching profession through the provision of pathways for professional growth and development, and the adoption of a supporting stance for the emergence of a transformative teaching profession (p.739).

Other professional bodies also have registered professional titles for the member of their profession, e.g., Engineers Ireland (EI). EI says that "A registered professional title from Engineers Ireland provides peer reviewed and internationally recognised formal recognition of your professional competence. It is an accolade associated with the very best of the engineering profession" (www.engineersireland.ie).

Three such Teaching Council designations might be Specialist Teacher, Consultant Teacher and Mentor Teacher. Each designation could be associated with particular expertise, for example: a Specialist Teacher would have developed expertise in a subject over and above that required to qualify as a teacher of that subject, e.g., advanced subject content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and subject methodology; a Consultant Teacher would have developed expertise in an area relevant to teaching, exclusive of a teaching subject, e.g., Leadership, Learning Support, Assessment, Classroom Management; a Mentor Teacher would have developed expertise in mentoring NQTs, Principals or experienced teachers. Teachers aspiring to be awarded a professional designation might complete a programme accredited by the Council based on set requirements. Such a programme might characteristically involve the teacher in illustrating his/her reflection, practice, learning, attitude and values in a variety of ways. These could include written assignments, a professional portfolio and a personal presentation.

The professional award might be made by the Council, which could register the teacher's achievement of the title. This register could be publicly accessible and could be of value to

teachers, to schools, to Education Centres, to HEIs and to others who might wish to call on the teacher for advice, to facilitate CPD or to give support in their area of expertise. The development and recognition of teacher expertise, a focus of the award of teacher designations, would partially address Coolahan's (2002) suggestion that "There is a need for increasing specialisation within the teaching profession to bring extra expertise to areas of school life requiring it, e.g., remedial, guidance and counselling, management and leadership" (p.12).

The introduction of the more widely known Chartered Teacher as a generic award rather than the specific designations suggested above is also a possibility. The idea of being chartered is noteworthy and is recognised as a designation within other professions, e.g., engineering, accountancy. However, the Chartered Teacher title is being discontinued in Scotland for future aspirants and it failed to be initiated in Wales, despite the expectation that their Chartered Teacher Pilot Project in the mid-2000s would be mainstreamed. While worthy of serious consideration, the perceived value of the Chartered Teacher designation may have become somewhat diminished by its abolition in Scotland. Consequently, it might not inspire the confidence it deserves if it were to be introduced in Ireland.

In proposing the professional designations for teachers, the author is aware of the reality, as Wang et al (2010) argue, that "educators need to understand the political realities, the stakeholder groups, and the role of advocacy in enacting bold ideas in teaching and teacher education" (p.12). In that context, there would inevitably be a need to address alternative suggestions and possible objections with regard to professional teaching designations from teacher unions or the Department of Education and Skills, or even from teachers themselves.

Teacher unions may argue that specific professional designations would lead to division in the profession with regard to perceptions of importance or status associated with a professional designation. In response, it could be argued that rather than fearing differentiation, it might be welcomed as an enrichment and an enhancement of the profession collectively. The focus might be on why this should happen, and needs to happen, rather than why not.

The Department of Education and Skills may fear that there would be financial implications for the government. These might include demands from the unions for additional salary

allowances on foot of the teacher's designation. This would be a matter for discussion by the appropriate bodies.

11.3 CPD and teacher collaboration within and without the school community

Teacher collaboration is a form of adult learning, explored in Chapter 3, where teachers share their practice, learn from each other and gain valuable insights from expressing their own thoughts. The research data from this study show that teacher collaboration has not yet been embedded in Irish schools, albeit that many teachers have experience of collaborative processes for specific purposes, e.g., school development planning. Working collaboratively can be a very worthwhile experience for the participants at a personal and a professional level. It was stated by a significant number of teachers in the focus group interviews, Chapter 9 (p.215) that teachers learn a lot from each other in the incidental conversations that happen at CPD events, at conferences and on other occasions when teachers meet. This view is supported by the statement from Avalos (2011) who found that

> The road starts with informal exchanges in school cultures that facilitate the process, continues in networking and interchanges among schools and situations and is strengthened in formalised experiences such as courses and workshops that introduce peer coaching or support collaboration and joint projects. In whatever way, the lesson learned is that teachers naturally talk to each other, and that such a talk can take on an educational purpose (pp.17-18).

McLaughlin and Talbert (2010) explain that a professional learning community is "a group of individuals who share a goal and work together to achieve the goal, assess their progress, make corrections, and hold themselves accountable for achieving their common goal" (p.35). McLaughlin's and Talbert's concept of the school staff as a professional learning community, or a similar definition, was not clearly articulated in the research data gathered in Ireland for this thesis, albeit that it may have been implicitly understood by the research participants. There is scope for CPD to educate teachers on what constitutes a learning community, how it can be formed, developed and sustained, the ethics, norms and values which underpin the group's work and the collaborative processes which the group employs. Learning *how* to be a learning community could be greatly enhanced through the experience of b*eing* a learning community and reflecting on the process. Thus, the development of collaborative CPD processes at staff level could support the formation of the staff as a professional learning community.

11.3.1 The creation of a professional learning community

The creation of a professional learning community could be greatly facilitated by a purposeful collaborative CPD project which ensures that the members of the group understand collaboration and are familiar with and comfortable with working collaboratively. A collaborative group is essentially a team of people with varying personalities, abilities, life histories, professional experiences, strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes who have agreed to work constructively together for professional purposes. For collaboration to be effective, it would be desirable that teachers would know and understand themselves and that they would recognise, respect and appreciate each other's differences, all of which contribute to the mutual endeavour, the purpose of the group. Where teachers feel safe in a group, it is likely that they will be forthcoming with their thoughts and ideas. Whitcomb et al (2009) conclude that

> Many conceptual discussions of professional learning communities identify respect and trust as essential features of a productive learning community. When in a safe and supportive environment, teachers are more likely to take risks and engage in challenging discussions that push them to deepen understanding and attempt new practices that will reach more learners (p.210).

However, the experience of working collaboratively may not necessarily be, in itself, educative and transformative. People may work together, ostensibly sharing the group's goal, making their contributions, respecting each other and generally behaving as a learning group but collaboration can be happening at a superficial level. This point is supported by Tripp (2004) in writing about the Teachers' Networks (TN) in Singapore when he says that "team learning does not necessarily result from placing teachers in learning teams…they also need learning processes" (p.195). Tripp advocates two key processes for learning groups, i.e., dialogue and action research.

Building trust in groups is essential for the success of the group's work but it can be a challenging task. In this regard, the group dynamics and the group's history, i.e., how the members of the group relate to each other and how some behaviours and practices may have become embedded over a period of time, may need to be considered. The roles previously played by members of the group may need to change to facilitate the equal contribution of all members of the group as they learn new ways of working together in the re-focused and re-formed learning group. Whether the learning group is a school staff group or a group of stakeholders working together, members need to be aware of the issue of power and how it is exercised in the group. Craft (2000) notes that

> In every institution, there are networks and hierarchies of power and authority alliances… the myriad of personal factors and alliances which can influence the trust people have in each other at work, their commitment to team decisions and goals, the way decisions are made and carried out, and even the overall ethos of the institution. Being aware of the politics of work is like listening the 'the music behind the words'; just as in a song, the music can have far more impact and effect than the words alone… (p.184).

11.3.2 Being a learner in a professional learning community

Being a learner in a professional learning community can be an exciting experience. Based on personal experience, a teacher educator in the stakeholder interviews said that "there is an absolute thrill in working collaboratively with other people…if we can actually demonstrate that and show that, I think there would be no going back" (TE4: 38.33). Rogers (1969), writing of the facilitation of learning, shared the same view in equally passionate terms:

> When I have been able to transform a group – and here I mean all the members of the group, myself included – into a community of *learners,* then the excitement has been almost beyond belief. To free curiosity; to permit individuals to go charging off in new directions dictated by their own interests; to unleash the sense of inquiry; to open everything to questioning and exploration; to recognize that everything is in process of change – here is an experience I can never forget (p. 105).

Professional learning communities have been studied extensively and documented in the literature on teachers working collaboratively. Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2010) researched Japan's lesson study where a lesson is prepared, taught, observed and discussed. Lieberman and Pointer Mace say that "these research lessons provide opportunities for teachers to learn from one another, refine their practice, and work with others to deepen their understanding of the complexities of teaching" (p.79).

van Es (2012), in studying a teacher learning community in California, conducted research on a teachers' video club where teachers came together to view video clips of each other teaching in their classrooms. This involved being a learning community where teachers felt comfortable having videos of their teaching viewed, discussed and analysed. van Es found that

> The results of this study suggest that teachers can develop supportive, collegial interactions to engage in substantive analysis of teaching and learning as they view video of one another's teaching. However, just as it takes time to learn new content and skills for teaching, it also takes time for groups of teachers to learn skills for collaboratively inquiring into teaching via video in order to develop into a community that is focused on learning in and from practice (p.191).

In Ireland, the practice of being videoed and/or observed while teaching is familiar to many student teachers and newly qualified teachers. There is much to commend the continuation of the process of all teachers giving and receiving feedback on each other's teaching as a regular feature of their ongoing learning. Teachers engaged in peer observation, or video clubs as outlined by van Es above, could be a valuable form of collaborative CPD. Having one's teaching critiqued by colleagues would have to be on a voluntary basis as it could be a daunting experience for some teachers. In many other professions, as referred to by an interviewee in the research process, practitioners work beside each other, observe each other, seek support from each other, query each other's practice and give feedback to each other. Similarly, teachers could greatly enrich each other's practice by sharing it with colleagues.

The proposed partnerships between HEIs and schools in Ireland may also be an opportunity for teachers' professional learning through joint research. Such research could be mutually beneficial to HEIs and teachers as illustrated by Sachs (2000) who says that

> There are many reasons for partnering in teacher research. These include: promoting change, improving practice and student learning outcomes, and contributing to knowledge construction which in turn enhances the status of teachers by formalising the knowledge base of the profession. Collaborative research between teachers and academics also provides each of them with the opportunity to adopt an outsider's or stranger's point of view, in relation to each other's professional world. This in turn stimulates informal and ongoing professional renewal for both parties (p.91).

A school ethos of teachers working collaboratively is vital for the facilitation of high quality education for the young people in the school. Teachers working collaboratively are also a powerful example for young people. The inner workings of the collaborative effort may not be on public display but may be evidenced in the respectful relationships and the strong work ethic which characterises the school ethos. Working collaboratively does not come naturally to everybody and there needs to be a process of initiation and education as teachers are guided in their collaborative endeavours.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a number of suggestions on how particular areas of teachers' professional lives, which were identified in the research for the study as needing attention, could be addressed. These suggestions have not provided fine detail in many respects but have, rather, focused on the transformative potential of CPD to enable teachers to *think*, *act* and *feel* differently in their professional role. The power, in the healthiest sense of the

word, that teachers have to change how they *are* as teachers is enormous. Tapping into that potential and bringing teachers along a different pathway is the work of transformative CPD opportunities. The benefits could be wide-ranging and far-reaching in respect of personal and professional efficacy and fulfilment.

Chapter 12 will address some of the practical matters in relation to creating a CPD framework that could support teacher transformation.

Chapter 12

The Way Forward: A CPD Framework for Teacher Transformation

Introduction

Chapter 11 offered suggestions for transformative CPD experiences which could enable teachers to change their approach to their professional role in a number of ways. This concluding chapter turns to concrete matters with a view to addressing the research question "what would be necessary for the creation of a national framework for continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers in Ireland?" Bearing in mind the ideas explored in the previous chapter, it will consider some of the practical issues involved in developing a framework for transformative CPD. These include:

12.1 CPD consultative structures – national, regional and local

12.2 CPD Policies and Processes towards enabling transformative CPD

12.3 Time for CPD

The research data showed that, on the whole, stakeholder representatives and teachers who were interviewed perceived CPD to be mainly related to national initiatives. In light of the evidence, it will require a significant shift in thinking to bring all the key players to the realisation that transformative CPD has a far more valuable and long-term effect on teaching and learning than a utilitarian approach to CPD. Kennedy (2005) explains that transformative CPD is actually a combination of a range of models of CPD and that issues of power are inherent to it. She further states that

> …an explicit awareness of issues of power means that the transformative model is not without tensions and indeed it might be argued that it actually relies on tensions: only through the realisation and consideration of conflicting agendas and philosophies can real debate be engaged in among the various stakeholders in education which might lead to transformative practice (p.247).

From the evidence in previous chapters, developing the necessary structures, policies and processes for a meaningful framework for teachers' CPD will call for the whole-hearted co-operation and the support of the stakeholders in education working with teachers. To commit to the intentions of the CPD framework, the stakeholders will need to understand what is being proposed, they will need to share the vision and they will need to be involved

in the reconceptualization of CPD as a transformative process. Stakeholders will also need to know their respective roles in supporting teachers' CPD. In the words of Sachs (2000)

> …it will also require new forms of affiliation and association between systems and union officials, as well as opportunities for all parties to come together on 'neutral ground' that has not been tainted by previous experiences, prejudices and leftover ideological baggage (p.92).

For that reason, the establishment of structures and processes for consultation between teachers and the education partners is proposed in the next section.

12.1 CPD consultative structures – national, regional and local

As a first step on the way to developing the structures towards creating a CPD Framework, the Teaching Council[21] might inaugurate a major consultative colloquium on CPD for teachers, involving the stakeholders in education and other interested parties. The purpose of this kind of initiative would be to enable the stakeholders in education to reach new understandings on the potential for teachers' CPD to transform teaching and learning in our schools. This CPD colloquium might adopt the *modus operandi* of the highly successful National Education Convention (1993) which

> set out to encourage participants to clarify viewpoints; to question, probe and analyse varying perspectives; to foster multi-lateral dialogue and improve mutual understanding between sectoral interests; to explore possibilities of new ways of doing things and to identify areas of actual or potential agreement between different interest groups (p.1).

Among other factors, the success of the National Convention was attributable to its continuation over nine days, followed by round-table sessions sequenced over a number of months. In his concluding comments at the convention, Professor Coolahan, Secretary General to the Convention (1994), said of the rich exchanges that took place:

> The value of an intensive immersion period in educational ideas has been exemplified. Creative ideas emerge, the stimulus to innovative thinking takes hold…making efforts to understand, and taking pains to see issues from other people's point of view…provides a surer foundation on which to build for a better future (p.236).

Modelling a CPD consultative forum on the foregoing, in order to get the most benefit from such an extended colloquium, provision might be made for a series of follow-up round

[21] The Teaching Council has a statutory remit under the Teaching Council Act, 2001, to "promote awareness among the teaching profession and the public of the benefits of continuing education and training and professional development" 39(2)(b).

tables to deal with important emergent issues, as happened productively with the National Education Convention. The Council has previously engaged in such in-depth consultation, at sectoral and cross-sectoral levels, in formulating the *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2001a).

It would be desirable that a colloquium on the development of a CPD framework for teachers would, in the first instance, have a sufficient number of days dedicated to it to ensure maximum active involvement and evolution of thinking by participants, in small groups and in larger groups. The colloquium itself could be a valuable learning opportunity for participants as they gained new insights into their own and others' thinking through the discourse, the debate and the sharing of ideas on the role of education and teachers in general and on teachers' professional development in particular.

Taking a medium to long-term view, the national CPD consultative colloquium might also initiate a further process: that of building a permanent, nationwide CPD consultative network of CPD Forums (Table 12.1, p.258). The purpose of the CPD Forum network might be to develop a communications system to facilitate consultation at all levels on the design of a national provision for CPD. At a CPD Forum gathering, the potential would exist for a meeting of minds where arguments are reviewed on their own merits, as distinct from the institutional power, or lack of it, enjoyed by the various participants. This could concur with Sachs (2000) "neutral ground" referred to in the introduction to this chapter. CPD Forums would not be responsible for policy formulation but they would yield a harvest of policy-rich ideas through brainstorming and expressing their thoughts, unfettered by sectoral-driven interests. Indeed, the CPD Forums could not work as open forums, outlined above, if they were seen to usurp the role or adopt the positions of the stakeholder groups. The respective roles of the stakeholder groups could proceed separately, according to each one's own remit, notwithstanding the possibility that individual people may belong to a CPD Forum and also to a stakeholder group.

The CPD Forum network might comprise three layers: firstly a National CPD Forum established under the auspices of the Teaching Council; secondly, Regional CPD Forums established in the Education Centres; and thirdly, a School CPD Forum established in every school. With regard to the latter, having the voice of teachers from the grassroots informing CPD policy at national level could greatly enhance teachers' professional identity and provide an impetus for meaningful engagement in transformative professional learning. The evidence from the responses in the questionnaires (Table 5.22.a, p.130)

indicates that 78% of Irish teachers strongly agreed that there should be a national CPD framework for teachers and 52% strongly agreed that the framework should be developed in consultation with the education partners.

Table 12.1

CPD Consultative Forum Structure – Enabling teachers' voices at grassroots level to be heard at national level through an intermediary process of representation at regional level.

As distinct from being a subgroup of the Teaching Council, the Council might decide that the National CPD Forum would be established as a separate entity but could include Council members. It would be important that the Education Centre Network and the PDST, as the major support service, would be represented on the National CPD Forum. The National Forum could give voice to a diversity of well-informed views, its own and those emerging from the Regional and School forums, without having the responsibility of formulating a CPD policy. Its views could inform the Council's work in formulating a CPD policy as it continues to develop and enrich the continuum of teacher education. It may be argued that the notion of the CPD Forum structure would be cumbersome and unwieldy. In response, it could be pointed out that similar structures exist within the teacher unions

and other educational bodies and they seem to work efficiently. Some will say that teachers would already be represented at the national CPD Forum through the unions' participation on the Teaching Council. While this is so, teachers on the ground can feel disconnected from national bodies and, anecdotally, have been known to say of national initiatives affecting them, "no one asked me". The CPD Forum structure would ensure that every teacher had an opportunity to be heard. It may also be argued that engaging in CPD Forums would be time-consuming. This need not be the case if modern communications systems are used, e.g., email, teleconferencing, group Skype, on-line surveys, etc.

12.2 CPD Framework Policies and Practices toward transformative CPD

Table 12.2 Elements of a CPD Framework – Policies and Practices

Some of the elements of the policies and processes that might be combined in a CPD Framework are illustrated in Table 12.2. In developing the policies and processes as part of the creation of a CPD framework, a number of suggestions are made here without going into the minutiae of each.

12.2.1 Principles underpinning CPD for teachers

It is suggested that there might be a clear articulation of the principles underpinning CPD for teachers. The Teaching Council has set out some guiding principles for teacher education in its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011a). While a number of the principles support the teacher as learner, i.e., "foster reflective, critical and research-based learning" (p.10), there is an absence of specific reference to CPD in an adult learning context; i.e., a context which brings transformative perspectives to the foreground. The evidence from the responses in the questionnaires (Table 5.22.a, p.130) indicates that 59% of Irish teachers strongly agreed that a CPD framework should be based on the principles of Adult Education.

12.2.2 The role of leadership

It was significant that, in their responses to the research questionnaire, 80% of Irish teachers strongly agreed that teachers should be supported in building a CPD culture. In looking at how schools might be enabled to develop a culture of transformative CPD which would include collaborative processes, the role of the Principal requires special attention. The EU, in adopting the "Council conclusions on effective leadership" (2013), stated that

> Educational leadership calls for a range of highly developed competences underpinned by core values. It requires professional commitment, an ability to motivate and inspire, and sound managerial, pedagogical and communication skills. Good educational leaders develop a strategic vision for their institutions, act as role models for both learners and teachers and are key to creating an effective and attractive environment which is conducive to learning (p.2).

Professional development support for Principals might be elaborated in a CPD framework. Distributed leadership might be encouraged where teachers with particular expertise are a resource to staff colleagues and are capable of leading teacher learning in that area.

12.2.3 Indicators of good teaching practice

It is suggested that the Council might consider the articulation of indicators of good teaching practice, building on the Council's (2011b) guidelines on learning outcomes for

student teachers. The purpose of the suggested indicators, as part of a CPD framework, would be to give teachers a way into reflecting on their practice. They could also be used for teachers' self-evaluation on an individual basis. They could be even more valuable if teachers used them for peer-observation and evaluation of each other's practice. A further development could be to use indicators of good practice as part of school self-evaluation, for the purpose of identifying teachers' CPD needs, in addition to the evaluation of teaching and learning in the school. In other jurisdictions, such indicators may be known as standards or competences and some teachers may fear that they could be used for accountability purposes or measuring teaching performance. That is not the intention here. Rather, it refers to the evaluation of teachers' own learning as discussed previously, in the context of School Self-Evaluation, in Chapter 11 (pp.244-246).

12.2.4 School CPD policy and plan

In the development of a CDP framework, schools might be encouraged to formulate a CPD policy which could state the school staff's vision and mission, processes and procedures in relation to staff's whole-school CPD. It is interesting to note that 73% of Irish teachers who responded to the research questionnaire, (Table 5.19.a, p.121), strongly agreed that staff CPD should be linked to practice. An annual school plan for staff CPD could be set out, based on the CPD policy. The process of formulating a school CPD policy could, in itself, be a collaborative process involving reflective exercises, discussion and the writing process. Based on the school's CPD policy, the principal and staff might set out a three-year CPD plan with a yearly review built into it. Much of this would also fit with the school self-evaluation process.

The importance of staff collaborative processes as a medium for CPD, referred to in the previous paragraph, has been explored in the review of the literature in Chapter 3. Concurring with the findings in the literature, the responses to the research questionnaire, (Table 5.17.a, p.115) showed that 60% of Irish teachers found CPD as a collaborative process with colleagues to be highly beneficial. Furthermore, the majority of stakeholders and teachers who were involved in the individual and focus group interviews, respectively, spoke enthusiastically about the developing culture of staff collaboration in Irish schools.

12.2.5 Teachers' CPD plans

As well as contributing to the direction of national CPD initiatives and whole-school staff needs, teachers might look at their own individual CPD needs. While there may be variations, there may also be links between individual and school needs. Teachers might

consider developing a personal yearly plan for their CPD. A teacher's CPD plan could include a statement of the goals that he/she wishes to achieve in a personal professional capacity. This need not be prescriptive but could be creative and imaginative with regard to his/her development as a teacher. In the research questionnaire, (Table 5.19.a, p.121), 57% of Irish teachers strongly agreed that teachers' personal CPD needs should be supported by the school.

12.2.6 Teachers' professional portfolios

Teachers might find it beneficial to compile a CPD portfolio as a reflective tool and also as a record of their CPD endeavours. The portfolio could be a combination of written reflections and evidence of work, including audio and visual recordings. Receptiveness to this suggestion is reflected in the findings from the research questionnaire, (Table 5.19.a, p.121), where 28% of Irish teachers strongly agreed, and 53% agreed, that teachers should maintain a CPD portfolio.

The following information on the work of Lee Shulman in developing professional portfolios may be helpful in expanding the idea of a professional portfolio, which is a relatively new concept for teachers in Ireland. While Shulman's work was for the purpose of assessing teachers, it is *not* for that purpose that insights from Shulman's work are put forward here: rather to illustrate the potential for teacher learning in the development of a professional portfolio.

Shulman's (2004) account of the emergence of portfolios is based on his work with the Teacher Assessment Project (TAP) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Rather than assessing teachers in simulated, decontextualized teaching situations, Shulman and his assessor colleagues wondered "what are these folk like back in their classrooms?" (p.387). According to Shulman, the assessors wanted "some way for teachers systematically to document what they were doing in their classrooms…I don't know when we began talking about such documentation as portfolios; it just sort of happened" (p.387). Shulman was cautioned that portfolios would not work in contributing to the assessment of teachers because, he was told, "Teachers cheat…they help each other out on their portfolios" (p.388). This is precisely what Shulman wanted teachers to do, to help each other. He required "some evidence that some other person – teacher, mentor, whomever – had some chance to review, discuss, or coach an entry…the notion that teamwork ought to be commonplace, rather than seen as some sort of idiosyncratic act of cheating" (p.389). Schulman goes on to explain the importance of the portfolio in

generating discussion on teachers' work and in improving the quality of teaching. He notes the enthusiasm of teachers who have engaged in the portfolio experience.

As part of the re-conceptualisation of ITE in Ireland, student teachers now develop a professional portfolio. It is intended that they will maintain this portfolio through their teaching career. Though desirable, it is not a requirement for those teachers who are already serving as practitioners to develop a professional portfolio. It is suggested that a portfolio project for experienced teachers could be initiated through the Education Centre network and the PDST. With guidance and support, individual teachers could be engaged in the process of developing a professional portfolio. Research on the project could be undertaken simultaneously, for instance, by other teachers as a postgraduate study. An alternative to an individual portfolio could be a joint portfolio project, undertaken by a whole-school staff or by a group of teachers within the staff. As already stated, it is not suggested that portfolios would be used to inspect or assess teachers' work. The development of a professional portfolio could facilitate individual or collective teacher reflection and greatly enhance teaching as a result.

12.2.7 Accreditation of CPD programmes

The CPD framework will have to make provision for the accreditation of those CPD programmes that may require official Teaching Council recognition. The Council already has a strategy for the review and accreditation of programmes of initial teacher education. The development of the ITE strategy was a learning experience for the Council which may guide its future work in the area of accrediting CPD. The Teaching Council Act, 2001, speaks of accrediting CPD programmes. In view of the potentially large number of such programmes for which accreditation may be sought, the Council may decide to accredit providers and entrust them with the facilitation of programmes in line with Council-approved criteria. It is worth noting that 58% of Irish teachers who responded to the research questionnaire, (Table 5.22.a, p.130), strongly agreed that CPD providers should be accredited and this view was shared by the majority of the stakeholders and teachers who were involved in the individual and focus group interviews, respectively.

12.2.8 Accreditation of teachers' engagement in CPD

According to the research data, teachers would welcome accreditation, or other official recognition, for their participation in CPD programmes. Teacher designations have already been suggested in Chapter 11. The Council might also consider negotiating with the HEIs with regard to the award of credits towards postgraduate studies. A credit system would

require evidence of more than attendance at a programme or course, e.g., carrying out an action-research assignment showing how the programme had impacted the teacher's work in the classroom. This could involve a more intensive kind of portfolio than that suggested at 12.2.6. It has also been suggested in Chapter 11 (p.248) that a professional portfolio might be a part requirement for a CPD programme leading to a professional designation. A portfolio being developed for such designations *would* be used for assessment purposes. Interestingly, 56% of Irish teachers who responded to the research questionnaire, (Table 5.22.a, p.130), strongly agreed that teachers should be accredited for their engagement in CPD and a similar view was held by the majority of the stakeholders and teachers who were involved in the individual and focus group interviews, respectively.

12.2.9 Funding for CPD

A framework for CPD might make reference to the issue of funding. The findings from the three research methods show that the Department of Education and Skills is expected to fund system-led CPD which is initiated to support the introduction and implementation of new national initiatives. In their responses to the research questionnaire, (Table 5.22.a, p.130), 69% of Irish teachers strongly agreed that there should be a national budget for teachers' CPD while 12% strongly agreed that teachers should contribute to funding CPD. In the individual and in the focus group interviews, there was broad agreement that teachers should fund CPD which they undertake of their own volition, e.g., postgraduate studies. On the latter, a contrary view was given by some teachers in the focus groups who cited the discontinuation of monetary qualifications allowances as a disincentive to individuals funding their Masters or Doctoral studies. Such allowances are in the area of teachers' conditions of service, and are therefore outside the remit of the Council. A CPD framework, however, might include reference to issues of incentivising CPD in the context of funding.

12.2.10 National Support Services

In the context of Department resources for teachers' CPD, a CPD framework might refer to the national support services, the main one currently being the PDST. A number of stakeholder and teacher interviewees spoke very positively about the benefit of teacher support services, as represented by the comment, quoted previously, that "…those services have been very beneficial in different ways because they targeted specific needs at specific points..." (SS2, 25.08 – 25.18, p.165). One of the challenges facing the PDST, or any

national support service, is that of having an adequate number of personnel to support teachers and schools through engagement in transformative CPD.

The framework might also include suggested ways that a support service could assist schools and teachers and how schools and the support service could work together to maximise the potential of their work to their mutual benefit, e.g., joint action-research projects. A CPD framework might also propose a reciprocal arrangement where schools could be sites of practice for support service personnel. For credibility purposes, it is important that seconded teachers retain their links with teaching. This could be facilitated by schools welcoming support service personnel coming in to teach classes occasionally, for the seconded teachers' own learning purposes. In these situations, the school staff could also benefit from interaction with the seconded teachers.

12.2.11 Teacher Exchange Programmes and other possibilities

Other potential sources of CPD for teachers might be outlined in a CPD framework, such as the EU Comenius teacher exchange programme and the CEDEFOP study visits. Paid sabbatical leave for teachers might be accommodated. It could be particularly beneficial for teachers to use sabbatical leave to gain work experience in a field unrelated to teaching from which new learning could be transferable to the school and classroom.

Together with the suggestions outlined above, there are many more possibilities for teachers' CPD which could be included in a CPD framework, e.g., teachers' professional reading groups and teachers' teaching video clubs.

12.3 Time for CPD

Finding sufficient time and dedicating it explicitly to CPD purposes remains a major issue for consideration in creating a framework for teachers' CPD. Integral to the time issue is reconceptualising the role of the teacher and the possibilities for the transformation of how teachers work and use their time in school.

The Teaching Council *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011a) says that

> CPD is a right for all registered teachers. In that context, an allocation of time for individual and/or staff group CPD should be built into teachers' scheduled non-teaching time. The allocation of time should be significant and should reflect the importance of CPD for effective professional practice (p.19).

The structure of the school day in Ireland, as currently configured, is fully taken up with class-teacher contact time in its entirety at primary level and to a large extent at post-primary level. There is no scheduled time within the school day for teachers to meet and work together. The OECD (1991) review of Ireland's national education policies recognised this problem when it recommended that

> Increased flexibility and variety in the organisation of teaching and learning are needed…[and] the single, homogeneous class and the instructional models associated with it are not conducive to co-operative team work or to innovative approaches to teaching and learning (p.62).

Now, twenty three years on, little has changed in Ireland with regard to the teaching day, in marked contrast with other parts of the world. The OECD (2011) figures show that, at the lower secondary level, teachers' teaching hours per day range from three hours, or less, per day in Japan, Korea and Poland (all of which scored highly in PISA 2009) to more than five hours in Argentina, Chile, Mexico and the United States (all of which had a significant number of low achievers below the OECD average). In Chapter 10, we saw that the "Less is More" policy in Finland, discussed by Sahlberg (2010), where there is less student-teacher contact time in school than in many other countries, has done the opposite of adversely affecting learning outcomes for young people. Sahlberg points out that "high-performing nations in all academic domains included in PISA rely less on formal teaching time as a driver of student learning (Finland, Korea, Japan)" (p.62) compared to lower performing countries like Italy, Portugal and Greece, where more time is spent on formal student instruction.

Time is precious and time in school is very precious for young people and for teachers. Teachers need to ensure that pupils' and students' time in school is used to maximum benefit, allowing for rich, stimulating, interesting and rewarding learning experiences. Pupils and students need to be actively engaged in their learning, taking joint responsibility for it in co-operation with the teacher. The possibilities exist for transforming the teaching and learning in our schools if teachers are willing to change how they teach to accommodate how students learn.

It is still a challenge for many teachers to abandon the traditional teacher-to-student transfer of knowledge in favour of facilitating students as self-motivated, inquiry-driven learners. Freire (1998) says that

> the more efficaciously I can provoke the student into an exploration and refinement of his or her curiosity, the better I am as a teacher… inciting the student to produce his or her own comprehension of the object, using the materials I have offered, certainly (p.106).

Some may fear allowing students the freedom to be self-directed learners. Rogers (1969) assuages that fear in his reassuring words that

> Out of such a context arise true students, real learners, creative scientists and scholars and practitioners, the kind of individuals who can live in a delicate but ever-changing balance between what is presently known and the flowing, moving, altering, problems and facts of the future (p.105).

Mark Prensky (2011), credited with coining the term "digital natives", speaking of education in the U.S, believes that a significantly different type of pedagogy is needed for teaching in the 21st century. He promotes the idea of "partnering" as a more effective pedagogy which would include problem-based learning, case-based learning, inquiry-based learning and student-centred learning where

> …students do what they do – or can do – best, which is finding information, using technology and other resources, and creating. The teachers do what they do best, which is asking the right questions, ensuring quality and rigor, vetting, and adding context and appropriate scaffolding…In its essence, the pedagogy has kids teach themselves, with the coaching and guidance of their teachers. And, based on the experience of principals and teachers who have used it, partnering is almost certain to lead to higher test scores, because it gets kids far more engaged in their own learning (p.6).

Teachers in Irish primary schools are familiar with the Prensky type approach with regard to inquiry-based and student-centred learning, but the use of technology for teaching and learning is not as advanced as it might be in Irish classrooms. While a number of teachers at post-primary level may be facilitating a "partnering" type approach in their classrooms, it is not the norm.

In fostering communities of teachers as learners (FCLs), Shulman and Glamoran Sherin (2004) also promote the idea of students being facilitated to be independent learners, stating that

> FCL calls upon teachers to implement their curriculum in quite specific ways, with instructional protocols that call for pedagogical moves such as establishing learning communities, employing 'benchmark lessons', creating student groups who will work on the discrete components of larger tasks, periodic opportunities for 'cross-talk' among groups, and group inquiry and design processes that unfold over long periods of time" (p.138).

Allowing young people to be jointly responsible for their own learning under the guidance of the teacher has much to commend it and could allow for the more productive use of teacher and student time in school. More importantly, it has the potential to excite and enthuse students about their learning and about sharing their learning experiences with other students.

If student time in school could be reduced to facilitate more student-centred learning through the use of technology, there could be a significant amount of time available for teachers to engage in collaborative learning and teaching-related activities during the school day. Thus, a shift in the ratio of teaching time to non-teaching time implies a recognised shift in the nature of the teacher's work where non-teaching activities, including CPD, would be integral to a teacher's life in school. At a deeper level, this would also mean a shift in the teacher's sense of professional identity and in the public perception of teaching.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to discover what would be necessary for the creation of a national framework for CPD for teachers in Ireland. This chapter has been constructed around some of the practical considerations in creating such a framework. The suggestions in Chapter 11 offered an introduction to a number of ideas on continuing professional development opportunities for teachers which could lead to transformation in many areas of their professional lives: transformation in teachers' professional identity - how they see themselves as teachers; transformation in teachers' professional relationships - how they relate to students, colleagues, parents and others within the immediate and the wider school community; transformation in teachers' professional work - how they engage students in the teaching and learning process; transformation in teachers' approach to CPD - how they continue to be self-motivated lifelong learners.

The ideas offered in this thesis have been informed by the theory of transformative learning and by the potentially exciting opportunities it opens up for teachers through engagement in CPD which is based on the principles of adult education. It suggests a way forward for the development of the teaching profession in Ireland, building on the work that has come before, and suggests innovative ways of strengthening the professional and personal lives of teachers in Ireland with a view to improving student outcomes.

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