An exploration of FET Teacher Engagement, Career Progression and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the Further Education Sector in the South-West of Ireland

By

Anne O'Mahony

Student ID: 20009515

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Supervisors:

Dr Anne Graham Cagney

Dr Sinead Conneely

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INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA PHORT LÁIRGE

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Declaration

I, Anne O'Mahony, hereby declare that this thesis is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts (MA) and is entirely my own work except where acknowledgement otherwise has been made in the text. It has not at any time been submitted for any other educational award.

Signed:  _____ (Candidate)

Anne O'Mahony

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To my husband Denis, and our sons Daniel and Seán, as well as to my family and friends, I owe a debt of gratitude. I thank you for your support, encouragement and sacrifices on this journey.

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Abstract

The Further Education and Training (FET) sector is key to the economic growth and recovery of Ireland. Historically provision was often ad hoc, informal, and responding to local, and individual needs (VECs), or the skills needs of industry (FÁS). However, since 2013, SOLAS has been tasked with amalgamating provision existing under a single entity with significant structural and organisational changes. These have caused shifts in identity, ethos and objectives. To achieve the strategic aim of building a world-class integrated system of FET the sector requires engaged, enthusiastic, and committed teachers.

This research set out to explore FET teacher engagement, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and career progression in the South-West of Ireland in order to add to the limited knowledge on FET teachers' lives, their understanding, experiences and ambitions for their continuous professional development and career progression.

This qualitative study takes an interpretivist phenomenological approach, based on the understanding that contexts are complex, subjective and dynamic and open to personal interpretation Twenty-four participants took part in this study comprised of one pilot study (3); two focus groups (9); and semi-structured interviews (12). The target population was FET teachers working in QQI programmes (Level 1 -6) from different contexts, with a span of age, experience and duties. The data collected was analysed using the constant comparative method to allow themes and patterns to emerge.

Findings from the study include:

i) Role engagement at work was high with a particular emphasis on students and the teaching-learning environment. Personal role engagement did not lead to organisational commitment due at least in part to a perceived lack of psychological safety.

ii) CPD was understood in its broadest sense to include a broad range of both structured and unstructured professional learning and development. A dichotomy exists between what FET teachers

understand and value as CPD and what the ETB organisation and local management provides and values as CPD activities.

iii) Career progression is perceived by the FET teachers as i) teaching and a 'flat' career; and ii) managing/administration and a vertical career. Those who chose teaching found themselves simultaneously in different career stages (Fessler & Christensen, (198). Career opportunities and advancement were limited to administrative/managerial positions.

iv) FET teacher role engagement strongly influenced their views of the value of the provision of CPD by their organisation, and their perception of an FET teacher pathway to career progression.

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ACOT	*An Chomhairle Oiliúna Talmhaíochta* (The Agricultural Training Council)
AE	Adult Education
AFE	Adult & Continuing Education
AnCO	*An Comhairle Oilúna* (the Industrial Training Authority)
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CE	Community Education
Cedefop	*Centre Européen pour le Développement de la Formation Professionnelle* (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)
CERT	Council for Education, Recruitment and Training
CIT	Cork Institute of Technology
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DES	Department of Education & Skills
ESF	European Social Fund
ETB	Education & Training Boards
FÁS	*An Foras Áiseanna Saothair* (the Training and Employment Authority)
FET	Further Education & Training
FETAC	Further Education & Training Awards Council
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMI	Irish Management Institute
IoT	Institute of Technology
IPA	Institute of Public Administration
IT, Tralee	Institute of Technology, Tralee
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NCVA	National Council for Vocational Awards

NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PHEC	Pre-Hospital Emergency Care
PLC	Post-Leaving Certificate
QQI	Qualifications & Quality Assurance Ireland
RTC	Regional Technical College
SfW	Skills for Work
SOLAS	*An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna* (Further Education and Skills Service)
TCI	Teaching Council of Ireland
UK	United Kingdom
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
VET	Vocational Education & Training
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Schemes
WIT	Waterford Institute of Technology

Chapter 1 Introduction

The role of the teacher is fundamental to the learning experience. Further Education and Training (FET) is no exception. Committed, enthusiastic, and engaged teachers not only share their expertise but also model professional practice in terms of skill development and continual learning that are essential to the development of learners within the FET sector. It is also vital to the development of the sector and its ability to meet the needs of the learners, staff, organisation, community and society.

The aim of this study was to explore the psychological conditions of engagement of FET teachers and how they, and their experiences within the sector, influences their perceptions of CPD (Continuous Professional Development) and career progression. In doing so it took a qualitative, interpretivist, phenomenological approach. The study used a pilot focus group, two focus groups, and twelve interviews.

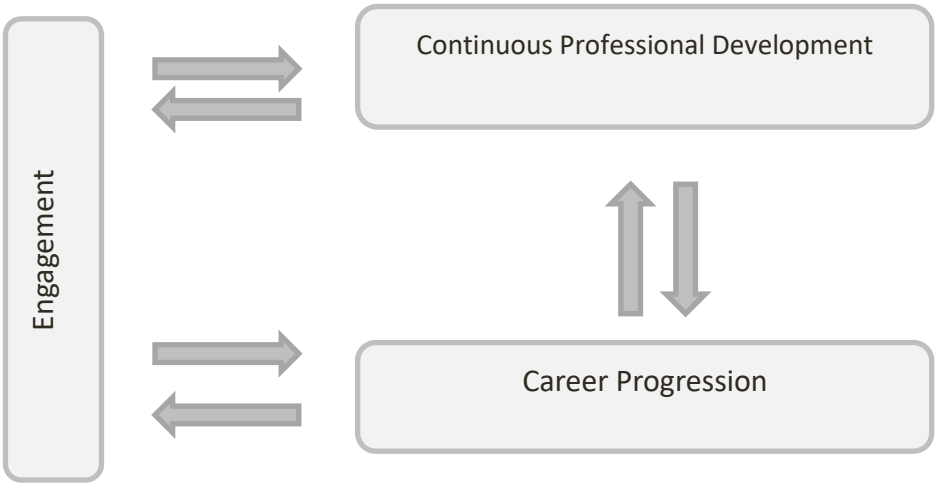


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

1.1 The context and setting for the investigation

1.1.1 The Development of FET in Ireland

In Ireland what is now known as Further Education and Training (FET) is the umbrella term that covers a wide and diverse range of provision in terms of aims, ideology and delivery. For the purposes of this study, the term FET will include Adult

& Continuing Education (ACE), Vocational Education and Training (VET), including Technical Education (TE), Adult Basic Education (ABE), literacy schemes and Community Education (CE). There are four main organisations involved in the FET sector, as shown in Figure 1: the Education and Training Boards (ETBs); Teagasc; the Institutes of Technology (although belonging to the higher education sector they still maintain some 'vocational' training and education); and the private/voluntary/community organisations.

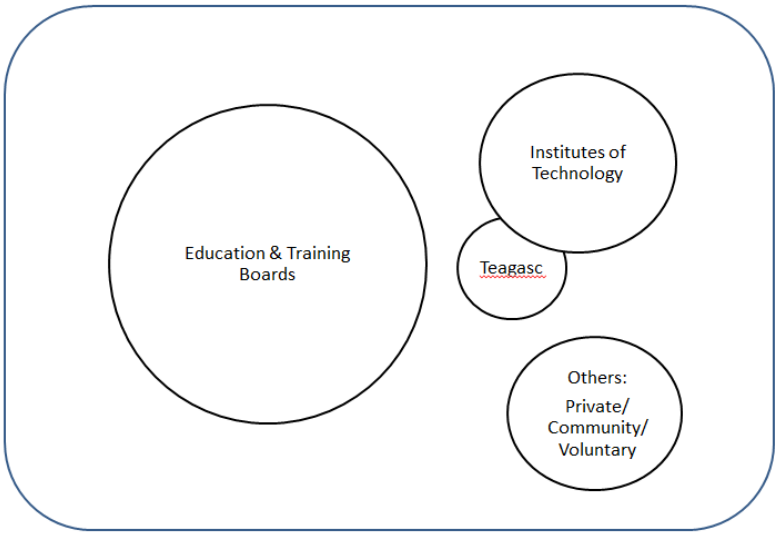


Figure 2 FET system map

This sector is often distinguished not by what it is, but by what it is not: its differences from the 'mainstream' educational system. Also called the 'Cinderella' (Randle and Brady, 1997; Petrie, 2015) sector, it has emerged as a series of developments and initiatives. These were efforts to increase the relevance, standing and status of the FET sector, usually in response to economic, political and social circumstances including technological advances, economic recessions and the demands of the economy for skilled labour. Responses included the establishment of Vocational Education Committees (1930), and the ongoing reframing of vocational training through *An Comhairle Oiluna* (AnCO) (1967), and *Foras Áiseanna Saothair* (FÁS) (1987).

VECs were autonomous and locally directed. Part of and directed by the local authorities, they were closely tied to local industry and enterprise. In the beginning, VECs predominantly catered for continuing education of the under-fifteens with an emphasis on trade, despite the fact that Ireland relied heavily on agriculture, with relatively little industrial activity or demand. Nonetheless, there was a political appetite for economic expansion which would invest in the 'technical colleges' for the over-16s who would be employed in positions of control or responsibility in trade or industry (Government of Ireland, 1930, sec. 38). This created a dual pathway to secondary education: the academic (being the arena of the religious-run schools) and the vocational (run by the VEC). Over time, the portfolio of the VECs increased to include primary, post-primary, adult education, recreational and community education, as well as vocational education. Thus, by being flexible and responsive to local needs the VECs continued to exist until 2013.

However, the diverse nature of the service and the schemes allowed for, and encouraged, diverse foci. Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses, Youthreach Services, Skills for Work and Vocational Training Opportunities Schemes (VTOS) were focused on the labour market. In contrast Community Education, Literacy and Basic Education Services, BTEI and Refugee programmes were focused on inclusion, engagement and community participation and active citizenship.

The PLC courses were given formal recognition in 1985 (Clarke, 2016, p. 307). These evolved from post-Junior and post-Leaving Certificate courses designed as a preparation for work or further education and took place predominantly within the vocational secondary school system. By 2011 constituted over fifty per cent of FET enrolments (McGuinness *et al.*, 2014). These courses typically operate in a vacuum of information. For example, providers have raised issues in terms of the ability to provide flexible provision in terms of industry and/or learner needs given that teachers have full-time employment contracts (McGuinness *et al.*, 2014, p. 60). However, data is not available in sufficient quantity or quality for analysis to support or refute this (McGuinness *et al.*, 2014, p. xii, 2018, p. 1).

In parallel with the VEC there have been successive state-backed responses to the needs for a skilled workforce. These include Manpower policies (late 1960s), which led to the setup of AnCO (1967), and later the Labour Service Act (1987) and the establishment of FÁS (1988). These successive bodies were state agencies with a structure that was significantly different to the VEC model and set up for different purposes. Both AnCO and FÁS were, in turn, tasked with providing a training advisory service, training for industry and individuals, the training of apprentices and training for semi-skilled occupations. AnCO's demise followed the mid-1970s oil crises and subsequent recession. Training and education were now seen as unnecessary costs rather than as an investment. Scarce financial resources, coupled with a perception of duplication of functions, questions about the quality of provision, overly bureaucratic systems and expensive outsourcing of functions to consultants were among the criticisms targeted at the state body (Garavan, Costine, & Heraty, 1995). By the mid-1980s Ireland again had high rate of unemployment. In an attempt to reform the vocational training landscape response FÁS was established. This rebranding incorporated the National Manpower Service, AnCO and the Youth Employment Agency and took place without any major dismantling of the existing structures or services (Garavan, Costine and Heraty, 1995). However by the mid-2000s FÁS was under scrutiny (Comptroller and Auditor General, 2009b, 2009a). This led to plans to dissolve FÁS.

Both the VECs and FÁS were general education and training bodies. Alongside these were specific and specialised areas such as Agriculture and Tourism. While education and training in the agriculture sector had also evolved through various organisations since before the foundation of the state in 1919, since 1988 it is under Teagasc (the Agriculture and Food Development Authority). Teagasc's role is a wide one with overall responsibility for advisory services, research and training to the agricultural industry. Throughout the changes in the FET structures the national framework of qualifications has been adopted and the sector is working more closely with third level institutions, but it has maintained its distinct position where education and training is only one part of the organisational remit.

Tourism, the other staple of Irish economic growth, was another focus for development through training. In 1963 CERT (Council for Education, Recruitment and Training) was established to provide recruitment, education and training for the tourism and hospitality services. CERT maintained independence within the sector (Garavan et al., 1995) and the programmes continued to run into the 1990s. It too came under criticism. It was deemed to be inflexible, classroom based (Garavan et al., 1995) and had key issues in relation to labour turnover and shortfalls, and skills shortages (CERT, 1999b). Despite identifying Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and strategic research as a means of gaining competitive advantage CERT was dissolved in 2003 (Government of Ireland, 2003) and its functions amalgamated with those of Board Fáilte under Fáilte Ireland.

The establishment of SOLAS in 2011 was followed by the Further Education and Training Act (Department of Education & Skills, 2013) and the Education and Training Boards Act (Department of Education & Skills, 2013). All properties, functions, assets and liabilities of FÁS and the VECSs were transferred directly. This included senior staff who now took up positions in SOLAS.

This shift was lauded as a 'new landscape' in FET provision in Ireland. While the remit of SOLAS is to ensure FET programmes are focused on lifelong learning and the needs of learners, in practice 'the focus is on retraining jobseekers and the needs of the labour market' (McGuinness *et al.*, 2014, p. 20). These functions are very different and are not necessarily aligned. The strategic close involvement with business and industry signalled a deliberate shift in focus towards market activation and skills development. This is evidenced in the priorities in the SOLAS strategy: the 'Action Plan for Jobs', 'Pathways to Work' and 'wider policy reform in education' as 'a core part of the enterprise, development and innovation infrastructure' (SOLAS, 2014, p. 3).

The amalgamation of such diverse services as existed under the VECs and FÁS resulted in complicated structures and work contexts for staff. SOLAS reports that it employs 'around 10,000 FET practitioners' (SOLAS, 2017, p. 3) under 54 job roles/titles grouped under i) learning practitioners ii) managers and iii) support and

administration staff (SOLAS, 2017, p. 16). Employment contracts, terms and conditions, as well as ethos and culture were, and are, significantly different depending on their context. Many of those working in the vocational areas are employed on 'teaching contracts' with full time permanent contracts and conditions similar to mainstream post-primary schools. In contrast others work under short-term and vulnerable employment contracts and conditions that equated to 'hours'. This effectively created a many-tiered system within an organisation entrenched in silos, under an administration that has been under constant and significant change in structure and ethos that promises to continue. The SOLAS Strategy for the period 2020-2024 indicates an intention to create 'staffing, governance and management structures appropriate to an education and training institution of scale' (SOLAS, 2020a, p. 38). This includes a move towards a framework for staffing that will facilitate a flexible deployment of staff in a reduced number of FET programmes (SOLAS, 2020a, p. 52) in integrated colleges/centres and hubs (SOLAS, 2020a, p. 60). These developments emphasise the nature of the continuing changes and the inherent insecurities for those working in the sector.

1.1.2 FET in the Cork Kerry region

The changes in the Cork Kerry FET sector were in line with those across the rest of the country. Kerry VEC (or Kerry Education Service) became Kerry ETB (Kerry ETB, 2020). Cork County VEC and Cork City VEC were amalgamated to become Cork ETB. Both Cork and Kerry ETBs have responsibility for primary schools and post-primary schools as well as Further Education & Training. The FET parts of both ETBs is spread both geographically across their respective counties; covering literacy and Adult Basic Education, Community and Youth programmes (including Youthreach), Post Leaving Cert Courses, outdoor education, apprenticeships, and vocational training courses (including BTEI and VTOS) across a range of campuses in full and part-time courses. Ongoing managerial and administrative restructuring has also meant that some campuses have had their independence removed and been put under the control of another.

Each of the two counties had an Institute of Technology (Cork Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology of Tralee). These amalgamated to become

the Munster Technological University (January 2021). Teagasc has an Agricultural College in Cork and local education centres across the region. Other providers of FET include *Turas Nua* (providing training on behalf of the Department of Social Protection), as well as voluntary and community bodies. This maintained sectoral and organisational silos. Following on from the official amalgamation and rebranding there have been some efforts to address this, at least within organisations (McEvoy and O'Donnell, 2020). But little or nothing is known of the experiences of the staff during this process.

1.1.3 Professionalisation of the sector

Changes in the values underpinning the educational sector have been attributed to the increasing effects of neoliberalism (Lynch, 2006), facilitated by the use of the practices associated with new managerialism (Lynch and Grummell, 2018) and the moral imperative on teachers to resist (O'Brien, 2017; Lynch, 2019). Some research has been carried out in this area in Ireland (O'Brien, 2018) and beyond (Gleeson and Shain, 2009) in respect of the role of management, but not in terms of FET teachers. While it is acknowledged that this is an area worthy of study and that these concepts impact the experience of the individual FET teacher, the focus here is on the individual. A deep analysis of this broad societal and organisational perspective is outside of the scope of this study.

Parallel to these changes there is an ongoing shift in the professional identity of those working in the sector at societal, sectoral, and individual levels. Teaching in the FET sector has traditionally been regarded as inferior to the academic equivalent. To redress this, a requirement for Teaching Council registration was introduced in 2009. This increased the academic qualifications required for employment. While these formal requirements brought the sector in line with primary and post-primary sectors, it created additional insecurity. At an individual level there was insecurity around continued employment and its sustainability. It also introduced issues around identity. In a sector that is defined by what it is not (Government of Ireland, 1999; The Teaching Council, 2011), not being a 'teacher' was a badge of honour for practitioners. Qualification and registration as a teacher meant that this too was gone. In addition, the diversity that is the strength of the

sector means that there is no homogenous professional identity. Instead, there are often competing identities (including a pedagogical one alongside a primary professional one) within the individual. For practitioners, this added to the uncertainty.

Uncertainty may be the Twenty-First Century ideal for organisations (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p 1-2) but change without an understanding of the organisation's culture, as many organisations have discovered, will doom it to failure (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, Schein 2016). Change induces fear and anxiety. Imposed change induces resistance, especially in the most vulnerable, those at the bottom of the organisational hierarchy. In this case, that is the teachers - those same teachers that have been identified as the key to learning and success.

1.2 The importance of this research study

Across education levels globally there is a growing recognition that teachers are a vital part of high-quality learning, and yet there are issues in attracting and retaining those who engage in high quality teaching, especially given the increasingly casualised nature of employment. In the FET sector this is more complex because of the demands for high quality teaching, as well as professional development in their primary discipline and in their pedagogical practice. In addition, there are the political demands of the sector: there are high aspirations for FET: to build a 'world-class integrated system of further education and training' (SOLAS, 2014, p3). However, this 'building' is set within a context of global and societal change emerging from a background of over ninety years of reactive Government policies, and a history of provision that has created silos of cultures and ethos, across and within organisations. Recent structural and organisational changes have, in theory, brought the sector together under a more streamlined structure. In practice, the situation is not as clear. While there have been reports on the organisational changes (Brownlee 2019, 2020; Sinnott 2018; McEvoy & O'Donnell, 2020) little is known about the experiences of the staff during this process and how the changes have affected their role engagement, their perceptions and conceptions of their professional development and career progression. This research is of value to a sector that needs to attract and retain

teachers who are engaged, committed, and are willing and able to develop within a constantly changing environment.

1.3 Research Methodology, Questions and objectives

The aim of this study was to explore the psychological conditions of engagement of FET teachers and how this, and their experiences within the sector, influences their perceptions of CPD and career progression. In doing so, the methodological approach took a qualitative, interpretivist, phenomenological position. The study design incorporated several methods including a pilot focus group, two focus groups, and twelve interviews with associated fieldnotes and supporting documentation.

To add to what is known about FET teachers' lives, their perceptions of existing professional development structures and whether these meet their needs, this qualitative study takes an interpretivist phenomenological approach, based on the understanding that contexts are complex, subjective and dynamic and open to personal interpretation. The study used a pilot (three participants), two focus groups (three and six participants respectively), and twelve semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Research questions:

1. What are the psychological conditions that influence personal engagement of FET teachers in their work role?
2. What is Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for FET teachers in terms of definition, purpose and participation?
3. What are FET teacher's perspectives on career progression?

The objectives of the study were to:

- Identify the psychological conditions of engagement that influence FET teachers' experience of their work role;
- Identify current CPD opportunities for FET teachers in Ireland;
- Determine professional development needs;
- Understand FET teachers' perceptions of career progression;

- Develop an emerging model that would support professional development and career progression needs;
- To contribute to knowledge on what conditions are necessary to support FET teacher role engagement, commitment to CPD and career progression.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter laid out the overview of the FET system in Ireland and the challenges for those who teach within a developing sector within the Irish education system and the rationale for this research project. It has identified that these educators are integral to the development of the sector and to meet the needs of all stakeholders. In order to understand the perspectives of these teachers it set out the focus of this research on the psychological conditions of engagement that influences their experiences, their perceptions of CPD and their career progression.

The subsequent chapters detail the research project itself. Chapter two examines the existing literature in the following areas: i) engagement, ii) continuous professional development and iii) career progression. Chapter three sets out the methodology and methods/tools used in the research. The findings that emerged from the data collection methods are detailed in chapter four. In chapter five these findings are discussed in terms of the literature, again under the three chosen areas of literature, and the main themes that emerged are identified to establish the most relevant aspects for the participants. Chapter six draws on the findings to form the recommendations for the FET teachers and the organisation they work in as well as identifying areas for further study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Engagement, professional development and career progression are areas of significant academic interest. However, within the extant literature on engagement, continuous professional development and career progression, there is little that refers to FET teachers. There is even less on FET teachers' experiences and their perspectives on their professional development and career progression. Therefore, a broad approach to the literature was taken to each of these areas to inform this research. This chapter will describe the literature under the headings of i) engagement, ii) continuous professional development and iii) career progression.

2.1 Engagement literature

2.1.1 Engagement Introduction

Engagement has become a concept that is almost universally adopted as being a positive, fulfilling, and desirable state that provides personal satisfaction and organisational benefits. Various lenses including socio-cultural, sociological, politico-ideological and psychological paradigms have been brought to bear on the subject area. This study draws on the psychological perspectives of the individual and unit of analysis is set at level of the individual. Thus, this section will examine the different conceptions and definitions of engagement, the psychological conditions that influence personal engagement and disengagement and the implications of engagement for individual teachers and their teaching practice.

2.1.2 Views of Engagement

Kahn's (1990) qualitative, grounded theory, research described a concept that had an intuitive appeal. Engagement was when individuals employ and express themselves 'physically, emotionally and cognitively during role performances' (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). Although almost ignored at the time, the lure of passionate, enthusiastic effort that 'unleashed the power of human potential' (Brown and Leigh, 1996, p. 358) and promised successful, and profitable organisations proved attractive. His theory posited that people employ varying degrees of themselves (physically, emotionally and cognitively) in their work and, given the correct psychological conditions, they were more likely to do so. Since then, engagement has become a concept that is somewhere between the Holy Grail and a panacea,

promising untold benefits in terms of well-being, satisfaction, and organisational success. It has been adopted and adapted across disciplines and sectors to align with particular perspectives and goals.

Over time the concept has been developed in a variety of directions. Kahn stated that it involves a physical, cognitive and emotional personal investment that promotes 'dignity, self-appreciation and a sense of worthwhileness' (Kahn, 1990, p. 707). With a different focus engagement has also been used to describe a 'positive fulfilling work related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002, p. 72). A more organisational focus has seen it described as a state that is 'directed towards organisational outcomes' (Shuck and Wollard, 2008, p. 49), or, as MacLeod & Clarke (2009, p. 9) put it, 'employees are committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational values and are at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being'. Therefore, depending on perspective, the antecedents and outcomes of engagement differed (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004).

As the concept grew it was adapted and refined: Saks (2006) distinguished between 'job' engagement and organisational engagement. Macey & Schneider (2008) separated out trait, state and behavioural engagement and argued for the relationships between these. Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfres & Delbridge (2013) explored the effects of engagement on organisational performance and individual wellbeing. Other uses include the measurement of engagement for the purposes of diagnosis of organisational issues (Macey and Schneider, 2006) and/or organisational gain (Truss *et al.*, 2013). Armstrong (2009, p. 335) made the distinction between engagement and organisational commitment (see Figure 3). This perspective classifies levels of engagement with organisational commitment as four combinations of low/high. This view of engagement, as taken by HR, almost assumes that everyone wants to, and should, be engaged in their work - as well as committed to the organisation.

Figure 3 Engagement and organisational commitment (Armstrong, 2009, p335)

The interest in the effects of engagement on organisational effectiveness, productivity and profitability has resulted in an emphasis on quantitative research, and especially the development of efficient questionnaires (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002; Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova, 2006; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2019). With an ever-increasing aim of efficiency these measurements have been reduced in the case of UWES-3 (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale 3) to three questions: (1) "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" (vigour); (2) "I am enthusiastic about my job" (dedication); (3) "I am immersed in my work" (absorption) (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2019). The Engaged Teacher Scale was developed by Klassen, Yerdelen & Durksen (2013) and revisited (and validated) in 2018 (Yerdelen, Durksen and Klassen, 2018). This measurement scale followed the UWES scale but as well as the physical, cognitive and emotional aspects, highlighted and separated out social engagement into two areas i) with students and ii) with colleagues. These quantitative approaches take an organisational lens that has demonstrated validity and reliability. While these methods have been widely used to rate the engagement of employees, there is no room for the capturing of nuances, perspectives and/or purposes that impact an individual's engagement.

In contrast, Kahn's (1990) qualitative approach facilitates the understanding of the complex, contextual and nuanced experiences of work and the individual's engagement from the individual's perspective. For this reason, it was chosen as one of the underpinning conceptual models for this research to study the engagement

of FET teachers and to examine how this influences their continuous professional development and career progression.

2.1.3 Psychological conditions of engagement (Kahn)

In his seminal work Kahn focused on the individual and the psychological conditions that fostered engagement and/or disengagement. He identified three conditions that fostered engagement. These were i) meaningfulness, ii) psychological safety and iii) psychological availability (Kahn, 1990). These are discussed in more detail below.

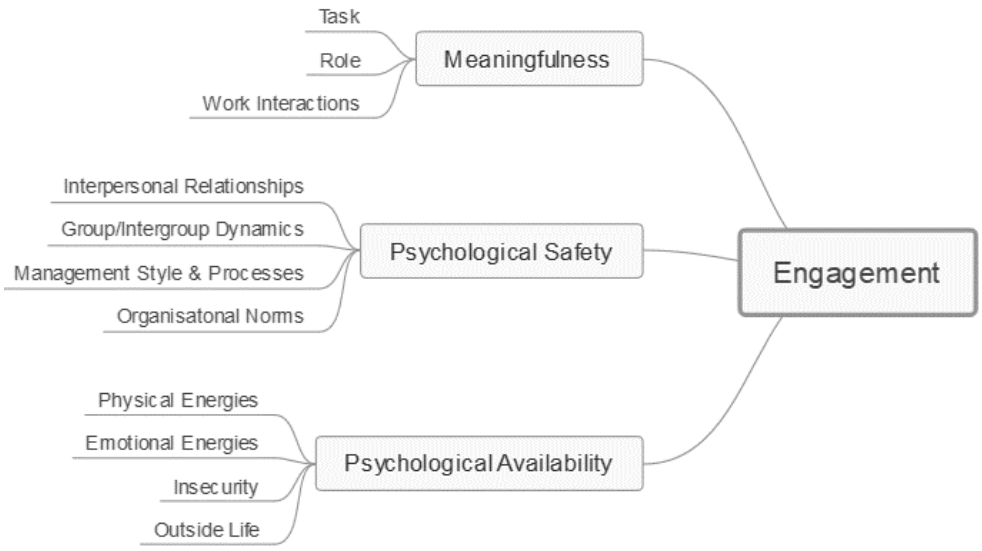


Figure 4 Psychological Conditions of Engagement (adapted from Kahn, 1990, pp. 703-717)

2.1.3.1 Meaningfulness

Kahn identified meaningfulness as the perceived return on investment of self (Kahn, 1990, p. 703). This psychological condition was identified as having three main influences: the task characteristics, the role and work interactions. Tasks should be challenging, clearly delineated, varied, creative and somewhat autonomous (Kahn, 1990, p. 705). Roles contributed through a formal position (that was associated with an attractive identity and fit the individual's preferred self-image) and held a level of status and influence (Kahn, 1990). The contribution of work interactions centred on the promotion of dignity, self-appreciation, and worthwhileness. These are relationships that facilitate and encourage giving and

receiving, have both professional and personal elements (with soft boundaries between). Consequently, people feel valuable and valued and there is a culture of mutual appreciation, respect and positive feedback (Figure 5). For Kahn (1992) meaningfulness was an 'experiential state' that, based on previous research (Maslow, 1954, 1987; May, Angel and Ellenberger, 1958; Alderfer, 1972), required that certain needs (personal and existential) be met.

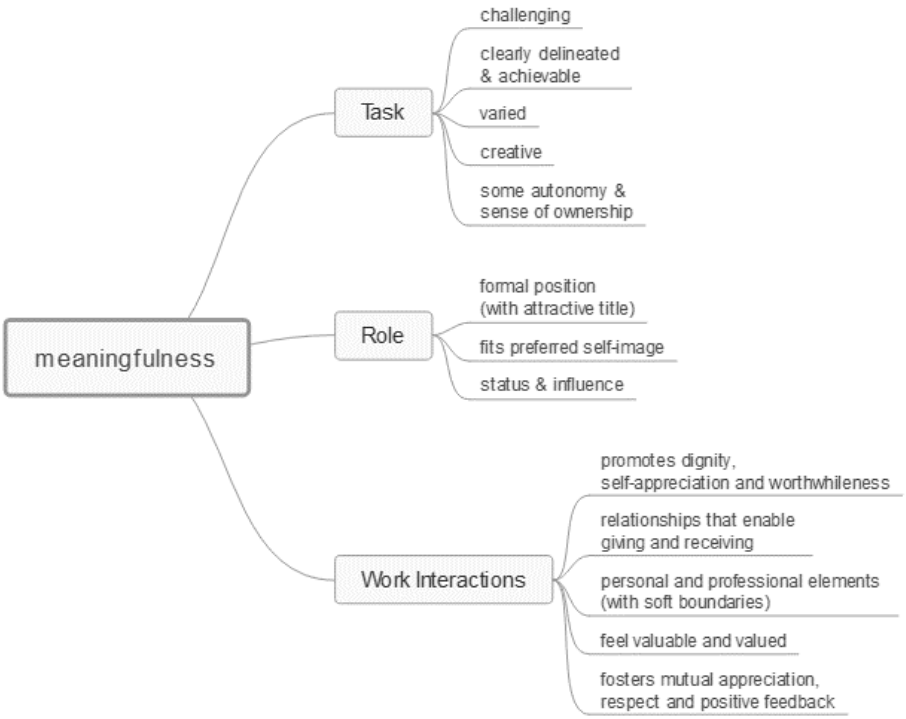


Figure 5 Psychological Meaningfulness (adapted from Kahn, 1990, pp. 703-708)

This is in contrast to the research of May, Gilson and Harter (2004). They considered that meaningfulness was influenced by concepts from organisational research literature. Therefore, the focus of meaningfulness in this research was on job enrichment (as a function of job design), work-role fit (as an authentic expression of self) and co-worker relations (treated with dignity, respect and valued for their contribution). In quantitatively testing Kahn's grounded theory, they defined meaningfulness as 'the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards' (May et al., 2004, p. 14). While the methodology was completely different this research shares elements with Kahn's

concept. Their job design relates to Kahn's task, their work role fit aligns with his role, and the co-worker relations corresponds to the work-interactions. In their research they found, through a 5-point Likert scale (on 14 items), that meaningfulness is the dominant influence on engagement.

Similarly Rich, LePine & Crawford (2010) took an organisational perspective but they associated meaningfulness with value congruence, perceived organisational support, core self-evaluations and job performance. These were concepts that were already well established in the HR and organisational literature. Along with other previously established concepts (discretionary effort, job design) engagement was used as a concept to reduce employee turnover, prevent burnout and leverage human capital for organisational gain. The focus on organisational gain introduces pressure to maximise employees as an 'organisational resource'. This demand for maximisation increases as the demands of the 'knowledge economy' require more from employees than just their time.

Across the literature meaningfulness infers that the work is valued, of value and worthwhile. This resonates with work on the role of values, of service and of vocation/calling (Bellah *et al.*, 1986; Hansen, 1995; Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997; Bullough and Hall-Kenyon, 2012; Duffy *et al.*, 2018). Although these concepts are labelled and defined in various ways they have a common theme: they answer to the deep values and needs held by each individual to serve others and their community. These include relatedness needs, desire for fairness and hope as part of their intrinsic motivation. The satisfaction of these needs is individual and answers to 'the integrated, authentic core from which a person acts authentically with true volition' (Deci and Flaste, 1995, p. 5). This is an 'origin of change and an avenue to high performance' (Dzubay, 2001, p. 4). This is what separates the 'calling' from a 'career' or a 'job' (Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997). For an organisation, the individuals who have an intrinsic motivation to 'give it their all' are valuable employees. However, organisational expectations and demands can affect the individual's perception of their psychological safety and/or psychological availability.

2.1.3.2 Psychological Safety

Kahn defined psychological safety as the ability to show and employ one's self "without fear or negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990, p. 705). He identified the importance of the influence of interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup dynamics in creating social systems. When positive, these create conditions that are predictable, consistent and non-threatening (Kahn, 1990). However technological, social and economic factors have increased uncertainty, change and 'unforeseeable' developments in organisations and therefore reduce psychological safety. These changes have led to an interest in the conditions, organisational and psychological, that would reduce interpersonal risk (Schein and Bennis, 1965; Edmondson, 1999; Clark, 2020).

Organisational literature has recognised that psychological safety is not a given: it is deliberately cultivated (Edmondson and Schein, 2012, p. 135) or created (Schein and Schein, 2017; Clark, 2020) within successful organisations. Without it, fear leads to 'poor decisions and incomplete execution' (Edmondson and Schein, 2012, p. 118). More positively, psychological safety has been associated with learning, collaboration and innovation (Newman, Donohue and Eva, 2017). People who feel psychologically safe are more likely to take risks, express themselves and be open to change. Although psychological safety is to be found in the organisational literature from the 1960s there has been recent increased interest and growth in the research on psychological safety as a concept (Frazier *et al.*, 2017). This is because it is seen as a prerequisite for contributing to organisational success in challenging and changing times and a precondition for work that needs individuals to be agile, adaptive and creative.

While psychological safety has been shown to have a lesser role than meaningfulness in personal engagement, the effects are still significant (May, Gilson and Harter, 2004, p. 23). The perception of safety is influenced by the social environment, interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup dynamics, management styles and processes and organisational norms (Kahn, 1990). This

contrasts with the narrower perspective of May et al. (2004) that emphasised only the interpersonal relationships with the supervisor and co-workers as the significant influences on psychological safety.

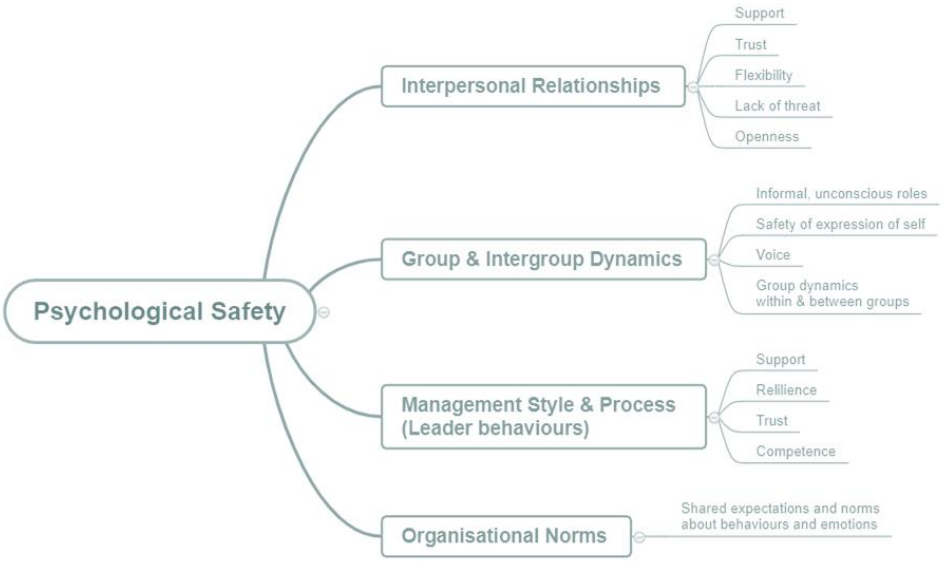


Figure 6 Psychological Safety (adapted from Kahn, 1990, pp. 708-713)

This organisational conception of the significant relationships does not include a major factor of teaching: the learners and the relationships within the classroom with the set of norms, expectations, relations and amount of time spent together that influence on psychological safety. Newman, Donohue and Eva (2017). They identify a more complex construction with i) a dyadic level (between two individuals), ii) a team level and iii) an organisational level (see Figure 7 Newman et al (2017Figure 7). This model indicates that work behaviours and attitudes (and therefore outcomes) are complex and have direct and indirect influences on the risks of investment of self at work level, team level and organisational level. Because these layers are based on relationships, they are also dynamic and subject to constant revision of perceptions of trustworthiness and supportive relations which are built over time and through interaction. Policies, practices and

management processes influence attitudes and behaviours on each of these three layers.

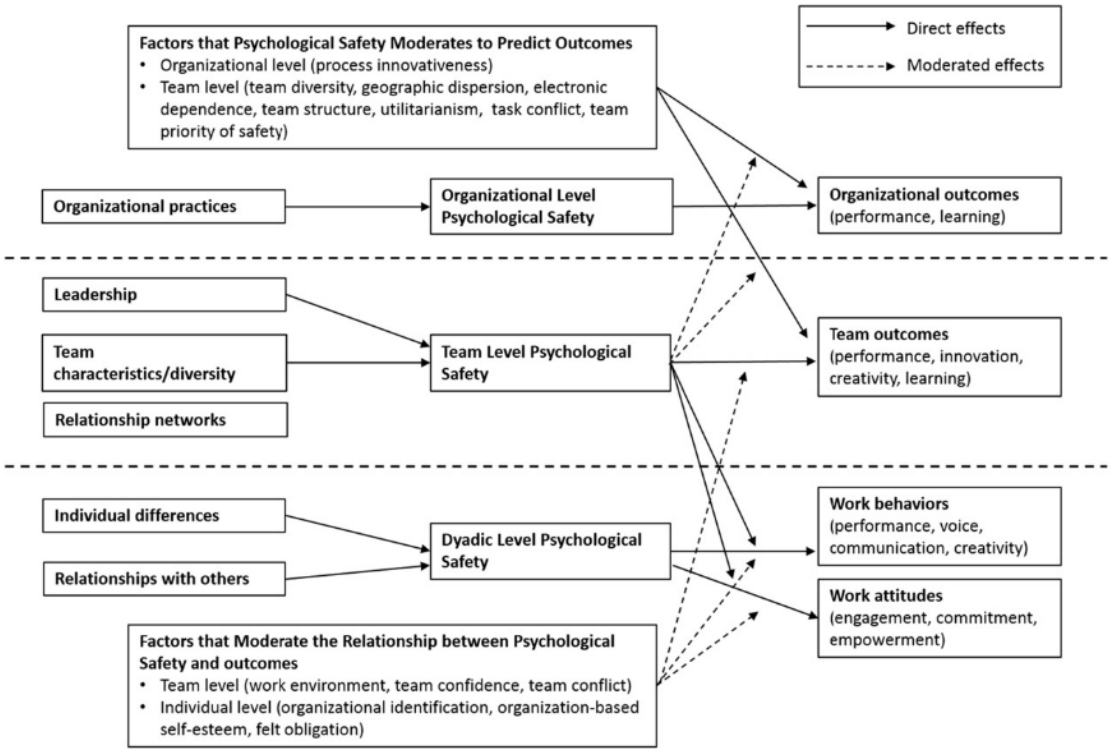


Figure 7 Newman et al (2017) p. 529

Fairness and the antecedents of trust (Macey and Schneider, 2008, p. 25) are fundamental to successful, supportive relationships that facilitate positive outcomes. Management processes that consistently support autonomy, and demonstrate genuine caring/empathy, have been linked to increased creativity, improved conceptual learning, increased self-esteem and general wellbeing (Deci, Connell and Ryan, 1989) as well as task performance. However, management controlling behaviours that push individuals toward specific outcomes tend to result in lower personal autonomy and reduced levels of psychological safety.

Psychological safety is also perceived by the individual as influenced by the context of the organisation. Workload, control, rewards, community and social support, fairness and values were identified as contextual influences (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001). Factors such as job security, the demands of the job and

the perception of the organisational resources made available (in a fair, open transparent manner), and fair feedback also contribute to the individual's experience. So too does the perception of growth and career development opportunities (Alderfer, 1972).

2.1.3.3 Psychological Availability

Psychological availability is described as the 'sense of having the physical, emotional or psychological resources' required (Kahn, 1990, p. 714) in order to express the self at work. This requires i) physical energy, ii) emotional energy and iii) security in order to be psychologically present (Kahn, 1992). Availability, according to Kahn, was subject to distractions, particularly by 'outside life'.

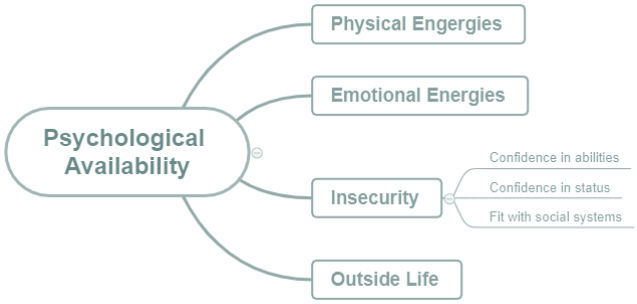


Figure 8 adapted from Kahn (1990) Psychological Conditions of Engagement

Kahn's perspective on availability was people had limited resources and that certain 'distractions' drained these resources. These drains included the depleted physical and emotional energies, insecurity and outside lives (Kahn, 1990, p. 714). This view was echoed by May et al (2004) who found that the individual's physical, cognitive, and emotional resources were those that determined psychological availability. One difference between the findings of Kahn and May et al was the concept of self-consciousness. Kahn found that self-consciousness was based on a perception of the views and judgements of others and contributed to insecurity. In contrast May et al found that self-consciousness did not contribute to availability. May et al posits that this could be that 'inordinately high levels' of self-

consciousness may be needed to impact availability. This could however be due to the nature of the work undertaken by the participants.

Kahn's research was conducted in two settings. One was with camp counsellors and the second was with architects whose work required high levels of personal investment in terms of creativity and risk, which may not (ironically) be associated with the insurance company where May et al conducted theirs. The demands and experience of work is not the same as a teaching context.

Kahn's conception of insecurity also included a fit with the social norms and values. In the presence of shifting organisational norms and values there is an additional insecurity that demands a choice of the teacher: whose needs are the priority - the learners, the organisation, or the self?

2.1.4 Implications of Engagement

Engagement is not all sweetness and light: it has a dark side. In terms of well-being Kahn looked at engagement and disengagement as being opposites (Kahn identified disengagement as the antithesis of engagement - you either invested yourself or did not at any moment). However, engagement has long since been linked with burnout (Maslach and Leiter, 1997; Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002) and disengagement (Kahn, 1990).

Burnout and disengagement have both been identified as opposites of engagement but with different consequences. Burnout has long been associated with the caring professions including social work, nursing and teaching (Huberman, 1993a; Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2006). Kahn considered disengagement as opposite to engagement while Huberman identified two states i) 'distress or extreme anxiety' and ii) 'profound boredom' (Huberman, 1993a, p. 51) that generally align with burnout and disengagement. Huberman reported that these states were caused by demanding situations that exact a 'heavy emotional toll' (Huberman, 1993a, p. 51). Burnout as a concept existed before Kahn's description of engagement and was characterised by exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy (Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Maslach and Leiter, 1997; Maslach, Schaufeli and

Leiter, 2001; Timms, Brough and Graham, 2012; Maslach, 2017; Schaufeli and De Witte, 2017). In Huberman's study of secondary school teachers he found that burnout was not caused by one factor or issue but that it was associated with multiple causes, that it could be experienced in 'recurring episodes' and it is a product of exhaustive demands (physical, cognitive and affective/emotional) combined with 'personal fragility' (Huberman, 1993a, p. 57). Burnout, in particular, has been associated with compromised mental health, 'sick days', staff turnover and reduced productivity. In addition there are costs beyond financial ones: there are costs associated with the withdrawal of emotional labour and loss of commitment (Timms and Brough, 2013, p. 769).

Engagement has also been linked to over-engagement, workaholism, and/or exploitation (Imperatori, 2017; Duffy *et al.*, 2018). Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli examined the relationship between burnout and work engagement among Finnish teachers and linked the lack of loss of job resources with burnout and low work engagement (2006, p. 508). Geurts & Demerouti (2003) linked over-engagement and the consequent impact and interference on work-home balance as one that undermines recovery and can lead to ill-health.

2.1.5 Engagement and teaching

Teaching, as a caring profession, has an emotional dimension. Passionate and enthusiastic teaching requires not only a physical and cognitive investment but an emotional one. This is described by Hochschild as 'emotional labour': a "co-ordination of mind and feeling" (1979, p. 7) that involves an interpersonal connection. These interpersonal connections can be rewarding, and the source of satisfaction, and meaningfulness (Avis and Bathmaker, 2004, p. 6). But this is not always a discretionary investment. In fact, teachers are expected to be caring, compassionate, empathetic, enthusiastic, and passionate about learners, about the subject/discipline and about the standards of qualifications. In teaching, these attitudes, behaviours and characteristics are aligned with personal, professional and organisational norms: they are expectations.

Hence emotions are at the heart of teaching (Hargreaves 2005 p278) and there are demands of the immense amounts of emotional labour (Day, 1999, p. 49). But

the labour and investment of the self is not uniform. It is complicated by the existence of three forms: i) surface acting, ii) deep acting and iii) spontaneous and genuine emotional labour (Humphrey, Ashforth and Diefendorff, 2015, p. 751). The latter, an expression of an "authentic self", resonates with Kahn's investment. In contrast, the 'acting' element, of 'feeling' what 'ought' to be felt, introduces a suppression of feelings 'in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others' (Hochschild, 2012, p. 7), being professional. This acting induces a dissonance that transforms the work away from being a rewarding, meaningful resource. Instead, the authenticity of the relationships is reduced, and, because of the ensuing alienation, the emotional well-being of all involved is damaged. This is especially so if the emotions counter the individual's identity and/or their ideal self.

Teaching has another aspect of investment and risk that not all other professions have: "unlike many professions, teaching is always done at the dangerous intersections of personal and public life" (Palmer, 2007, p. 17) because "we teach who we are" (Palmer, 2007, p. 1). Implicitly or explicitly teachers convey who they are: they share their values, priorities, philosophies and their assumptions. This is the gamble taken. Teachers risk showing who they are and what they believe in, not just in what they say but in what they do. Every day. Because teaching is 'a daily exercise in vulnerability' (Palmer, 2007, p. 17) there is a careful dance along the line between sharing and oversharing. But this is not a solo dance. Caring teachers want learners to express themselves - but not too much. They have an obligation to themselves, and others, to avoid inappropriate disclosures and so must regulate their contributions, as well as teaching others to make similar judgements and choices. Threatened by our vulnerability, some retreat into the armour of professionalism or cynicism. This produces caregiving without caring: the tasks and behaviours are performed (Noddings, 2013), but the armour is used to 'withdraw and defend' (Kahn, 1990, p. 694) that vulnerable self. The ability to avoid this disengagement and to maintain engagement can be influenced by peer support and perceived organisational support: relationships that have shared values and have built up trust.

In addition to the demands and influences of the work of teaching within the classroom there are contextual effects. Reforms and reorganisations, in addition to the wider influences of globalisation, political, social and economic changes affect the teacher's psychological safety. Changing roles, increased demands and struggling trying to meet the needs of the learners (Edward *et al.*, 2007) against an increasingly bureaucratic and neoliberal agenda. This tension was articulated 'from the front line' and identified a 'real danger of initiative and policy overload' (Maunsell, 2017). The constant rate of change is in itself destabilising and has clear and present impacts on psychological safety, which in turn affects psychological availability.

Engagement in FET teaching

There is little research done on engagement and its implications in the context of Further/Vocational Education. However, Wenström, Usuiautti, & Määttä (2018) found that enthusiasm (as a factor or form of work engagement (Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2006)) led to the development of skills and expertise, dedication, good job performance and a positive attitude towards their work. However, a lack of or reduced resources (budget cuts, a negative work atmosphere and changes) weakened enthusiasm. This is echoed in research in the FE sector in the UK that found FE teachers were engaged (Involvement and Participation Association (IPA), 2014). This research found engagement was important, especially during periods of organisational change, but vulnerable to management processes and increasing demands to 'do more for less' (Involvement and Participation Association (IPA), 2014, p. 7). The ethical considerations of the demands for and exploitations of engagement are rarely examined (Francis and Keegan, 2020).

Teaching quality was identified as a priority for the FET sector (SOLAS, 2014, p. 109). This supported the requirement of mandatory qualifications (a Teacher Education Qualification) and the identification of the importance of continuing education. 'Engagement' was only measured in relation to the uptake of CPD (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017).

2.1.6 Engagement Conclusion

This section introduced the concept of engagement and explored different conceptions of both engagement itself and the antecedents and outcomes. Kahn's grounded theory approach drew pre-existing concepts to identify three psychological conditions necessary for individuals to personally engage or disengage at work (Kahn, 1990). His work has been acknowledged as the seminal work on the concept and has been tested, adapted and developed by others including academics, professionals, policy makers and practitioners in management and human resources (Shuck, 2011). It is this breadth of interest and examination that ensures that there is no one agreed definition of engagement, or in the antecedents and outcomes ascribed to it. Each disciplinary perspective has adopted and adapted the concept to fit their perspectives and goals and has influenced their focus. The impact of engagement on organisational effectiveness has led to a growing body of literature studying the concept in general as well as component parts such as psychological safety (Edmondson, 2003, 2018; Edmondson and Lei, 2014; Clark, 2020).

While engaged employees may be the ideal situation for the employer, in terms of employee performance, productivity and production, there are risks and costs for the employee. Others have identified the potential negative aspects of engagement both in general (Maslach and Leiter, 1997; 2001; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002) and specifically for teachers (Huberman, 1993a; Geurts and Demerouti, 2003; Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2006).

Teaching is cognitively, physically and emotionally demanding. It is a caring profession that is 'done at the dangerous intersections of personal and public life' (Palmer, 2007, p. 1). As such, vulnerability and risk are constant companions. However, there are also factors outside of the classroom that influence the work of teachers. These changes come from social, political and economic sources and impact psychological safety and availability. The implications of these factors on the engagement of FET teachers in Ireland is under-researched.

For this research the primary focus and the level of analysis is on the individual. Therefore, Kahn's conception of engagement as depending on meaningfulness,

psychological safety and psychological availability is used as the conceptual framework to study the experiences of FET teachers and to examine how this influences their continuous professional development and career progression.

2.2 Continuous Professional Development

It is widely accepted that teaching, as professional work, includes and requires continuous (career long) development (Guskey and Huberman, 1995; Day, 1999; Field, 2006, p. 86). This research takes the term CPD as the 'shorthand' term to refer to what is a complex and contested term, because it is the one that is commonly used by practitioners (O'Brien and Jones, 2014). It will examine these three aspects: i) the definitions/perspectives of CPD and the related terms, ii) outline the purposes and drivers of CPD and iii) the supports and barriers that exist towards participation.

2.2.1 What is CPD?

Ongoing development as a concept has been generally accepted as a feature of professional life. The conception that development has become a career long occupation for teachers (Friedman, 2012) and is widely reinforced and enforced by registration procedures and professional standards (Friedman and Philips, 2004) and takes many forms (Caffarella and Zinn, 1999, p. 241).

The terms used to describe the process are varied and have shifted in focus over time. Within teaching alone the concept of ongoing, career long training and development has been known as staff training, staff development, In-Service Education and Training (INSET), Professional Development (PD), Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Continuous Professional Education (CPE), Learning and Development (L&D), Professional Learning & Development (PL&D) (Glover and Law, 1996; Day, 1999; Friedman, 2012) and Job-Embedded Learning (Zepeda, 2019). However, the language used is important because it signals the assumptions and intentions that underlie the approach.

The shifts in the descriptions and focus have, according to Zepda (2019, pp. 3–4), moved from a focus on the individual and their development to one that balances the individual's development with the organisation's development to a

wider, systemic, integrated perspective of professional development (Loucks-Horsley, 1995, p. 265). Staff training and staff development and INSET are described as narrow, (Day and Sachs, 2004, p. 8), much maligned (Day and Sachs, 2004, p. 16) and yet remains a feature of CPD experience across education. These terms are associated with the one-off or short workshop/training days, often, but not exclusively, occurring as part of the working day of teachers. This shift towards a more formalised, structured, and monitored activity that is provided for teachers requires that there are measurable results and accountability for the financial investment, and it has become an area of significant investment. Zepeda indicates that $18 billion is spent in the USA per annum on professional development (Zepeda, 2019, p. 6). While these numbers may not transfer to Ireland, or specifically the FET sector in Ireland, it is a significant expense that has commercial value.

In contrast the emphasis on learning and development that underpins L&D, PL&D and Job-Embedded Learning sees it as an ongoing professional responsibility. This belies the belief that learning and development are natural parts and occur as a consequence of living and adapting to changing conditions. This wider view of CPD reflects that of Day who defines it as 'all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom' (1999, p4).

Caffarella & Zinn (1999, p. 241) identify three types of CPD activities: i) self-directed activities, ii) formal professional development programmes and iii) organisational development strategies. This categorisation is focused on the development of faculty in universities. However, there are correlations with the FET sector.

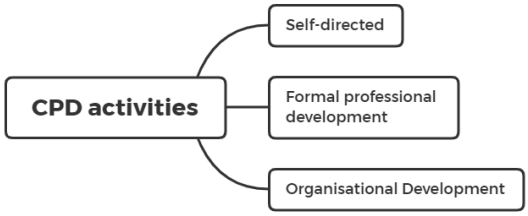


Figure 9 CPD activities (adapted from Caffarella & Zinn, 1999, pp. 242-243)

Self-directed activities, according to Caffarella & Zinn (1999) comprise the greatest part of CPD. These are the activities that are the sole control of the individual: they are planned, undertaken and evaluated by the individual. These activities include the development of materials for classes, teaching, the design, development and/or review of courses or modules.

Formal professional programmes are described by Caffarella & Zinn as professional meetings, workshops and conferences and mentoring (Caffarella and Zinn, 1999, pp. 242–243). In contrast organisational development strategies refers to planned activities to develop and implement systemic change to achieve organisational improvement (Caffarella and Zinn, 1999, p. 243). Hence this type of activity is specifically aimed at organisational change rather than individual development (Caffarella and Zinn, 1999, p. 244).

However, this framework presents two issues: i) it perceives these as three types of activities as separate with no overlaps, and ii) it does not differentiate the level of formality within the professional and organisational spheres. Reid's Quadrants of Teacher Learning (Figure 10) (Fraser *et al.*, 2007, p. 161) provides a format for analysing where learning takes place and the type of learning associated with it.

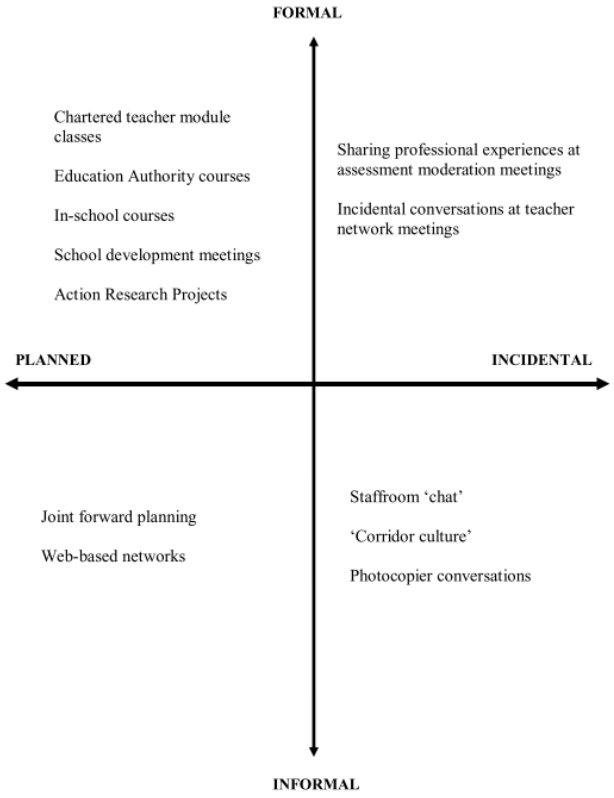


Figure 10 Reid's Quadrants of Teacher Learning (Fraser et al, 2007, p.12)

While formal education/learning and incidental learning are generally uncontested the categories of formality and informality are not clearly defined. Formal education is associated with the education system, courses, accreditation and progression from primary school level to postgraduate programmes. Incidental learning is learning that is unintended and is as a result of personal experience or interactions (Jarvis, 2002, p. 99) or as a by-product of another activity (Marsick and Watkins, 2015, p. 7) and is experiential and tacit (Eraut, 2000). However terms such as informal and non-formal learning are not as clear-cut (Fordham, 1993; Colley, Hodkinson and Malcom, 2003; Malcolm, Hodkinson and Colley, 2003; Field and Tuckett, 2016). The differences lie in the ownership and purpose (education/training -v- learning).

Nonformal learning was described by Coombs and Ahmed (1974, p. 8) as organised, systematic learning outside the formal system. This is compared to the definition of non-formal learning as a process that happens outside the formal system to meet the needs of the learners (Jarvis, 2002, p. 144). These definitions

share the common idea that non-formal learning is organised and outside of the academic accredited system.

This research will take the following definitions:

- Formal education/learning. Mainstream or 'regular' education that takes place in colleges and universities.
- Non-formal education/learning. Organised learning outside of formal learning.
- Informal learning. Non-taught, self-directed learning.

2.2.1.1 CPD in FET

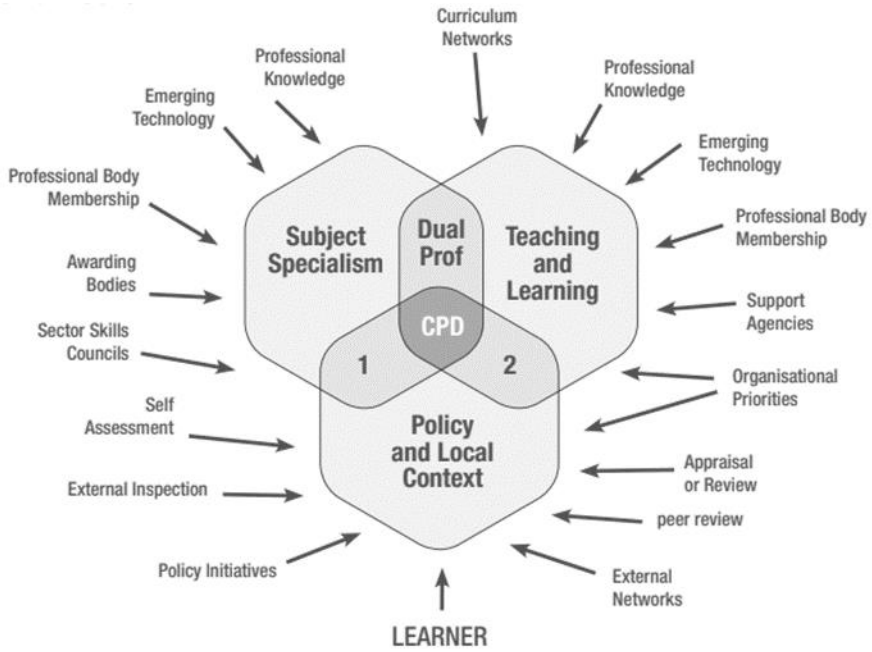
FET is an umbrella term that includes Adult and Continuing Education (ACE), Vocational Education and Training (VET), Technical Education, Adult Basic Education, and Community Education (CE). Those who work in the sector also come from a diverse range of backgrounds, disciplines and career paths and work in a diverse range of contexts. These contexts influence the content and nature of the expectations for, and of, CPD.

The FET sector in Ireland has gone through a recent process of 'professionalisation' including the introduction of regulations that regulate eligibility to work in the sector. The sectoral reforms and requirements means that some, who were hired on the basis of their vocational expertise (Broad and Lahiff, 2019, p. 436), were deemed 'unqualified', because of a lack of academic qualifications or a TEQ at an acceptably academic level. This created a requirement for many to gain pedagogical qualifications. This gatekeeping relates to the view of professionalisation that focuses on creating symbolic strength through 'societally based legitimacy', maintaining exclusivity, controlling a branch of knowledge and providing protection for the members of the profession by representative groups (Englund, 1996, p. 77).

The SOLAS FET Professional Development Strategy has identified professional development as the 'enabler of change in FET' (2017, p. 6). Through the

implementation of a sector wide planning, delivery and review process, the aim is that professional development will build on good practice, support the role of the ETBs and to create an identity for a 'unified sector' (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017, p. 7). This strategic plan is explicit in identifying that there are political and economic drivers, both at a national and European level.

The strategy acknowledges that those working in FET have a 'distinctive role' (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017, p. 16) and uses the term to include 'learning practitioners', to encompass the diverse job roles, titles and contexts. It also acknowledges the role as being one that of a 'dual' professional (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017, p. 16). This is commonly associated with VET (Vocational Education & Training) where teachers typically are members of an initial (vocational) profession that hold an identity as educational professional as a secondary or dual profession. However, this dual professionalism has been extended across FET to any that have a subject specialism (see **Error! Reference source not found.** 11), of which professional body membership may be an element (Institute for Learning, 2009, p. 7).



Dual professionalism and its impact on the model for continuing professional development:
1 relates to CPD arising out of subject specialism,
2 relates to CPD arising from teaching, and 1 and 2 both relate to the context in which you work.

Figure 11 Institute for learning, (2009) p. 7

As a dual professional 'learning practitioner', there are CPD demands that differ from the mainstream educational sector. FET teachers occupy a role that demands they maintain their subject expertise and/or expertise vocational area, as well as being able to meet the constantly changing organisational needs for changing subject specialisms. They are also expected to have, maintain and develop pedagogical expertise. Both of these demands need to be aligned with the requirements of policy and the local context (Institute for Learning, 2009, p. 7).

For those teaching vocational subjects there are, of course, additional concerns. The longer they spend away from their initial area of expertise, the demands and expectations are increased. They are expected to be willing and able to remain vocationally competent, confident, and current without the access to the daily workplace and the embedded tacit and implicit learning that accumulates through experiences.

Broad & Lahiff demonstrated some of the informal and innovative ways that teachers maintained and refreshed their knowledge and skills, demonstrating a high level of self-directed and relevant learning (Broad and Lahiff, 2019). These were in addition to the more commonly used activities, for example reading, access to materials online and work in their field (Hoekstra *et al.*, 2009; Broad, 2016; Andersson and Köpsén, 2018). Based on this Broad & Lahiff recommend that, because each teacher's path is an individual one, there is a responsibility on policymakers in the sector to appreciate that complexity and deliberately enable and empower teachers to share and develop practice and opportunities (Broad and Lahiff, 2019).

2.2.2 Purposes and drivers of CPD

Perspectives of what CPD is or should be can be taken from the development of an individual, the profession, the organisation or at a wider systemic and political level (Guskey and Huberman, 1995). These perspectives align with Caffarella and Zinn's (Caffarella and Zinn, 1999) categorisation, that is that learning is self-directed, professionally oriented or organisationally focused. This would imply three types of drivers: individual (intrinsic and extrinsic), and professional (status maintenance or growth) and organisational (reactive and or strategic) (Friedman and Philips, 2004).

These are driven by different ideologies, purposes and goals, and, therefore, different criteria by which effectiveness is judged. For example Guskey offered that CPD could offer three areas of change or impact: i) practice, ii) attitudes and beliefs and iii) student learning outcomes (2002, p. 381). This is similar to the position of Avalos, who identified the core of PD as 'about teachers learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students' growth' (2011, p. 10). These perspectives are quite limited in their focus of the outcomes of CPD but drive what is valued in CPD.

Teachers' individual learning, in the tradition of Dewey, is self-directed, based on experience and is enhanced through reflection and reflexive practice (Schön, 1987). This form of learning can be part of the development from novice to mastery or expertise (Steffy *et al.*, 2000; Dreyfus, 2004), as a response to a context or a critical incident, as an interest in a subject or as a strategic career move.

Alternatively, drivers in FET can be part of an organisational requirement or focus, for example an intention to provide courses that are wanted by learners and have outcomes meet the needs of other stakeholders (industry) (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017). This requires having staff who are willing, and capable, to learn to deliver those modules. There are also professional drivers that include the 'vocational profession' requirements as well as 'pedagogical profession' requirements.

These individual intrinsic and extrinsic drivers of CPD broadly align with those identified by Friedman & Philips (2004, p. 372):

- continuous or lifelong learning,
- a means of personal development,
- a means of job security and control,
- remaining current and appearing to do so,
- verifying competence and maintaining standards of professional bodies,
- a means for employers to ensure employees are competent and adaptable.

Day views it as a process whereby teachers commit to their role, develop their knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence to support professional thinking,

professional planning and professional practice (Day, 1999, p. 4). Although Day's definition focuses on teaching as a practice that involves children and young people it is equally relevant to those working with adults: this practice also involves moral purposes, and requires knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence, professional thinking and planning in practice.

In the research by Fraser et al it was found that ownership and control of the process increased the likelihood of development (2007, pp. 165–166) and that authentic development generated a desire for further self-directed development (Bell and Gilbert, 1996, p. 29). Conversely, Timperley found that the passive 'sit and get' development is a 'demeaning, mind numbing experience' (Timperley, 2011, p. 1). Timperley's finding is not an isolated one: Miles in the introduction to *Professional Development in Education* posits that 'A good deal of what passes for professional development in schools is a joke – one that we'd laugh at if we weren't trying to keep from crying' (Guskey and Huberman, 1995, p. vii). These types of experiences may account for the lack of interest and participation of some vocational teachers (Dalton and Smith, 2004), and therefore the impact on practice.

Broad (Broad, 2015) in a survey of UK FE teachers found that the most important reason for undertaking CPD is the desire to update subject knowledge. Updating pedagogical skills second was the second. Yet this study also found that the legislative requirements were the main driver (Broad, 2015, p. 22). This indicates that there is a distinction between the CPD that is important and relevant to the individual teacher in their role and the CPD that is logged to fulfil requirements (Broad, 2015, pp. 24–25). Broad also found that only certain CPD is perceived to be of value to and valued by the organisations.

2.2.3 Supports and Barriers

CPD has been identified as being of strategic importance, professionally and organisationally across education. However, there are factors that support or enhance the uptake and participation in CPD and those that create barriers or impede it. Caffarella & Zinn (1999) identified four domains that barriers and supports are clustered in: i) personal and interpersonal relationships, ii) institutional structures, iii) personal lives, considerations and commitments, and iv) the

intellectual and personal characteristics of the individual. Friedman & Philips (2001) identified two models of employer support i) active participation in planning, providing and evaluating CPD and ii) more general support (2001, p. 5). This general support described by Friedman & Philips included learning accounts, flexibility and time off. However, a view of CPD that is firmly rooted in, and controlled by, the employer could be regarded as a threat to professional autonomy (Friedman and Philips, 2004, p. 366), rather than as a support for developments in professional practice (Friedman and Philips, 2004, p. 374). This threat to professional autonomy was described as a monitoring tool, a method of control that dictated 'learning' for the purpose of auditing. However, the converse is also true. Positive, relevant, experiences that are professionally supportive provide a sustainable basis for continuous professional development.

Friedman & Philips found in their research that the most frequently cited barriers to participation included i) time pressures at work, ii) demands of home and family, iii) variation in professionals and iv) a lack of employer supports (2001, pp. 5–6). The role of the employer supports was identified as a strong influence on participation in CPD. These supports included formal and informal learning and development opportunities, and practical supports such 'ring-fenced time' and/or study leave, as well as financial support (Friedman and Phillips, 2001, p. 5). Two further studies highlighted the commitment of those working within the FET sector and more or less indicated that it was within the power of management to actively support teachers through facilitating communities of practice (Broad and Lahiff, 2019) and opportunities to use work tasks to contribute to their CPD (Andersson and Köpsén, 2019). In the Swedish system Andersson & Köpsén (2018) indicated that there is a level of CPD provided by the employer but that occupational/ vocational or specialist CPD is the responsibility of the individual teacher. One Australian study found that self-directed professional learning was an option that the teachers were too busy to undertake (Dalton and Smith, 2004, p. 512).

But employer appetite for CPD also depends on the value that is placed on learning within the organisation and the expectations and evaluations of its effectiveness. There has been much written about the effectiveness of CPD quality

of CPD/professional learning (Guskey, 1994, 2003, 2017; Kennedy, 2016). It is often deemed ineffectual (Fullan, 1995; Guskey, 2002), for not effecting the required changes in teacher behaviour or student achievement that often emanate from organisational or sectoral conditions or changes. There is a long history of imposed initiatives and sectoral changes across education (Guskey and Huberman, 1995). Edward et al (2007) examined the impacts of changes in the UK FE (Further Education) sector in the 2000s and indicated that factors and aspects of the sector added to the challenges. These included the nature of the staff cohort: high turnover, high levels of temporary, part-time and agency staff, and employment terms and conditions that are not on a par with mainstream teachers (Simons, Harris and Pudney, 2009). They also identified issues around the sheer number of changes and adjustments required and the lack of involvement and voice either in the formation and or evaluation of the changes. Despite this they found those in the classrooms were committed, notwithstanding the changes. They determinedly met the needs of the learners but that this was done at a personal cost as they tried to shield their learners from the effects of the changes. This, they posited, was not a sustainable prospect in the long term. They recommended that teachers were supported and listened to, that is treated as professionals that are 'professional learners' as part of being 'learning professionals' (Eraut, 1994, p. 14).

In Broad's research in the UK FE sector it emerged that there were a range of barriers. These included accessing financial support from their organisation and workload issues (Broad, 2015, p. 25). Barriers also included the individual teacher's perception of organisational values, a lack of organisational opportunities as well as a lack of networks of colleagues. Broad also found that being part-time (Broad, 2015, p. 27) impacted the ability to access CPD events.

2.2.4 CPD Conclusions

This section explored the literature on Continuous Professional Development (CPD). It was found that the term is a contested and ambiguous one that is used to describe many meanings, objectives and purposes across the professions. Despite these challenges, within the teaching profession in general, and FET in particular, there are reported high levels of self-directed, active learning.

CPD is strongly driven by the teachers themselves, their own motivations, interests and values. However, there is also an element of CPD that is undertaken to meet the requirements of the organisation or other stakeholders. These requirements determine the provision of, and value placed on, CPD by organisations, and is more likely to be driven by organisational needs and policy compliance than the needs of the individual teachers, or the learners. For each teacher, the combination and effects of these drivers is individual, and depends on the context in which they teach, their subject/discipline, their personal availability and supports, and their perceptions of CPD based on prior experiences.

As teacher and teaching quality have been identified as the influence on learning, there is an imperative to refocus on and support CPD that is authentic, rather than bureaucratically driven, to create and foster an appetite for CPD and culture that encourages and supports ongoing learning and development. A range of supports and barriers to participation have been identified, including people and interpersonal relationships, institutional structures, personal considerations and commitments and intellectual and personal characteristics. Each of these can act as a barrier or a support for sustainable and authentic learning and development.

2.3 Career Progression

In general, views of career progression have changed from a focus on movement through a hierarchy within an organisation to broader, more individually crafted, paths (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Hall and Moss, 1998; Sullivan and Arthur, 2006). Careers can be 'a feature of individual's lives, or as a set of opportunity and incentive structures . . a path in life . . . an upward climb in an occupation, or even a series of experiences in an institution' (Acker, 1995, p. 124). So careers are increasingly viewed as less structured, more dynamic and nuanced and are described in terms of being boundaryless or protean (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996, 2004; Briscoe and Hall, 2006; Forrier, Sels and Stynen, 2009), as authentic (Svejenova, 2005), kaleidoscope (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005) or off-ramp (Hewlett, 2007). These more fluid perceptions of career are underpinned by the

individual's values, motivations, and definitions of a successful career. They are also associated with high career mobility and employability. However, this can also be used as an organisational justification for using moves and transitions as rewards in themselves or as opportunities to develop new skills/competencies (Chudzikowski, 2012) and to assume that intrinsic motivations such as 'calling' and 'service' exclude the need for extrinsic rewards.

2.3.1 Teaching as a career

Teaching is a complex task. It requires knowledge - not only of subject matter, but also motivation, pedagogy and metacognition (Darling-Hammond, 2000) and all teachers do not develop equally. With a wider perspective, and as a contrast to the linear development model, Huberman produced a large scale research project on the lives of teachers based on the human life cycle (Huberman, 1993b, p. 13). In this he identified alternative paths that reflected a more complex, affective progression. While this model recognised the variations in the phases and themes that can occur, it too was a one-way progression within and through a career.

Although the status of teaching as a profession is still debated (Ingersoll and Merrill, 2011; Ingersoll and Collins, 2018) teaching, as a career, became a source of interest in the 1980s (Huberman, 1989a). Until the mid-1970s research in career progression focused on entry into and early years within teaching (Huberman, 1989a, p. 343) and the associated models of career development (Fuller, 1969; Katz, 1972; Burden, 1980; Glaser, 1996). This focused on skill mastery, which can be viewed as a linear progression through stages (Super, 1953; Katz, 1972; Steffy *et al.*, 2000; Steffy and Wolfe, 2001; Day, 2004a). Mastery was the goal. This reflected that then, and indeed since, teaching has been defined as "relatively continuous patterns of activities that provide workers with a livelihood and define their general social status" (Form, 1968, p. 245 quoted in Coldwell, 2016, p. 610), or as a 'flat occupation with no career structure, low pay, [and] salary increments unrelated to merit' (Butt, Raymond, McCue, & Yamagishi, 1992). In a similar vein Hargreaves describes it as 'a flat career that attracts socially conservative entrants', but Hargreaves continues that many teachers are 'women who have an "in and out engagement" to their work' (Hargreaves, 2010, p. 146). This gendered view of

teaching is supported across the literature (Sabbe and Aelterman, 2007; Drudy, 2008). Teaching has long been considered a respectable occupation, a vehicle for upward mobility (Meiners, 2002) as a stable career and associated with job security (OECD, 2005) and positive working conditions and opportunities (Coolahan, 2003, p. ix).

Most of the research that has been conducted on teachers and teaching careers has been done in the mainstream compulsory education sector. In comparison, this is a sector that has a long established tradition and confers a level of status that is socially recognised with opportunities for development, although it is not without need for reassessment and action (Coolahan, 2003). One factor that has been highlighted for examination is the gender bias within teaching (Drudy, 2008). Although this is normally associated with compulsory education it is replicated within the Irish FET sector (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017). This has implications for the status of the profession and its members and their efficacy and agency (Acker, 1995) and how the status and conditions vary over time (Acker, 1995, p. 109) . There are implications too for a teacher's identity (discussed later in this chapter). However, the individual's experience is not only influenced by societal assumptions and expectations but is also, at a more personal level, influenced by peers and local management.

The progression models have two things in common that do not typically reflect today's teachers in the FET sector. There is an assumption that teaching is fulltime and life-long. This assumption reflects a mainstream model: a college education followed by a stable trajectory until retirement. As such, the models are simplistic and, for the most part, ignore the wider professional and organisational, as well as personal influences. They do not consider the more contemporary career forms that include greater flexibility, mobility and changes. Fessler and Christensen's (1992) career cycle model, although a contemporary of Huberman's, is a more holistic cycle that identifies career stages but also identifies external influences both from the personal environment and the organisational environment.

Fessler & Christensen's model identifies eight career stages: i) preservice, ii) induction, iii) competency building, iv) enthusiastic and growing, v) career frustration, vi) career stability, vii) career wind down and viii) career exit. This model acknowledges that, despite the intuitive logic that the phases within the career cycle are linear, that in practice there is an 'ebb and flow, moving in and out of stages in response to personal and organizational environmental influences' (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, p. 249).

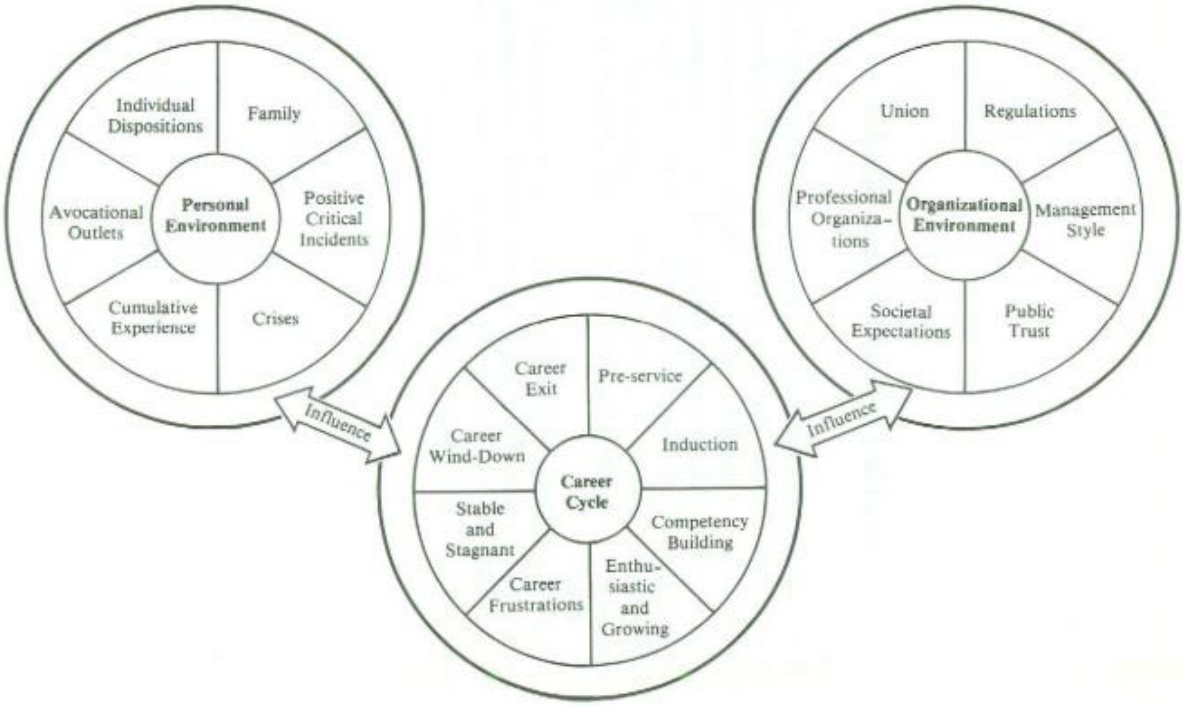


Figure 12 The Teacher Career Cycle (Fessler & Christensen, 1992, p. 36)

The pre-service stage is a period of preparation for a specific role and can refer to the profession (Initial Teacher Training) or retraining/upskilling for a new role or assignment (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, p. 45). This is followed by the induction stage. This stage refers to both the initial induction into teaching but also acknowledges that the induction experience can be associated with changing levels, buildings or districts. This focus of the individual teacher at this stage is on survival, adequacy and acceptance (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, pp. 59–60) that necessitates adjustment. Having achieved the stage of competency building there is a 'striving to improve'. This is evidenced by the desire to improve teaching practice

through increased skills and abilities (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, p. 87). The next stage, that of 'enthusiastic and growing' (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, p. 119) describes a high level of competence combined with ongoing development. This is associated with a positive attitude towards the job and the learners combined with high levels of job commitment and job satisfaction. Up to this point the literature on teacher career development more or less align with models of skill development (Dreyfus, 2004). Previous literature (Fuller, 1969; Katz, 1972; Burden, 1980) and since (Steffy *et al.*, 2000; Steffy and Wolfe, 2001; Day, 2004b) focused on these beginning to mastery stages.

Other literature (Huberman, 1989b, 1993a; Vonk, 1989) extended into other, later stages and described stages akin to Fessler & Christensen's fifth to eighth stages of career frustration, career stability, career wind-down and career exit. Fessler & Christensen describe the career frustration stage as one of frustration and disillusionment and associate this stage with burnout (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, p. 153). In contrast the teachers who persist reach a stage of career stability and stagnate and go through the motions competently but not enthusiastically. This stage combines Huberman's 'Serenity' and 'Conservatism' stages (Huberman, 1993b, p. 13). The next career stage continues the process of disengagement towards a more active and deliberate preparation to leave. This may be a period of serenity or bitterness (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, p. 191; Huberman, 1993b, p. 13). As their final stage, career exit, extends beyond the employment and is characterised by the circumstances and may be permanent (retirement or career change), or temporary (career break) and may be voluntary or enforced. Fessler & Christensen highlight that the career exit stage may be reached from any other stage from pre-service right through. Therefore, it can be seen that the stages of the cycle are not sequential and reaching one (career frustration) can be the catalyst to a 'reverse' move (to enthusiastic and growing) (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, p. 154).

2.3.1.1 Careers in FET

CEDEFOP states that the 'poor level of data' available 'makes it impossible to provide a comprehensive statistical picture of the VET workforce and of the various

challenges it faces' (2009, p. 115). This is echoed by OECD (2010, p. 96), and the data available for the FET Professional Development Strategy (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017). However, research indicates that FET teachers, in contrast to mainstream teachers, are more likely to enter their teaching career 'accidentally' (Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler, 2005; Orr, 2019, p. 337) from a variety of routes, but the decision is less likely to be made for economic gain (Orr, 2019, p. 337) and may be part-time. But, again, there is a lack of specific data on the even the number working in the sector (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017, p. 3), and even less on the routes in and through their teaching career.

2.3.2 Factors influencing career progression

Fessler & Christensen (1992) identified that there were factors in the personal and organisational environments that influenced the individual's progression through the career cycle. The following sections look at these.

2.3.2.1 Personal Environment

There is little research specifically on the effect of the personal environment on FET teachers. However, Jameson & Hiller (2008), Villeneuve-Smith (2008) and Wilson & Wilson (2011) found that the personal disposition of those working in the sector was such that they had a high level of determination and commitment to their work. Positive critical incidents, although not specifically studied, emerged from the pull towards teaching through the accidental introduction to FET teaching (Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler, 2005). Personal values, attitudes and beliefs are part of the personal dispositions that, combined with needs and priorities, which develop and change over the life-course. These are significant influences on both career choices, commitments and satisfaction derived. This could be related to the concept of career as a 'calling' (Hall and Chandler, 2005) and influences the motivations for working in the sector (Straw, 2017, p. 15). The positive motivations and orientation towards work can have negative effects. Acker (1995) found that, for teachers in general, the influence of work on home life, especially for women, tended to be greater, and negative, taking time and energy away from the non-work life.

2.3.2.2 Organisational Environment

The organisational environment, in terms of working conditions, management style and processes, policies and procedures will have practical effects on the experience of work, career stages, opportunities and challenges. These are tangible supports, restraints and constraints. Straw found that in the UK enabling factors for career progression included 'gaining a formal teaching or training qualification' (Straw, 2017, p. 17). However Lucas & Unwin found that there was little organisational support for this (2009, p. 428). Effects of the organisational environment were highlighted by Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop (2004) who found that enforced changes had a negative effect on career progression. Management and leadership styles and processes too can have positive (Day and Sammons, 2013) and negative effects (Rose *et al.*, 2015). There are also pressures the organisational resources are insufficient to deal with the demands of the work (Kahn, 2019). While resilience is a personal attribute or characteristic organisational conditions have a significant effect (Gu and Day, 2013).

Teacher identity has suffered because of the feminisation of the sector (Acker, 1995) and its close ties to caring or mothering roles. Legacies of this include a 'martyr' role, as if only through extra effort, time, and commitment the status of professional could be earned even when this impacts life outside of work. Acker considers that these self-imposed responsibilities have become societal expectations and an 'unavoidable part of teaching itself' (Acker, 1995, p. 124). The effects of these expectations meant that their work (over) influenced home/private life (Acker, 1995, p. 131) adding to the emotional costs of teaching (Bullough, 2008).

2.3.2.3 Other factors

In addition to the factors identified by Fessler & Christensen (1992) there are other influences on career progression identified in the literature.

Professional Identity

A professional identity as an FET teacher is complicated by the dual identity status. This is more than the multiple identities that we all hold: our core (attributes, character, values), and those of our context (gender, background,

nationality etc.) (Williams, 2013). An identity associated with an occupation, vocation or profession has a sense of belonging to a community. Taking on a dual identity, or even a 'part-time' identity is more complicated in some ways than a career change because both identities have to be held simultaneously. This can be a process of personal transformation to an 'authentic self' from a 'non-authentic self' (Williams, 2013, p. 27). But this depends on the opportunity, in the new identity, to have a strong culture that encourages belonging and the communication of shared values.

There are also the challenges to identity that come from a wider context: Beijaard et al highlighted that enforced changes can cause a separation between the new expectations and the personal aspirations and values of the teacher with troublesome consequences: 'Such a conflict can lead to friction in teachers' professional identity in cases in which the "personal" and the "professional" are too far removed from each other' (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004, p. 109). This introduces the risk of a 'divided self' (Rodgers and Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 271) and leads to a withdrawal of 'presence' and authenticity, which in turn reduces learner trust (Rodgers and Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 272) and affects teacher engagement, agency and efficacy.

Culture

Organisational culture is an intangible, but direct influence on the personal decisions for engagement (Kahn, 1990), presence (Kahn, 1992) and orientation towards professional learning, as well as on the perception of the self (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). The culture has a normalising effect on behaviours, and ambitions. This is less obvious than policies but often accounts for the difference between the organisational rhetoric and the experiences of the individuals (Lucas and Unwin, 2009). However, within large organisations there are sub-cultures and networks that mediate and/or support individuals and their career progression (Ibarra and Deshpande, 2007).

Trust

While Fessler & Christensen place 'Public Trust' (1992, p. 39) in the organisational environment this does not address trust as part of the relationship between the individual and the organisation, one that is built or damaged easily. Trust is multi-faceted: it has a proximal dimension (relationship with line-management or supervisor) and a wider organisational one (Holland, Cooper and Sheehan, 2017) and has different forms (Kramer, 1999). The presence of trust results in positive attitudes, co-operation and high levels of performance (Dirks and Ferrin, 2001, p. 450), increased levels of psychological safety (Edmondson, 2004; Clark, 2020), creativity (Avis, 2003) and employee engagement (Holland, Cooper and Sheehan, 2017). However, there is an argument to be made for cultivating distrust. Acker's description of women teachers, as individuals whose priority was their family role, (1995, p. 104) and so required higher supervision levels highlights the use of distrust to regulate teaching and teachers to the status of semi-professionals. This could be seen to have parallels with the increasing organisational priorities of accountability as a remedy for the perceived failures of the FET sector. The autonomy associated with being professional is being eroded and distrust used as a means of control in an environment in flux (Donovan, 2019).

This leads to an undermining lack of trust in the self, as well as the organisation. Despite this there is evidence in the literature that FET teachers are enthusiastic, experience high levels of job satisfaction, and take pride in their work and its contribution to society (Villeneuve-Smith *et al.*, 2008, p. 41). Their determination to the work, even under challenging conditions and changing expectations (Wilson and Wilson, 2011), was also found by Jameson and Hillier (2008).

2.3.3 Career Progression Conclusion

This section led with general descriptions of careers, identifying the changes in the perception of careers. This was followed by a review of the literature on teaching as a career followed by a review of literature on a career as an FET teacher.

Fessler & Christensen's (1992) Teacher Career Cycle model was used to describe the phases of a teacher's career through eight stages from preservice to

career exit. Unlike the other models identified this was chosen as a model that took a holistic view of the teaching career and an acknowledgement that these phases are not necessarily linear or sequential. This model also includes influences that emerge from the personal environment and the organisational environment. Influences that emerge from the literature that do not sit within the model were also identified. Despite this, the Fessler & Christensen Teacher Career Cycle model has been chosen for its more holistic view of a career cycle and an individual teacher's progression within and through their career.

2.4 Conclusion

The aim of this research is to explore the psychological conditions of teacher engagement and how this influences their perceptions of CPD and career progression. Thus, this chapter drew together literature on the topics of engagement, CPD and career progression. Because the FET sector is generally under-researched, this review of the literature has included literature on teaching in general, as well as that relating to the sector.

In the area of engagement, the focus was the psychological conditions of personal engagement. These conditions were identified as Meaningfulness, Psychological Safety and Psychological Availability. The implications of engagement for FET teachers were then identified.

CPD was explored, highlighting the variety of definitions and conceptions of the term and related concepts. The purposes and drivers of CPD were identified, differentiating between those that are relevant to the individual, the organisation and the profession. The factors that act as barriers and supports to CPD were also identified.

In relation to career progression there was an identification of what constitutes a career, first in the general literature, followed by that on teaching as a career and then teaching in the FET sector. Using Fessler & Christensen's Teacher Career Cycle (1992) the factors that influence a teaching career were explored.

The literature on FET teachers and their individual experiences as professionals in an emerging sector, especially in Ireland, is still limited. This study sets out to contribute to this knowledge to look at engagement in the work role and how this influences CPD and career progression.

Chapter three will set out the methodology and research design chosen for this research.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter will present the methodology of this study. It is divided into four sections. Section one describes the research approach taken and identification of the population of interest. Secondly it details the data collection methods and design. Section three details the preparation and approach to the analysis of the data. This is followed by a section on the analysis process. Finally, there is the section on the ethical implications.

3.1 Research Approach

For this research it is understood that contexts are complex, subjective and dynamic. Therefore, a relativist and emic approach was taken. This reflects the ontological understanding that there are multiple realities, each created by personal interpretation of the individual's own personal and situational contexts within the emergent sector of FET. This study set out to qualitatively explore i) the personal engagement of FET teachers with their work role, ii) their experiences and commitment towards CPD and iii) their experiences as professions in a teaching career. It will focus on the areas of i) engagement, ii) Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and iii) career progression.

An interpretive approach is taken that focuses on the tradition of *Verstehen* or understanding (Ormston *et al.*, 2014, p. 11; Robson and McCartan, 2016). This is in the knowledge that firstly, qualitative research is not always successful in revealing the 'why' alongside the 'what' and 'how' and secondly, that the small scale precludes generalising results to a larger population. Despite this, a qualitative approach is the most suitable for exploring the subjective individual experience. Through qualitative methods is possible to explore the individual human experience: the emotions, values, influences (historical and social) and the associated constructed meanings.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

3.2.1 Researcher Position

In qualitative research the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection, coding and analysis. While this position introduces challenges in terms of

assumptions and biases (conscious and unconscious), there are also corresponding strengths. One of the strengths of qualitative search is the gathering of 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973). These descriptions of lived experiences are rich and holistic (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014) and can provide insights into the complex relationships of influences and contexts on an individual's perceptions and behaviours.

In this study the researcher is an FET teacher. This position, as a colleague/ practitioner in the field and as a researcher, introduced strengths and challenges to conducting this research. Being of the field (an insider) there is a greater understanding of the culture, with potentially better participation acceptance rates, a better rapport and so richer data because of shared experiences and understanding. However, the position of 'insider' is not a single position: according to Adler & Adler (1987) it can be one of three: (i) a peripheral member, (ii) an active member or a (iii) complete member. This implies three discrete positions. However, it could also be viewed as a spectrum. This visualisation is pertinent. As a 'colleague' of the participants the position of insider/outsider varies because of the varied and often traditionally fractured nature of the sector and the intended sampling of participants (from a variety of backgrounds, contexts, and disciplinary perspectives). Therefore, in this case the insider/outsider argument is not an 'us or them' (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Instead, it is one that provides a shared understanding from which similarities and differences naturally emerge. This mitigates the challenge of familiarity and the assumptions that emerge from similarity, thus allowing the researcher to know the field yet and requiring the ability remain 'sufficiently detached' to make the 'familiar unfamiliar' (Ely, Anzul, Freidman, Garner, & McCormack-Steinmetz, 1991, p 16-17) or in Kvale's terms one of 'deliberate naïveté'.

3.2.2 Ethical conduct of research

The primary guide for the ethical considerations in undertaking research is the respect and care for the dignity and wellbeing of participants, their knowledge and values balanced with care for democratic values, justice and equity, as well as the quality of the research (BERA, 2018; Waterford Institute of Technology, 2019).

In line with the WIT regulations and policies, ethical approval was obtained for this study. This included approval of the sampling methods, participation and consent procedures and safeguards to privacy and anonymity.

The study initially used convenience (Lavrakas, 2008) and snowball sampling (Hutchinson, 2004) to invite those who met the criteria of the target population (as detailed below). This approach, although it has advantages, has limitations and disadvantages including a biased sample and consequent 'group think' phenomenon. The initial profile information of the interviewees, determined through my own knowledge or that of the snowball 'gatekeepers' of those invited (length of service and biographical details), was confirmed with each individual. To minimise these issues purposive sampling was used in the final selection of the participants.

Those interested were invited to take part on a voluntary basis and a written record of informed consent was obtained from those who chose to participate (see Appendix A). This document also included the information on their right to withdraw, the intended use of the research outputs and the likely benefits to themselves (negligible) and the possible benefits to the sector.

The information/consent document also provided participants with an indication of the measures taken to ensure that their privacy and anonymity would be maintained including the use of pseudonyms and the masking of any potentially identifying information (names, specific affiliations or details). It also included information on the recording and storage of data in line with WIT policies and GDPR regulations.

3.3 Population of Interest

The target population for this study included those who fulfilled the following criteria:

- Employed in a teaching role in the FET sector in the Cork & Kerry area
- Employed in one of the following settings:

- Adult Basic Education/General education programmes QQI Levels 1-4
- Vocational Programmes QQI levels 5 & 6.

The following criteria were taken into account as much as possible: geographical spread, QQI Level (1-6), focus of training and/or education, and experience as well as urban and rural contexts. It was relatively easy to achieve a gender balance, and to represent the differing teaching roles, experience and contexts. Despite the small scale of the study, the sample aimed to achieve as wide a selection of voices as possible from across the FET sector in the region, but social class, racial/ethnicity and diversity balances were beyond the scope of the study. For example, there was a real limitation to achieving a more diverse population due to the constraints of the low population density in the geographic location, the homogenous nature of the population of interest, and the challenge of maintaining anonymity and confidentiality.

Figure 13 Planned Focus Group locations

This plan was ambitious as it aimed to get thirty-six FET teachers from a mix of contexts and settings together across six locations (Figure 13). This was deemed important because of the diverse and fractured nature of the sector. It was envisaged that this would highlight commonalities and differences in the responses between those working in different discipline areas and levels. Following in the

focus groups it was planned to interview twelve from this pool of participants. However, this plan had to be modified.

The next section will describe the sequence of the research process undertaken.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

This qualitative study adopted an interpretative approach to study the participants' engagement in their work and how this influences their CPD and career progression. Figure 14 describes the iterative process in which this multi-method study was carried out.

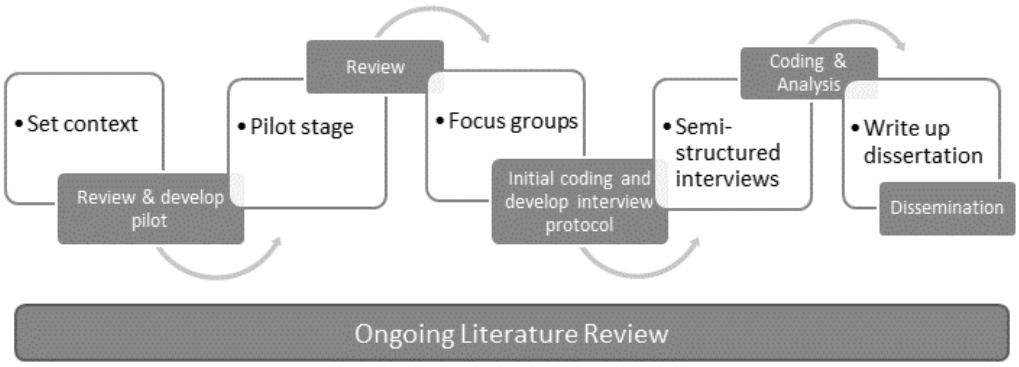


Figure 14 Research process

The clearly defined steps in the design of the research study began with a literature review and context examination. The pilot stage was followed by focus groups. The focus groups were followed by the semi-structured interviews.

At each stage, the findings (summaries and transcripts as appropriate) were member-checked. Each stage of the process is detailed below.

To be ethically sound and to be as fair as possible, the data, once gathered and transcribed, was sent to that participant for checking. This is for three reasons: to acknowledge the contribution of the interviewee, to give them the opportunity to amend/clarify any misrepresentations and to confirm that, after some time and thought they are comfortable with the level of their private world that is made public. Consequently, any amendments/additional information returned was

incorporated or removed as appropriate. This provides for reliability and validity checks.

As a pre-pilot (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 211) consultations with three experienced FET teachers, chosen for their experience and area of expertise (basic education, vocational training and apprenticeship education) the nature and format of the focus groups was refined to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of data for the pilot. These refinements involved adapting the wording to eliminate any possible misunderstandings.

3.4.1 The Focus Group Pilot

The use of a pilot is established good practice to identify difficulties that might emerge with the study procedures and protocols, the flow of the design, or problematic questions or questions that require clarification/simplification (Ismail, Kinchin, & Edwards, 2018).

The pilot focus group was run with four tutors from one literacy sector centre. These were chosen using a convenience sampling approach (Lavrakas, 2008). The setup chosen for the focus group pilot was in the format of 'stations': posters with questions where participants were invited to place post-it notes, followed by discussion. This allowed the participants to consider their responses individually first and then to explore common and different conceptions, perspectives, and assumptions. The poster questions were linked almost directly to the theoretical framework.

On reflection the researcher's personal biases were revealed in the directive nature of the questions. The questions were 'leading' towards confirming the findings in the literature. Hence each question was carefully reconsidered and reworked to reduce bias and to maximise the nature and depth of the data gathered in the focus groups. In contrast the 'station' format was deemed to have worked well and so it was retained.

3.4.2 Focus Groups

Focus groups were chosen as the initial method of data collection as a way of mapping the context/landscape. This is similar to a 'scoping study', a type of literature review that summarises 'a range of evidence in order to convey the

breadth and depth of a field' (Levac, Colquhoun and O'Brien, 2010). The focus groups took place in February 2019.

Focus groups, as a method, have the advantage of being able to bring people together to discuss a general topic or topics to determine both the range of views and to encourage discussion and clarification of those views (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007).

3.4.2.1 Sampling

In the initial stages a convenience sampling approach (Lavrakas, 2008) was used. Those who met the criteria (from a diverse sample from across the sector, from a wide geographical spread and working in a wide variety of contexts and settings), were invited to take part. This convenience sampling approach was enhanced by asking initial contacts to recommend others for invitation i.e. snowball or network sampling (Hutchinson, 2004; Halej, 2017) to extend the potential pool of participants. These methods have advantages including access to potential participants and the bypassing of gatekeepers. The participants that met the criteria were self-selected.

However, in this case, because of the nature of the sector and the working patterns of those who are employed, it was almost impossible to manage the logistics. The number of focus groups was therefore reduced to two, one with participants from the literacy sector (levels 1-4) and one from the vocational sector (levels 5-6), one in each of the two counties of the geographical area.

Table 1 Focus Groups Sampling Criteria

	Phase 1: Focus Groups
Purpose	Explore the diversity of experiences and attitudes
Recruitment methods	Convenience and snowball sampling
Number	2 groups (3 member in one; 6 in the other)
Age	23-65
Gender	Mixed
Inclusion criteria	Employed in the FET sector at QQI levels 1- 6
Exclusion criteria	Self-exclusion

3.4.2.2 Method

To begin, four questions (see Appendix B) were on 'posters' on the wall and the participants were encouraged to move between these and place 'post-it' notes with their thoughts and/or experiences as appropriate. This exercise was partly as an icebreaker and partly to gather a diverse range of data as possible. Once this was completed the whole group came together to discuss and sort the 'post-it's into themes within the posters. The data collected included audio recordings, flipcharts of post-it notes (as well as backup photographs of the 'themed' posters) and the impressions and field notes of the researcher and the observer.

To ensure that all data gathered from the focus group was correct and was as fair and ethically sound as possible, a summary was sent to those participants for checking. The observer's oral reflections (where present) were incorporated into the field notes and the observer was also sent a copy of the summary for review. There were no requests to include additional information or amendments as a request of this member checking. The use of focus groups has some limitations. One of these is participant availability. Another is the effect of the group on the data gathered. This can be in either of two directions: there may be some reluctance to share information in a group setting, or there may be a 'group think' effect. This was addressed with careful and deliberate facilitation. The researcher undertook the role of facilitator to set the tone and theme, to emphasise the independent nature of the research, and to reassure participants in relation to confidentiality, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the steps taken to maintain their privacy and safety and to provide a supportive, open, engaged, respectful atmosphere. To support the facilitator role an observer was asked to also take field notes. Unfortunately, this was only available for one of the focus groups. The presence of the observer was explained to the participants. The use of focus groups has some limitations. One of these is participant availability. Another is the effect of the group on the data gathered. This can be in either of two directions: there may be some reluctance to share information in a group setting, or there may be a 'group think' effect. This was addressed with careful and deliberate facilitation. As the researcher, I undertook the role of facilitator to set the tone and theme, emphasise the independent nature of the research, and reassure participants in

relation to the voluntary nature of their participation, confidentiality, and the steps taken to maintain their privacy and safety and to provide a supportive, open, engaged, respectful atmosphere. To support the facilitator role an observer was asked to also take field notes. Unfortunately, this was only available for one of the focus groups. The presence of the observer was explained to the participants.

3.4.2.3 Influence on next stage

The small number of focus groups, that were grouped both by level and geographic location, were not ideal from this point of view; they ended up as 'homogeneous groups' (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p. 301). While this can have advantages, in terms of group formation because there is a level of shared experiences, there may also be issues of 'groupthink' and responses may be influenced by background dynamics and relationships that are implicit or covert. Nevertheless, the two groups that did take part gave a range of backgrounds and career stages that was sufficient to at least partly mitigate these challenges. However it was decided that the interviewees would be chosen from the pool of interested participants who could not attend the focus groups.

The data gained from the focus groups was used as a guide for the questions for the semi-structured interviews.

3.4.3 Interviews

There was no separate pilot for the interviews. The twelve semi-structured interviews took place in February/March 2019. Interviews as a data collection method can give access to the perspectives of others, their observations, emotions and their meaning-making processes. We can 'learn about places we have not been and could not go and about settings in which we have not lived' (Weiss, 1994, p. 1). It can give us access into private experiences and lives, but only if the interviewee is willing, and able to share their stories honestly. An interview can be a space for the sharing information or views that participants may have reluctant to be open and forthcoming about in the presence of other participants in a focus group (Willig, 2001, p 35). But, in telling these 'stories', there may also be a tendency to please the interviewer, self-aggrandise, or 'fill in gaps' in memory. There is also the

influence of power relations, or perceived power relations, on the process. As interviewers, the role of the 'wolf' is not the aim, that is to use a 'gentle, warm, and caring approach [to] efficiently circumvent the interviewee's defences . . . and invade their private worlds' (Kvale, 2006, p. 498). The semi-structured format was chosen to allow the interviewer to explore in greater depth aspects that may not have been accessible through a structured set of questions. Rather the approach in this study, with a set agenda, but freedom to adapt to the context and conversation was deemed to be the most appropriate format choice using the set of questions in Appendix D as prompts.

Information gathered from any interview is not only dependent on the context and the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee and the situation but also on the disposition of the interviewee and the skills of the interviewer. Therefore, the key to the success of all interviews is the interviewer's skills, abilities and disposition (Kvale, 1996; Bryman, 2012, p. 475). The approach and the skills of the interviewer, as well as interpersonal skills, are required to facilitate the expression of information and to do so in a way that is constant and consistent across the interviews (Gubrium and Holstein, 2012, p. 33). While interviews are deemed to be considered ripe grounds for the exploration of an interviewee's experiences and meaning-making processes it is also necessary to remember that the process is essentially a human one and, as such, is subject to human strengths and foibles. In presenting themselves, interviewees are not bound to 'tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'. There are likely to be 'vagaries of memory' and 'shading' so that their story is a positive representation of their self (Weiss, 1994, p. 149). To assess validity Creswell & Miller's approach has been taken. They measure validity as 'how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomenon and is credible to them' (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p. 124).

As a best compromise between aiming for comparable data collection and the need to create a safe and encouraging dialogue, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate means of acquiring further, more detailed, and rich data. In this way, the approach taken in this study to the interview process is a

shared one, where the questions were used to open conversation related to the research study. Thus, the collaborative conversations (using semi-structured interview format) were carried out i) to further clarify the emergent themes of the focus groups and ii) to explore in greater depth the experiences of the participants, without the influence of group think.

3.4.4 Sampling

Following the reduced number of focus groups, the decision was made to choose the interviewees from those who were not able to attend the focus groups. There was one, unintended exception. Due to unforeseen circumstances one potential interviewee was unable to participate and, at short notice, one member of the focus group volunteered to be interviewed.

Table 2 Interview Sampling Criteria

	Phase 2: Semi-structured Interviews
Purpose	Explore the individuals' experiences and attitudes
Recruitment methods	Purposive sampling
Number	12
Age	23-65
Gender	Mixed
Inclusion criteria	Employed in the FET sector at QQI levels 1- 6 in as wide a range of contexts as possible
Exclusion criteria	Self-exclusion

The interviewees were predominantly female (two male and 10 female) and came from a wide urban/rural mix (Table 3 Geographical spread of Interviewees). Two worked at centres which were in rural settings away from any other development. Six worked at centres in towns of varying sizes. Of the four classed as urban two were in large regional towns and two in a city.

Table 3 Geographical spread of Interviewees

	Geographical Spread of Interviewees			
Geographical population	Rural		Urban	
	<1,499	1,500-3,999	4,000-9,999	10,000+
No. of Participants	2	3	3	4

Figure 15 shows the age and years' experience of the sector. This ranges from one interviewee in their first year in FET to one with thirty-three years' experience. Half of the interviewees having between 15- and 22-years' experience. The age range of the interviewees fell between 32 and 62 years.

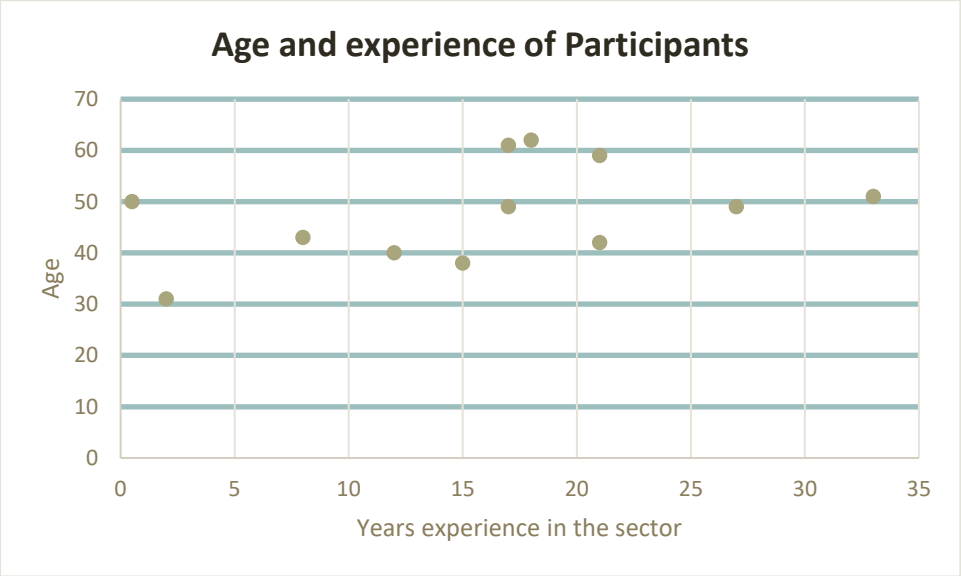


Figure 15 Age and FET experience of Interviewees

The combination of interviewees was also chosen to, as much as possible, map the experiences of those working in the sector in terms of QQI levels and responsibilities (e.g. teaching only or teaching plus admin). Thus, the twelve interviewees populated roles as follows:

Table 4 Roles/responsibilities of Interviewees

	Teaching duties only	*Teaching plus admin/management*
Levels 5 & 6	3	3
Levels 1 – 4	3	3

The interviewees were a mixture of those known and not known to the researcher. Both have advantages and, of course, disadvantages. Braun & Clarke (2013) claim that interviewing strangers eliminates the management of a dual relationship, and that once a rapport can be built, is the key to rich, detailed,

relevant answers. In contrast, interviewing those who are known to the researcher requires the managing of these dual relationships. Fundamental to the managing of the relationships is the decision on where the interview actually takes place. In this case the interviewees chose the time and location. The interviews were recorded in audio format, on two devices. The decision not to record the interviews in video format was a difficult one. Video would have given more data but would be less flexible and more intrusive. Therefore, the comfort of the interviewees was prioritised.

The chosen format (semi-structured interviews) allows for a dynamic flow. It is not a standard or standardised form: it is a conversation with an agenda around a pre-set set of questions. This facilitates a collaborative co-authoring (Kvale, 1996, p. 183) of the session that is respectful, empathetic and understanding.

The next section describes the process of the data analysis collected from the pilot, the focus groups and interviews.

3.4.5 Overall Summary of Data Collected

The researcher was the key instrument for data collection in the pilot, the focus groups and the interviews. The multiple sources of data gathered for each of these data collection sources (e.g. focus group flipchart (post-its/posters etc.), audio files and transcripts, observations and field notes) were chosen to ensure validity and reliability (see Table 5 Types of Data Collected.

Table 5 Types of Data Collected

Data/Source	*Pilot*	*Focus Groups*	*Interviews*
Artefacts	✓	✓	×
Audio Recording	✓	✓	✓
Field notes/Reflections	✓	✓	✓
Observer reflection	×	✓	×
Summary	✓	✓	×
Transcriptions	×	×	✓

Having given an overview of the data collected the following section will discuss the basic approach to the analysis.

3.5 Approach to the preparation and analysis of the data

Qualitative research has many meanings. It can describe a method of techniques for data collection/methodologies. It can also describe a perspective that is philosophical or political. There is no one way of analysing data and therefore the process of analysing the data varies widely: 'There is no single tried and true method of analysis or strategy for the presentation of findings' (Weiss, 1994, p. 152).

In this study the aim is to shed light on what has been learned from the participants about the experiences of FET teachers and how their engagement with their work may affect their views of and attitude towards CPD and career progression. By assuming the role of the analyst, the researcher plays a critical role in the process of interpreting the data collected. In the qualitative paradigm the 'lens' of the analyst shapes the findings. The function of the analysis is to bring a holistic view to the socially constructed and perceived reality of the participants (Creswell and Miller, 2000), through the use of explicit, systemic, documented procedures.

The intention is not to generalise for the whole population of FET teachers. Nor is it intended to test a hypothesis but instead, to generate and plausibly suggest properties and hypotheses. For this purpose, this section will describe the general approach taken, as well as the methods used for the focus groups and the interviews.

3.5.1 The Pilot

The pilot focus group was intended to test the design. The data gathered from the pilot group was, on reflection, biased. The questions asked were leading participants towards the specific theories of the framework (Engagement/Calling, CPD and Career Stages). It was decided to open the questions so that the answers reflected the authentic views of the participants. Thus, the data was explored merely as an exercise and, as such, was not used in any meaningful way in the

study. However, the 'gist' did correlate with what was found in the focus groups and interviews.

3.5.2 Focus groups

The data from the focus groups included audio recordings, flipcharts (with post-it notes) and the impression/field notes of the researcher and the observer. The format of the focus group determined the initial analysis was a collaborative effort with the participants using a thematic analysis: the 'post-it' notes placed by the participants on the posters (questions). These were discussed and additional comments and ideas were shared and added and collated into themes. One focus group identified the impact of local management on their experience. This form of 'collaborative coding' (Saldaña, 2016, p. 36) or participant coding explores various views and perspectives (Saldaña, 2016, p. 37) and increases the validity of the data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 348).

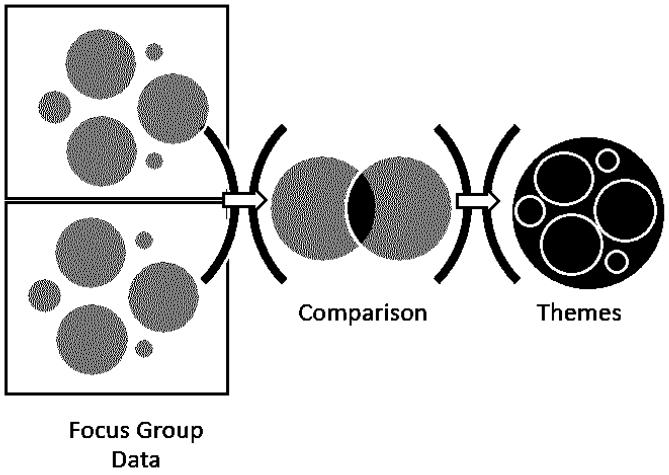


Figure 16 Analysis of Focus Group data

The flipcharts (question page, post-it notes and additional notes) displaying the discussed and emergent themes, the field notes and impressions of the researcher, along with those of the observer (only available for one group), were coded using constant comparative coding to draw up summaries of the focus groups. These were checked with the relevant participants. Addendums or additional thoughts/opinions were invited, but none were received. Afterwards the themes

that emerged from both groups were compiled and compared. This informed the development of the themed questions for the semi-structured interviews.

3.5.3 The interviews

The interview transcripts were member checked for validity and reliability, with no addendums or edits. A four-stage process of analysis was adopted:

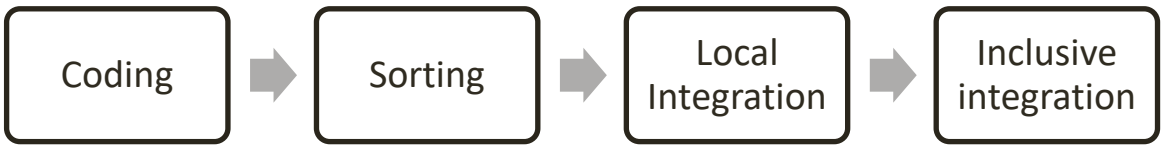


Figure 17 Overarching process of interview analysis

This four stage process, taken from Weiss (1994, pp. 153–166), gave an overarching framework for the process of the analysis, each of which had multiple stages. Weiss offers that, while these are four distinct processes, they are carried out throughout the research where each one has a phase where it is more dominant. This approach, combined with a constant comparative method, allows for what Glaser calls 'vagueness and flexibility' combined with discipline as an aid to the 'creative generation of theory' (Glaser, 1965, p. 438).

3.5.3.1 Coding

The purpose of the coding process is to analyse and categorise the data in such a way that addresses the research question. In practice every interview, from conception to design to execution is essentially partial (not everything can, or should be, recorded). The recommended amount of data that is actually coded varies among methodologists. Some advocate that every detail of the whole body of data is coded. Others maintain it is sufficient to get the 'gist' or 'essence'. This is a contested issue (Saldaña, 2016, p. 17). The latter approach of 'getting the gist' can risk ignoring data that may 'pull everything together' or change the perspective so that everything is reassessed (Saldaña, 2016, p. 17). According to Saldaña it is the quality of the data that is important (2016, p. 18).

Coding, at one level, is an implicit human function, it is how we organise our worlds. On the other hand, coding in research needs to be explicit, systematic and consistent. And herein lies the challenge. There is no 'one size fits all' approach (Braun and Clarke, 2020). As a reflective member of the 'field', and through the process of the literature review, there is a level of 'pre-coding' amassed before even the first attempt at data collection. In this case, these pre-codes were developed as an initial 'codebook' that guided the interview questions (Appendix E).

Miles et al (2014, p. 70) recommend concurrent data collection and analysis. This approach was taken here. Transcription, and a consequent deep familiarisation with the data, was an opportunity to identify not only the data that correlated with the 'codebook' but also to identify the interesting and the outliers.

The coded data were identified and documented in both the field notes and a later expanded reflective memo/journal format, along with preliminary analyses. This ongoing comparison of theory, data and reflection is in line with the constant comparative method of analysis and took the following format. Each transcript was coded first thematically, in terms of the three broad conceptual areas: engagement, CPD and career progression using Microsoft Word. This was a process of broad or 'holistic' coding (Saldaña, 2016). These were not as clearly defined as the codebook would suggest as the relevant data tended to be woven throughout the conversation.

The data were then refined to a more detailed and disciplined 'structural coding' (Saldaña, 2016, p. 101) that was driven by the research question and literature. The next stage involved extracting all coded data to Microsoft Excel. This step including added coding for source identity, geographical context and location to the quotations. Though the processes of 'lumping' and 'splitting' (Saldaña, 2016, p. 23) these data points were grouped to form emerging patterns and themes.

3.5.3.2 Sorting

In Microsoft Excel the data were sorted into topics and extracted to a separate sheet. In this the data were summarised and interpreted and mini-theories developed i.e. 'local integration' (Weiss, 1994, p. 158). The use of Microsoft Excel

allows for flexibility in the management of the data and the potential to keep multiple versions of the sorted data and for the data to be added to throughout the constant comparative.

3.5.3.3 Local Integration

This was an iterative process where each mini-theory is evaluated, verified through comparison with the literature and, if necessary, reappraised on the basis of the data that did and did not fit. This stage is focused on bringing a level of coherence to the data on which to build meaning.

3.5.4 Inclusive integration

Subsequently, the data were further organised and analysed, both in terms of coherent and inclusive conclusions of the data set and to reflect the theoretical framework. This in turn influences, shapes and is shaped by the reporting format (Weiss, 1994, pp. 160–162).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The primary guide for the ethical considerations in undertaking research is the respect and care for the dignity and wellbeing of participants, their knowledge and values balanced with care for democratic values, justice and equity, as well as the quality of the research (BERA, 2018; Waterford Institute of Technology, 2019).

In line with the WIT regulations and policies, ethical approval was obtained for this study. This included approval of the sampling methods, participation and consent procedures and safeguards to privacy and anonymity.

The main ethical issues in relation to this project were:

- Informed consent,
- Privacy and data protection
- Researcher position and issues related to insider inquiry.

3.6.1 Informed Consent

Potential participants were contacted in relation to taking part in the study by email. They were informed about the purpose of the research, the methods and procedures and the steps taken to ensure their privacy. Consent forms (Appendix D) were signed by each participant and retained. The voluntary nature of participation was highlighted and their option to withdraw made known.

3.6.2 Privacy and Data Protection

Accuracy of data, confidentiality and anonymity were addressed through:

- Compliance with the responsibilities as data controller under the Data Protection Acts (1988 and 2003) and WIT procedures.
- Participants were assigned a pseudonym and this was used throughout. The document linking names and pseudonyms is to be kept, separately, for five years in accordance with WIT policies..
- The data (workshop summaries and interview transcriptions) were recorded for accuracy, with participant consent, processed (summaries and transcriptions) by the researcher and stored digitally in a secure location. Hard copy artefacts were stored in a locked unit within WIT. All data were stored in accordance with WIT policies.
- The analysis of the findings was verified through member checks.
- All efforts were made to ensure that no individually identifiable information (names, specific affiliations or details) was shared.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the qualitative approach taken to this research. This decision was taken because it takes the individual as the unit of study and their personal experiences as the basis for their meaning making processes.

The target population and criteria for inclusion were described as FET teachers from the South West of Ireland from a range of centres and contexts. The decision to use snowball and purposive sampling to provide a depth and breadth of experiences was described.

This was followed by a description of the methods used. This set out the rationale for the initial pilot focus group, the main focus groups and the subsequent semi-structured interviews. It also explained how each stage of the study informed and influenced the subsequent step. Following this, the method of analysis is outlined for each of the data collections methods and why these methods were deemed suitable.

This chapter has laid the foundation for Chapter 4, which details the data collected and the findings that emerged from the focus groups and the interviews.

Chapter 4 Analysis of Fieldwork Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter details the findings from the study. The structure of the chapter reflects these stages: i) the pre-phase, ii) the focus groups and iii) the semi-structured interviews. These phases were chosen for specific purposes. The focus groups were chosen to explore the breadth of experiences of the participants while the semi-structured interviews were a means of exploring the experiences and understandings of the individual participants in a deeper way.

The data is qualitative and is reported here as 'findings' for each phase. Each phase has an introduction, a section on each of the three conceptual areas: i) engagement, ii) CPD and iii) career progression (as shown in Figure 18) and a conclusion.

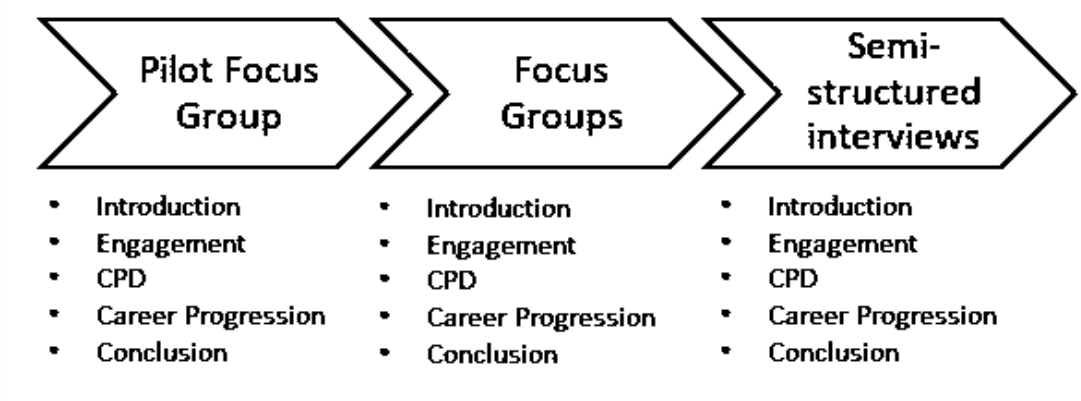


Figure 18 Structure of Findings Chapter

4.2 Findings from the Pilot Focus Group

4.2.1 Introduction

This section reports the findings from the pilot focus group under each of the three conceptual areas: i) engagement, ii) CPD and iii) career progression both in terms of the format and the responses.

Following a consultation with three teachers in the sector the pilot focus group was conducted. This was intended as a test of the planned format and structure of

the main focus groups. The advantages of using a pilot is to evaluate effective and efficient data collection, checking logistics of processes (data processing and analysis) and gauge the alignment between content and participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The pilot was run with a group of tutors from the literacy sector. The session began with individual contributions: participants moved around the room to flip charts containing questions. Here they were asked to contribute words and/or ideas on post-it notes. These were subsequently used to prompt a group discussion that allowed the contributions and experiences to be explored, compared and contrasted in a deeper way.

4.2.2 Engagement

It became clear upon reflection that the question **'How do you feel about your work? (Career/Vocation/Job)'** with the examples of (career/vocation/job) was a leading one (see Figure 19).

Figure 19 Pilot Focus Group Engagement Question

It was interesting that a variety of answers emerged. One saw their work as a positive combination of job/career, one at the intersection of all three and a third as a 'vocation – definitely'. However, this format had guided the participants to a particular perspective and did not sufficiently explore the concept of engagement. Thus, for the Focus Groups, the question was changed to 'What does your work mean to you?', without graphics or prompts.

4.2.3 Continuous Professional Development

The initial question here was **'Give examples of CPD you have undertaken'**. This question elicited concrete examples that spanned a wide variety of answers. In the subsequent discussion these were categorised as '*Meaningful CPD'* and '*not meaningful CPD'.* It emerged that the same CPD was viewed differently by participants and that the meaningfulness of CPD depended on the indivdiual's needs and career stage. There was also an emphasis that real CPD incorporated personal, professional and organisational functions. Most of the barriers to CPD identified were in relation to the organisation. Although this worked well the responses were limited. Therefore, for the focus groups the question was changed to 'What does professional development mean to you?'.

4.2.4 Career Progression

The question posed here asked participants '**Which of these [models] reflects how you see your progression?**' The models shown included i) the central career cycle part of Fessler & Christensen's career cycle, ii) a stepped growth model, based on Steffy et al, 2000) or iii) an opportunity to draw their own.

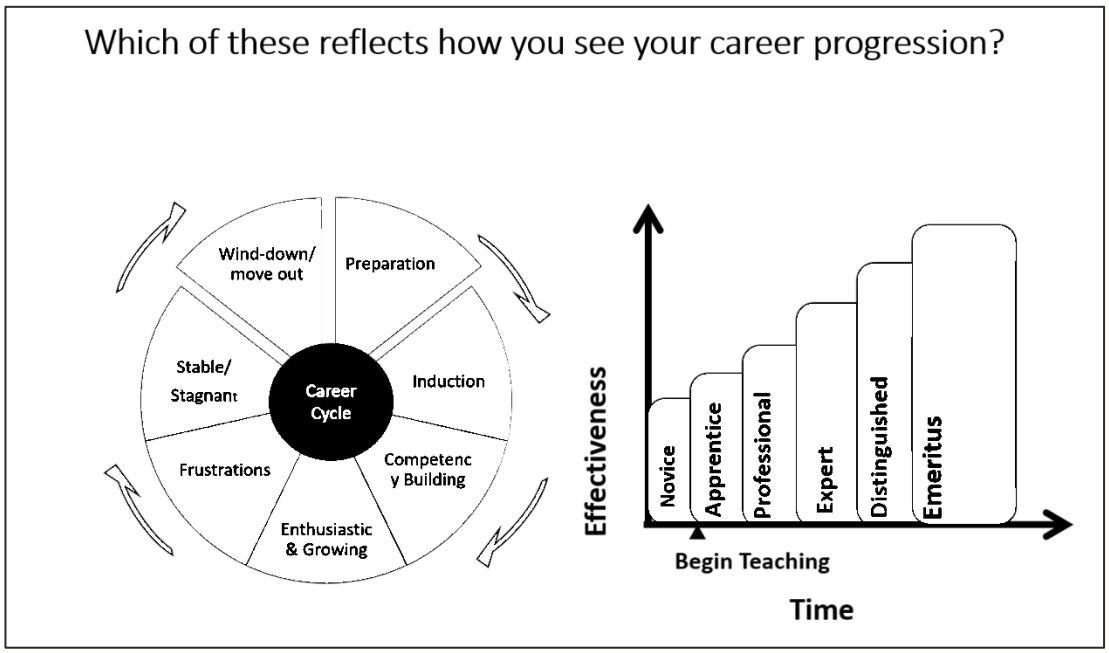


Figure 20 Pilot Focus Group Career Progression Question

This was, again, leading. But it also required a large cognitive shift from the previous concrete examples of CPD. It was interesting that one participant chose to

draw their own representation of the 'frustrated professional' which included the change in their opinion (within ten seconds) going from 'winning' to 'frustrated' (see Figure 21) while the others chose the Fessler & Christensen model.

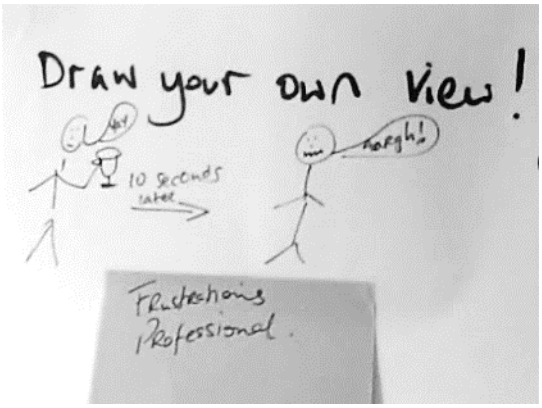


Figure 21 Pilot Focus Group Career Progression response

It was anticipated that this question would have helped to articulate their views. Instead, it seemed the conversation moved towards the deficiencies of and within the organisation. This question was refined to 'What is your understanding of your "Career Progression"?' for the next phase of the research.

4.2.5 Conclusion

The format of individual reflection followed by discussion worked well, allowing for individual reflection and group discussion. Although the data collection methods were deemed biased and leading, the pilot did confirm the teachers i) are engaged in their work, ii) are taking part and valuing relevant CPD and iii) have a non-linear view of career progression that does not conform to view of progression as advancement through the organisational hierarchy (ETB).

For the main focus groups, it was decided to refine the questions, to broaden beyond the relevant literature, and to focus on drawing out the participants' understandings of the conceptual framework.

This section covered the pilot focus groups, its format, its limitations, and the conclusions drawn from it. These findings were used to inform the main focus groups as detailed in the next section.

4.3 Findings from the Focus Groups

4.3.1 Introduction

The aim of the focus groups was to explore the experiences of participants working in the FET sector, their engagement in their work role, and the influence on their perspectives of CPD, and career progression.

Initially six focus groups were planned to take place across the Cork and Kerry region with a mix of participants across the sector. However, this plan had to be modified due to participant availability. In practice it proved too difficult to co-ordinate due to the working timetables and personal lives of those working within the sector. As a result, two focus groups were convened: one in Cork and one in Kerry. One comprised of teachers from the literacy programmes (Levels 1-4) and one from the vocational programmes (Levels 5-6). These groups were comprised of colleagues that worked within a centre, but typically in different disciplines/subject areas.

The design of the focus groups was based on Table 2. Each question was set within the conceptual area (described in the area of interest) and the related subcategories as shown. Participants were asked to answer the four questions in Table 6 in order to explore both general and personal understanding and experiences of their engagement, CPD and career progression.

Table 6 Focus Group Questions

Question No.	*Area*	*Question asked:*
1.	Engagement	What does your work mean to you?
2.	Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	What does Continuous Professional Development mean to you?
3.	Career Progression	What does carer progression mean to you?
4.	CPD & Career Progression	What are your aspirations for your development and/or progression?

Following discussion on the individual responses (on post-it notes), the initial coding was done by the participants as they grouped their post-it contributions.

These themes, along with a thematic analysis of the audio recordings and field notes, were used to prepare a summary which was then returned to the participants for verification and/or additions if desired (see Appendix C for the summaries).

4.3.2 Engagement

In response to the question *'What does your work mean to you*?' it was intended to explore the personal engagement of the participants in their work. This was under three headings: meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability. Each of these was comprised of components parts, as outlined in Table 7.

Table 7 Focus Group: Engagement

Question 1 *What does your work mean to you?*

Concept	**Categories**	**Sub-categories**
Engagement	Meaningfulness	Task, Role, Work Interactions
	Psychological Safety	Interpersonal Relationships, Group/Intergroup Dynamics, Management Style and Processes, Organisational Norms
	Psychological Availability	Physical and Emotional Energies, Insecurity, Outside Life

4.3.2.1 Meaningfulness

Meaningfulness, according to Kahn, is derived from the i) task, ii) role and iii) work interactions (see Figure 6).

Task

Tasks considered to be associated with meaningfulness are those that are challenging, clearly delineated and achievable, varied, creative, with some autonomy and a sense of ownership.

Group A: They spoke of feeling useful and valuable and to be willing and able to give of themselves, their time and their abilities to others. This contribution was identified both on an individual basis (helping some learners to access their entitlements or achieve their potential and 'move forward') and as a community investment (creating social and peer support networks). In this they found challenge and derived satisfaction and found teaching 'fun' and 'rewarding' with a 'sense of contributing to the community'. This group spoke of the supportive atmosphere that facilitated not only autonomy and a sense of ownership to their classes/groups but this was translated into voluntary efforts towards the development of the centre. This group spoke of the 'great working environment' with 'great teamwork within the centre' and felt supported in their efforts.

Group B: This group also indicated that the rewards they derived from their work were overwhelmingly centred on the personal satisfaction from 'making a contribution', and empowering others and 'hopefully adding something of value to the world' by sharing their 'passion'. The task of teaching was spoken of in terms of its challenges (meeting the needs of a variety of learners), its variety (no two classes were ever the same), and the creativity needed to keep learners interested.

This group, while appearing to have freedom to work within the classroom, were quite distressed by the way that work was undermined by management. The task of teaching was reported as not being clearly delineated and achievable. Stories were told of constantly changing timetables and being allocated at short notice to modules that they had no background or expertise in along with expectations/demands of high levels of success rates in terms of grades and progression.

Role

The characteristics associated with a meaningful role include formal positions (and attractive titles), that the role fits with the self-image and confers status and influence.

Group A: The role was also associated with practical, economic needs: 'money' to 'pay the mortgage' and hours of unpaid work. But this group found satisfaction in

their role. It was something they took pride in and as such took satisfaction in doing. Their role, while important – seeing the difference in a group who have gained skills and knowledge - was secondary to the wider impact of their work: the sense of community they felt part of building.

Group B: 'I love teaching – I could teach all day': investing and deriving personal satisfaction from their work was important to them. This was far more important for the participants than a formal position or attractive title – 'you need to be able to go home in the evening and say, yeah I did a good job and for me that's my teaching'. The work was important to their preferred self-image. 'That's what's important – whatever you do in the classroom, once the door is closed, that's your identity, your professional identity, your practice and your attitude'.

They also identified work as a means of meeting their practical needs (wages, pay bills) and a means to do 'other things' (economic), as well as personal needs (human connection and identity) but outside of the classroom of very little status, influence or respect: 'if we were outside the gates [striking] we'd have eggs thrown at us today'.

Work Interactions

Work Interactions centre on dignity, worthwhileness and respect. Positive interactions promote mutual appreciation, positive feedback and reciprocity.

Group A: The relationship within the group of participants was respectful but authentically egalitarian: collegial, collaborative and empowered. Each spoke highly of their relationships with the learners, each other and the wider community. There were descriptions of shared values and experiences, but also a freedom to disagree and debate points. Examples were recounted of open conversations and collaborative efforts to improve the centre (through community participation and support) and its functions through attendance at centre events - 'we had a great night – and we weren't being paid. And we made buns and . . .'

In contrast the attitude towards the wider ETB and the more senior management was spoken of negatively. There were descriptions of managers who

were hostile, disinterested or incompetent 'she couldn't change the cover on her biro'. Their experiences and perceptions of the wider management was that they were dogmatic and had an aggressive management style. While it was acknowledged that not all management were like this the opposite were few and far between. Meetings too were frustrating events because 'I see bullshit, I know what bullshit is and I just say it'. However, frustration was compounded because the participant got very little peer support because teachers were 'afraid to open their mouth'.

Group B: These participants saw their ability in the classroom to effect change and growth in others as meaningful and rewarding, of being useful and of use. However, at times some participants seemed overwhelmed and unable to give any more: 'I'm drowning, and no one gives a shit'. This comment was not by the early career teachers but by one of the more senior ones.

Their description of the working environment was toxic. Work interactions within the centre, were beset by cliques and managerial practices that were described by the participants as 'ruling through fear'. This created an atmosphere that was oppressive: 'I think it's killing me, little by little'. There was no trust in either direction between management and teachers. The teachers spoke of being 'checked up on'. Neither was there a sense of trust or safety with management. In fact the identification of a need for help or training was described as a reason to lose hours or a module. There was the perception that the actual values of management, as opposed to the espoused values, was at odds with their professional values: 'you can get by, and do very well, by knowing what the game is and knowing how to play it - and that is rarely what I would consider excellent teaching'. Teaching and learning was not perceived to be valued in the centre.

Meaningfulness Summary

The following table summarises the findings detailed above under the headings i) task, ii) role and iii) work interactions for Group A and Group B.

Table 8 Meaningfulness Summary

Group A	*Group B*

Task	• Feel useful & valuable • Able to give to others • Supportive atmosphere • Great working environment	• Personal satisfaction • Able to make a contribution • Add something of value to the world • Share their passion • Work is creative & challenging • Undermined by management
Role	• Pride and satisfaction in role • Role/title as secondary to the impact and being part of community building • Meets practical economic needs	• Love the teaching role • More important than formal position or title • Classroom work is your identity • Meets practical economic needs • Not valued in wider society
Work Interactions	Within classroom and centre • relationships were collegial, collaborative and empowering • Shared values, but open to discussion and disagreements and debate • Within organisation the perception and impact of senior management was negative • Not a safe space	Within classroom • relationships were meaningful and rewarding Within centre • cliques of 'in' and 'out' staff • little/no support • oppressive atmosphere – 'ruling through fear' being 'checked up on' • management values at odds with professional values • teaching and learning not valued

4.3.2.2 Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is associated with situations that are non-threatening, predictable, and consistent. It is about feeling safe, safe to be authentic and express the self safely, without fear of negative consequences. It is associated with clear boundaries, processes and consequences. The identified influences on

psychological safety include: i) interpersonal relationships, ii) group and intergroup dynamics, iii) management style and processes, and iv) organisational norms.

Interpersonal relationships

Group A: There was a distinction made by both groups between the classroom situation, the centre/context, and the wider organisational context. They differentiated between the sense of being valued and of value to the learners and to the centre staff that contrasted with not being valued by the organisation. They reported that there was no relationship with senior management, who typically had a lack of awareness of, or interest in, what was involved with and done in the classroom and local community.

Group B: In this case the wider organisation did not feature. References to the interpersonal relationships centred either on the classroom situation, peers and colleagues and local management.

Group and intergroup dynamics

Group A: Group and inter-group dynamics were only mentioned in a positive light in relation to the local structure/centre. In the wider terms of the organisation there were instances of both inclusive and exclusive behaviour by certain members of higher management. The latter was laughed off as school yard behaviour. There was another instance when one participant was not supported publicly (in front of management) by peers, although support was expressed privately.

Group B: In Group B there were references to the 'cliques' within the centre staff and the difference in how you were treated within the centre depending on your social status within the community. This group said 'we're the others'. This was deemed to be a result of the relationship with management but became more widespread as it created tensions within the centre.

Management style and process

While both groups were disconnected from the wider organisation (at ETB level) it was the immediate management style and practices that had the most influence on their daily lives. Independently, without prompting, the participants of

both groups identified the effect of line management on the morale and culture of the setting, but their experiences were very different.

Group A: One site had an atmosphere of being open, safe, collaborative and collegial. There were examples given of contributions over and above the job specification. This was attributed to the deliberate leadership style and actions of the centre manager.

Group B: This site was distressed, unstable and in constant flux. Participants here identified this state as a deliberate management strategy to control through fear, uncertainty and competition. It was described as it's 'not safe to say I need training or help'. This was, in some cases, accompanied by the imposition of additional administrative duties and/or responsibilities which included being singled out as someone for learners to go to if they were suicidal (on the basis of a two hour training session). This led to the perception that leadership and support was ineffective, non-existent or just 'all on paper' both locally and at a wider organisational level and that led to a 'why bother' attitude. This 'why bother' attitude was not obvious at classroom level.

Organisational norms

Organisational norms were specified by the participants as having local and organisational elements.

Group A: In this centre the local organisational norms were a commitment to the learners, to high quality and to a high commitment to the success of the centre. The centre manager gave and expected and modelled this behaviour. On a wider perspective they identified a gap between higher levels of management and the 'coal face' in terms of values, aims, ideals and approaches. One such gap arose from a perceived dichotomy between the organisations' values and the practices: management had an 'obsession with progression'. Participants indicated this as being in direct contrast with their own values and aims, as well as the espoused rhetoric and policy of the organisation.

Group B: The organisational norms were not positive within this centre. These norms were identified pressure being applied to prioritise paperwork over professional practice and ethics. They saw the centre being treated as a business with business aims: 'get them in, get money off them and get them out'. This was perceived as undermining personally and professionally and had negative consequences on the perception of the wider organisation.

Psychological Safety Summary

The following table summarises the findings from the focus group under the headings i) interpersonal relationships, ii) management style and process, iii) group and intergroup dynamics, iv) organisational norms for Group A and Group B.

Table 9 Psychological Safety Summary

	Group A	*Group B*
Interpersonal relationships	Distinctions drawn between • Class (positive) • Centre (positive) • Organisation (negligible/negative)	Distinctions drawn between • Class (positive but hard work) • Peers/Colleagues (mixed) • Local management (negative
Management Style & Process	Centre • Open, collaborative and collegial • Attributed to centre manager	Centre • Deliberate strategy to control through fear, uncertainty and competition • Demands without support either locally or organisational level
Group & Intergroup Dynamics	Centre • Positive Organisation • Management: 'school yard behaviour' • Staff unwilling to support peers publicly	Centre • Cliques within staff • Treated differently based on membership of cliques/status in wider community • Tensions created and maintained by management
Organisational norms	Centre: shared • Commitment to learners • High quality • High commitment to centre Organisation • Gaps exist between management and teachers' values, aims, ideas and approaches	Centre • Pressure to prioritise paperwork over professional practice and ethics • Org aim: 'get them in, get money off them and get them out' • Personally and professionally undermining • Negative effect on perception of wider organisation

4.3.2.3 Psychological availability

Psychological availability has been associated with the resources the individual has available to them to engage. This includes their physical and emotional energy. It also is influenced by insecurity and the demands of outside life.

Physical and emotional energy

Group A: Physical and emotional energy were not mentioned directly by this group but their descriptions of the energy they devoted to the work and the centre included not only the investment in their work but also in their efforts, over and above their contracted hours, to help the learners, the centre and the wider community. In this case the physical and emotional demands of the job were demanding but 'doable'.

Group B: In contrast the centre where there were issues with management styles and processes the atmosphere was very different. While the participants in this group were making themselves available to the learners, in as much as they could, they found that the stress and distress that they were feeling was impacting their work. One participant openly spoke of spending the journey home each day in tears, spending sleepless nights worrying and the effects that this was having on home life: 'I'm drowning and they just don't care'.

Insecurity

Insecurity is associated with work, status, self-confidence, ability, self-consciousness and personal/organisational fit. In Kahn's terms high levels of inner absorption detract from the capacity to engage.

Group A: This group spoke of their positive experience. They felt safe and supported. They spoke with confidence in their, and each others', abilities and accomplishments. They identified the management within the centre as being central to this.

Group B: Participants in this group reported high levels of insecurity, generally not in their work as a teacher but as an employee. They also indicated that, as FET teachers, their status within the organisation was low, and that their status within

the wider community was not valued. The cumulative effects of these insecurities were taking a toll. The changes in the organisational values (towards a 'production' model, rather than a 'process' one that valued the learner's capacities and achievements) over time were highlighted as a concern and as a move away from their professional values and understandings.

Outside Life

Group A: Participants in this group referred to their outside life in terms of the extra hours that were expected and given to the centre. They worked collaboratively with others on their own time. They attended events at the centre and even involved their families.

Group B: The effects of the working conditions were blamed for the intrusions work imposed on outside life in terms of emotional upheaval and anxiety. Only one participant claimed not to be affected but also said plans were in place to move on.

Table 10 Psychological Availability Summary

	Group A	*Group B*
Physical & emotional energy	• Described high levels of energy devoted to their work and the centre – above hours • Described as demanding but 'doable'	• Devote available resources to learners • Energy (physical, cognitive and emotional) negatively impacted by stress and distress • Negative impacts on home life
Insecurity	• Centre management created a safe and supportive environment • Positive about own and each other's abilities and accomplishments	• High levels of insecurity as employees • Status within organisation perceived as low • Status within wider community is not valued • Value gap between professionals and organisation identified as the cause of insecurity in organisation
Outside life	• Outside life impacted by extra hours expected, and given, by the centre and personal and professional standards	• Conditions negatively impacted on outside life • High levels of emotional upheaval and anxiety. • One participant had plans and taking steps to move on.

This section on engagement looked at the findings from the two focus groups (A and B) under the headings of i) Meaningfulness, ii) Psychological Safety and iii) psychological availability. Each of these headings was subdivided by the influencing factors identified by Kahn. The sections were completed with a table summary of the findings.

Engagement, as defined by Kahn, has three elements: meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability. For the participants in this study their engagement was driven by and derived from the rewards, satisfaction, and sense of worth and belonging, that is the meaningfulness, that came from being of value and valued in the classroom. Their perception of their psychological safety influenced their commitment to the centre whereas both groups were generally unconnected from their ETB as a whole. Those who did not feel safe/valued by the centre and/or organisation disengaged and did not invest their energies: the investment of psychological availability was a choice made based where they felt they had the most impact and the most reward.

The next section deals with the second part of the conceptual framework (CPD) in the focus groups.

4.3.3 Continuous Professional Development

This section introduces Friedman & Philips's (2004) drivers of CPD and describes the responses of the two focus groups (Group A and Group B) and then classifying the responses under the six drivers.

Day's definition of teacher development comprises of 'all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom' (1999, p4). By examining the responses of the two focus groups through the lens of Philips & Friedman's (2004) drivers of CPD this section aimed to uncover the reasons why CPD was undertaken.

Table 11 Focus Group: Professional Development

Question 2	*What does Continuous Professional Development mean to you?*	
Concept	**Categories**	**Sub-categories**
Continuous Professional Development	Drivers of PD	i) Continuous or lifelong learning, ii) means of job security and control, iii) remaining current and appearing to do so, iv) verifying competence and maintaining standards, v) upholding the standards of professional bodies, and vi) a means for employers to ensure employees are competent and adaptable.

Group A: In response to the question 'What does Professional Development mean to you?' this focus group produced the following replies detailed in Figure 22 Findings: Professional Development :

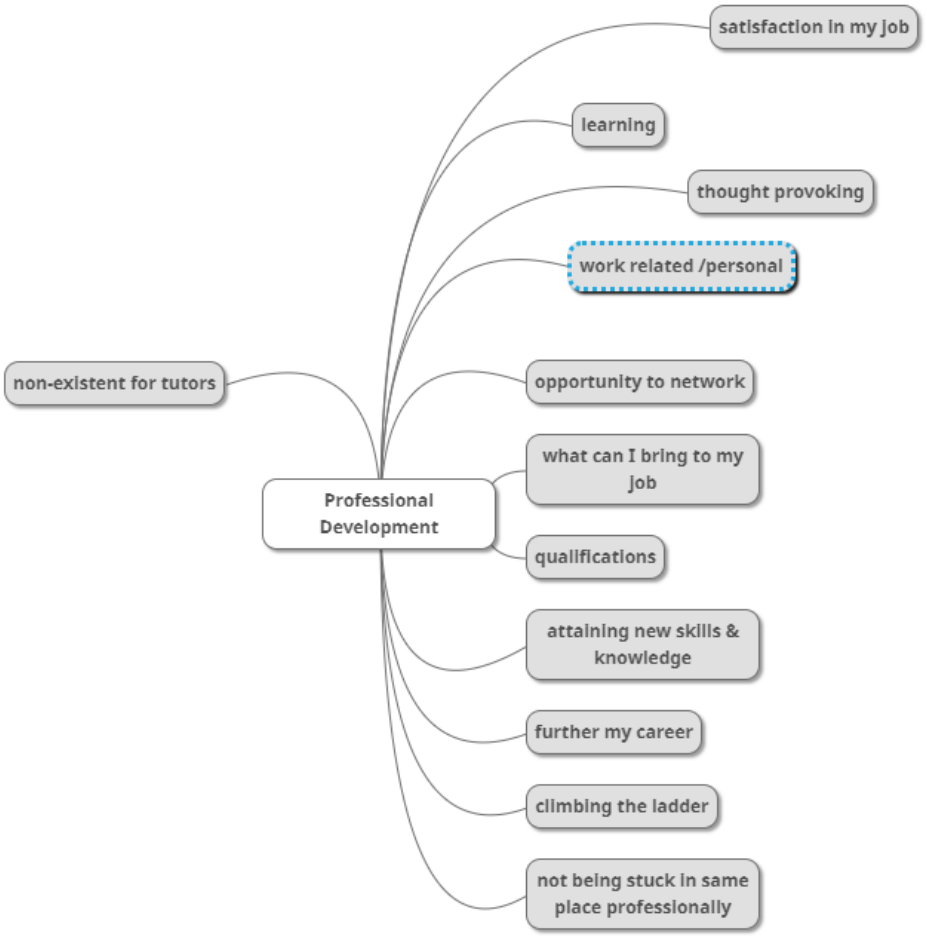


Figure 22 Findings: Professional Development

Although the responses were overwhelmingly positive and aspirational there was a negative opinion of organisational provision and the organisational attitude towards their CPD.

In the discussion they indicated that, in their experience, what had been organisationally provided was irrelevant and badly timed: 'they run things on the third week back in September when everyone is back working'. They also told of situations where they were asked to travel to attend a session and in return were given lunch rather than expenses 'they think that lunch is like a big thing to us' or being 'treated' to a performance by an 'old ladies choir', or when a relative of a senior manager was brought in and, on the topic of voice care, told them to 'breathe like a woman that's expecting'. Another example of the level of organisational priority towards professional development was when one participant had been told that there was a €500 budget for the entire county. This was despite the fact that they were aware of others who were being provided with postgraduate education opportunities.

A lack of recognition for existing experience and qualifications was also identified as an issue. They indicated that there was no reward or recognition for existing or extending expertise, and any 'development is really on your own back' and, because of a lack of encouragement or support 'any aspirations have been dampened' by the ETB. There was also an emphasis on the knowledge and skills that were 'being wasted' and valuable learning that was ignored or dismissed.

However, there was also a desire for CPD that would give them a 'motivating spark' and a challenge. One participant indicated that this could involve undertaking a PhD. Negative comparisons were made with their previous employments where opportunities were provided or rewarded. They indicated these took different forms where courses paid for on completion or courses were paid for upfront and had to be reimbursed if employment was terminated within a certain timeframe.

Group B: In response to the question 'What does Professional Development mean to you?' this focus group produced the following replies:

Group B too had an almost entirely negative organisational experience. PD, where it was provided, was irrelevant (a drumming workshop during exams), unrealistic, enforced and often reduced to putting in hours and a cert to 'tick a box', which led to choosing the 'options' that required the least input from them to make up the 30 hours p.a. that was required. There was a perception that provision was designed as staff training to 'keep us busy' when learners were not in attendance. In terms of accessing other CPD opportunities there was disagreement about what supports existed (for example cover for classes and timetabling changes).

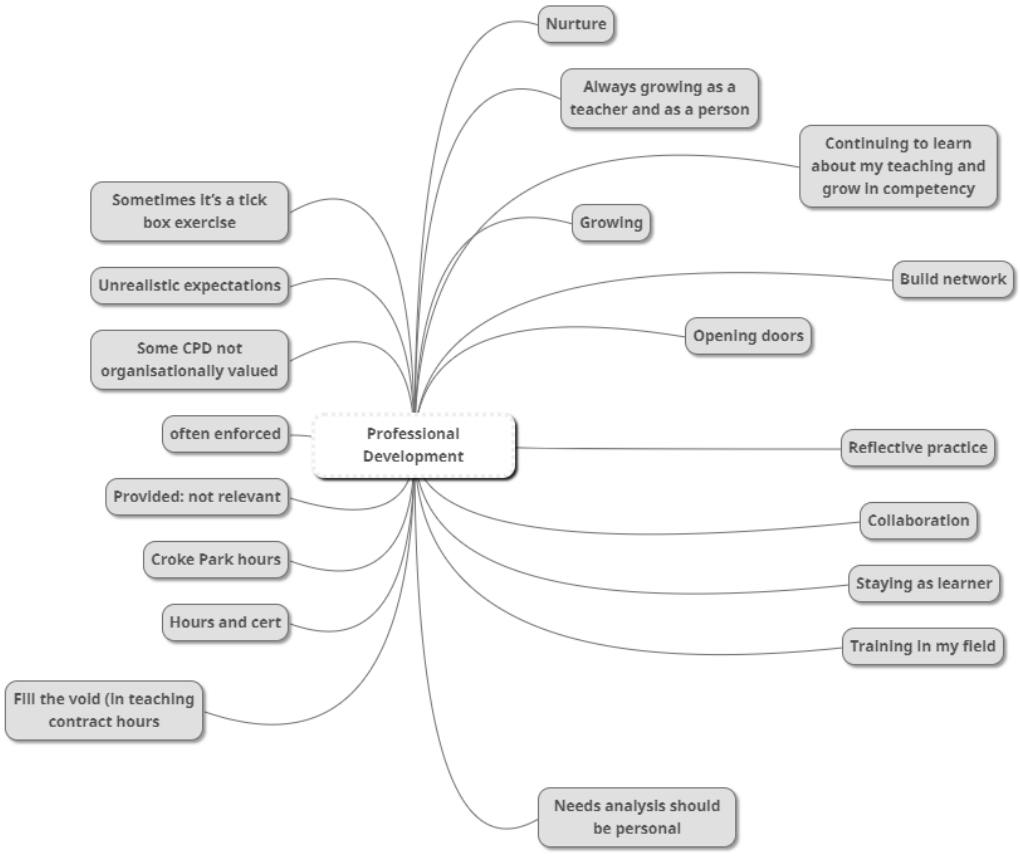


Figure 23 Focus groups: Professional Development

They also expressed a desire that, ideally, they would like autonomy in their choices that would reflect their career stage, interests, and needs (varying from technical skills to well-being). They also wanted to be trusted to be able to identify and engage with development that would meet their needs.

Philips & Friedman identified six drivers of CPD from the literature and recommended that precautions be put in place to mitigate against 'demotivating factors' (Friedman and Philips, 2004). However, when the drivers identified by the two focus groups were aligned it was found that there were some drivers that overlapped multiple drivers, and some that did not fit easily into any driver. This was especially evident in the responses in relation to networking and collaboration.

Neither did Friedman & Philips identify any of the negative aspects of CPD that emerged. In particular, the negative effect of past experience was evident. There was a frustration around PD that was unavailable, not relevant, or only a tick box exercise. PD that is for appearance's sake 'hours and a cert' or 'to 'fill the void' were as damaging to the participant's morale and motivation as their development that they saw as being ignored or not valued by the organisation.

Friedman & Philips recommended that professional development policies and programmes should act as a support for professional practice and should feature:

- Clarity of purpose and practice
- Consistency
- Suitability to the needs of the members and the context
- Self-reflection
- External perspectives (Friedman and Philips, 2004, p. 372).

These qualities are not evident from the experiences of participants. However, the findings do confirm Friedman & Philips' findings that there was apparent confusion on the aims and value of PD between those of the individual and those of the organisation, and professional bodies.

Table 12 Professional Development Summary

		Group A	*Group B*
i. *ii.*	*Continuous or lifelong learning,* *a means of personal development*	• Learning • Thought provoking • Attaining new skills & knowledge; work related /personal	• Always growing as a teacher and a person • Nurture • Continuing to learn about my teaching and grow in competency • Staying as learner • Reflective practice
iii.	*means of job security and control,*	• Further my career • Climbing the ladder • Not being stuck in same place professionally • Satisfaction in my job	• Opening doors
iv. *v.* *vi.*	*remaining current and appearing to do so,* *verifying competence and maintaining standards of professional bodies,* *a means for employers to ensure employees are competent and adaptable.*	• Qualifications	• Training in my field • Hours and cert • Often enforced • Provided: not relevant • Croke Park hours • Fill the void (in teaching contract hours)
Other		• Opportunity to network • What can I bring to my job? • Non-existent for tutors	• Collaboration • Build network • Needs analysis should be personal • Sometimes it's tick box • Unrealistic expectations • Some CPD not organisationally valued

This section compared the responses of the participants of the focus groups to Friedman & Philips's drivers of professional development. It found that the drivers identified by the participants could not be easily classified into these categories. This research also found that the experience of FET teachers displays both self-directed and positive professional development and the negative effects of activities, enforced by the organisation, in the name of professional development that are demotivating and demoralising.

In the next section, career progression in FET, will focus on the area of career progression as understood by the two focus groups.

4.3.4 Career Progression in FET

This section will report the findings from the two focus groups on the topic of career progression. It will detail the findings from the two focus groups on the questions posed and identify the theme generated spontaneously and independently by the two groups. This is followed by a summary and conclusions.

The model used for career progression was Fessler & Christensen's (1992) Teacher Career Cycle. Progression was explored using the questions in Table 13. The questions were deliberately open so the participants were free to choose any perspective that was relevant for them.

Table 13 Focus Groups: Career Progression

Question 3 & 4	*What does carer progression mean to you?* *What are your aspirations for your development and/or progression?*	
Concept	**Categories**	**Sub-categories**
Career Progression	Career Cycle Phases	Pre-service, Induction, Competency Building, Enthusiastic and Growing, Career Frustration, Career Stability, Career Wind-down, Career Exit

The question '**what is your understanding of career progression**?' brought about a range of views about 'career' and what career progression means, rather than a stage model understanding.

Group A

The group identified ‘advancing your career’, ‘recognition’ ‘recognition of time, commitment and experience’ and ‘promotion’ as understandings of what ‘career progression’ meant. They also indicated that this type of progression was limited or restricted within the organisation. In fact, they believed there was no progression, not even security as a marker of progression, available to them. This was entirely at the discretion of local management who could generate a level of trust, and facilitate favourable, or not, working conditions. The discussion indicated a level of frustration with the organisational understanding of career progression as opposed to a personal development as a teacher. However, one participant was adamant that she ‘downsized from private sector to [my] current role. Don’t want other than what I have’, and so did not aspire to a management role in the ETB. Each of these participants were on their ‘second career’. All participants’ initial careers were in large organisations at national and international level.

Despite their negative opinions of the organisational prospects for progression they identified their aspirations for progression as developing the centre, developing the team working there, developing themselves, and ‘sorting out the system’. One expressed interest in undertaking a PhD as a means of personal and professional development. The participants were enthused by and had examples of where they collaborated with peers (in their own time) to develop materials and marking schemes that would standardise and therefore strengthen the ‘brand’ of FET. They felt this was important, but futile, because it was not valued by the organisation. This led to an attitude of ‘why bother?’.

The participants did not identify ‘stages’ of a career as specific definite categories. However, in the discussion they shared that in their view of their own progression that there were phases that included induction (or lack thereof), competency building, growth and frustrations and a level of stability. They spoke of many of these phases being concurrent – they were enthusiastic and growing while also experiencing frustration and building their competencies. The introduction of new modules, policies and procedures meant that their learning and development was not only ongoing but a continual competency building. They could be growing and enthusiastic about the development of resources but be frustrated by the

organisational demands while also being at the induction stage on a new module or approach.

The aspirations of this group of participants were personal or associated with the development of the centre but they identified that even these were being quashed by the organisational structures, policies and practices.

Group B

There was a mix of backgrounds in this group – some were 'career' teachers and had done nothing else and some were on their second career, or were combining their teaching career with some professional work.

Although the participants in this group were varied in their levels of experience and expertise, they indicated that the culture of the centre was such that they were constantly feeling destabilised and they were settling for survival rather than growth and stability. These states are commonly associated with the induction phase.

This group indicated that teaching is not a career for progression, but that it should be, and that progression should be in teaching and learning - 'not PR'. They identified progression as 'sideways, not up', as a means of providing a new focus, a 'motivating spark' and an 'anti-stagnation' tool. A career break was also suggested here as a means of renewal and rejuvenation of finding that 'motivating spark'. This was discussed as an option in terms of further study and accreditation and/or industry placement/internship. One participant suggested a model that spread four years pay over five years so that there would be no economic loss during this 'break' year.

There was also a discussion around organisational opportunities. 'Posts of responsibility' (formerly 'A' and 'B' posts, now referred to as Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal I and Assistant Principal II), that make up part of the hierarchical structure of 'school' management were mentioned. These posts involved duties that were locally decided but typically included administration/co-ordination elements, depending on the local needs. Appointments to these positions had been

subject to a moratorium as part of the measures for economic recovery. In their place, according to the participants, 'co-ordination hours' were introduced. These were considered to be a devolvement of managerial and administrative duties and a means of extracting 'productivity' from teachers without realistic consideration of the time and effort involved. Although the moratorium on the awarding of posts of responsibility has been lifted since 2019, the consensus among the group participants was that they would not be considered for the role, even if they wanted it. The decision to become involved in the organisation outside of the classroom provoked a debate about the value of this form of progression (if the extra work was worth it) and the change of values that progression into a management position would entail (from a learner centred focus to an organisational focus) that did not resonate with their core personal or professional values.

Comparison of Groups

There was a high level of agreement within the groups on the value of personal and professional development in career progression that 'challenges and motivates' and provides a 'new focus' or aids problem solving.

There was a high level of cynicism in their view of the organisation. This centred on 'supports' which were 'all on paper' and were not there in reality. They also spoke of the 'reality' of 'dwindling aspirations'. This perceived lack of potential for growth and an attitude of 'playing the game' in order 'to be able to survive', spoke of employees who were experiencing a level of bereavement for their development and career aspirations. They felt a widening chasm between their 'vision' of their work and its worth and the objectives of the organisation. This led to the majority of the participants expressing an aspiration 'to be able to survive'.

Effect of management

Unexpectedly, spontaneously, and independently, both groups raised the impact of local management/leadership on their experience for two different reasons. Group A's experience was a negative one that permeated both their

working and home lives. They indicated that there was a deliberate strategy to undermine and destabilise them through a constant state of flux, disruption, and competition. This exacerbated a widening gap between their professional values and the wider organisational rationalisation and focus on teaching and learning as a product rather than a process.

In contrast Group B's experience was a very positive one, attributed to their local management. Although there was a direct and deliberate emphasis on the very high standards expected of them they were confident and trusted that they would be valued and supported, despite wider organisational policies and practices.

4.3.4.1 Summary

Table 14 Career Progression Summary

	Group A	*Group B*
What is your understanding of your 'career progression'?	• Progression is non-existent or limited within the ETB • No security • No Recognition of time commitment and experience • Advancing your career • Promotion would be more work but questioned if it was worth it. • FET teaching meets current needs	• Personal and professional development • Building on core skills, knowledge and competencies and inform practice and being challenged and stimulated • Anti-stagnation • Motivating spark • Problem solving • New focus • Should be teaching and learning • Not PR
What are your aspirations for your development and/or progression?	• Limited organisational opportunities so 'why bother?' • Focus on personal and centre development • Progression would be sociable hours • To be recognised by the organisation	• To derive meaning and value from work throughout career • To continue to learn and grow/keep up to date • Development is not progression • Play the game and survive

This section reported the findings from the two focus groups on their understandings, experiences, and aspirations for their career progression.

A lack of organisational recognition contributed to a perception that, as teachers, they were relegated to a lack of organisational opportunities, policies and practices. This has a demotivating and demoralising effect.

The next section introduces a participant generated theme. This focused on the effect of local management on their experiences as an FET teacher.

4.3.5 Conclusion

Participants in both focus group sites were engaged in their work within the classroom. This engagement was evident in their descriptions of, and their aspirations for, the learners. They indicated that their work was meaningful to them and within the classroom they saw what they did as valuable and valued. There was a difference between the levels of psychological safety that was perceived within their centre/context. This was identified, by them, as being integral to their commitment to their centre and their mental health. They felt that the management style and processes were responsible. In terms of the wider organisation there was little or no commitment or sense of belonging.

They also described their professional development, what CPD they undertook and would like to undertake, to broaden, deepen and support their work. There was a dual understanding of CPD – one being the training that the employer/organisation provided (generally not valued) but equally there was an emphasis on the 'real' development: personal and professional. Both groups spoke of the importance of personal growth and peer support to their growth and development and of the negative role of the organisation in limiting or creating barriers to this process.

There were participants that were on their second (or third) career and those for whom teaching was their primary career. It was evident that for both groups teaching was not a choice for those who are traditionally career minded (going up the ladder within an organisation) and that teaching in FET was not a chosen career but one which they 'fell into'. For both groups career progression was viewed as the achievement of personal goals. They did not see that there were organisational structures or opportunities available to them. The only organisational avenues were in administration or management. Both groups identified the role of the organisation as being a barrier/demotivating factor. For one group career progression consisted of survival.

It was expected that there would be differences between the experiences of the two groups that could be ascribed to the context (QQI levels). It was expected that the context would influence the experiences of the individuals. Levels 1-4 are

typically small centres with low levels of contact between teachers and lower levels of contact with management. In contrast levels 5 & 6 are typically focused in larger centres and are generally day-time courses with aligned start, finish and break times. In these settings contact with management is far more frequent and therefore potentially influential. Hence the identification of the influence of the management styles and processes as a strong common influence was unexpected. This influence, although extremely different in effect, seemed to affect all three areas of the study (engagement, CPD and career progression).

From these findings it is unclear if other factors, such as the entry pathways into teaching in the FET sector, may have a bearing on the individual's expectations and experiences. These are additional areas that were identified as warranting further exploration and informed the format of the interviews.

4.4 Findings from the Interviews

4.4.1 Introduction

This section, following the introduction, reports the findings from the twelve semi-structured interviews under the three conceptual frameworks of i) engagement, ii) professional development and iii) career progression. This is followed by a section conclusion.

The original plan for the interviews had been to invite participants from the focus groups. However, because the number of groups and participants was smaller than planned it was decided to choose interviewees instead purposively from outside this pool. There was one (unplanned) overlap. In this, using purposive sampling, the following balance of experience, levels and roles were achieved.

Table 15 Participants' Experience in FET and Duties

Participants' Experience in FET and Duties

Levels	L1-4						L5-6					
Years in FET	0.5	8	17	17	18	21	2	12	15	21	27	33
+ Admin duties		✓		✓	✓			✓			✓	✓

The questions for semi-structured interviews (see Appendix D) were based on the conceptual frameworks, the literature review, and results of the focus groups. All quotes used here use pseudonyms to protect the interviewees' identity and anonymity.

4.4.2 Engagement

Kahn posited that people employ varying degrees of themselves, physically, emotionally and cognitively at work (1990, p. 692) depending their perceptions of i) meaningfulness, ii) psychological safety, and iii) psychological availability. Each of these three elements is then discussed in terms of the factors described in Kahn's work Figure 24.

Kahn's complete and comprehensive questions would have filled the entire interview session (and beyond – his interviews took between 45 and 90 minutes). This would have excluded any other topics or areas. His extensive set of questions

were reduced from 24 open ended questions to 14 to get a balance of depth and to cover the breadth of the elements as shown in Figure 24.

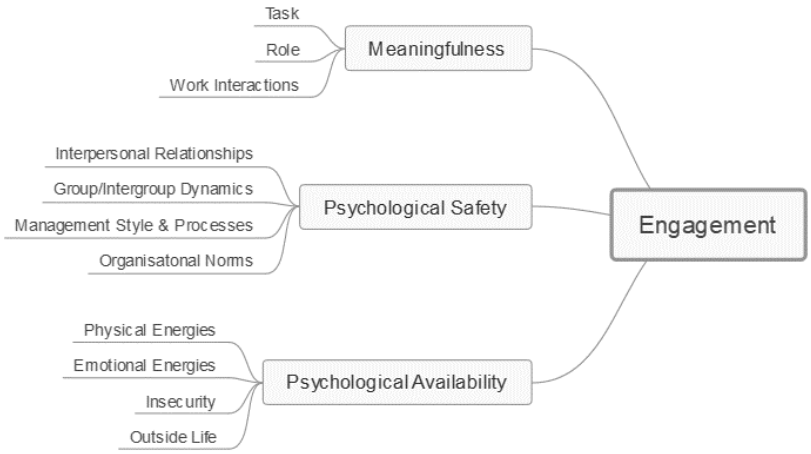


Figure 24 Psychological Conditions of Engagement (adapted from Kahn, 1990, pp. 703-717)

The following are the findings:

4.4.2.1 Meaningfulness

Kahn identified meaningfulness as the individual's perceived return on an investment of self into the work role. This meaningfulness was dependent on the task, the role and work interactions, which were in turn influenced by the characteristics of the i) task, ii) role and iii) work interactions.

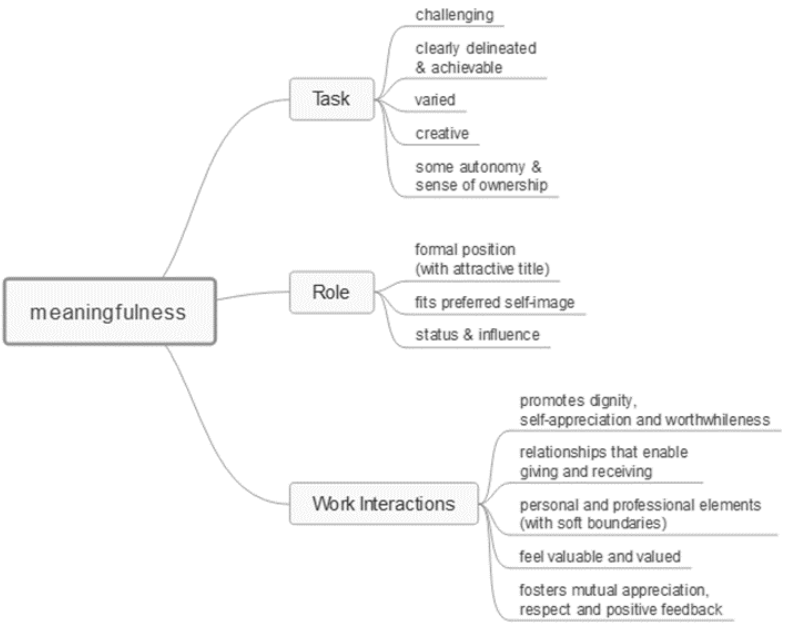


Figure 25 Psychological Meaningfulness (adapted from Kahn, 1990, pp. 708-713)

Task

A meaningful task was identified as one which is 'challenging, clearly delineated, varied, creative and somewhat autonomous' (Kahn, 1990, p. 704).

Of these characteristics **challenge** and autonomy emerged from the interviews as notable themes. FET teaching was described by the interviewees as a challenging, responsible role that offers rewarding work. As one interviewee of more than 20 years put it: 'I get a great kick out of teaching . . . sometimes the more challenging the students the more I enjoy it' [Anita]. Each of the interviewees spoke of their sense of meaning or purpose that they derive from their work – whether this involves helping them with forms/paperwork, discovering their abilities and building confidence or challenging their ways of thinking. This sense of purpose and meaning as a personal reward echoed the findings of the focus groups.

In addition to challenge, most participants enjoyed the **autonomy** that is associated with their roles: autonomy was the characteristic most (seven of the twelve) referred to. This was in terms of both the freedom that is provided by the QQI system (where learning outcomes are specified but there is not a directed approach) and the almost private space of the classroom, where you 'can stand on your head as you're doing it' [Helena]. This can be an opportunity 'I have learned how to use themed literacy and integrate it to the QQI components' to create a learner-centred experience [Mary Jo]. But 'enjoyment' of this autonomy also emerged as having negative elements, including isolation, a duplication of work and a lack of standardised assessment. The reference to duplication was in relation to the creation of materials and assessments. Because of a lack of a 'book', a culture of working as an individual rather than as a team, and ongoing changes to the module and assessments there was a perception of reinventing the wheel over and over again.

During the interviews it also emerged that the greatest detractors from meaningfulness for the participants were associated with frustration in relation to unrealistic assessments, and, from their point of view, increasing and unnecessary bureaucracy and a focus on 'bums on seats' and progression. '*The form, that*

accesses a form that submits another form. . . there's a lot of forms . . . there's forms to get permissions to run a course, improve a course, and sign off after a course. It's all paperwork' [Gerard]. Another interviewee pointed to the frustration of the burden of proof, especially in terms of skills demonstrations and portfolio assembly, that is time-consuming, and interrupts the 'flow' [Lillie]. At the higher levels the criticism is that there is an increasing focus on the academic nature of assessment, even in very practical subjects [Paco]. This perceived misalignment of values was identified as a cause of disconnection from the organisation. Another cause was that the organisational system makes them feel invisible, unimportant and, as described by one interviewee, 'disposable'.

Role

Kahn's description of the work role as an influence on meaningfulness had two aspects: i) an identity (with formal positions or titles) that fits the individual's preferred self-image, and ii) a perceived status and influence.

Formal positions and attractive identities

Across the interviews, interviewees viewed their work as a means of expressing their values: they expressed a desire to care for, facilitate growth in, or empower others. '*I actually liked the idea of helping and assisting people to improve their skills, increase their knowledge, and that sort of thing*' [Imara], '*as a result of the caring all my life, I found that I wanted to care for the less well off, intellectually and [with] disabilities*' [Mary Jo], and '*the feeling that you're helping people. And that you're giving people . . . knowledge and that's going to be very important*' [Lillie].

There was less emphasis, and even confusion, on the formal positions:

> *'my role as an FET tutor, teacher, whatever . . . I suppose we'll go with tutor because that's what [is] written down in your pay slips' [Mary Jo].*

> *'I'm the chief instructor or depending on what document is written, I'm the deputy principal or the assistant manager' [Gerard]*

> *They labelled me as a manager of the centre but that was never written down, which we don't worry about [Mary Jo]*

Status and influence

In terms of status and influence the responses reflected the complexity of the sector –

> *'it kills me for years as I was getting pay cheques . . . with unqualified written on the top when I had like qualifications coming out every pore. And I wasn't afraid to go out and put myself in a place where I could be assessed again and again and again to improve those qualifications.' (Paco)*
>
> *'Considering I don't even know what to call myself. . . I don't know what we're supposed to be. And I'm not a teacher apparently. I am a teacher. I consider myself a teacher, the ETB don't consider me a teacher'. (Rose)*

These samples of the reality of working within the sector that has been developing and growing in different directions has led to a wide variety of titles, and expectations. Some want the 'status' of being a teacher because this has a solid identity [Paco and Rose]. However, the converse is equally true: they shy from being 'a teacher' and see their role as being significantly different from the traditional mainstream teacher. This clash of identity - having to work to become recognised as a teacher (through the Teaching Council Registration and achieving a Teacher Education Qualification) - creates a level of internal conflict that is, for some, destabilising.

Work Interactions

Kahn identified five influencing characteristics of work interactions: i) interactions that promote dignity, self-appreciation and worthwhileness, ii) relationships that enable giving and receiving, iii) personal and professional elements (with soft boundaries), iv) interactions that result in feeling valuable and valued, v) relationships that foster mutual appreciation, respect and positive feedback.

Interactions that promote dignity, self-appreciation and worthwhileness

Inside the classroom these are predominantly positive: '*I know my students do appreciate a lot of what I do for them*' [Anita]. The reward comes from '*the fabulous learners . . . that's the reward. And that's a big reward*' [Claire]. '*When they get jobs*

afterwards . . . you can't take any credit but . . . [you know that] *you helped them along the journey*' [Bonnie]. This stems from the reward that the participants get from those interactions through the job '*I wouldn't do it if I didn't teach, you wouldn't do it for the admin part . . . because it's all about the interaction with people that are using the service*' [Rose].

However, it is not always positive:

> *"I think you can also become a bit cynical, because whilst I understand that there are so many of them that do have a lot of issues. Like I mentioned earlier. There always comes a point in the year, and I'm there right now, where I'm sick of people's excuses. Yeah. And I'm like, I cannot do this for you. So you just do the work, or don't do the work"* [Elaine]

Relationships that enable giving or receiving

Within the work interactions outside of the classroom one participant described her experiences as '*you'd be rewarded for interaction or for supporting others, it's appreciated. It's, you know, being - for being a good team player'* [Helena]. Another described an example of her relationship with her manager:

> *[My daughter] had a consultant appointment and . . . I was going to take an unpaid day and I just emailed [principal] and said look sorry for the short notice. [Daughter] has an appointment and I will [take the unpaid day] because we normally, normally we would be supposed to give six weeks' notice. And she said, Oh, my God, absolutely not. Just tell your class. [Anita]*

However this is not universal. For some there is a level of disconnection or a lack of a relationship either with management or peers, some through lack of opportunity: [teachers] *are never encouraged to get together in a professional capacity . . . and they're not encouraged to [Rose].* Another interviewee who was new to the job (just over six months) had not yet met her 'boss', and thought that the administrator was her supervisor.

Sometimes the relationship does not work because of the physical layout: services are spread out over multiple campuses/centres.

> *I've been through three managers, three directors of the college . . . there was a question put to me by the recent management . . . just saying - we see you don't do*

an awful lot of extra work outside of your time. . . . which you know, I'm over here and that's fair enough. . . so they don't see any of the extra work that I put in. [Paco]

Personal and professional elements

Across the interviewees only two mentioned interactions that could be considered to have personal and professional elements with their co-workers. These were supportive relationships but for the majority of interviewees there was a clear divide between their personal and professional relationships.

Their relationship with line management was '*a minor connection*' [Helena], or '*very much a work relationship*' [Mary Jo] but it is not always one based on trust: '*there's maybe a fear that if something goes wrong you're going to get it in the neck and that fear is always there*' [Rose].

Valuable and valued

The responses relating to feeling valuable and valued were in the majority around the work within the classroom. Here interviewees felt valuable and valued. In the organisational context three said explicitly said that they felt valuable and valued but the majority did not feel visible in the organisation, much less valuable or valued:

> *I'm not comfortable as in the institution I work for, because I just feel, like I feel very insular and I feel like I'm not really communicated with or have the opportunity to communicate back to that institution . . . I do feel like in some ways, to quote The Simpsons [laugh], I feel like a low level employee from sector seven, you know. That I have my job to do and, and communication flows one way at best and I can't feed back into this system. [Paco]*

This led to a perception of a 'waste' of abilities and/or resources: one interviewee reported that: '*in fact, what I'm good at is being wasted* [Rose]'. Three interviewees pointed out skills and abilities that were not valued, not used, or not appreciated within the organisation.

Relationships that foster mutual appreciation, respect, and positive feedback

Again, there was a difference between the relationships inside and outside of the classroom. There were many examples of these relationships that were respectful and appreciative.

Outside of this there are some relationships that are worked at and work:

I tend to go get on with people. . . I don't take offense. Like [principal] can be a little bit 'abrasive' sometimes. . . I just don't take any notice of her . . . It has to go over your head. You can't get stuck. . . life is too short to be stuck in things like that. [Anita]

I don't know how many years we've worked together but . . we get on really well together. I think we work well together. . . he gives me a lot of help in what I'm doing here as well. But at same time, you know, I can tell him No, no, I'm grand like. No need to be looking over my shoulder, as well. So no, we get on great [Jacinda].

I've known [x] most of my life. . . We'd have a very good relationship in discussing the direction that the place is traveling in or things that need to be addressed or issues . . . just as a support for each other. Yeah, we're pretty good that way around. Good relationship works well [Gerard].

Summary

The work interactions fell into two groups: i) inside the classroom and ii) outside the classroom (the organisational context). The classroom relationships were generally positive and fulfilling. The relationships outside of the classroom were far more varied and context dependent. Some were distant and impersonal, due to geography or work context, some due to a deliberate separation of personal and professional lives. Those with administrative duties in addition to their teaching role were more likely to have a positive relationship with management than those with teaching only duties.

This section introduced the psychological conditions that influence Meaningfulness and its three related elements (task, role and work interactions). It outlined the findings from the interviews in terms of these elements and their constituent constructs. It found that FET teaching is challenging, varied, creative and

has high levels of autonomy with a sense of ownership over the work. In contrast the role is valued as an opportunity to teach but only has status and influence within the classroom. While participants felt valued and valuable within the classroom there was not a feeling that they were essential or important to the organisation. Work interactions within the classroom were positive and promoted dignity, self-appreciation and worthwhileness and allowed the interviewees to feel valuable and valued. The same was not true for the organisation where over half of the participants felt that the work interactions did not result in respectful, appreciative relationships with personal and professional elements.

The next section will look at the role of psychological safety in terms of engagement.

4.4.2.2 Psychological safety

Psychological safety, according to Kahn, has four elements: i) interpersonal relationships, ii) groups and intergroup dynamics, iii) management style and process and iv) organisational norms.

Interpersonal relationships

Psychological safety in terms of security and acceptance within interpersonal relationships was highest amongst those who had administrative duties at assistant principal level (contexts with level 5 and 6 courses). Each of these had developed a good working relationship over a long time (more than ten years) with their next in line. Two were very positive and saw their principal as being a friend and/or mentor, the third described strategic efforts to work on the relationship with a principal that was described 'abrasive but supportive'. In contrast those who were solely in the classroom had a different perspective. '*I feel like that if I have questions about anything that's happening . . .that I feel influences the students, positively or negatively, I really feel like I can't feed into it'* [Paco]. Bonnie described her perception as '*the better your work is, the more you're resented. And the more efficient you are, the more you're shunned* '. However, it was not all negative: '*The people I work with . . . the other teachers are fantastic. The support that they give you as a new teacher coming in was amazing*' [Elaine].

Those working as resource workers (levels 1-4) were more ambiguous about their role and what was expected of them: perceptions ranged from basic administration to a management position. Each of these interpreted their roles differently and acted accordingly, making the role fit their comfort level, experience and trust in managerial support. '*Who would I expect the support* [from] *if things weren't going well? I don't know*' [Mary Jo]. In one case the relationship was described negatively '*there's a deep resentment for management amongst frontline staff*' [Rose]. In contrast those with teaching only positions often had little contact with other colleagues '*I often think I'm completely self-employed, that's how it feels', 'I know the[other] tutors to say hi to, but I certainly don't feel like staff*' [Claire].

Group and intergroup dynamics

Teaching is typically a solo endeavour among groups of learners. The management of group and intergroup dynamics within the classroom is typically an assumed integral part of the job but did not emerge as of concern in this research. Interactions with other members working in a particular centre depends on the type of centre (full time or part-time) and the conditions that FET teachers work under. The only mention of groups and inter-group dynamics was by those who did not feel psychologically safe. In particular in the case where the management style and processes had a negative impact did a 'them and us' situation arise. Here there were mentions of 'friends' (of the manager), and 'spies' and the perceived inequalities.

Management Style and Processes

There was a spectrum of relationships with management ranging from the 'distant and devolved' to a dictatorial, fear-based style *'when you step out of line . . . you're punished for that in some way' [Elaine].* This latter style was a feature of one centre (which was used for one of the focus groups) and was not widespread. However, there was a more subtle, though no less powerful, perception that conformity was what was valued. This was expressed by Claire who told of a recent hire who was described as 'great' because she 'didn't want to change the world' because 'you certainly not rewarded if you want to create change' [Claire]. Claire

also spoke of the 'security' of a Contract of Indefinite Duration (CID) '*I think since the CIDs came in they've been trying to get everybody out. [laughs] I do. That's my sense of it. It's like . . . Oh, my God, you've a CID - you're big trouble*' [Claire]. Given the changes within the wider system and within the organisation there is an ongoing insecurity that is contagious and that feeds a perception of the organisation as being a place where conformity is valued. This is fundamentally limiting in its attitude towards personal risk, growth and development as well as organisational growth and development towards the stated aim of creating a world class sector.

Organisational norms

For those with teaching responsibilities and on 'hours', across all levels, there was little or no perception of security, either in terms of their job security or in terms of expressing opinions or themselves. Variations were heavily influenced by the confidence of the individual and the perceived support of peers and management.

The overwhelming description of the relationship to and perception of psychological safety within the wider organisation was notable in its absence. There was no real attachment or sense of belonging, safety or trust in the organisation. *Rose* spoke of being 'frustrated' and 'disgruntled' by the lack of support, information and oversight by management. This stemmed from increasing demands without i) remuneration, ii) training or iii) consultation. This induces in her 'a fear that if something goes wrong you're going to get it in the neck and that fear is always there' [Rose]. Two spoke of a distance (physical and relationship) between them and 'management'. One [Imara] indicated that she physically met her manager once a year with a phone call typically once a month, and while she viewed her manager as supportive also indicated that she had not had occasion to need it. Another [Claire] described management as 'nice but removed', while Helena described her connection with management as 'minor'. Low levels of connection and trust were common:

> *like I feel very insular and I feel like I'm not really communicated with or have the opportunity to communicate back to that institution and I do feel*

like in some ways, to quote The Simpsons [laugh], I feel like a low level employee from sector seven, you know. That I have my job to do and, and communication flows one way at best and I can't feed back into this system [Paco]

'I would hope that my management wouldn't at any stage turn around and say she's in her 60s. She's too old; we need somebody younger and look for ways to push me out. I don't get a sense that that could happen. But - I don't know, I haven't seen it happening with anybody else, but Anne who knows. Who knows?' [Imara]

Only one mentioned the wider organisation in a positive light: this was in reference to the role of HR in the setting and maintaining of contract terms and conditions. This was the same participant that had a 'career plan' to progress to centre principal.

4.4.2.3 Summary

Psychological safety is a significant part of the investment of the self, and is based on relationships. It emerged not as a single state but as a layered, contextual perception that was described as within the classroom, within the centre and within the organisation. The responses to questions about their safety and security within the centre/college varied widely, depending on the individual's position in the setting and their peer relationships and the relationship with the next level of management.

Participants in this study mainly felt 'safe' in the classroom. One of the participants said that they spent more time with those on their course than with anyone else, including family. Therefore the classroom environment can be a context where intense relationships are built and through the building of relationships a bubble of trust is built. Yet this bubble is fragile. Not feeling 'safe' at organisational level can drive the individual teacher's focus into the classroom: here they have relationships, that although dynamic, allow 'voice and choice' and the expression of self. This may be good for the learners, and themselves, but it is not necessarily what is best for the organisation. Given the ongoing changes at system and organisation level there is a current of insecurity that is contagious. There is a perception that the organisation is a place where conformity is valued. This is

fundamentally limiting in its attitude towards personal risk, growth and development as well as organisational growth and development towards the stated aim of creating a world class sector.

4.4.2.4 Psychological availability

Psychological availability, as described by Kahn, has four facets: physical energies, emotional energies, insecurity and outside life. These are seen by Kahn as limited resources that are in competition with engagement at work and the 'sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary' to be able to invest. In other words they are 'distractions that are more or less preoccupying in role performance situations' (Kahn, 1990, p. 705).

Energies: Physical and emotional

Teaching was described by all the participants as a role where physical, cognitive and emotional energies were essential. The job is demanding, but all described their individual contribution as being 100%, or as close as possible to it. An interesting finding was the split between the 'lifers' and the less experienced teachers. A lack of boundaries was described as a threat: '*everything explodes if there's not boundaries and respect'* [Mary Jo]. Those who had the most experience created boundaries for themselves. While at work their focus was on their work: '*I've developed a skill of - the moment I've dropped my own children off in the morning, I'm in the car. I'm in work mode.* [Jacinda] and '*home doesn't come into my work and work doesn't come into my* [home]*. Once I come in here, I'm in here. And this is my space'* [Helena]. This 'boundary' on how they make themselves available develops over time: '*as I've gotten older, I realised this - I'm paid for the hours that I'm here. It shouldn't eat into my own personal life. So I generally don't think about work when I'm not here'* [Jacinda]. In contrast a newer teacher identified the way her work life impacted her personal life: '*there is a big part of me that would love to be able to switch off more when I leave school or to not take things so on board that I would actually be worrying about certain students when I leave school*' [Elaine]. The impact was personal and invasive: she would wake up in the middle of the night worrying, becoming worn out and physically and emotionally drained. Another

described herself as ‘maxed out’ [Rose]. It seemed that in order to maintain a level that is sustainable, not only on a moment by moment basis but on a long term one, emotionally and physically, boundaries were required. Those who were older, or had a more physical work role, there was an emphasis on taking care of themselves in order to continue by investing in their health.

> *‘ . . . I use my body as a tool . . . I’m very answerable to my body. Do you know what I mean? If I don't take care of it and I don't watch it my mood is definitely affected and if my mood is affected, my work is affected. So I have to be really careful’ [Paco].*

So, with the knowledge that there were times of the year that were more demanding, and that injuries were harder to recover from, each made adjustments and accommodations to their lifestyle. This included strategies to maximise their energy (typically fitness) and prevention of injuries and long term damage. One participant indicated that rather than her job taking her energies the job energised her.

Insecurity

In terms of insecurity and their confidence in their ability and status the findings were discussed under psychological safety. While all felt capable and confident in their classroom environment, not all were as confident about their place within the organisation. While all interviewees spoke of the satisfaction that they derived from working with the learners, their commitment towards the organisation varied. For some this was because the organisation had changed. Despite rhetoric to the contrary the rationale of efficiency, accountability, and accounting meant that the primary driver was ‘bums on seats’ and ‘progression rates’. These values were seen as growing in importance over and above the actual learning. It was also noted that this perceived shift in priorities was not even: those who had an administrative role or a level of managerial responsibility typically had benign responses in relation to the organisation and were more committed to the organisation.

Outside Life

In a similar vein to the focus groups where there was an emphasis on the effects of 'outside life' incidents were recounted that, rather than being a distraction, and therefore a negative influence on psychological availability, there were features of their outside life that shaped and enhanced their engagement. One interviewee said '*it's just all the job – which is good for the students, but not good for your own work/life balance*' [Bonnie] who also spoke of training for voluntary work that was a 'mini H.Dip' and sparked an increased consciousness and awareness of her own practice. Two participants spoke of how their personal caring responsibilities created empathetic bonds with their learners.

On the other hand those who were surviving at work found that their work life had a negative effect on their outside life, reporting disturbed sleeping patterns and struggles in their private relationships.

For some it FET teaching can have a level of flexibility, in terms of day and evening work, that allows an opportunity to create an individual work/life balance.

Summary

Psychological availability came across as a choice that the interviewees made to invest themselves in their work. This was demonstrated in terms of their conscious decisions to ensure their physical and emotional energies were sufficient for the work. Part of this is ensuring that they are fit and well enough to perform their work. The steps taken depended on their subject area, their age and their health history. Maintaining boundaries on availability was also identified as a coping mechanism. Those who had built long term sustainable careers were conscious of and deliberate in their efforts to maintain these boundaries. There were also the interviewees that held administrative responsibilities as well as their teaching positions and were more likely to have a positive disposition towards the organisation. These were also the least likely to report a level of insecurity about their position.

Outside life was not considered by the interviewees as a distraction, but as a source of inspiration and renewal or as a flexible position when necessary.

4.4.2.5 Conclusion

For all of the participants it was the potential to empower others was the 'meaningfulness' they derived from their work. The value of this meaningfulness in many cases compensated for deficits in psychological safety and shaped their investment of their psychological availability. The role of line management was crucial in the creation and maintenance of psychological safety. This was especially evident in centres/settings that had a high level of contact with management and a management style or process that was not supportive. This was magnified for those who were at the beginning of their careers. For those who had a managerial role, or for those who were mid or late career there was a more developed level of confidence in their position. These possessed a level of stoicism that sustained them. These were also those who had developed boundary mechanisms as a means of self-protection.

4.4.3 Continuous Professional Development

For this research Continuous Professional Development (CPD), has been taken to include 'all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom' (Day, 1999). This part of the research set out to discover what CPD was defined as by FET teachers and what constituted 'authentic' professional development for them and how this was supported and enabled by their work roles and organisations. This section will report the findings from the interviews that refer to the interviewees' experiences and establish i) their current CPD activities and their locations (in terms of type of activity, location and providers) and ii) experience of supports and barriers.

Table 16 What does CPD mean to you?

	What does Continuous Professional Development mean to you?	
Concept	**Categories**	**Sub-categories**

Continuous Professional Development	CPD activities	Training, Education, Workshops, Communities of Practice, Collaboration, Reflective Practice . . .
	Type/Structure	Formal, Non-Formal, Informal and Incidental
	Provider/Situation	Higher Education, Professional Bodies, In-house, Work-based, other
	Supports and Barriers	Financial, Emotional, Resources Provided, Recognition

4.4.3.1 What is CPD?

The interviewees reported participation in a wide range of activities that were classified as seen in Table 17. This shows the existing CPD as undertaken and described by the participants categorised into the following forms: i) academically accredited programmes, ii) professional qualifications by National Governing Bodies or professional organisations (accredited but not academic), iii) activities provided by organisations (employer or external bodies), iv) activities that are social or collaborative but that are not structured or have a formal set of learning outcomes or an agenda, v) self-directed and self-initiated learning.

Table 17 Examples of CPD activities

Examples	**Academically Accredited Qualifications** QQI/ HE programmes of study: Higher Cert, BA, MA, PhD	National Governing Bodies/ **Professional Qualifications**: Accredited certification/ revalidation	**Organised activities** (by organisation, network, or professional body). Workplace training, workshops, seminars, short courses, voluntary training	**Group learning:** Learning through peer collaboration/ unofficial mentoring/ communities of practice e.g. Conversations with colleagues, team teaching, peer collaboration (programme development)	**Self-directed activities**. Driven and sourced by the needs/ interests of the individual. Readings, social media, blogs, websites, Special Interest Groups, MOOCs
	Incidental Learning				

Academically Accredited Qualifications

It emerged that although CPD is distinct from, and a (career long) continuation of, Initial Teacher Training (ITT) only two interviewees had undertaken traditional

ITT at the beginning of their careers (for secondary school teaching). These were the two youngest interviewees. Of the twelve interviewees eight had held formal qualifications at degree level or higher before entering the sector. Two of these included a Teacher Education Qualification (TEQ). Of the remaining interviewees two had trained as nurses and two had vocational/instructor qualifications. The latter two interviewees were obliged to undertake a TEQ at Level 8 under the Teaching Council Regulations, and so their ITT was part of their CPD. The remainder were TC registered based on an academic qualification and a minimum teaching experience before regulations came into effect.

Since beginning their teaching careers, as part of their CPD, the interviewees have added formal qualifications: three added Higher Certificates (in Literacy Development), two have added Bachelor's Degrees, two have completed Master's degrees and one has completed both a Bachelor's Degree and a Master's degree.

Professional Qualifications

Professional qualifications were initially typically undertaken as part of registration with professional bodies or sporting National Governing Bodies. These courses are not necessarily aligned with the QQI system and included 'instructor' courses that qualified participants to teach subjects such as Safeguarding (for children and vulnerable adults), manual handling, first aid, etc. These include a 'revalidation' system which require proof of requalifying or proving CPD on an ongoing basis to maintain registration.

Of the twelve interviewees five have reported adding to their vocational/professional qualifications to increase the width or their expertise of their area.

Organised activities

These activities typically came in two forms: i) provided by the employer and ii) provided by external (special interest) organisations.

Employer provision: Eight of the twelve indicated that there was an element of compulsory CPD as part of their employment conditions. Of the ETB provision the predominant feature was training in administrative procedures and assessment policies. In each of these cases there was an acceptance that some of these were inevitable (e.g. First Aid or Child Protection). There was also an acceptance that some organisational training was necessary (in new policies/procedures or administrative changes). '. . s*ometimes there's an actual need for training for example, if you think about our database, you need training and there's no point in sitting around chatting to people about it. You need to get somebody in that will physically show you how this thing works'* [Rose].

Other offerings included wellness days, suicide awareness training, and strategies for working with mental health/learning difficulties. These were described as being of varying degrees of relevance and usefulness and often merely 'tick-box' exercises.

However, there was a certain resistance to what was seen as imposed, irrelevant, or institutionally driven: '*that was three hours of my life that I could have been doing something more, more important to the college*' [Paco]. For example: '*the reason that we're feeling stressed is because we have to go there and do stress management training when we should be here doing our jobs. Stress is getting on the motorway and . . . getting stuck in traffic for two hours! I could have done it online* [Rose].

On the other hand, what was expected was not provided: '*when I started, [I] actually thought - there's a tutors manual and . . . that's what you'll be delivering'* [Lillie] or '*I was landed into a classroom and given the QQI module descriptor for the first time, there you go. There's your classroom. They're your people and that was it*. [Claire]. This pointed to a lack of an induction or supported transition into the organisation.

The literacy training for voluntary tutors was identified as a practical support and induction, including one outside of the literacy service. However, although this is run by the ETBs it is not mandatory or universally available.

External (special interest provision): These examples included a wide spectrum of provision from conferences e.g. ETB literacy tutor training, NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency) conferences, Family Learning conferences, the European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE) as well as Erasmus training/information sessions, Dyslexia Ireland training, Social and Health Education Project (SHEP) courses, *The Artist's Way* courses, 'arts and empowerment' courses and creative writing courses. These were typically short-term/one off sessions that were chosen by the individuals as being of interest and benefit. For the most part these were undertaken by the individuals in their own time, although for some the learning could be counted for their mandatory CPD hours.

Group/Collaborative Learning

In contrast to the organised learning that was organised and had specific learning outcomes these types of CPD were unstructured and without clear learning outcomes. These included peer collaboration in terms of reviewing folders, sharing resources, unofficial mentoring, communities of practice, team teaching, stakeholder review and planning days, and presentations to external groups. These also included participation in Erasmus projects and network building opportunities. One participant particularly valued '*being in a room with other people that do the same job as me, and having the opportunity to talk to them*' [Rose].

Self-directed activities

These were typically driven by the needs/interests of the individual and were typically immediate or short-term in response to specific problems or questions. *'There are things that you might do, you'll have found or, and kind of source them yourself and you go to them yourself'* [Gerard]. Readings, websites, literature, research, social media were sources of information, as was 'bounce it off Brenda' a form of peer or colleague feedback. As one interviewee put it: *'to give a good quality service, you have to know what's the latest thinking . . . you have to keep fresh otherwise you're . . . you'll get stale or bored* [Helena].

There was a strong element of the importance of personal development that enhanced practice: '*I'm interested in my own personal development and professional development, because it makes me better at what I am doing for people'* [Claire]. It is '*obviously all about improving myself*, . . . *bettering myself so that I can perform my job . . . to the best that I can possibly do* [Imara]. For the interviewees this included self-care activities and personal rewards.

Incidental Learning

Incidental learning, being unintentional, serendipitous by its nature takes place not only across the spectrum for formal, non-formal and informal learning settings but is also experienced within the classroom and often within discussions or completely unrelated incidents. Bonnie described a voluntary instructor training programme as being a 'mini–H. Dip' (a recap of the Teacher Education Qualification) and the value of being a learner '*I would always be looking* [in adult learning situations] *and I'd be drawing from that too'* [Bonnie].

Imara described a meeting in relation to her own studies as being the catalyst for her transformation from 'trainer' to 'adult educator'. This conversation was pivotal: it changed her point of view, her approach to her own learning and her practice as a teacher.

Claire identified her interview as part of this research as an unintended but valuable part of her CPD: the questions prompted a deeper level of reflection on her role, practice and future development.

4.4.3.2 Purposes and Drivers of CPD

All twelve of the interviewees spoke of a commitment to developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Using Friedman & Philip's (2004) classification of drivers of CPD this research found that the interviewees undertook CPD, in addition to the compulsory requirement, for the following reasons:

Table 18 Reasons for Undertaking CPD

Increase Efficiency & effectiveness	*Remain current*	*Maintain qualifications (revalidation)*	*Improve self (personal development)*	*Improve practice*	*Upskill (expand expertise)*

# of interviewees	1	4	2	3	6	7

Only one interviewee identified a formal individual training needs analysis within the organisation. The other eleven undertook self-directed and organisationally manded CPD.

In analysing the data another reason emerged: to maintain, or rejuvenate, enthusiasm: *if you're not participating in CPD, then you're - you're just stagnant* [Claire]. [The] *two years I was doing the Masters, I felt that I myself was, full of enthusiasm, you know, for newness and new things. And then that filtered into my coursework that I was then teaching* [Bonnie].

4.4.3.3 Experience of Supports and Barriers

Continuous Professional Development is subject to the same enablers and challenges that influence all adults as learners. This section reports the findings of the research in terms of supports and barriers to participation in and with CPD.

Caffarella and Zinn (1999, p. 243) concluded that factors that support or impede CPD can be categorised under four domains: i) people and interpersonal relationships, ii) institutional structures, iii) personal considerations and commitments and iv) individual intellectual and personal characteristics.

People and interpersonal relationships

Enabling factors include personal supports at work and positive working relationships that include mentoring or modelling. For the interviewees these supports were focused on the relationship with their immediate managers. Two spoke positively of managers who had 'seen something in them' and encouraged their development into FET teaching and developing their skills. Paco identified a more senior staff member with 'vision and passion' that mentored him. These were relationships that provided support and encouragement. On the practical side three others spoke of how they were encouraged and supported through timetable scheduling. Mary Joe spoke of the support of knowing that there was someone at HQ at the other end of the phone.

Conversely, Rose spoke of a lack of encouragement from management for what she had identified as relevant CPD opportunities. This she saw as a passive but effective impediment to the professional development of herself and her colleagues. Her relationships with management also left her in doubt as to the support that she would get if a substantial element of CPD was undertaken (e.g., a Masters). In this case the relationship was interesting in that she also spoke of being 'permitted to go' on an Erasmus project on her own time.

Another aspect identified by Caffarella & Zinn (1999) was the recognition of work by colleagues. This seems to be rare within the FET sector. While Gerard spoke of materials that he developed that were adopted by the ETB for use across the ETB this was an exception.

Another aspect identified by Caffarella & Zinn (1999) was the support and encouragement of family and friends. This aspect was categorised both under people and interpersonal relationships and personal considerations and commitments. Two interviewees spoke directly to this. Bonnie spoke of her efforts to balance work life, family life and professional development: '*when you do one the other two suffer. So, then you have to kind of pull back and say okay, I must pull back from this to give the other two time'*. Imara spoke of the effects of her continued commitment to CPD on her life: '*My social life became non-existent*' and '*I discovered who my friends were*'. This was an 'eye opener' for her; '*And I realised, you know what, maybe at the end of the day, if they're not there supporting me, they're not really good friends'.*

Institutional structures

The findings relating to the provision of resources varied. The experience of interviewees covered a wide range of perceived supports from the organisation. One indicated no organisational supports at all. Another referred to an annual, formal, individual planning and development session with supported, funded development opportunities. The interviewees with the most and least supports both worked outside of the ETB context. These were the outliers.

Within the ETBs there was also a variation. Nine of the twelve reported that there was at least some level of training. This training, that was planned, provided and evaluated by the organisation was described by Paco as '*this is what management do, you know what I mean? They . . . put things in place to teach you, so that you can be a better employee*' [Paco]. This was typically considered to be administrative training or of a mandatory nature (e.g. Safeguarding, QQI assessment procedures, Manual Handling or in administrative software products). These were seen as necessary, a tick box exercise, but not as professional development by most. Rose identified the value of these was in the networking opportunity, rather than the content.

Outside of organisational training the experience of the organisational commitment towards supporting CPD was inconsistent. In FET colleges the feedback was that sometimes the course and associated expenses was paid for but attended on the teachers 'own time'. In another case resources were made available (transport) for those attending. In three cases timetables were amended to cater for attendance and study leave. In others the perception was that considerable barriers were experienced: courses, even those 'approved' by the organisation, had to be self-funded and if the time clashed with contracted hours there was a consequent loss of wages, which was a double cost.

Although there was a wider reporting of organisationally provided CPD/training at Lever 5&6, the more positive perception of supportive institutional structures was higher among those who had administration duties/posts of responsibility.

Personal Considerations and Commitments

The support and encouragement of family and friends, or conversely the lack of support or active discouragement overlapped with People and Interpersonal relationships (above).

The personal resources available (time, funds) can be a factor that enables or impedes development. In this research time and funds were recurring themes. This is especially salient when CPD is not part of the 'working life' and instead is undertaken outside of working time. One participant identified that she had

undertaken CPD when she had fewer hours. However, the lower income then became a constraint.

Imara identified a stage in her life where personal upheavals and crises meant that she was not in a position to even consider her CPD. Following changes in her circumstances she declared: '*I was late coming to professional development. Late in life, if you like, but when I did, oh God it opened the floodgates and I can't get enough of it now'.*

Health related issues were not specifically mentioned in relation to CPD. Cultural and/or religious values did not arise as a factor that impacted CPD.

Intellectual and Personal Characteristics

All the interviewees showed strong personal beliefs in the importance of excellence in their work. This correlated with beliefs in the value of CPD and being a lifelong learner.

Their self-confidence in their roles was far more varied. This depended on their context (Basic Education -v- VET), their contract status and their relationship with their immediate manager. One interviewee described herself as 'self-employed' and not part of a faculty after seventeen years of employment. This sense of disconnection was far more evident in the Levels 1-4 for those employed as teachers. Those with additional administrative duties displayed far more confidence in their employment and their role.

While the interviewees indicated a recognition of different forms of CPD there was far more of an emphasis on the formal or organised forms, especially the organisational training aspects.

The allocation of time for CPD within the work life also varied. Training organised by the organisation was generally run within the work-time but this was not accessible by all. There were some accommodations made by local management (timetables/study time) but this was not universal. Much of the CPD was undertaken in the interviewee's own time.

Of the interviewees only two explicitly indicated that there was a climate that fostered collaboration and collegiality. These interviewees described their role in the promotion of this climate.

Other findings

Only two interviewees reported that the achievement of a qualification was recognised by the organisation and extended the scope of their employment. One interviewee also indicated that certain qualifications merited financial remuneration, but this was not mentioned by anyone else. One interviewee indicated a level of peer teaching/collaboration: he was to 'share' his CPD (an academic qualification) knowledge so the organisation would have the equivalent of four degrees for the price of one.

In contrast three interviewees indicated that additional academic qualifications were not only irrelevant in terms of their remuneration but neither were their qualifications acknowledged in their organisation. One participant in particular was aggrieved by the organisational description of him as 'unqualified' (on his payslip) when he was contracted on the basis of his high level of qualifications in his area. This description was based on the lack of a TEQ.

4.4.3.4 Conclusion

There appears to be two conceptions of CPD by the interviewees. The first is an 'organisational training' one. The second is an individual and personal definition of their own professional development.

The organisational training model perspective is based on a requirement for 'CPD hours' either by the organisation or professional bodies. This is likely to be perceived as a threat, as it is a condition of contractual requirements of employment or professional registration. The enforced participation may ensure access to a form of development that is important to the organisation in terms of mandatory systems, policies and procedures training (e.g. GDPR, software use and assessment procedures). However, mandatory training, especially training that is seen as irrelevant or unsuitable, can have a negative effect on the orientation of

individuals towards learning and will reinforce a culture of doing the minimum hours necessary.

The second definition of CPD is a more personal one. This covers a spectrum of activities, events and motivations that are instrumental in challenging, changing and developing the individual as a person and a professional. This personal and professional development is part of the individual's development throughout their lifespan. This definition and perceived function of CPD is wide and includes personal and professional learning across a range of contexts and purposes. It was found here that many approached it in a proactive way that enriched their practice, despite the lack of organisational support or by the absence of organisational acknowledgement or value placed on it.

The next section will deal with the impact of role engagement on career progression from the perspective of the FET teachers who participated in the interviews.

4.4.4 Career Progression

This section is based on Fessler & Christensen's (1992) Teacher Career Cycle. Although this model was based on mainstream teaching in the USA, it is used here to detail the responses and perspectives on career progression in three sections: i) a career as an FET teacher, ii) career stages and iii) challenges and concerns.

The FET landscape is a diverse one. This gives rise to a variety of working contexts, conditions and experiences. One of the dominating influences is the level. At levels 5 & 6 in FE colleges (vocational education) the hierarchy is similar to post-primary settings (from which most have evolved). Typically, these have academic calendars with at least some having contracts that are equivalent to those of secondary school teachers. The organisational management structure includes 'posts of responsibility' known as 'A and B posts' or more recently as Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal I and Assistant Principal II. In contrast Levels 1-4 (Adult Basic Education) provision is in small settings (in full or part-time centres) on short courses nested within, but shorter than, the academic calendar. Each centre

has a Resource Worker, who generally is responsible for administration within the centre of both the voluntary one to one sessions and the groups (paid work). The job description for this is not clearly defined and falls somewhere between an administrator with teaching hours and a centre manager. Through purposive sampling the population has three interviewees with teaching only duties at level five and six and three at one to four as well as three with teaching and admin duties at level five and six and three at one to four.

Table 19 Roles & duties of Interviewees

	Teaching duties only	*Teaching plus admin/management*
Levels 5 & 6	3	3
Levels 1 – 4	3	3

This section set out to explore the interviewees' opinions on:

i) A career as an FET teacher

ii) The career stage they are at

iii) The challenges/concerns at this stage of their career.

4.4.4.1 A career as an FET teacher

In response to the question 'How would you describe a career as an FET teacher?' it emerged that those working in the Basic Education service (Levels 1 – 4) did not equate working in this area as a career. One described it as '*precarious'*, 'a *nightmare'* and only feasible '*if you can survive on part-time work*' [Helena]. Another shared that '*unless you can depend on it to pay your rent, or your bills, or your mortgage, it's not a job, it's not a career, it's nothing. It's only a bloody pastime*' [Rose] because *'the term after Easter this year is only four weeks long. . .so there's a certain percentage of tutors that won't* [have] *work after the 13th of April. How do you make a career out of that? You can't'* [Rose]. Another described her experience as feeling '*I'm kind of self-employed now, that's the way I see it, you know, I don't see myself as part of staff team*' [Claire]. However, those with administrative roles were more confident in their career choice: 'The career. . . I tell you it's so fulfilling' [Mary Jo] and 'I have reached an age now where I'm very content here in the centre . . .

that's where I'm staying. I told them. In a general announcement, last week - I'm going nowhere' [Mary Jo].

At the higher levels (Levels 5 & 6) the programmes run on an academic year (end of August to May) and, as such, the opportunities for stability are greater in terms of the length of the year and available hours, depending on the demand for the subjects. However, for those who work in this area there was a perception that further opportunities had changed and become scarce and, consequently, the role less attractive. Two spoke of promotions/positions (A posts) that had been available in the past but '*they kind of come and go with different movements and numbers . . . So whether they come back in, or that opportunity for the teachers [will be there] to apply for them, I'm not sure.' [Jacinda]* Another interviewee stated that there were 'rungs' available but that, based on experience, these positions would be open or available to them. These progression opportunities, or 'posts of responsibility', were seen as organisational, administrative or managerial, rather than teaching duties e.g. programme co-ordination and development or industry liaison that gave them 'hours off their timetable'. Thus for some these posts were seen as taking away from the valued, teaching element of the work.

By having an administrative role there seemed to be a different perspective of possible opportunities. Of the six participants who held these 'additional' duties (in either L1-4 or L5&6) four claimed they had no interest in 'going up the ladder'. Three of these were within five years of retirement. Another resented the managerial aspect of the role: '*I'm not anybody's boss . . . nor do I want to be'* [Rose]. In contrast one interviewee indicated a future intention to aspire to the position of principal/centre director while another said no, but with the caveat that it was not ruled out as a future possibility. For those that want to 'remain' in the classroom (and not take on administrative or co-ordination roles) there is no organisational structure (by remuneration or title) that acknowledges or rewards this commitment. Neither is there an organisational value placed on improvements in teaching and learning. The traditional 'permanent and pensionable' contracts, which included long service increments and qualification allowances, were considered relics of the past.

In this research purposive sampling was used to achieve a spread of years' experience and age (Figure 26).

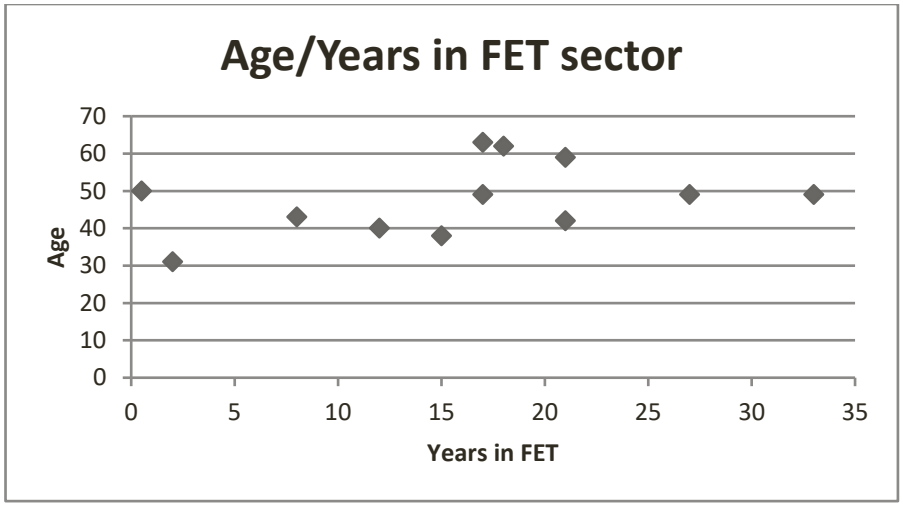


Figure 26 Teacher Age/Years in FET sector

4.4.4.2 Career stages

Fessler & Christensen's Teacher Career Cycle involved eight stages that described the following phases: preservice, induction, competency building, enthusiastic and growing, career frustration, career stability, career wind-down and career exit.

Unlike Fessler & Christensen's findings the interviewees indicated that they were at more than one phase simultaneously. These reported phases are summarised in Table 20 Career Stages of Participants.

Table 20 Career Stages of Participants

Years in FET	*Pre-Service*	*Induction*	*Competency Building*	*Enthusiastic & Growing*	*Career Frustration*	*Career Stability*	*Career Wind-down*	*Career Exit*
½		✓	✓	✓				
2		✓			✓			
8				✓	✓			
12						✓		
15		✓	✓	✓				
17		✓		✓	✓			
17			✓			✓	✓	
18				✓			✓	
21				✓			✓	
21				✓	✓			
27				✓				
33				✓	✓			

The majority indicated that they were enthusiastic and growing and even would take on '*whatever training I need to keep me on top of what I'm doing here'* [Mary Jo]. Another said: *oh I'm not winding down. I'm not going ah – I've only six more years to go . . . Absolutely not. I'm the opposite'* [Imara].

New phases, subject areas or other contextual changes induced feelings of being 'new'. One with fifteen years' experience said:

> *'I don't see me at the end or the middle . . . I do kind of see myself still at the start. Because every year, it's a new year, and you can take every year as kind of another setoff eyes, you bring the experiences of all the other years, but . . . I kind of always feel as if I'm a newbie' [Bonnie].*

Fessler & Christensen highlighted the influences of the environmental conditions of the home environment and the organisational environment. The influence of the organisation was highlighted in phase shifts:

> *So you feel like you are just on top of it and they throw some other spanner in the works and you go backwards again. And I think that for* [all] *the tutors it's the same. They just get the handle on what they're doing and then some new piece of paperwork comes their way, some new procedure comes their way, some new bit of training comes their way, and then they're*

back a step again [Rose].

Along with high levels of reports of the 'enthusiastic and growing' stages there were high levels of frustration reported. However, these frustrations were more focused on the organisational influences:

> *I suppose in some ways, wanting to stay* [in the ETB]*, but having no reason to. Like, like what I'm delivering in the ETB, I could be out doing privately . . . I've begun to, and I see the difference and I feel often a bit like an eejit to be still there because it's not paying me and I think that's wrong.* [Claire]

> *Uncertainty would be one big word that would come about here like, so uncertain, unsure. I also, within my organisation, I actually sometimes doubt my - doubt would be a big word – meaning the doubt would come from - Did I make a mistake, not getting into further education, but did I make a mistake working for ETB?* [Elaine]

These findings indicate that career progression is more complex and dynamic than the model describes it.

4.4.4.3 Challenges/Concerns

Fessler & Christensen identified support systems for each career stage that would meet the challenges and concerns of that stage. In this research challenges and concerns did not relate to the stages per se but three recurring themes emerged:

Health and fitness

For those who were involved in physical activities (outdoor education), had previous health issues or who were getting older there was an emphasis on ensuring that their health and general fitness would be maintained so that they could continue to do their job.

'*Nowadays, because it takes long, it takes me longer to recover from injury nowadays than it did when I came here as a 20 year old or as 16 year old. I don't get injured too often, luckily enough, because we are - we do look after ourselves and we do try. [Gerard]*

'I would hope is that I just keep my health and I don't become ill and unable to do my job'. [Imara]

But it wasn't all physical: one interviewee realised '*if I think long term about being in an organisation for the next 30 years, like, that would not be good for my head*' [Elaine].

Dealing with change and insecurity

For those who are on short term contracts there is a level of insecurity that has to be dealt with almost constantly: '*you're not in a permanent job as such - it's contracting. You're on for three or four months of the time,* [Lillie] ' . . . *it's like will I or won't I have hours and it's kind of begging a bit'* [Helena].

There was also an element that included having the stamina to cope with and '*trying to manage the long term prospect of things being the same as they are now . . . with this job, it constantly changes. Everything. The goal posts, the rule books, everything changes.* [Rose]. Another interviewee indicated that there were upcoming redeployments looming in the centre and that there was a great deal of uncertainty among the staff and that this was having a negative effect on the whole atmosphere.

Values

There was a widespread discomfort with the perceived changing values of the organisation. This was seen to be prioritising numbers, accountability and accreditation at the expense of the learner. This was expressed in terms of assessment: '*It's going to be a fair assessment guys as long as they're all academic. . . . And I, I struggle with that'* [Paco] or the pressure to have '*bums on seats*' [Mary Jo]. One expressed frustration with the organisational maintenance of the status quo: '*I heard somebody in there one day saying you know, this is great - somebody who was hired and like, she doesn't want to change the world*' [Claire].

4.4.5 Summary

The careers of FET teachers are individualised. They do not have a linear career trajectory, or a series of progressive states that can be externally recognised. There are limited organisational opportunities for those working at Levels 5 & 6. There have been, and may be offered in the future, posts that include added

responsibilities, and rewards (financial and in status). The organisation of the basic levels is not structured in this way. The only opportunities for organisational advancement are into administration/management.

The career phases experienced by the interviewees align with the dynamic flow through Fessler & Christensen's model. However interviewees indicated that they are at several phases simultaneously.

In the same way that there are multiple phases being experienced simultaneously the challenges and concerns are not confined to particular phases or stages but are experienced across the career cycle but associated with the individual's personal context and the organisational environment.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the three data collection stages. At each of these stages (the pilot, the focus groups and the interviews) the findings were presented in terms of the three conceptual frameworks: personal engagement, CPD and career progression and are summarised below:

Engagement

FET Teaching, at all levels, is an occupation that all participants agree demands physical, emotional and cognitive investment from the teacher. This investment is central to the concept of engagement. All interviewees spoke of being engaged in their work as a teacher within the classroom. This engagement was based on the meaningfulness they derived from their work. They invested of themselves and in doing so felt valued and valuable, and often despite a lack of psychological safety within the organisation. The perception of psychological safety was found here to be more dependent on the management style and processes and interpersonal relations than the other influences of group and intergroup dynamics and organisational norms. Psychological safety influenced psychological availability. While all participants spoke of being present and giving one hundred percent while some highlighted the need for personal boundaries as a means of self-care. The

relationship with the direct line manager and their management style was found to have more impact than wider organisational policies and procedures.

This study also found the inclusion of administrative or managerial duties increased organisational commitment.

CPD

All participants indicated that the development of their practice is ongoing. This development spanned the formal, non-formal, informal and incidental spectrum. It was also found that much of the authentic learning and development was evaluated individually. It was not generally associated with organisational provision but was prompted by problems and self-directed goals.

The experience of CPD requirements by the organisation or professional bodies became an administrative chore that was often chosen not for its learning and development potential but as a means of 'ticking the box'.

The strongest factors that supported CPD were the personal characteristics of the individuals and their personal considerations and commitments in terms of time, funds and personal availability. The factors that impeded development included a lack of support systems at work including the provision of necessary resources. The majority of those who indicated sufficient organisational resources existed were those with additional responsibilities/administrative duties.

Career Progression

The concept of career progression within the organisations of the FET sector is one that is perceived as being non-existent or limited and opportunities rare. Progression is focused on an administrative model. There is no recognition of development or expertise within teaching and learning roles.

In the perception of the participants their careers and career progression are not linear. Instead, the perception is that the cycle is dynamic and an individual can occupy several 'phases' (of induction, competency building, enthusiastic and

growing, career frustration, career stability, career wind-down and career exit) simultaneously.

In the next chapter these findings will be analysed in comparison to the literature on engagement, CPD and career progression.

Chapter 5 Discussion of key findings in relation to the literature

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the data collected and the interpretation of the data (the findings) in terms of the three conceptual areas: engagement, CPD and career progression, how these are conceived in the literature and how they influence and are influenced by each other (fig 1). This chapter adopts a strong theory to practice approach which is helpful in identifying coherent links/connections between the findings and the literature. However, the researcher's own interpretation limits this discussion to some extent, given the qualitative design and small scale of the study. Connections related to theory practice approach best efforts have been made to identify coherent connections between the findings and the qualitative nature and small scale of the study combined with the researcher's own interpretation limits this discussion to some extent.

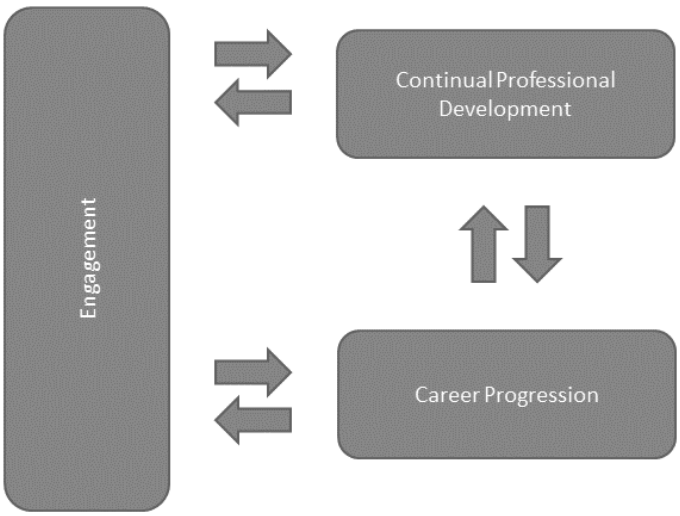


Figure 27 Conceptual Framework

5.2 Engagement

5.2.1 Introduction

The interest in engagement is evident across both academic and practitioner literature including psychology, management and human resource management and development. Multi-faceted perspectives have produced definitions of

engagement that vary across authors and disciplines and emphasise different conceptions, purposes, and outcomes. These include improving organisational outcomes, employee effort and performance that is linked to individual wellbeing, fulfilment, and personal investment.

Personal engagement is described by Kahn as how people employ varying degrees of themselves, physically, emotionally and cognitively at work (Kahn, 1990, p. 692), depending on their perceptions of 'meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability'. He posited that each of these conditions was, in turn, influenced by contributing factors (Kahn, 1990). Kahn held that these three elements were necessary conditions for personal engagement, but he did not prioritise these aspects or how they might influence each other or elements of the work. The intention of this research study was to explore how engagement and the related aspects of meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological ability for FET teachers impacted and/or influenced CPD and career progression.

From the responses to questions about their work it was clear from both the focus groups and the interviews that all participants were engaged in their work in terms of being cognitively, emotionally and physically invested in their work. This reflects the definition of Kahn (1990) and Schaufeli et al (2002, p74) of personal engagement. They spoke of feeling useful and valuable and to be willing and able to give of themselves, their time, and their abilities to others. This contribution was identified both on an individual basis (helping some learners to access their entitlements or achieve their potential) and as a community investment (facilitating social and peer support networks, as well as maintaining professional standards). These findings align with Shuck's description of an approach to engagement as a needs-satisfying one (Shuck, 2011). Teaching within the FET sector meets their practical needs (wages, pay bills) and is a means to do 'other things' (economic), as well as meeting personal needs (human connection and identity). But this work does more: it also allows them 'to feel important and special' (Kahn, 1990, p706).

5.2.2 Meaningfulness

Kahn identified meaningfulness as the individual's perceived return on an investment of self into the work role. This was, according to Kahn, derived from i) task, ii) role, and iii) work interactions.

5.2.2.1 Task

A meaningful task was identified as one which is 'challenging, clearly delineated, varied, creative, and somewhat autonomous' (Kahn, 1990, p. 704) and is repeatedly found in the literature (Farkas, Johnson and Foleno, 2000, p. 14; Connolly, 2008, p. 13). This description correlates with the description of FET teaching by participants as a challenging, responsible role that offers rewarding work. The challenge, the sense of meaning or purpose that they derive from their work – whether this involves helping learners with forms/paperwork, discovering the learners' abilities and building confidence or challenging their ways of thinking – is a personal reward and correlates with the definition of calling. This is bounded with an individual's perception of their purpose in life (Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997; Hall and Chandler, 2005, p. 160). It is not necessarily associated with traditional religious beliefs and service (Hall and Chandler, 2005, p. 161), but is integral to the individual's 'values' or 'priorities' (Bellah *et al.*, 1996, p. 6) and involves having a positive impact on society (Dirkx and Smith, 2005). This level of optimism is usually associated with pre-service and early career teachers in mainstream education (Huberman, 1993b; Farkas, Johnson and Foleno, 2000). In this study, optimism extended across all the participants and is closer to that described by Hansen, as 'a form of public service that yields enduring personal fulfilment to those who provide it' (1995, p. xiii).

Participants indicated when their role was not particularly clearly defined indicated that there were two effects: it either allowed the individual to 'craft' their own version of their job (Wrzesniewski et al, 2013) or it induced raised levels of anxiousness or anxiety (Kahn, 1990). This 'freedom' also relates to autonomy, which Kahn identified as an aspect of a meaningful task. Most participants enjoyed the autonomy that is associated with their roles but that the enjoyment of this autonomy also emerged as having negative elements, including isolation, a

duplication of work and a lack of standardised assessment. The reference to duplication was in relation to the creation of materials and assessments. Because of a lack of a 'book', combined with a culture of working as an individual rather than as a team, and ongoing changes to the module and assessments there was a perception of needless repetition. This is exacerbated for those working in basic education in part-time centres who often do not know or meet each other. The sense of isolation reduces the sense of belonging to an organisation and precludes peer support as well as professional and social capital.

5.2.2.2 Role

Kahn's description of the work role as an influence on meaningfulness had two aspects: i) an identity (with formal positions or titles) that fits the individual's preferred self-image, and ii) a perceived status and influence. The development of the FET sector has resulted in a range of positions, identities, roles, and job descriptions that do not reflect the duties and responsibilities in the sector. This diversity serves to create divisions based on level, subject, or qualifications. Some individuals want the 'status' of being a teacher because this has a solid identity. However, the converse is equally true: some shy from being 'a teacher' and see their role as being significantly different from the traditional mainstream teacher. Some look down on others as unqualified or 'not real teachers' and yet others emphatically insist they are not 'teachers' and dismiss post-primary teacher training as irrelevant. This clash of identity – some having to work to become recognised as a teacher (through the Teaching Council Registration and achieving a TEQ) and some who seem exempt by virtue of not teaching QQI modules - creates an external 'them and us' and an internal personal conflict that is, for some, destabilising. Participants were unified only in their overwhelming view that they had no status or influence outside their specific sphere of their classroom or centre.

It also emerged that there was a perception of a certain 'waste' of abilities and/or resources: relevant skills and abilities were not perceived to be valued, not used, or not appreciated, within the organisation. This perception of not being valued by the organisation separates the individual's perception of being valued and of value in the classroom from their value in the organisation, thereby reducing

their interest and personal investment in the organisation. This has implications for the individual's allocation of their personal effort and resources to where they will be perceived to have most impact and echoes Castells' view (quoted in Bellah, 2007) that "when people find themselves unable to control the world, they simply shrink the world to the size of their community". While this may, at least in the short term, positively influence teaching and learning because of undivided attention, it is at a cost. The lack of peer or co-worker relationships, individual interactions and task-related support that make up social resources (Lee, Rocco and Shuck, 2020) contributes to feelings of being invisible and unimportant, and, as described by one interviewee, 'disposable'.

5.2.2.3 Work interactions

Positive work interactions promote feelings that contribute to the individual's dignity, worthwhileness, and respect. These positive feelings develop from appreciation, positive feedback, and reciprocity. Findings from this research indicate that the work interactions took different forms. There were the interactions with the learners, interactions with colleagues and interactions with management.

The research found that overall the interactions with learners were very positive. These interpersonal relationships are described as rewarding and give a strong sense of meaningfulness. The only reported exceptions to this was for those who did not feel psychologically safe. For these participants, the effort was exhausting, and they came to a point in the year where they felt unable to give.

The second form of work interaction was with colleagues. These were also varied but less influential, depending on how well they knew or interacted with colleagues. In full time centres typically there was a greater level of interaction. In contrast, in part-time centres the teachers did not know one another or had little or no interaction with each other.

The third type of interaction was with management. The focus groups demonstrated the extreme ends of a spectrum in terms of management styles, interactions and relationships and the resulting perceptions of respect,

appreciation, and care. The interviewees were more varied and balanced across that spectrum of positive and negative relationships. Only those with administrative roles indicated any relationships with the wider organisational management staff. These experiences were typically neutral or negative and tied to the type and amount of support received and of the demands made. In general organisational demands were associated with frustration. There was a widespread belief in the existence of an unrealistic and increasingly academic requirement for assessments, even for practical subjects. This was combined with a focus on 'bums on seats' [Mary Jo] and progression. These organisational values did not fit with the participants' personal and professional values. The result was that participants reflected one of Kahn's participant's quotes: 'you put the energy where it will be appreciated' (Kahn, 1990, p 708). The teachers focused their engagement in the classroom.

In summary, the participants indicated that their perception of meaningfulness was derived from espousing and living their values and their personal preferred self-image: they expressed a desire to care for, facilitate growth in, or empower others. However, the perceived misalignment of teacher and organisational values was identified as a disconnection from the organisation as a system and as a barrier to what they identified as their real work.

5.2.3 Psychological safety

Psychological safety is fundamental to engagement. Kahn described it as 'feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career' (Kahn, 1990, p 708). It is comprised of four categories: i) interpersonal relationships, ii) group and inter-group dynamics, iii) management style and processes and iv) organisational norms. These are closely related to the work interactions in the previous section. In this study it was found that psychological safety was experienced differently within different contexts: the classroom, the centre, and the organisation.

5.2.3.1 Interpersonal relationships

Psychological safety is a significant influence on the investment of the self and is based on relationships as well as the perception of acceptance, influence, and

impact. The classroom environment can be a context where intense relationships are built, through time, presence, and connection, resulting in trust. Teaching is an occupation that Brookfield describes as 'frequently a gloriously messy pursuit in which shock, contradiction and risk are endemic' (Brookfield, 2006, p 1) and therefore requires a level of comfort with vulnerability. Palmer describes teaching as 'always done at the dangerous intersection of personal and public life' (Palmer, 2007, p. 18), a 'daily exercise in vulnerability' (Palmer, 2007, p. 17). Within the classroom participants indicated that they generally felt not only able to show and express themselves but that there was almost a self-imposed expectation that they are 'there' 100%. This is what is described as 'presence', of 'bringing one's whole self to full attention' (Rogers and Raider-Roth, 2006, p 267). This presence has been identified as essential to successful teaching and learning (Day, 2012, p 18). But teachers are not invulnerable and there were conditions reported that threaten this presence: feeling a low level of safety in terms of working with learners with challenging behaviour, or challenges in relationship building. But these are the daily challenges of teaching and are part of navigating the balance of personal and public, connection and protection or, as Brookfield puts it, 'muddling through' (2006, p 1).

The collegial relationships, as discussed in the section on meaningfulness, were dependent on whether there was interaction between FET teachers and was typically only an issue when it was part of the overall environment and the management style and processes.

5.2.3.2 Group and Intergroup Dynamics

The dynamics of the group and the participants' perception of these dynamics depended on the context that they worked in. For those working hours in smaller part-time centres there were no group dynamics: typically, they felt isolated, even if they knew of the existence of others there were no relationships. Group and intergroup dynamics were only an issue that arose in the focus group where the management style was perceived as a cause of division within the staff. The group dynamics observed in the other focus group were positive, healthy and empowering. The most apparent explanation was the difference in the local management styles.

5.2.3.3 Management styles and processes

In contrast the experience of management styles and processes at each centre/college varied widely. Psychological safety in this context was dependent on relationships with management and job security. Those holding long-term positions and contracts (the permanent and pensionable type) were more likely to have developed a good working relationship over a long time (more than ten years) with their local/direct manager. In these cases, a positive perception of psychological safety led to a more proactive, and creative work involvement. It resulted in increased discretionary effort as well as agency, and voice. These behaviours have been linked in the literature with increased organisational performance, increased creativity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and organisational learning (Edmondson et al 2014, p26) and was reflected in the descriptions of the participants both positively and negatively.

Management styles and processes were also found to be experienced differently by those with permanent contracts and for those with teaching-only responsibilities and on 'hours' (contracts that are based on a certain number of hours, for example for a particular class or subject). For these short-term or casual contracts, across all levels, there was little or no perception of security, either in terms of their job security or in terms of expressing opinions or themselves. These variations were influenced by the confidence and resilience of the individual, their comfort with non-conformity and uncertainty, and their perceived support of peers and management.

In centres where there were there had been a history of ongoing changes in management, or where there was a climate or culture of insecurity and mistrust, a lack of psychological safety took its toll. Because teaching is one of the 'caring' professions, experiences can be intense and emotional and, without care, can be physically, cognitively, and emotionally draining. These effects were particularly evident in one setting although were also present, to a lesser extent, in others. They manifested as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and compassion fatigue or burnout (Kahn 2019, Maslach 2003). Kahn identified the responsibility for mediating the effects as an 'individual dilemma' (Kahn, 2019). However, Maslach and Leiter

identified the role of the organisation in burnout and in particular in 'the mismatch between the nature of the job and the nature of the person who does the job' (1997, p9). This mismatch emerges from perceptions of workload and overload, control, reward, community, fairness and values. It results in exhaustion, cynicism and inefficiency: consequences that negatively impact employee health, absenteeism, and quality of work, among others. The organisation has, as one participant put it, 'a damn duty of care'.

5.2.3.4 Organisational norms

The individual's relationship towards the wider organisational context was notable in its absence. There was no real attachment or sense of belonging, safety or trust in the organisation. References to frustration and resentment stemmed from increasing demands without i) remuneration, ii) training or iii) consultation. This reflected the lack of voice and agency and their perception of being valued and of value within the organisation. However, most of these criticisms were aimed at line management, rather than at the organisation as a whole. There was only one single mention of the wider organisation in a positive light: this was in the context of setting and maintaining of contract terms and conditions. This was by the participant that had a 'career plan' to progress to centre principal. This participant showed passion for the vocational area, described an open and collaborative relationship with line management and gave evidence of 'voice' and efficacy. This was not typical of the participants.

Not feeling 'safe' at organisational level can drive the individual teacher's focus into the classroom: here they have relationships, that, although dynamic, allow 'voice and choice' and the expression of self. This may be good for the learners, and themselves as teachers as their engagement is rewarded. But it is not necessarily what is best for the organisation. Working in silos, in isolation, is rarely sustainable. Although teachers typically work in insolation in the classroom, there are those who do not have the collegial contact with peers in a staff room or where they are the only member of staff in a particular discipline this isolation is magnified. Although in some cases, a withdrawal or disengagement may be a method of self-protection (conscious or unconscious) it is not best practice for the individual, the educational

context, or the profession. Given the ongoing changes at system and organisation level there was a contagious current of insecurity. There was also perception that the organisation is a place where conformity is valued. This was identified as fundamentally limiting in its attitude towards personal risk, growth and development as well as organisational growth and development towards the stated aim of creating a world class sector.

5.2.4 Psychological availability

Psychological availability, as described by Kahn, has four facets: i) physical energies, ii) emotional energies, iii) insecurity and iv) outside life. These are seen by Kahn as limited resources that are perceived to be possessed by the individual. The limited nature of these resources is influenced by social systems that create cultures that vary in their levels of threat, predictability, and consistency. Psychological ability was also associated with 'individual distractions' that preoccupy and deplete the resources which are then not available for work (Kahn 1990, p703). Kahn's model of engagement also argued that psychological availability was as significant a factor as meaningfulness or psychological safety. The findings of this study did not reflect Kahn's conception.

5.2.4.1 Physical and Emotional Energies

Kahn defined availability as 'possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary' and to be able and capable of investing these resources into the work. Availability is influenced by what are described as 'distractions' that preoccupy and reduce the individual's ability to perform their role (Kahn 1990). The FET teacher, like others, has a 'choice' in terms of how much of themselves to invest at work. Teaching is a demanding occupation, physically, cognitively, and emotionally. As a role it demands 'performance' and while there is a move away from perception of the teacher as the 'sage on the stage' there is nonetheless still a significant element of performing. There is also a need to be responsive to the needs of others, to read the room and respond accordingly. This requires confidence in one's abilities and skills and constantly demands a choice to make that investment and to be available. Without this confidence there is a reduced psychological availability.

In this study, all participants described their work as demanding and their personal investment 'as giving their all' to their work. However, their perception of the influences on their role were quite different and correlated with the findings of May et al (2004). They too found that personal resources (cognitive, emotional, and physical) were strong influences on their availability but that each of these personal resources, although variable between individuals, are limited and need to be maintained. The degree to which participants succeeded in this varied. Those who were working in the sector for longer had, consciously or unconsciously, developed strategies. These included deliberate practices to promote their physical health and fitness, as well as their emotional well-being. These strategies include setting boundaries on work and personal life. These boundaries were generally described in terms of time ("I don't think about work when I'm not here") that compartmentalised work and personal lives. They deliberately chose to manage the investment of their limited resources of time and energy to ensure sustainability.

Despite this, all the participants spoke of teaching at 100%. For individuals it was difficult to find the time for recovery, rejuvenation, and renewal especially within the ETBs where participants felt that there were constantly demands for more with an increasing focus on accreditation and bureaucracy. In the face of these demands it is easy to become overwhelmed and struggle, feeling unsupported. Of course, this is not unique to the FET sector. It is a feature of work in a VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity) (Bennett and Lemoine, 2014) environment that features ongoing change and increasingly precarious employment.

5.2.4.2 Insecurity

Insecurity spanned a wide spectrum for the participants. Kahn described insecurity as being influenced by individual levels of confidence relating to the individual's abilities and status. The data in this study indicated that participants were generally secure in their ability to teach. Insecurity did emerge as an issue around QQI modules, especially for newer teachers or those who were teaching new modules. The learning outcomes and module descriptors are open to interpretation and thus teachers worried about maintaining standards, especially

given the increasing pressure to produce results (individual grades), certification, and evidence of progression. Thus, the insecurity is less about the self-consciousness described by Kahn and more about the quality of the learning process, the maintenance of professional standards and a concern that the aims of the organisations have changed and no longer enact either the organisations' own espoused views or those of those working in it. Another source of insecurity was in relation to contracts. Those beginning their career or working at the levels 1-4 felt especially vulnerable and disposable. Despite this each participant focused their investment on their own classroom practices rather than as an organisational member.

5.2.4.3 Outside life

Participation in activities outside of work were also identified as a resource in terms of rewards, and a release, a way to 'feed the soul'. This resonates with Sonnentag's (2003) research on the influence of recovery on work related outcomes: sufficient recovery during 'leisure time' has positive effects on work engagement. It also positively influences proactive behaviour and the pursuit of learning goals. In this research these outside activities involved recreation, in one case it was a case of working for other organisations. Sonnentag's research also indicated that high levels of situational constraints impeded recovery. This is critical. Teachers need to be able to sustain their engagement in the longer term. May et al (2004) found that if these resources are not attended to and maintained, and are instead ignored, the consequence is depletion (Bloom & Farragher, 2013). This depletion of personal resources affects availability, and leads to exhaustion, burnout, and disengagement. This was evidenced in the case of the focus group where the perception was that the culture was unsupportive. The culture itself was a drain on resources which had a direct effect on the participants health and well-being and reduced their psychological availability, both within their work context and their outside life. In this case managerial practices led to expressions of frustration, anger, and resentment because 'they have a damn duty of care' [FG participant], but also to evidence of exhaustion, burnout, and disengagement.

In summary, Kahn viewed the elements of psychological availability as elements that proved a distraction from the work. The participants in this research viewed it quite differently. They prioritised and managed their physical and emotional energies to ensure their ability to work. They put up with the insecurities of the work. They valued the richness that their activities and opportunities outside of work contributed to their practice. The exception to this was in the focus group where the participants were under duress. They knew that the management style was affecting their ability to cope, and that this was negatively affecting their whole lives. Their energies were depleted and approaching disengagement and/or burnout and so affected their ability to be psychologically available to their learners. This was, to them, personally and professional devastating.

5.2.5 Conclusion

This section draws together the key themes and findings from the section on engagement:

Engagement is an individual's choice to personally invest themselves. For all the participants there was a conscious and deliberate choice to invest themselves where they felt they were of value and valued: the classroom. Engagement is influenced by the individual's values. The participants had a strong sense of their values and how these were increasingly not aligned with those of the organisation. This again focused the investment of each individual. Engagement is also heavily influenced by relationships with line management and their styles and processes, negatively or positively.

Psychological Safety is contextual and layered, consisting of classroom, centre and organisation. A lack of Psychological safety has effects on the individual's ability to engage but also can affect their health and personal lives. However, some deficiencies in psychological safety can be mitigated by meaningfulness.

Psychological Availability is determined by the individual's personal capacities. The decision to make one's self available can be proactive or reactive. Proactive decisions include those made to ensure a personal ability and capacity to engage, in terms of health or lifestyle choices. Reactive decisions are typically influenced by

demands and working conditions where the individual focuses on their work rather than contributing to the organisation.

5.3 Continuous Professional Development

This section will discuss the findings of this research study compared to the literature. It will discuss what CPD is for the FET sector, the purposes and drivers of CPD and the supports and barriers experienced by those working in the sector.

5.3.1 What is CPD?

The recent professionalisation of teaching in the FET sector has brought an expectation of ongoing learning and development that has been associated with being a professional, similar to the disciplines of law, medicine, and management. Attempts to reform the sector through professional development have been influenced by wider political agendas. The Bruges Communique (2010) identifies this professional development as conceived as a right, an obligation and a feature of school development and as part of the quality assurance process by different European states (CEDEFOP, 2016, p 3). In Ireland it is now obligatory through the implementation of the FET Professional Development Strategy. However, a 'lot of good things are done in the name of professional development. But so are a lot of rotten things" (Guskey, 2002).

For this research CPD includes 'all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom' (Day, 1999). This, therefore, includes terms and conceptions such as initial job training, ongoing training and development, professional learning and development, continuous professional education and job embedded learning. The participants in this research were clear that for them there two aspects to their definition of CPD: i) what is provided by the organisation, and ii) authentic professional learning and development.

Table 21 Examples of CPD activities

Type	Formal (Academic)	Non-Formal (Vocational/ Professional)	Informal (structured)	Informal (collaborative)	Informal (Individual)
	Incidental				
	Accredited		Non-Accredited		
Examples	Accredited QQI/ HE programmes of study: Higher Cert, BA, MA, PhD	National Governing Bodies/ Professional Qualifications	Organised activities (by organisation, network or professional body). Workplace training, workshops, seminars, short courses, voluntary training	Learning through peer collaboration/ unofficial mentoring/ communities of practice e.g. Conversations with colleagues, team teaching, peer collaboration (programme development)	Self-directed activities. Driven and sourced by the needs/interests of the individual. Readings, social media
	Structured			Collaborative	Unstructured

5.3.1.1 CPD in FET

The participants identified examples of the activities that they undertook as part of their CPD. These spanned the following formats:

- formal, academically accredited qualifications,
- professionally accredited qualifications,
- activities organised by their employer or other organisation which were typically not accredited or assessed
- group learning: peer collaboration, mentoring, communities of practice
- Self-directed learning activities, and
- Incidental learning. This was unplanned learning that could occur as part of any or all of the above.

Thus, the organisational provision was only a small part of their professional learning, if at all. Training on organisational or administrative systems was understood as part of employee training, as opposed to part of their professional development. It treats teachers as passive recipients of information in an 'empty

exercise in compliance' (Calvert, 2016, p2), that does not treat them with respect for their knowledge or expertise (Schwartz, 2019). Inevitably the mandatory nature makes CPD subject to being 'worked' i.e. do the minimum possible in terms of time, effort and financial outlay. This may be evidence of problem-solving capabilities but in fact is detrimental to the orientation towards learning. It erodes intrinsic motivation and enjoyment replacing it with the drudgery of a chore, something that is unpleasant but essential and must be 'got through'. This resistance is inevitable when poor quality, mandatory, unsuitable or irrelevant PD is enforced. This is not just a single episode of waste – it is a justification for an attitude of 'why bother?'.

Far more emphasis was put on what they, as professionals, understood as their development and how this was achieved. This reflects the findings of Andersson & Köpsén (2015) Broad, (2016); Hoekstra, Brekelmans, Beijaard, & Korthagen, (2009) who found that vocational teachers were self-directed and found informal and innovative ways of maintaining and refreshing the skills, as well as more commonly used activites (reading, access to online materials and work in their vocational field). Their participation in non-formal and informal learning opportunities and their acknowledgement of incidental learning indicate their commitment towards learning and their professionalism. This is how they address challenges in a timely way. However, none of these would have been accepted as professional development hours to meet organisational demands for documented hours. The conversations in the hallway, the inspired moments and the gradual changes of priorities spoke of real and authentic personal and professional growth. These learning 'events' are almost covert, widening the division between the 'real' and the organisational or professional requirements.

It was notable too that it was not the activity itself that made the event valuable. The same learning events, typically those events organised by the organisation, professional body or special interest organisation, could be relevant or not. This largely depended on the needs of the individual and how the event is relevant to their context, orientation and attitude at the time. This reaffirms the importance of individualised professional development. The more recent move in wider education circles of Job-Embedded Learning (Zepeda, 2019) is a shift in focus

away from that individual relevance towards meeting organisational and systemic needs. This is evident in the prioritisation by individuals of meeting the needs of mandatory organisational and professional body regulations and in so doing, choosing to do the minimum activities that will satisfy those needs, at the expense of what might be relevant or appropriate for them.

5.3.2 Purposes and drivers of CPD

The purposes and drivers of CPD can be at an individual, a professional, an organisational, or a wider systemic level. This would imply different ideologies, purposes and goals. However, because the unit of analysis in this research was the individual the focus here is on the participants' purposes and goals.

In its essence CPD is a form of adult learning (Knowles, Holton III and Swanson, 2005, p. 40), therefore it is important to consider what is known about adult learners:

- Adults are motivated to learn based on their experiences, needs and interests
- The orientation of adults towards learning is life-centred
- Experience is a rich source and resource for adult learning
- Adults need to be self-directed
- Individual differences increase across the lifespan.

These reflect the participants' orientation towards their own learning, but this does not always align with the drivers for professional development. Friedman & Philips' (2004) identified six drivers of CPD:

- Professional lifelong learning
- Desire to improve self (personal development)
- A means of ensuring job security/control
- A way of proving being up-to-date
- A means of maintaining the standards of professional bodies/associations
- A way of verifying that professional standards are upheld
- A means of ensuring a 'competent, adaptable workforce' for employers.

These six drivers of CPD were important for the interviewees in this research with upskilling, improving practice and remaining current being the most important three. It was notable that the participants added another reason: to increase their enthusiasm or provide a 'motivating spark' or to avoid 'stagnation'.

The organisational view of CPD may begin with good intentions but frequently does more harm than good. The descriptions of irrelevant, useless, and often badly designed training have less to do with strategic planning than 'tick-box' exercises to satisfy a set of 'Quality Assurance' criteria. Descriptions of mandatory drumming workshops and jive classes taking place during and in the same building as exam sessions is seen as an example of both a lack of respect for the learners and a 'busywork' mentality that infantilises teachers and removes their agency (Goller et al, 2017). These mandatory CPD hours are at the discretion of, and organised, by local management.

In contrast many of the examples of 'authentic' professional development in this research emerged from informal and incidental incidents, none of which would have been accepted as professional development hours to meet organisational demands for documented hours. The incidental and accidental conversations, the moments of inspiration and the gradual changes of priorities spoke of real and authentic personal and professional growth. But these episodes are not widely spoken of, although they form the greater portion of what is learned (Eraut, 2000; Billett, 2002). In addition, there is a division between the 'real' and the organisational or professional requirements. The latter is systematic, time bound and often costly. It treats teachers as passive recipients of information in an 'empty exercise in compliance' (Calvert, 2016, p2). Inevitably the mandatory nature makes CPD subject to being 'worked' i.e. do the minimum possible in terms of time, effort and financial layout. This may be evidence of problem-solving capabilities but in fact is detrimental to the orientation towards learning. It erodes intrinsic motivation and enjoyment replacing it with the drudgery of a chore, something that is unpleasant but essential and must be 'got through'. This resistance is inevitable when poor quality, mandatory, unsuitable or irrelevant PD is enforced. This is not just a single episode of waste – it is a justification for an attitude of 'why bother?'. If

FET teachers are not enthusiastic and committed to learning how can they model this behaviour? It is a testament to the resilience and agency of the participants in this research that they are interested in learning and improving their practice – just not in having it controlled.

5.3.3 Supports and barriers

It became apparent from the participants that the organisation and national strategies had less influence on access to learning and development opportunities than the local management and the recognition of, and level of support for, 'their work and the school culture' (Gu, 2017, p. 41).

Caffarella and Zinn's (1999) framework of barriers and supports, although focused on higher education, echoes the findings of this study. These were the same barriers and supports that are long known to have been experienced by all adult learners. The factors that enable development (relationships, institutional structures, personal considerations and commitments, as well as the individual's intellectual and personal characteristics) can also be factors that impede development. Patricia Cross (1981) described these barriers as situational barriers, institutional barriers, and dispositional barriers.

The experience of supports and barriers by the participants for learning opportunities varied considerably. Caffarella and Zinn's framework was based on faculty positions that included time allocated for professional development. This contrasts with the experience of participants in this study that were on 'hourly' contracts. Given that the participants reported high levels of engagement with their learning, it was the situational and often the institutional barriers that had the greater impact for these participants. The role of the organisation can be in terms of i) planning and providing CPD and ii) more general support (Friedman and Phillips, 2001). In this case it was found that local management within the ETBs functioned as gatekeepers in terms of knowledge about, and access to, the opportunities and as managers in their willingness to allocate resources within the constraints of the system. Despite established knowledge on the efficacy and consequences of individualised, relevant, and strategic learning for both the individual and the organisation, this appears to be ignored.

Despite this, personal beliefs and values combined with a high level of engagement in their work role drove a high level of commitment towards CPD.

5.3.4 Conclusion

FET teachers are professionals committed to keeping up to date in their field and doing the best they can for their learners. They are self-directed learners who can be deterred by the organisational barriers and indifference to their development.

The shifting nature and provision of CPD reflects political, social, and economic changes. These cannot be considered separately to the ideological and cultural forces and influences that control and shape lives (Gregson *et al.*, 2015, p. 20). For the participants in this study much of the organisational professional development failed to provide what teachers want most: respect. Those who work in the FE sector develop expertise in their craft: teaching adults. But when they move to the other side of the relationship, they are subjected to practices that fly in the face of what is best practice for adult learners.

CPD is important. FET teachers are themselves adult learners whose learning differences and needs for application, critical reflection, respect, and support need to be understood. Authentic professional learning/development is not something you can get or be given: it is something you do, continuously. It has been identified as important to the individual and their personal growth and development, providing opportunities to stay current in their professional/vocational areas, to improve pedagogical impact and to act as a source of renewal and inspiration. It is instrumental to teacher development and renewal as well as empathy with learners. Participants in this research indicated the role of CPD in anti-stagnation, as well as a cause of novelty and enthusiasm. It is also central to professional effectiveness and relevance: conditions that are important to the FET teachers are crucial to the FET sector and its ongoing ability to ensure its viability and success as a crucial part of the education landscape.

5.4 Career Progression

This section focuses on the discussion on the subject of career progression and, in particular, career progression for teachers in the FET sector. The model used for career progression throughout this research was Fessler & Christensen's Teacher Career Cycle (1992), and so this is followed by a section on the factors influencing career progression, from an individual and organisational perspective. Following this is the section on challenges and concerns arising around career progression and the stages and a concluding section.

5.4.1 Teaching as a career

Teaching, as a career, has long been considered a profession that is flat in terms of career progression (Butt *et al.*, 1992; Hargreaves, 2010; Coldwell, 2016). Although it could be seen that the activities carried out by teachers form cyclical patterns of varying levels of regularity (student intake, teaching and learning patterns, exams and course exit), there is a similar cycle that occurs within a teacher's career. Fessler & Christensen's (1992) model took this perspective. Progression through their career cycle was not hierarchical within an organisation but consisted of phases that were experienced in a non-linear fashion. This is as true of teaching in the FET sector as it is of any other sector.

5.4.1.1 FET teaching as a career

The question '**what is your understanding of career progression**?' brought a diverse set of responses about their views of career. For those whose experience was precarious there was an element of frustration and of being in survival mode. This may stem from a lack of control, a perception of a lack of opportunity or a lack of agency. This may be of a greater importance to teachers in general: Hargreaves' view of those who choose teaching as 'socially conservative entrants' may also translate into being conservative or risk adverse. These were the participants who were least invested in the organisation.

For some participants the understandings of progression was 'up a ladder' within an organisation but these also were those who indicated 'teaching is not a career for progression'. But instead that teaching was an ongoing development of skill, knowledge and extending their practice. Therefore, perceptions covered both

'vertical' (organisational) and 'sideways – not up' models. Yet within the discussion the responses also showed a more personally crafted understanding of their own career that moved through non-linear or 'protean' stages. In this understanding career progression could mean a recognition of their time, commitment, and experience (by the organisation) or a broadening of their vocational and pedagogical experience and expertise (professional and personal recognition). The former was from the basic education sector: this may be because of the more precarious nature of basic education programmes and that many of the classes would be in the evening time.

The status of teaching in the FET sector has two wider sociological influences. The gendered nature of education (Acker, 1995; Sabbe and Aelterman, 2007; Drudy, 2008) is reflected in the available numbers and gender balance within FET (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017, p. 3). This is, according to Acker, fundamental to the way the profession is viewed by society as well as by those working within it, as it is not considered to be a valued choice. This element of FET teaching being a valued choice is reflected in the entry into the sector and the role. Entry to teaching in the FET sector has traditionally comprised of a variety of paths. This has been one of its strengths. Teachers come from diverse backgrounds, through community and voluntary experience (including literacy development), art & craft backgrounds, vocational/industry experience and expertise, as well as higher education. It is also an attractive option to those with post-primary teaching qualifications. In this research only one participant had deliberately set out to work in the sector, others 'fell into it'. It may be a sector that gives a second chance, but it also seems to be one of second choice. Despite this, the participants in this research indicated, as one participant put it: *'I like my job. I wouldn't do any other job. With all my giving out about it I wouldn't do any other job'* [Rose]

Throughout the data collection methods there was a consensus that FET teaching was a complex career. The dynamic nature of the sector, the continuous shifting of external and internal demands, and the requirements of professional bodies mean that 'mastery' of the occupation within FET was not a simple stage process moving from preservice to novice and on to expertise (Day, 2004; Katz,

1972; , Burden, 1982; Steffy et al, 2000; Steffy et al, 2001; Super, 1953). Even Huberman's more complex development (Huberman, p 1993) followed a trajectory from beginning to end. The Fessler & Christensen model of the 'teacher career cycle' is described as complex process that is not one path but a series of cycles that continue throughout the individual teacher's career. Their model described the cycle as ongoing with the introduction of new roles, new 'grade' levels or a change in district (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, p 41). It also introduced a wider view of influences that included personal and environmental influences. In this research the concentration was on the career cycle, and other influences were only included if raised by the participant. It became apparent in this research that these stages were not discrete steps that were worked through in a linear fashion. The descriptions of the participants was more reminiscent of a game of snakes and ladders where gains could be made and lost almost arbitrarily, reflecting scenarios that would cause a 'fall-back' (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, p. 43). It appeared from their descriptions however that teachers occupied one stage at a time. Instead, in this research, it was common for participants to describe themselves as being in multiple stages at once. These were, for example, as a result of the challenges of new modules or the changing needs of learners.

This complex view of a career gives a level of hope for a continued satisfying career within the FET sector. It is not inevitable that the development of skills and competencies or age lead in one direction and that for all working in the sector there is an opportunity to understand the influences and even to instigate change and to create, and achieve, a personal set of criteria for success.

5.4.2 Factors influencing career progression

5.4.2.1 Organisational environment

Fessler & Christensen's Teacher Career Cycle includes the following influences: regulations, management style, public trust, societal expectations, professional organisations, and union. Their model made no reference to which influences may have a greater or lesser impact. Of these, in this research, it was the management style combined with the local interpretation of regulations that had the most impact on career progression. The effects were most obvious in the focus groups but were

reflected also throughout the interview. As Fessler & Christensen pointed out 'an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion will likely have a negative impact' (Fessler and Christensen, 1992, p. 38). The increasing bureaucracy and managerial processes are interpreted as mistrust and suspicion. This is compounded by the perceived lack of 'real' support.

The lack of organisational support was stronger in those with teaching only positions but was not exclusive to them. This is despite the strategic documents that acknowledge the dependence of the sector on the workforce (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017, p. 7). The 2020 'People Strategy' promises to 'develop and support our staff to achieve their own career ambitions and the strategic goals of the organisation' (SOLAS, 2020b, p. 8). However, the focus in the next sentence is on building the capability of those in and aspiring to leadership and management positions, not those at the front line. This document declares that there is an ambition to become an 'employer of choice' with an 'ability to attract the best people from the labour market' (SOLAS, 2020b, p. 8). This does not indicate that teacher retention is a priority. Furthermore, the strategy that aims to 'succeed at succession' focuses on the plans for and at senior management levels. If, as is stated there is a will to 'ensure that a focus on the employee experiences is at the heart of the organisation's ethos'(SOLAS, 2020b, p. 9), it seems that there is a significant gap between the experience of teachers on the ground and the strategy. There is no mention of the work that needs to be done on the organisational culture and networks that are fundamental supports to the career progression of the teachers in the FET sector.

5.4.2.2 Personal environment

In Fessler & Christensen's Teacher Career Cycle (1992) the Personal Environment is a distinct and important influence on career development. The elements identified here include life stages, family, positive critical incidents, crises, individual dispositions and avocational outlets. As seen in this research these are real and significant influences on an individual's career. Individuals reported that there were times in their lives where their personal lives have contributed both

positively and negatively on their career. Despite this, the findings indicate that, in general, there is a tendency to prioritise their work.

It is interesting that there is no direct influential link in Fessler & Christensen's model between the personal and the organisational environments. Although, it is acknowledged that the focus of their work was on the career cycle itself, the relationship between the individual and the organisation is influential in and of itself. In this research, where there were temporary distractions the support of the organisation in and through these times, significantly impacted the individual's experience of their career cycle.

5.4.3 Summary

While teaching is a 'flat' career and teaching in the FET sector does not necessarily bring about the conditions that are evident in mainstream education settings (pay scales, qualification allowances, etc.) there are some opportunities to create individual career successes within an organisational setting. The complex understanding that FET teachers have of their own career stages indicates that there are challenges and opportunities at all stages of a teaching career that do not necessarily fall into the linear categories that have emerged from skill mastery and life stage/career development theories. While some FET teachers come from an academic background the career of others is part of a series of 'mini' careers, not forty years in the same job. This has implications for personal, professional and career choices and decisions.

5.5 Conclusion

At the outset of this research, it was conceived that the three elements were separate concepts that influenced each other but could be independent of each other. This research has shown that they are more closely related.

Participants in this study were engaged in their work and chose to be. They found the role of an FET teacher to be meaningful and rewarding. Their ability to remain engaged was heavily influenced by their context and relationships with line management and the management styles and processes. The sense of reward for

their investment helped to mitigate some deficiencies but where there were significant negative pressures there were signs of burnout and/or disengagement.

The participants saw formal CPD as one aspect of their broader personal and professional development which they saw as being necessary to maintaining and growing their knowledge, skills, abilities, and enthusiasm. The non-formal, informal and incidental learning was seen to be of greater impact on their day-to-day practice. It was evident that valuable opportunities for growth and development were particular to each individual's context, their prior knowledge and skills levels and their career stage. In contrast 'enforced' or mandatory sessions were considered meaningless and affected orientations towards further learning and development. These sessions also negatively influenced their attitude towards the organisation. The growing chasm between the individual and the organisation was evidenced by a lack of belonging, a lack of knowledge of the wider organisation and the perceived lack of support and/or interest by the organisation.

In terms of career progression, the view was that traditional organisational progression opportunities were limited and often not available to those who held teaching only contracts. This had a negative impact on their aspirations. Those with some administrative or managerial duties saw some opportunities though only one or two expressed an interest in pursuing those.

Chapter 6 Conclusion and recommendations

This section will return to the original research questions and consider the findings and the implications. This will be followed by an acknowledgement of the limitations of this study and propose recommendations.

The FET landscape in Ireland is under researched and its unique challenges were described in Chapter 1. This highlighted that a sector that had emerged organically in response to local needs and demands was amalgamated under one body. This has brought about challenges. These include practical, as well as ideological and cultural, differences that affect the experience of those working in the sector. These changes have implications for an individual teacher's engagement, their CPD and their career progression. This research set out to explore FET teacher engagement, their CPD and their career progression using the following research questions:

1. What are the psychological conditions that influence personal engagement of FET teachers in their work role?
2. What is Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for FET teachers in terms of definition, purpose and participation?
3. What are FET teacher's perspectives on career progression?

These concepts were chosen because they are essential to those working in the FET sector. They are fundamental to maintaining engaged and enthusiastic teachers who are willing to grow, develop and remain current in the vocational fields/disciplines in times of change and uncertainty. And they are the key to the sectoral strategic goal of ensuring high quality teaching (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017, p. 12).

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 FET teacher engagement

FET teacher engagement in the work role was found to be high across the participants. Of the psychological conditions of engagement (Kahn, 1990) the most important for FET teachers were found to be meaningfulness and the work

interactions, especially those within the classroom. For the majority of participants, especially those in teaching only positions, their focus was on the classroom. This drove their psychological engagement with and investment in their teaching. In terms of psychological availability, the participants prioritised their work life by ensuring that they had the physical and emotional energy required.

The management style and processes were an influencing factor on psychological safety across the participants, especially at a local level. This was influenced by a perceived misalignment of values between the teacher and the organisation. However, even those who felt supported and had a positive experience of psychological safety, felt little or no connection to the wider ETB or its structures. This has implications for each organisation and for the sector as a whole. It will impede organisational commitment and the impact the development of the identity and status of the sector.

6.1.2 CPD for FET teachers

This research found that FET teachers defined their Continuous Professional Development (CPD) broadly. This echoed Day's approach that CPD consists of natural learning experiences as well as conscious and planned activities that contribute towards practice but also included incidental and unplanned learning. Included in this were formal, academic courses, non-formal (non-academic or vocational) courses or training events, informal learning and incidental learning. There was also a strong thread that professional development and personal development are linked.

The FET teachers in this research reported high levels of CPD. Their participation aligns with, and exceeds, the findings of the SOLAS & ETBI report (2017, p. 26). However, it was found that for many there was a misalignment between their authentic development and the priorities and provision of the organisation. Much of what was valued by the individuals was not acknowledged or valued by the organisation. The organisation's priorities and provision were seen as 'tick box' exercises that contributed little, and in some cases eroded the appetite for CPD. The organisation was, in many cases, a barrier or impediment either through support from management or a lack of coherent resources. The majority of those

who felt that there were sufficient supports and resources had administrative/managerial responsibilities.

The policy for the sector acknowledges that CPD has a key role in the development of the sector (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017). However, the career pathways of FET teachers are diverse, and their needs are personal.

6.1.3 Career progression for FET teachers

The findings highlighted differences between organisational progression and career progression within a classroom career. Teaching within a classroom can be considered as a 'flat' career. In contrast to the linear models Fessler & Christensen's (1992) cycle conceptualised a career as having eight phases that were moved through in a dynamic way. However, the participants indicated that they occupied multiple stages at any one time within that career. They could be in the pre-service phase in one area, enthusiastic and growing in another, and dealing with frustration, all at the same time.

6.1.4 Overall conclusion

These findings combined indicate that the FET teachers that participated were engaged in their work role. This contributed to their personal and professional development throughout their career. However, this development was perceived by the participants to be largely influenced on the support of their local management. It was found that career opportunities in the organisation were limited to the administrative/managerial positions. There was only one participant who expressed an interest in this progression. For the others it was felt that opportunities were few and not valued by those whose focus was on teaching.

6.1.5 Limitations of the Study

This was a small-scale research project limited to the South-West of Ireland. The decision on the geographical spread balanced a desire to ensure that there was a variety of employers and contexts and practical logistics. The sample of participants selected was small and predominantly from two large multi-faceted organisations. Purposive sampling was used to gain insights from a variety of participants in terms of gender, context (levels and urban/rural), age and

experience. However, the participants self-selected and it is likely that those that responded had an interest in the topic as presented.

6.2 Recommendations

This section will outline the recommendations that emerged from this research under the headings of engagement, CPD and career progression. This research indicates that the recommendations could inform Human Resources practice and policy to support FET teacher engagement. It also indicates that there are opportunities to support, value and encourage relevant and authentic professional development through individualised training needs analysis. Recommendations are also made for the implementation of a clear and accessible career structure for FET teachers to support teaching development and excellence.

6.2.1 FET teacher engagement

Participants in this study indicated a high level of role engagement as an FET teacher. This should not be taken for granted. Engagement needs to be supported by structures, by policies and by practice to maintain and improve the conditions that will attract and retain suitably qualified and professional teachers. These professional teachers are those that are enthusiastic and up to date in their area of expertise, have the welfare and development of the learners at heart and are committed to their role as dual professionals. The organisations that employ the FET teachers have a role in meeting the needs of the teachers and supporting their engagement through recognising their expertise, valuing their voice and focusing on the learning process over a focus on numbers, accreditation and progression.

6.2.2 Continuous Professional Development

CPD was acknowledged by the participants as being an integral part of being a 'professional'. It is important that the depth and breadth of authentic 'professional development' is not only recognised, but acknowledged, valued and supported and clearly understood by all involved. It is, but should be, more than a tick-box exercise. The FET sector is not mainstream education, and it has some unique challenges and strengths. Strategies involving FET teacher CPD should respect the individual needs and aspirations of the FET teachers and prioritise genuine supports and opportunities over those that are easily counted. This study recommends that

these approaches be based on adult learning principles and best practice should affirm the expertise of these dual professionals. CPD should be individually tailored, made accessible and supported through a framework that is planned and reviewed.

Support for CPD, including existing supports, needs to be made explicit, known and accessible to individuals. This is a role for management that would include support and provision from organisational, representative and professional sources. There should be support for learning communities within and across organisations that promote individual progress and a culture of growth, progression and a practice of lifelong learning that goes beyond skills and rhetoric.

6.2.3 Career Progression

Career progression as a vertical movement within an organisation is no longer the norm, or expectation. The traditional view has been replaced by boundaryless (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) and protean career models (Hall, 1996). FET has benefitted from this as evidenced by the diverse entry into and through teaching in the sector. Recent demands for academic qualifications, as part of the registration for the Teaching Council, may increase the academic status of the sector. For the best of what has developed in the FET sector to continue, a clear supported structure of development that rewards engagement, excellence, and commitment that supports and provides opportunities for the dual professional status of FET teachers is needed. The practice of having over fifty different titles (SOLAS and ETBI, 2017, p. 16) with no clear distinctions and/or pathway or motivation as a means of progression serves neither the individual nor the sector.

To get a more thorough understanding of the experiences and attitudes of FET teachers a further study of the population would be proposed, with an emphasis on those who may not be as engage, as predisposed towards Professional Learning and Development and who may have different conceptions of career progression.

6.2.4 Sectoral Recognition

FET in Ireland is emerging as a valuable part of the education system. However, it is emerging from the legacy of a fractured sector. This study found that this legacy has impacted the experience of those working in the sector, as well as the external

perception. Therefore, to become a recognised and valued part of the education system, there needs to be organisational structures and supports at least on a level with existing systems in terms of rewards, incentives, and conditions of the other sectors to support teacher engagement. In addition, activities that support teacher development, such as formal academic education, non-formal/vocational education and training, as well as informal and incidental learning, should be encouraged and developed to mirror, if not exceed, the provision in the mainstream sector. The organisations responsible for FET, including SOLAS and the ETBs, have a responsibility to actively determine and implement the supports and opportunities required to make teaching in FET a desirable and viable career option.

6.2.5 Conclusions

FET in Ireland is an emerging and developing part of the education system, albeit with the legacy of a fractured sector. If FET is to reach the aspirations of a world-class integrated system capable of supporting the economy, social inclusion and multiple stakeholders (SOLAS, 2014, p. 3) it needs to be respected and valued as an equal, but unique, sector of the education system.

There is a need for organisational structures and supports to be placed at least on a level with existing systems in terms of rewards, incentives, and conditions to support teacher engagement.

Activities that support teacher development, such as formal academic education, non-formal/vocational education and training, as well as informal and incidental learning, should be encouraged and developed.

The organisations also need to provide opportunities that make FET teaching a desirable and viable career option.

6.3 Contributions of this study

6.3.1 Contribution to knowledge

This study explored the psychological conditions of engagement as experienced by FET teachers. This is a new application of research to a sector that is generally under-researched.

It confirmed Kahn's links between personal engagement and psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability. However, it found that meaningfulness was the most positive significant contributor to engagement. The research also found that when FET teachers are highly engaged with their role this does not necessarily equate to a commitment to the organisation.

The research also found that there is a high level of participation in CPD by FET teachers. This study confirms the findings of the SOLAS & FET research (2017) but expands the range to formal, non-formal, informal and incidental learning. These ongoing forms of learning and development are used by FET teachers to maintain their knowledge, and skills and, in doing so maintain their personal engagement and enthusiasm. It also found that while FET teachers are self-directed learners the role of local management is influential in supporting access to resources and encouraging development.

6.3.2 Contribution to research

This research has contributed to what is known about the experiences of FET teachers in an emerging and developing sector. This is an under-researched area on which little is known. This contribution to research has been made by a research that is 'of' the sector, giving insights not easily accessed by others. Recommendations have been made on how this research could be built upon and developed further.

6.3.3 Contribution to practice

This research has confirmed high levels of engagement among the participants and that this influences their CPD and their progression through the teacher career cycle. It has valued the previously unheard voice of the FET teachers and made these voices known. It has, thus, affirmed the autonomy and agency of FET teachers as professionals and the importance of the role of local management in supporting their professional practice.

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Chapter 8 Appendices

Appendix A: Invitation/Consent Form

Title: **An exploration of FET Teacher Engagement with Career Progression and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the Further Education & Training (FET) Sector in South West of Ireland**

About this research
You are invited to take part in this research project which aims to explore Career Progression and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the Further Education & Training Sector in Ireland.

Before you decide to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Who has been invited to take part?
A sample of those who are teaching QQI levels 1 to 6 in a variety of centres, settings and contexts in the Cork/Kerry region have been selected.

Purpose of the Study
The aim of the study is gather feedback on the experience of the working lives of those employed in the sector and the relevance of career progression and Continuous Professional Development to their work.

What is involved?
This study will use focus groups/focus groups to explore the participants' perceptions of career, career progression and their continuous professional development.

Focus group: Meet with the researcher during a 1½ hour focus group with fellow FET professionals. Several groups will be held at locations to accommodate people travelling from a range of locations and will be held at a mutually acceptable time in so far as is possible. These sessions will be recorded (audio only) to ensure accuracy. A summary of the focus group will be emailed to you to verify that the researcher understood your intended meaning.
Interview: A small number of follow-up interviews will be held to expand on the information gathered in the focus group. Interviews will take approximately an hour, will be recorded (audio) and you will be a sent a transcript for your approval. You can choose to amend or extract information at this time.

Do I have to take part?
Your involvement in the research is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time up to the return of the verified session/interview without any consequences.

Benefits to you: There are no directly immediate benefits to you. But this information will provide information about the working lives of those employed in the Further Education sector and may be used to guide career planning and/or professional development.

What happens to the information?
All information is gathered in the strictest of confidence and accessible only to the researcher and the WIT research supervisor. A summary of the focus group will be shared with those who took part, while the interview transcripts will only be shared with the respective individuals. Names will be coded and no identifiable information will result. The data gathered will be analysed to identify themes based on the research objectives and will be used for educational purposes and shared correspondingly.

Privacy/Confidentiality
In so far as is possible, all efforts will be made to protect the participants' privacy e.g. masking any potentially identifying information. Individuals will only be identified by a pseudonym. Quotations used in any report of the findings will not be attributed to a participant in this study by name or in any other way that would lead to identification. Names or specific affiliations that could disclose your identity will not be included in any report or publication of the study findings. The researcher will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research
Please circle as appropriate

1.	I have been fully informed as to the nature of the research	Y	N
2.	I understand my role in the research	Y	N
3.	I understand that no names (individual or business school) will be used in the final report	Y	N
4.	I understand that the findings will be published in academic journals and presented at conferences	Y	N
5.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can opt out at any time	Y	N
6.	I understand that I can decide not to participate in this research or to withdraw at any time without adverse consequences	Y	N
7.	I consent to the digital recording of the **focus group**	Y	N
8.	I consent to the digital recording of the **interview**	Y	N

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line blow. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered.

Name of Participant	**Signature**	**Date**
Anne O'Mahony		
Name of Researcher	**Signature**	**Date**

Further Questions?
The researcher conducting this study is Anne O'Mahony (anne.omahony@posterad.wit.ie) and is supervised by Dr. Anne Graham Cagney (agraham@wit.ie). If you have any further questions about this research, now or during the course of the project, please contact either directly.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Ethics Review Board, Waterford Institute of Technology

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Please sign two copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.
Thank you
Anne O'Mahony

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

An exploration of FET Teacher Engagement with Career Progression and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the Further Education & Training (FET) Sector in South West of Ireland

Research Question

The research question seeks to explore the area FET teacher engagement with Career Progression and Continuous Professional Development. Specifically it focuses on how the psychological conditions of engagement in the workplace influence FET teachers' experience of career progression and Continuing Professional Development.

The objectives include

1. Identify the psychological conditions of engagement for FET teachers in their work
2. Explore how these psychological conditions influence personal engagement with career progression and CPD
3. Explore FET teachers' career aspirations and their view of how these could be supported.

Focus Group Questions

1. What does your work mean to you?
2. What does professional development mean to you?
3. What is your understanding of your 'career progression'?
4. What are your aspirations for your development and/or progression?

Appendix C: Focus Group Answers

Focus Group Questions

	[redacted]	[redacted]
1. What does your work mean to you?	• Central part of my identity. V NB to me • Making a positive contribution to empower others to self-improvement • Connection • Helping others to move forward • Helping others • Hopefully adding something of value to the world • Passion • Pays the bills so I can achieve other goals	• fun • Satisfaction • Satisfaction • very important take pride in my work • rewarding • autonomy • mortgage • money • a great working environment • great teamwork in centre • lack of support • isolation • sense of contributing to community • being able to help others • obsession with accreditation • lack of awareness of what we do by the powers that be (by the top managers) • delegated devolved management • hours of unpaid work • lack of teamwork in organisation
2. What does professional development mean to you?	• Always growing as a teacher and as a person • Nurture • Collaboration • Reflective practice • Always growing as a teacher and as a person • Continuing to learn about my teaching and grow in competency • Nurture • Training in my field • Collaboration • Reflective practice • Staying as learner • Opening doors • Build network • Needs analysis should be personal • often enforced • Provided: not relevant • Croake Park hours • Fill the void (in teaching contract hours) • Hours and cert • Sometimes it's tick box • Unrealistic expectations • Some CPD not organisationally valued	• learning • thought provoking • opportunity to network • what can I bring to my job • non-existent for tutors • qualifications • attaining new skills & knowledge; work related /personal • further my career • satisfaction in my job • climbing the ladder • not being stuck in same place professionally
3. What is your understanding of your 'career progression'?	• Should be teaching and learning • Anti-stagnation • Personal and professional development • Building on core skills, knowledge and competencies and inform practice and being challenged and stimulated • Motivating spark • Problem solving • New focus • Not PR	• More work but ? if it's worth it • No security • Recognition of time commitment and experience • Recognition • Advancing your career • promotion • Restricted within this organisation • Limited within CETB • No progression • Downsized from private sector to current role. Don't want other than what I have

4. What are your aspirations for your development and/or progression?	• To derive meaning and value from my work throughout my career • Continue learning/ growth • [provide] Student services e.g. mindfulness • Keep up to date • Choice • Dwindling aspirations • Development not = progression • Support = all on paper • Playing the game? • Widening 'vision' gap between organisation and me • Bereavement: to be ABLE to survive • Keep up to date • Choice • Support = all on paper • Perspective • Values and rewards •	• Development for me is about the centre where I work • Sort out the system • Policy-v-practice • Bring in a universal system of marking etc • Can I develop us as a team? • Progression = sociable hours • Recognition of tutors by org • Sit in (resource worker's/manager's) chair • No opportunities • Why bother? • Burnout • Aspirations quashed by org • Did lots of studies in my previous job but don't have aspirations to a management role in ETB • PhD •

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Question		Theory
Role	Why did you choose to become an FET teacher?	Kahn: meaningfulness
	Do you feel comfortable in your current role, and with the people?	Safety
	What do you like most about being an FET teacher? Why?	Meaningfulness
	What aspects of your role involve you personally and emotionally?	Meaningfulness
	What do you dislike about being an FET teacher here? Why?	Availability
	What aspects of your role here are personally and emotionally uninteresting to you? Why?	Availability
	For what behaviours are you rewarded here? What are those rewards?	Safety /Availability
	How free are you to perform the role as you wish, at your own pace and style?	Safety
	What is your position in the hierarchy here?	Safety
	What is your relationship with the management here, personally and professionally?	Safety
	What support systems do you have here?	Availability
	How much do you want to be personally and emotionally involved in your role?	Availability
	How is that involvement influenced by your physical and emotional energy?	Safety
	How does the staff group influence your performance?	
Professional Development	What for you would be professional development? Give examples of your learning	Lieberman
	Where did you do this learning/development?	
Career Progression	How would you describe a career as an FET teacher?	Fessler & Christensen
	How long have you been working as an FET teacher?	
	What stage of your career are you at?	
	What are the current challenges/concerns for you at this stage of your career?	

Appendix E: Interview Coding List

Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement at Work

Topic	Focus	Code
Meaningfulness: Return on investment of self	Task	mT
	Role	mR
	Work Interactions	mI
Safety Employ self without fear	Interpesonal Rels	sIR
	Group/InterGroup dynamics	sG
	Management style & processes	sM
	Org Norms	sO
Availability Having the resources to invest self in performance	Physical Energies	aP
	Emotional Energies	aE
	Insecurity	aIN
	Outside life	aEX

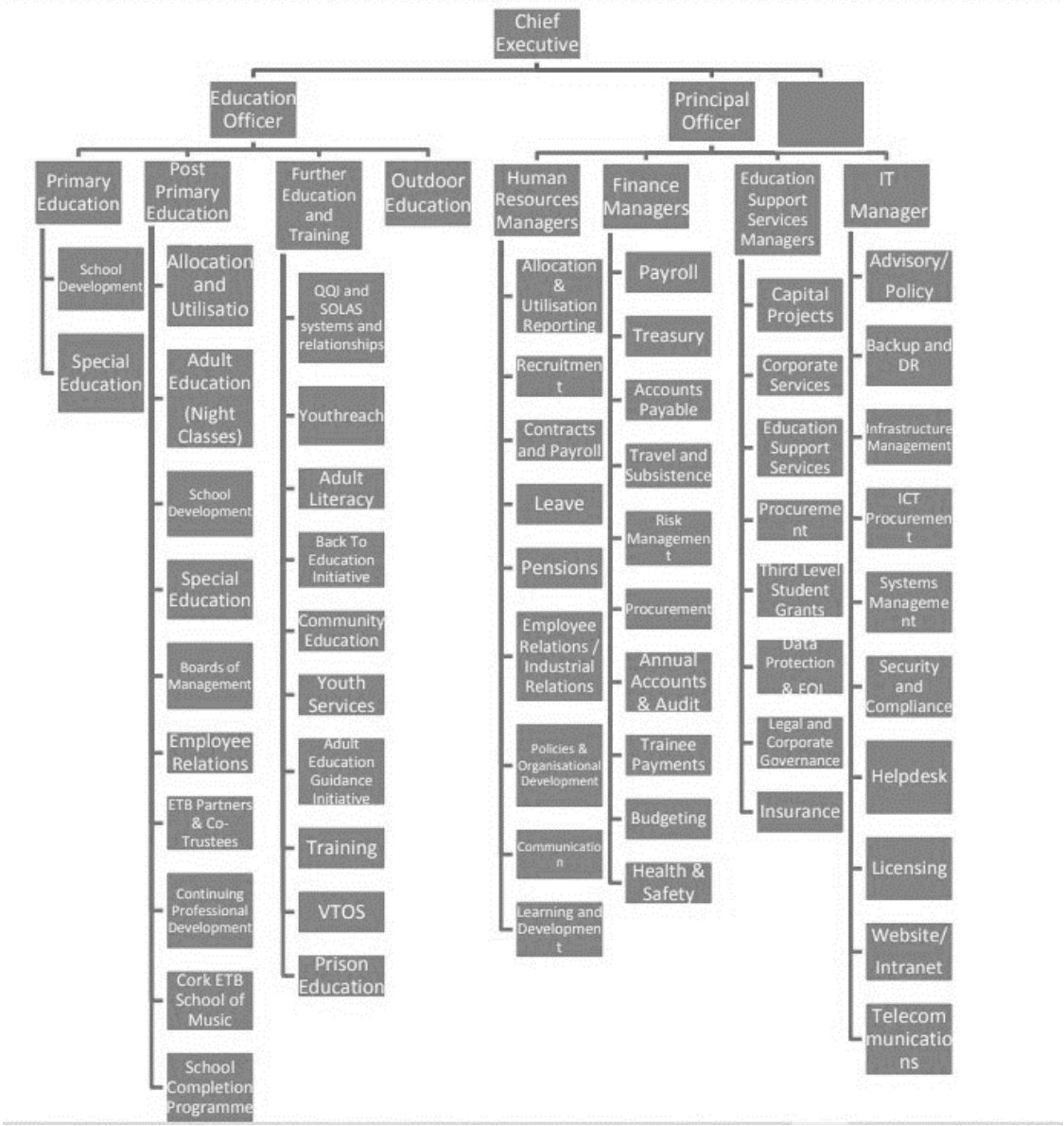
Continuous Professional Development

Topic	Focus	Code
PD Definition	Open	pdO
PD Type	Formal	pdf
	Informal	pdinf
	Non-formal	pdnf
	Incidental	pdi
PD Places	HEI CATEGORIES	pdp
	NGB	Pdng
	In-house	pdor
PD Support	Financial	pdS
	Emotional	pdE
	Resources	pdR
	Recognition	pdR

Career Progression

Topic	Focus	Code
Personal Environment	Family	peF
	Positive Critical Incidents	pePCI
	Crises	peC
	Individual dispositions	peID
	Avocational outlets	peAO
	Life stages	peLS
Organisational Environment	Regulations	oPe
	Management Style	oeM
	Public Trust	oePT
	Societal Expectations	oeSE
	Professional Orgs	oePO
	Union	oeU
Career Cycle	Pre-service	CcP
	Induction	CcI
	Competency Building	CcCB
	Enthusiastic & growing	CcEG
	Career frustration	CcF
	Career stability	CcS
	Career wind-down	CcW
	Career exit	ccE

Appendix F: Organisational Structure of Cork ETB



Appendix G: Resource Worker Job Description

Kerry Education and Training Board

Job Description

Job Title: Resource Worker
(Tuition will form part of the post proposed 7 hours)

Hours of Attendance:
The post is a full time 5 days per week (37 Hours). Attendance shall be at such times as necessary for the delivery of the service including attendance outside of normal office hours as required. This post will include a combination of both tuition & administration duties.

Location:
Appointment is to the Scheme – Kerry ETB reserves the right to assign a staff member to any other location, as the service exigencies require. Your centre of first assignment will be Kerry Education and Training Board, Centrepoint, John Joe Sheehy Road, Tralee.

Duration:
This post is fixed term for one year from date of appointment.

Reporting/Accountability Relationships:
The post holder will report to the Programme Co-ordinator/Adult Education Officer/Director of Further Education and Training.

This post requires flexibility as the Resource Worker will perform varied tasks at different locations.

Combination of daytime and evening hours: Post Holder must be prepared to work some evenings and occasional weekends as the work will require visits to various locations including various outreach locations where community education is delivered. Post Holder must have own transport and a full driving license. He or she is not only involved in delivering tuition hours duties but also expected to operate as part of a team and contribute to the overall growth of the Kerry ETB Adult & Further Education & Training Sector.

General Responsibilities:

- Supporting the Co-ordinator with the preparation of the annual reports for the delivery of the relevant Programme in Kerry for approval and implementation.
- Supporting the co-ordinator to ensure learner information is recorded including learner participants form (manual, on line)
- Supporting Programme Planning, Administration and on-going Evaluation of the programmes in accordance with the Kerry ETB, FET Strategy Plan. All new course initiatives must be referred to the Co-ordinator for approval in accordance with agreed protocol.
- Assisting the Co-ordinator with sourcing suitable accommodation and ensuring organisational arrangements are in place for the delivery of quality teaching and learning. Decisions in respect of utilising new venues for the Programme must be approved by the Co-ordinator
- Organising and managing the exam centre in Head Office where appropriate
- To schedule all Courses on PLSS and assist the Programme Co-ordinator on the management of learners on PLSS.

- Assisting the Programme Co-ordinator to maintain files on programme content, and maintain a waiting list of learners where appropriate.
- To support the Programme Co-ordinator to set up and maintain a section on curriculum content, useful resources for tutors including an annual newsletter.

Administration Matters:

- Assist the Co-ordinator in day to day administration, planning and delivery and evaluation of the Programme.
- To collaborate with the Co-Ordinator & the Head of FET Services Department on all administration matters relating to the Programme.
- In the absence of the Co-ordinator, deal with queries from the public, and on occasions tutors and learners where appropriate.
- To assist the Co-ordinator in ensuring that students registered on all courses meet the criteria as per the SOLAS Guidelines. To assist the Co-ordinator, when required with the enrolment of learners for day/evening classes and open days/nights.
- To ensure all student packs are returned to the Further Education and Training Services Department promptly with a fully completed Request Form/Summary Sheet showing learner categories/module details etc.
- Assist the Co-ordinator with the preparation of reports.
- To support the Co-ordinator on all dealings with QQI Requirements specific to the Kerry ETB Programme.
- Assist the co-ordinator to ensure that the documentation and procedures in relation to QQI/certification are properly administered in relation to all relevant students.
- Ensure all students who are liable for fees, where appropriate, are invoiced on commencement of course and all fees are received and lodged promptly. Provide a list of students who are liable for fees to the FETS Department.
- Ensuring student Cessation and Waiver Forms, where appropriate, along with supporting documentation are submitted to FET Services Department and are available for audit.
- Support the Co-ordinator & FET Services with the preparation of Implementation Reports to SOLAS.
- Assist the Co-ordinator with the preparation of internal bi-annual Course Activity Reports in preparation for the submitting of the Annual Course Activity Report.
- Assisting the Co-ordinator with organisation of Special Events including Presentation of Certificates/Information days, staff in-service and CPD.
- Liaising with tutors re accepting QQI packs, checking packs and ensuring adequate information for assessment and that learner portfolios are in compliance.
- Assist the Co-Ordinator with the QQI external assessment process.
- Assist the Co-ordinator with monitoring the internal verification process for each centre/programme.
- Attend appropriate in-service training as directed by the Co-ordinator/AEO.
- Carry out any other duties appropriate to the grade which may be assigned from time to time.

The above list of accountabilities may be varied having regard to the changing needs of the Scheme and the terms of the post can include delivery of responses to unpredictable work demands as they arise.

Person Specification

Selection Criteria
Selection criteria outline the qualifications, skills, knowledge and/or experience that the successful candidate must demonstrate for successful discharge of the responsibilities of the post. Applications will be assessed on the basis of how well candidates satisfy these criteria.

Essential Criteria
- Recognised primary degree
- Minimum of 2 years tutoring experience
- Experience of QQI assessment protocols and procedures
- Excellent ICT skills/experience (including database, data analysis and spreadsheets, other MIS systems)
- Full clean driving Licence

Desirable Criteria
- Good planning and organisational skills
- High level of interpersonal and communication skills
- Good time management skills and ability to work on own initiative
- Commitment to Kerry ETB core values: Respect, Quality, Equality, Inclusion and Learning.

Competencies Required
Kerry ETB Core Values of Respect, Quality, Equality, Inclusion and Learning are the guiding principles of the organisation and underpin the competencies required to fulfil this role.

Specialist Knowledge, Expertise & Self Development
- Clearly understands the role, objectives and targets and how they fit into the work of the organisation.
- Understands the boundaries of professional practice
- Develops the expertise necessary to carry out the role to a high standard and shares this with others
- Demonstrates knowledge of child protection policy and practice
- Understands and shows commitment to the purpose of Kerry Education and Training Board and to work within the values, policies and procedures of the organisation and in the context of current legislation and regulations
- Has expertise in his/her field that is recognised and utilised by colleagues

Administrative & Technical Skills
- Experience in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Access & PowerPoint etc.)
- Experience of communication via information technology
- Experience of maintaining accurate paper and electronic record systems
- Experience of working to multiple deadlines.

Delivery of Results
- Plans and prioritises work in terms of importance, timescales and other resource constraints, re-prioritising in light of challenging circumstances
- Assumes responsibility for and delivers on agreed objectives / goals

- Effectively manages multiple projects
- Ensures all outputs are delivered to a high standard and in an efficient manner
- Uses resources effectively, challenging processes to improve efficiencies.
- Is self-reliant and uses judgement on when to seek guidance and from whom.

Teamwork

- Experience of working effectively in a team environment
- Develops and maintains good working relationships with others, sharing information and knowledge, as appropriate
- Maximises the contribution of the team, encouraging ownership, providing support and working effectively with others
- Contributes to the development of policies in own area and the wider organisation

Interpersonal & Communication

- Communicates in a fluent, logical, clear and convincing manner verbally and in writing
- Is able to listen effectively and develop a two-way dialogue quickly
- Experience in motivating people
- Maintains a strong focus on meeting the needs of service users
- Effectively influences others to take action
- Works to establish mutual understanding to allow for collaborative working

Drive & Commitment

- Is self-motivated and shows a desire to continuously perform at a high level
- Must be flexible and prepared to work outside normal hours as required.
- Has the ability to think logically, use initiative and work with minimum supervision.
- Have a flexible approach to the work in response to organisational change, development and review of best practice
- Through leading by example, fosters high standards of ethics and integrity

Appendix H: Resource Worker (Youthreach)

Youthreach Resource Worker
JOB DESCRIPTION/PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: Resource Worker

Location: Killarney Youthreach

Reports to: Killarney Youthreach Co-Ordinator

Works With: Killarney Youthreach Team

Hours of attendance: 33 hours per week

Duration Specific purpose to cover leave

Job Summary

Work with the Project Co-ordinator and other Resource Staff in creating an atmosphere and environment where the participants can realise their full potential while on a Youthreach Programme.

Key Duties & Areas of Responsibility will include:

- Responsible to the Project Co-ordinator on a day to day basis for the delivery of the programme
- To prepare, develop and deliver QQI Levels 3 Module: Health & Fitness (3N0531), QQI Level 4 Module: Health Related Fitness (4N2666) & QQI Level 4 Module: Human Biology (4N2910) in accordance with the criteria set out by QQI.
- Direct class contact in keeping with the programme needs as timetabled.
- Actively participate in the development and implementation of a Centre Development Plan and participate in the internal evaluation process as set out under the Youthreach Quality Framework.
- To work within budgets and monitor programme spending in co-operation with the Project Co-ordinator
- To maintain discipline in accordance within the agreed Code of Behaviour.
- To undertake administrative duties relevant to the position, including maintenance of records and provision of reports as required.

- To promote the work of the centre and develop contacts outside of the centre which are relevant to work.
- To provide locally agreed substitution cover for absent staff and to supervise participants as necessary during lunch breaks and at opening and closing times of the programme.
- To prepare for and attend individual supervision on a regular basis.
- To attend appropriate in-service training and participate in staff development and team maintenance activities as required.
- To actively participate in all Staff Meetings.
- To engage in other activities for the benefit of participants that may arise from time to time and as directed by the co-ordinator.
- To undertake other duties as may be requested

Essential Criteria

- 3rd Level Degree in Education or a related field.
- Ability and experience in the delivery of QQI 3 & 4 in an Integrated Programme in the area of Health and Fitness & Biology.
- Experience in working with vulnerable young people in an informal education setting
- Experience of assessing literacy needs, devising, delivering and evaluating individual learning plans.
- Fluency in English, both written and verbal

Skills, competencies & attributes

Specialist Knowledge, Expertise & Self Development

- Evidence of professional knowledge in programme delivery and accreditation opportunities
- Clearly understands the role, objectives and targets and how they fit into the work of the department and the wider organisation.
- Experience in working with young people in a dynamic/engaging way using a variety of methodologies.
- Demonstrates the importance of policy and procedures in youth work practice
- Understands the boundaries of professional practice
- Develops the expertise necessary to carry out the role to a high standard and shares this with others
- Demonstrates knowledge of child protection policy and practice
- Awareness of current and emergent trends for young people in society and services
- Understands and shows commitment to the purpose of Kerry ETB and to work within the values, policies and procedures of the organisation and in the context of current legislation and regulations
- Has expertise in his/her field that is recognised and utilised by colleagues

- Reflects on own development personally and professionally

Programme development and delivery

- Experience in delivering QQI modules (or equivalent) related to Health and Fitness
- Experience in delivering QQI modules (or equivalent) related to Human Biology.
- Track record in designing, delivering and evaluating educational programmes
- Analytical skills with the capacity to absorb/organise new information to ensure well briefed on new topics
- Demonstrates the ability to apply basic teaching and learning methods with young people
- Recognises the importance of a group setting for young people.
- Understands the importance of health and safety within the workplace overall and with emphasis on the delivery of programmes and activities with young people, particularly in relation to Fitness activities.

Teamwork

- Experience of working effectively in a team environment
- Develops and maintains good working relationships with others, sharing information and knowledge, as appropriate
- Maximises the contribution of the team, encouraging ownership, providing support and working effectively with others
- Contributes to the development of policies in own area and the wider organisation

Interpersonal & Communication

- Communicates in a fluent, logical, clear and convincing manner verbally and in writing
- Is able to listen effectively and develop a two-way dialogue quickly
- Experience in motivating young people
- Maintains a strong focus on meeting the needs of service users
- Effectively influences others to take action
- Works to establish mutual understanding to allow for collaborative working

Drive & Commitment

- Is self-motivated and shows a desire to continuously perform at a high level
- Must be flexible and prepared to work outside normal hours as required.
- Has the ability to think logically, use initiative and work with minimum supervision.
- Have a flexible approach to the work in response to organisational change, development and review of best practice
- Through leading by example, fosters high standards of ethics and integrity

Contract

- Specified Purpose contract linked to Maternity Leave.

- This contract is for 33 hours per week.
- Remuneration is in accordance with the Youthreach Resource worker salary scale approved by the Department of Education.
- Employment with Kerry ETB is subject to a satisfactory response from the Garda Vetting Unit being received in relation to any candidate under consideration and satisfactory reference checks being received.
- This post is subject to a probationary period.

Appendix I: Resource Worker Cork ETB

BOARD OIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA CHORCAÍ
Cork Education and Training Board

Contract of employment between CORK ETB and <INSERT NAME>

Nature of Post: Resource Person

Tenure (tick as appropriate)

- **On Probation from …….. to ……. Commencement date……..**
  (A Probationary period of 1 year applies to all newly appointed full time staff and to those who have been less than one year in service)

- **Fixed Purpose contract (defined on page 2)**

Date of appointment <Insert Date>

Date form which this contract is applicable <Insert Date>

Duties of Resource Person

- Responsible to the Co-ordinator/Centre Manager on a day to day basis for the delivery of the programme.
- Direct class contact in keeping with programme needs as required by the Cork ETB subject to a maximum of 20 hours per week.
- Curriculum development and delivery, implementation of certification procedures supervision of work experience and delivery of front line guidance and information as appropriate.
- Work with centre management in the planning, delivery and evaluation of appropriate responses to education and training needs, including the identification and implementation of indicators for education and training outcomes for learners.
- Work with Cork ETB and centre management to (i) agree and implement a Centre Development Plan for the delivery of the relevant service and (ii) conduct an internal centre evaluation process as set out in the Quality framework.
- Maintenance of discipline.
- Development and monitoring of programme.
- Assessment and monitoring of trainee course work.
- Conducting interviews of trainees.
- Administrative duties relevant to the post, including the maintenance of records and the provision of reports as required.

- Provide locally agreed substitution cover for absent staff, and supervise participants as necessary during lunch breaks and at opening of the centre,
- Deputise when necessary for the Centre co-ordinator.

Tenure: **Fixed Purpose Contracts**

(Tick as applicable**.)**

- A one year probationary period will apply, operative from …….. to ……

- Subject to satisfactory completion of probation a **fixed purpose contract** will apply i.e employment will be continued subject to

    (a) the continued operation of the <specify> programme and
    (b) the number of Youthreach/Prison Education Service/Adult and Community Education places approved in the Cork ETB area being continued and/or continued allocation of posts from Department of Education and Skills

In the event of a service no longer being required in a scheme, the issue will be the subject of national discussions between the Department, IVEA and TUI.

Remuneration.

Payment will be made monthly on the basis of the salary and allowances specified by the Department of Education and Skills from time to time for Youthreach Resource Persons.

Pension

Full-time Resource Persons will be pensionable under the conditions set out in the Local Government Superannuation Scheme – a co-ordinated pension scheme with payment of full PRSI.

Hours of attendance

Resource persons will work 37 hours in a flexible manner that may include evenings and other times, in accordance with service needs.

Annual Leave

35 days annual leave per annum and Public Holidays will be allowed, together with such short periods of closure as are permitted for Christmas and Easter. Attendance outside of normal office hours will be by prior agreement with the Adult Education Organiser/Education Officer/Chief Executive Officer and will be offset against office hours attendance. **Where at least 25% of annual attendance time is outside of office hours, an additional three days annual leave will be allowed in the year in question.**

Resource persons will take annual leave during periods when centres are closed to trainees.

Sick Leave.

Full-time staff may be granted full pay for certified sick leave up to a maximum of 365 days in any period of 4 years or less. Absences for minor indispositions will be allowed not exceeding 7 days in a two year period, provided that absences in excess of 3 consecutive days are medically certified.

Other leave/secondments

Employees will have the same entitlements to career breaks, secondments, job-sharing, maternity leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave, force majeur leave, parental leave, study leave and compassionate leave as apply to education staff in the ETB sector.

Absence

In the event of absence from work you are required to contact the Centre/ETB by 10.30 a.m. on the first day of absence.

Place of Work

Your normal place of work will be located at **<Insert Location>** but you may be required from time to time to work at the premises of other organisations as the ETB may require, or the centre may have to move to another premises/location. You will be given as much notice of any such change of place of work as is practicable. Transfers to a different Youthreach centre will be subject to the terms of the TUI/IVEA Transfer Agreement.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowance

Allowances in respect of travelling and subsistence are payable in respect of necessary authorised journeys on the Board's business, and at rates not greater than those sanctioned from time to time by the Minister for Education and Skills.

Grievance Procedures.

Employees will be entitled to invoke such grievance procedures as are collectively agreed by the TUI and IVEA from time to time.

Disciplinary procedures

Employees will be subject to the general disciplinary procedures as are collectively agreed from time to time and subject to relevant legislation.

Confidentiality

Employees are obliged to main confidentiality in certain aspects of their work. All personal and commercially sensitive information and knowledge acquired in the course of official duties must be treated as confidential and must not be divulged to unauthorised persons or used for the purpose of gain or profit. Under the terms of the Educational Welfare Act 2000, data may be shared with other bodies prescribed by the Minister for educational placement, training or tracking purposes or for educational research, provided it is used for a relevant purpose only.

Notice

In general, an employee may only terminate employment through formal notification in writing to the ETB, at least one month in advance. However, if both parties agree, this period of notice may be reduced.

Agreement

I accept and agree to all of the above terms and conditions of employment

Signed _____ Date _____
Employee

Signed _____ Date _____
ETB