

**BEING A PROFESSIONAL LECTURER: FRAMING PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING WITHIN AND BEYOND AN INITIAL ACCREDITED
PROGRAMME IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AN IRISH
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted as an exercise for a diploma or degree in any other college or university. I agree that Maynooth University library may lend or copy the thesis upon request from the date of deposit of the thesis.

Signed _____

Dated _____

Dedication

To my parents Úna and Jim Hanratty who were my first educators, and along with my great friend Noeleen Clarke supported my learning informally;

To Betty Moen, Claire Toal and Professor John Panter, who as formal educators inspired me in my roles in education and educational development.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore and explain lecturers' views on what informs and influences their professional learning in relation to the teaching aspect of their role in higher education. Current policy at a national and international level was reviewed along with insights from existing research on drivers for professional learning in relation to teaching. Activity theory (Engeström, 2001) was used as the theoretical framework to inform and explore understandings and accounts of professional learning. It is a socio-cultural research design with philosophical underpinnings.

An institutional case study was carried out during the calendar year of 2015. Data collection methods were an online questionnaire to all lecturers who are graduates of the institution's postgraduate programmes in teaching followed by semi-structured interviews with 16 lecturers. Findings have resulted in a new understanding of lecturers' experiences of professional learning within and beyond accredited programmes.

Themes identified included the discourse around professionalism in relation to the teaching role, the lecturers' orientations to professional learning and the influence of communities. Key findings included the value of authentic learning experiences within accredited programmes supported the continuing engagement in professional learning. The use of activity theory as a framework to analysis the findings provided a valuable insight into the contextual factors which may enable or constrain professional learning within and beyond accredited programmes. The existence of institutional policies was a strong influencing factor on many lecturers' initial engagement in accredited learning. Structural constructs such as heavy teaching loads constrained many lecturers in continuing to engage in professional learning.

Recommendations for educational developers working in an institutional context were identified to further support lecturers' professional learning in relation to teaching in higher education.

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List of Abbreviations and Glossary of Terms

The following is an alphabetical list of terms and abbreviations used within this thesis:

Artefact used in relation to Mediating Artefact, some use the spelling artifact, this is only used here within direct quotes from others.

DIT Dublin Institute of Technology

EDIN Educational Developers of Ireland Network

Educational Developer

The term used to describe the role of someone who supports lecturers' educational and professional learning. This term is used in preference to similar terms such as Academic Developer, Staff Developer and Teaching and Learning Officer.

HEA Higher Education Authority in Ireland

Higher Education (HE)

This is the sector of education which is the focus of this thesis. It may also be described as post-compulsory college education, third level or tertiary education.

Lecturer

While in some higher education contexts, the main teaching role may be referred to as academic or third level teacher, the term 'lecturer' is used within this thesis. I am not associating the term lecturer with the potential connotation of a didactic approach to teaching. I am not using the term 'teacher' as there is currently debate around the emergence of terms for contract purposes such as 'university teacher' as opposed to a lecturer whose role would involve research and other aspects traditionally associated with an academic in higher education.

LTTC Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre

NUIM National University of Ireland Maynooth

National Forum

This is the abbreviation used to represent the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Participant

I use the term participant as opposed to student to refer to a lecturer when engaging in an accredited programme. The term student may imply the undergraduate or postgraduate student with whom we work. I am using the term lecturer as that is the common title.

PGCert Postgraduate Certificate

PDF	Professional Development Framework or the Framework
Respondents	Participants in research – who responded to questionnaire
SEDA	Staff and Educational Developers Association
TU	Technological University
UK HEA	UK Higher Education Academy

Chapter 1 Introduction

“To be or not to be, that is the question” (Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act III, Scene 1)

1.1 Overview

Is it an aspiration of the lecturer to be a professional lecturer? Is it an obligation to themselves or others to be a professional lecturer? The term professional lecturer is not currently a commonly used phrase in Irish Higher Education (HE). This thesis is an account of the research conducted to explore the learning experiences of lecturers in relation to teaching in a policy context of increased professionalisation of the role of teaching in Irish higher education. While there is currently no definition of a professional lecturer, internationally there are professional standards and in Ireland, a professional development framework has been piloted. The research focused on lecturers’ learning experiences within an accredited professional development programme relating to teaching and also their learning experiences beyond that programme. It is an institutional case study based in the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). Since 2006, this institute has implemented two policies relating to professional development in terms of teaching. The first being the contractual condition of employment that all new DIT lecturers must have or complete an initial accredited professional development programme in teaching, and the other that completion of an accredited programme is a criterion for progression from assistant lecturer to lecturer. The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*, published in 2011 and commonly referred to as the Hunt Report, noted the following recommendation:

All higher education institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support on-going development and improvement of their skills (DES, 2011, p.62).

These examples of policy at an institutional and national level are similar to those in universities and other higher education institutes (HEIs) internationally. Currently, DIT is the only HEI in Ireland to have a contractual requirement for lecturers to have a recognised qualification in teaching in this educational sector. This approach to influencing lecturers’ professional development and learning activities from a structural level of governance and management may be deemed as professionalising the role of teaching in higher education (Locke, 2014).

As an educational developer working in the Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTC) in DIT, I sought to explore the learning experiences of graduate lecturers from within

and beyond the accredited programmes. The accounts of lecturers' learning experiences were analysed to identify and explain the factors influencing their learning from their personal positions as well as the structural and cultural contexts. It is a socio-cultural research design with philosophical underpinnings. I share the view of Knight, Tait and Yorke, (2006) that "professional learning is systemic...an interplay between individuals and their environments" (p.320). I explored within this research, what constitutes the learning environment of the lecturers within DIT, and what influences their learning within it? How can I, as an educational developer, contribute to the development of a learning environment which supports lecturers to engage in professional learning? Do lecturers aspire to be "qualified and competent" (DES, 2011, p.62) or more than that? Do lecturers and their supporting colleagues create a learning environment which recognises that the "making of the professional self is bound up with moments of criticality and discursive formation" (Barnett, 2008, p.206).

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis and the associated research. It builds on the brief introduction above to clearly present the rationale and research questions. This is followed by an insight into the overall research context including the local level of the institution, as well as the national and international. An exploration of the key concepts associated with the various layers of context is then documented. Based on these underpinning concepts, the theoretical framework that informed and supported this research is introduced. This chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis structure.

1.2 Research rationale and questions

This research is timely within this national policy context of Irish higher education in relation to lecturers' professional learning regarding the teaching aspect of their role. It is also pertinent and practical as it is exploring how educational developers' implementation of institutional and national policy can impact on lecturers' professional learning in relation to their teaching role. The institutional drivers within DIT had pre-empted one of the key recommendations of the Hunt Report (2011) and other European level policy recommendations in relation to teaching development. The initiation of a national Professional Development Framework (hereafter referred to as the Framework) by the National Forum in early 2015 also proposed a potentially significant impact on lecturers' learning. While there are many professional development and learning opportunities available to lecturers within HE, many of the professions which the lecturers are members

of are also becoming more regularised in terms of professional development and learning. Within this context in terms of policy and timeliness, the rationale for this research was to explore the lecturers' experiences of professional learning relating to their teaching in both accredited and non-accredited formats. Knight (2006) states that professional learning in relation to teaching "is a complex job because learning to teach is not, mainly, a formal process: non-formal, practice-based learning is more significant" (p.29). He claims that "enhancing the quality of teaching implies the creation of working environments that favour certain kinds of professional formation" (Knight, 2006, p.29). This significance of the learning environment is reiterated by Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) who emphasise that the learning environment can stimulate or suppress learning that should ideally challenge existing understanding.

A key starting point for me as an educational developer supporting lecturers' professional learning within an institutional context, with the advent of the national professional framework, was the exploration of policy drivers and to learn about other influences on lecturers' professional learning as individuals or groups of lecturers. According to Evans (2007) "the advent of new professionalism is often seen as a governmentally-imposed professional development initiative which has, to all intents and purposes, swept away conceptions as that of Freidson (1994, p.10) whose view of professionalism as a structure and system of professionals' autonomy and control over their work-related remits and roles" (p.4). I was interested to explore the influence of lecturers' own sense of professionalism in contrast to policy professionalising their role.

Research has been conducted over the years on the learning experiences within these programmes at an institutional level and internationally. However, much of this research has been conducted for evaluative purposes to make improvements to the programmes at a local level. There is a dearth of research on the learning experiences of lecturers beyond their participation in such programmes, and therefore few insights into how conducive their usual work environment is to continue professional learning. Cultural and structural aspects associated with lecturers' working lives in higher education are generally not researched, which was highlighted by Smith (2010; 2011) with specific reference to probationary lecturers in the UK. While there is a growing body of educational research internationally on formal, accredited learning within programmes, the focus on informal learning experiences is only beginning in the context of higher education. There is currently

extensive research on teaching and learning in higher education however, some of the research has been critiqued as it has been asserted that there is a need for explicit theoretical underpinnings (Clegg, 2005).

I considered it important to conduct research within an institutional context to build an institutional picture as its context is unique as the programmes are the longest running (Appendix A). While the focus is on one institution, findings could also contribute scholarship to the national and international research field. Donnelly (2006) had previously conducted research with 25 graduates of the first four years of the DIT programmes. She asked if changes in teaching would be happening more substantially in five to 10 years, as there should be a critical mass of graduates and they might impact on the teaching practice of their departments (Donnelly, 2006). She professed that “it is only by these individuals continuing to take action to alter their own environments that there is any chance for deep change” (Donnelly, 2006, p.215). My research sought to explore the experiences of individual lecturers and also their environments to ascertain if there are structural enablers or constraints which impact on the lecturers.

In 2013, I was involved in research on the DIT accredited programmes with colleagues (McAvinia, Donnelly, McDonnell, Hanratty & Harvey, 2015) on the impact of participation in accredited teaching programmes. An online questionnaire was distributed to graduates of all the accredited programmes including two masters and 78 were returned from both internal and external participants. This was followed by two small focus groups consisting of eight graduates from programmes between 2008 and 2013. Findings from this research indicated that participants in the programmes did alter their approach to teaching and felt that their students benefited from this. While that research differed from this research, as it was an evaluative study, I noted that it would be ideal to focus solely on the DIT lecturers and to strive to involve graduates from a longer period of time e.g. from 2000 to 2014. This research will further that evaluative study to explore lecturers’ experiences of continuing their professional learning during a longer time span and their opinions on how they could be supported further in terms of organisational supports and potentially national frameworks.

Therefore, an objective of this research project was to extend previous research and capture the accounts of lecturers’ learning on their previous and current experiences of

professional learning during this formative time of the development of a national framework for professional development. My intention was to build on existing knowledge and extend it to present timely and relevant explanations in relation to how lecturers engage in professional learning within and beyond an initial accredited programme. I aimed to explore how lecturers articulate and plan their own professional development, identify some of the influencing factors in terms of enablers and constraints. The next section outlines the research questions.

This thesis is intended to address and contribute to the current practical challenges as well as contribute to the discourse on lecturers' experiences of learning within and beyond accredited professional development offered by the institution. It is also anticipated that there may be insights on how lecturers engage in professional learning relating to their subject or discipline area which may in turn influence their teaching. In addition to the recommendation from the Hunt Report (DES, 2011) noted above, there are other implications for policy and practice at the local level in terms of the institute and throughout the organisational structure in the form of Colleges, Schools and Departments.

Two key terms were to the forefront of my initial consideration of this topic – that of 'aspiration' to be a professional lecturer and 'obligation' relating to compliance with policies. If there is a continuum between aspiration and obligation, do current DIT lecturers participate in learning activities relating to their teaching role, based on aspirations in their teaching role or obligations associated with policy? Within the current policy agenda to professionalise the role of lecturers through participation in formal accredited programmes, are lecturers feeling constrained and obliged by these structural requirements or are they engaging in a more agentic approach to their own learning? This research is an institutional case study conducted with current DIT lecturers who are graduates of an accredited teaching programme so the key theme is professional learning of lecturers in relation to their teaching. This exploration attempts to span issues of concepts of agency and structure in its analysis. The following research questions were identified.

Research questions

The main research questions were:

- Why do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?

- How do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How can educational developers further support professional learning?

1.3 Context

This section sets out the context in which this research was conducted. Firstly, the local institutional context is presented. This is followed by the broader Irish context of policy and practice in supporting professional learning and development in relation to teaching and then relevant European and international influences. It also outlines the current research influences and returns to the local and specific context of researching the challenge of supporting professional development.

1.3.1 Institutional context

The higher education institute is a place of learning for lecturers. The institute can be perceived as a workplace for lecturers and as a learning organisation (Senge, 1990). This research was conducted during 2015 at a time of significant structural and cultural changes within DIT. The institute is the largest institute of technology in Ireland with over 20,000 registered students and over 2,000 members of staff. It is currently composed of four constituent Colleges supporting student learning in a diverse range of programmes from Arts to Sciences. These Colleges are situated at various campuses across the city of Dublin. The staff and students are in the process of re-locating to a single campus on a large site in the north inner city. As an institute, it is also in the process of merging with two smaller institutes of technology within the Dublin region with the purpose of a joint bid to become a technological university.

The LTTC is the institute's centrally funded and supported unit for enhancing the learning experiences of students through the provision of opportunities for lecturers and academic leaders to engage in a diverse range of learning activities. These learning activities range from formal accredited postgraduate programmes and modules, to one to one consultations and collaborative whole School initiatives such as programme design intensives. There is a team of ten within the LTTC with learning development officers and eLearning development officers. There are also internally funded projects such as Teaching Fellowships and support for national and international projects and initiatives. The provision of accredited programmes to support teaching development is a common feature in most centres for teaching and learning in higher education nationally and internationally. A comprehensive insight into the emergence and development of the role of educational

developers and associated centres for teaching and learning is provided in Chapter 2: Literature Review (Section 2.3).

The accredited programmes offered and facilitated by the educational developers within the LTTC in DIT are the longest running in Ireland, as they commenced in 2000 with their first graduates in 2001. There were three programmes in the original suite comprising of a Postgraduate Certificate in Third Level Learning and Teaching, a Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching and a Masters in Third Level Learning and Teaching. These programmes are abbreviated to PGCert, Diploma and MA (L&T) respectively for the remainder of this thesis. In 2006, it became a condition of contract to complete an initial accredited programme, which at that time was the PG Cert. The Diploma became the initial accredited programme in 2009. A comprehensive profile of the institution and an introduction to the programmes and policies is provided in *Appendix A: DIT profile and programmes*.

1.3.2 National context

This research is timely in terms of structural and cultural changes at an institutional level, as well as the changing context of higher education nationally. The implementation of the recommendations of the Hunt Report (DES, 2011), is of particular relevance to this research context. This implementation includes the establishment of a National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning for Higher Education in 2012, which, within Irish higher education, is commonly referred to as the National Forum. Its principal role is the advancement of “teaching and learning of all students in higher education” (National Forum, 2016). One of the five work plans is the development of a national professional development framework for those engaged in teaching in Irish higher education. This framework was being developed during the timeframe of this research and the draft framework was piloted during the academic year 2016-17. I was involved in the consultation phase of the Framework with other educational developers in the LTTC and co-ordinated the LTTC submission. Some DIT lecturers also contributed directly and indirectly to the consultation on draft frameworks.

The piloting of the draft Irish Framework in 2017 and the subsequent introduction of a professional development Framework for all lecturers in Irish higher education is a particularly relevant contextual consideration for this research.

1.3.3 International context

The broader international context evidences an increasing emphasis on performance management within publicly funded sectors such as higher education. An example of this at the European level is the recent publication of the Report to the European Commission on *improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions* in 2013. It was prepared by the High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education (HLG) (2013) and chaired by former Irish President Dr Mary McAleese. An early declaration within the report is that "Quality teaching is a *sine qua non* of a quality learning culture" (HLG, 2013, p.13). One of the guiding principles from this report is that "academic staff are employed not just to teach, but to teach well, to a high professional standard" (HLG, 2013, p.30). It is also stated that "it is a key responsibility of institutions to ensure their academic staff are well trained and qualified as professional teachers and not just qualified in a particular academic subject" (HLG, 2013, p.30). The terminology used indicates a perspective of lecturers being trained and skilled in relation to teaching, which contrasts sharply with the view of being an autonomous professional who may be associated with the research role of an academic or the traditional view of a lecturer as subject expert.

The UK Higher Education Academy published a Professional Standards Framework for lecturers in the UK and internationally (Bamber, 2009; HEA, 2011) which is outlined in Chapter 2. The presence of this and other international frameworks influenced the development of this research in terms of insights into associated scholarship on the implementation and evaluation of these in other countries.

The principle of professional standards can be linked to a similar assertion by UK researchers of higher education, Blackmore and Blackwell (2003) as they state that "staff expertise is the most important asset in a university; without it literally nothing can be achieved" (p.23). These insights from the international context on lecturers' professional development and learning as well as the broader context of curriculum reforms such as the Bologna Declaration and impacts on quality enhancement and quality assurance are addressed within Chapter 2 (Section 2.2).

The level of focus that I am interested in for this research is the learning experiences of the lecturers at an individual and collective level. Lecturers' experience of engaging in these programmes and beyond in their usual working lives is rarely explored and has not been researched in the current context of national policy implementation.

As an educational developer working in the LTTC in DIT, I sought to identify and explain the learning experiences of lecturers within and beyond the accredited programmes. I was interested to find out whether these lecturers felt obligated to participate in these programmes. This is set in the context of existing institutional policy requirements and national recommendations and associated implementation plans. Within the philosophical frame of 'being a professional lecturer', what are the underlying factors which enable or constrain professional learning within and beyond accredited programmes? If there is a continuum between obligation and aspiration, is it an aspiration to become a professional lecturer, or is it an obligation to be a 'qualified and competent' lecturer? Or is being a professional lecturer not a structural label but an agentic way of learning? The following section provides the theoretical concepts and framework which were used in this research.

1.4 Theoretical Concepts and Framework

The research context is complex and there is potential for exploration using a variety of theoretical frameworks. Many theoretical frameworks used to analyse teaching and learning processes in higher education are typically either from a psychological or sociocultural perspective (Ashwin, 2012; Kahn, Qualter and Young, 2012). This section introduces the theoretical and conceptual influences which were explored during the process of preparing to conduct this research.

Activity theory, as developed by Yrjö Engeström (2001) was used as the theoretical framework within this research. It is a sociocultural theory which encompasses many related concepts to offer a rich framework for understanding enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education (Bamber, Trowler, Saunders & Knight, 2009). Sociocultural theory is based on the belief that the individual cannot be viewed in isolation from their social and cultural environment and offers concepts such as internalization, how an individual is influenced by their environment and externalization, how an individual constructs and shapes their environment (Frambach, Driessen & van der Vleuten, 2014). This was my starting position within this research as I wanted to explore the lecturers' learning environment both within a programme and especially in their usual work environment.

Ashwin (2012) suggests that a limiting aspect of much current research in higher education is the lack of consideration of both individual agency and sociocultural structure. This limitation is addressed in Engeström's (2001) activity theory as there is an explicit emphasis

on agency and structure processes (Ashwin, 2012). My use of activity theory allows me to capture the various elements of the lecturers' learning and work environment within the six components of activity theory which are: subject, object, mediating artefacts, rules, community and division of labour (Engeström, 2001). This theoretical framework can provide me with a lens to view many aspects of the lecturers' and institutional, national and international environments in relation to each other with the specific focus of analysing the learning within and beyond an accredited programme. As emphasised above in Section 1.3 Context, the significance of three levels of context is integral to this research, and Engeström (1987, 2001) has based much of his research on complex contexts, which he describes as activity systems. A more comprehensive description of activity theory and how it was used in this research is provided in Chapter 3: Methodology (Section 3.5).

1.6 Structure of thesis

This chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis within the following five chapters. The next chapter will provide insights into the existing literature pertaining to the main topics and themes of this research. Chapter 3 is the Methodology which provides a comprehensive account of the philosophical underpinning, the theoretical framework of activity theory as well as the practical implementation of the case study methodology, the two data collection methods, and the associated strategies of data analysis. The findings are reported in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 based on thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) on the data collected in the sequence of the online questionnaire and followed by the semi-structured interviews. These findings were then modelled into activity systems based on the theoretical framework of activity theory. Chapter 7 provides the discussion on the findings identified within the previous three chapters. Conclusions are drawn in Chapter 8 and recommendations are presented for in terms of practice and policy for educational developers within the case study institution and nationally. Overall, this thesis provides an account of the timely and comprehensive research which was conducted from 2015-2017.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises the research through a review of the relevant literature. The chapter is divided into three sections: Irish higher education context and policy; the role and activities of the educational developer; and the professional learning of lecturers in relation to teaching. The literature reviewed is organised to reflect three levels of context as depicted in Figure 2.1. The levels are represented by concentric circles indicating the span from the micro level of the individual lecturer through to the meso level of the institution, and the macro level which includes national and international policy. The approach used was adapted from work by Appleby and Pilkington (2014) in which they plotted the elements which could form a “model for supporting critical professional development using enabling structures and learning spaces” (p.36).

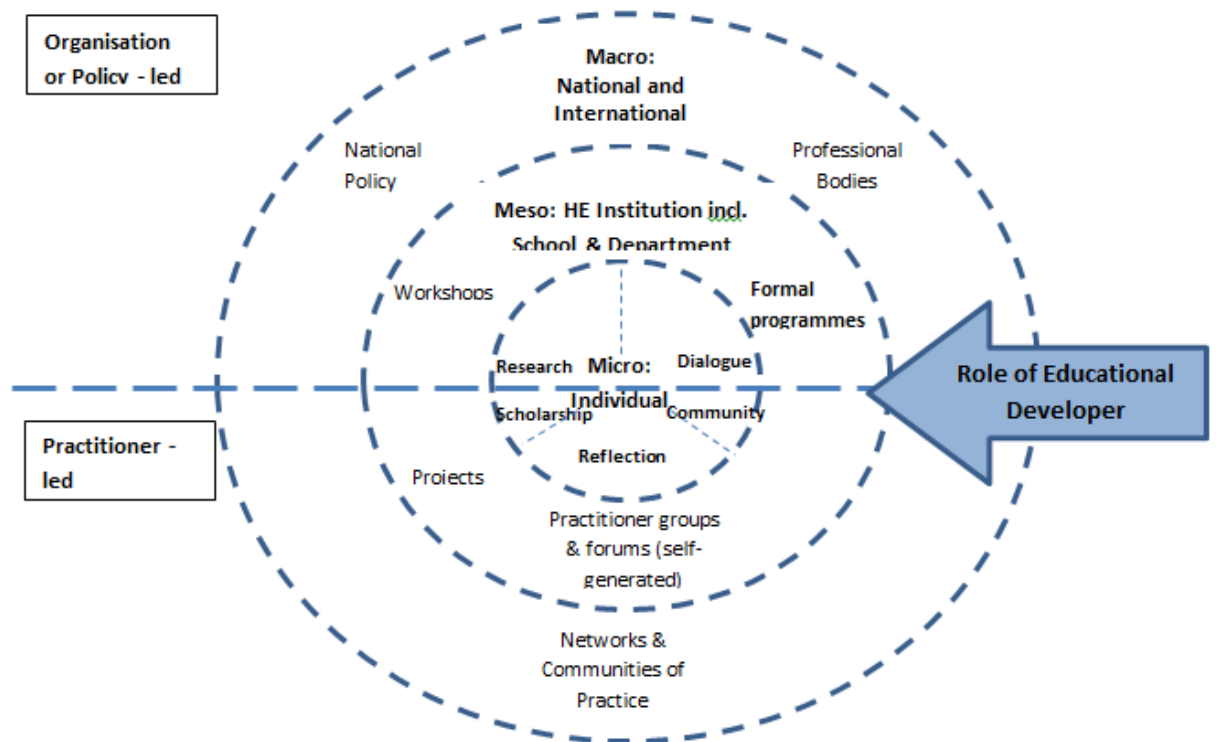


Figure 2:1 Model for supporting critical professional development adapted from Appleby and Pilkington (2014, p.36)

This model developed by Appleby and Pilkington (2014) aimed to represent the different forms and levels of structures which enable and support professional learning. The use of concentric circles emphasises how the wider contexts of national and international policy impacts on both individuals and organisations and how structures and spaces can support critical professional learning. I have selected this model as it aligns with my own understanding of the forms and spaces for learning within a complex institutional context

and the potential for individuals and institutions to be influenced by the wider contexts. However, I have altered Appleby and Pilkington's (2014) model based on my own experience of supporting professional development in the Irish and institutional context. I have positioned **Reflection** in the Practitioner-led section, as I believe it is led by the individual lecturer / practitioner, although it may be initiated by participation in formal programmes. I have renamed Formal courses as **Formal Programmes** and positioned them into the Organisation or Policy-led section as mandatory programmes at national and institutional level are explored in this research. I believe that both **Dialogue Community** and **Research Scholarship** are enabling structures and learning spaces which may be organisation and policy led through national and institutional projects, as well as practitioner-led (e.g. disciplinary research interests). Significantly, I also added the role of the **educational developer** as I believe we play a mediating role in implementing institutional, national and international policy (Clegg, 2009; Gosling, 2009) and may be involved in developing policy (Smith, 2016), as well as supporting individuals. I am also emphasising the lecturers' department and subject discipline as part of the meso level (Fanghanel, 2007; Trowler & Cooper, 2002; Trowler & Knight, 2002).

Section 2.2 of this chapter outlines the macro level of Irish higher education and the internationally contextualised landscape of Irish higher education policy. The role of the educational developer is explored in Section 2.3, from its emergence to current activities and is set within the macro and meso levels of interpreting and implementing European, Irish and institutional policy. Section 2.4 focuses on the individual lecturer and approaches to professional learning and development. The chapter concludes with a collation of the key points arising from the review of existing literature which informed this research.

2.2 Irish Context and Higher Education Policy

2.2.1 Context of Higher Education in Ireland

In 1922, at the time of the establishment of the Irish state, the higher education sector consisted of four universities and a small number of specialist colleges supporting non-university education (Coolahan, 1981). The universities were the University of Dublin - Trinity College and the three constituent colleges of the National University of Ireland, which were in Dublin, Cork and Galway. The new government established the Department of Education in 1924 (Coolahan, 1981; White, 2001). However, this department did not determine the funding for the universities, as this was controlled by the Department of Finance until the late 1950s (White, 2001). The non-university sector was small and initially

some components of it were governed by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (White, 2001). By 1964/65, there were 18,127 higher education enrolments (Barry, 2011). In the academic year 2015/16, there were 222,618 students enrolled within the public HEIs with 23,544 staff, both academic and administrative supporting the students and the running of these HEIs public (HEA, 2017). In addition to publicly funded HEIs there are also 15 independent, privately funded colleges however, the policy developments which follow focus on publicly funded HEIs from the 1960s.

2.2.2 Policy Developments in Irish Higher Education

This section will focus on policy development in relation to higher education as a sector from the 1960s to 2016. Table 2.1 presents the Irish and international policies and reports which are relevant to higher education and to this specific research topic. White (2001) asserts that “Irish higher education is not a pure designer project and it does not have a tidy history” (p.vii). This section explores the untidy history to outline the deliberate policy developments by Irish governments and how they were influenced by both national and international perspectives.

Table 2:1 Policies relevant to the Irish Higher Education sector

1965	OECD and Department of Education <i>Investment in Education</i> Report
1967	Commission on Higher Education Report
1967	Steering Committee on Technical Education was set up in 1966
1971	Higher Education Act
1992	DIT Act; RTC Act
1994	DIT Act
1997	Universities Act
1999	RTC Act
1999	Bologna declaration - European
1999	Qualifications (Education and Training) Act
2001	Skilbeck Report: The University Challenged: A Review of International Trends and Issues with particular reference to Ireland
2003	Skilbeck Discussion Paper: Towards an Integrated System of Tertiary Education in Ireland
2004	OECD Review of Higher Education in Ireland Examiners' Report
2005	European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA)
2006	IoTs Act
2006	EUA Review of Quality Assurance Processes in Irish Universities
2011	National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt Report)
2012	European Science Foundation Position Paper - The Professionalisation of Academics as Teachers in Higher Education
2013	High Level Group Report to European Commission on Modernisation of Teaching in Higher Education (McAleese Report)
2015	Technological Universities Bill
2015	Updated - European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA)
2016	Action Plan for Education

O'Sullivan (2005) suggests that religious ideals associated with a dominant theocentric paradigm, provided the ideological backdrop for educational policy in the first generation of the Irish state, but these were subsequently displaced from the 1950s onwards by a "mercantile" paradigm with economic considerations at its core (O'Sullivan, 2005, p.104). This correlates with Coolahan's assertions that "Ireland experienced also the breakdown of the old paternalistic ethos which tended to confine educational policy to the authority figures, church and state" (1981, p.132). White (2001) and Barry (2014) also reiterate this analysis, and that by the early 1960s there was a seismic shift from the earlier governments' focus on building the nation with priorities relating to the revival of the Irish language, to more broad ranging economic and social developments associated with outward looking, confident government officials striving to attract foreign investment and export potential. Gleeson (2013) suggests that the visit of Irish politicians to the 1961 Washington Conference may have resulted in the adoption of the human capital approach to education serving the economy.

According to Walsh, "the policy of successive governments towards higher education between 1922 and the late 1950s amounted to little more than benign neglect" (2014, p.8). However, as Coolahan (1981), O'Sullivan (2005), Walsh (2014) and White (2001) all indicate, the thirty years from 1960 to 1990 was a period when the government and the public displayed greater interest in higher education. The transformation of higher education policy commenced in the late 1950s under the leadership of Séan Lemass with his radical economic policies and an objective of greater equality of opportunity for all citizens (Barry, 2014; Walsh, 2014). The first economic programme for government was initiated with the 1958 White Paper on Economic Expansion and was authored principally by T.K. Whitaker. Education was not referred to in this first economic roadmap, apart from an acknowledgement that vocational education was seen as important and should be adaptable to the economic and work environment. The second economic programme published in 1963 however, devoted an entire chapter to education. This was perhaps due to the awareness of education being profiled as having potential to serve economic purposes as noted earlier in relation to the Irish attendance at the Washington Conference in 1961 (Gleeson, 2013). The chapter was broad ranging from primary education through to higher education including vocational and featured proposals which Dr Patrick Hillery as Minister for Education had previously expressed, about the development of opportunities for technical education and greater linkages with emergent industries (White, 2001).

Internationally, there was an emphasis on financial investment in higher education especially from the early 1960s and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) advocated a 'human capital' theory approach which the Irish government at the time enthusiastically adopted (Coolahan, 2008; Gleeson, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2005; Walsh 2009, 2014). The emphasis of human capital theory on the workforce was communicated through slogans such as "a nation's wealth is its people" (Coolahan, 1981, p.131). In the post-war industrial growth, there was a growing demand for an educated workforce and Coolahan (1981) highlights that commentators at the time were noting that the educational provision in Ireland was not supporting a flourishing workforce. Education was also increasingly perceived as "being the social escalator" (Coolahan, 1981, p.132). This could be applied to both the second level and higher education sector. It could also be asserted that the fledging nation had begun to find its feet and was looking to European opportunities and beyond with interest. However, this approach to education is heavily criticised by sociologists such as Lynch (2006) as it was perceived as neo-liberalist and higher education was being proffered as a commodity which individuals could buy, rather than being valued as a State provision for all citizens.

2.2.2.1 Investment in Education - OECD Report

Ireland was beginning to be less insular in its outlook and by the early 1960s had aspirations of becoming a member of the European Economic Community (EEC). It was already forging links with international organisations such as the OECD, the Council of Europe and the United Nations (Coolahan, 1981). This is evidenced by the government inviting the OECD to conduct a review of the Irish education system in 1962 in collaboration with a survey team within the Department of Education (Barry, 2011; Hyland, 2014). This was the first OECD review of national policy in education (Hyland, 2014; Walsh, 2014). Their report was published in 1965 entitled '*Investment in Education*' (Barry, 2011; Coolahan, 1981; Hyland, 2014; Walsh, 2014; White, 2001). According to Coolahan it was "one of the foundation documents of modern Irish education" (1981, p.165). Walsh (2014) reiterates this and he highlights that the report profiled the university sector as "restrictive and elitist in nature" (p.7). This is further evidenced within the report which noted that "only 2% of the population aged 15-19 and 3.4% of the population aged 20-24 at the time of the 1961 census were enrolled in third-level education, excluding theological training for the priesthood" (Government of Ireland, 1965, p.120 cited by Walsh, 2014, p.7).

The enrolments for the 1964/65 academic year in universities were 13,006 (Government of Ireland, 1967, p.21) which was 11% of the age participation population. While this figure had doubled since 1948-9, this was perceived as a low percentage of participation in higher education (Walsh, 2014). Students participating in higher education were predominantly enrolled in university programmes (Barry, 2011; Walsh, 2014). Barry (2011) notes the proportions for these enrolments in 1964/65 as 75% in universities, 20% in teacher training colleges and other specialist colleges and 5% in vocational and technical education, which corresponds with Walsh's (2014) figure of only 660 participating in vocational or higher technical programmes. The OECD report presented this low level of opportunities and participation in higher technical and vocational education as a significant drawback to Ireland's economic and social development. It also revealed the shocking statistic that only 20% of the school-going aged students were completing school in 1965 (Barry, 2011) which undoubtedly has implications for potential for progression to higher education.

White (2001) highlights the supply of third-level teachers was raised within the introductory chapter of the OECD report, as was the financing of the overall third level sector. He asserts that the only recommendation from the report was to establish the development unit within the Department of Education and that little was outlined for specific developments in higher education (White, 2001). However, Barry (2014) indicates that the OECD report provided evidence to instigate key future developments in the second level sector. The non-university sector was an area for significant focus and recommendations within the government's Commission on Higher Education and is discussed in the next section.

2.2.2.2 Commission on Higher Education

This Commission on Higher Education was established by the Irish government in 1960, with a broader remit than an earlier commission which focused on assessing the physical infrastructure of university buildings (Government of Ireland, 1959). This commission was charged with reviewing all universities and all institutes offering higher education. The government noted the need for an appraisal of the existing provision of higher education and clear recommendations for future developments. Prior to the commission's report in 1967, the Minister for Education, Dr Patrick Hillery had already instigated the creation of greater opportunities for students interested in vocational subjects with the proposal of Regional Technical Colleges in 1963. The university sector was also conscious of the

emerging economic opportunities and University College Dublin (UCD) launched the first Masters in Business Administration (MBA) programme in Europe in 1964.

The OECD reviewers' recommendations from 1965 further bolstered this policy direction in technical and professional education and associated investment by highlighting the economic benefits of a more skilled workforce. Investment in education across all sectors in Ireland had not been substantial prior to this and within the small higher education sector, the universities had dominated. A Steering Committee on Technical Education was set up in 1966 and its report in 1967 further reiterated the need for immediate skilled workers who could serve and advance economic opportunities linked with increased trade with neighbouring Britain and the emerging EEC. It also stressed the longer term benefits of investment in education beyond the needs of the growing industrial sector but also innovation in terms of science and technology.

The commission's report was published in 1967 and incorporated many of the existing developments. It also proposed that a new form of third-level institution should be created to facilitate training and a vocational function, and that research should be the primary focus for the university sector (Walsh, 2014). This was conveyed within their rationale that "the university is not a professional academy...existing merely to provide training for several professions...The university is a place for the study and communication of basic knowledge" (Government of Ireland, 1967, pp.119-20). The members of this commission and the steering committee on technical education would probably have been influenced by significant reports on UK higher education around this time, such as the publication of the Robbins Report in 1963. This UK Report had led to the establishment of the polytechnics which according to Walsh and Loxley (2015) may have provided insights for the Irish policy writers in terms of the development of the non-university higher education institutions.

The Higher Education Commission's report was comprehensive and captured many of the prevailing discourses on the value of higher education. However, many of the proposals were overshadowed by implications of a possible merger between UCD and Trinity College (Walsh, 2014). The creation of a higher technical education sector was broadly welcomed and the development of the Regional Technical Colleges (RTC) sector was advanced with five colleges opening across the state in the early 1970s. The next section will focus on the

significant developments in Irish higher education based on the commission's report and also social, economic and political influences from the earlier 1970s and are presented as key themes and refer to relevant policies.

2.2.3 Funding, Governance and Autonomy

Apart from the significant growth in student numbers reflecting the massification of HE, there have been other changes during the past 50 years, including a decrease in funding from central government along with greater control and tighter management models within institutions (Barry, 2014; Coolahan, 1981, 2003; Loxley, Seery and Walsh, 2014; White, 2001). However, there are others who when comparing Irish higher education to other international contexts, assert that the Irish government funds the HE sector "rather generously but does not control" (Coate & MacLabhrainn, 2009, p.202). This tension of funding, governance and autonomy is the focus of this section.

Shortly after the Commission on Higher Education report, in 1973 Ireland joined the EEC which had significant implications for the economic and political context which would continue to the present. One noteworthy impact was a strategic decision by the Department of Education to apply for European regional funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) which was launched in 1975 (Barry, 2011). Grant aid was sought to provide financial support for students pursuing programmes in the RTCs which, according to Barry (2011), resulted in 90% of all new students within the RTCs, being funded on their programmes by 1986. This was a substantial incentive to participation and these students represented 20% of all higher education entrants at that time.

While there was a focus on the structuring of higher education and associated funding, there was also an emerging discourse on the governance of publicly funded sectors such as higher education. The Commission on Higher Education (1967) strongly endorsed institutional autonomy but noted that there had to be limitations and accountability as these institutions were being publicly funded by the state finances (Coolahan, 1981; Walsh, 2014). A statutory body for higher education was proposed by the commission which would oversee planning and budgetary activities within the institutions and would report directly to the Taoiseach. The creation of the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in 1968 would fulfil many of the proposals set out in the 1967 report (Coolahan, 1981; Walsh, 2014). The HEA became a statutory body in 1971, and would report to the Minister for Education instead of the Taoiseach. It was the central governing body over the universities

and some other designated institutions in terms of funding, but held only an advisory position in relation to the RTCs and the other higher technical sector, which were governed and funded directly by the Department of Education (Costello, 2002).

The Higher Education Act 1971 heralded a significant step in Irish higher education as the emergent binary system of university and higher technical education (Barry, 2014) was established in law in the two distinct types of higher education institution (HEI). While technical education and the regional technical colleges were not specifically mentioned in the Act, the term “institution of higher education” was introduced and defined to include institutions other than universities (1971, Section 1, Interpretation, p.x). The focus on economic development was quite prominent in the early 1970s and higher education was part of Ireland’s diversification from a predominantly agriculturally-based economy (Barry, 2014; Coolahan, 1981).

The economic downturn of the 1980s further emphasised the perceived need for well-qualified graduates. Further legislation was approved in relation to the higher technical education sector with the RTCs Acts from 1992 to 1999, and the amalgamation of large technical colleges in Dublin resulting in the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) within the DIT Acts of 1992 and 1994. The RTCs were subsequently renamed as Institutes of Technology (IoTs) in the IoTs Act of 2006. In 2017, there are currently seven universities across Ireland with four of them in the Dublin region. There are fourteen institutes of technology (IoTs), most of which were formerly Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs). The DIT is different from the other thirteen, as it had been established from the coalition of six large technical colleges within Dublin in 1978 with its degrees validated by Trinity College and it became an autonomous institution in 1992 (Duff, Hegarty, Hussey, 2000; Kenny, 2006; Walsh, 2014).

After initial investments in the higher education sector to expand the universities and establish a substantial non-university sector, the 1990s witnessed a policy focus influenced by managerial approaches as evidenced in the introduction of statutory quality reviews and associated procedures within HEIs which heralded a greater emphasis on accountability. According to Walsh (2014) the period from 1980 to 2011 was associated with a central government drive for a “knowledge-based economy” (p.48). Walsh states this time period was “characterised by more systematic intervention by the state in higher education at

institutional and programme levels: greater monitoring of institutional activity and sustained official pressure on HEIs to pursue explicitly economic functions” (2014, p.33). There was a substantial increase in student numbers participating in higher education globally, which has been profiled as the sector moving from privileged elite to mass education for a much more diverse population. This massification of HE was a global trend though Ireland’s participation rates were higher than the OECD average (OECD, 2004; Clancy & Goastellec, 2007).

Most programmes in the RTCs and DIT were funded by the ESF grants as noted previously by Barry (2011), so that individual students did not pay tuition fees. While ESF support was very welcome, a neo-liberal stance (Loxley, 2014; Lynch, 2006) was emerging more generally in aspects of the provision and management of higher education. Similarly, while the RTCs and DIT now had the right to self-govern, their missions were articulated within the Acts as the provision of education and training for the economic development of the state. The balance between autonomy and accountability was coming into sharper focus as ostensibly independent HE providers clearly dependent on the state and or the market. The neo-managerialist external environment demanded greater accountability.

This discourse of accountability and neo-managerialism pervades Irish policy documents such as the Green Paper ‘Education for a Changing World’ in 1992 (Walsh, 2014). This Green Paper linked HE to the concept of a ‘knowledge-based economy’:

the development of knowledge-intensive industry based on ‘brains rather than fixed assets’ will largely depend on the ability of higher education institutions to produce sufficient numbers of leader, innovators and those capable of managing and exploiting the opportunities of the new technology and its applications, both as employees and as entrepreneurs (Department of Education, 1992, pp.201-2 in Walsh, 2014, p.39).

The utilitarian purpose of higher education was also asserted in other publications at this time, such as the report by the Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (STIAC) in 1995 entitled ‘*Making Knowledge Work for Us*’ which captures the strong emphasis on higher education functioning to provide research to support commercial activities based on potential collaborations between the state, industry and higher

education (Loxley, 2014). This had previously been highlighted by Lynch (2006) and more recently (Lynch, Grummell & Devine, 2015).

While this 1995 report and similar Irish reports had implications for activities within universities, there were also subsequent national and international policies which would impact on teaching and the perception of the quality of the learning experiences of students within the entire higher education sector. The introduction of quality assurance procedures within the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act in 1999 in Ireland was consistent with what was happening globally. The greater control of HEIs in terms of their funding and management, as outlined above, reflected the trends in neighbouring governments, such as the Conservatives in Britain during the 1980s (Clegg, 2005) and the drive for greater performance which was termed as a “new public management” (Boyle, 1995, p.4) was evident in Irish Higher Education (Loxley, 2014; Loxley et al. 2014; Lynch et al., 2015) but the extent and impact of this management approach was exercised less in Irish HE than in other countries, according to Boyle (2014) and Coate and MacLabhrainn (2009).

As Boyle (2014) notes in his report *Public Sector Reform in Ireland: Views and Experiences from Senior Executives*, though changes were occurring, the effects of new public management (NPM) were not felt in Ireland at the same time as Canada, New Zealand or the UK. Boyle asserts that it was not until the launch of the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) in 1994 that attempts were made to improve the “efficiency, speed and coherence of government” (2014, p.6) with the OECD noting in 2008 that its impact was significant on the civil service sector. A concerted effort was being made in relation to reform of the civil service with the production of a plan entitled *Delivering Better Government* in 1996 (Boyle, 2014). It was at this time that the significant Universities Act was being drafted and discussed. Delays in its enactment to 1997 indicate some of the difficulties envisioned by the style of governance first profiled in the Bill.

The Universities Act in 1997 acknowledged the right of the universities and their staff to traditional academic freedom in terms of their teaching, research and other university activities. However, Walsh (2014) states that despite articulating respect for institutional and academic autonomy, an overt regulatory approach to the relationship between the HEA and the universities was evident in terms of imposing new obligations in relation to

strategic plans as well as documenting and implementation of quality assurance procedures. This is reiterated by the Head of Policy and Planning in the HEA, Fergal Costello, in 2002 when he states that “The Act clearly sets out an onus upon Universities to make teaching a central part of their activity and to strive to enhance the quality of that teaching”. He refers to Section 12 of the Act and the 11 objects of the university and highlights two expectations of the universities in relation to teaching as:

- (a) to advance knowledge through *teaching*, scholarly research, and scientific investigation, and ...
- (h) to promote the highest standards in, and quality of, teaching and research. (Costello, 2002).

There were also some requirements within the Universities Act with respect to promoting equality in terms of access to university, and effective management of resources to ensure adherence to public accountability of state funding which had an impact on Quality Assurance which is discussed in Section (2.2.4).

Summarising the context in terms of funding, governance and autonomy, the strong negotiating powers of key stakeholders within the universities are noteworthy and this may be interpreted as an example of the ongoing higher education wrangle between autonomy and accountability. The particularly vulnerable political position of the Irish coalition government in 1996, and the context of a rapidly expanding higher education sector nationally and internationally, may also have aided the strength of agency exerted by the senior university leaders and other voices involved in opposing drafts of the Universities Act (1997). However, the broader political landscape, with the emergence of NPM, must also be acknowledged and its impact as a management approach was evident beyond higher education. It must also be noted that Irish HE also received substantial funding through Atlantic Philanthropies from 1982-2004 totalling US\$7 million, which was directed to projects in non-science areas, as well as technology and represented funding which was “non-strategic and non-accountable” (Coate and MacLabhrainn, 2009). However, the focus of this research is on the dominant context of publicly funded HE and the associated accountability and regulation. The strengthening of greater powers regarding regulation of public funding was being applied to quality assurance within higher education internationally which is the theme of the next section.

2.2.4 Quality Assurance developments

In terms of teaching and the associated experience of learners in Irish higher education, Walsh indicates that within the Universities Act (1997) the “development of procedures for quality assurance of teaching and learning was identified as a key requirement for all institutions, reinforced by a new monitoring role for the HEA” (Walsh, 2014, p.38). The Universities Act (1997) stated within Section 35 that Irish universities had to establish quality procedures for the purposes of quality assurance (QA). However, according to Coolahan (2004) all HEIs in Ireland had invested in QA prior to the early 1990s and Skilbeck (2001) supports this by noting that the Council of Heads of Irish Universities (CHIU) had commissioned work on quality assurance in 1994. The Universities Act (1997) also heralded the requirements for each institution to engage in strategic planning.

The implementation and review of the quality assurance procedures and associated processes were not heavily prescribed and it was suggested that the effectiveness of the procedures should be reviewed periodically but within no less than 15 years. Within Section 49 of the Universities Act (1997), it was noted that the HEA would also be involved in reviewing the quality assurance procedures within the universities, further indicating a development of an audit culture which had not previously been applied to the university sector of Irish higher education. This relatively slow implementation of a quality assurance system indicates the light touch regulation which surrounded the process.

There was also an emphasis on quality assurance with reference to each of the higher education sectors within the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act (1999). Quality assurance was noted in relation to DIT “for the purpose of further improving and maintaining quality of education and training” (Section 39, Part V) and the same text was used in Section 42 relating to the Universities (IV). While there was no specific reference to teaching quality, it was noted that the process of quality assurance should involve “evaluation by learners of programmes of education” (Section 39, Part V). Quality assurance procedures were also a key feature of the Bologna Declaration in June 1999 which is discussed separately in Section 2.2.5.

Despite the articulation of quality assurance procedures and associated reviews within statutory acts relating to Irish higher education, and allied European agreements, formal evidence of the implementation of these procedures seemed to be lacking. An Irish Universities Quality Steering Committee was established in 1995, but it was not until after

the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) was set up in 2003 that the first formal review of quality assurance procedures and associated effectiveness took place in an Irish university in January 2004. The other six universities' QA procedures were subsequently reviewed, with all completed by February 2005.

In 2004, the HEA and IUQB jointly commissioned the European University Association (EUA) to conduct a review of the QA procedures and their implementation. The EUA's *'Review of Quality Assurance Procedures in Irish Universities'* was published in April 2005. It was noted by the reviewers that there was "little evidence to suggest QA processes have influenced the overall teaching portfolio of universities, nor that they are explicitly linked to other more specific QA mechanisms for teaching and learning" (EUA, 2005, p.22). They also expressed astonishment that there were few or no opportunities for students to provide their input on their evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning. Student feedback is now sought on a module level through the use of Q6a forms within the IoT sector and noted in Appendix A with reference to QA processes in DIT. Overall however, Irish QA climate contrasts sharply with that of the UK and specifically England which has recently piloted the Teaching Excellence Framework (HEFCE, 2017).

The European influence in terms of conducting a review on our quality assurance procedures and also the overall European context is noteworthy. After the single European Market was established in 1992, there was a move for greater cohesion of the European higher education sector as an entity and even a European commodity. The Irish higher education context was now conspicuously operating within a much broader international socio-political environment and this with pan-European processes and policies infiltrating all key aspects of HE provision. The Hunt Report (DES, 2011) refers to European level recommendations on quality assurance with an emphasis that each HEI should be responsible for quality. It is beyond the scope of this literature review to comprehensively capture the influence of European policy on Irish HE. Therefore, the scope of European involvement in Irish HE is illustrated by tracking how one particular European HE project has had a highly significant impact on the current shape and focus of Irish HE. This is the Bologna Declaration of 1999 as discussed below.

2.2.5 Bologna Declaration 1999

The most significant European-wide reform in higher education was initiated with the signing of the Bologna Declaration in June 1999 (McMahon, 2014; Scott, 2012). According

to Scott (2012) the extent of influence of the Bologna declaration and the associated implications is potentially on a par with that of the Euro currency. It may also be positioned within what Levin (1998) described as education reform being part of a “policy epidemic” (p.131). Levin (1998) suggests that the disease analogy seems to invoke characteristics of policy affected large numbers of people and “happens to people as much as something that people cause to happen” (p.138). The Bologna Declaration was an agreement signed initially by 29 European ministers for education in Bologna. The purpose of the declaration and associated agreement was to establish a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which had initially been proposed within the Sorbonne Declaration (1998), with the aim to promote citizens’ movement and opportunities for employment across the member states. The principal implications of this declaration for individual countries is that their national higher education system and HEIs need to have clear documentation relating to their programmes of study to allow for comparability and compatibility of the HE systems across Europe. This was evidenced in a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, the “establishment of a system of credits – such as in the ECTS system” (1999, p.3) and an emphasis on quality assurance (1999). The individuality and self-governance of the states and their HEIs was recognised and conveyed as “taking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of University autonomy – to consolidate the European area of higher education” (1999, p.5).

The Bologna Declaration involved practical interpretability of programmes across the sector and this had significant implications for individual institutions, lecturers and students. An example of this was the emphasis on an outcomes based approach to curriculum. Both Gibbs (2013) and Land (2004) highlighted the impact of such legislation in terms of curriculum changes for lecturers and departments. Gibbs aptly describes the impact of the Bologna process as “radical” (2013, p.9) and claims that earlier approaches to teaching development were more akin to “fine tuning” (p.9). Land (2004) described it as a “pedagogic and epistemic change” (p.9). Gleeson (2013) commented that the adoption of this curriculum approach was “characterised by an eerie silence, certainly in Ireland” (p.921).

Debate continues around the pros and cons of an outcomes based approach (Gleeson, 2013; Murchan, 2014) with commentators such as Knight (2001) favouring a process based model which “respects academic freedom” and treats academics “as professionals who are

trusted to vivify the curriculum” (p.378). Gleeson (2013) follows a similar line of reasoning and views the Bologna process as part of a wider neo-liberal agenda, characterised by measures such as performance indicators. He cites Ball (2008) and Hargreaves (2003) when he suggests that indicators such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) “may be the ‘Trojan horse’ that legitimates the neo-liberal performativity agenda” (Gleeson, 2013, p.921). However, O’Connor and colleagues in the HEA assert that the general association of a demand for greater accountability in HE with the promotion of a ‘neo-liberal’ agenda belies its wider importance both for quality assurance and for the civic role of HEIs (O’Connor, Patterson, Chantler & Backert, 2013).

From the HEA perspective the Bologna process is well embedded in the Irish HE sector which values the importance of “balancing institutional autonomy with accountability” (DES, 2011, p.91). Many commentators worried that managerialist approaches were creeping into HE which were designed to serve economic and industry interests rather than educational (Dunne, 2013; Garvin, 2012; Lynch, 2006; Walsh 2012). McMahon (2012), Palfreyman (2008) and Teichler (2007) all link the Bologna process to bureaucracy and to greater alliances between higher education and industry. McMahon (2012) notes that Ireland was viewed as compliant, and “a leading performer” (p.182) in aspects of the Bologna Declaration such as the learning outcomes approach at programme and module level.

The intentions which were articulated in the Bologna Declaration (1999) have been expanded and the ongoing process involves meetings of European ministries of Education with the output of a communiqué every two years (EUA, n.d.). Ireland was the first country to develop and launch its National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) in 2003 as part of the work plan of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) which was a statutory body created from the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. The development of this framework was part of the mechanisms and systems of quality assurance.

The National Reports on the Bologna Process are relevant to this research as they incorporate data on the professional development of lecturers: “Training in teaching for staff” (National Report Ireland, 2015, p.8). The Hunt Report (DES, 2011) referred to the performance of Irish HEIs in the Bologna Process Stocktaking Report (2009) in terms of quality assurance. However, the national level focus belies the institutional level of

investment in resources to support the extensive implementation. While national level seminars were organised by the NQAI, each individual institution had to organise and implement their own strategies to comply with the implications of the Bologna Declaration in terms of use of learning outcomes at programme and module level. This may be viewed as relying on an individualistic rather than a collective structural approach to policy implementation and associated professional development. It could also be positioned as part of the individualism of neoliberalism and managerialism by national government, relating to the performativity drive of quality development and assurance (Lynch et al., 2015). Ireland's reliance on outside influence and direction can also be noted in other international insights in the early 2000s.

2.2.6 International Perspectives on Irish Higher Education

In addition to the significant developments in national policy in terms of the Acts of 1997 and 1999, and the highly influential impact of the Bologna Declaration (1999) and associated processes, Ireland sought insights from others to develop the HE system. Coate and MacLabhrainn (2009) claim within their account of Irish HE, that the “strongest steers for HE are not coming from inside but external” (p.208). The two most substantial reviews were undertaken by Malcolm Skilbeck in 2001 and by the OECD in 2004 which are discussed in the next two sections.

2.2.6.1 Skilbeck Report 2001 and Discussion Paper 2003

Malcolm Skilbeck was commissioned by the HEA and the CHIU to conduct a report on Irish HE within the context of international trends and the associated prospective changes and challenges. His report *The University Challenged: A Review of International Trends and Issues with particular reference to Ireland* was published in 2001. While his remit was the university sector, there were recommendations which could apply to the IoT sector. In profiling the challenges and associated potential changes, he declared that “the test for universities is, essentially, their readiness to mobilise the enormous talent at their disposal” (Skilbeck, 2001, p.11). He highlighted the potential of continuing development of existing staff including sustaining morale and acknowledging good practice in teaching (Skilbeck, 2001).

While some suggested actions were directed towards institutions, Skilbeck also emphasised that the challenges were not solely the concern of one element of an institution, but the whole institution and indeed the sector (2001). He captured the Irish context of higher

education as: “in an environment of national goal setting and strategic planning, a traditional society and economy is being transformed into a modern, knowledge and information-based society” (Skilbeck, 2001, p.13). According to McDonnell (2006) Skilbeck portrays a broad range of responsibilities associated with higher education institutions, more than purely economic. One of the forces he highlights which is impacting on higher education policy and practices is:

Continuing growth in demand by individuals and by whole societies for ever higher levels of educational attainment, for credentials of value in employment and professional life, and for personal and community well-being (Skilbeck, 2001, p.10).

Skilbeck also authored a Discussion Paper in 2003 on DIT in terms of its potential for gaining university status, which was favourable but remained at discussion level until recently. Loxley (2014) perceives Skilbeck’s report (2001) and the subsequent OECD report in 2004 as being further points of reference for the emphasis on a knowledge based economy.

2.2.6.2 OECD Report 2004

While some viewed Skilbeck’s (2001) review of the context of Irish higher education and how it could respond to the challenges as broad-ranging, the OECD review was deemed to be directing Irish higher education to be firmly focused on a solely economic remit (Loxley, 2014; Lynch, 2006). This is articulated by Lynch (2006), as the OECD review’s portrayal of “the role of education in servicing economy to neglect of its social and development responsibilities” (p.1) with an emphasis on education for a skilled work force.

With specific reference to supporting the professional learning and development of lecturers, the OECD report (2004) noted the following recommendation:

...the need for a more positive approach to staff development in both universities and institutes of technology and the commitment of institutional resources to staff development programmes covering the whole range of work in tertiary education, in particular in the development and updating of teaching skills... (p.27).

The OECD report (2004) also incorporated a number of recommendations at an institutional level, such as that funding of the IoTs should be moved to the HEA, which happened from 2005. The OECD report also recommended that institutions be funded

based on a “contract against an agreed strategic plan which will significantly increase accountability for performance” (OECD, 2004, p.25). In relation to institutional governance and management, the OECD report (2004) refers to the National Development Plan (2000-2006) which describes “the role of education in the ‘knowledge-based’ economy where intellect and innovation will determine competitive advantage... and to which ‘knowledge-capital’ represents a key contribution” (National Development Plan 2000-2006, para 6.35). Lynch asserts that “the view that education is simply another market commodity has become normalised in policy and public discourse” (2006, p.1). She contends that this occurred earlier and more strongly in the higher education sector in Ireland (Lynch et al., 2015) than other countries. The emphasis in HE to serve the economy and to do so as part of a managerial performance based approach, is supported in this OECD report (2004).

2.2.7 National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 – Hunt Report (2011)

The predominance of the idea of HE to serve the economy and contribute to other societal functions is reflected in the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (DES, 2011) and is commonly referred to as ‘The Hunt Report’. This report was the most comprehensive policy document relating to higher education since the 1995 Report of Steering Committee on the Future Development of Higher Education and the Universities Act 1997. The timing of this Report is significant as it was published in the wake of an international economic crisis which heavily impacted on Ireland and led to a governance climate of austerity for several years.

Despite, the acute economic situation at the time of the authoring, Walsh and Loxley (2015) view the Hunt Report as a collection of previous policy initiatives rather than offering much new or relevant for the period in time and for the future. However, it could also be deemed as far-reaching as it refers to all aspects of higher education from funding to the student experience. Like previous policy documents, it is positioned in line with the Government’s objectives to support a “Smart Economy” (DES, 2011, p.3) and higher education’s role to “rebuild an innovative knowledge based economy” (DES, 2011, p.9). This reiterates the theme of other Government policies and publications such as *Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal* in 2008.

The sections of the Hunt Report (2011) which are of direct relevance to this research are Part 2: The mission of Higher Education, section 3: Teaching and Learning (from p.52) and

specifically 3.10 Development of teaching skills (from p.59). The “establishment of centres for educational development and academic practice” and the “availability of professional programmes on teaching and learning” (DES, 2011, p.52) are both noted as welcome developments in relation to teaching and learning. These advances are discussed further in this thesis in Section 2.3 Education Development. While these developments were highlighted in the Hunt Report as “evidence of the commitment and dedication of academic and support staff to the teaching mission” (DES, 2011, p.52), it is insinuated that these advances and associated best practice are not evidenced across all Irish HEIs. It is declared that the challenge is to “convert best practice into standard practice” (DES, 2011, p.52). Professional qualifications for teaching are noted as requirements in other educational sectors such as primary through to further education, and continuing professional development is highlighted as obligatory in many professions (DES, 2011).

The Hunt Report (2011) follows recommendations relating to lecturers and teaching qualifications emphasised elsewhere such as in the UK’s Dearing Report (1997) and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2009). One standard stated that “institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so” (ESG, 2009, p.18). This statement is almost identical to the recommendation within the Hunt Report which places the onus on the HEIs to “ensure that teaching staff are qualified and competent” (DES, 2011, p.63). The Hunt Report quotes the ESG (2005, 1.4) that HEIs should “provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective” (DES, 2011, p.60). This statement is stark in its directive and punitive tone, as well as an emphasis on teaching associated with skills. The summary of recommendations subsumes this underlying regulatory and corrective approach, with the first statement that students “should have an excellent teaching and learning experience, informed by up-to-date research and facilitated by a high-quality learning environment” (DES, 2011, p.61). The final recommendation is that:

All higher education institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support ongoing development and improvement of their skills (DES, 2011, p.62).

The focus in this final recommendation and the accompanying text is clearly on the institution to support the achievement of this goal in relation to teaching quality which ultimately enhances the student learning experience. However, this recommendation has resource implications, and may lead to only those institutions with the funding and commitment to assign resources to this. As an implementation of recommendations within the Hunt Report (2011), the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education was established in 2012, and is commonly referred to as the National Forum. As noted previously in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2, one of its projects in 2014 was the development of a national Professional Development Framework for those supporting learning in Irish HE. The consultation phase for the development of this Framework was being organised in early 2015 when this research was commencing.

As noted above, most Irish HEIs have centres for educational development and examples of their work was highlighted and praised within the Hunt Report (2011). It is these and the associated role of the educational developer which are the focus of the next section 2.3.

2.3 Educational Developer and their role within National and Institutional contexts

This section presents the emergence of the activities associated with educational development in Ireland. There are competing conceptions of what constitutes educational development and various terms associated with the role are outlined to capture this. The role is set against the backdrop of changes within the higher education sector and associated policies both nationally and internationally which have been profiled in the previous section (2.2). The changes noted above, such as increased student numbers, curriculum developments and increased managerial focus are discussed with a greater emphasis here with the impact on educational development activities and the implications for lecturers. This section concludes with an exploration of the activities of educational developers in terms of how they support lecturers in formal, informal, individual and collective settings.

2.3.1 Terminology

Prior to profiling the history of the activities of educational development, it is important to establish the common terminology associated with the activity and to present the rationale for the use of one term, that of educational developer. In the US, the term faculty development is used to describe this type of role as it relates to working with academic

colleagues, whom they term as faculty. The term staff development was originally used in the UK from the same perspective of supporting colleagues' learning and development. Initially, this work may have been associated with a broad range of aspects of the role of lecturers however, as the work became more focused on teaching and learning, the terms educational and academic development became more prominent. This also led to the specific role titles of educational developer and academic developer.

This change in titles may signal a move from a potentially deficit model of developing staff, our colleagues, to the development of an academic activity such as education and associated learning and teaching. More specific role titles have also been created which are linked to the grade and the specific nature of the work such as learning development officer, senior academic developer, or new titles such as curriculum innovator. The term educational developer is used throughout this thesis as it is the term most commonly used in Ireland. This term is the title of the Irish network – Educational Developers of Ireland Network (EDIN).

There are also various terms used for the role of the lecturer within higher education such as academic, academic teacher, teacher, professor and faculty. Lecturer is the term used within this thesis as it is the term which is most commonly used in Ireland. The official job titles of lecturers in most Irish HEIs are assistant lecturer, lecturer, and senior lecturer. The term higher education will be used to refer to this sector of education. Other terms such as third level are frequently used in Ireland but they often refer to undergraduate level only. The term tertiary refers to post-compulsory second level education and includes further education as well as higher education whereas the term higher education encompasses both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

2.3.2 Historical emergence

There is evidence of educational development activity within HEIs from the mid to late 1960s based on accounts from international authors (Boud, 1999; Grant, Lee, Clegg, Manathunga, Barrow, Kandlbinder, Brailsford, Gosling and Hicks, 2009; Gosling, 2001, 2009; Jones & Wisker, 2012; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2016; Saroyan, 2014; Sorcinelli, 2015). While there is no specific account of the emergence of educational development in Ireland, an account of the role of the learning technologist has been documented in an unpublished doctoral thesis by McNutt (2010). A review of the documented histories of other countries

and specific work by Land (2004) provides a valuable insight into educational development, from which the drivers for the activity and associated role within Ireland may be plotted.

Gosling (2001, 2009) charted the emergence of educational development activity in the UK from the year 1966, noting the existence of one educational development centre in the UK until 1970 when two more were established in the period 1970-1975. There are similar records of educational development activity in the late 1960s in other countries. Roxå and Mårtensson (2016) state that there were educational developers within Sweden's Lund University in 1969. The first educational development unit in Canada was established in the same year 1969 within McGill University (Saroyan, 2014). In the southern hemisphere, universities in Australia and New Zealand also had educational development activity in the 1960s according to Grant et al. (2009) who assert that lecturers began to collaborate to support each other in teaching undergraduate students. By the mid-1970s in the UK, there were approximately 30 people working within the realms of educational development, most of whom were part-time (Gibbs, 2013).

Gornall (1999) uses the term 'new professionals' for those involved in such emergent activities which included educational development and learning technology. Whitchurch (2008) describes them as 'third space professionals' as the instigators of these activities to support the improvement of teaching working on the peripheries of institutions and were often not clearly positioned within the dominant spheres of academic or administrative activity. Initially, they were individuals engaged in ad hoc activities such as workshops and seminars for interested individuals. This was prior to more formalised structures with appointments of dedicated staff to roles of educational development within specialist units or centres. The figure 2.2 below summarises the historical emergence of educational development activity in three regions:

US – Ages of Faculty Development	Australian and UK context—Phases of Academic development as:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of the Scholar (1960s and prior) • Age of the Teacher (1970s) • Age of the Developer (1980s) • Age of the Learner (1990s) • Age of Networks (2000s) • Now Age of Evidence (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy & Beach 2006; Beach, Sorcinelli, Austin & Rivard, 2013; Sorcinelli, 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded and invisible in academic life (lecturers engaging in situated learning) • Moral imperative; improvement of teaching in 1970s • Corporate policy; (late 1980s) • Multidimensional and distributed • Localised practice • Reciprocal peer learning (Boud, 1999)

Figure 2:2 Summary of historical emergence of Educational Development activity

There are similarities across the two historical presentations of educational development with the US and Australian / UK contexts as depicted in Figure 2.2 with each beginning with activity which was firmly with the lecturers themselves. The work of educational developers was often part-time and informal, and uncoordinated (Boud, 1999; Gibbs, 2013; Grant et al., 2009; Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy & Beach, 2006; Sorcinelli, 2015). The educational developer may have been a fellow lecturer with expertise or interest in teaching development. By the late 1960s, the activities and roles became more formal as centres or units were established. The increase in student numbers enrolling in higher education and the interest and investment in this sector by governments contributed to the development of activities to support new and existing lecturers in terms of their teaching activity.

The accounts by Boud (1999) and Sorcinelli et al. (2006) as summarised in Figure 2.2, chart the move to a greater emphasis on the improvement of teaching in the 1970s. Boud (1999) declares the second phase of educational development as “a moral imperative” (p.4) as he highlights that the increased enrolments and diversity of students coupled with high failure rates probably prompted a focus on improving teaching to support student learning. This is reiterated by Sorcinelli et al. (2006), Gosling (2009) and Gibbs (2013) who all highlight that the initial approach to supporting lecturers was on an ad hoc, voluntary basis through to event-based activities such as seminars, workshops. Gibbs (2013) also notes the publication of texts focused on teaching tips around this time. By the late 1980s there was a significant shift in terms of the activities of educational developers, which Sorcinelli et al. (2006) term

as the age of the developer as the work become more formalised and centralised within the HEIs.

The growth in numbers of educational developers and their influence as a community is evident by the early 1990s when educational developers in the UK formed their own association - the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) in 1993. This association became one of the founding associations of the International Consortium of Educational Developers (ICED). Other associations and societies interested in supporting learning in higher education already existed since the 1970s such as the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA), which had been set up as a scholarly society for those “committed to the advancement of higher and tertiary education” (HERDSA, n.d.). The international network of educational developers ICED established itself quickly and launched its associated International Journal for Academic Development (IJAD) in 1996.

According to Land (2004), the emergence and establishment of educational development is associated with key drivers for change within the higher education sector at the time. He identifies six drivers for change as: massification, accountability, managerialism, learning technology, marketization and consumerism, and pedagogic and epistemic change. Three of these, massification, accountability and managerialism have been discussed in Section 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 above. Land (2004) asserts that the new managerialism approach, with increased scrutiny of lecturers’ activities, led to teaching being separated from research and, because of its generic nature it became more susceptible to control by management than research activity. Some educational developers may refute these charges of being foot soldiers for management (Clegg, 2009; Manathunga, 2007; Rowland, 2007; Roxå and Mårtensson, 2016) or “street level bureaucrats” as Land (2004, p.21) refers to them, with his use of Lipsky’s term from 1969 and 1980. However, the move from educational developers being active at the periphery with enthusiastic lecturers interested in improving their teaching, to a more central position within the HEI and greater involvement in implementing quality assurance related policies seems evident particularly in the UK and Boud (1999) allies this phase of educational development with the rise of human capital theory. More recently, Debowski (2014) has noted a shift in the educational developer role in Australia, from being perceived as an expert and agent for change to more of a partner

working with academic leaders to support change. The educational developer role in Ireland is now profiled.

2.3.3 Educational Development in Ireland

Educational development activities followed a similar pattern in Ireland to that which had emerged in the UK (Wisker & Antoniou, 2006). Though the emergence of Irish educational developers and activities lagged behind (O'Farrell, 2008), in an article by Susan Sayers in the first issue of the *Irish Educational Studies* journal in 1981, Sayers indicates that she was actively engaged in an educational development role in an Irish university from the early 1980s and that she had experience in supporting lecturers within an accredited programme while in a UK university prior to that. Despite Sayers' 1981 account, there is little documented evidence of educational development in Ireland prior to 2000. There were at least three educational developers in the Irish universities of Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork and University College Dublin by the mid-1990s (Huntley–Moore, personal correspondence, March 14, 2017), with evidence of their activities documented in associated resources in each of the three universities.

The drivers which Land (2004) noted in relation to the emergence of the role of educational developers in the UK can be applied to the Irish HE context, particularly relating to increasing students numbers and the use of learning technologies such as content management systems and virtual learning environments (VLEs). By the mid-1990s, there was clear evidence of educational development activities within Irish HEIs with the organisation of seminars and workshops for colleagues on teaching related issues, including strategies to engage large groups of students and emerging technologies. There were also workshops facilitated by fellow educational developers or associated role holders in other HEIs as counterparts or external educationalists. There was an individualistic approach to professional development and learning, as it was voluntary for lecturers to participate. Resourcing was an issue which differentiated institutions with the ability to commit people and time to these activities. This was evidenced in two universities who had people leading the initiatives based on their experiences in similar roles in the UK and Australia (Huntley–Moore, 2017, personal correspondence).

In 1996 the Irish government's Targeted Initiatives funding supported the establishment of centres for teaching and learning in the university sector. DIT, the largest institute of

technology, set up a Teaching and Learning Centre in 1999. Other IoTs seconded lecturers to learning and teaching support roles on a part-time basis (e.g. IT Tralee, 2006). Some private, independently funded HEIs had begun to support teaching and learning development activities earlier. For example, since 2000 Griffith College offered lecturer support through one-off workshops and it established a Lecturer Support and Development Unit in 2002. It was not until 2007 with the aid of national funding (Section 2.3.4.1), that other HEIs such as Dundalk IT established a centre for teaching and learning. However, prior to the existence of centres and formal educational development roles, there were ad hoc activities organised and supported within each of the institutions, often on a goodwill basis with existing educational developers or those with an interest in specific areas such as assessment or learning technology offering workshops or informal support.

The emergence of the All-Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE) in 2000 may be perceived as evidence of the significant level of interest among lecturers and educational developers in supporting student learning and their own professional development at that time. As a member-based association, AISHE aims to promote the development and, importantly, the dissemination of innovative practice to support learning within HEIs across the island of Ireland (AISHE, n.d.). The involvement of educational developers from Northern Irish HEIs (i.e. Queens University Belfast and University of Ulster) meant that they brought insights from their participation in the well-established SEDA network in the UK. There were also lecturers and educational developers who had studied or worked in HEIs in other countries who brought that experience to Ireland. Two of the founding members of AISHE had come from working in roles supporting teaching and learning in an Australian university and were members of the Australasian scholarly society HERDSA which had existed since the 1970s.

The increase in the number of educational developers in Ireland prompted the establishment of a network for educational developers in 2002. The network known as the Educational Developers of Ireland Network (EDIN) initially had members from the university sector only and was informal and collegial in structure. In 2005 members were invited to join from the IoTs and other HEIs and 53 members of EDIN were recorded in that year (Harding, 2013; Wisker & Antoniou, 2006). Almost 10 years ago, in 2008, O'Farrell noted that "In Ireland, we are only starting to demarcate the role of educational or

academic developer, and the part people in that role should play in learning and teaching, policy making, educational research and the scholarship of learning and teaching” (p.12).

By 2012, there were 116 EDIN members (Harding, 2013) with 49 from the University sector, 45 from the IoTs and the remaining 22 based in private colleges or working as individual consultants with no attachment to a single institute. This compared favourably, and indeed, represented proportionally greater numbers than in the UK, as Jones and Wisker (2012) documented 91 Educational Development Centres in the UK by 2011, while membership of EDIN indicates representation of 26 centres. By 2016/17 there were 93 educational developers noted as EDIN members (Keane, 2017, personal correspondence).

2.3.4 Funding of educational development activities in Ireland

Few activities would be sustainable in an expanding sector such as higher education without funding from internal or external sources. Within the period from 2000 to 2011, substantial funding of €33.5m was assigned from the HEA to individual HEIs and collaborations among institutions through teaching and learning projects. Some of this funding was directly related to the implementation of curricular changes associated with the Bologna Declaration (Section 2.2.5). This section will outline the key sources of some of this investment in educational development activity, how the funds were allocated and for what purposes.

As noted in Section 2.2.3, the Irish government with some support from the ESF had been investing in the higher education sector since the 1970s. While some HEIs were allocating internal funds to support the development of teaching and learning, central government funds were also administered to the seven universities through the HEA. The first significant funding allocated to HEIs from central government funds to support the development of teaching and student learning was in the form of the Training the Trainers programme in 1994. This funding was part of the National Development Plan and was allocated for the identified priority area of “staff development in teaching methodologies and course delivery” (National Academy Consultation, 2011, p.2). This was followed in 1996 by the Targeted Initiatives funding which supported the establishment of centres for teaching and learning in the university sector, some of which emerged under the guise of offices which were also concerned with QA and quality improvement (QI).

This formal structuring heralded a new phase in supporting educational development within Irish HEIs, as activities which may have been on an ad hoc basis were now being directed through a central office which had a remit to support all staff as well as report on QA. These changes in approach are similar to that experienced by educational developers in the UK and elsewhere (Boud, 1999; Gosling, 2009) in that the activities were no longer hidden and or informal support for interested individuals. While the initial approach was one based on organised workshops attended by those interested and available, the QA agenda, and the provision of dedicated funding, started to dictate the topics and formats for provision of support with a more formal approach to recording attendance, and gathering evaluative data for reporting to the HEA was required. This emphasis on monitoring and control is reflected in Duff, Hegarty and Hussey's (2000) warning that increased funding allocated to the HE sector in Ireland must come with increased responsibility and accountability.

In 2000, a specific HEA strand of funding was allocated as 'Support for Teaching'. It continued for many years and was renamed as Strategic Initiatives from 2004. The renaming to Strategic Initiatives seemed to signal a new funding phase in terms of both amount and purpose. The government's allocation of funds had doubled from €397,000 in 2000 to €800,000 in 2004 with an additional €210,000 for the National Digital Learning Repository (NDLR) project which commenced in 2004 (National Academy Consultation, 2011).

This was a period of intensive developments in terms of technology and its use within the higher education sector (Land, 2004; McNutt, 2010). Individual HEIs were allocating funding to specific projects to develop technology, and nationally the NDLR project was a collaboration to support the creation and development of a repository for digital resources. It received substantial annual funding of up to €970,000 in 2008 and may be seen as an example of the significant investment awarded to collaborative projects which were deemed to be crucial to supporting student learning and lecturers' engagement with technologies. Reflecting previous communities of practice, for example, EDIN and AISHE, the Irish Learning Technology Association (ILTA) was formed around this time between 2000 and 2004. However, it must be emphasised that the government funding for these initiatives was solely given to the university sector, apart from the NDLR project from 2005-06 onwards. While other HEIs may have contributed to the associated projects, it was the

educational developers within the universities who were leading on the projects and managing the funding.

2.3.4.1 Strategic Innovation Fund

It was not until the commencement of the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) in 2007 that the IoTs were included in the allocations of central government investment in educational development. The SIF investment was in two rounds known as SIF I and SIF II and amounted to €22.7m (National Academy Consultation, 2011). This funding was generally co-ordinated and managed within institutions by the centres for teaching and learning with the HEIs matching the funds for the projects from their own internal budgets. Educational developers were assigned projects and their time at an hourly rate was often used as the mechanism to calculate the match funding. A new cohort of individuals involved in educational development activities were hired by HEIs via SIF contracts relating to projects.

A requirement for the award of SIF funding was that proposed projects had to be collaborative. This resulted in initiatives such as the establishment of the National Academy for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL) in 2006-07 and a specific network for the Institutes of Technology known as the Learning Innovation Network (LIN). There were also regional clusters formed and funded accordingly such as the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA) and the Shannon Consortium (Limerick and surrounding areas). According to O’Sullivan (2014) while there are some indications of success in areas of lecturer development based on SIF funded projects, she asserts that “it is unlikely that these initiatives had enough time to become embedded within institutional structures and personal teaching practices” (p.229).

2.3.5 Activities of Educational Developers in Ireland

This section highlights the specific and strategic approaches to educational development work within Ireland. It is structured around the main categories of activities from formal and accredited to informal and non-accredited and variations on these. As a comprehensive overview of this work in Irish Higher Education from an educational development perspective, this section addresses a gap in the literature.

According to Blackmore and Castley (2006), in the early days of educational development from the late 1980s to early 1990s, the approach to the work of educational developers was “relatively ‘free-floating’ as their activities were not defined by institutional strategies” (p.46). This summation is similar to those noted earlier in Section 2.3.2, which described

educational developers working as 'ad hoc' and even atheoretical (Gibbs, 2013). Blackmore and Castley (2006) plotted the changes in terms of UK policy, such as the recommendation of the 1997 Dearing Report on professional development and that academics engaged in teaching should have a qualification. They stated that the policy and other developments such as the review of subjects by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education resulted in "the agenda for many ED units began to alter from change agent to an exponent and **enabler of good practice** in teaching and learning" (Blackmore & Castley, 2006, p.46, *emphasis in original*). It has also been asserted that educational development is difficult to evaluate (Stefani, 2011).

Bamber (2009) proposed a broad flexible framework for continuing professional development of lecturers based on a conceptualisation by Blackmore and Castley (2006). The framework, as presented in Figure 2.3, contains four quadrants. Bamber (2009) asserted that the non-formal and non-accredited quadrant is often unaccounted for and neglected in terms of lecturers' professional development and she refers to it as "the 'invisible curriculum' in an academic's learning" (p.13).

There is little research conducted on the non-formal, unstructured professional development. The focus tends to be on what is offered by educational development centres and educational developers. The provision tends to be event based with an emphasis on attendance. This focus therefore neglects to account for lecturers' engagement or participation in educational development activities which are not organised by a central unit or other opportunities provided by the institution. However, a recent snapshot of activities was captured by the National Forum in December 2015 and presented as a typology of professional development activities (National Forum, 2016).

It is this area of lecturers' learning activity, which may be hidden from me as an educational developer within a centralised unit, that I was interested in exploring. The four quadrants of the framework are now discussed with reference to activities of educational developers and lecturers in Ireland.

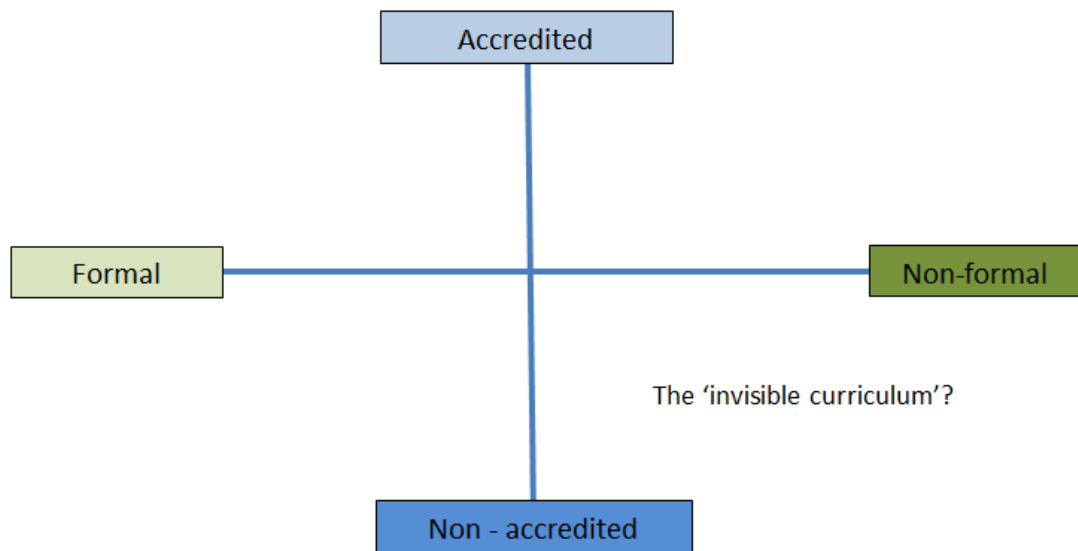


Figure 2:3 A broad, flexible framework adapted from Blackmore and Castley, 2006 by Bamber (2009, p.14)

2.3.5.1 Formal

The formal category of educational development is often associated with event-based activities, but also includes structured projects. The event-based activities may be open to all those interested or targeted to specific groups. This category is discussed in two sub-categories of accredited and non-accredited formal activities. The format of non-accredited activities was initially associated with educational development and included workshops and seminars. This is followed by the increasingly dominant format of accredited formal provision.

Slowey and Kozina (2012) conducted a survey as part of a DRHEA project in 2012 which gathered insights from lecturers within the HEIs in the Dublin Region on their engagement in professional development activities. One of the questions sought examples of structured professional development activities and of the 659 respondents, 371 specifically named a course or activity which they had engaged in. Within this group of respondents, 75 noted they had obtained a qualification in teaching and learning with the most common examples of a PG Cert or PG Diploma and some noted Masters level. However, some did refer to unstructured / non-accredited activities such as reading, learning from peers and engaging in discipline-specific associations. O’Sullivan (2010) conducted a survey with lecturers in the two Irish dental schools and noted that only 12% of the 83 respondents were aware of the accredited formal programmes which were available in their institutions.

Non-accredited

As with other staff development activities within organisations, educational development provision was initially based on short sessions as the main form of training or development. This category includes the event based activities of seminars and workshops. These are formal but not accredited in terms of forming or contributing to a recognised module or programme within an institutional or national framework of qualifications. According to Osborn and Johnson (1999) these seminars attended by volunteers constituted the main educational development activity. Such sessions can be facilitated by an educational developer from within the institution or from another HEI, or by a fellow lecturer. Examples of these activities within the formal, structured and non-accredited provision may include workshops, seminars, symposia, colloquia, fora, presentations, small conferences and lunch-time professional conversations. In addition they may include more comprehensive, longer-term activities such as projects and fellowships which lecturers may apply for within their institutions or nationally and internationally. However, this form of professional development has been critiqued. Knight (2002) asserted that “event-based professional development is often associated with a managerialist discourse” (p.239). This may be based on the emphasis of tracking attendance which was noted as part of the reporting mechanism for SIF and other sources of funding within Irish HE.

Accredited

Accredited provision of professional development refers to any activity which leads to an academic award or qualification. Internationally teaching qualifications, in the form of accredited programmes, exist in many guises. Research into the professional activity of teaching in higher education is relatively recent (Hanbury, Prosser & Rickinson, 2008; Kandlbinder & Peseta, 2009). Yihong (2011) notes that in China centralised initial teacher training for tertiary level existed since the mid-1980s. In the US, many faculty have voluntarily undergone a review and accreditation process (Lubinescu, Ratcliff & Gaffney, 2001) by self-study offered by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC, 2007). For some, the participation in programmes and self-study for accreditation of teaching is another substantial time commitment without a substantial increase in resources (Light, Cox & Calkins, 2009). There are also accounts of accredited programmes for HE lecturers in other countries such as: Australasia (Gray & Radloff, 2008; Kandlbinder & Peseta, 2009); the UK (Parsons, Hill, Holland, and Willis, 2012; Trowler and Bamber, 2005); Sweden (Roxå and Mårtensson, 2016) and in other European countries (Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne and Nevgi, 2007; Rienties, Brouwer & Lygo-Baker, 2013; Stes, Min-Leliveld, Gijbels & Van

Petegem, 2010). The UK Higher Education Academy (HE Academy) accredits programmes based on their alignment with the Professional Standards Framework. Kandlbinder and Peseta (2009) noted that in 2007, there were 168 HE Academy programmes available in UK universities.

In Ireland, accredited programmes can take the form of Postgraduate Certificates, a similar level to that of the UK. There is a broader range of provision from 5 ECTS modules to masters' level programmes with 90-120 ECTS. As noted in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1, the DIT was the first Irish HEI to develop an accredited programme and at the time took the initiative to develop a suite of three programmes in 2000. The initial programme was the PG Certificate but some lecturers registering for this programme, also registered for the other two. The programmes were initially offered on a voluntary basis, but in 2006, a policy was introduced that stated that completion of the initial programme became a condition of the contract for new lecturers within their first two years of employment as a lecturer in DIT. DIT was the first HEI in Ireland to introduce such a contractual requirement. Also in 2006, a qualification in teaching, such as the PG Certificate became a criterion for progression from Assistant Lecturer (AL) to Lecturer (L). Further details on the DIT programmes are within Appendix A: DIT Profile and Programmes.

In 2007, with funding from SIF (section 2.3.4.1), other HEIs developed programmes for their own lecturers as well as making places available to lecturers from HEIs within their SIF alliance. These programmes had the flexibility associated with modular provision and some allowed for recognition of prior learning (RPL). This flexible and accumulative approach to accredited educational development was evidenced, for example, by the IoTs in their Learning Innovation Network (LIN). This network developed a range of 11 modules, from 5 ECTS to 15 ECTS as part of their academic professional development offering to lecturers within the IoT sector but was open to all interested lecturers. They proposed two pathways to their LIN Postgraduate Diploma in Learning, Teaching and Assessment but both required completion of the introductory module *'Learning and Teaching'* (15 ECTS) and the mandatory *Personal Development Planning (PDP)* 5 ECTS module. While the suite of modules was developed collaboratively within the network, individual IoTs took the lead to develop, pilot and validate the individual modules.

There were also programmes developed within the university sector, such as PG Diploma in Higher Education in Maynooth University in 2007, based on SIF funding. In addition to the individual programmes being evaluated, Irish educational developers have published on the broader impacts lecturers' participation in these accredited programmes (Donnelly, 2006; Maguire, Harding, Noonan & O'Connor, 2017; McAvinia et al., 2015). While there was a proliferation of these accredited programmes in Ireland, as elsewhere, there are those who critique aspects of this form of professional development and learning (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Knight et al., 2006; Trowler & Cooper, 2002). Potential difficulties arise for participants and graduates of these programmes if their discipline departments do not support or value the teaching and learning theories and practices advocated within the programmes (Trowler & Cooper, 2002). Knight et al. (2006) also noted this challenge and claimed that learning may result from participation in formal settings such as workshops and programmes, but "the problems of then embedding that learning in the workplace are notorious" (p.321). It is the workplace learning environment of the lecturers' department and school context that interests me for this research.

2.3.5.2 Non-formal

While formal educational development programmes have become an almost ubiquitous feature of the Higher Education landscape in the UK (Parsons et al., 2012) and other countries as noted above, there is increased recognition in the literature that academics' informal contexts for their non-formal learning is significant. There is less data available on the non-formal forms of professional development for lecturers. Knight et al., (2006) maintain that this non-formal or informal learning is much more significant for lecturers than formal, event-based learning activities. Becher (1999) stated that "teaching can occur without learning and learning without teaching" (p.153). As with student learning in higher education, it is not necessarily confined to the scheduled hours of classes, and some such as Becher (1999), Eraut (1994, 2000), Knight (1999; 2002) and Lueddeke (2003) would emphasise the value of learning beyond the formal settings. This learning is often referred to as workplace learning (Billett, 2001; Engeström, 2007; Fenwick, 2001; 2008; Hart, 2017; Illeris 2003; 2011) and is discussed in more detail in Section 2.4.3.1.

Educational developers are aware of the value of learning in non-formal settings and through the institutional centres for teaching and learning offer opportunities for lecturers to engage in professional development and learning through post-graduation reflection, networking and scholarship. However, as Bamber (2009) and Roscoe (2002), noted non-

formal learning is often ignored and formal forms of professional development and learning such as workshops and programmes may be preferred by institutions, as these activities can be tracked in terms of attendance and completion, whereas the non-formal is more difficult to recognise and document.

Accredited

In Bamber's (2009) flexible framework for CPD (Figure 2.3) based on the work of Blackmore and Castley (2006), she suggested that learning associated with the lecturers' professional bodies may be an example of this form of accredited, yet non-formal learning. It is difficult to identify accredited and non-formal learning which is supported by educational developers. However, the use of recognition of prior learning (RPL) is one example and this mechanism is available to lecturers participating in accredited programmes as they may wish to gain academic credits for learning based on experience.

Non-accredited

Reflective practice activities are often central to accredited programmes, and usually form the strategy for assessment in terms of portfolios and reflective essays. Critical reflection on teaching practice and underpinning values is associated with deep learning (Hatton & Smith, 1995) and has emerged as theory of change within programmes (Bamber & Anderson, 2012). As programmes often have an explicitly stated intended learning outcome that participants will become reflective practitioners, educational developers may often expect graduates to continue engaging in non-formal and non-accredited learning through the use of reflective practice techniques.

There is acknowledgement of the importance of the social element of professional development programmes (Donnelly, 2006; Rienties & Kinchin, 2014) and the potential for peer learning outside of the programme settings. Opportunities for peer learning are often incorporated into programmes so that lecturers may build relationships with colleagues which last beyond the duration of the programme.

Eastcott (2016) notes that educational developers can provide mentoring or coaching for individual lecturers which can be deemed as supporting non-formal professional learning and development. These may be general, open discussions or based on specific topics of interest or concern for the lecturer. Examples may include:

- Individual consultancies - One to one chats / professional conversations (Haigh, 2002)
- Review of submissions for Teaching Awards – National or Institutional

- Enquiries re. strategies and resources – Educational developer as an ‘Idea blender’ (Donnelly, 2015)
- Involvement in institutional committees – Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committees / Teaching and Learning Committee

Bamber (2009) described this quadrant (Figure 2.3) as the ‘invisible curriculum’ as the learning activities here may be perceived by the educational developer or more importantly the lecturer, as professional development or learning. She asserts that this form of learning can “contribute to the academic becoming a more knowing professional” (Bamber, 2009, p.13).

This framework (Figure 2.3) for supporting continuous professional development and its visualisation of the various forms of professional learning and activities was deemed valuable for exploring the often neglected areas of non-formal learning within this research. It prompts the educational developer to look beyond the typical formal provision of activities which are often initiated centrally within the institution. This framework and supporting visual was used within an introductory document on my research within interviews (Appendix H). After my research had commenced in April 2015, the National Forum published *A Snapshot of Non-Accredited Continuing Professional Development for those who Teach in Irish Higher Education* in December 2015.

Structured non-accredited	Unstructured non-accredited	Collaborative non-accredited
DEFINITION		
These are externally organised activities (by an institution, network, disciplinary membership body). They are typically facilitated and have learning objectives.	These activities are independently led by the individual. Engagement is driven by the individual’s needs/interests. Individuals source the materials themselves.	Learning from these activities comes from their collaborative nature – in this case professional development is not a commodity to be consumed, it is developed through the collaborative process.
EXAMPLE IN PRACTICE		
Workshops, seminars, MOOCs, Dublin eLearning summer school	Reading articles, following social media, watching video tutorials, keeping a reflective teaching journal/ portfolio, preparing an article for publication.	Conversations with colleagues, sharing research at a conference, peer review of teaching

Figure 2:4 Typologies for engagement in non-accredited continuing professional development (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, 2015, p.14).

While the terminology used is different, with the use of the terms Structured and Unstructured, and the addition of Collaborative, the examples presented align with the flexible framework proposed by Bamber (2009) which I have used in my research.

The lecturer's professional development and learning, which may or may not be supported or initiated by an educational developer, is explored further in Section 2.4. The following section connects the Irish policy dimension relating to lecturers' learning with professionalisation.

2.3.6 Connecting Policy and Professionalisation through a discourse of excellence

The review of literature pertaining to the macro context of national and international context and policy, in addition to the meso level of educational development activity within the institutional context based on interpretations of macro level policy has raised the issue of dominant discourses within Irish higher education. I am defining discourse based on work by Fairclough (1992) to include both linguistic origins of written and spoken language and also social theory and analysis based on the work of Foucault. While I am not engaging in discourse analysis, I am considering the role of discourse within my research as "discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or 'constitute' them" (Fairclough, 1992, p.3). I am considering both spoken and written discourses.

According to Light et al. (2009), there is now a discourse of excellence in higher education with an emphasis on lecturers' performance and accountability in relation to their teaching. These are set within the current and emergent social and economic forces which are shaping higher education. This culture of excellence brings with it, the terminology associated with an industrial context based on "the twin guise of competition / efficiency and quality / accountability" (Light et al., 2009, p.8). These authors also claim that the move towards professionalism in terms of the lecturers' role in teaching and supporting learning is an inevitable outcome of this discourse of excellence. I have interpreted the discourse of excellence as building upon the emergence of a neoliberal underpinning and a pervading culture of performativity and accountability. These themes have been identified within the Irish HE context (Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4).

Ball (2003) describes the teachers who are characterised and prompted to consider themselves as individuals who can “‘add value’ to themselves, improve their productivity, strive for excellence and live an existence of calculation” (p.217). He also describes them as “neo-liberal professionals” (p.217). He refers to Bernstein’s (1996) description of the effects of this performativity approach to educational reform as “contract replaces covenant” (p.169). Ball (2003) adds to these substitutions with “value replaces values” (p.217) and other impacts are that commitment and service are not acknowledged. He states that a culture of performativity “requires individual practitioners to organise themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations...and to set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live in an existence of calculation” (Ball, 2003, p.215). He further asserts that rather than creating transparency, that the performativity agenda prompts a more opaque façade as both organisations and individuals may strive to present a corresponding fabrication to match the expectations of the system, which may not reflect their own true beliefs and values (Ball, 2003). As educational developers working within this context, we may therefore feel obliged to emphasise outcomes which are easy to measure and report.

While Ireland does not operate a formal performance management system, making it one of the few European countries not to do so (IUA, 2008), there is clearly a political drive emerging that “teaching excellence in Irish higher education...be recognised and benchmarked against ‘best practice’ internationally” in the Performance Evaluation Framework (HEA, 2013). This intention is also clearly articulated at European level in the HLG (2013) which states that:

The need for professional training as a teacher at primary and secondary school level is generally taken for granted but remarkably, when it comes to higher education there seems to be an all too common assumption that such professional teacher training is not necessary, as if it is somehow an idea unworthy of the professional academic (p.18).

Nationally, this is reflected in the Hunt Report (2011) recommendation (as noted in Section 2.2.7), which states:

All higher education institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support ongoing development and improvement of their skills (DES, 2011, p.62).

This move to a requirement towards formal recognition of lecturers as teachers has its origins in the policy development that has been traced in Sections 2.2.6 and 2.2.7. The

gradual process is conspicuous through the clear references to professional development for lecturers within the seminal OECD Report (2004):

...the need for a more positive approach to staff development in both universities and institutes of technology and the commitment of institutional resources to staff development programmes covering the whole range of work in tertiary education, in particular in the development and updating of teaching skills... (p.27).

This focus was further stressed in the reference that a “monitoring process to ensure that a high priority is given to staff development in all HEIs” (OECD, 2004, p.27). This was articulated into Recommendation 19:

That HEIs give greater priority to staff development issues and allocate resources accordingly and that the Tertiary Education Authority be asked to monitor this process (OECD, 2004, p. 28).

While this new authority did not emerge, staff development was highlighted by the OECD and it was pitched as a managed and monitored process, rather than lecturer or institution directed engagement. This OECD recommendation may have prompted the emergence of the discourse of professional staff / educational development in the following decade in Ireland, as profiled in terms of funding (Section 2.3.4) and formal, activities (Section 2.3.5). The last section of this chapter focuses on the literature associated with the micro level of the individual lecturer and their engagement in professional development around teaching.

2.4 Lecturers’ engagement in Professional Development and Learning in relation to Teaching

I am one of those academics who would prefer to engage in autonomous development rather than submit themselves to developmental efforts designed by experts and managers. (Räsänen, 2009, p.188).

This section focuses on the lecturer at the micro level and practitioner-led activities (Section 2.1: Figure 2.1). While the previous sections have moved from the Organisation or Policy led macro level of policies, to the meso level of practices of educational developers at an institutional level (Section 2.1: Figure 2.1), this section considers the literature on the perspective of the lecturers themselves and their priorities with regards to their own professional development and learning in relation to teaching. The lecturer as professional is somewhat neglected in the literature, relative, for example, to the work carried out on

policy and educational development more generally. It is virtually non-existent in the Irish research in this area. Hogan (2015) has articulated the philosophical underpinnings of competencies and professional cultures associated with school based teaching, but there is little or no literature on this for higher education in Ireland.

The opening quotation above from Räsänen (2009) certainly presents a particular stance on lecturer professional development in general, not least through the choice of the words 'submit' and 'efforts'. While the macro and meso levels described above (Sections 2.2. and 2.3) may favour, to the point of advocating development for lecturers in HE, the opinion of the lecturers themselves on this matter may very well be at odds with the goals of the other two levels. This sense of a lack of a shared discourse and narrative around professionalism and development may be as a result of relatively little research on the professional development and learning of lecturers as professionals in relation to teaching in higher education (Robson, 2006). Gourlay (2011) acknowledged this lack of research on lecturers as professionals, and noted that this was especially true with regards to research focused on lecturers who have joined a higher education institution from practice or industry as opposed to coming directly from an academic background.

2.4.1 Initial questions on lecturer's perspective

My research motivation is that I am involved in supporting lecturers in their teaching development within accredited formal learning e.g. programmes, and I want to learn more about their learning beyond the programmes e.g. within their departments. A question which arose for me as a programme director many years ago was, do lecturers continue to engage in professional learning after completion of the programme? If so, why and how?

I am interested in the lecturer's perspective on their own professional learning. I am curious about other aspects of this learning also. For example, what are their motivations to engage in professional learning, is it intrinsic (self) or extrinsic (compliance)? As there may now be a critical mass of lecturers who have completed an accredited programme in DIT since 2001, what is the impact of this? Donnelly (2006) noted within her research on the first three years of the initial programmes that there is a need for a supportive departmental and School environment in order to maintain and sustain lecturers' learning from programmes. I was interested in the learning experiences of graduates within their departmental and School environments and if they were sustaining and stimulating continuous learning for the lecturers.

The issue of the broader institutional recognition of individuals' investment in teaching practice was noted within the research I was involved in with DIT colleagues (McAvinia et al., 2015). When asked about the status attributed to teaching across the institution, focus group participants were not convinced that teaching was highly valued, and especially not when compared to investment in disciplinary research. Prior to a national or institutional framework for professional development relating to teaching I am keen to ascertain what are the current professional learning activities and experiences of lecturers, beyond programmes and other formal learning opportunities? Do they invest time in these activities and would a framework further support their engagement?

The previous two sections (2.2 and 2.3) have reviewed the literature relating to the context of Irish higher education, as well as the emergence of the role and activities of educational developers to support professional development of lecturers in relation to teaching. Key concepts emerging from these sections are the rise in performance management, accountability and quality assurance in relation to many aspects of the role of the lecturer. Another key point from these sections is the rise of central support and centrally funded roles e.g. educational developers, to support policy and institutional priorities in terms of teaching and learning, and lecturer performance in this regard. The gap in the literature is a comprehensive insight into the lecturers' learning experiences within their usual practice or working environment. My research addresses that gap and this section contextualises the research which I completed and the findings which I present in Chapter 4. The existing literature around the specific perspective of the lecturer and their engagement in professional development and learning is now discussed.

While there is literature relating to lecturers' formal professional development and learning, especially within programmes (Section 2.3.5.1), there seems to be relatively little research on lecturers' initiated professional learning in relation to teaching. There are at least two examples of relevant research which may inform my research questions: O'Byrne (2014) conducted research with Irish lecturers in relation to their research identities and concluded that lecturers are "shaped by, and shape their working context" (p.15). When conducting research around Irish health professionals as educators, O'Sullivan (2010, p.45) cited MacDoughall and Drummond (2005) that the professional qualifications and experience of lecturers within medical education were often perceived as "sufficient to guarantee at least adequate teachers". This was reiterated by Robson (2006) who suggests

that there may be an assumption that if the lecturer is an expert in their subject that they can therefore teach others about it. She adds that:

the knowledge and expertise that really matters...is the knowledge of their specific discipline or occupational area; indeed, it is this that gives them the credibility for their educational role (Robson, 2006, p.14).

The emphasis on this health professional or other expert discipline area may insinuate that some lecturers from highly regarded professions may be deemed accomplished professionals, perhaps more so than others who enter HE from less regulated disciplinary contexts or recognised qualifications. While it would be interesting to explore the diverse professional and disciplinary backgrounds of lecturers in HE, my focus in this section is on lecturers in the general sense. I am framing the lecturers' working context within the HEI as their learning context, and aim to contribute to the research on professionals learning within their teaching context. The next section explores the discourse around professionalism and professionalism.

2.4.2 Professionalism and Professionality

This section commences with a review of what a profession and a professional is, in order to explore how these concepts fit within the discourse in policy around 'professionalising' the role of the lecturer. Baume (2006) suggested that HE lecturers are the last of the 'non-professions'. There is ambiguity around the concepts of a professional and a profession. Crook (2008) and Robson (2006) remark that a profession is a socially constructed concept, and has been a contested concept for many years. It has been proclaimed that "professionalism has always been ideological" (Nixon, Martin, McKeown & Ranson, 1997, p.6).

Evans (2007) refers to others' definitions of professionalism such as Hoyle (2001) and Sockett (2006) who associate it with an improvement in the quality of a service or practice. Cheetham and Chivers (2005), Etzioni (1969) and Freidson (1984; 2001) have questioned what constitutes a profession. Cheetham and Chivers (2005) posed specific questions: "What makes a professional effective? How does he or she acquire the knowledge, the skill, the wisdom and the wherewithal to bring all of these things together to perform competently? What exactly is professional competence? What sorts of experience, what kinds of environment help professionals become fully competent?" (p.xv).

According to Appleby and Pilkington (2014) professionalism “is understood as professional knowledge informing professional practice” (p.13). They also proclaim that an individual builds their own personal identity based on their participation in a professional community as there is a common set of values, beliefs and practices. However, definitions are not conspicuous in the literature and, according to Evans (2007; 2008) and Fenwick (2009), there is a shift now from a conceptualisation of distinct and traditional professions to a more diffused definition of the profession and what it means to be a professional.

Appleby and Pilkington (2014) assert that there are three theoretical approaches to professionalism:

- The knowledge model
- The career path model
- The ‘doing and becoming’ model (p.13).

Others have offered models and outlines of professional development such as Hargreaves (2000) who describes the Four Ages of Teacher Professionalism as four historical phases which took place in many countries:

- The pre-professional age
- The age of the autonomous professional
- The age of the collegial professional
- The post-professional or postmodern?

Hargreaves (2000) notes that when teachers are asked about professionalism, their responses are usually based on two aspects, that of improving quality and standard of practice, or on professionalization in terms of improving status and standing. He states that these are often presented as “complementary projects (improve standards and you will improve status), but sometimes they are contradictory” (Hargreaves, 2000, p.152). Defining professional standards in high-status and technical ways as standards of knowledge and skill, can downgrade, or neglect the equally important emotional dimensions and values of teachers’ work in terms of being passionate about teaching, and caring for students’ learning and lives (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996).

The existing literature is acknowledging the ambiguity which exists in this area. Barnett (2009) suggests the discourse of “knowledge; competence; learning; community; complexity – all are inadequate bases for forming professionalism; and they are contested”. This theme of uncertainty and inconsistency is also aligned with autonomy and professionalisation. Autonomy seems to be the key differentiating factor in many

conceptualisations of being a professional or member of a profession. Freidson (1994) describes a profession as a group having autonomy and control over its own work. According to Bottery (1996) there are 17 different criteria or attributes for describing professionals, but he discusses three concepts in particular. These are:

- Expertise (specialist knowledge and associated practice);
- Altruism (an ethical concern for their clients, or those for whom they work for or with) and
- Autonomy (the occupation is self-governing in terms of controlling entry into the profession and the practice within it) (Bottery, 1996, p.179-180).

These are similar to Robson's (2006) conceptualisation of professionalism in relation to teaching based on three constituent elements of "autonomy, professional knowledge and responsibility" (p.7). Bottery notes that Handy (1985) classified teachers and doctors as 'Dionysians' which Bottery (1996) understood as "professionals working within organisations built to facilitate the display of individual expertise, rather than as team members working towards some corporate goal" (1996, p.180). While discussing professions such as teaching in the context of NPM, Bottery asserts that professionals "need to be able to defend themselves better, have to understand themselves better" (1996, p.190). He adds to this that if professionals strive to retain a position of absolute expertise and a sense of infallibility, they may deny "themselves their best defence against an unthinking managerialism" (Bottery, 1996, p.192). Therefore, professionalism as one experiences it as an individual cannot be disentangled from the profession and professional context. As such autonomy will never be absolute, it will always need to link to the community, to the broader professional picture. For lecturers in HE, this context is not only an institutional one, but also within a macro level. It is policy driven and within a national and international context is made up of changing social, economic and political factors.

This sense of the professional as an individual inseparable from the community of a profession, as a collective is noticeable in models which acknowledge neoliberal settings. Power (2008) also discusses professionals in the context of NPM and the associated audit culture. She suggests that professionals are being "beset by forces outside their control" (p.151). Within her description of the "oppressed professional" (Power, 2008, p.150), she references Shore and Wright's (2000) analysis that a professional in higher education is redefined as an "audited subject...recast as a depersonalized unit of economic resource

whose productivity and performance must constantly be measured and enhanced” (p.63 cited in Power, 2008, p.151). This sense of de-professionalisation is also presented by Hoyle and Wallace (2005) who proclaim that accountability has supplanted a professional’s autonomy. Certainly, as the first section of this literature review (Section 2.2) has argued, the culture of managerialism and accountability is undeniable in Irish HE. Other models of professionalism reimagine that accountability versus autonomy challenge with different emphasis and detail.

Lester (2015) offers two paradigms to differentiate the conceptualisation of a profession and professionalism which he describes as Model A and Model B, as shown in Table 2.2. Within Model A, he defines professionalism as “objectivity, rules, codes of practice” while in Model B professionalism is based on “exploration of own and others' values, personal ethics, mutual enquiry, shared expectations” (p.12). In agreement with Hoyle and John (1995), Lester asserts that a professional makes skilful use of their specialist or expert knowledge. A professional also exercises autonomy in their judgements, and is committed to a set of principles based on their own volition. According to Lester (2015), “such a person need not be a member of an easily-defined profession or of a professional association; it is possible to work as a professional from a set of expertise and skills that is relatively unique to the individual” (p.7). The concept of “extended professionalism” (Hoyle, 1975), is similar to Lester’s ‘Model B’ and both are indicative of practitioners who may be affiliated to a recognised profession but are able to practice from this independent perspective.

Table 2:2 Lester's (2015) two paradigms of professions and professionalism

	Model A	Model B
character	technical, logical; problemsolving	creative, interpretive; design
capability	solvable, convergent problems	congruent futures; 'messes', problematic situations, divergent / 'wicked' problems
approach	solving problems; applying knowledge competently and rationally	understanding problematic situations and resolving conflicts of value; framing and creating desired outcomes
criteria	logic, efficiency, planned outcomes; cause-effect, proof	values, ethics, congruence of both methods and outcomes; systemic interrelationships,
epistemology	objectivism: knowledge is stable and general; precedes and guides action (pure science, applied science, practice)	constructivism: knowledge is transient, situational and personal; both informs action and is generated by it (cyclic / spiral relationship between theory and practice)
validation	by reference to others' expectations; standards, accepted wisdom, established discourse;	by questioning fitness for purpose, fitness of purpose and systemic validity; 'value'
thinking	primarily deductive/analytical; sceptical of intuition	inductive, deductive and abductive; uses 'intelligent intuition'
profession	a bounded, externally-defined role, characterised by norms, values and a knowledge-base common to	a portfolio of learningful activity individual to the practitioner, integrated by personal identity, perspectives, values and
professionalism	objectivity, rules, codes of practice	exploration of own and others' values, personal ethics, mutual enquiry, shared expectations
professional standards	defined by the employer, professional body or other agency according to its norms and values	negotiated by the participants and other stakeholders in the practice situation in accordance with their values, beliefs and desired outcomes
professional development	initial development concerned with acquiring knowledge, developing competence and enculturation into the profession's value system; continuing development concerned with maintaining competence and updating knowledge	ongoing learning and practice through reflective practice, critical enquiry and creative synthesis and action; continual questioning and refinement of personal knowledge, understanding, practice, values and beliefs

This contrast of paradigms is based principally on autonomy and what is required within the professional community, builds their professionalism on their own values or follows what others have dictated. Professional development is contrasted with one rationale for participating in development activities to develop competence and then maintain it, while the other profiles professional development with examples of reflective practice and critical enquiry. Realistically, within the context of HE, there is rarely a simple 'either or' of Model A or B.

However, as an educational developer supporting lecturers' professional development in teaching, I would hope that professional development within programmes fostered engagement in reflective practice around teaching, rather than a focus on merely acquiring knowledge and developing skills. The complexity of the environment coupled with the idea of some personal and or professional freedom as encapsulated in the idea of academic freedom means that lecturers, and educational developers may find themselves in the liminal space between models such as A and B.

The refrain of autonomy versus accountability / managerialism is also considered by Evetts (2009; 2014). Evetts (2014) declares that professionals such as teachers and doctors are now increasingly employed within organisations, so that the autonomy with associated judgements and decision-making ascribed to the ideal or traditional conception of a professional is now subsumed within an organisational structure. According to Evetts (2014), there are three phases of professionalism:

- Early phase: Professionalism as Normative value;
- Critical Phase: Professionalism as Ideology
- Third Phase: Professionalism as a Discourse.

She analysed the third phase of professionalism within the context of organisations where this discourse was defined and used by management, in some ways to reclaim the ideological values of professionalism and also to critique it.

Evetts (2009; 2014) uses McClelland's (1990) differentiation of professionalism based on whether it is organizational professionalism which is also termed professionalism "from above" (Evetts, 2014, p.41) or occupational professionalism which is "from within" (Evetts, 2014, p.40). She states that it is the occupation or group who can develop their professionalism from within, using an agreed discourse to create their collective identity and garner recognition of their status with their clients while sustaining commitment to their responsibilities which are ideally self-directed. In terms of learning and development, those with a strong sense of professionalism from within may support each other's learning to maintain and extend their professional expertise.

The notion that an organisational or managerial professionalism can inhibit learning, innovation and creativity in practice is addressed by Daniels (2016). According to Daniels (2016) the dominant conceptualisation of professional learning and its application in

institutional policy can deter practitioners from developing innovations or trying out new approaches. She suggests that the underlying philosophy of learning associated with professional standards is one of “learning for achievement with its adherence to competencies and checklists that is the greatest barrier to development of innovative and imaginative professional practice” (Daniels, 2016, p.171). Peel (2005) adds that “emerging professional identities bring with them the challenge of retaining their own socially constructed professionalisms” (p.126).

2.4.2.1 The Lecturers as a cohort if not a profession

The profile of lecturers as a profession or even a cohort is not well established in Irish higher education and there is a dearth of discussion on lecturers as a professional group. In terms of indicating affiliation with a profession through a union or association, two key groups exist under the broad heading of teacher unions within Irish HE. These are the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) established in 1965 and the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) established in 1899. Yet while some lecturers may define themselves as teachers and affiliate with a union which names them as such, within the literature reviewed, there were no specific references to the education of lecturers or teachers in Irish higher education in terms of their teaching role prior to the 1960s. A concern regarding the supply of teachers for the Irish third level sector was noted within the OECD report on *Investment in Education* published in 1965 (White, 2001) noted in Section 2.2.2.1, but there was no specific reference to their educational development or qualifications within this report. There is evidence of training and educational development activities for lecturers from the 1960s and this was discussed in the Educational Development section (2.3). As most lecturers come from a primary discipline area and many in the IoT sector have practiced, they may associate more with what they view as their main professional area while some may perceive themselves as a dual professional which is discussed in the next section.

2.4.2.2 Dual professionals

Nixon (1996) heralded that higher education was reaching a “crisis of professional self-identity” (p.6) as he described lecturers, with reference to Piper (1995) as Janus-like facing inwards to the institution for their teacher identity, but outside for disciplinary identity. Beaty (1998) captured this dilemma as lecturers experiencing a double professionalism, while Dexter (2007) used the term dual professionals. This can exacerbate the opposing desires and demands of the institution and the individual.

Lecturers may prioritise their primary profession over their role, identities and knowledge as educators, and if teaching is a concern, it would be a secondary one (Robson, 2006). McWilliam (2002) concurs with this and goes further to suggest that, with regards professional development events:

Regular attendance demonstrates an academic's recognition of their own shortcomings, and their acceptance of responsibility for addressing these shortcomings. Failure to attend, on the other hand, signifies an academic's inability or refusal both to notice their own limitations and to take responsibility for them (p.296).

Peel (2005) reflects Roscoe's (2002) concerns over continuing professional development (CPD), when she asks "how might we evaluate whether CPD makes a positive difference to individuals, to professional institutions, to the workplace, and to society?" (p.124). In the Irish context, lecturers in many IoTs are members of professions, some with a tradition of apprenticeships and trades and many would also be members of professional bodies which may have a regulation to participate in professional development, for example, accountancy, engineering and social work. They may have requirements to engage in continuing professional learning in these contexts. Is the approach to learning in these contexts, different from learning about teaching in HE? The discussion above has raised many issues around why lecturers might engage in professional development or learning, or why not. The next section addresses how professionals learn.

2.4.3 How do professionals learn?

Sharpe (2004) posed the question "How do professionals learn and develop?" (p.132). As providers of learning and development for others, how do the lecturers, the professionals in HEIs engage in their own development and learning. According to Appleby and Pilkington (2014), for professionals "learning takes place in practice largely through reflective learning, independent scholarship and discursive means" (p.37). Learning is therefore enacted within practice and firmly situated in the educator's own context (Eraut, 1994, 2000). Learning in practice can be informal, for example in the form of a professional conversation with peers where such dialogue moves beyond the immediate context of the individual and is informed and shaped by a broader discourse. Appleby & Pilkington (2014) assert that "This is where reflection, research or scholarship enables more rigorous and focused learning activity to take place" (p.38). Knight et al. (2006) also stress the necessity for active participation in learning. They suggest that:

action in the context of professional learning for educators is an activity process strongly allied with an opportunity to learn from and through work: professionals have to be active in learning, proactive in their approach and not reactive. It requires inhabiting the professional world actively with agency rather than being a passive recipient of it (Knight et al., 2006, p.50).

Equally, the idea of activity or action is reiterated by Barnett, Parry and Coate (2001) who suggest that in the curriculum for professional subjects, the action domain is the most significant. They argue that what is required to operate as an informed professional is different within the domains of the arts and humanities and science and technology, as well as in professional subjects. By focusing on the curriculum in this way, they illustrate effectively that critical professional agency is both relational and contingent, operating in differing sites, discourses and communities of practice and power.

Cheetham and Chivers (2005) suggested there are two contrasting epistemologies associated with the development of professional practice, which clearly reflects Lester's Model A and B. They use the two fields of "technical rationality" and "knowing in action" (Cheetham & Chivers, 2005, p.xv). The knowing in action is also referred to as reflective practice, based on the work of Schön (1983). This complexity of the situation makes its restriction to a binary interpretation impossible. For lecturers, the situation is more nuanced, not least because their work involves relationships with students and with colleagues. Therefore, while a proactive, reflective, knowing-in-action approach would be desirable, so too would the technical rational and the ability occasionally to cope adequately in a reaction scenario. All of this research points to Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) conclusion that the models of professional development associated with other contexts of teaching have not corresponded adequately to the complexity of the professional development process within higher education.

According to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), teacher professional development had historically been linked with planned activities in terms of professional development. They refer to Guskey (1986) when they suggest that professional development activities were often based on a training paradigm which suggests a deficit in terms of the teacher's current knowledge and skills. They also indicate that the format of the professional development was often in a 'one shot' approach and that they and others have provided evidence that this 'one shot' approach fails to support effective professional development. They refer to many advocates of ongoing professional development including Schön (1983)

and highlight Johnson’s (1996) re-articulation of ongoing professional development as “opportunities for learning” (p.12, cited by Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002, p.949) so that there is a greater sense of this concept being embedded within the general school environment. While they reference Guskey (1986) and Fullan (1982) who are largely concerned with second level teachers, when the factors of policy and other external influences with the draw of the discipline and the dual role are all considered, the complexity of the situation for lecturers and educational developers in HE becomes apparent.

These factors represent only a potentially small component which is also hugely impacted by culturally specific characteristics of the institution and the professional perspective of the lecturer. This suggests that professional development for lecturers in HE is multifaceted or layered, and one model is unlikely to be adequate to capture all that needs to occur and to incorporate the wants of institutions and individual lecturers in terms of teaching. Therefore, a more conceptual approach which has the capacity to draw from various models and which provides a theoretical underpinning for this area may be more appropriate. In this regard, ideas such as evidence based approaches to work, reflective practice, development as cyclical and iterative, and a focus on self-efficacy and self-awareness are all potentially useful. Such a multifaceted approach provides a more holistic view of continuous professional development for lecturers in HE.

2.4.3.1 Models of Continuing Professional Development

Knight (2002) asserted that policy associated with continuing professional development for second level teachers seemed to be lacking in a theoretical grounding. This also applies to professional development or learning in higher education. Kennedy (2005) argues that there was a dearth of literature accounting for the various forms of CPD and she strove to address this by identifying a spectrum of CPD models based on her context of teacher education. While her context is not higher education, her curation of models is valuable for potential application to the context of lecturers in higher education.

Model of CPD	Purpose of model
The training model The award-bearing model The deficit model The cascade model	Transmission
The standards-based model The coaching/mentoring model The community of practice model	Transitional
The action research model The transformative model	Transformative

Figure 2:5 Models of CPD (Kennedy, 2005, p.248)

Kennedy's collation of models reminds us again of the now familiar dichotomy of autonomy versus accountability. At this stage in the review of literature I am reinforcing that 'either – or' will not be sufficient and that a linear representation will probably prove inadequate to address questions on lecturers' professional learning. This challenge is revisited in the Discussion (Chapter 5).

Unlike Kennedy's contribution, Pill's (2005) work does come from the HE teaching and learning environment. Pill (2005) explored a range of models associated with the learning and practice of new lecturers in higher education. The four models of professional development Pill (2005) identified were:

- Reflective practice (Schön, 1983; Argyris & Schön, 1974; Moon, 1999; Eraut, 1995)
- Action Research (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992; Walker 2001)
- Novice to Expert (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986)
- Metacognitive approaches (Eraut, 1994)

This view of the area as more process than product orientated is a more useful way of viewing the nature of development that lecturers in HE require and indeed may want. It is a life's work rather than a 'one shot' or 'one and done' approach. A similar philosophy of CPD for HE lecturers is proposed by Dall'Alba & Sandberg (2006) in their critique of staged models of professional development.

A relatively recent conceptualisation of lecturers' approaches to professional development around teaching is represented by Light et al. (2009) who offer a professional paradigm in contrast to two of the more traditional paradigms associated with lecturers' learning and which have both already been profiled.

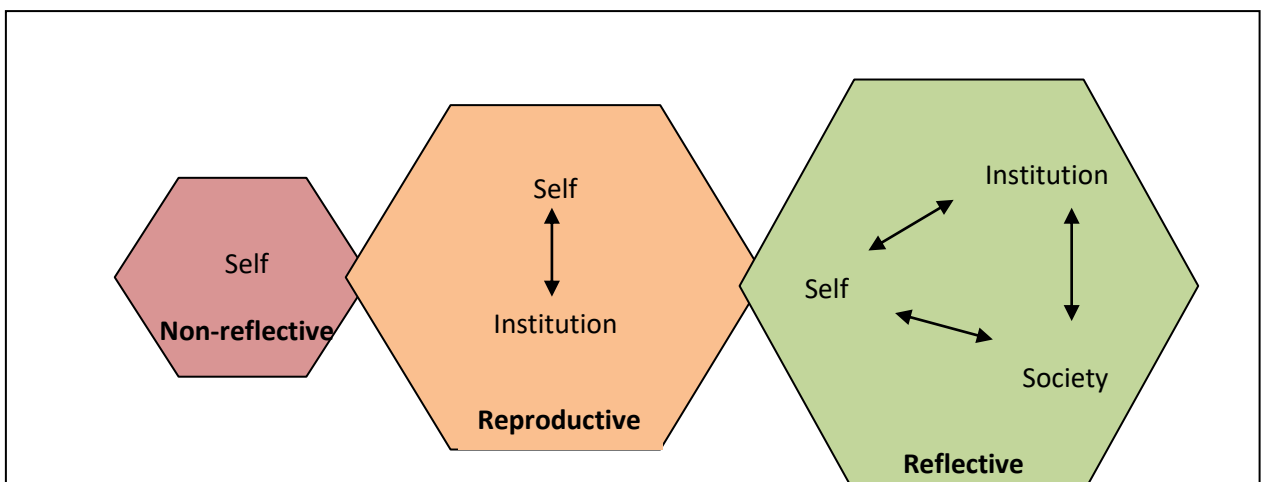


Figure 2:6 Paradigms of academic development of teaching (Light, Cox & Calkin, 2009, p.12)

According to Light et al. (2009), the Ad hoc paradigm is based on the lecturer themselves and their approach to teaching development is to pick up tips and get insights informally and as an individual. This approach is therefore ad hoc with the lecturer relying on themselves and their past experiences of teaching and learning. They may experiment using trial and error, but their approach is non-reflective.

The second paradigm is focused on the accumulation of skills and development of competencies which the lecturer then reproduces. These skills may relate to communication and teaching performance. The structure of the development is formal in that it is provided by others such as trainers, and while located within the institution, they are not directly associated with the disciplinary context. This is similar to the transmission model of CPD presented by Kennedy (2005).

The Professional paradigm is the third, and they assert is contemporary. They proffer that this paradigm is beyond the confines of the lecturer or practitioner themselves and the institution, and that it encompasses and embraces wider societal issues. They refer to Bennett's (1998) proposition that professional status for lecturers is derived from the value that society ascribes to it, which acknowledges the lecturers and learners engage in specialized knowledge and utilise critical thinking skills to create new knowledge. The wider society would presumably include their disciplinary networks and professional societies associated with their discipline. While not explicitly stated by Light et al., (2009) I would ascertain that this paradigm would also capture their research and community links and activities.

Light et al. (2009) declare that within the cultures of HEIs, there can be two responses to the challenge of professionalism in relation to teaching and learning. In a dominant culture of performativity and a discourse of excellence and accountability in teaching in HE, there can be a perceived call *for* professionalism. This can be affiliated with Evetts' (2014) use of

the term professionalism *from above*, insinuating an imposition and a need for lecturers, in this instance to comply, and to be visibly accounted for in terms of attendance and adherence. The alternative to this according to Evetts (2014) is emergence of professionalism *from within* (Section 2.4.2), which Light et al. (2009) present as a call to professionalism. While the terms differ subtly, the essence of the differentiation remains in that professionals can be committed to taking charge of their own learning and aspire to make changes and, “defend their own academic values and practices from the worst excesses of externally imposed frameworks of excellence” (Light et al., 2009, p.13). A key issue for me to consider as an educational developer is how I can support this form of charged and committed cohort of professionals at the micro level, while responding to the demands of the institutional and national agendas. Also, I am asking myself, is this level of imposition and or aspiration in existence among lecturers, the departmental cultures and the HEIs as a whole.

2.4.3.2 Workplace Learning

What becomes clear when one reviews the models which have emerged is how they are significantly influenced by the context. In this regard, Billett (2001), Boyd (2010), Evans (2007; 2008), Eraut (1994; 2000) and Knight and Trowler (2000) offer insights into the workplace learning environments and how they impact on the CPD process. Evans’ (2007) work on professionalism and professionalism has resulted in her adapting the work of Hoyle (1975) on professionalism of teachers and focusing on his continuum of restricted and extended orientations of professionalism. She uses the term professionalism orientation to refer to where the practitioner or learner is positioned on the restrictive – extended continuum. Hoyle (1975) had described a teacher’s restrictive orientation to professional development as only focusing on their practice within the classroom. An extended orientation would involve a teacher considering issues beyond their own area of practice and could encompass challenges associated with curriculum or other broad ranging areas of practice and concern for teachers.

Evans’ (2007; 2008) work declares that professionalism should be conveyed in reality, not as an idealised concept. She posits that “professional development involves changes to professionalism” (Evans, 2007, p.35). She also differentiates between functional professional development and attitudinal professional development (Evans, 2002; 2007).

This echoes with Barnett's (2008) assertion that "the professional is a living project of knowledge in action" (p.206).

2.4.3.3 Professional development vs. professional learning

While much of the literature around professional practice refers to the terms professional development and continuing professional development, the use of the term 'development' has been critiqued by many in relation to engagement by colleagues in higher education (Harvey & Knight, 1996; McWilliam, 2002; Webster-Wright, 2009) with a general conclusion that it suggests a deficit model. This was also conveyed by Bell and Gilbert (1994; 1996) in their model for science teachers in which they asserted that a focus on learning is more empowering than a dependency on facilitators or others to suggest areas for change. Harvey and Knight highlighted that there may be ethical issues associated with professional development and they posed the questions: "who develops whom, in what ways and on what authority?" (1996, p.157). This links back to the terminology associated with educational development in Section 2.3.1 and especially the term staff development as it may indicate that the lecturers need to be developed and according to an approach prescribed by institutional management.

McWilliam (2002) suggests that within the almost domineering drive to develop others, that development is conceived as being much more than 'training'. She concludes that "training is understood to focus too narrowly on technical capacities, not the sort of personal and professional growth that leads to leadership skill and managerial 'best practice'...and ...development demands nothing less than an entirely new worker identity" (McWilliam, 2002, p.291). I concur with Leibowitz (2016) and Webster-Wright (2009) that the term 'development' suggests a deficit model in which the lecturer is perceived as needing to engage in the organised learning activities to improve, while the term professional learning is more associated with an implication that the lecturers themselves are responsible for their own learning, and are motivated of their own volition. Professional learning seems to indicate a self-directed and potentially more authentic approach to engaging in learning about teaching, rather than participating in learning activities which are organised by others. Therefore, professional learning is my preferred term for the role in which I am engaged and to which this research will contribute. There is no definitive line on this area, not least because of the need for more research to explore experiences of professional learning in the usual workplace environment (Eraut, 2000; Webster-Wright, 2009).

2.4.4 Who is responsible for organising and leading professional learning?

According to Hart (2017) in her recent work on modern workplace learning, professional development has traditionally involved units within organisations identifying and leading the professional development opportunities, curriculum, agenda and format 'for' employees. While Hart's (2017) work is not specifically based in a higher education context, there are valuable insights for educational development units. Much of this development tended to event based, either face-to-face or online web-based. This is true of the higher education context. Hart (2017) emphasises that there is a real need for a different approach to modern workplace learning which could underpin all the forms of learning which people engage in. She stresses that this does not merely involve updating formats for training and development but exploring new approaches to support both manager-led and employee-led learning. Viewing 'employees' as co-enquirers in their learning moves one from a position where development is delivered to a much more learning community process. This is similar to the concept of professionalism 'from within' (Evetts, 2014).

This interpretation is close to research by Lave and Wenger (1991) who analysed the importance of legitimate peripheral participation, and the notion of communities of practice (Wenger, 1999). Eraut (2000) and Becher (1999) have also explored work as a key site for professional learning, and both writers have stressed the importance of the non-formal in professional learning and what Eraut (2000) refers to as "personal knowledge" (p.114). Becher (1999) distinguishes between different forms of professional development: resource-based ("boning up"), practice-based (learning on the job), practice-related (at one remove from practice but encompassing many of the activities described by academics as scholarly activity), and interpersonal (networking). Networking activities were crucial for the professions. Becher (1999) studied the learning within professions of accountancy, law, pharmacy, medicine, structural engineering and architecture. Eraut (2000) also studied professional learning environments of accountants. Despite this research being conducted almost 20 years ago, in the absence of technological supports for online social networking, the influence of others in terms of meetings and linking up with contacts is substantial. Therefore, the importance of community emerges as essential in terms of professional learning and development with regard to HE.

The vast majority of practitioners value the collegial component of their working lives and sharing with peers within the disciplines in particular is essential to their professions and a key activity of the lecturer as evidenced in conferences, learned societies, and systems of

peer review. According to Eraut (2000) the most common, but rarely acknowledged forms of learning and development come from participation in routine interactions: internal and external examining, committee activity, validation and course development work, much of which is shared and involves more experienced academics supporting novices, as well as experienced practitioners bringing in knowledge from contacts with other organisations. Wenger (2000) argued that the success of organisations involves “the ability to design themselves as social learning systems” (p.225), but in most universities much of this learning, including that from outside, goes largely unnoticed as a form of development or indeed learning. This sentiment was proposed by Senge (1990) in relation to the differentiating features of learning organisations.

Therefore, if the emphasis is on a learning community, then leadership within this community will prove very influential in terms of activity and impact. Based on their research on academic staff induction within higher education, Trowler and Knight (2002) emphasise that leadership within the academic department or other significant activity is a key determining factor in the success of academic induction for new lecturers. They cite that leadership is “central to successful induction – over and above any arrangements made centrally” (Trowler & Knight, 2002, p.38). They continue “leaders can affect professional learning of all members of the activity system through the cultures expressed in practices and discourse that they promote” (p.38) and assert that within the process of professional learning that “coming to know; is not simple”. As with Wenger (2000), they suggest that situated learning supports and enhances professional learning as it prompts “the negotiation of meaning and significance in social settings” (p.38). In this regard, they state that the “quality of the activity system as a site for continuing learning is as important to professional development as the provision of more formal learning opportunities” (Trowler & Knight, 2002, p.39) and note Knight’s previous assertion that it maybe even more important (1998).

According to Light et al. (2009) the emerging curriculum of graduate attributes and transferable skills and competencies is one of five factors which they highlight as leading to a challenge of professionalism to teaching and learning within higher education. The others being: the increasing numbers of students; greater diversity of students in terms of experience, needs and expectations; ubiquitous technologies and expectations for their use in teaching and learning, and the conceptual shift from delivering teaching to supporting

learning with an emphasis on creating opportunities to foster independent learning. These align with Land's (2004) conceptualisation of these as drivers for change. The focus on graduate attributes seems a relatively recent driver and may be linked with an emphasis on articulating employability traits which could be associated with a human capital theory agenda.

When I consider the context of busy lecturers with heavy teaching loads addressing these challenges, they may prefer to attend organised professional development sessions and events which are structured. These challenges may prompt lecturers to rely on short, available learning opportunities. Therefore, while they may declare that they want to have autonomy over how and what professional learning they engage in, it may be easier and more time efficient to not engage, or alternatively to attend an organised event or other formal form of learning, as it can be recorded and observed that they attended. The role of the educational developer also needs to be considered in the context of lecturers' professional learning, especially in relation to continuing professional learning.

2.5 Conclusion

This review of literature has provided an insight into the context of Irish HE in which the current policy directives relating to professionalising teaching are set. The most recent policy recommendation within the Hunt Report relating to lecturers' professional learning and development was identified as:

All higher education institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support ongoing development and improvement of their skills (DES, 2011, p.62).

As outlined above in Section 2.4.2, there is a tension between professionalism which may be perceived as being imposed and professionalism which is more associated with being based on values and own volition.

In the context of Irish HE, professionalising the role of the lecturer in terms of teaching qualifications is a new dimension which is currently associated with policy. The commencement of the work of the National Forum in developing a National Framework would suggest that the Framework will be associated with the recommendation within the Hunt Report (2011). This Framework may be perceived as the key driver for lecturers' professional learning and development if it is implemented within HEIs. At this juncture in Irish HE, this literature review has traced the emergence of professional development in

terms of policy and in relation to the practices of educational developers. However, the review has highlighted that there is a gap in the literature relating to the learning experiences of lecturers within and beyond their participation in formal professional development activities and also learning opportunities within their work environments as professional lecturers. This research sought to address that gap and the following research questions were identified:

- Why do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How can educational developers further support professional learning?

The next chapter 3: Methodology provides a comprehensive insight into how the research was planned and implemented in order to adequately address these research questions.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines my philosophical assumptions and theoretical framework which underpin this research. This chapter emphasises how taking a constructivist and interpretivist stance influenced the research design. The theoretical framework, of activity theory is described and justified for use within this research. It provides the rationale for the choice of methodology and methods. The ethical considerations of the research are also discussed. An outline of the research design and process is illustrated. The chapter concludes with an insight into the strategies used for data analysis which inform the subsequent chapters.

The research questions identified in Chapter 2 were used to guide the research design:

- Why do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How can educational developers further support professional learning?

3.2 Philosophical underpinnings

The choice of research methodology and methods should not merely be a technical task but should be strongly allied with our epistemological and ontological stances (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Grix, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011; Ryan, 2006). As a researcher I needed to consider my “basic belief system or worldview” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.105) or paradigm (Burton, Brundrett & Jones, 2014; Cohen, et al., 2011). Burton et al. (2014) outline two paradigms for educational research as positivism and interpretivism, while Cohen et al. (2011) also suggest critical theory. Against this backdrop, I clarified my beliefs and philosophical associations (Burton et al., 2014; Lincoln et al., 2011), by considering how I view reality (ontology), the relationship between knowledge of reality and the knower (epistemology), and how I would inquire to find knowledge (methodology).

3.2.1 Ontology

My ontological stance is how I view reality. If I believe that social reality is constructed and may change based on my own and others’ perspectives and experiences, then my ontological position could be described as relativism (Lincoln et al. 2011) or constructivism

(Burton et al. 2014, Grix, 2002). This belief contrasts with an assertion that social reality exists independently of the person, which Grix (2002) defines as objectivist and Cohen et al. (2011) as “realism” (p.7). Social reality is not external but is socially constructed by me as the researcher and participants together through collective personal experiences (Lincoln et al., 2011). My ontological stance is aligned to that of constructivism or social constructivism.

Schwandt (1994) outlines some of the contours of a constructivist position and refers to Gergen’s (1985) labelling of a specific form of constructivism as social as it captures the notion that knowledge is formed within a social activity of interaction and “the terms by which the world is understood are social artefacts” (Gergen, 1985, p.267 cited by Schwandt, 1994, p.127). This conception of knowledge and its creation is closely aligned to the underpinning aspects of my theoretical framework of activity theory.

3.2.2 Epistemology

While “positivist researchers believe that they can reach a full understanding based on experiment and observation” (Ryan, 2006, p.13), I can confidently declare that my epistemological stance is interpretivist (Burton et al, 2014; Gray, 2013; Grix, 2002; Ryan, 2006). An interpretivist looks for “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (Crotty, 1998, p.67 in Gray, 2013, p.23). My epistemology is rooted in the belief that I am co-constructing knowledge with the participants and that knowledge is based on interpretations and meaning-making which can be facilitated within a social constructivist approach as participants actively engage. I see myself in the guise of a learner, employing reflexivity, as opposed to a tester (Ryan, 2006).

This epistemological position as an interpretive researcher, and specifically a social constructivist, aligns with my ontological stance of constructivism (Gray, 2013). I began this research by examining my assumptions about social reality, knowledge, how it is created and how it is validated. My professional practice as an educational developer is driven by the underlying premise that education should be participant focused and use exploratory approaches to learning. I strive to be a facilitator of new knowledge and understanding through open, constructivist approaches to teaching and learning, rather than didactic and teacher focused approaches. My professional practice is within collaborative learning settings such as within accredited programmes and supporting projects where I strive to

create a socially constructivist, collegial learning environment. Prior to outlining my chosen methodology of case study, I now discuss the theoretical framework of activity theory which I determined as most appropriate for my research context and questions.

3.3 Theoretical Framework - Activity Theory

3.3.1 Introduction to Activity Theory

Activity theory was the theoretical framework used within this research. As outlined in Chapter 1: Introduction (Section 1.4), activity theory was deemed appropriate as it is a sociocultural theory which can incorporate many related concepts to provide a comprehensive framework for exploring and understanding endeavours to support and enhance teaching in higher education (Ashwin, 2012; Bamber et al., 2009). The individual as well as their social and cultural environment are all considered within sociocultural theory and specifically social practice theory. The unit of analysis is social practice as opposed to individual cognition or agency, or social structures (Bamber et al., 2009). A key aspect of this theoretical position is to explore how the individual is influenced by their environment and how they can impact on their environment (Frambach et al., 2014). This aligns with the model of Appleby and Pilkington (2014) as outlined in Chapter 2: Literature Review (Section 2.1). It is also important to state that social systems are not static and that they may be perceived and interpreted differently by diverse observers.

As noted in Chapter 2, research into the professional activity of teaching in higher education is relatively recent (Hanbury et al., 2008; Kandlbinder & Peseta, 2009), with some critiquing the research as being atheoretical (Clegg, 2005). A limiting aspect of some current research in higher education is the lack of consideration of both individual agency and socio-cultural structure (Ashwin, 2012). Activity theory has been identified as a sociocultural theory which addresses this challenge. The third generation of activity theory as developed by Engeström (2001) has an explicit emphasis on agency and structure processes (Ashwin, 2012). Engeström (1993) conducted his research on learning and development within organisations such as hospitals and declared that “contexts are activity systems” (p.67). Edwards (2011) reiterates this when she asserts that for some researchers context is integral to the analysis.

A key point emerging from the review of literature in Chapter 2 is the importance of context and the overall learning environment of the lecturers within their workplace. When it originated, activity theory heralded that the individual learner cannot be considered

without reference to their cultural environment. Engeström's third generation of activity theory builds on these sociocultural concepts of context and learning environment to propose that all human learning and development takes place in the form of activities. By analysing these activities, the complexity of learning and development processes can be described, explained and understood (Frambach et al., 2014). According to Foot (2014), it also uses a practice-based approach to analysing professional work environments and practices. She notes that a crucial aspect of analysis using activity theory is to capture the holistic environment of the activity, and not merely the individual components (Foot, 2014). My role as the researcher was to present the participants' worldview of their learning contexts (Yamagata-Lynch, 2007) in terms of their activity systems within the programme and also their activity system of their professional contexts of their usual workplace within their departments. The next section will outline the emergence of activity theory based on three generations of its use in research.

3.3.2 First Generation Activity Theory

The origins of activity theory are generally traced to Russian psychologists Vygotsky, Luria and Leont'ev working to develop Marxist political theory and psychology in the 1920s and 1930s (Ashwin, 2012; Edwards, 2007; Engeström, 1993, 2001; Wells & Edwards, 2013; Yamagata-Lynch, 2007). Vygotsky and colleagues were considering alternatives to the behaviourist approach to activity which was based on stimulus and response. Vygotsky developed the concept of mediated action in which he did not treat the individual subject and the environment as separate entities (Yamagata-Lynch, 2007), but that they interacted with the use of tools as mediating or facilitating change (Engeström, 2001; Wells and Edwards, 2013). This ability to use tools to understand and interpret the object of activity was linked to Vygotsky and colleagues' description of human consciousness (Wells & Edwards, 2013).

The three interrelated elements of the subject (individual), the object (goal) and the mediating tool are presented within a triangular shape (Figure 3.2). According to Yamagata-Lynch (2007), 'tools' was the English translation of the term used by Vygotsky however, the term 'mediating artefacts' was used by many who further developed the theory such as Cole (1996).

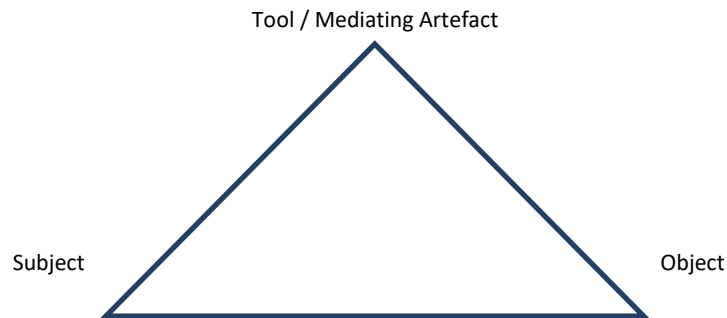


Figure 3:1 Vygotsky's first mediation triangle adapted by Cole (1996) cited in Yamagata-Lynch, 2007, p.454

Another important feature of their work was that self-directed action or learning was made possible by mediating artefacts and this concept was later foundational in the development of a theory of human 'agency' (Stetsenko & Arieivitch, 2004 cited in Wells & Edwards, 2013). The emphasis on action being oriented towards the object or goal, resulted in the objects being perceived as "cultural entities" (Engeström, 2001, p.4). Wells and Edwards (2013) state that Vygotsky and Leont'ev agreed the basic unit of analysis was the activity, which was goal-directed, cooperative and mediated by artefacts. However, Engeström (2001) highlighted that Vygotsky's unit of analysis was based on the individual and the next generation of the theory by Leont'ev would focus on broader activity systems involving collectives of people.

3.3.3 Second Generation Activity Theory

Leont'ev (1978) extended Vygotsky's work by positioning his concepts into a broader collective context (Ashwin, 2012; Engeström, 2001). Leont'ev did this by differentiating between action, activity and operation while focusing on the broader concept of activity as the unit of analysis (Wells & Edwards, 2013; Yamagata-Lynch, 2007).

Engeström (2001) claims that the inclusion of the community and the individual or groups of subjects within the concept of activity greatly enhanced the theory as it emphasised the complexity of relationships. Yamagata-Lynch (2007) highlights that Leont'ev and his colleagues did not address issues of analysing and presenting data within activity systems. Engeström (1987) addressed this limitation by using Leont'ev's concepts to expand on Vygotsky's initial diagram to represent the second generation of activity theory with six elements as depicted in Figure 3.2.

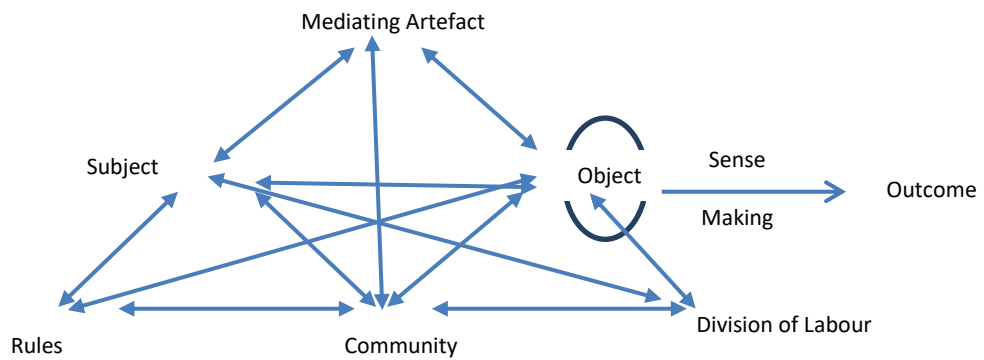


Figure 3:2 Engeström's (2001, p.135) representation of Leont'ev's activity system theory.

A key feature of Leont'ev's development of activity theory is motives and his assertion that "the object of the activity is its true motive" (Leont'ev, 1978, p.1 cited in Edwards, 2011) and is captured by Edwards (2005) in her conceptualisation of object motive.

In 1993, Engeström defined the additional three elements:

- *community* as the individuals or groups (subjects) who share the same object;
- *rules* as the norms and conventions which may be implicit or explicit that guide the subjects' actions and interactions;
- *division of labour* captures both the allocation of tasks between the subjects and the hierarchy of power and status.

Engeström (1993, 2001) as well as Wells and Edwards (2013) outline how Leont'ev's (1978) second generation theory of activity systems was applied by researchers in various fields. Engeström (1993) highlights a key aspect of the theory was the concept of tension or "contradictions" (p.71) within the system which led to change and developments, as an activity is not a constant entity. However, he notes that a limitation of Leont'ev's theory was that it lacked an appreciation of potential diversity across different perspectives and based on this, he extended activity theory to explore the interactions between multiple activity systems (Engeström, 2001).

3.3.4 Third Generation Activity Theory

Based on work by Bakhtin (1981, 1986) on dialogue, the concept of activity networks was developed to accommodate diverse perspectives (Engeström, 2001). Following this, Engeström (2001) expanded activity theory to encompass at least two interacting activity systems as displayed in Figure 3.3.

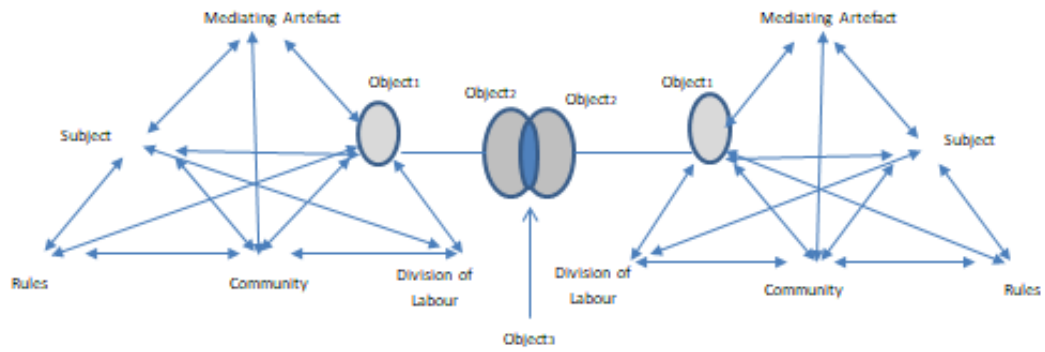


Figure 3:3 Two interacting activity systems as a model of Engeström’s third generation of activity theory (2001, p.136)

In this development of activity theory, Engeström (2001) presents object₁ as the initial “raw material” (p.136) or problem which is constructed into a communally significant object₂ by the activity system and then to a mutually constructed and shared object₃. Engeström asserts that within this model, the object of the activity is not reducible to known short-term goals, but is a target which is not static (Engeström, 2001). This was the basis of his development of the theory of expansive learning which is an application of activity theory.

Based on his use of activity theory within his own research in workplace contexts such as hospitals, Engeström (2001) articulated his conception of activity theory within five principles. I considered these and noted my potential applications for my research in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3:1 My Application of Engeström’s (2001) Five Principles of Activity Theory

No.	Engestrom’s Five Principles	My application for this research
1	The unit of analysis is the activity as a whole – a collective, artefact-mediated and object-oriented activity system within a network of other activity systems.	I am starting with two activity systems – the activity of participating within the programme and the subsequent activity of professional learning within lecturers’ usual workplace context.
2	Activity systems are multivoiced and are a nexus of many points of view and traditions which can be the sources of conflict, tension and innovation.	I expect diversity within the two activity systems as lecturers are from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds with different approaches to learning, as well as demographic differences.
3	Activity systems take shape and are developed over long periods and should be analysed in terms of history such as the genealogy of conceptual tools that have shaped them.	I am expecting to document changes. For example, while the policy for participation of new lecturers is applied since 2006, there may be lecturers who participated in programmes prior to this.
4	Contradictions between and within activity systems are sources of change and development. Open-ended learning systems can adopt new elements from outside, which can create contradictions. These contradictions can prompt disturbances and conflicts but also innovation.	An example of a Contradiction within my research may be that while advocating group based student projects with peer learning, the activities and assessments within the programme may have been focused on individuals. This contradiction may have led to the introduction of a group based project within the programme.
5	Activity systems have potential for expansive transformations, which occur through relatively long cycles of qualitative transformation. Expansive transformations happen when the object and motive of an activity have been reconceptualised to embrace a much wider horizon of possibilities than originally imagined.	By exploring the two activity systems of lecturers’ learning within the programme and also beyond the programme, I am hoping to identify some collective changes which may be possible from these activity systems.

In addition to the description of Engeström’s (2001) concept of contradictions above (Principle 4), further differentiation of four levels of contradictions had been outlined by Engeström (1987):

- primary - within a component e.g. within the Community
- secondary - between components e.g. between Rules and Community
- tertiary – between an activity and a remodelled form of that activity at a later date
- quaternary – between an activity and an associated activity.

3.3.5 Use of Activity Theory in Educational Research and Limitations

Activity theory has become established as a theoretical framework and has been applied within educational research. It has been used to analyse teacher education in schools (Edwards, 2007; Yamagata-Lynch, 2007) as well as in programmes in higher education (Fanghanel, 2004; Frambach et al., 2014; Knight et al., 2006). Researchers who acknowledge the inter-relationships between the learner's thoughts and actions associated with their practices and their institution's opportunities for action find activity theory a valuable framework (Edwards, 2011). The theory has been used to argue against decontextualized theories of learning based on models such as competency based training with a skill being defined as a discrete and bounded observable performance, and a qualification as the aggregation of different skills (Wheelahan, 2007). She advocates for a more holistic approach to learning which transcends the procedural aspects of 'know how' and that activity theory can assist in explaining that learning needs to encompass 'knowing with' and involve becoming part of, learning about, and making connections between all elements of the activity system (Wheelahan, 2007, p.192). However, like many theoretical frameworks it has been critiqued and some limitations identified.

Fanghanel (2004) highlighted that when she used an activity systems framework, agency, intentionality and emotions were not adequately accounted for or accommodated. Wheelahan (2007) also noted this potential limitation. Edwards (2007) addressed this by proposing an emphasis on relational agency within activity theory in which subjects ask for support and offer support within their community. She asserts that "agency does not reside solely with individuals but in collectives" (Edwards, 2007, p.28). She also proffers that this agency is a capacity to expand the shared object being worked on with the use of the shared resources (Edwards, 2007). This concept of relational agency also seems to capture the notion of intentionality and links with Edwards' emphasis on object motive. These concepts of motive and intentionality are central to my research in terms of the individual lecturers' rationale for participation in programmes and how they are supported in continuing their professional learning within their usual workplace environment.

Values were an aspect which Fanghanel (2004) noted as being understated and she was unsure of whether they should be perceived as Rules or Mediating artefacts. According to Wells and Edwards (2013) values are positioned as Rules based on their representation of Engeström's (1987) single activity system. However, depending on how the learners or Subjects perceive them, they may be used as mediating artefacts. As noted within the UK

Professional Standards Framework in Chapter 2, values are key components to support engagement and within the context of activity theory, they therefore could be used as part of this as a Mediating artefact to drive learning.

Fanghanel (2004) noted the same struggle with the positioning of reflection within the activity system of lecturers, and suggested that if it is perceived as a meta-cognitive tool, then it's a Meditating artefact. However, as the theory of change associated with many programmes for lecturers is based on reflective practice, reflection could also be deemed as an Object. This critique raises some queries for my research as to whether Objects of the programme (e.g. reflective practice) may become Mediating artefacts or Rules or norms within workplace learning.

Within this level of complexity of activity theory, there is the potential to over-theorise (Yamagata-Lynch, 2007). As highlighted above by Fanghanel (2004), it may be a challenge for a researcher to consider all elements of the activity system framework and analyse their context based on it. She described these struggles as dissonances (Fanghanel, 2007), while Knight et al. (2006) identify mismatches between different elements of an activity system as "d calages" (p.321) and suggest that this is usual in a higher education setting. However, I would suggest that Engestr m (2001) would perceive these differences as valuable contradictions which can lead to learning and development, as activity systems are inherently dynamic and not fixed. I am striving to uncover some contradictions within my perception of the activity system associated with lecturers' learning experiences within the programme and beyond, as in their workplace environments.

3.2.6 Conclusion

This theoretical framework provides a lens which will facilitate the exploration of lecturers' activities within accredited programmes as well as their activities within their usual work environment of being in an academic workplace. While there has been some significant research conducted on lecturers' experiences within accredited programmes, there is less documented about their learning within their usual workplace. As Trowler and Knight (2001) highlight, it is within the usual work environment such as the department that activities and practices can become embedded with much learning being tacit (Eraut, 2000) and values are communicated, both explicitly and implicitly. A theoretical framework which explicitly accommodates the complex work environment is a valuable tool to enable analysis.

I anticipated that the application of activity theory would allow me to identify some enablers and constraints relating to lecturers' professional learning within a programme and in their usual work environment. It was envisaged that it would provide a framework to explore the key questions of why do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching as well as how. This framework was chosen as it offers a perspective on the centrality of the social and historical context and stresses relational links between different elements rather than focusing solely on the cognitive developments associated with psychological theories of learning.

3.4 Methodology

Silverman (2005) defines methodology as the approach used to research the phenomenon which can be described in the broadest distinction of quantitative or qualitative or more narrowly in terms of specific paradigms. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) the methodological approach aligned with a constructivist paradigm is "hermeneutical / dialectical" (p.109) which Gray (2013) outlines that taking a hermeneutic perspective involves interpretation, rather than merely explaining and describing. This would involve induction rather than solely deduction.

Using Silverman's (2005) definition, I considered a range of methodologies which could support my theoretical framework of activity theory and research approach to achieve interpretation and address the research questions. Wilson (2014) notes the use of activity theory as a methodological framework has alignments with both case study and action research. She emphasises the focus on change within activity theory and that it can be used to clarify and explain an issue which may then be lead to an intervention using action research (Wilson, 2014). As the context for this research was complex, with the confluence of the lecturers' participation in accredited programmes, their broader learning environment within the institution and with implications from both national and institutional policy, a case study approach was deemed more appropriate than action research to capture this.

3.4.1 Case Study

The case study approach is often categorized as one of the classic approaches which facilitate comprehensive, contextualized analysis of a complex issue (Baxter & Jack, 2008;

Cohen et al., 2011; Denscombe, 2007; Ryan, 2006; Silverman, 2005; Stake, 1994, 1995; Yin, 2009; 2012). It allows for the identification and development of “detailed, intensive knowledge about a single ‘case’ or a small number of related cases” (Ryan, 2006, p.71). This focused approach allows for significant scope to fully understand the case and “unravel the complexities of a given situation” (Denscombe, 2007, p.36). As a holistic approach, it also provides an opportunity to retain the real-world context (Collyer, 2015; Yin, 2012).

Cohen et al. (2011) assert that case study “provides a unique example of real people in real situations” (p.289). In this research, case study allowed for the in-depth exploration of lecturers from the micro of the individual, the meso level of the department, school and institution and the macro level of the wider, national context. This research approach supports the use of activity theory, as profiled in Section 3.3 in which there is a focus on the specific contexts of the activities of the participants (Engeström, 2001; Hashim & Jones, 2007), and has been used in institutional and regional educational settings (Edwards, 2004; Fanghanel, 2004; Yamagata-Lynch, 2003; 2007).

Denscombe (2007) suggests that “the real value of a case study is that it offers the opportunity to explain why certain outcomes might happen – more than just find out what those outcomes are” (p.36). In this research, I aimed to identify and interpret the range of factors influencing participation in a programme as well as learning beyond the programme in other professional contexts. I hoped to develop detailed and discursive insights into lecturers’ experiences of learning based on programme participation and their learning beyond the programme. I drew on my own previous experience of using case studies (Hanratty & O’Farrell, 2007; Potter & Hanratty, 2008; Hanratty, Higgs & Tan, 2011). In addition I was mindful of data which had been collected on the institution’s accredited teaching and learning programmes by my colleagues and I previously (Donnelly, 2005; McAvinia et al., 2015). This research builds on and extends previous research by further examining participants’ learning experiences, especially beyond programmes and within the context of the introduction of a new national professional development Framework.

I categorise this case study as instrumental (Stake, 1995) and explanatory (Yin, 2009, 2012). I was investigating the experiences of the lecturers within the context of one institution, and not solely for its own sake as in an intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995), my aim being to provide insights and inform implications for my role as an educational developer and

colleagues within the higher education sector. Yin (2012) differentiates between single and multiple-case designs, while Stake (1995) uses the term collective for more than one case. While I set out to investigate the experiences of lecturers within the one institution, the initial unit of analysis was the lecturers' experiences in one of three different programmes and then their experiences beyond the programme. This would categorise it as an "embedded single-case" (Yin, 2012, p.7) within the same context of the institution. I was exploring the experiences of lecturers within different contexts – formal learning within the programme and learning within their usual work environment. This also aligns with the theoretical perspective of exploring and interpreting the various activity systems of the lecturers.

As case study is a comprehensive methodology, it "usually requires more than one tool for data collection and many sources of evidence" (Cohen et al. 2011, p.289), which is reiterated by Flyvberg (2011). Stake (1994) asserts that "as a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used" (p.236). A case is a "bounded entity" (Yin, 2012, p.6; Stake, 1994, 1995). As such the sampling and the data collection tools need to support the exploration of the particular case. The data collection methods of questionnaire, interviews and focus groups were all considered applicable for this case study. Similarly, prior to finalising the data collection methods and tools to be used, it was crucial to determine the potential participant population.

3.4.2 Sampling strategy

Silverman (2005) advocates the use of a "sampling frame" (p.19) to identify the population for participation in the research. Sampling is a key task in determining how a case study is bounded. Within this case study, I conducted purposive sampling as opposed to random sampling (Ryan, 2006). While I set out to involve graduates of accredited programmes from one institution within this case, I needed to carefully consider the criteria for participation. I identified four criteria to ascertain the population for participation in this research:

- Successful completion of one of the chosen programmes
- Had graduated at least nine months
- Member of staff in case study institution - DIT
- Main role is / was as a lecturer.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Educational researchers, like all researchers, must give careful consideration to prospective ethical issues to inform and guide decision making in terms of the research design. Ethical decisions are made based on abiding by ethical principles which may be external or internal to the individual researcher (Cohen et al., 2011). There are many ethical dilemmas, especially when embarking on research which involves substantial participation from others. This research proposal to explore the learning experiences of graduates of the DIT programmes was approved by the Head of the LTTC and then submitted to DIT's Ethics Committee who awarded it general approval. This section details the decisions made based on common ethical principles of access and acceptance, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and issues relating to electronic formats which contributed to the research decisions and to the application to the Ethics Committee of the host institution, DIT. The section concludes with a discussion on the ethical considerations around my own position as an 'insider-researcher' (Coghlan, 2007; Hansen, 2013; Mercer, 2007; Trowler, 2011).

3.5.1 Informed Consent

Social and educational research frequently involves individuals or groups as active participants within the research process. It is important that prospective participants are aware of the purpose of the research and any potential consequences based on their involvement (Cohen et al., 2011). Informed consent is a foundational element of ethical practice as "it respects the right of individuals to exert control over their lives and to take decisions for themselves" (Howe & Moses, (1999) as cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p.77). Providing sufficient information to allow prospective participants make an informed decision on participation in research is a central principle within the DIT Ethics Policy. An outline of the research proposal was documented within the 'Participant Information Sheet' (Appendix C) and the accompanying Consent Form (Appendix D) was developed based on this and the DIT Ethics form.

These files were included as attachments within the email invitation to participate in the questionnaire. They were also included in reminder emails sent after the initial invitation. It was intended that participants would complete the Consent Forms and return them via internal institutional post or email. There was no direct link between the online questionnaire and the completed consent form as the online questionnaire was anonymous. Spare consent forms were taken to interviews to ensure consent was received

by all participants prior to data collection. For those completing consent online, there was also a statement and consent tick box included within the questionnaire to remind respondents to read the Participant Information Sheet and complete the Consent Form as shown in Figure 3.4.

1.

Confirmation and Consent: Please indicate that you have read the Participant Information Sheet, and the Consent Form and therefore agree to participate.

Reminders: to please submit the signed Consent Form which will be kept separately from this anonymous survey. Also, you may withdraw from this research project at any time.

Yes, I have read the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form and therefore agree to participate

No, I have not read the Participant Information Sheet and or the Consent Form, and do not wish to participate.

Figure 3:4 Opening statement on Consent with tick box confirmation and consent.

3.5.2 Anonymity

The key principle of anonymity is that it should not be possible to identify a participant based on information they have provided during the research process. This issue was considered in the design of the data collection tools. In the first phase, the online questionnaire was anonymous and designed so that the individual responses that could identify respondents were limited or could be eliminated.

All eligible graduates based on purposive sampling criteria were emailed the link to the online questionnaire using the 'bcc' field which allows emails lists to be anonymous. Some initial questions on programme, year of graduation and discipline could disclose identity. The identities of respondents to the questionnaire were only revealed if they emailed me as the researcher to volunteer for participation in the interviews. Unless details were revealed within interviews, it was not possible to link the interviewees to their completed questionnaire.

Based on respondents volunteering to participate further in interviews, their identity would be known and their names would be used during the interview itself for ease of conversation but any identifying detail was removed from transcripts and in reporting at a later stage. It was also anticipated that some interviewees may use the names of colleagues and/or students during interviews and this was noted in the information

sheet as something to avoid. All names of colleagues or students were removed after transcription and all identities of interviewees were concealed by the use of pseudonyms.

3.5.3 Confidentiality and issues relating to electronic formats

The issue of confidentiality relates to ensuring the participant's right to privacy by not revealing any information which would identify them (Cohen et al., 2011). As well as pseudonyms, other related information which could disclose their identity was concealed. Data gathered in paper format, such as the signed consent sheets were stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

Data relating to prospective participants for this research is held securely within the institution's database systems. The data required for this research related specifically to their position as students and graduates of the programmes of the LTTC. Access to this data was via an administrator who has authorised access to the central database systems within the institution such as registration and assessment records and was available to me as a member of the LTTC.

Electronic data was stored on my personal, password protected laptop as opposed to any electronic devices used within the institution's premises or network. Data was also backed up on an external hard drive stored in a locked, fire-proof cabinet.

3.5.4 Ethics Approval

The ethical issues outlined above were considered in preparation of the documentation submitted to the DIT Ethics Committee (Appendix B). I complied with the DIT's ethics procedures and also considered the general educational research guidelines of the British Education Research Association (BERA) publication 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research' (2011).

The submission was acknowledged at the Ethics Committee Meeting on March 25th 2015. Minor revisions were sought in relation to greater emphasis on participation involvement in the Participation Information Sheet, such as estimated time commitment for the participant. These were dealt with in the final participant documents (Appendices C and D) and approved. This ethical approval by DIT was recognised by Maynooth University's Ethics Committee.

After receiving formal ethical approval in early April 2015, the online questionnaire was made live and available to prospective participants. The final questionnaire (Appendix E) is discussed later the Data Collection Methods section.

3.5.5 Insider-researcher

As an educational developer within this institution, I was aware of being an insider researcher (Coghlan, 2007; Hansen, 2013; Mercer, 2007; Trowler, 2011) as I was also a colleague of those involved in the research. Stake (2005), with reference to case study, describes the position of the researcher as being “a guest in the private spaces of the world” (p.459), emphasising this privileged and onerous role. The role of a researcher within one’s own organisation is even more complex. Some of the key dilemmas which can be encountered as an insider researcher within professional doctorates (Coghlan, 2007) and particularly in higher education (Hansen, 2013; Mercer, 2007; Trowler, 2011) are proximity, role duality and organisational politics.

Hansen (2013) uses the term “proximity” (p.389) to convey one aspect of being a researcher in your own institution, which facilitates access to prospective participants and potentially greater levels of trust and responsiveness. I acknowledge the privileged position that I had in being able to conduct this research in my own institution. As well as enabling easy access to research participants, I had ‘preunderstanding’ which Gummesson (2007 cited by Coghlan, 2007), describes as “people’s knowledge, insights and experience before they engage in research” (p.57). I was familiar with the programmes and the general context and structures of the institution as a whole, and could be described as “culturally literate” (Trowler, 2011, p.1). Bourdieu (1988) offers some advice on the challenge of being a local researcher in ‘Homo Academicus’ with “the sociologist who chooses to study his own world in its nearest and most familiar aspects should not, as the ethnologist would, domesticate the exotic” (p.xii). In contrast, Hansen (2013) with reference to Mannay (2010) indicates how she attempted to “make the familiar strange”, by creating some distance between herself and the interviewees by adopting a formal approach. However, Mercer (2007) emphasises the benefits of being known to participants as it allows for rapport and candour which may not have been achieved as an external researcher. The familiarity with the participants and context may however, result in bias (Hansen, 2013; Mercer, 2007).

Decisions were made to limit any potential compromising aspects of my position as a researcher and colleague, as noted above in the four criteria within the sampling section,

such as excluding any recent graduates. It was anticipated that many of the potential 182 participants would not be known to me. Most would have completed the programmes prior to me joining the institution in March 2013. The initial data gathering phase of the online questionnaire was anonymous, so I as the researcher would not have known who the respondents were.

The issue of role duality and conflict is also common for educational developers who are engaged in scholarly research as well as implementing institutional and or national policies (Brew, 2010; Hansen, 2007). The contested nature of the role of the educational developer (Land, 2004; Rowland, 2007) as profiled in Chapter 2: Literature Review also creates some distance from academic colleagues. McDowell (1996) highlighted the challenge of balancing “the level of detachment we would aspire to as researchers and the support we would wish to offer as educational developers” (p.140). Hansen (2013) reiterates this and also notes within an interview scenario, the role of the educational developer may result in some lecturers perceiving you as an expert in teaching and learning, which may influence how they respond to some questions. This sense of credibility presents as an advantage within interview situations (Mercer, 2007). Clegg and Stevenson (2013) acknowledge this and emphasise that particularly within interviews with colleagues there are tacit assumptions with being within the context. Given my role as an educational developer which involved facilitating and assessing learning within the programmes, I emphasised during interviews that I was not evaluating the programmes.

The issue of the perception of the roles is also embedded within the organisational politics. As I was a part-time colleague of two years at the time of conducting the research, I had some preunderstanding of the institutional context, but it was my own lack of knowledge of the broader institutional experiences of the lecturers that inspired and drove the decision to conduct an institutional case study rather than a multi-case study. There is a critique of the interpretive and qualitative approaches to research that they can be narrowly focused in a micro-sociological approach. This may be a criticism which could be particularly applicable to insider researchers working on an institutional case study. However, this research is utilising these approaches to garner understanding of the meso-level and macro-level within an institutional case study which is often neglected (Trowler & Cooper, 2002). The use of activity theory as a theoretical framework, as discussed in

Section 3.2 also allays the potential for only focusing on the micro level, as it captures the more holistic aspects of the lecturers' environment.

3.5.6 Assumptions and potential biases

While I conducted inductive analysis on the data, I felt that it was important to consider any assumptions, preconceived notions and potential biases prior to commencing the process of analysis. This was based on recommendations by O'Leary (2014) who suggests that "a good way to start your analysis is to list as many of your assumptions and preconceived notions as possible" (p.307). She indicates that this activity will allow for the articulation of any potential biases that may need to be managed while engaging in analysis and it also may assist in identifying possible areas for exploration. I noted my assumptions and potential biases as:

- I am expecting that policy requiring new lecturers to complete a programme will be part of their rationale for participating in a programme;
- However, I am hoping that some are interested in the area of teaching and learning of their own volition;
- I am open to learning about many diverse reasons for participating in the programmes; Some have participated in an accredited programme prior to policy requirements, and for the CPD module, it is not a requirement so I am interested to learn what prompts them to participate;
- As the CPD co-ordinator and lecturer on many of the programmes, I am keen to learn about the learning experiences within the programmes, but I am not evaluating the programmes. As an educational developer, I am more interested in learning how to support colleagues within the programmes and especially beyond in terms of their own professional learning which may be non-accredited and informal.

3.6 Research design and processes

The research processes were divided into two distinct phases based on the data collection methods. The decision to use two phases was to allow for data collection from one method, the questionnaire, to inform the interviews / focus groups in an iterative sequence. This research project was conducted over a period of eight months from April 2015 to November 2015. An outline of the phases and scheduling is presented in Figure 3.5. The timeframe was determined by the academic calendar as lecturers were engaged in heavy teaching loads of 16-18 hours a week from April to early May but would potentially be more flexible in terms of their time from mid-May to mid-June as they would be involved in reviewing student assessment activities. I was aiming to have all questionnaire

responses in by the end of April so that interviews or focus groups could begin in May and be completed by mid-June (Figure 3.5).

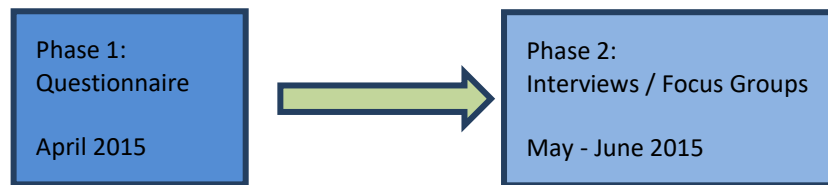


Figure 3:5 Planned Sequencing of Data Collection Phases

Details of my actions as the researcher and participants are also noted based on the actual schedule and extended timeframe from the planned outline. These are presented in Figure 3.6.

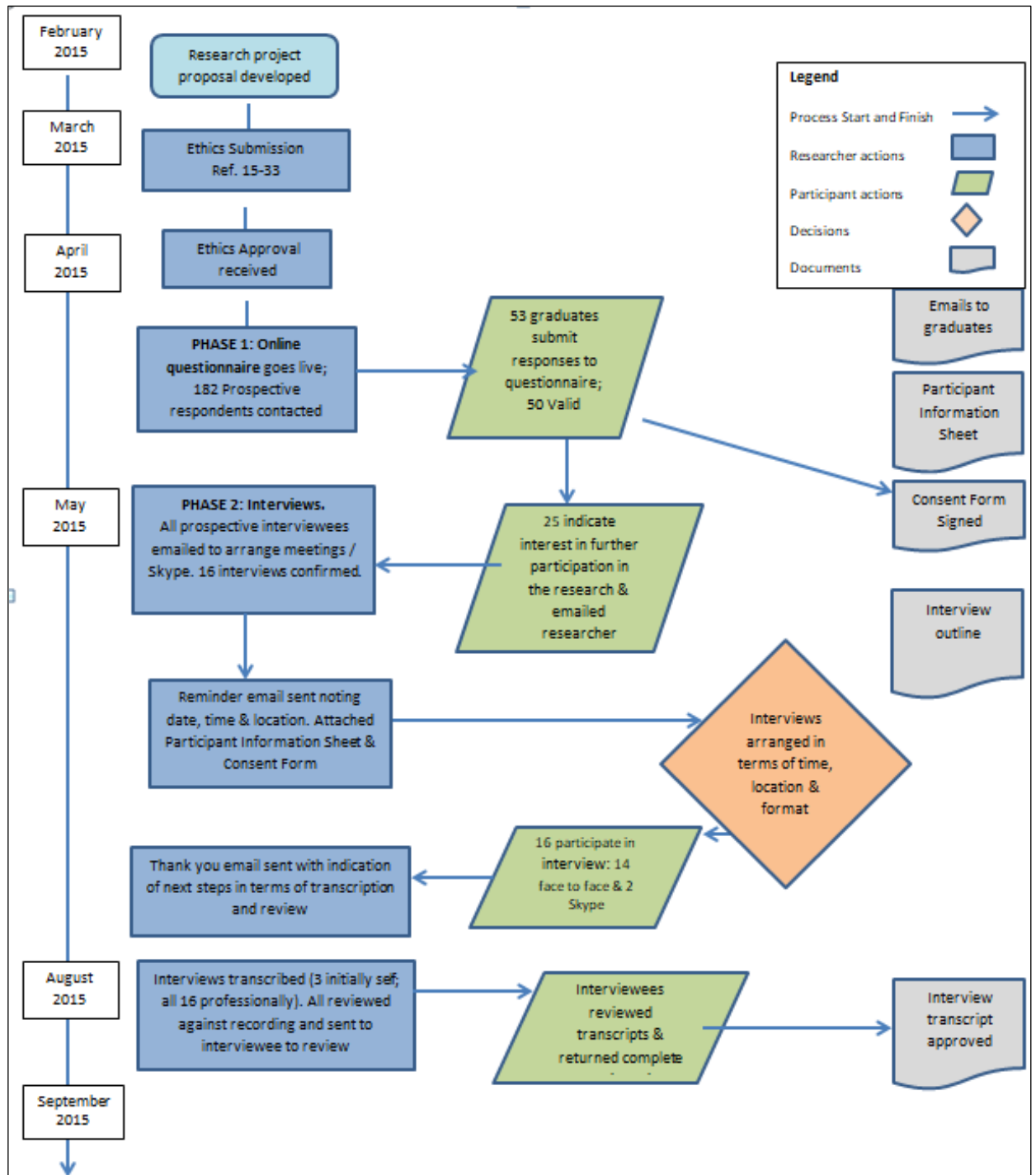


Figure 3:6 Research Design - Processes and Schedule

3.6.1 Data collection strategies

A range of data collection strategies were chosen which is common within a case study methodology (Denscombe, 2007). The use of a range of methods allows for greater depth and breadth of responses and from a wide range of respondents which is valuable for research which strives to capture insights into a complex context applicable to activity theory. This also enables triangulation of data. There are different strengths and limitations with the various methods used. The use of a variety of strategies can delimit the potential weaknesses of one method. It is also a more systematic approach. The total potential population for participants was 182. This is made up of all DIT graduates from the three accredited programmes. Two different data collection methods were chosen and used at different phases of the research project.

- Questionnaire
- Interviews

3.6.2 Phase One –Questionnaire

As activity theory and the methodology of case study are both holistic in their approach, I considered it important to initially gather data from as many graduates as possible on their experiences of learning within and beyond the accredited programmes. This aligns with Engeström's principles of multi-voicedness, as presented in Table 3.1, in which he describes activity systems as "a community of multiple points of view, traditions and interests" (Engeström, 2001, p.136). Within this research, I wanted to gain insights into the diverse range of perspectives of lecturers from various disciplinary backgrounds. An online questionnaire was used to gather data from all potential participants. I deemed this appropriate as it allowed me to elicit responses from a large number of potential participants who were not known to be and the online questionnaire could be administered without me, the researcher being present (Cohen et al., 2011). Additionally, Denscombe (2007) highlights consistency as an advantage of questionnaires as the questions presented to each participant are identical, and this also eases the process of analysis of the data (Cohen et al. 2011; Denscombe, 2007).

The aim of this questionnaire was three-fold. The primary aim was to gain a quick insight into the breadth of lecturers' experiences and thus provide an initial overall sense of the area with a potentially large number of respondents. This would facilitate identification of significant issues prior to conducting a more in-depth discussion. It was not envisaged that results would be statistically significant. The questionnaire was also used to invite further

participation in the next phase. It was considered that it would have been difficult to invite lecturers to participate in focus groups or interviews by email or other means alone. This was due to the fact that it was also approaching the end of the academic year and lecturers may have perceived participation in interviews as too time consuming. All participants were self-selecting. The questionnaire was also used as an awareness raising strategy around emerging national issues such as the professional development Framework.

The online questionnaire software 'Survey Monkey' was used to create the questions, gather responses and do initial analysis of responses. The advantages of the online survey tool are that it can generate a web-based link which is emailed to potential respondents and they can complete it anonymously. It can also be accessed easily by the researcher to check responses. It is a password protected application.

3.6.2.1 Question Formats

The design and structure of the questionnaire (Appendix E), contains open and closed questions, and opportunities for participants to select multiple answers where appropriate. In many of the questions, an opportunity was given for further elaboration or clarification of their responses. The research questions and the elements of the activity systems were considered when designing the questions to allow for identification and interpretation of why lecturers engaged in professional learning activities and how. A pilot questionnaire was created online using Survey Monkey and completed by three colleagues who were not participating in the research. They offered comments on the structure of questions to allow for greater ease of responding and minor suggestions relating to the phrasing of a few questions. The final questionnaires were released in mid-April (Appendix E). There was an additional question posed in the Cert and CPD Module questionnaires, and the rationale is explained in Appendix F.

3.6.2.2 Response rate

The questionnaire was structured to allow a respondent to complete it within 10 to 15 minutes. I provided an estimated time allocation so that they could decide whether to participate or not. There was also the option to leave the questionnaire at any stage, even if this would result in an incomplete submission. They could also return to the questions if they wished. There was no time limit. The response rates to each of the three questionnaires are presented in Table 3.2 below. The response rates per question are presented in Appendix F.

Table 3:2 Questionnaires and Response Rates

Programme	Total Population	Responses Received	Completed & Usable	Percentage of total
Diploma	120	41* [^]	37	31%
Cert	47	7	7	15%
CPD Module	15	7*	6	40%
Totals	182	55	50	27%

*One Diploma respondent completed 6 answers out of 22. One CPD module respondent completed 8 answers out of 23. These were deemed incomplete. Three respondents who had completed the Diploma questionnaire did not have a main role as a lecturer which was one of the criteria for inclusion (Section 3.4.2).

[^] Two Diploma respondents answered 12 out of 22 questions and another answered 15 so while not 100% complete, as there were over 50% of questions answered, it was deemed appropriate to include them in the study.

The overall response rate of 55 (29%) is a reasonable response rate according to Cohen et al. 2011; Nulty, 2008 and Weimiao & Zheng, 2010. Almost half of potential graduates of the CPD module responded to the questionnaire. I had taught one instance of this module. The response rates of 31% and 15% to the Diploma and Cert respectively and I did not know the majority of the potential respondents. It is likely that these respondents had something they wanted to contribute to this research.

3.6.3 Phase Two - Interviews

While the questionnaire would allow me to gather multiple perspectives as advocated in Engeström's principle, I also wanted to gain deeper insights into participants' specific contexts to address Engeström's principles of historicity and the role of contradictions, as outlined in section 3.3.4 and presented with my applications in Table 3.1. Denscombe (2007) recommends the use of interviews for gaining such insights into participant's experiences and advocates it as "a method that is attuned to the intricacy of the subject matter" (p.174). Interviews allow both the researcher, as the interviewer, and the interviewees to clarify their interpretations and express their understanding from their own perspective (Cohen et al., 2011). The interview is also defined as being constructed, in contrast to a general conversation (Cohen et al., 2011; Denscombe, 2007). It was intended from the outset that either focus groups or interviews would be used for this phase.

The last question posed in the online questionnaire asked if respondents would like to participate in a follow up interview or focus group. One respondent explicitly noted that they would prefer an individual interview as English was not their first language. For logistical reasons, particularly the difficulty with finding times in lecturers' schedules for five to six to be available to meet, individual interviews proved more feasible than focus groups.

While a specific number was not set for interviews, it was anticipated I would interview least 12 respondents to the questionnaire who were interested and available to participate further. It was considered ideal if there were interview participants who held senior roles within a department or school as they may have insights into how professional learning in relation to teaching is valued and supported within a School. It was also deemed advantageous, but not essential, to have interview participants from across the four DIT Colleges so as to provide an insight into disciplinary groupings. This was a more influential factor than other attributes such as gender and age profile. It was considered that a natural mix of participant profile would be achieved given the diversity of lecturers. These profiles were achieved.

Twenty-five respondents to the questionnaire initially volunteered to follow-up participation, and 18 respondents confirmed interest in participating in an interview. Two however, who had indicated that they were interested were subsequently not available. The remaining 16 were interviewed. The interviews were initially planned from mid - May to the end of June 2015. Some interviews had to be scheduled later due to lecturers' holidays and one interview took place in November due to the participant's illness during the summer period. Two interviews were conducted using online software Skype. All other interviews took place in person. Many took place in the lecturer's campus base to ensure that the experience was as convenient as possible for them. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed in full verbatim as an "orthographic transcript" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.89). I commenced the transcription process of two interviews myself within NVivo, but decided to get all interviews professionally transcribed due to the time required to carefully transcribe 16 substantial interviews.

3.6.3.1 Semi-structured

It was the intention from the outset that the interviews would be semi-structured and were focused around four main topics (Appendix G). As the questionnaires were anonymous, it

was noted that some questions might be repeated; these related to participant's discipline and when they had completed the programme. A pilot interview was conducted twice with an educational developer based in another HEI. The purpose of the pilot interview was to check the clarity of the proposed questions and interviewee's interpretation of them. It was also intended as a means to estimate the approximate duration. These pilot interviews were digitally recorded so that I could replay them and improve on my phrasing of key questions. A key result from piloting the interview questions was that the questions topics remained the same, but how they were introduced and phrased improved. The order of some questions also changed to allow for greater connection between related questions.

Though the interview schedule was offered to participants in advance (Appendix G), some indicated that they had not had time to read it. An introductory information sheet was also produced for the interviews (Appendix H). This contained a quote from the Hunt Report (2011), and the figure depicting Bamber's (2009) graph with four quadrants which would be used to facilitate discussion for some questions (Appendix H). The duration of the interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

3.6.3.2 Interview Process

Prior to importing the data from the 16 recorded interviews into NVivo, I reviewed all the transcripts. This involved replaying the digital recordings and simultaneously checking the transcriptions. They were checked for gaps and accuracy with the additional support of notes taken during the interviews. I made initial memos in a 'Data Analysis' notebook. Interviews transcribed from Skype recordings took longer due to some parts being less audible e.g. two hours for a 50 minute recording. This process was part of familiarising myself with the data and as such Phase 1 of the application of Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis.

All transcripts were returned to the individual interviewees for them to review with guidelines (Appendix I). The full transcripts were emailed to the interviewee and a period of 2-3 weeks was suggested for review and return. All apart from one interviewee replied with little or no changes. The only changes noted were to add clarification or correct an inaccuracy of an acronym used. Pseudonyms were then applied to interviewees' transcription files. The files were then imported into NVivo. The use of this specialist software to support qualitative data analysis was valuable. Beyond facilitating the storage of large amounts of data, it allowed for coding and identification of connections and

relationships within and across the data (Bazeley, 2009; Bazeley & Jackson, 2013) as well as recording my reflections and ideas.

3.7 Data analysis strategy

It has been suggested that the approach to data analysis used within research is often not explicitly articulated by researchers (Bazeley, 2009). Braun and Clarke (2006) and Gibbs (2002) have aimed to address this by providing insights into suggested processes especially with the use of computer based tools such as NVivo. This section outlines my approach to data analysis and specifically data collected within an activity theory framework.

Activity theory is the theoretical framework for this research. While I intended using it as a means to support the analysis of my data, I used thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) prior to considering the elements of the activity theory modelling of activity systems. Wilson (2014) asserts that activity theory is “both a method of analysing qualitative data collected using a range of approaches, and a methodological approach used to help practitioners gain understanding of their own, and others’ work contexts, in order to bring about change” (p.27). It was a challenge to identify an appropriate data analysis strategy to use with activity theory, but a review of data analysis strategies used by other researchers assisted in determining my approach.

Frambach et al., (2014) and Yamagata-Lynch (2003) acknowledge the challenges of setting boundaries and extracting activity systems from rich data sets. The sequence of using thematic analysis prior to analysis with the use of activity system tools as an analytic lens has been used by Douglas (2012), Frambach et al. (2014) and Yamagata-Lynch (2003) within case study, and Yamagata-Lynch and Smaldino (2007) and Yamagata-Lynch (2007) with other methodologies. Some researchers have analysed data directly in relation to the six elements of activity systems (Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2009), however, I determined that if I did this I would have lost a lot of the rich detail and nuance within the data within the questionnaires and interviews. I therefore used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) on the data from the questionnaires and then the interviews prior to analysis with the modelling of the activity systems based on an activity theory framework. The specific approaches to data analysis are now discussed in the following sections.

3.7.1 Questionnaires

I conducted thematic data analysis within Nvivo based on an inductive approach using a latent level of analysis for questions which prompted rich qualitative data from respondents (Braun & Clarke, 2006) as I was striving to identify underlying assumptions. A semantic or surface level of analysis within MS Excel was deemed sufficient for the more quantitative responses based on questions with limited scope such as Likert scales (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Data from the 50 valid questionnaires was exported from Survey Monkey and stored in the first instance within three separate MS Excel worksheets, one for each of the three questionnaires submitted by graduates from the three programmes. I initially reviewed all responses to determine if any questions had been misinterpreted, with one only respondent noting they did not understand one particular question. I then carefully reviewed the data from each of the questionnaires separately, commencing with the largest from the Diploma. I had been reading the responses as they had been submitted, but this review was based on reading all responses from the completed questionnaires for each programme. These initial steps are part of the first phase of becoming familiar with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Some questions which had both quantitative and qualitative response options were analysed together. For example, questions which had a direct input format such as choosing from a drop down list, then followed by an open text box for 'other please specify' were analysed within the one worksheet. I repeated this for each programme. I then created a separate worksheet for each of the key questions and responses from each of the three questionnaires within the one file. While the file was large in that it had 16 worksheets, it allowed for more focused review of the data relating to each question or section.

Priority was given to conducting thematic analysis on the open questions and rating questions, as themes emerging from the questionnaires were being used to support the final preparation of the interview topics and questions. I therefore conducted simple totalling within MS Excel on the quantitative data. I transferred the responses to the

qualitative questions from the questionnaire into NVivo (version 9 and 10). However, I created the nodes based on my existing themes identified within the use of MS Excel.

3.7.2 Qualitative data corpus - Questionnaires and Interviews

The following sequence of steps was taken in the analysis of the qualitative data:

Table 3.3 Steps of Data Analysis

Step 1	All qualitative data were combined into one data set. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) terms, my data <i>corpus</i> (p.5) consisted of two data sets: the online questionnaire (n= 50) and the interviews (n=16).
Step 2	Thematic analysis based on the Braun and Clarke (2006) approach was undertaken to allow insight into the overarching themes initially, and to avoid solely focusing on the six current elements of the Activity Systems Theory. I adapted Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase approach to thematic analysis, and applied the first five phases to qualitative data from my two data sets.
Step 3	Consideration of the six elements within Engeström's Activity Theory models.
Step 4	Outputs in terms of models and thematic maps.

At Step 2, I followed the second to fifth phases of Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis for the qualitative data: "generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes and finally defining and naming themes" (p.87). Substantial qualitative data was gleaned from open questions in the questionnaire, such as 'Briefly outline your reasons for participating in this programme' which was initially analysed within MS Excel to identify themes. Some open questions prompted comprehensive responses which were over 70 words with one response having a 179 word response.

The term node is used within NVivo to identify distinct units of data (Bazeley, 2009; Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Gibbs, 2002). A node is comparable with the use of the term code by Braun and Clarke (2006) as it is initially identified and then organised into themes. The nodes in NVivo were set up with associated classifications and attributes within each individual transcript file. The coding of terms within NVivo needed to be carefully considered. The initial themes identified based on analysis of the data within the questionnaires were noted. Open coding was conducted on the full data set. This resulted in 112 codes created within NVivo as nodes. Some such as 'Professionalism' had 108 references from the 16 interviews.

3.7.3 Activity systems modelling

After the main themes were identified based on the data from the questionnaires and interviews, the six elements of Engeström's Activity Systems model were considered. Two initial models were created based on data associated with the two key stages of

professional learning within an accredited programme and then beyond an accredited programme. Based on analysis from the questionnaire data, it was clear that there were differences in the Objects associated with learning within an accredited programme, with four distinct Objects identified. The more extensive data from the interviews which averaged one hour in duration, provided a rich source to allow for more in-depth analysis and interpretation, and two orientations or Objects were identified.

The associations and contradictions between themes and elements of the activity systems models were more evident at this final stage of analysis. These were represented as models and thematic maps which will be noted in the next three chapters. The distinction between different levels of data in terms of Micro, Meso and Macro proved a useful initial step. This also aligns with Yamagata-Lynch's (2007) use of Rogoff's (1995) distinction of three planes of analysis as personal, interpersonal and institutional / community and the recommendation to zoom in and out of the various planes one at a time. The contradictions within data is a distinct feature of analysis within an activity theory framework and Engeström highlighted contradictions as a principle within complex activity systems, as described in Section 3.3.4 above.

The process of data analysis was therefore iterative within both data sets from the questionnaires and interviews. It was time consuming to conduct thematic analysis prior to applying the activity theory framework but this proved valuable in terms of developing a comprehensive range of themes. The themes and associated data are detailed within the next three findings chapters.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described the research design based on the philosophical underpinnings, use of activity theory as a theoretical framework as well as ethical and practical influences. It outlines the predominantly qualitative methods used within an institutional case study. This chapter presented the orienting decisions and the processes involved in conducting research with lecturers within the reality of the academic year. While it was a flexible research design, the focus remained on using the most appropriate processes to address the research questions and aimed to gain a better understanding of the lecturers' experiences of learning within and beyond the accredited programme. This epitomises an approach which strives to achieve an exploration without expecting final truths.

The following three chapters, document the analysis and the associated findings from this research methodology:

Chapter 4 Findings: Questionnaires

Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews

Chapter 6 Findings: Activity Systems.

Chapter 4 Findings: Questionnaires

4.1 Introduction to Findings Chapters

The following three chapters present the findings based on the analysis of data collected to address the research questions:

- Why do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How can educational developers further support professional learning?

The tools used for data collection were:

- questionnaires, and
- interviews.

Chapter 3 (Section 3.6) introduced these tools and outlined how these tools were used in a sequential order so that data from the questionnaires informed the design of the interviews. The findings are presented in this order in the following three chapters. The analysis of the findings from the online questionnaires is the focus of this Chapter 4 Findings: Questionnaires and the analysis of the data from the 16 interviews is presented in Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews.

These chapters are followed by further analysis of the data using the theoretical framework of activity theory and the modelling of activity systems in Chapter 6 Findings: Activity Systems. The rich data gleaned from the two data collection tools facilitated the modelling of activity systems capturing the wider context of the lecturers' learning and work environments which I then analysed using the activity theory framework. This framework furnished me with a lens on the wider context as I was encompassing the components of community, rules and division of labour as previously presented in Chapter 3 Methodology in Figure 3.2 and described in Section 3.3. For example, while there were not specific questions on community, the questionnaire and interview prompted research participants to refer to these and provide insights into immediate communities in their departments and School, as well as disciplinary based communities which were both within the local context of the institution, as well as national and international which may be perceived as meso and macro level contexts respectively.

4.1.1 Format for reporting results and findings

All responses to each question from the three different questionnaires were collated and analysed together. I have honoured the voices of the research participants by including many samples of data. Data from the questionnaires is presented with indentation accompanied by the programme title and respondent number, which was based on the order of input. The data inputted by respondents within the questionnaires has been presented as entered. Any typographical errors in terms of spelling, grammar or syntax were maintained for the purposes of integrity.

The data from the interviews are presented as transcribed. Any potential identifiers relating to subject discipline or colleagues' names have been replaced with a general term which is italicised. While the analysis of the data from both the questionnaire and interviews is collated within the modelling of the activity systems in Chapter 6, there is some direct reference to specific responses, for example in Table 6.1.

4.2 Online Questionnaires

The questions and formats are presented in Appendix E. The data gleaned from the 50 valid online questionnaires was analysed and key findings identified. The response rates for each question ranged from 50 to 22 and are noted in Appendix F.

4.3 Demographical information on respondents

Section 1 of the questionnaire 'You and Your role' contained questions relating to demographics and role. The demographical and role details were respondent attribute variables, and will be referred to again in later sections as there are linkages between these variables and responses to some subsequent questions. Table 4.1 below indicates that there was an even response rate across the four DIT Colleges and gender. Data on the School /department and main subject / discipline are excluded to prevent any potential for respondents to be identified as some stated unique specialisms.

Twenty-three respondents (46%) of the 50 noted their role while beginning a programme as Assistant Lecturer, which is associated with early career. However, five of the six respondents who participated in the CPD module were at Lecturer grade, and the other was an Hourly Paid Assistant Lecturer (HPAL). This indicates that the variety of programmes available caters for the diverse profiles of lecturers in terms of part-time, early career and mid to late career.

Table 4:1 Demographics and Role

		Diploma	Cert	CPD module	Totals
Gender	Female	19	5	3	27
	Male	18	2	3	23
DIT College	Arts and Tourism	9	3	2	14
	Business	6	1	3	10
	Engineering & Built Environment	12	2	0	16
	Sciences & Health	10	1	1	12
Role beginning programme	HPAL	4	1	1	6
	Assistant Lecturer	21	2	0	23
	Lecturer	12	4	5	21

Data was gathered on the years of teaching experience in higher education and also experience in main discipline, and membership of a professional body. This data is presented in Table 4.2 below. There is evidence of extensive teaching experience in higher education with 43 (86%) teaching for six or more years. A similar number of respondents, 42 (84%) stated they had six or more years work experience in their main discipline, with 33 (66%) of the 50 respondents declaring membership of a professional body. This data would seem typical of the profile of IoT lecturers as experienced practitioners and professionals in their discipline, as noted in Chapter 2 (2.4.2.2) and in the institutional profile (Appendix A).

Table 4:2 Years' experience and Professional Body

		Diploma	Cert	CPD module	Totals
Years' experience teaching in HE	0-2 years	1	0	0	1
	3-5 years	5	0	1	6
	6-10 years	11	3	0	14
	11-15 years	12	2	1	15
	16 or more years	8	2	4	14
Years' experience in main discipline	0-2 years	1	1	1	3
	3-5 years	5	0	0	5
	6-10 years	11	2	0	13
	11-15 years	14	1	0	15
	16 or more years	6	3	5	14
Member of professional body associated with discipline	Yes	27	4	2	33
	No	10	3	4	17

However, when I tracked the individual responses, I noted that this was not the case for four (8%) of the respondents. There were two respondents who had less than two years' work experience in their main discipline, but who had been teaching in higher education

for six or more years. There were also two with three to five years' work experience and had been teaching over 16 years. This low level of work experience in discipline areas corresponded with non-membership of a professional body. These four respondents were from disciplines within three of the four main divisions, excluding Engineering. While the proportion is small at 8%, it may indicate that some lecturers were coming into a teaching role, early in their overall career. There are connections with this data and when and why the respondents completed an accredited programme, which is the focus of the next section.

4.4 The Programme

4.4.1 When

Question 10 in all three online questionnaires asked 'When did you complete the programme?' The respondents could have completed one of three programmes between 2001 and 2014. Responses from the 43 out of the potential 50 are shown in Table 4.3. Despite there being the possibility of a diverse range of responses spread across all 13 years, 20 out of the 43 responses (46%) completed a programme between the years 2009 to 2011. A further 17 (40%) completed a programme between 2012 and 2014. The remaining six (14%) were spread over the range of years from 2001 to 2009.

Table 4:3 When programmes were completed

Year of completion	Cert	Diploma	CPD Module	Total per year
2001	1	-	-	1
2002	0	0	-	0
2003	1	0	-	1
2004	1	0	-	1
2005	0	0	-	0
2006	0	3	-	3
2007	0	0	-	0
2008	0	0	-	0
2009	2	3	-	5
2010	2	5	-	7
2011	-	8	-	8
2012	-	6	1	7
2013	-	5	0	5
2014	-	0	5	5
Totals	7	30	6	43

There were a small number of graduates who completed the Cert and Diploma programmes in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, however, only three graduates of the Diploma

completed this questionnaire. Respondents may have been early career when they commenced the programme. This indication of the level of experience and stage in career is discussed later in relation to the specific programmes and rationale for participation. The programmes are described in Appendix I.

4.5 Reasons for participating in an accredited programme

This question (11, Appendix E) sought insights into the reasons why respondents participated in an accredited programme. This was a key question and is presented here separately to the other question in The Programme section of the questionnaire. Many respondents gave a mix of reasons for participation in a programme. This is evidenced in the following example:

I wanted to learn about good practice in learning and teaching and the underlying theory and evidence and gain confidence in this area – and to meet colleagues with a similar interest [Diploma, 11]

When the data from all responses was coded, 14 themes were identified (Figure 4.1) to indicate the diverse range of responses and also the most frequently referred to reasons.

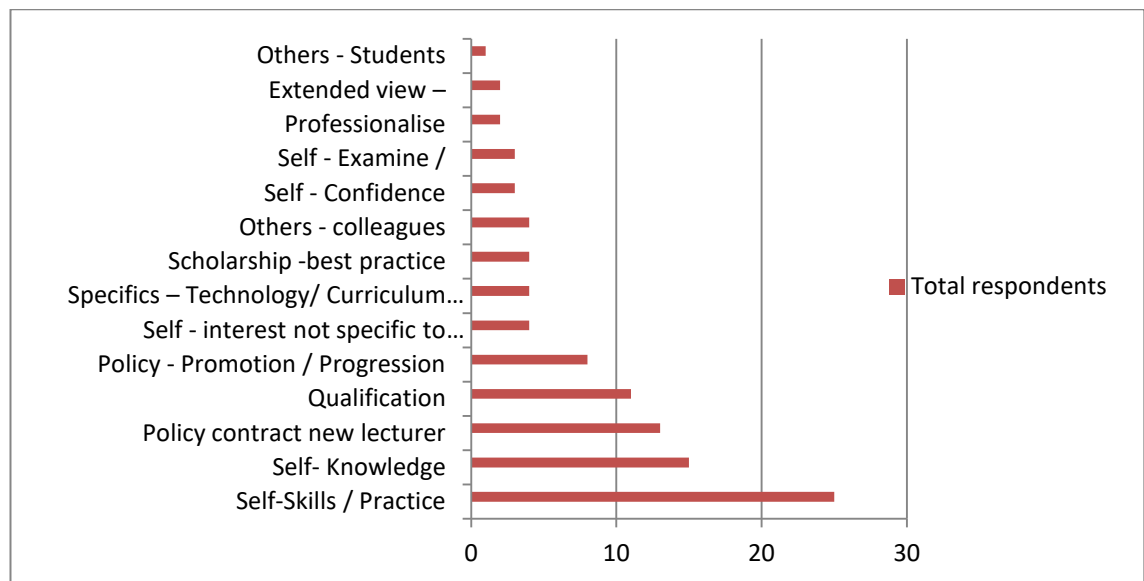


Figure 4:1 Chart of responses to Q.11 based on 14 themes

The most prevalent reason noted was to improve practice. The four main themes related to Self, Policy, Qualification and the Influence of Others. The four themes and sub-themes were plotted in a thematic map as shown in Figure 4.2 below.

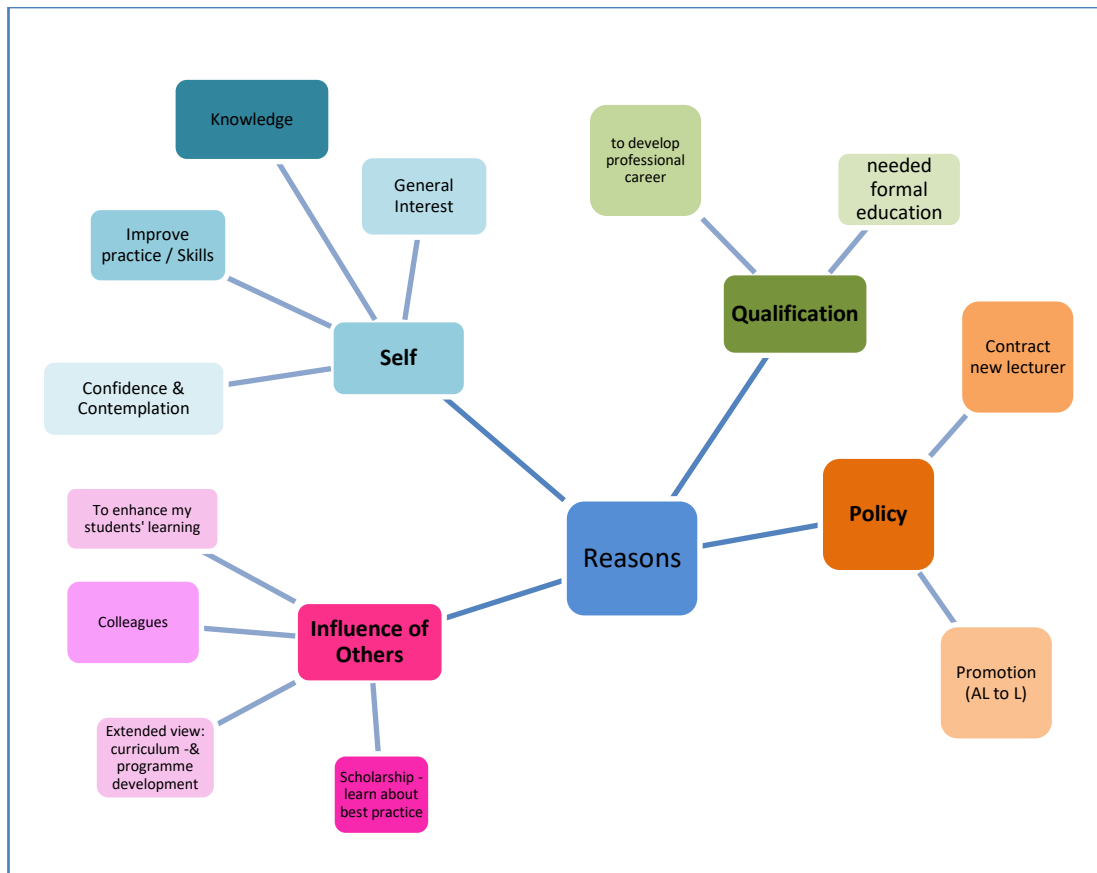


Figure 4:2 Initial Thematic Map showing four main themes

The next section presents the findings associated with each of these four main themes with reference to the sub-themes and associated relevant quotes:

- Self
- Policy
- Qualification
- Influence of Others

4.5.1 Self

Four sub-themes of **Self** were identified: *practice/skills, knowledge, general interest and confidence and contemplation* (Figure 4.1). The theme of **Self** captures the respondents' emphasis on participating of their own volition to support their practice and learning. It is differentiated from another main theme of **Policy** where participation is motivated by compliance. The sub-themes of self are discussed below.

4.5.1.1 Practice / skills

Twenty-five respondents referred to participating in a programme to enhance their *practice*. This included specific references to teaching strategies such as problem based

learning, assessment and practice generally. Six respondents indicated improvement of practice as the only reason for participation.

To further enhance my lecturing skills. [Diploma, 10]

Get an update on newer learning and teaching methods. [Diploma, 19]

To improve teaching skills, learn about ways to make classes more interactive. [Cert, 4]

To improve my teaching methods [CPD Module, 6]

Others referred to enhancing their practice as one reason among others:

I did the cert to become a more effective & efficient lecturer [Diploma, 9]

To professionalise my teaching pedagogy and in partic to learn about PBL [Diploma, 12]

4.5.1.2 Knowledge

While no respondent solely referred to *knowledge* as the main reason for their participation in a programme, it was indicated by many alongside other reasons. Some respondents articulated that they wanted to learn about concepts and theories associated with teaching in higher education.

to further my knowledge of the education system to enable me to propose new programmes' based on innovative learning and teaching methods [Diploma, 6]

I wanted to learn about good practice in learning and teaching and the underlying theory and evidence [Diploma, 11]

For me it was important to enhance my teaching and to help with programme development, modularisation etc... [Diploma, 13]

To update my teaching approaches, to update my knowledge of research approaches, to learn about HE policy, to learn about technology and learning [Diploma, 19]

Two of the comments include the phrase to 'learn about' which may imply a difference with 'learn to' with conations of more direct application in practice. The first and third comments include references to curriculum development as opposed to solely focusing on classroom-based practice. This could be termed as an extended view of professional development in contrast to the restricted view associated with focusing on one's own classroom practice (Hoyle, 1975; Evans, 2007) and these were also coded to Influence of Others, as programme development is not an individual endeavour. This is elaborated on in Chapter 7.

4.5.1.3 General interest

There were five respondents who indicated reasons why they participated in a programme in *general* terms which did not link with practice or knowledge. While I coded some aspects of these comments to other themes such as policy, I felt that the sense of *general interest* was intriguing, and perhaps indicated that they do not approach the programmes with an expectation to change practice:

Requirement of employment contract but also desire to engage with personal pedagogical development [Diploma, 29]

Career advancement Personal interest [Diploma, 30]

Other comments conveyed a sense of interest in education generally and higher education.

4.5.1.4 Confidence and Contemplation

A final sub-theme within **Self** was identified as *confidence and contemplation*. There were comments which conveyed a sense of self-knowledge relating to confidence and feeling the need to engage in formal learning opportunities. While only one respondent explicitly used the term *confidence*, two others conveyed it in their comments and I felt that it warranted being a distinct sub-theme. The first quote refers to other reasons for their participation, and the inclusion of the term *confidence* is noteworthy:

I wanted to learn about good practice in learning and teaching and the underlying theory and evidence and gain confidence in this area – and to meet colleagues with a similar interest [Diploma, 11]

The next two quotes selected within this sub-theme referred to feeling a need for a formal qualification with the second conveying a sense of not feeling qualified, which could be linked with confidence. Both of these quotes are also coded to other themes:

I felt I needed formal education regarding learning and teaching at third level. [Diploma, 4]

Needed an MA and felt unqualified to teach [Diploma, 20]

Other data referred to participating in the programme in order to have an opportunity to reflect on current practice. Interestingly, these respondents were lecturers with more than ten years' experience and had participated in the CPD module as opposed to the longer Cert or Diploma programmes. One noted:

Professional development - my main reason was to take the opportunity to reflect on my existing teaching and assessment practices and to learn about best practices [CPD Module, 3]

Overall, the theme of **Self** encompasses a diverse range of reasons for participation in one of the three programmes. Many of these could be discussed with reference to Barnett and Coate's (2005) conceptualisation of HE curriculum relating to acting, knowing and being. The three paradigms of academic development of teaching (Light et al., 2009) could also be used to explore these reasons further as they could be categorised in one of the three paradigms of ad hoc, Skills or Professional, as introduced in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.3.1).

4.5.2 Policy

Another theme to emerge was that of **Policy** as shown in (Figure 4.1). The shortest answers to the question asking for reasons for participation in a programme were related to policy and respondents did not provide any further reasons. Twenty-one respondents referred to policy related requirements linked with an accredited programme. Ten referred to one of these policies as their only reason for participating in a programme. The sub-themes are based on the two lecturer profile associated with the policies.

4.5.2.1 New lecturers

In 2006, it became a condition of contract that all new lecturers had to complete the initial accredited programme within their first two years in employment as a lecturer. The Cert was the initial programme at that time and it and subsequently the Diploma became the initial accredited programme from 2009 (Appendix A). There were 13 respondents who referred to this policy as a reason for their participation in either the Cert or Diploma. Seven stated the policy as their only reason for participation, such as:

Condition of contract [Diploma, 30]

Mandatory PG Cert [Diploma, 31]

One indicated there were subsequently other reasons which they did not elaborate on:

Compulsory - to begin with [Cert, 3]

Six respondents noted other reasons in addition to the contractual condition. Some provided an indication of prioritising their reasons:

1. Part of requirements re: contract 2. Although not required to finish-up, willing to learn more on Learning & teaching [Diploma, 2]

Apart from the mandatory aspect to it, I wanted to undertake the course of formal learning to improve my teaching practice. [Diploma, 28]

4.5.2.2 Progression

There was a valuable insight into the leverage potential of the programme in relation to progression and promotion. In 2006, the completion of the initial accredited programme in teaching and learning became a criterion for progression from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer. Eight respondents indicated their reason for participating in an accredited programme was for promotion or progression, with three stating this as their only reason for participation, e.g.:

In order to try progress in D.I.T [Diploma, 5]

For progression from assistant lecturer to lecturer [Diploma, 31]

Others included it as one of their reasons:

1. To develop my professional career 2. To fulfill the requirement for obtaining progression from Assistant Lecturer to a Lecturer grade [Diploma, 23]

Career advancement, Personal interest [Diploma, 30]

There was also an insight into how a programme was perceived as a mechanism to progress from being an Hourly Paid Assistant Lecturer (HPAL) to becoming a full time lecturer. While it is not a requirement to have a qualification prior to becoming a lecturer, one respondent indicated that they viewed it as a valuable tool to support their application to progress from HPAL to full time. They stated in response to an earlier question that they were a HPAL when they commenced the programme.

4.5.3 Qualification

There were 11 references to qualifications or terms associated with gaining formal accreditation in education, which did not have associations with progression or policy. An example was:

I had been working in industry and felt that it would be appropriate to gain some qualification in education. [Diploma, 35]

There was an implication that some wanted to engage in formal learning, with three respondents using this term. This is perhaps related to gaining a qualification from formal learning rather than engaging in informal and non-accredited learning:

Interested in upskilling in terms of teaching - had no formal training in teaching. [Diploma, 32]

There were also two respondents who used the term 'professionalise' and 'professional':

To professionalise my teaching pedagogy and in partic to learn about PBL [Diploma, 12]

1. To develop my professional career [Diploma, 23]

It was difficult to decide whether these reasons were more related to the theme of **Self or Qualification**. The respondent who used the phrase “to professionalise my teaching pedagogy” (Diploma 12) did not volunteer to be interviewed and it would have been interesting to discuss their meaning of the use of the verb professionalise in this context of teaching. As Respondent 23 has noted 3-5 years for teaching experience and 16 or more years work experience in their discipline, it is difficult to ascertain if they view teaching in HE as their “professional career” or whether it is their discipline career. However, they commented in relation to a later question on professional development frameworks for teaching (Section 4.2.6) that “This will help in defining a clear path for professional development”, which may indicate that they intend to continue to engage in professional learning in relation to teaching, beyond an initial accredited programme. They had volunteered to be interviewed so this may emerge in interviews discussions. The discourse of terms such as professional and professionalism is dealt with in relation to the interviews in Section 4.3.1.

This overall sense of wanting a formal qualification may be linked to the dominance of formal learning associated with higher education and to the value of these qualifications within their professional disciplines. This sense of becoming qualified and also competent is discussed in Section 4.3.3.2 with specific reference to the associated recommendation from the Hunt Report (DES, 2011).

4.5.4 Influence of others

Five respondents noted that other people influenced their participation rather than policy or self-motivation. One respondent highlighted the influence of colleagues as the only reason for participating in a programme, while others included it with other reasons. One respondent specifically referred to students as their rationale for participation:

The main reason was to learn about innovation in education and initiatives to enhance my student's learning experience [Diploma, 1]

This comment also conveys an indication of learning ‘about’ good practice and innovation from others which might be related to others’ scholarship. An interest in best practice and scholarship was also articulated by four other respondents, which included:

...to learn about best practice in L&T at third level [Diploma, 9]

To improve teaching skills and learn the best methods of teaching [Diploma, 20]

Overall, the comments from the 50 responses reveal a diverse range of reasons for their participation in an accredited programme on teaching and learning. Further exploration of the theme of **Self** and **Policy** can be related to Evetts' (2014) differentiation of professionalism based on "from within" or "from above" (p.40). These examples of relevant literature are used to develop the discussion of these and other themes within Chapter 5. The next section presents the analysis of the questionnaire responses which deal with aspects of the accredited programme which they deemed important.

4.6 Aspects of the Programme

Respondents were asked to rate aspects of the programme in terms of what they believed were important. Results were collated in Table 4.4.

Table 4:4 Collation of importance ratings on five aspects of programme

Consider what you believed were the important aspects of the programme you completed. Please rate each of the following in terms of how important you perceived	Skills - Programme helped you to gain skills and change your teaching			Development - Programme clarified or changed your focus from what you do in your teaching to your students and their learning.			Reflection - Programme developed you as a reflective practitioner (for examples, so as to be able to recognise problems			Student learning - Programme helped you to understand better or improve your students; learning (for example, so your student focus on understanding, rather than reproduction of a subject)			Conceptions - Programme developed or changed your conceptions of teaching away from teacher-focused towards a more student-focused approach.		
	Diploma	Cert	CPD Module	Diploma	Cert	CPD Module	Diploma	Cert	CPD Module	Diploma	Cert	CPD Module	Diploma	Cert	CPD Module
<i>Very important</i>	22	6	3	17	4	1	15	4	2	20	5	3	17	5	3
<i>Important</i>	12	1	2	13	3	4	16	3	3	10	2	3	9	2	1
<i>Somewhat</i>	1	0	1	4	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	5	0	0
<i>Neutral</i>	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	0	4	0	2
<i>Not at all</i>	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
<i>Don't know</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

It is clear that **Skills** were deemed as *very important* by the majority of respondents (31). **Student learning** was a close second (28) with **Development** rated as *very important* or *important* by more participants than **Conceptions**. However, when the ratings of *very important* and *important* are combined **Reflection** is deemed as the fourth highest rated aspect over **Conceptions**. While few respondents chose to use the *Neutral* rating, it was used by some for **Student learning** and **Conceptions**.

Further analysis revealed that 11 indicated *Very important* for all five aspects of the programme. Three respondents chose *Very important* for only one aspect and none were the same, with one choosing each of **Skills**, **Reflection** and **Student learning**. Twelve respondents did not rate any of the aspects as *Very important* with two of them selecting *Important* for all five aspects. Respondent 15 chose *Not at all* for four aspects and noted *Somewhat* for **Reflection**. Their rationale for participating in an accredited programme was:

Class sizes were increased and I wanted to see if I could learn how to control and teach bigger numbers of students. [Diploma 15]

While this rationale was coded to Self-Practice/skills, based on this and a subsequent response noting academic and reflective writing, they may have found an emphasis in the programme on reflection which they may not have expected but they deemed important.

4.7 Approach to professional learning within the programme

4.7.1 Experience of professional learning during the programme

Question 13 sought responses on experiences and activities within the programme which participants deemed to support their learning. Many of the 49 respondents gave more than one example of activities or experiences. I identified 21 codes from the data, and collated them into six main themes:

- Practice-based activities – classroom based and curriculum based practice
- Knowledge and scholarship
- Learning from others
- Engaging in reflection
- Active learning strategies including technology
- Academic writing and other activities.

4.7.1.1 Practice-based activities

As the programmes were practically focused, this theme is divided into two sub-themes of classroom based teaching and curriculum level practice. This reflects Hoyle's (1975) and Evans's (2007) differentiation of restricted and extended perspectives on teachers' professional development.

Classroom based teaching practice

All three programmes had at least one micro-teaching task. Seventeen (35%) of respondents mentioned micro-teaching as being useful for supporting their learning about teaching. The Diploma and Cert programmes also had tutor and peer observation tasks. Over half of the Diploma (18) and three Cert respondents mentioned these observations as beneficial, with slightly more noting the peer observation. While the observation was intended as a formative task on which to reflect on within the portfolio, one respondent articulated it as assessment:

having my practical teaching class assessed and critiqued by lecturer [Cert, 2]

Two also referred to the preparation aspect of the tasks:

micro teaching was helpful in understanding the objectives for particular lecture [Diploma, 30]

Preparing lesson plans [Cert, 4]

Curriculum level practice

Curriculum development is a central theme within the Diploma with practical activities involving the re-design of a module. The theoretical aspects of curriculum development are also emphasised in all three programmes. This focus on curriculum development was noted by six (12%) respondents, including:

constructive alignment [Cert, 6]

Write new module descriptor Write new assignment [Diploma, 18]

programme redesign [Diploma, 33]

curriculum design workshops. Learning importance of assessment and feedback [Cert, 5]

These findings reflect the intended learning outcomes associated with these tasks which are integral to the programmes.

4.7.1.2 Knowledge and scholarship

There was also an emphasis in the programmes on reading and reviewing existing scholarship on teaching and learning topics as well as participants contributing to scholarship themselves through a practitioner research project. Nine (18%) respondents highlighted the engagement with theoretical concepts on a general level while six (12%) noted specific topics, e.g. student-centred learning. Two commented on how they became more aware of their own practice in relation to scholarship:

discovering that the way i teach is actually based in the literature not just something i thought of by myself [Diploma, 7]

The teaching portfolio for module one made me recognise just how much I was already doing as a lecturer and that I was already practicing a lot of what was being taught but just wasn't aware of it. [Diploma, 3]

Participants also noted the opportunity the programme provided to link theory and practice:

I liked especially activities that linked with practice - for example trialling ideas introduced in the programme [Diploma, 12]

Applying theory to my practice on a weekly basis [Diploma, 14]

4.7.1.3 Learning from others

Learning from others is defined here in this theme as other lecturers as co-participants or peers and the tutors or facilitators within the programmes, with 31 (63%) responses relating to this theme. While six of the 49 respondents (12%) highlighted the tutors of the programmes, 25 out of 49 responses (51%) mentioned learning from their co-participants. The emphasis on peer learning was an intentional aspect of the programmes and it is valuable that this was reflected in the data. While learning from others had been referred to within specific tasks, such as the peer observations and micro-teaching noted above, learning from colleagues through discussions and other class activities was associated with this theme. This was articulated in many ways from general exchange of ideas within discussions, to more longer-lasting supportive relationships being developed:

Interaction with fellow staff across faculties. Discussion... [Diploma, 27]

Also I found we had a very good learning group which created a fun atmosphere. Great relationships were formed. [Diploma, 29]

development of a community of practice [Diploma, 35]

This sense of building relationships among peers within the programmes is more evident from respondents who completed the longest programme, the Diploma. It is also noteworthy that when asked why they participated in a programme (Section 4.2.2.2), only four respondents specifically referred to learning from others. However, 25 (51%) respondents here noted this aspect of participation as supporting their learning. This may relate to the difference between expectation and learning linked with what they actually experienced.

4.7.1.4 Engaging in reflection

Becoming a reflective practitioner was an intended learning outcome associated with all programmes, with the assessment based on producing a reflective portfolio (Cert and Diploma) or a reflective essay (CPD Module). Over a quarter (12) of respondents to this question noted engaging in reflection or reflective writing. Nine referred to this in general terms as reflective practice or reflection. However, three others provided details of how they engaged in it:

The practice of reflection - sitting down for ten minutes and writing what I think
[Diploma, 36]

I liked especially activities that linked with practice - for example trialling ideas introduced in the programme and then using the reflections in the portfolio
[Diploma, 12]

The second comment evidences how tasks set within the programme prompted reflections which would be incorporated into the final assignment of the portfolio. While two respondents from the CPD Module specifically noted in response to Q.11 that their reason for participating was to reflect on their teaching, neither specifically highlighted the activities of reflecting or reflective writing within their responses to this question. However, two others did note the completion of the assignment which was a reflective essay.

4.7.1.5 Engaging in active learning strategies including technology

Twelve out of 49 (24%) respondents noted participating in active learning strategies within the class sessions. Many noted the collaborative nature of such activities, and three specified the use of approaches such as problem-based learning (PBL) and three others highlighted technologies:

Group exercises, mind maps, brainstorming, making posters etc. [Diploma, 18]

Use of audio/video tools for pre-lecture resources [Diploma, 20]

Being exposed to new - to me - uses of technology in teaching and learning (podcast, screencast) was also very useful [Diploma, 1]

4.7.1.6 Academic writing and other activities / experiences

The first five themes identified above reflect the intended learning outcomes at the programme or module level. However, participants noted other activities and experiences which were not explicitly stated as intended learning outcomes. Examples of these include academic writing:

Not having any experience in academic writing I found this to be most difficult skill to master, however this turned out be the most utilised skill I acquired on the program [Diploma, 4]

I would never had a need for writing huge amounts of writing apart from preparation of material for teaching. So my first experience at academic writing and writing reflections for other people to read. [Diploma, 15]

Another interesting comment noted by one respondent was “individual attention” [Cert, 3]. The class sizes are relatively small with a maximum of 20 participants, so perhaps this respondent valued the experience of being in a small class and having the opportunity to engage directly with the facilitators.

Overall, these themes reflect the key activities and intended experiences within the programmes. Additional activities and experiences which may not have been intended by the facilitators were experienced by the participants as being of value to them. All themes were noted for further exploration within the interviews.

4.7.2 Time committed to professional learning and development

The purpose of this question was to estimate the additional time participants committed to their professional learning while participating in a programme. It has been stated previously that lecturers in IoTs have heavy teaching loads. Since 2006, lecturers in DIT have had an allowance of three hours off their timetables to participate in the scheduled sessions of the Cert or Diploma. Fifty per cent (24) indicated they committed 3-5 additional hours per week to professional learning while participating in a programme. Totals from across the programmes are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4:5 Average time committed to professional learning and development while participating in a programme

Q14 Estimate the average time you committed to professional learning and development during the programme (in addition to the scheduled class time):	0-2 hours per week	3-5 hours per week	6-8 hours per week	More than 8 hours per week
Diploma	5	16	9	5
Cert	1	2	4	0
CPD Module	1	5	0	0
Totals	7	24	13	5

There were some differences between the three programmes. Five (11%) respondents noted committing more than eight hours of time to professional learning while participating in the Diploma. This may be related to conducting a practitioner research project. Nine Diploma respondents and four Cert respondents indicated that they spent 6-8 hours outside of the scheduled time on professional learning. This substantial commitment of time may be related to the value the participants attributed to their participation and learning. It may also be based on preparing for peer and tutor observations and the practitioner research projects.

Participants on the shorter CPD module also committed significant time to their learning. While participating in this programme, five out of the six respondents indicated that they committed an additional 3-5 hours a week to their professional learning within a relatively short duration of five weeks.

4.7.3 Impact of participating in the programme

Question 15 was posed to ascertain the impact of participating in the programme within the three areas of knowledge, skills and values (Appendix E). There were connections with this and previous questions such as respondents' rationale for participating in the programme and what activities and experiences they deemed most useful to support their learning.

4.7.3.1 Knowledge

A review of the 43 responses yielded 20 codes initially and these were collated into five broad themes or categories:

- Theories and specific concepts
- Scholarship
- Practice-related knowledge
- General comment on impact
- Other impact

Over 40%, 18 out of 43 respondents, specifically noted theories or concepts such as student centred learning, active learning strategies or concepts relating to curriculum and assessment. Five respondents highlighted scholarship and learning about best practice. There was a linkage with some responses to a previous question in terms of the realisation of already engaging in good practice, such as:

I learned the correct terminology of what I was already practicing I would never had a need to know this before. [Diploma, 15]

Seven out of the 43 respondents (17%) did not provide details of the impact of participation in terms of knowledge but noted an indication of the degree of impact. These responses were categorised as *General comment on impact*, for example:

knowledge was increased exponentially [Diploma, 19]

vast improvement [Cert, 7]

Within this category two respondents indicated that there was little or no impact on knowledge after participation in a programme:

no real difference [Diploma, 28]

very little [CPD Module, 5]

An interesting aspect of these two responses is that both respondents had extensive teaching experience (6-10 years and 16 or more) and their reasons for participating in the programme were: 'under my contract' and 'suggested by colleagues' respectively, which would suggest that they may not have participated in the programme with the aspiration or expectation to gain new knowledge.

While this question was focused on knowledge, six (14%) respondents referred to impacts on their practice. Examples of such comments included:

Approached my teaching in a totally different way after learning about the different learning styles [Diploma, 23]

It changed how I prepared and delivered a class and so I teach now with a wider range of activities [Diploma, 29]

Seven (16%) respondents did not refer directly to knowledge but to the impact on their approach to teaching and their own learning. These included:

Pedagogy in relation to third level L&T. I am aware that I do not have all the answers but I have confidence to allow space for my students to create/ research their knowledge [Diploma, 13]

Sparked a desire to develop my knowledge and skills in this area. Lead to further training in the area. [Diploma, 35]

4.7.3.2 Skills

Comments from 43 respondents in relation to skills were diverse with 21 codes identified. Some responses were general, in relation to impact. Academic writing was identified as an 'outlier' as it was noted by one respondent and it does not correspond with the main areas:

- Teaching / Lecturing including preparation
- Being adaptable to accommodate student diversity
- Engaging students in learning including technology for out of class
- Being reflective including reflective writing
- Curriculum including assessment
- Academic writing
- General comment on impact including confidence

The theme of key teaching skills could be divided into two sub-themes of preparation and active learning. Many respondents referred to both of these aspects as evidenced in the example:

I learnt how to plan lessons better and how to integrate active learning into the lessons [Cert, 4]

Others were focusing on students:

It helped me to shut up more and let students speak. [Diploma, 29]

There were responses indicating the use of new approaches to support student learning by acknowledging the diversity of students and the need to be flexible. Six (14%) respondents mentioned technologies in response to this question on skills. Some noted technologies in general while others provided specific examples such as using videos and online quizzes. Two of these noted the use of technology to support learning out of class time. Five (12%) respondents referred to developing their reflective skills, with some referring to reflective writing, while others indicated that they were reviewing their approaches and refining them.

Specific skills of teaching and activities within the classroom or online were noted by most respondents. However, nine (21%) respondents referred to skills relating to curriculum development including assessment and evaluation, for example:

application of constructive alignment principles to curricula [Diploma, 9]

Improved methods of assessment [Diploma, 21]

Change in focus of teaching to spending time developing student activities and giving feedback. [Cert, 5]

Within the category 'General comment on impact including confidence', the respondent who indicated "very little" for the impact of the participating in the programme in terms of their knowledge, noted "Quite a lot - useful in terms of how students learn" [CPD Module, 5] for this question on skills. It could be surmised that there may have been some confusion in the interpretation of this question, as this response relates more to knowledge than skills. There is another example of a general comment provided for both with "significant" for knowledge and "less significant" for skills by Diploma, 14.

There were also comprehensive responses conveying insights into other aspects of participation in a programme, such as confidence which in turn supported skills development:

Confidence to use technology where & when appropriate to support learning in & out of the classroom. Keep up to date in educational literature not just in the context of my discipline. Not to be afraid to try something new but to know to plan it well, evaluate & reflect on process. Love learning about the how, why & when to use technology in my practice as it does not come to me intuitively [Diploma, 10]

One respondent conveyed some challenges relating to implementation which were noted and considered in planning the interviews:

Somewhat improved. The problem is having time to practice innovative ideas given our heavy workload and the decreasing academic standard of the student cohort, most of whom do not know why they are there. [Diploma, 18]

4.7.3.3 Values

The final part of this question related to values. The initial process of coding yielded 20 codes. One example of a response which captures changes in a range of values is:

More reflective, more collegiate, more interested in critical inquiry [Cert, 3]

However, it became evident within the diversity of responses that some participants may have misinterpreted the question and rather than noting any changes in their own teaching values, they referred to broader values in education or the value of participating in the programme. Examples included:

the value of education to increase both social and cultural capital as well as academic and personal governmentality [Diploma, 20]

time well spent [Diploma, 5]

One respondent stated that they did not understand the question. Based on these comments it was noted that the issue of teaching values would need to be carefully articulated within the interviews.

The main themes identified were:

- Student centred approach to teaching
- Being reflective
- Research
- Fairness
- Broader value of education

4.7.3.3.1 Student centred approach to teaching

This was the most prevalent theme with 15 of 43 respondents (35%) noting it. The associated comments provided an insight into whether this was a new value or whether respondents already acknowledged the role of students within the teaching and learning process. Examples of comments coded within this theme included:

Changed entirely my outlook on teaching towards a more socially constructed approach. [Diploma, 36]

I felt empowered to move away from the tradition of teacher-centred instruction [Cert, 4]

I don't think my values have shifted as I did believe and practice a student-centred approach in advance to participating in the programme. [CPD Module, 3]

Those who already held the value of student-centred learning were from the cohort who completed the CPD Module and had longer duration of teaching experience than those who were probably new lecturers when they participated in the Cert or Diploma. This connection between length of teaching experience and responses to questions is discussed in Chapter 5.

4.7.3.3.2 Being reflective

Seven of the 43 responses (17%), articulated the importance of reflection in striving for improvement in teaching practice. Examples of responses coded to this theme were:

Emphasised what I was doing well but motivated me to pursue further goals with my teaching practice [Diploma, 31]

I was always very reflective, but it gave me better ability to judge the quality of what I was going, Better informed reflection. [CPD Module, 5]

4.7.3.3.3 Research

The importance of research and literature was indicated by five respondents, such as:

Importance of linking theory with practice in teaching and learning [Diploma, 25]

4.7.3.3.4 Fairness

Four respondents referred to values of fairness and respect in relation to students. All comments are noted below:

supportive and respectful interaction with students while communicating high expectations [Diploma, 9]

Made me consider carefully the issue of ethics and fairness in evaluating students performance. [Diploma, 19]

I was made aware of students with disabilities, which as a new teacher, I hadn't really come across before. [Diploma, 26]

I understood the importance of equity and the value of speaking to all rather than just those students who appeared to be most interested. [Diploma, 30]

4.7.3.3.5 Broader value of education

Three of the 43 (7%) respondents indicated the broader theme of the value of education and teaching, rather than referring specifically to their own personal or professional values. These comments were collated into a theme as respondents may have misunderstood the question but still aimed to address values in a broad sense. Responses were:

It actually allowed me to think about the value of teaching itself [Diploma, 2]

the value of education to increase both social and cultural capital as well as academic and personal governmentality [Diploma, 20]

Confirmed my values in relation to the importance of Higher Education [Cert, 2]

There were also two categories which had data that did not relate to content based themes:

- Indication of values but not specified
- General comment on impact

4.7.3.3.6 Indication of values but not specified

While not a theme based on the content of comments, a category was created to capture responses which conveyed that respondents held values but they did not articulate them.

Two referred to their teaching philosophy statements and one noted the departmental culture:

My teaching philosophy reflects who I am as a person. It has not changed over the years. [Diploma 10,]

my teaching statement also helped me to understand how I wanted to teach [Diploma, 24]

It reinforced values I would be comfortable with and that are embedded in my own work and in the culture of our Department. [CPD Module, 1]

4.7.3.3.7 General comment on impact

Eight (19%) responses out of the 43 were a general comment on impact. The style of response was consistent with that given to the other two parts of this question on knowledge and skills. Examples included:

Not much impact [Diploma, 23]

My approach has been significantly altered - big change [CPD Module, 5]

Overall, responses to this question indicate that great care will need to be taken when discussing values within the interviews as some respondents to the questionnaire were unclear about what was intended within this question.

4.8 Approach to continuing professional learning and development in relation to teaching beyond the Programme:

The next series of questions related to continuing professional learning and development activities after the completion of a programme (Appendix E). Many of the questions were in two parts, with examples of learning opportunities given initially and an option for respondents to provide their own examples. This was to address different forms of professional learning, formal and accredited, but also non-accredited and informal learning experiences.

4.8.1 Accredited Formal

This question sought insights into respondents' participation in accredited formal learning to support their continuing professional learning and development after the completion of a programme. The examples provided were all programmes and CPD modules offered by the DIT LTTC. Thirteen (26%) of respondents skipped this question, which is substantial and another inputted "none" (Diploma, 28) resulting in 36 responses collated in Figure 4.3. The lack of responses from the substantial proportion of 26% may indicate that they did not continue to engage in accredited formal learning.

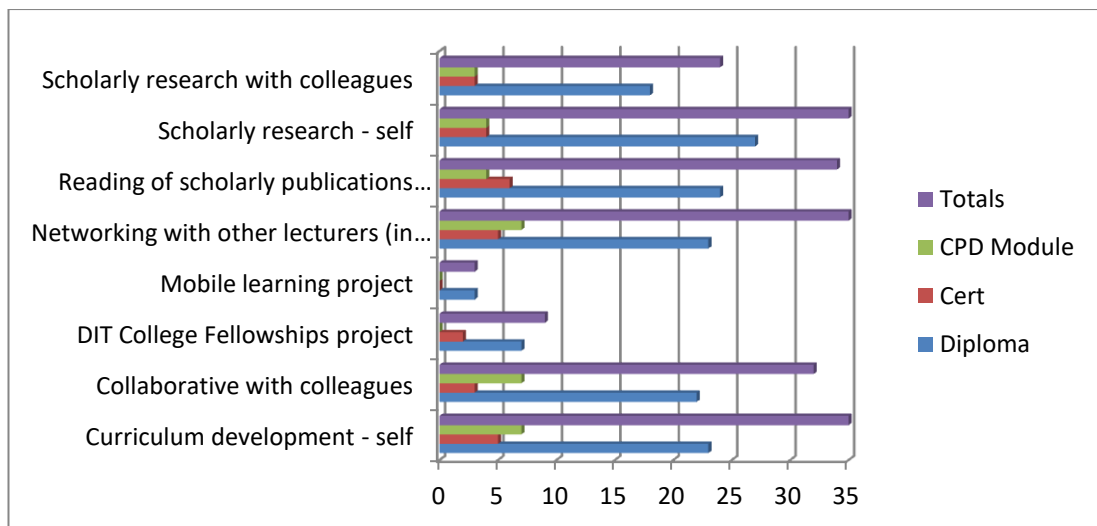


Figure 4:3 Responses to Q16a participation in continuing professional learning

This data indicated that many of the 36 respondents completed at least one programme or CPD module after completing the initial programme. One of the initial striking features of this data is that 16 (44%) respondents completed the MA in Higher Education and six (17%) completed the MSc in Applied eLearning after completing the Cert or the Diploma. Two respondents completed the two Masters and a series of CPD modules. While, some of these modules were core or electives as part of the masters' programmes, the Technology Enhanced Learning, Teaching and Assessment (TELTA) module was not. Some respondents completed the Cert, Diploma and Masters as a suite, and articulated this when noting their rationale for completing the initial programme as linked with the Masters.

There are further linkages with topics noted in response to previous questions on the programmes and CPDs. For example, there were four (11%) respondents who completed the CPD in PBL and three (8%) who completed the CPD in Assessment and Feedback who did not participate in a Master's programme, so they potentially chose these as topics of interest for further study.

The second part of this question asked respondents to provide their own examples of other formal learning opportunities they participated in, which could be accredited or non-accredited. Twenty-two (61%) inputted examples. It is interesting to observe that two of the most high profile and long running annual LTTC formal learning events, the teaching and learning Showcase and the e-learning Summer School were referred to by only one

respondent. However, another respondent noted both of these events in response to a subsequent question on non-accredited, informal learning.

Three (8%) respondents stated that they were in the process of completing or had completed a MEd, EdD or PhD at other institutions. Some indicated that they had attended DIT or LTTC events but did not specify topics. Other respondents referred to formal learning opportunities relating to research supervision and also discipline specific topics. Two respondents indicated their intentions to participate in formal learning opportunities while one also conveyed the challenge associated with participation:

Finding time is an issue. Signed up for two now. [Diploma, 18]

One respondent misunderstood and indicated the formal training that they provide to others:

On-going delivery (by request) of professional training to the sector [CPD Module, 2]

One also gave examples of non-formal and non-accredited professional learning such as:

Self directed reading/learning [Diploma, 27]

All thirteen (26%) who did not provide indications of continuing accredited formal learning for this question, responded to the next question on non-accredited informal learning.

4.8.2 Non-accredited informal learning opportunities and experiences

Respondents were asked about non-accredited informal learning opportunities and experiences. This question was in two parts with eight examples provided in the first part from which respondents could choose. There were 45 responses and these were collated across the three programmes as presented in Figure 4. 4.

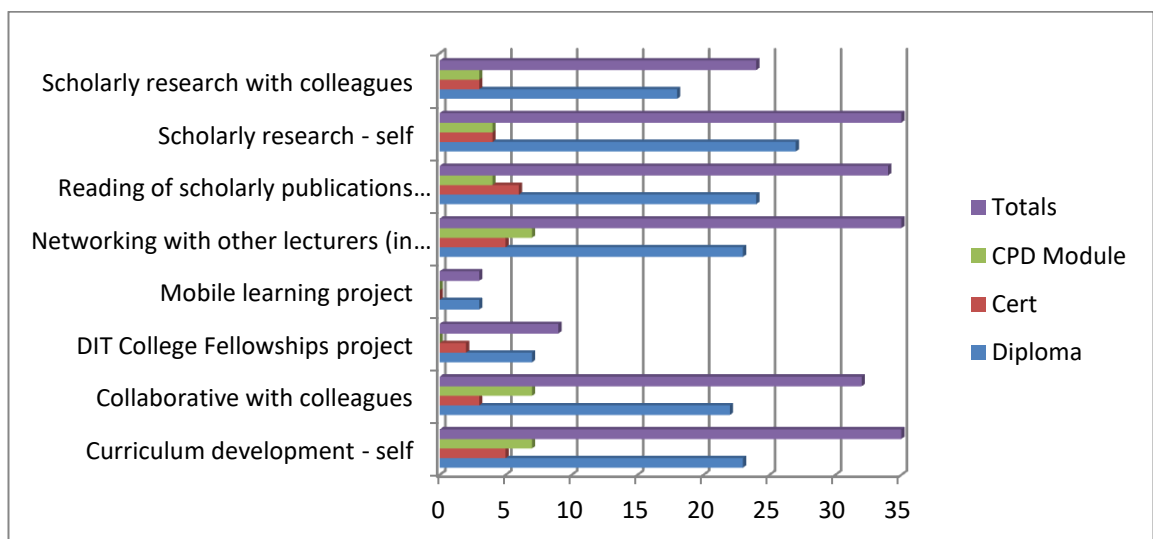


Figure 4:4 Responses noting participating non-accredited learning opportunities

An initial review of the collated results indicates that 35 of the 46 respondents (76%) engaged in three of the examples of non-accredited and informal learning experiences: curriculum development, networking and scholarship by oneself. Thirty-four respondents (74%) read scholarly literature relating to teaching and learning while 32 (70%) collaborated with colleagues. Six (13%) respondents engaged in seven of the eight options, one of whom had indicated in the previous question that they had completed two masters relating to teaching and learning.

The lowest participation rates were in DIT LTTC initiatives of Fellowships and the Mobile Learning projects. While nine respondents indicated that they participated in the LTTC fellowship projects which were College based research projects, over half of respondents indicated that they engaged in research projects with colleagues. Therefore, while there were some references to discipline-based educational research, other research was also mentioned, perhaps owing to misinterpretation of this question.

The second part of this question sought examples of other non-accredited and informal learning opportunities. Eight respondents (17%) provided examples, with some of these noted below being formal:

I have worked on projects with DIT colleagues to develop discipline specific educational resources as part of a professional body I belong to as well as a small NAIRTL project. [Diploma, 9]

I have been part of a few working groups representing my dept. on teaching and assessment, first year retention [Diploma, 15]

Attending T+L conferences [Diploma, 35]

Another respondent referred to supervision and external examining activities which may implicitly involve learning about teaching and learning issues:

Supervising and examining m Phil and PhD dissertations Acting as External Examiner in a number of IOTs [CPD Module, 1]

Overall, this data indicates that respondents participated in a wide range of professional learning opportunities after completion of an initial programme. This was an intended topic of discussion within the interviews and the data gleaned from this questionnaire clearly indicates that a large proportion of graduates from programmes participate in other opportunities for professional learning within and beyond the LTTC and the institution.

Responses also indicated the need to be clear in defining professional learning and focus on learning related to teaching.

4.8.3 Influence of approach to professional learning and development in relation to teaching.

This question sought insights into the degree of influence based on a variety of potential factors. Five examples of factors were presented to respondents which they rated from *Very important* to *Not at all*. There were 47 responses to this question and the results were collated across the three programmes (Table 4.6).

Table 4:6 Collation of ratings of the influence of factors on professional learning in relation to teaching

Q18a How would you rate the influence of each of the following on your approach to professional learning and development in relation to teaching:	Self - own sense of professionalism	Student learning	Departmental	Other disciplinary	Institutional
Very important	40	40	5	4	6
Important	6	7	24	24	20
Somewhat	0	0	5	5	6
Neutral	0	0	12	13	13
Not at all	0	0	2	1	4
Don't Know	1	0	1	2	0

Respondents clearly considered both **Self – own sense of professionalism** and **Student learning** as *Very important*, with 40 (85%) choosing this rating. The majority of remaining respondents chose a rating of *Important* for both of these factors. One respondent chose *Don't Know* for **Self – own sense of professionalism** and chose *Important* for **Student learning**.

There was greater differentiation in the responses to the other three factors. There were 24 (51%) respondents who rated both **Departmental** and **Other disciplinary** as *Important*. The remaining respondents rated these factors similarly with 12 and 13 (25%) choosing *Neutral* and only 5 and 4 (10%) selecting *Very important*. The ratings were quite similar for the **Institutional** factor but with 20 (43%) choosing *Important* and 4 (9%) choosing *Not at all*. This was the largest percentage of *Not at all* of all of the five factors.

Respondents were given the opportunity to note any additional factors which they felt were relevant. Two respondents noted examples:

There will always be champions in each school at different activities. A good approach is to highlight what they do at school meetings so they can be a go to person should colleagues wish to try something. [Diploma, 12]

Involvement in research in my special area has been very influential on my professional interaction, as a lecturer, with students [CPD Module, 4]

These were valuable insights into the influence of both colleagues as champions and research. These themes and the variations in influence of the other factors were explored further within the interviews.

4.8.4 Other professional learning and development opportunities which may not currently be available via the Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTC) in DIT.

The LTTC offers a diverse range of formal, accredited professional learning opportunities through programmes and modules. There are also other formal but non-accredited opportunities, such as, funded projects through fellowships. This question was posed to ascertain if respondents had ideas for other professional learning opportunities which may not be available. There were 28 responses to this question and 12 codes were identified.

These were collated into five themes and four categories:

- Happy with current provision
- Scholarship
- Networking
- Technology based module / workshop
- Teaching observation

- Discipline specific opportunities
- Areas for other centres
- Other suggestions
- Other factors

Nine of the 28 respondents (32%) indicated that they were happy with the current provision of professional learning opportunities from the LTTC:

N/A. DIT LTTC is very well situated to support staff. [Diploma, 36]

LTTC provide a fabulous range of programmes. [Cert, 7]

Three of the nine respondents who indicated they were content with current provision added comments about barriers to participation. These were dealt with in the category 'Other factors'. The remaining 19 responses were diverse. More opportunities to engage in

or learn about Scholarship were noted by three respondents, one of whom stated a Doctorate in Education. The other examples were:

I think development of more aspects on scholarship of teaching and learning would be beneficial. [Diploma, 13]

When they hear from colleagues that things can be quite straightforward and actually enhance their lecturing experience they become a lot more open to ideas. I think that staff need to promote good practice to each other, as this is somehow more 'real for colleagues'. I think a regular piece showcasing L&T initiatives/ innovations would be useful i.e. a short, snappy case study/ example of a lecturer within the institute who has tried something and the results of their efforts. The information could be collected as part of the LTTC programmes and then disseminated on a phased basis (i.e. collect a lot of case studies upfront and then release them over time, as you gather new cases). These cases could be circulated by email on a monthly/ every 2 months basis. This would also provide some great material for the website. [Diploma, 27]

The second response is an extract and is comprehensive in the statement of both the idea and the potential implementation. While there are existing opportunities for dissemination of scholarship such as the annual Showcase of teaching and learning initiatives, a graduate conference featuring research projects from the programmes and a journal, this respondent's focus seems to be on more regular dissemination and presentation in the form of case studies available online. While there are online resources, they may not be perceived as case studies.

Opportunities for networking were also suggested. One was specific to local networking based on pedagogical projects while another was suggesting international connections and it was difficult to decipher if it was specific to teaching and learning or broader:

international academic partnership and engagement with cultural exchange and collaborative learning [Diploma, 20]

Suggestions in relation to technology were also provided. Some were specific to teaching and learning with reference to e-learning, while others were more general on the use of technology:

More e-learning workshops and personal website development courses [Diploma, 38]

There is room for a module on the use of social media & digital spaces in HE...I know A lot of my colleagues who would not be familiar with such systems & why you might use them as Academics. [Diploma, 10]

There was one notable response which suggested an extension of teaching observation which is a core element within the Diploma programme:

More opportunities to observe and participate in teaching observation and review [Diploma, 18]

There were four responses which related to other units or centres within the institution, such as the Information Services unit or Staff Development. Two responses referred to support for research in terms of supervision and also allowances within timetables. Finally, there were some responses which were difficult to categorise:

Freedom of academic teaching eg what allowed / not allowed... [Diploma, 5]

Post graduate modules offered by my school. Funded courses available over the summer. [Diploma, 19]

More elaboration on QA procedures, QE & governance of Higher Education [Cert, 5]

The diversity of these responses may signal opportunities for greater collaborations between the LTTC and academic units or service units. For example, part of the role of the Head of Learning Development for each College is to liaise with the Quality Office in terms of quality assurance and enhancement in terms of programmes, as outlined in Appendix A.

The final category 'Other factors' was the grouping of responses which referred to factors which impinge on respondents' participation in learning opportunities. As noted above, while nine (32%) respondents indicated their satisfaction with the current provision of learning opportunities available through the LTTC, they also articulated some of the barriers which impinged on or prevented their participation. Time and workload were the dominant themes. Examples of these responses were:

I ... would engage more with some of the short courses if I did not have so many teaching hours. [Diploma, 4]

time is the resource that is not available. [Diploma, 28]

4.8.5 Barriers

An additional question on barriers was included in questionnaires to graduates of the Cert and the CPD Module as noted previously in Section 3.6.2.1 and shown in Appendices E and F. There were 12 (92%) responses out of a possible 13, with analysis yielding the following themes:

- Time
- Value of participation as perceived by others

- Value of participation for self
- Financial support
- No barriers

While some respondents gave insights into more than one barrier, the most commonly noted was time. Ten of the 12 respondents (83%) indicated lack of time generally, with some respondents giving further insights into the issue of time:

Time: the increased hours, and new modules assigned at short notice. [Cert, 6]

Timing of programmes [CPD module, 5]

The last point is interesting and a response given to the previous question by a Diploma graduate may be useful in addressing this as they suggested scheduling programmes in non-teaching weeks. However, a key aspect of participation within the programmes is the opportunity to implement strategies immediately when teaching, as expressed by one respondent, and also to facilitate activities such as observations and research projects.

Two respondents highlighted the low value of participation as perceived by others as another barrier. One respondent referred specifically to management while the other suggested participation was not deemed a priority for lecturers:

A barrier to uptake of CPD is that it is not seen as a priority by many in HE [Cert, 5]

Time and perception that there is no institutional value placed on being the best teacher-practitioner one could be. If engagement in innovative teaching practice was valued by management and recognised as a core part of work i believe it would encourage me and others to engage more in LTTC programmes. [Cert, 7]

Another participant highlighted that it may be difficult to ascertain the potential value of a programme or CPD prior to commencement. One respondent referred to financial support and this is based on their contract as a HPAL; they receive limited financial support, unlike their colleagues who are full-time and can apply for a full fee-waiver:

As a HPAL lecturer of 8 years I have to pay for my courses and only get a contribution from the Institute based on the number of Hours I teach per Semester [Cert, 1]

There were two respondents who felt there were no barriers to participation:

I don't think there are major barriers [Cert, 4]

I don't consider that there are barriers, it's about making them a priority. [Cert, 5]

Overall, the responses to this specific question on barriers, along with the responses given by Diploma respondents to the previous question relating to professional learning

opportunities, clearly highlight the most common constraint is time. The insights into other barriers such as perceptions of value were noted for exploration within the interviews.

Based on the responses to this and previous questions, I observed that some respondents may perceive learning opportunities as confined to formal and accredited opportunities such as programmes and modules. While efforts were made to phrase questions so that participants would also consider informal and non-accredited learning opportunities and experiences, it was noted that two respondents to the question on additional learning opportunities referred only to accredited and formal provision. For example:

I am happy with the courses on offer. [Diploma, 2]

Many responses to the question on barriers also indicated a focus on scheduled, formal learning opportunities. Within interviews, a visual aid based on the work of Bamber (2009) was used to assist in overcoming this potential issue and presented in Appendix G Interview Schedule.

4.9 Professional Frameworks

Two questions were posed on professional frameworks. The first question provided a brief overview of frameworks which have been developed to support professional development of teaching in higher education. The UK Professional Standards Framework was specifically referred to as an example. The question was then presented: *Would you consider such a framework useful to guide your continuing professional learning and development, such as an institutional or national framework outlining suggested knowledge, skills and values associated with competence in teaching in higher education?* Respondents were asked to give a Yes or No answer and invited to provide a supporting comment. The collated results are presented in Table 4.7:

Table 4:7 Responses to questions on professional frameworks

Q: Would you consider such a framework useful to guide your continuing professional learning and development, such as an institutional or national framework outlining suggested knowledge, skills and values associated with competence in teaching in higher education?	Yes	No	Comment given
Diploma	23	9	22
Cert	4	2	5
CPD Module	2	4	5
Totals	29	15	32

There appeared to be significant support for the potential usefulness of a professional framework with 29 (66%) of the 44 respondents indicating Yes. There were 32 supporting comments which offered greater insights into the rationale for these responses and also some expressions of doubt. Two respondents provided comments but did not indicate Yes or No to the initial question, with one expressing they were unsure about the meaning of the question. The open responses were analysed and 18 codes generated leading to four themes:

- Positive
- Caveats
- Negative – disadvantages or own reasons
- Alternatives / Teaching needs to be valued

4.9.1 Positive

Sixteen of the respondents who answered Yes provided comments which can be divided into three sub-themes based on perceived positive aspects of a professional framework.

4.9.1.1 Structure and benchmarking

Half of these respondents, (8) conveyed their enthusiasm for potential attributes of a framework in the form of a clear structure or criteria as well as the opportunity to benchmark against good practice. Comments included:

Good to benchmark yourself against good practice and see what gaps, if any, need to be filled. [Diploma, 21]

This will help in defining a clear path for professional development [Diploma, 25]

A framework is needed to allow us to demonstrate professional competence, and to quantify in a meaningful way the effort that some staff put into CPD. Without such a framework, there is the potential that well-meaning staff remain ignorant of the potential that CPD could bring to themselves and their students. [Cert, 5]

4.9.1.2 Accreditation

Five (11%) respondents made reference to accreditation with three specifically referring to the UK Professional Standards Framework with one preparing their application and another considering it. One respondent suggested linking with the UK HEA framework, while others considered it only in a national context. Examples of comments were:

To get national accreditation with your peers would be a forward move & may influence greater engagement & stronger networking opportunities. [Diploma, 10]

It makes sense to tie in with for example the UK HEA system as it gives a national/international benchmark to individual institution's qualifications. [Diploma, 13]

Yes, I am currently preparing my application to the HEA for professional recognition. An Irish version would be great. [Diploma, 36]

I think this would be a great idea and I would feel motivated to participate in working towards accreditation that was understood in a national context.' [CPD Module, 3]

4.9.1.3 Recognition

It was noted that frameworks have the potential to recognise the value ascribed to teaching by others and an acknowledgement that lecturers invest time and effort in it, for example:

I think more recognition of the teaching role is very important and the focus is continuously on research and publishing to the detriment of teaching role. Those that are active in improving teaching get little recognition in comparison to those actively publishing. [Diploma, 34]

4.9.2 Caveats

Four respondents indicated that they were in favour of a professional framework but expressed concerns and potential conditions:

Discussion, exchange of and engagement in educational research informs us on how to improve how we teach and how we aid students learning, however Lecturers who are interested in engaging in this invaluable activity need to be given time off their timetable. It's not possible to engage at this level without having the time. I find it very frustrating that the D.I.T. gives little more than lip service to this kind of activity [Diploma, 4]

20 years in industry, I became chartered as this was held in high esteem. This is something I would strive for in my current role if it was recognised with value. [Diploma, 24]

As long as it is not imposed without consideration for discipline area and specific circumstances of teaching. [Diploma, 28]

I think it would be a good way to recognise different levels of teaching engagement, but would not like it if it is a way of stratifying people. [Diploma, 30]

4.9.3 Negative

As noted in Table 4.10 above, there were 15 (34%) respondents who indicated that they did not deem a professional framework useful to guide their professional learning in relation to teaching. Ten of these respondents provided comments, of which eight conveyed their rationale for this rejection of such a proposal. Their comments ranged from being ardently

against the use of a professional framework for lecturers, to two focusing solely on their own situation, for example:

Make it too prescriptive you lose the creativity and introduce another box ticking quality assurance exercise [Diploma, 8]

I believe as both lecturers and students are individuals no framework can capture the aptitudes of large groups in relation to teaching and learning. *Flexible and fluid approaches are better than frameworks. Personal integrity and morals serve to provide teaching excellence.* Most lecturers are trying their best at all times. The framework would also add more unnecessary bureaucracy and paperwork to the job [Diploma, 38]

I couldn't see how I would have time to get involved in this. I am expected to stay on top of a dynamic discipline with few resources. [Cert, 6]

No as it would displace the need to working on tying my subject-specific research to the pressing learning needs of my students. [CPD Module, 1]

4.9.4 Alternatives

There was one respondent who indicated Yes for agreement with the potential of a professional framework but their comment referred to benefits of an existing approach within DIT. There were also two respondents who had selected No for a professional framework but provided alternatives within their comments. The three comments within the *Alternatives* theme were:

The DITs Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy committee of which I am a member, have developed guidelines for the inculcation of specific 'Graduate Attributes' (GA). The combined elements call for the support of a) student engagement, b) enterprise, c) enquiry based, d) effectiveness, and e) expertise in chosen field/discipline. This particular GA framework has been most useful in guiding both practice and continuing professional learning and development [Diploma, 20]

...Flexible and fluid approaches are better than frameworks. Personal integrity and morals serve to provide teaching excellence... [Diploma, 38]

I think that the approach of providing courses and good support through LTCC is a very positive way to support and encourage good practice in higher education teaching. Developing a culture of quality in teaching can be fostered in many ways including support from line managers, engaging with programme chairs on quality of teaching across a programme, linking up the Quality Assurance process and higher management valuing the time and expertise of staff involved in teaching. [CPD Module, 1]

4.9.5 Further analysis related to other questions

I considered the responses to this question on professional frameworks with reference to whether the respondents were members of a professional body and also reviewed their years of teaching experience. I analysed these questions to explore if there were any associations between being a member of a professional body and perception of usefulness of a professional framework to support professional learning in teaching. I also wanted to explore any relationship between the responses and career stage by checking years of teaching experience.

Within the 10 Diploma respondents who answered No to whether they were members of a professional body, six answered Yes to professional frameworks. While two did not offer a supporting comment, two highlighted the merits of a framework to provide a structure. All six had previously indicated that they had 10 or more years teaching experience. There were three respondents who had completed the Cert and were not members of a professional body. Two of these indicated No to the potential usefulness of a professional framework. I noted that the one who indicated Yes had 6-10 years teaching experience while the others had 11-15 and 16 or more years teaching experience. Within the six CPD participants, three answered No to the professional framework and all had 16 or more years teaching experience.

I then explored the relationship between years of teaching experience of the Diploma group. Within the cohort of 15 Diploma respondents with up to 10 years teaching experience in HE, only two stated No to professional framework with one noting that they were unsure, with the other offering an alternative. While this analysis is not conclusive, there are indications that those with more years teaching experience and who may be mid to late career are less interested in professional frameworks than lecturers who are early career. I also noted that it would be interesting to explore if those who are members of professional bodies have professional frameworks to guide or direct professional learning in relation to their discipline. These were all noted as potential topics for interviews.

4.10 Discipline related professional learning and development

The final section of the questionnaire focused on respondents' engagement in professional learning in relation to their discipline. The first closed question asked whether or not they engaged in discipline related professional learning and development. They were then asked to describe how this impacted on development of their teaching (Appendix E).

Forty-four respondents (88%) answered Yes that they did engage in professional learning and development in relation to their discipline, and 38 (76%) provided comments. These comments were reviewed and 20 codes were identified. I analysed these codes further and collated them into four main themes.

- Impact on teaching
- Form of professional learning
- Reasons to engage in professional learning
- Barriers

4.10.1 Impact on teaching

Eleven respondents referred to how their engagement in disciplinary focused professional learning impacts on their teaching practice generally. Ten highlighted how it kept them up to date for their students. Six others referred to how it supported curriculum developments such as assignments and student research projects. Five specifically referred to how it supported the development of discipline-specific teaching strategies. Professional learning in their discipline therefore contributed to keeping teaching practice current, informing assessment design, and discipline-based research:

Lends credibility and keeps the teaching and learning both current and diversified
[Diploma, 20]

Project development of many different types within the School e.g. New teaching and learning models for [subject], [subject] support structures, online assessment of [subject] etc... [Diploma, 32]

4.10.2 Form of professional learning

The most frequently mentioned forms of disciplinary focused professional learning were scholarly writing and research which were noted by 11 respondents, followed by attendance at conferences by eight and five respondents mentioned learning from peers. Other formal professional learning activities referred to included workshops, courses and two specifically noted the completion of doctorates. Three respondents noted reading, two mentioned online learning and one highlighted practice. Nineteen respondents provided comments which outlined a range of activities in which they engage, as well as noting how this impacts on their teaching:

Peer reviewed and conference papers opens up endless networking opportunities and reveals up to date discipline related teaching technics [Diploma, 8]

I attend workshops and training courses to upskill in areas that are relevant to the topics I teach. This helps be to provide relevant examples and contextualise topics and ensure that information is current and useful. I also participate in some conferences and workshops in [*discipline*] education (e.g. on podcasting, using tablets, micro scale labs etc.) which keeps me aware of pedagogical developments and how they can be applied in my discipline [Diploma, 9]

Attending conferences ... inspires me in thinking of new research ideas suitable for my students' projects. [Diploma, 25]

Online teaching tools and forums, videos are viewed regularly, webinar participation and continuous consultation with colleagues and programme development teams. [Diploma, 38]

I am involved in ... work placement supervision and engagement with professionals which allows me to remain current [Cert, 5]

However, while some respondents referred to the forms of professional learning, they did not address the question which asked how their experience of professional learning impacts on their teaching:

When I have a little time I read current research publications and occasionally write small scale papers, have them published and post them on Arrow. I also help less experienced colleagues with their research work. [Diploma, 4]

I work as a manager so I suppose it is a bit different for me. I also read a lot about management/ leadership, attend management conferences and am completing a PhD in the area. Furthermore I also organise and attend lecturers by high profile industry speakers. [Diploma, 27]

4.10.3 Reasons to engage in professional learning

Twenty-two comments referred to the reasons people engaged with professional learning in their discipline. These comments referred to keeping up to date, new techniques in the discipline and bringing new development back to their modules and programmes:

Attending discipline related conferences keeps you engaged in the current literature, brings current research examples into my teaching & stimulates undergrad & postgrad projects. You will also learn about new experimental techniques to bring back to your Institute. [Diploma, 10]

Active research profile is important for keeping to the fore of a discipline. [Diploma, 28]

4.10.4 Barriers

Three respondents highlighted barriers to engaging in professional learning in their discipline. Time was mentioned by two which correlates with previous responses to engaging in professional learning in relation to teaching. Other activities which put demands on their time were also noted, as was the indication of lack of support. An example was:

It is important to stop and get time to think and reflect on how I practice so any opportunity for professional development I do take if there is time and space among the competing demands vis a vis teaching itself, research outputs and other scholarly activity. [Diploma, 30]

The detailed responses to these final questions provided an insight into the activities which lecturers engage in for professional learning, in relation to their discipline, and also those specifically relevant to their teaching.

4.11 Summary: Key Findings from the Questionnaire

Overall, the 50 respondents to the questionnaires provided a rich array of data. Analysis yielded key themes and areas for further exploration within the semi-structured interviews which followed. These included:

- Participants' interest in professional learning about teaching was evident based on wanting to learn in terms of practice, knowledge and confidence.
- Institutional policy drives initial participation for some, as completion of an accredited programme is a condition of contract for new lecturers and a criterion for progression.
- Learning within the programmes was influenced by the practical experiences within the sessions and beyond such as peer and tutor observations and engaging in scholarship and reflective activities.
- The influence of others such as colleagues was noted both within the programme and beyond in informal learning opportunities.
- There was an indication of a dominance of formal and accredited professional learning associated with teaching while indications of more non - accredited and informal activities relating to disciplinary based professional learning.
- Barriers such as time and perceived lack of support from management were highlighted as factors inhibiting engagement in professional learning.

I also noted implications for my own practice in relation to the next phase of the research. Practical issues such as the phrasing of particular questions and the use of a visual aid were carefully considered. The next chapter details the findings and analysis of the 16 interviews which were conducted with volunteers who had responded to the questionnaire.

Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the findings from the sixteen interviews. The interview schedule is in Appendix G and the analytical process has been described in Chapter 3 (Section 3.7.2). Following analysis of the questionnaires, the outline of interview topics and questions was reviewed and four topic areas were identified:

- Professionalism
- Learning within accredited programmes
- Learning within non-accredited and 'non-formal' activities
- Professional Frameworks

The sixteen interviewees are profiled in Table 5.1. They included five senior role holders: one Head of School and four Assistant Heads of School, as well as Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers.

Table 5:1 Outline details of interviewees

Interviewee pseudonym	Role	Programme completed
Claire	Lecturer	Cert
Nuala	Assistant Head of School	Diploma
David	Lecturer	Diploma
Mary	Lecturer	CPD Module
Conor	Assistant Lecturer	Diploma
Roisin	Assistant Head of School	Diploma
Mark	Lecturer	Diploma
Dermot	Assistant Lecturer	Diploma
Kenny	Lecturer	Cert
Sandra	Assistant Lecturer	Diploma
Aileen	Assistant Head of School	Diploma
Brian	Lecturer	CPD Module
Stephen	Lecturer	Cert
Robert	Head of School	Diploma
Jason	Assistant Head of School	Diploma
Scott	Lecturer	Diploma

When responding to the questionnaire, respondents were asked to note their role title when they commenced the programme; many had moved to new roles since then. The thematic analysis of the interview data revealed four over-arching themes:

- Discourse of professionalism
- Self: orientations to professional learning

- Structural constructs relating to teaching and professional learning (including institutional policy, national policy (Hunt Report, 2011) and the development of the Professional Development Framework by the National Forum)
- Influence of communities.

5.2. Discourse of professionalism

The interviews yielded important insights into the discourse of professionalism, teaching as a professional activity, and professional learning in relation to teaching from the perspective of lecturers and role holders within DIT. Interviewees provided their own understandings and engagement in the discourse around teaching and professional learning. The discourse was through spoken and written interaction.

This discourse is predominantly spoken. There was some reference to written discourse, but the analysis deals with this separately and specifically later (Section 5.3.3). Discourse also permeates other themes in the analysis such as influence of communities (Section 5.3.4). Here, the analysis focuses on the discourse of professionalism, teaching, and professional learning relating to teaching. The theme is divided into three sub-themes:

- Concepts associated with being a professional and member of a profession generally
- Perceptions of teaching as a professional activity, and
- Professional learning relating to teaching.

5.2.1 Concepts associated with being a professional and member of a profession

Fourteen interviewees were members of a professional body associated with their discipline and the concept of being a professional or a member of a profession was discussed within the interviews with some participants referring to the establishment of discipline related statutory registration and associated discussions. The interview data generated 118 references to the theme of professionalism generally and in relation to teaching. With the identification of the theme of discourse, the sub-theme of concepts was identified and coding reviewed in relation to this. Based on their descriptions of a professional and member of a profession, the concepts referred to were coded around 20 sub-themes. A model created within NVivo based on these concepts as nodes is presented in Figure 5.1 below:

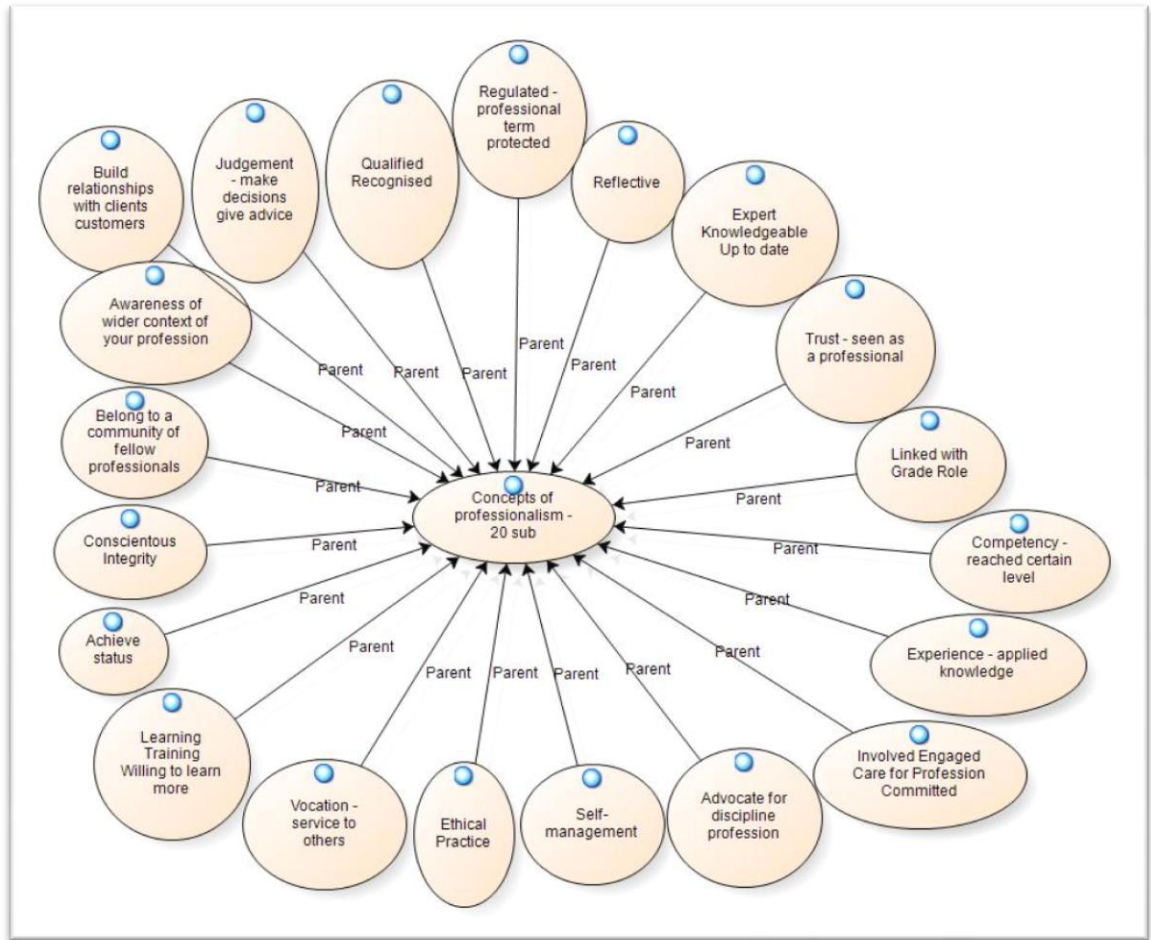


Figure 5:1 Concepts of Professionalism

The most prevalent concepts noted within the discussions were:

- Ethical practice
- Qualification – recognised nationally / internationally
- Learning or training and willing to continue to learn
- Expert in area – knowledgeable and up to date
- Involved, Engaged, Care for Profession

Ethical practice and having a recognised qualification were the two most dominant concepts articulated in relation to being a professional with 14 and 13 references codes to the nodes respectively. Some interviewees articulated ethical practice generally in terms of acting with integrity, while others referred specifically to codes of conduct and in relation to their own professional contexts.

Within the concept of qualification, there was an emphasis on nationally recognised qualifications and also on accreditation with regulatory bodies. There were further insights

into qualifications with some referring to chartership and other postgraduate professional learning in two different disciplines:

So in [main discipline] professionalism is getting a chartership [Roisin]

I joined as a member of that society and then there's a process of chartered [role related to discipline], so there's things you have to match up to achieve that status so that's about acting as a professional in your discipline. [Scott]

The sense of being appropriately qualified was also linked to using a recognised professional title by two interviewees, such as:

There's a recognised title usually with a profession. I suppose it's that recognition, it's that and nothing else, so that someone else can't call themselves that if they don't have that title. [Sandra]

There were also eight interviewees who emphasised that a professional is an expert. This was expressed as having knowledge and skills beyond what they may have gained through initial qualification and there was a strong focus on keeping up to date. There were examples provided of professional bodies having stipulations for maintaining membership and status within the associated professional body by demonstrating participation in professional development. However, there were also participants who deemed a professional as someone who was willing to continue learning and be reflective, without reference to complying with requirements. These conceptions of being well-qualified and up to date in terms of knowledge and practices contributed to the portrayal of the professional as being autonomous in terms of making judgements, "self-management" (Mark) and being an expert as an individual:

I think the idea of valuing independently, professionalised judgement is a very important one. [Brian]

While the terms of 'qualified and competent' were discussed subsequently in relation to the recommendation of the Hunt Report, the term 'competent' was not used by any participants when describing a professional. Only one participant referred to competency:

Well I think it's you have a competency so you have reached a certain level in your discipline and you have this set of competencies or skills or knowledge that you have acquired over the years. [Aileen]

The lack of use of the term competent may be because it was inadequate or insufficient in conveying the professional as an expert, or indeed an advisor. An associated sense of respect and trust was conveyed by Robert, as a Head of School who referred to his colleagues as professionals:

I find, that because everyone is a professional, the last thing you want is to be talked down to about doing certain things. [Robert]

Though there were the interpretations of a professional as being autonomous and expert, there was little indication of acting on one's own or in isolation. Rather than merely adhering to a set of rules or codes of practice, there was a strong sense of the professional being a committed member of a community:

I'm just thinking of my own professional body, the Royal Society of [Discipline area], there'd be a kind of an ethical sort of concept in terms of... there's a particular way that you'd behave as a [role relating to main subject area] representing the [subject area] society...you're a part of the society of a part of a professional network. [Scott]

Jason differentiated between those who are members of a professional body, because their organisation might have a group membership, and those who are active individual members:

People that make a conscious decision to actually sign up to a professional body are the people that are likely to get involved and that they care for the profession, they have a level of pride in the profession...people who would get involved in committees, they will be vocal around the types of services the professional body provides and so on. So I think it's useful to make that distinction; engaged vs not engaged if you like. [Jason]

This sense of pride and contributing to the profession or discipline was also conveyed by others, where being a professional also meant being part of a community of active members who are committed to developing their area of work, and being an advocate for it:

A professional is somebody who belongs to a community of others or have a similar vocation. [Conor]

Conor's use of the term vocation conveys a commitment to the role beyond just doing a job or viewing the practice as work. There were also concepts of being of service to others, including society.

Overall, the interviewees conveyed a coherent account of their understanding and experience of professionalism. Despite the interviewees coming from disparate disciplines and professions, there was a remarkable sense of a shared discourse within the concepts they articulated in relation to professionalism in general.

5.2.2 Perceptions of teaching as a professional activity

Interviewees were asked to describe someone who could be recognised as a professional lecturer and suggested considering this in terms of knowledge, skills and practices and professional values. In terms of the knowledge and skills of a professional lecturer, most interviewees referred to concepts associated with curriculum development and learning theories, along with the ability to engage students, assess appropriately and provide feedback effectively. Many of the interviewees related teaching to the general concepts of professionalism such as ethical practice. Examples provided related to behaving honestly and fairly with some referring to assessment:

That they are very fair with the students, that they outline very early on how the assessment procedure, what the learning outcomes are and then the assessment procedure and then that it's all done in a reasonable and honest way whether it's continuous assessment or exams [Dermot]

However, discussions around the theme of teaching and professionalism revealed that some interviewees thought that teaching may not be perceived as a professional activity by some colleagues and management:

I would see that there are two main different types of people who are recognised as a professional lecturer. There are the ones that, are very expert in their field, but aren't very expert in teaching. And don't give that a huge amount of thought or weight. And they are still very much recognised as a lecturer, and they are employed as a lecturer [Claire]

Claire elaborated further to convey how this relates to the personal conception of the role of the lecturer:

I would say that most of the people that I work with, intend to do a good job, as a professional lecturer. But what their concept of what that is, is quite different to maybe what my concept would be [Claire]

Claire's comments suggest a lack of a shared understanding or shared language among the interviewees around teaching and professionalism, or teaching as a professional activity. One interviewee stated that she did not consider the term professionalism in relation to the role of the lecturer in the same way as other more traditional professions:

It's not a very important kind of term that I would feel was essential to my kind of sense of myself as a lecturer...there would be arguments as to what extent it's a profession or a vocational element or something that's always in process, ...this is the way that it should be, so I see it more in that way that you're always working at it and improving it, which is a good thing. I don't think it necessarily lends itself to being sort of categorised and maybe classified in the same way as other professions. [Mary]

Other interviewees conveyed this by emphasising that some colleagues may not perceive teaching as their primary role, and that they are more allied to their discipline:

So I think a lot of lecturers tend to associate themselves with those [discipline related] professions. The fact that they are a lecturer I don't know how much they would identify as being a member of a professional lecturing body. [Jason]

One early career lecturer expressed how participating in the Diploma impacted on her sense of being a professional in relation to teaching and related this to confidence:

probably maybe more so since I did the PGDip...I think for me one of the main things I got from that was confidence. I'm not sure how much I changed what I do actually, but I do feel more confident in it...I suppose I do feel more of a professional now [Sandra]

As evidenced in the questionnaires (Section 4.2.4.3), there was some confusion over the term values, and specifically the values of management compared with the values of lecturers. David discussed this at length, and how his efforts to develop his teaching were at odds with what was valued by management:

the teaching side of things ... the value isn't placed on that as much I don't think, from a management perspective. Like I do place a lot of value on being up to speed with current developments and pedagogy [David]

Many interviewees expressed their disappointment with what they felt was management's poor view of teaching as a professional activity:

effectively management really saw it as something 'out there' maybe or something I'm not quite sure but it wasn't capitalised on. [Kenny]

It was valuable to have five role holders from management in terms of one Head of School and four Assistant Heads of School participate in the interviews. Within this small cohort, there were conflicting insights into the discourse around teaching. Nuala described continuing a "professional discourse" about teaching with programme boards and teams, and with individual colleagues, particularly those participating in the accredited programmes. However, discussion of teaching tended to be informal unless specific plans were being made for a new programme. Teaching was not within the discourse that she engages in with colleagues who were in similar roles in management:

I would have work related discussions with people, my line managers for example, but not about teaching. We have more serious issues in relation to the current role, rather than in relation to the teaching role that we discuss. No, I don't talk about teaching matters with other colleagues, as in, my other assistant heads in our school. We, our discussions are very focused on running the school efficiently and well and we get on with the job. [Nuala]

There is an indication here that there are informal conversations about teaching, but more formal and important discussions do not include teaching. Expectations of teaching in higher education were unclear. Someone may be hired to teach but there would be no conversation around best practice in preparation for embarking on the role. This Head of School described his own experience of his first lecture:

I wouldn't expect that someone would be a professional lecturer day one...I know when I started, I shudder, I was fine. I got everything done, the students got knowledge. But, I think ... when you're starting off and you haven't taught before ... none of that lark in third level. I walked in and delivered the lecture, and was left alone to do so. That is kind of dangerous to some extent. [Robert]

This sense of isolation and risk reinforces the sentiments expressed by others that there is little discourse around teaching. Being a new lecturer, as depicted by this Head of School is in stark contrast to the concept of being part of a community as was articulated when participants described being a member of a profession generally.

However, Claire revealed that it was the realisation that there was a discourse and scholarship around teaching that prompted her to engage in learning about it:

it started to dawn on me that there was a whole field that I'm completely unaware of, a whole field of thinking about education, thinking about curriculum design, thinking about assessments, about feedback and all of that [Claire]

The interview data suggested management's perception of the discourse of teaching and learning as being "out there" (Kenny), as it is happening and is being taken care of by others, but it is not part of their primary focus. This lack of conversation around teaching is also evidenced clearly by some lecturers at the School level:

And nobody was talking about it in my School. There wasn't a culture at all at my School at the time, of thinking about or talking about teaching. [Claire]

One of the Assistant Head of School suggested that this lack of discourse around teaching was because it is not valued as much as research. She indicates this using a term to describe an interest in the scholarship of teaching which was almost demeaning:

in my discipline area, and it was just the ethos in the school I was in, even though we had a good few champions in the teaching and learning area, I felt it wasn't as valued as research...The 'teachy learny' stuff as they referred to it! [Aileen]

There was also data which corroborated these condescending references to teaching and the discourse around it with a clear statement that an interest in teaching is not highly valued. Two interviewees referred to this in terms of caring and soft skills, and associated

with a predominantly female endeavour. One male interviewee described how this use of almost sexist language has been directed towards him, and an indication that his immediate colleagues do not associate with teaching:

I'm talking about staff in DIT who regard teaching and learning as that kind of girly thing. So it's a way to kind of rubbish it because we're men. So then it becomes difficult to have, have kind of you know people often say to me 'you like that kind of thing'. Well this is our kind of thing. This is, is this not our core business? You know, but 'you like that kind of thing'. I've had that so many times like, you know 'you like that kind of thing' you know 'would you go to that meeting?' [Kenny]

This data suggests that low value is attributed to engaging in teaching development and meetings or initiatives by some lecturers, and that this activity is outsourced to whichever colleague may be most interested in it.

5.2.3 Professional learning relating to teaching

This section presents analysis of the discourse around professional learning relating to teaching. The first section focuses on the initial accredited programme and is followed by insights into continuing professional learning. The analysis shows that high value was ascribed by the lecturers to accredited programmes supporting professional learning, in contrast to the low value ascribed by management.

There were references to the time allowance given to participation in the initial accredited programme and associating this with the value ascribed to it by the institution:

What makes it work though is, that it is seen as a valued activity. And that the institute puts in the resources, by giving staff a three hour allocation... And it also advises those who timetable, that they should make that allowance on a staff member's timetable, as in it must be facilitated, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. So I think that staff value it for what it is, but that then they are facilitated in doing it. And I would really stress the maintaining that hours' allowance. [Nuala]

Interviewees spoke of the accredited programmes as valuable with some highlighting the opportunity to experience a safe space to discuss teaching. This was physically and geographically the case at the time when the programmes were facilitated in a venue separate to the main DIT campuses, which was described as an "oasis". They also referred to gaining a new vocabulary and language to support their learning and practice:

it was amazing because in a sense it introduced you to a language, things you kind of knew but you hadn't got a language for ... and you know I feel this but I've no, I can't put a construct on it [Kenny]

The valuing of participating in a programme, however, did not extend to promotion. Nuala comments on her promotion from Lecturer to Assistant Head of School:

I applied and was appointed, I don't think the course had anything to do with it. I did mention it on the CV that it showed my engagement with teaching and learning, I don't think it made a difference. [Nuala]

Therefore, professional learning relating to teaching was valued and important at one level, especially for the lecturers themselves, but they felt that it was not valued enough by management to be articulated in formal strategies or documents. Claire recounted this experience. She stated her agreement with the Hunt Report recommendation regarding the support for ongoing development. She indicated that this was her view for many years but that she felt she was not being heard and that she put continuing professional development (CPD) into the Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy so that it would be part of the written documentation:

I asked for it to be put down that there would be a certain number of hours of mandatory CPD hours...Just say everybody has to do a certain – and not necessarily professional CPD as a lecturer but even updating themselves in their field of practice ...I also have often voiced my opinion that the right questions need to be on the PMDS forms as well

OK

Management need to be better informed about what best practice in education is as well [Claire]

This extract clearly outlines Claire's perception of the lack of emphasis on, and understanding of, teaching, and support for professional learning in relation to it. It also evidences how she, as a lecturer, is using written documentation in terms of strategy and performance management to bring this into more of a public forum.

At the time of conducting the interviews, the consultation phase on the national professional development Framework for Teaching in Higher Education had begun and there was printed documentation and institutional level meetings held to introduce the process. Nonetheless, three of the five role holders interviewed were not aware of the development of the Framework. This was also evidenced in Claire's account where she recalls arriving at the opening institutional consultation meeting on the Framework which was held directly after an Academic Council meeting:

I overheard one of the directors saying '... get out of here quick now or we will get caught' – you know 'we will get caught' so it's not valued, by anybody [Claire]

Within our discussion on the development of the Framework, Claire, hoped that the Framework would “shine a light” (Claire) on professional learning in relation teaching and bring it into the discourse.

Overall, there were indications from the interviews that lecturers were engaging in professional learning in relation to their teaching but their time and efforts may not have been acknowledged or supported by management. There was a clear indication that many lecturers believed that teaching was not part of the discourse of the management. In response to the final question of the interview, which was termed as a ‘dream’ or an aspirational question: ‘if you could create or change one thing?’ one lecturer referred to the issue of discourse around learning:

Have more conversations about our core, our core business. I suppose learning. Not teaching. So focusing on learning rather than teaching. [Kenny]

5.3 Self: orientations to professional learning

Two sub-themes emerged based on contrasting orientations of lecturers based on discussions of their engagement in professional learning in relation to their teaching. These are:

- Being proactive – *commitment to students, discipline, themselves as a professional*
- Being pragmatic – *compliance, commitment to self - promotion*

As Braun and Clarke (2006) advocate there is a distinct phase in thematic analysis which involves “defining and naming themes” (p.87). I carefully chose the term ‘orientations’ for this theme as the sub-themes of being proactive and pragmatic are not intended to be fixed approaches taken by lecturers in relation to their engagement in professional learning. There was evidence that there is movement between these two orientations and I therefore did not categorise lecturers into one or the other. There were, however, indications that some lecturers may have started being pragmatic and reactive in relation to their professional learning and then became more proactive. I have, therefore, commenced the presentation of these findings in that order.

5.3.1 Being pragmatic

It was important to learn about the rationale for participating in the programmes such as the Cert and Diploma, and also the CPD module in Teaching, Learning and Assessment which was voluntary and was not related to either policy for new lecturers or those seeking promotion from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer. Two interviewees noted that their

participation in the initial accredited programme was based on compliance with a condition of contract as a new lecturer.

Initially, I'll be honest here, it was based on the requirements but I kept going because I like it. [Mark]

Another noted his initial dismissal of participation in the programme:

I missed that intake for the diploma and I was kind of thinking 'Sure I don't need to do this'. ... I couldn't convince myself for the need for it I said 'Look sure I can teach, I have been a student for so many years, I know how the game is played'. But I knew the game from my perspective. It took a while for me to open my eyes and realise how wrong I was. ... It's hard to convince people of the need for it. [David]

When I probed David for greater insight into what convinced him to participate in the programme, he outlined two factors both highlighted by his Head of Learning Development: the first was the obligation to take the programme as part of his contract, and the second were the benefits of the programme:

she also said 'look it will be of benefit to you, it's a little bit of time and effort during the course but the benefit you get out of it at the end will be worth the time you put in because you'll be more effective, you'll be more efficient in teaching, you'll have best practice, the students will enjoy it more, you'll enjoy it more'. [David]

The influence of senior colleagues will be discussed later in a separate sub-theme (5.5 Influence of communities), but it is important to note here the reasons for participation as presented by the Head of Learning Development with an emphasis on both the contractual aspect as well as the benefits to the individual lecturer. However, an intriguing feature of the presentation of their reasons is the emphasis on the efficiency and effectiveness, and indeed enjoyment. While these potential benefits are certainly valuable, there is no emphasis on the impact on student learning. It seems to be a pragmatic colleague providing this advice.

There were also indications that lecturers participated in other professional learning opportunities because they were available rather than seeking out opportunities based on their own needs and interests in specific topics. Among three reasons provided by Brian for his participation in the voluntary CPD module, he noted the benefit for his colleagues:

I also knew that a number of people on the course would benefit career wise from doing it, i.e. permanence and things like that. So I knew if there weren't the appropriate numbers the course wouldn't run. [Brian]

He also added that he had another pragmatic reason for participating in an accredited module, which was to show that he was interested in teaching and wished his CV to reflect that interest and experience.

5.3.2 Being proactive

Interviewees conveyed their motivations for engaging in professional learning relating to teaching based on their commitment to their students, the discipline and themselves as a professional. This data contrasts with the pragmatic approach outlined earlier in section 5.3.1. Examples of interviewee data analysed as 'being proactive' included: four referred to completing a programme prior to the institutional policy; three who completed the Diploma after the policy expressed their motivation and aspiration to engage in the opportunity and Roisin participated in the Diploma as a part-time lecturer and paid for it herself.

While the questionnaire asked for the reasons for participating in a programme, the interviews facilitated greater insights. Four interviewees specifically referred to participating in the programme prior to the institutional policy. Claire described what prompted her to engage in her own professional learning, based on her attendance at two formal events:

I think probably the very first thing that I did, that made me realise that I'm not doing as good a job as I need to be, and ... I would have been in that sort of ignorant sort of unknown unknown thinking I was doing a good job...and probably wasn't doing a very bad job either, but could have been a bit more informed, particularly around assessments and that sort of thing. I went to, I think his name was Mantz Yorke was over in DIT and ...something around first year or ... graduate attributes or...And I think that's probably the first thing that I went to, and went 'oh, ok!'... And when I did the e-learning summer school, I remember the keynote speaker talking about constructive alignment and I remember thinking 'I've no idea what he's talking about here at all' [Claire]

She conveys her realisation that she was not familiar with the language and concepts being presented, and while this links with the theme of Discourse (Section 4.3.1.2), a key point here is the expression that she felt "I'm not doing as good a job as I need to be" (Claire) and the driver seems to be to support student learning. This is also expressed in how she outlines the features of the discourse and scholarship, as she refers to student related aspects as opposed to strategies for efficiency:

it started to dawn on me that there was a whole field that I'm completely unaware of, a whole field of thinking about education, thinking about curriculum design, thinking about assessments, about feedback and all of that, that I was probably bobbing along and probably doing ok, but I hadn't really, you know, put much thought in one way or another particularly into the nature of the assessments that I was using, the type of feedback I was giving [Claire]

There were also clear indications of being motivated to engage in professional learning by those who had contractual conditions as new lecturers. This was conveyed through expressions of appreciation for the opportunity to engage in formal learning which had not previously been available to them, with another expecting to participate as they had done so with colleagues while in another HEI:

I suppose to really gain the theory behind the practice that I was already doing, so at that point I'd been teaching for 4 years and I hadn't really the opportunity prior to that to engage in something like this so I was really motivated and interested in engaging with it. [Sandra]

I kind of embraced it. I had actually done like a two day training in [another HEI] maybe about a year previously and I really enjoyed it and, you know, we got two days out to kind of do some training with colleagues and it was very interesting. [Conor]

This provides an insight into the lack of consistency in terms of opportunities for professional learning for teaching across the sector. However, the key sentiment emerging was that they as individual lecturers wanted to learn and “aspired to” (Dermot) irrespective of institutional or national policy:

it's how I would have, what I would have aspired to anyway before the Hunt Report and before all the measures that have occurred in the last five or six years. [Dermot]

When discussing the potential of the new professional development Framework for lecturers, one lecturer articulated a key point in relation to lecturers focusing only on their own individual teaching practice. The risk here is of improvement in one lecturer's teaching only, which does not change any other aspect of the students' experiences within their programme. Stephen commented:

In a lot of cases people go about improving their own teaching which is brilliant, but inevitably they are one little bit in what a student sees in four years of ..., it's really the curriculum that needs to have an overall learning and teaching theme running through it that is student centred in any way. So if it was in any to help that or that should become one of its goals then I think that should be added to it, yeah. [Stephen]

This can be linked with Hoyle's (1975) representation of teachers' professional development as restricted (only focusing on classroom practice) and extended (broader view of entire experience of student / curriculum) in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.3.1 Models of Continuing Professional Development. There should now be a critical mass of lecturers who have participated in the accredited programmes as they have been offered for over 15 years. There are also many other opportunities for professional learning – but the lecturers do not seem a cohesive strong group, they are diffused in both enthusiasm and energy, too spread out, and are moving on to research and other priorities.

5.4 Structural constructs relating to teaching and professional learning – Institutional and National

The theme of structural constructs emerged within the analysis of the interview data. Despite there not being any questions directly focused on institutional structures, interviewees spoke extensively on how such structures impacted on their engagement in professional learning in relation to teaching. This theme is divided into two sub-themes of Institutional and National.

5.4.1 Institutional structural constructs

- Academic calendar including timetable and teaching loads
- Policies and Documentation including Contracts for new lecturers, Promotion, PMDS, grade titles and quality assurance
- Committees at various levels: Institutional, College, School and Programme
- Incentives including Teaching Awards and Fellowships

There were 66 references coded to the theme of 'Teaching Load' with these references coming from 13 sources. The academic calendar in the IoT sector runs from early September to June 20th. This involves lecturers being engaged in institutional activities such as teaching during this period with a strong emphasis on their activities being timetabled and accounted for. This is evidenced in the contracts for assistant lecturers and lecturers based on an allocation of hours into a weekly timetable of 18 to 20 hours. One assistant head of school described this allocation as 'inhuman':

the lecture load for new lecturers on an AL scale is supposedly 20 hours a week which is actually inhuman. [Nuala]

Another lecturer referred to the heavy teaching load as 'quite poisonous really' (Brian). While many lecturers provided insights into the impact of the heavy teaching load on themselves, one lecturer described how a colleague sought help from him as he is working until 3am on teaching related activities. This sense of being overworked was also noted by

an assistant head of school in relation to potential barriers to lecturers participating in professional learning in relation to teaching:

time is a massive inhibitor. For a lot of people I don't think it's a lack of interest, for some people it certainly is. But for a lot of people I think they are over worked and time poor so that's what DIT need to address. [Jason]

Another assistant head of school shared her own experience of making time for professional learning in relation to teaching, as well as juggling other areas of activity such as research:

Any of the programmes I have done I have done off my own bat ...on top of your 18 or 20 hours and that's very, very stressful especially if you are trying to do research on top of that as well...it has been really tough...there is no switch off which is fine because if you are a researcher that's how you operate but there is no equity in the system. [Aileen]

Aileen's expression of a lack of fairness in comparing research and teaching activities is also conveyed by others but in relation to the levels of teaching. There were expressions of how the timetabling can generate a sense of inequity and potential disparity around the level of teaching within the high number of teaching hours, such as the Head of School, Robert:

I think in DIT there is a big imbalance...It's very high for third level. I would have colleagues who would teach almost exclusively final year, undergrad and postgrad on 18 hours. That's hard going... Some of my colleagues would teach large groups at high levels...compared to someone else teaching first certs in their whole day, I think it is a whole different world. It's not that equitable. A lot of people are upset about that, because they feel themselves hard done by. I think what would... improving the learning is giving people time to think about it. I think at the moment, they just don't have the time. I am sure that is fairly common, what people are saying. But that's a big thing. [Robert]

This was also highlighted by an experienced lecturer Mary with reference to the hours allocated for co-teaching within a Masters programme:

we have very, very short class contact hours. In fact our whole full-time Masters programme is delivered with eight class contact hours per week, so if you're teaching on that and you're co-teaching which is recommended with a colleague, you actually end up getting a half an hour on your timetable for teaching a module at Masters level which to do it well there's a lot of work in it...a huge amount of independent learning which has to be supported. For preparation and feedback and so on, that doesn't get reflected in your actual timetable. [Mary]

This was also strongly expressed by a lecturer with reference to its potential impact on the quality of teaching:

the kind of teaching you can do if you are doing 20 hours in a classroom should not properly be called higher education... It's a waste of time and leads to poor quality output [Brian]

This same lecturer's comments reflect sentiments noted earlier in terms of both the potential of this as demoralising and the language of inputs and outputs:

it's very depressing ... learning is a complicated sort of thing and that classroom learning should, if anything, be reduced and yet, despite the co-operation of staff, it was, you know, all the promises to give allowances for this and allowances for that, was reversed and given away with this very crude measure of not output but input of academic staff members. [Brian]

Two other lecturers referred to the input and output model which they felt was represented in the timetabling but framed it as a sectoral issue and not just specific to DIT. Conor provides an insight into his perception of the use of the timetable and workload allocation as an input driven model which he describes as being very controlled; and he reiterates Brian's perspective on the impact on teaching and the wider learning environment:

we are very input driven... mandatory kind of 18 hours or 16 hours ... highly controlled and that's really not the kind of... environment or atmosphere in which you want to generate a kind of teaching and learning research, teaching and learning nexus [Conor]

Aileen also shares this view and refers to a model of credits which she feels is present in the university sector:

It's just to give people a bit of leeway ... give them credits based on their productivity rather than how many hours they are physically sitting in front of a class. That goes on like in a lot of places ...in the university sector it's there...and if people don't want to be researchers and they want to be excellent teachers or excellent at outreach or excellent at engagement and industrial links let them do that, you know, we can't be everything to everyone [Aileen]

However, the Head of School, Robert deemed the high teaching loads as linked with government policy and financing, rather than a specifically institutional issue:

Twenty is too much. But the government has to realise that – it probably won't happen due to cost measures – either that or bigger classes. That's the only way to make it work. I don't think people would mind bigger classes if they knew that they were going to get less hours. [Robert]

There was also a strong sense of calculating the total hours engaged in the activity of teaching with two lecturers from different disciplines using the term multiplier associated with the contact hours. Mark noted that for each hour assigned to teaching there is a

multiplier and specifically referred to the associated time required for preparation. Another interviewee referred to the multiplier in relation to the assessment activities and meetings with students:

Its 18 contact hours. That generates a multiplier of marking and administration and seeing students in various ways that, you know, brings it up to 40 easily. [Conor]

The potential for meeting students and getting to know them was also noted by David's account of his experience of the timetabling. As a lecturer within the Sciences, he also indicates how the timetabled hours might be different across the disciplines. However, he indicates that there may be changes to this as science lecturers may be taken from the labs. He also describes how the mix of lectures and labs impacts on his approach to teaching and engaging with the students as individuals:

So, anywhere between 18 and 20 now they could be labs and they could be tutorials. So, it's not lectures all the time but I suppose that's a good thing about the sciences, you do have, like the labs for me are very important because in first year classes there could be 250 students facing you. And you've no hope of learning their personalities, their names, their styles of learning but if you are in the lab you have that one to one contact. ... So the labs are quite important to me and there's a drive now to move the lecturers out of the labs and into more lecturing positions and I'm kind of almost against it [David]

A lecturer from another discipline noted that some of their hours are allocated for supervision of portfolios and dissertations and wondered whether I was viewing supervision as a form of teaching, which would suggest that 'teaching' was deemed as the classroom based activity with a group of students:

I would have allowances for being course chair and tutor and those other things...It's probably not much more than maybe eight. A lot of our work is actually supervising dissertations and things...also maybe supervising portfolios too, so I don't know if you could count that as teaching as well. [Mary]

There was also an interesting comment from another lecturer who intimated that because he had engaged in professional learning, he was given a heavier teaching load compared to some of his colleagues:

But, so I would nearly always have because the odd thing is because I've kept my skills up to date if I hadn't kept my skills up to date I would have a lighter teacher load. [Kenny]

Within the accounts of their workload in terms of the timetable, there were references to allowances of hours away from teaching which gave an impression of starting with a full teaching timetable and allowances were granted based on other commitments:

there was one stage where I had three PhD students...and I was a programme chair and I was a first year tutor so with all of the allowances, between the research supervision and admin you were probably down to maybe 10 hours a week. When they finished up you could go back up to your 18 or 20 hours...so it was very intense when you are back to your full timetable. [Aileen]

There were indications of changes in terms of workloads such as lecturers being expected to do more administrative tasks which may previously have been supported by other colleagues:

I mean there is a whole servicing of that [18 hours teaching] and increasingly we are having all of our administrative support being taken away ...those 18 hours generate, have a multiplier effect ... it's 18 hours in a classroom, more supervising students ...and that comes with that [Conor]

Aileen provided an insight into current developments which are aimed at alleviating some of the strain, but interestingly these measures are supporting researchers to be allowed time away from teaching and some of these researchers are resistant to leaving their teaching commitments:

within our own school we have created this document that is to encourage researchers so they can actually take time out ... and say 'Look I want to write a proposal' or 'write a book chapter' ...it's aligned with the research action plan of the institute but at a school level we are trying to say 'listen we'll give you the time', now what we see the problem is, is that the people who are really good researchers don't want to walk away from their lecture courses because they really like teaching as well. [Aileen]

This comment also highlights the potential priorities of the institution in terms of having a research action plan; there was no corresponding teaching action plan. Aileen acknowledged the restrictive nature of the timetable and heavy teaching loads and offered that these structural constructs may need to be reviewed when planning for university status:

I can see like moving to the TU for Dublin I can see this whole ... stringent 18, 20 hour timetable. I think the whole model has to go because it's just suffocating any kind of innovation [Aileen]

Another structural factor which inhibited innovation and the development of projects was that lecturers may not be teaching the same modules every year. One lecturer recounted learning a lot from an innovation he tried as part of his practitioner research project within the Diploma, but was not continuing the project as he was not timetabled to teach that module the following year. This sense of putting time and effort into developing their

teaching and supporting student learning was also noted by Robert, the Head of School when he relayed a conversation with a new colleague:

They put the time into it. So, that's what I was saying with my new colleague... she just put so much time in. She said, "There's an awful lot of work to get the lectures ready". It is a lot of work. You try and get people to do the same thing the next year, if at all possible, so that they can build on that. [Robert]

When I asked about the issue of some lecturers being moved from modules, he agreed:

Yes. We try not to do that, but you have to sometimes. No choice. [Robert]

Overall, the issue of the heavy teaching loads of up to 20 hours a week was highlighted by many as a challenge to achieving and maintaining quality in the teaching and learning experience, as well as allowing any time for engaging in professional learning in relation to teaching. One assistant head of school suggested using the same model of allowing hours from the scheduled teaching load to this development and professional learning:

But I do think that we really need to look at the skill set, the teaching skill set of those that have been in the system for a while. And I don't know what incentive would need to be given, but at least the same hours allowance. [Nuala]

There were also indications of a lack of space and time to reflect on current teaching practices. This sense of space seemed to be based on physical space as well as head space:

Teaching all these extra hours and everyone is worn out at the end of it and you don't have enough time to reflect on it, new, innovative methods of teaching and learning for the students or just reflect on what went wrong and what was right, etc. [Dermot]

Three interviewees specifically referred to the open plan structures within offices in relation to limiting their capacity to engage in professional learning or activities relating to their teaching. These three interviewees were now in office areas designed for up to 20 lecturers. One specifically related this to mitigating against engaging in online teaching due to the noise level where another described the environment limiting their capacity to engage in any area of their practice:

The open plan office is a disaster. ... If I want to go and do some quiet work by myself I can't do it in there... it's not conducive to any teaching and learning...if you want to get anything done you have to go away and work at home ... so you pull yourself out of the environment and it's just wrong, it's wrong. I think the Dean of our College knows that it's wrong because he has to work in one as well and he can't make a phone call. [Conor]

This was reiterated by another interviewee who referred to trying to engage in informal learning and also research:

And the layout, this new configuration actually creates barriers to research and to this type of learning and I know I speak on behalf of my colleagues. [Nuala]

Jason also highlighted the lack of social spaces across the campus for lecturers to engage in informal learning over a coffee or lunch.

5.4.1.1 Policies and Documentation including Contracts for new lecturers, Promotion, PMDS, grade titles and quality assurance

Another sub-theme within the institutional structures related to institutional policies and documentation beyond the academic calendar and timetable, which included the policies, performance management system of PMDS, grade titles and quality assurance. There was only one reference to the institutional Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy which was commented on in the analysis of the theme of Discourse in section 5.2.

DIT introduced a policy in 2006 that all new lecturers must complete an accredited programme in teaching within their first two years and it is a condition of contract (Appendix A). At that time, the initial accredited programme was the postgraduate Certificate and then it became the Diploma in 2009. While there was not a specific question on this policy, there were 29 references to it by 11 interviewees.

Most of these interviewees applauded the existence of the policy, especially two assistant heads of school:

I think it's a very positive recommendation and I think it's something DIT has done really well on in terms of leading the charge on that in making it a requirement... obviously the contractual piece in place that everyone is expected to actually have done and you know sometimes that helps because if you leave it completely up to people there's always something else to do. ... people are busy, they are carrying heavy workloads but I have actually seen a lot of people... actually really looking forward to getting involved. [Jason]

One commented on it in relation to all staff:

I would also think it's highly advisable for *all* [emphasis] staff and so far there hasn't been an institutional push in that regard. ...I would suggest that if there would be a directed email to say that staff that have not had the opportunity of doing this should consider it in the next year or two years. And that those who have done such courses in the past should be offered a refresher, again, with hours' allowances. [Nuala]

The suggestion of a 'refresher' is consistent with the concept of continuing professional development. While Nuala does not specify who should send the 'directed email', it may be insinuated that it would come from management.

This potential management drive to prompt professional learning is reiterated by another assistant head of school who intends to encourage all her colleagues to engage in an accredited programme or module, and she expresses the expectation of resistance:

I'm going gently at first, yeah, I imagine I will meet a lot of resistance because why would they bother. They've already got their full-time jobs for life. Yeah, happy with the day job, so I will meet resistance but I go in gently [Roisin]

However, Robert, as Head of School, did not believe that all staff should need to complete an extensive programme such as the Diploma which is run over one academic year. He suggested that lecturers could complete a shorter module initially:

The fact that someone could spend 20 years here and never go to anything is a cause for concern, from my point of view. I wouldn't be as big a fan as the DIT policy of making everybody to do the postgrad Dip. To be honest, I wouldn't be in favour of that. I think that's a bit of overkill. But, there are some nice short courses – the short version for example that should be done very early on for everybody, and if that could be counted as credits towards a further qualification that people wanted to continue with in their own bat, let them off. [Robert]

The completion of a module as opposed to a whole Diploma programme was also suggested by one of the lecturers.

There was also extensive discussion on the policy relating to promotion from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer scale. There were 33 references to this issue by 15 interviewees. Some commented that to progress further to senior Lecturer level that teaching was not referred to in the criteria. One Assistant Head of School emphasised the benefit of engaging in educational research as part of the programmes:

a lot of people I have seen in order to even progress from AL to L scale, which I think is appalling asking them to do it just to get over that barrier ... are going to be looking at educational research and doing their MAs and doing... the educational research in their discipline. I think that's quite nice because now it means that there will be added value in their practice and in their current role [Aileen]

One lecturer referred to greater recognition of teaching within promotional opportunities in response to the dream question which was seeking insights into *'if you could change one thing'*:

professional recognition in terms of career development because ultimately that is going to be the main motivator. So if we really want people to engage with this and demonstrate that they are reflective practitioners, some element of their CV ... must have an indicator of how they have been a professional educator and that needs to be part of progression in terms of being promoted or whatever, so I think institutional recognition of teaching as a promotional criteria is probably what I would love. [Scott]

When discussing potential policies for CPD, Robert noted that the model of CPD in terms of recording hours and participation may not support real engagement in professional learning:

it's the ongoing bit I think that is the next bit...and do you make people go to CPD, and we're all going to record it. In which case, you get people "turning up" rather than engaging [Robert]

The use of the performance management development system (PMDS) was referred to by some interviewees in various contexts. The Head of School and two of the Assistant Heads of School referred to their use of the PMDS process to engage with lecturers on a one-to-one basis to discuss professional learning, with one noting it as the Personal Development Planning 'PDP' meeting:

Through PMDS you'd suggest things to people to do stuff like that. I have a mix of [main discipline and other allied disciplines] three kind of groups. In general, the [role relating to main discipline] would be quite cognisant of professional development and teaching, because [main discipline] itself is seen as quite difficult to teach. So, therefore, a lot of them have done postgrad Dip, or a lot of them have been at the conference thing, or whatever. [Robert]

And it would also come through in things like the PDP meetings where we'd have the one to one meeting with the staff every year or every two years, and then they would talk about things they've learnt on the programme and I would ask them what was interesting, what was challenging, what did they try out and how did it work out. So, I would find that very useful to stimulate my own thinking as well. [Nuala]

there's been a big kick off this year, it's very much in the fore, everybody has to have their PMDS so it's definitely happened. [Roisin]

Two lecturers spoke of their experiences participating in the PMDS process with one intimating that they find the process useful as it is an opportunity to consider professional

learning, while another highlighted that their School has only conducted it once and there is a lack of follow through on the process:

I mean I did my PMDS with my Head of School and I think that's one of the things I vocalised that I need something on that level, probably on at least a semi-formal basis. I mean it doesn't need accreditation but I think I need to spend something like the time I spent with you on the module. I need something like that. So I am looking around for something like that. [Brian]

now this PMDS thing is hopefully a yearly thing. We have just done the first one ever on our School and the problem is that I acknowledge that management are all very busy as well and I never got back the final form from the interview I did with my line manager last November...so they have to get on top of all that. [Dermot]

5.4.1.2 Grade Titles

In relation to grade titles, there were specific references to being an assistant lecturer and the implication that the title suggested a junior position and there were four references to the low salary associated with this starting grade. Two lecturers articulated their sense of being a junior colleague and associating this with the grade title:

I wasn't prepared to keep doing it without the support of both the management and of other colleagues. It's too trying and it was always me that was pushing it and I am a mere assistant lecturer. [Dermot]

We have people, I have colleagues here who have worked in industries for...15, 20 years, maybe more, when they come in to work here as a lecturer and they come in as assistant lecturers, I mean how demeaning is that. These people are experts in what they do, they are highly skilled people, they are highly knowledgeable, they mightn't have their PhD done yet but they have got really good industry skills. What are you doing putting them on €30,000 and calling them an assistant lecturer, you know, who are they assisting...it's ridiculous. [Conor]

Conor added to this, with an insight into his own professional expertise working in an international organisation which he feels is not recognised by the institution. Within his account of this, he clearly articulates the institution as 'they' and 'the inside' and he also expresses his anger at this situation:

I was even working as a consultant for [an international organisation] at one point...that's on my CV, nobody takes that into account here. ... when I go and I present my CV to the outside to bring research money in that's what gets used but on the inside nobody gives me any credit for, you know, the 40 or 50 research projects I worked on before I got here. Anyway don't get my blood boiling [Conor]

This sense of their professional expertise and experience not being valued is also articulated by an Assistant Head of School who said that despite having a very senior

position in industry started at the “bottom, of the bottom, of the bottom” (Roisin). She also expressed her astonishment at the grades which some colleagues were on:

if I'm very honest, I'm shocked at some people and what grades they are and it appears that they've been made a specific grade because of a, I'm not going say a fluke, but they've got to where they are, not necessarily through a difficult competition or training programme or anything like that, it's more sit and wait and you'll get there eventually, so ... that's my impression anyway. [Roisin]

5.4.1.3 Quality Assurance

Within the sub-theme of quality assurance there were 27 references to it from nine sources. While the quality assurance procedures and policies are used nationally in HEIs, there were referred to and analysed as institutional constructs. Two lecturers specifically referred to their professional learning in terms of being involved in reviews as an external examiner. Two interviewees indicated the potential for learning from external examiners who highlight the high quality of teaching, which may not be recognised by others within the institution:

But it also comes through in the externs reports, that the teaching is innovative and engaging [Nuala]

However, a lecturer conveyed his dismay that the external examiner reports are not used to their full potential for learning, or acknowledgement of effort:

I think that would boost morale in a sense of 'yeah actually do you know what...there is learning'... And when we have an external examiners report it's actually read, it's actually looked at, we action it and we say 'okay ... how will we respond?' But external examiner reports are never read...never read into the group to say 'well done, this is interesting...'. So it suits everybody that nobody reads it ...kind of drift into ... mediocrity, it suits everybody because it's the safest place to be. [Kenny]

Six interviewees referred specifically to the quality assurance procedure of gathering student feedback (Q6A forms and Q5 as outlined in Appendix A) with two noting how they review the feedback and get affirmation from it or address issues. Another, as programme chair, collates the feedback into the Q5 form to use as a reporting tool while the Q6A forms from the students stay with the lecturer who can use them to reflect on any potential areas for development:

Because I get great feedback from students. So competency from me is - are the students learning anything and are they enjoying it so that's all about feedback I think. [Roisin]

No I do feel competent, I feel I'm a good teacher... I do the Q6 forms and I address them, I reflect as best when I can. [Dermot]

if we take the QA seriously, you're taking note of student feedback and trying to incorporate it. I'm the course chair myself...this time of year we'd be preparing the Q5 forms which is the overall feedback from a course, so that really should go back then at the first programme meeting in September, but at that stage it has become fairly ...maybe bland because it's just an overall, so I think that really the Q6A forms which lecturers themselves get are the ones where the soul searching should happen in terms of 'I've found that was far too rushed' or 'I found that I really didn't' ... and that only stays...with the lecturers. It's up to the lecturer, and maybe that's as it should be, it has to be kind of self-ownership of the feedback. [Mary]

Other aspects of the quality assurance policies and procedures such as School reviews and Programmatic reviews were also referred to by some interviewees. There were two notable insights into aspects of quality assurance which clearly indicated that there are many opportunities for development and action in relation to these which are currently not been used. An excerpt from one of these examples is:

I think in some way if we implemented some of the procedures that we have on paper which are actually good, like quality assurance ... you [would] begin to use that as the mechanism to even just analyse marks, look at trends, you know, use data to begin to feedback. So simple things ... it could be the learning of the institution so for instance appeals ... reviewing examination boards ... so many different student handbooks ... So when you are teaching and you don't actually do any of the Q6s or quality assurance and nothing happens and the reason nothing happens is nobody cares. [Kenny]

The other lecturer articulated that he felt that current quality assurance procedures for the development of programmes do not really push for an implementation of student-centred learning:

The quality assurance process, the DIT kind of strategic aims and objectives would reflect that. The quality assurance process however, you know, programmes could be validated without necessarily having a very student centred philosophy. So I would think that the requirement end of things through quality assurance is something the institution could think about in order to ensure that ongoing development and improvement of teaching is happening. So I'm interpreting improvement of teaching as I move towards student centred learning. [Stephen]

However, this lecturer, Stephen, noted how he instigated a review at programme level to explore the introduction of specific strategy across the programme rather than in just one module and he involved his colleagues in this. Another lecturer also conveyed his excitement of engaging in the process of developing a new module and programme and the informal learning associated with that process. He was looking forward to experiencing the validation process for the programme associated with the quality assurance procedures:

It will be a test of our QA system, our quality assurance system whether we can actually cope with something like this going on. I am really, really excited about that. I have learned a lot just in that, just from kind of putting that module together and that's an intangible thing. ... I think there is a lot of learning that goes on in stuff like that, you know, where you are actually pulling from a colleague's perceptions of what the content is about and you are trying to kind of converse with that with your own kind of ideas. [Conor]

5.4.1.4 Committees at various levels: Institutional, College, School and Programme

Another sub-theme which emerged which was not related to any specific question was the institutional construct of committees which were articulated as being an effective means of identifying and supporting change at various levels. The range of levels of these committees were from the institutional Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee which is chaired by the LTTC and other committees more local to the interviewees in terms of their Colleges, Schools and programmes. There were indications that many of the interviewees were active within these committees based on their roles as Head of School or Assistant Head of School or enthusiastic lecturers who sought out opportunities. One lecturer fits this enthusiastic category as she outlines her participation in a range of committees:

I am a member of the Learning and Teaching, the Institute Learning and Teaching Strategy Committee and the equivalent College Committee...I am also chair of a School based committee which ... has not been overly effective yet but I am hoping after the School Review I am going to get a bit more buy in from management. We can start making some really good changes in the ...curricula... in the School [Claire]

Another presents her involvement as a programme chair but related the potential for learning from these in a general sense:

programme committees that are quite active in our department, ... in reviewing a programme we would discuss assessments and you would certainly get good ideas about maybe alternative ways of assessment or somebody might say that they got very good kind of feedback from students, you also get feedback through your QA system and I think where these are meaningful, you are reflecting on them, both individually and collaboratively and trying to do something different perhaps every year, that's the idea anyway. [Mary]

Overall, there seems to be a high level of influence of institutional structures on the day-to-day activity of teaching and also professional learning in relation to it. The heavy workloads as dictated by the significant number of teaching hours of 20 hours for assistant lecturers has a substantial impact on teaching activity and the opportunities for professional learning. However, there were also indications that other institutional factors had a bearing

on the day-to-day activities of lecturers:

I think what is really distracting us here from our normal work of pedagogy and teaching and learning is the TU for Dublin and then before that the College restructuring and then the big move over to [another campus area] for us so, you know, that was very distracting. Now it's TU for Dublin and the merger and it's so distracting to the management. [Dermot]

5.4.1.5 Incentives including Teaching Awards and Fellowships

Apart from allocating more time to professional learning, six interviewees referred to other incentives to support professional learning and teaching development. There was reference to teaching awards and other forms of recognition, especially when responding to the question on how institutions can support ongoing development and improvement. An assistant head of school referred to individual managers recognising and acknowledging excellence in teaching and suggested Institutional level awards in addition to the College teaching awards:

I think maybe more just of an emphasis on it...Where there is a high emphasis on teaching, that we would have more around awards to recognise...excellence in teaching and learning and that would be quite a significant thing...Sometimes people probably think "you know I can go to the bother of doing all of these things but who cares really at the end of the day". So I think that comes down to individual managers as well have to recognise those things...You often see on staff CVs from elsewhere, where they've won a particular award from their Institution to recognise their performance.. I think those things are important...I think recognition...really talking about at the end of the day is motivation. [Jason]

The perceived lack of incentives and recognition of excellent teaching publicly was also noted by a relatively new lecturer:

You don't really see people up on the screen in DIT for being a great teacher [Sandra]

Teaching Fellowships were referred to by three lecturers who have received them and are now supporting others to avail of the funding to engage in teaching and learning projects. Claire referred to Teaching Fellowships in terms of supporting others within her School to get involved in teaching innovation projects, and wondered about the perception of their motives which may be seen as focusing solely on the financial benefits:

there's been loads now of Teaching Fellowships coming out of our School because often me or [colleague] might say to people, 'would you think about maybe, doing that' or our names appear second or third and its very much about trying to bring more people into the field and I'm not sure if that is recognised. I am sure it's like 'oh there is Claire and [colleague] trying to get more funding' but it is not, it is genuinely ... to bring more people into...'would you think about a teaching fellowship?' [Claire]

5.4.2 National structural constructs

This sub-theme includes the two national level constructs of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 / Hunt Report, (DES, 2011), and the Professional Development Framework (National Forum, 2016). There were specific questions based on both of these and this is reflected in the level of discussion around them in the interviews.

5.4.2.1 National Strategy

There were 54 references to the specific recommendation relating to qualifications and ongoing professional development within the Hunt Report as noted in Section 1.1. (p.11). All interviewees were in agreement with the sentiment of the recommendation. One interviewee indicated that she felt that it may be more applicable to the university sector as opposed to the IoT sector in terms of teaching qualifications and professional learning:

I think it's quite useful I think for people nowadays in higher education and it's probably more relevant in the university sector from what I've heard anecdotally but I think we do need to upskill in our teaching and learning strategies and just to, you know, just to go in and preach to the masses isn't really what I would consider lecturing anymore. [Aileen]

There were many who expressed that it is surprising that the need for a qualification had not been previously identified, with two specifically comparing other sectors such as healthcare. One example of this is:

I mean you would say that all nursing staff should be qualified and competent in nursing, ...it's a strange situation that on your first day, as a lecturer, that it's quite possible you've never taught anything before in your life and you're standing up there in a teaching role [Sandra]

While this participant agreed with the recommendation, she emphasised the need to really support the associated learning:

However, it hasn't always been my experience that there's the space and time to support that within the workplace, you are really expected to hit the ground running. [Sandra]

She also warned against the policy being a once-off tick box:

I think that being qualified and competent is an ongoing process and I think you very quickly become unqualified if you don't continue to work on that and develop that. [Sandra]

There were also expressions of scepticism in terms of the practicalities of implementation. This was highlighted by Conor and by Scott, the latter of whom remarked:

The concern then is with the competent or competency aspect is on a policy point of view or, a kind of implementation point of view how that's actually measured. I mean, we can get somebody to do a course and they can be qualified as a result of that course but then the actual competence... like I say I'm a good lecturer but how is that going to be actually assessed by my institution. That's maybe where it gets more difficult. [Scott]

Another emphasised that he would have aspired to engage in professional learning and did not need the recommendation from a national policy.

Two lecturers disagreed with the language used within the recommendation with both highlighting the tone of compliance. One noted that the real change is not in terms of competency and skills but attitude, and not just at an individual level but across the institution:

So you can have all the competencies and all the qualifications but if the behaviour or the attitude of the institute or department is wrong it's pointless...it's the environment so it doesn't capture the environment so the danger is that it becomes a check box 'yes all our staff have done this course, this, this' and they've done it because they were forced. [Kenny]

Another interviewee was stronger in his comments:

I think the Hunt Report was envisaged, a particularly obnoxious view of education. So I think separating teaching from academic and learning generally ...em, I think the kind of, the idea that higher institutions are capable of ensuring, if they alienate staff in the way that they are alienating staff, is a completely instrumental view of handling people...So on the face of it, of course ok. But when you look at the language a little closer ...and then if you look at the whole Hunt Report, you know it's very depressing, the lack of thinking on the policy level. [Brian]

Participants were asked if they felt qualified and competent and all agreed. I probed further for their sense of evidence for this and many referred to student feedback, self-awareness and engaging in scholarship on their teaching activity:

I mean I would and my evidence to support that would be based upon the formal qualifications I've achieved and the research I've done on learning and teaching. [Stephen]

I think I would, to be fair. I, by choice, did the postgrad Dip, and went on to do other stuff. I keep up with my profession. I do research to keep up with the theory in the area that I teach. I have papers in draft for teaching and learning publications. I would try and... I would also go to CPD events that the LTTC here would run. [Robert]

Others also emphasised that they also felt confident based on either their experience of participating in an accredited programme or based on their years of practice:

I suppose to have competence and maybe a confidence in implementing what would be considered good practice in what are called research-based instructional strategies...I have the PG Diploma ... and I feel having come out of that, that core idea of being a reflective practitioner is sort of the number one learning outcome and as a result of that I feel qualified to teach...I think competency comes out there as well ... because competency, I think, relies, or is intertwined with confidence...I don't know whether it's because of the course or whether it's because I'm teaching for ten years whether I feel that but certainly now I am confident in that when I go into a lecture or a lab and I teach, that I am competent [Scott]

This is an interesting point raised about the potential of the participation in an accredited programme with the associated qualification being instrumental in building confidence in teaching practice. It also indicates that the assessment of the programme was not based on demonstrating competence in teaching, but on being a reflective practitioner.

5.4.2.2 Professional Frameworks

Analysis of the interview data revealed some valuable insights into frameworks and models to support professional learning. I noted the development of the Professional Development Framework for teaching in higher education by the National Forum within the interviews. Earlier in section 5.2., I discussed the Framework in relation to Discourse and the sub-theme of the support for professional learning about teaching, and noted there was a lack of awareness among interviewees with three of the four Assistant Heads of School not aware of it. Here it is presented as a sub-theme of National structural constructs as the Framework was discussed as a tool to garner recognition for teaching:

I certainly can't see any harm in it. I mean it's giving an acknowledgement that wasn't possibly there before to those who make a substantial effort in that area. So that's obviously going to be a good thing...It certainly sounds like another step in giving the whole area a bit of recognition and importance which is good, which is great. [Stephen]

I suppose if it had the effect of enhancing the value of teaching, I think it could be useful. [Mary]

However, both of these interviewees also emphasised the need to focus professional development and learning at the practice level and especially at programme level. Stephen highlighted that changes in individual lecturer practices can only result in some extent of impact on student learning, and that it would be ideal to focus more on curriculum level changes.

Another interviewee was quite pessimistic at the suggestion of a professional framework to

support professional learning in relation to teaching:

you can have the framework but if the, if the environment...[shakes head]. It's just a waste of time. [Kenny]

The broader context was also referred to in these discussions on the proposed professional development framework. Some interviewees emphasised the importance of a framework being recognised by management and the Human Resources department for the purposes of promotion. This would suggest that the participants would use their participation in the framework as a tool to support promotion and progression within the institution.

You know if it's just another letter after your name or you know, does it have any gravitas with it...Would there be any point in doing it... But it would also be important that if you are looking for it to transfer to a new position or if you are looking for a promotion that this would...be valued from a management perspective as well and from the HR perspective as well [David]

I think it will encourage people to engage more in their own professional development because as they move roles, or even as they look for promotions in other roles, it will be something that they don't have that others have. [Jason]

Some of these immediate responses were related to promotional prospects as opposed to any potential value of that learning for practice in terms of improving student learning. The Head of School responded with reference to recruitment:

I think if it is used for supporting the development, yes. If it is used as a criteria to recruit, it could be a bit of a problem. [Robert]

Many of the interviewees engaged in continuing professional learning in relation to their disciplines. Such models have been considered in relation to the national Professional Development Framework at the consultation stages as members of the National Forum met with many representatives of the main professional bodies associated with disciplines. However, there were mixed perspectives from the interviewees on practices such as recording engagement in continuing professional learning. A number of interviewees referred to the approach of recording professional learning in terms of hours or accruing points.

Probably just a list of, you know, I think for people who are maybe not involved outside they think CPD is all paid courses and to make them aware that reading a journal article, one hour ... actually helping out in a local society or something is CPD for us if it's training in new skills like financial management or project management or meetings [Roisin]

However, there were those who did not agree with this model of recording or accruing hours of informal non-accredited professional learning. Robert stated that the model of

reaching a target of CPD hours was in his discipline, but had concerns on its application in relation to teaching:

It wouldn't be a bad policy that someone would have to attend at least one event every two years, or something like that... and do you make people go to CPD, and we're all going to record it. In which case, you get people "turning up" rather than engaging. [Robert]

This concern about focusing on the hours or attendance was reiterated by another role holder, who when asked if they thought that informal learning could be incorporated into a framework for professional development was quite dismissive:

I think if we're talking about accreditation for something that has evidence based and that is nationally recognised, so any modules of any value should be counted. Informal learning are part of the professional task and should be seen as part of the professional task without needing the incentive of accreditation. And I would think it's a very sad day if we only do what is being counted. [Nuala]

This statement also relates to their concept of being a professional as someone who engages in learning as part of their role and potentially commitment to the profession. Another interviewee had a different perspective on the potential of a reliance on the informal learning and felt that it was important that the individual would be supported in their professional learning by the institution or organisation:

I suppose the concern is that it just becomes another bureaucratic tool or whatever... if it is just another job that people have to do and there is no recognition ... that would be a little bit of my concern, in [subject areas] as well that it is a little bit in some ways maybe a copout for the [government organisation] or the agencies that, 'Oh, so we don't have to send our people on training because they can do a bit of reflective practice and they can read journals and that's their CPD covered you know', so.' [Sandra]

There was also discussion around evidencing professional learning, especially from informal and non-accredited learning experiences. Some noted that informal non-accredited learning could be incorporated into more formal and public learning in terms of research projects, conferences presentations and publications based on active scholarship. Some specifically referred to action research and project based learning. However, two interviewees emphasised that there needs to be a sense of evidence that the projects and associated learning took place and also that it is the public aspect which adds credibility. When one was asked did he think it would be possible or useful to map some non-formal and non-accredited learning to a framework, Stephen offered the following advice:

I think that that should be handled through publications at possibly conferences... there is certainly plenty of scope for fairly lightweight projects to be published and could easily address that non-formal, non-accredited quadrant. Otherwise it's possibly, what you've done is possibly just very, very introverted ...or it's hard to know whether someone has or hasn't done it. If it's published at a conference then at least it's getting people to write it up and to reflect on it and so on and to improve the quality of it. [Stephen]

There was another interesting angle on the model of gaining fellowship or accreditation such as in the UK HEA model, with one interviewee comparing it to the model used in their discipline. In his comments, he makes a comparison between a model of documenting participation that proves someone has achieved a certain standard or engaged in activities, and a goal driven model which is supported by another member of the professional community in the form of mentoring:

is a much more supportive approach than just filling out a form and you know see if it is good enough. [Scott]

This perspective may also link with the concept of being a professional, as a member of a community who is supported in their professional learning.

There were also other expectations of the potential Framework. Claire's comments on the Framework indicate that she envisages it as a catalogue of modules to choose from and also that she might become aware of something that she does not already know or engage in. There may be a sense here that she thinks that there are experts who will have a set of ideal learning opportunities or achievements and while she has created her own or completed existing modules, that she might be missing out on something that she is not yet aware of. She was at the introductory session on the draft models used in the early stage of the consultation phase in April 2015.

I am trying to think how it will benefit me ... that something would be laid out for you ... there are things out there that we are not aware off so you know for me to be able to maybe browse through like a catalogue of modules that I could do and think Jeez I never even thought of doing a module on that...At different levels maybe...the wheel kind of approach ...so that you are kind of growing up the way. [Claire]

She also highlighted the potential for the Framework to be a tool for promotion, as indicated by David earlier.

It would be nice to get a little bit more accreditation and hopefully something that I can then go and for an interview for a senior position and go 'Look I got this'. [Claire]

In addition to the proposed Framework, she also referred to using other documents such as the quality assurance procedures to prompt professional learning:

you know really that to me is very important in terms of you know if you have got staff who won't engage with their professional role as a lecturer. Then you need the documents there instead. You need to force it somehow you know [Claire]

This comment was made while referring to the work of the Head of Learning Development in relation to quality assurance and at curriculum level. This can also link with institutional and specifically curriculum level practice. Claire viewed the need to be changing practice, and how documents or frameworks are tools to prompt change at this level. This reiterates Stephen's point earlier in relation to the lack of impact on student learning if lecturers are only focused on changing their own classroom based practice in terms of specific strategies or activities. These points raise the issue of individual practice versus practice of the programme team to support student learning at the programme level.

One interviewee cautioned the use of a Framework in isolation and she framed this as a top down versus a bottom up approach:

But only in addition to all the other things that are happening and should continue to happen in relation to the CPDs and, you know, the work at programme board level and you know, the good sort of guidelines on designing forms and so on, for designing modules and so on.

Do you mean that it should incorporate that?

Well, what I mean is ultimately it's things that happen at the bottom are probably more important than anything that would be imposed in a top down way. And frameworks can look very grand and very impressive on paper, but it's actually the bottom up that happens. [Mary]

Overall, the institutional structural constructs such as the timetable and policies had a strong impact on how lecturers engaged in professional learning in relation to their teaching. One lecturer captured his aspiration for how the institute could best support ongoing professional learning to meet the national recommendation articulated in the Hunt Report, was to allow more time for professional learning and engage in research and scholarship. Within this excerpt he also conveys a sense that many colleagues feel demoralised:

The other way it can best support ongoing development and improvement is to reduce our teaching hours quite simply because that is having a huge impact on our ability to keep up and be qualified and competent in teaching and learning and that is really affecting us and it's affecting our ability to research which I think you become just some kind of, you become a robot and you are just doing the same stuff you did last year and just getting through that, is taking all your time and you are not having time to both reflect on that but also to research and renew things so that's the most difficult thing. In the summer you are just whacked and you are demoralised and there is terrible demoralisation in the School and across the institute I know from talking to loads of people so it's not hearsay, people tell me. [Dermot]

The influence of the community of colleagues and other communities is the focus of the last theme.

5.5 Influence of communities

Various communities had an influence on individual lecturers' decisions to engage in and continue professional learning in relation to their teaching. There were 219 references coded to the node of 'colleagues' within Nvivo making it the most coded node. There were also data extracts coded to other communities such as students and external colleagues in their disciplines. The findings presented demonstrate that there were indications that communities had both positive and negative influences on the individual lecturers interviewed, with some becoming more determined to pursue professional learning while others were deterred. Based on the diversity of the communities, there were six sub-themes or categories of communities identified:

- Peers within the programme
- Immediate colleagues in the department / school
- Senior management
- Students
- External colleagues in their discipline
- Other communities – LTTC; external

Some participants indicated being influenced by more than one community, as was the case with Scott:

There was an interest in the school in [*subject area*] education so because I was talking to those people it just generated an interest in me and also through the European network I was involved in ... so it was just a combination of local and network factors that I suppose got me interested in the idea of education as opposed to just going to lecture [*subject area*]. [Scott]

5.5.1 Peers within the programme

While there was not a direct question on the influence of co-participants or peers within the programme, the engagement with other lecturers within the programme-based

activities was referred to extensively. This corroborates the data given in the questionnaire as noted in Section 4.2.4.1 Learning from others. Data inputted revealed that lasting relationships were developed with some establishing their own communities of practice. Within the interviews, there were descriptions of how there were activities to support peer learning, such as group tasks and online learning groups, with one noting that within his cohort that they preferred to telephone or email each other.

Many interviewees conveyed their enjoyment of participating in the programme and learning from other lecturers, especially from other disciplines and in the structured activities such as micro-teaching and the observations, as well as in the social spaces, which is articulated in this example:

we had micro teaching as well and that was incredible and useful to see other people teach but I think what was also, which was as much as in any course is the space between lectures...at the cup of coffee, walking back from [venue] with colleagues from [another DIT campus] and I think meeting people in different disciplines and just sharing ... I felt excitement about the idea of actually being in a place that you could talk about teaching as opposed to complain about teaching. [Kenny]

The use of the term 'excitement' is striking and the overall description captures a sense of positive collegial exchange around teaching, both during and after the sessions. Another interviewee described how he observed other initially reluctant participants changing during the programme:

You are ...looking at how ... people are behaving when you are working in groups where I could see people transforming over that time as well. I think ... that was created by the people running the programme that people could, you know, learn from each other. You could see people changing over the course of the time as well as being conscious ourselves of how we were learning. [Conor]

He referred specifically to a conversation he had with one participant:

One guy who at the start I found him really intimidating actually, came up to me and said to me 'I want what you have'. I said 'What's that?' he said 'You are able to question people.' I said 'Well I just do that, you know...'. 'Yeah but you are able to question people and I just took whatever everybody said and I wrote it down and I took it as gospel, you don't do that, you ask questions. You were asking those guys questions and I want to be able to do that.' We did have a conversation and he was just kind of, he was brought up with the idea that education was about sitting in rows and the teacher telling you what to do and you just took it and you didn't question it in any way...I think there was a change process going on for that man just observing all of this... [Conor]

This evidences the significant impact of learning from others and in a profound way that prompted someone to reconsider their experiences of how they learnt in the past. It also

describes the potential transition from an orientation to professional learning based on compliance with policy, to engagement involving deep questioning about how we learn and ideally how we teach and support others' learning.

5.5.2 Immediate colleagues in the department / school

The references to the influence of immediate colleagues in a department or school were generally positive and encouraging of the interviewee engaging in professional learning with most referring to the accredited programme:

And I knew one or two other trusted colleagues who were doing it as well. All people who would be on a trajectory in their career and would be ambitious and I said 'D'ya know what that's something as a young member of staff, I should do, before I start teaching a huge amount more' [Jason]

Another assistant head of school provided an insight into the influence of a colleague in relation to her commencement of the programme when she was a lecturer and not a role holder. She also indicated that the level of participation in the programme was not strong in her department:

The person who suggested, who spoke glowingly about the course many years ago, was a lecturer in another department. So it was on her personal recommendation that I applied for the course. Because not many in my department were doing it at that time. And I think because I did it, I showed that it was still OK to do it, even if you were there a little while. And then of course the recommendation for all new people to do it came in as well. So that helped both ways. [Nuala]

However, there was also evidence that two lecturers felt that there were no role models in their School or department in relation to teaching. One relates her experience while teaching in another HEI, and she notes a sense of there being no colleagues to discuss teaching with or view as role models:

I suppose for me, when I worked in [another HEI] ... I didn't really feel that there were people around me that I could aspire to be or that I could learn from. I was really, my job was teaching, and like there was no emphasis I suppose for me on developing myself professionally [Sandra]

This is also stated more directly by David who indicated that his department was lacking role models or advisors in relation to teaching and that ironically he has become the person he was looking for:

I'm seen as the go to person in my department for all things teaching and learning and that was the person that I was looking for when I started - I needed, I was going 'Well who do I go to, to bounce ideas off? Who do I go to, to get advice and inspiration?' And at the time there was nobody there. So whatever, whether it was something that was behind my motivations to do it but I've become that person now and I'm happy in that role providing guidance and support to staff members - more senior than me in terms of years of teaching but they don't have the kind of the background that I have in terms of the qualification and the research in the teaching and learning area. [David]

His description of his sense of standing in this role, as an advisor is based on his qualification and scholarship. It is also noteworthy that both of these interviewees use similar terms associated with what they believe a role model should be in addition to them being knowledgeable but that they would provide "inspiration" (David) and "that I could aspire to be" (Sandra).

Robert recounted his experience of lecturers when being taught in another HEI, recalling varied experiences and the risk of developing an ad hoc teaching style based on these lecturers:

In [another HEI] – I did my undergrad in [another HEI] – I had a wide variety. I had from absolutely awful, to spectacularly wonderful. You then adapt your own teaching style out of some of that, the way you were taught. [Robert]

He then proceeded to indicate that within the programmes, participants may see the LTTC facilitators as the role models as they may experience their techniques as students and see what works and what doesn't:

You do model yourself on certain people that work well, and do well. ... You see what good things you do to get a class talking, and what kind of techniques and how slides work [Robert]

Another sub-group which was referred to within the community of immediate colleagues was a critical friend. There were two specific references to critical friends with both emphasising the value of having someone to discuss ideas with:

For me the best colleague I have is a critical colleague... Nine times out of ten the ideas you have are just not going to work. So you leave them on the clipping floor but there's that one idea that they go "That sounds really good I'd go ahead with it". You have that kind of boost straight away saying "Right, someone else thinks it's a good idea, I'm going to give this a shot". [David]

The influence of colleagues was also mentioned in the context of mentoring by four interviewees. Robert noted that though it occurred it was quite informal:

And I think we all do it to some extent at the school. And, the college has quite a good tradition of it...you'd have a chat with somebody about it [an issue] So it's kind of this informal, rather than formal. [Robert]

This sense of informal mentoring was also highlighted by Scott:

CPD maybe over formalises it but just offering approaches whereby somebody interested in a particular teaching strategy can work with somebody who knows about these things, either a mentor within the school or somebody in the learning centre in terms of working through that. So it's kind of an institutional support in that it costs money obviously for that time, that support. But it's not as formal as doing some qualifications [Scott]

He also referred to mentoring in relation to his chartership / professional learning and warned that a framework approach might be based on evidencing what you have done, whereas a mentored approach that he experienced was based on working towards goals.

Finally, there were two specific references to a cohort of colleagues as being a Community of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2000). They were based within the same broad discipline area and one created their own interest group focused on educational research and scholarship around teaching their discipline area. Aileen described it as beginning with two other colleagues:

We tried to include other people and what happened was I suppose we probably motivated the likes of [colleague from another School] to get into the whole educational research and he is, you know, again he is a champion now in the School I'm in now and [colleague from another School] as well, and [colleague from another School] would have helped out on piloting some of the resources that we developed in [subject] ...I suppose we would have included them on what was going to be our website but ... it never really happened...Rather than showcasing what we did, we were more about getting the projects done. [Aileen]

5.5.3 Senior management

Interviewees were asked to consider the influence of senior management and role holders on their engagement in professional learning and a few commented extensively on this. In contrast, some of the shortest answers in the interviews were in response to this question with many responding 'no' or 'none' for the influence from senior management or role holders.

Some interviewees indicated the influence of senior management in relation to other areas of discussion throughout the interviews. It was felt that senior management could encourage innovation and support ongoing development and improvement in teaching more. This was deemed to be important as Jason as an Assistant Head of School describes here with reference to other areas of discussion throughout the interviews:

I think maybe more just of an emphasis on it, you know. ... that we would have more around awards to recognise... excellence in teaching and learning and that would be quite a significant thing... So I think that comes down to individual managers as well have to recognise those things. But I think DIT – there should be Institutional awards... maybe there is but I don't know about them if there are? [Jason]

There were also discussions with interviewees who were not encouraged by their line managers or other colleagues in senior management. One interviewee expressed how they were initially discouraged from volunteering to participate in an accredited programme:

It's funny you know, I, I put myself forward to do that or suggested doing it very early in my career here, and I was told by my then, one of my line-managers at the time, that I didn't need to do it [Claire]

It was indicated that some management have identified that there are lecturers within their department or school, who may be associated with teaching that other colleagues can link up with. While this is positive, there may be an implication that these few lecturers will take care of teaching, that others do not need to engage in formal professional learning in teaching, and that management or individual lecturers themselves do not need to invest time and energy in it:

And now we would be considered within the School to be, kind of the 'go to' people in terms of if you want to, you know, from a management point of view, you know if any committee comes up, they'll nominate either myself or [colleague], or for anything in or around that area. [Claire]

This sentiment relating to management and individual lecturers driving professional learning is expressed by David:

Managers need to drive it from the top down but also staff need to realise themselves and from the bottom up approach as well [David]

Despite the importance of both groups pushing for professional learning, the reality seems fairly different:

it's a very hands-off approach in our school that if you want to do it they'll support you in doing it, but they're not cracking the whip or anything like that... Now maybe there's scope there for the management to be a little bit more heavy handed in saying in terms of the Hunt Report, we need to get everyone to have at least the CPD of 15 credits completed every year or something, I don't know something like that. Or even the Diploma maybe over the next two years. But from our school, the management don't have that kind of strategy in terms of the learning, the heads of learning development definitely yeah, ... where there has been a head of learning development have been very enthusiastic, have a very, a very good first point of contact I suppose. [David]

We haven't done it now last year. I wasn't prepared to keep doing it without the support of both the management and of other colleagues. It's too trying and it was always me that was pushing it and I am a mere assistant lecturer. [Dermot]

There is evidence that two assistant heads of school are encouraging their colleagues to participate in professional learning in relation to teaching:

I've started to identify people who have been in the staff for a long time and don't have the postgraduate diploma and starting to approach them to say 'would you think of doing it' ...And that's something I have to go gently with but that's where I would be steering everybody. [Roisin]

There was also an indication that there needed to be greater levels of communication within the institution with a specific reference to "more open communication with management" (Dermot).

5.5.4 Students

While there were 90 references coded to 'students', I was surprised that there were relatively few direct references to the impact of students on interviewees' professional learning. Apart from the references to learning from the feedback provided by students within the Q6A forms, there were some indications of learning about and from students more generally. For example, Aileen refers to this in relation to supporting a diverse student body and also refers to building lecturers' digital capacity:

if we are going to be more inclusive we have such a diverse range of students ... how we can be more flexible in what we do. I just think that some level of training needs to be embedded into our CPD to ensure that we are able. I can see it from looking at some of the higher education policy documents, I can see that a lot of the push is to upskill staff to cater for the needs of our students coming through with these digital skills that we don't necessarily have. [Aileen]

Claire highlights the need to consider the students when preparing your teaching as well as engaging with them in class; she emphasised that being student focused is within her core values as a lecturer:

you need to be very engaged with your students...you need to be responsive to them ... certainly to be mindful of your students, ...I think its ... unfair to your students, to not be in their world a little bit more... So that would be very important as well...I'd say that a lot of my values have come through there in terms of putting your students first I suppose and that is ultimately what your job is as a professional lecturer, is to develop your students and I think that a lot of people can spend a lot of time as a professional lecturer developing themselves. [Claire]

5.5.5 External Discipline based

There were references to professional learning through engagement in external discipline based activities relating to teaching. These activities ranged from discipline specific

education journals and education streams within conferences, to more informal groups interested in teaching of their discipline. Robert refers to a discipline based organisation that a group set up and indicates the rationale for it:

In the Irish [*discipline related organisation*], we had a 25 year anniversary a couple of years ago. Some of the old people had set it up 25 years ago were there. One of them was one of the best teachers I ever had. That was one of the reasons they set it up, to kind of share good practice. It is technically about research, but everybody... it's about networking and everybody learning from each other. [Robert]

He elaborates on their work at a national level and refers to collaborations with UK universities on topics of interest:

There is an [*main discipline*] education stream at the conference...There is an [*main discipline*] education journal – two of them actually – which are quite well ranked and it would be a quite good piece of research. I am doing some research at the moment with a colleague in the [*UK university*] on plagiarism ...So, there is quite a lot of that kind of research, and that would be disseminated at the conference...But [there's a] strong stream every year on [*main discipline*] education, so you get maybe ten papers or something like that. They would be well attended. [Robert]

When I probed for further insights into the origins of the education stream within the conference, he indicates that it was quite organic:

It just happened. A lot of people are doing research in it, so therefore there are papers. If it all stopped tomorrow, we'd probably scratch our heads and try and help to support it. But, we don't have to. In fact, there is a funding stream for it – the Chartered [*role relating to main discipline*] run what is called the Irish [*discipline education group*], and that funds the research into [*main discipline*] at third level. And second, but primarily third. So, for example, if I had a large project where I decided I needed financial support...I wanted to do a big qualitative type approach... I can apply to the Group and give them a research proposal. Chartered [*role relating to main discipline*] run that one. [*Professional Organisation*] will support, though not directly; [*Another Professional Organisation*] Ireland will actually have a call every year for a bursary of about 5000 euro that they disperse between third level institutions, to focus on [*main discipline*] issues– some research, but some [*main discipline*] education is acceptable. So there is quite a lot – [*main discipline*] is quite good at that. There is a lot of support for education and professional development. [Robert]

When I asked other interviewees about opportunities for informal professional learning within their disciplines, some referred only to discipline based knowledge. For example, Roisin noted that she organises discipline based events to which students are invited. However, there is no specific focus on teaching, as it more on discipline. Another lecturer relayed an account of his involvement in a European network.

I have been part of a team that applied for EU funding for a *[subject related topic]* a three year EU funded *[subject related topic]* research programme and it has three sub networks. ...There is *[subject related topic]* research, community participation and pedagogy so we are in the pedagogy strand so we are looking at the teaching of *[subject related topic]* as a discipline within *[subject related]* teaching. [Dermot]

Others were quite clear that they chose not to participate in professional learning in relation to teaching when I asked if they engaged in opportunities that would be non-accredited, formal or informal:

Not in relation to teaching because my focus is on keeping up with my research, as well as my interests, what I came into the job to do in the first instance. And I go to education conferences that deal with *[subject areas]*. I do not deliberately go to ones that deal with teaching at higher level. And at the moment I have no particular interest in doing that because the other area is so interesting it changes, *its* dynamic. And I want to keep up to speed with it. And as you note, my role has changed substantially, so I'm not dealing with the subject on a day to day basis, and I need to create other opportunities to keep up to speed with what's happening in that subject. [Nuala]

5.5.6 Other communities

The LTTC was deemed to be one of the main 'other' communities supporting and leading on professional learning in relation to teaching. There was not a sense that development and improvement of teaching would come from other areas within the institution apart from LTTC. Two of the assistant heads of school referred to the LTTC in relation to this and I perceived a sense that there was not an onus on them in their roles to support colleagues in relation to teaching development that this was left to the LTTC as a specialised unit:

LTTC is absolutely fantastic. I see that as the community of teaching us how to teach and I've been to loads of their courses, their lunchtime courses or whatever, never mind the more formal CPD type courses. Even basic stuff like Webcourses, that's excellent, really excellent. [Roisin]

Do you think the institution can support ongoing development and improvement of teaching? *[reading]* Yes it does, very much so, through the LTTC and staff training and development [Nuala]

I would also go to CPD events that the LTTC here would run... I find them very, very useful. I find them very, very helpful. They're well run in general. [Robert]

Where interviewees, who were lecturers, had benefited from the services and support of the LTTC, they were very keen to protect it:

Well, I say at every School meeting the best facility we have in DIT is the LTTC. Without them we'd be lost...we need to have their support [David]

There was one reference to the perception of the involvement of the LTTC as a community within School activities, as one interviewee noted that engagement with LTTC needed to be

appropriate, rather than in some way remedial:

and then when Teaching and Learning (the LTTC) have been brought in recently to the School they've been brought in like a fire brigade almost...Which I think is...actually putting them in an invidious position because it's a kind of problem solving where people in one way don't see that there is a problem so don't know why they are coming in and the other then is putting them (the LTTC) in a very difficult position because they are not integrated but coming in so it's like buying in a kind of you know consultants to tell us how to do it [Kenny]

There were references to other external communities which were linked with community projects which were based on areas of interest in the wider curriculum and also reflected some initiatives prioritised by the institution such as integrating more with the community around the new DIT Grangegorman campus. There is a strong institutional tradition of engaging with the wider communities around the DIT campuses and the move to a single campus in a redeveloped area of the city in Grangegorman is prompting more high profile engagement projects.

5.6 Summary: Key Findings from Interviews

The data gleaned from the sixteen interviews provided a diverse range of insights on the overall focus on professional learning relating to teaching. It also revealed many valuable perceptions of their experiences of working and learning within the institution and wider context of Irish HE.

- **Discourse:** There is a lack of shared discourse on professionalism in relation to teaching. There were insights into how teaching is compared to research as a professional activity. Despite this, there is evidence of engagement in professional learning, and striving for a sense of professionalism which is mostly based on individual pursuits and discourse in small groups of two to three. Some participants articulated a clearly their own sense of professionalism and were prompted to participate in professional learning after realising that there was a scholarship around teaching in HE that they were not aware of, to support student learning. Participation in the programme provided participants with a language to apply to their existing practice and also to support their engagement in further opportunities for professional learning
- **Orientations to Professional Learning:** There were two main orientations to professional learning articulated based on the position of oneself as pragmatic or proactive. These are not static and it was evident that some participants started off as pragmatic but became more proactive. Others strive to be more proactive but

feel constrained. Participation in an accredited programme supported continuing in professional learning, especially formal learning as the opportunities may be more obvious.

- **Structural constructs:** Institutional constructs such as the policies were instrumental in research participants initially engaging in formal professional learning. However, the structural constructs of the timetables and perceived lack of value attributed to developing teaching, impeded some participants in continuing to engage in professional learning.
 - Quality Assurance procedures could be used more to support learning for programmes teams rather than individual lecturers. Some lecturers were using formal structures such as meetings and documentation including strategy documents and quality assurance procedures to support professional learning and curriculum development, but this was initiated by them as individual lecturers, rather than being led by management.
 - Institutional constructs are currently more influential on professional learning than national constructs, but this may change if the National Professional Development Framework is embedded into institutional policy. Some participants discussed the potential of an institutional policy on CPD in terms of allowances of time.
- **Influence of Communities:** Research participants were impacted by explicit and implicit conversations and practices within their many communities.
 - The community of peers within the accredited programme had significant positive impact on participation, to the extent that some initially reluctant participants became more engaged and interested in professional learning around teaching. There were indications of authentic learning experiences through shared activities such as micro-teaching and observations as well as group tasks such as designing modules.
 - However, the immediate colleagues within the department had a longer term influence on continuing engagement in professional learning activities, with some positive examples of some now being perceived as role models or 'go to' people, but others felt they lacked support or respect from immediate colleagues for their interest in teaching.
 - Management were generally perceived as not valuing teaching or professional learning associated with it.

- However, the insights from the five role holders in management conveyed a sense of both informally and formally supporting colleagues to engage in professional learning however, this was not experienced by many of the lecturers interviewed.
- External discipline based communities had a strong and supportive influence on some proactive research participants who continued professional learning through scholarship through funded projects and discipline specific conferences and journals. These disciplinary networks prompted an investment in time and energy into professional activity, which many research participants seemed to prioritise. These external discipline communities were stronger than the internal discipline communities.
- Students and the LTTC were evidenced as being influencers on some participants' professional learning through the use of student feedback mechanisms and engagement in activities and learning opportunities offered by the LTTC.

Overall, there were clear indications that while the orientations to professional learning based on the lecturer as an individual were important, the influence of contextual factors such as institutional policy, timetables and colleagues in departments and management, and disciplinary networks were key determinants in continuing to engage in learning about teaching. These contextual factors are accounted for within the holistic framework of activity theory which was applied during the final stage of data analysis and are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 Findings: Activity Systems

6.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3), activity theory is a holistic, sociocultural and practice-based approach which can be used to analyse work environments and practices (Foot, 2014). It was applied to the thematic analysis of the data gleaned from this case study. The data analysis strategy using the activity theory framework was outlined in Chapter 3 (Section 3.7.3) and highlights that analysis based on the system in which the activity takes place, encompasses many aspects of the context and facilitates valuable insights into rich data following thematic analysis. The activity, which is the focus of this research, is lecturers' professional learning in relation to teaching in HE. As an educational developer and researcher, I used activity theory as a tool for analysis of the data on lecturers' professional learning at the institutional level or plane (Rogoff, 1995). The activity system perspective enabled me to consider the institutional context at the meso level as illustrated in Figure 2.1, which included the institutional policies, structural constructs such as timetables and the various communities in the form of departments and schools. However, using the activity system as a framework, I could appreciate the influence of macro level structures and learning spaces which the research participants had referred to such as national or international disciplinary networks (Figure 2.1).

The modelling of the activity systems was initiated during the thematic analysis which emerged from the questionnaires and interviews. The responses from the individual lecturers were considered but the focus of this level of analysis is based on the activity systems level, and so required a step back to view the lecturers as a collective. Drawing the activity systems from an extensive data set is an analytical dilemma (Fanghanel, 2004; Frambach et al., 2014; Yamagata-Lynch, 2007). However, the systematic approach to thematic data analysis of the questionnaires and interviews along with my perspective as an educational developer enabled me to commence "parsing the data set into units of bounded systems" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p.26).

There were two contexts for the activity systems of professional learning:

- learning within an accredited programme (6.2), and
- learning beyond an accredited programme (6.3).

Within each of these two contexts, there were two activity systems based on the different Objects (motives) of the Subjects (the research participants). The modelling process of the

activity systems involved plotting the analysis of the data in terms of each of the six components of Engeström's extended activity theory (2001). The subjects in each of these four activity systems are the research participants who are graduates from an initial accredited programme. However, their profiles differ based on their motives or Objects which relate to the orientations to professional learning identified in Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews, Section 5.3. There were differences in the Object for participation in the programme and in continuing with professional learning beyond the programme. Determining the Object is one of the most difficult aspects of modelling activity systems (Yamagata-Lynch, 2007; Wells & Edwards, 2014). As the Object motivates the activity (Engeström, 2001), four separate activity systems have been modelled reflecting the different Subjects and their intentions or Objects which the participants reported in the questionnaires and interviews. The different objects within the activity system of the learning within the programme were identified within the analysis of the questionnaires (Section 4.5) and in the interviews as orientations to professional learning (Section 5.3.2: Being Proactive and Being Pragmatic. These two orientations were interpreted as different objects and modelled as to improve teaching practice to support students' learning (Figure 6.1) and the alternate Object to comply with rules and institutional policy (Figure 6.2).

There were contradictions noted within and between components. As noted in Chapter 3, (Section 3.3), most of these contradictions are described as primary and secondary contradictions (Engeström, 1987). The primary contradictions are depicted using a circular arrow within the component and the secondary contradictions between two components are represented by a 'lightning bolt' symbol. While the contradictions are noted separately in a textbox below the six components of each model, the discussion of these is integrated into the analysis of each of the relevant components. The following sections present and explain the modelling of the four activity systems of professional learning.

6.2 Analysis of Professional Learning / within the Programme

My analysis of this activity setting of the lecturers' professional learning within the initial accredited programme was based on data from both the questionnaires and the interviews. A key question within the questionnaire sought respondents' rationale for their participation in an initial programme. As discussed in the analysis of the questionnaire (Section 4.5), responses to Question 11 highlighted the two principal reasons for participation were based on lecturers' motives which were expressed as their own commitment to professional learning for themselves and their students, while another

motive was compliance with policy. These themes and categorisation of reasons were also evident within the interviews and analysis resulted in a differentiation of orientations to professional learning as Being pragmatic (Section 5.3.1) and Being proactive (Section 5.3.2). When this data was considered in the context of the activity system, the participants' profiles are associated with the Subjects and their motives are the Objects.

6.2.1 Activity System 1

The first activity system is based on the Object of improving teaching practice and associated with Subjects being proactive and is illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

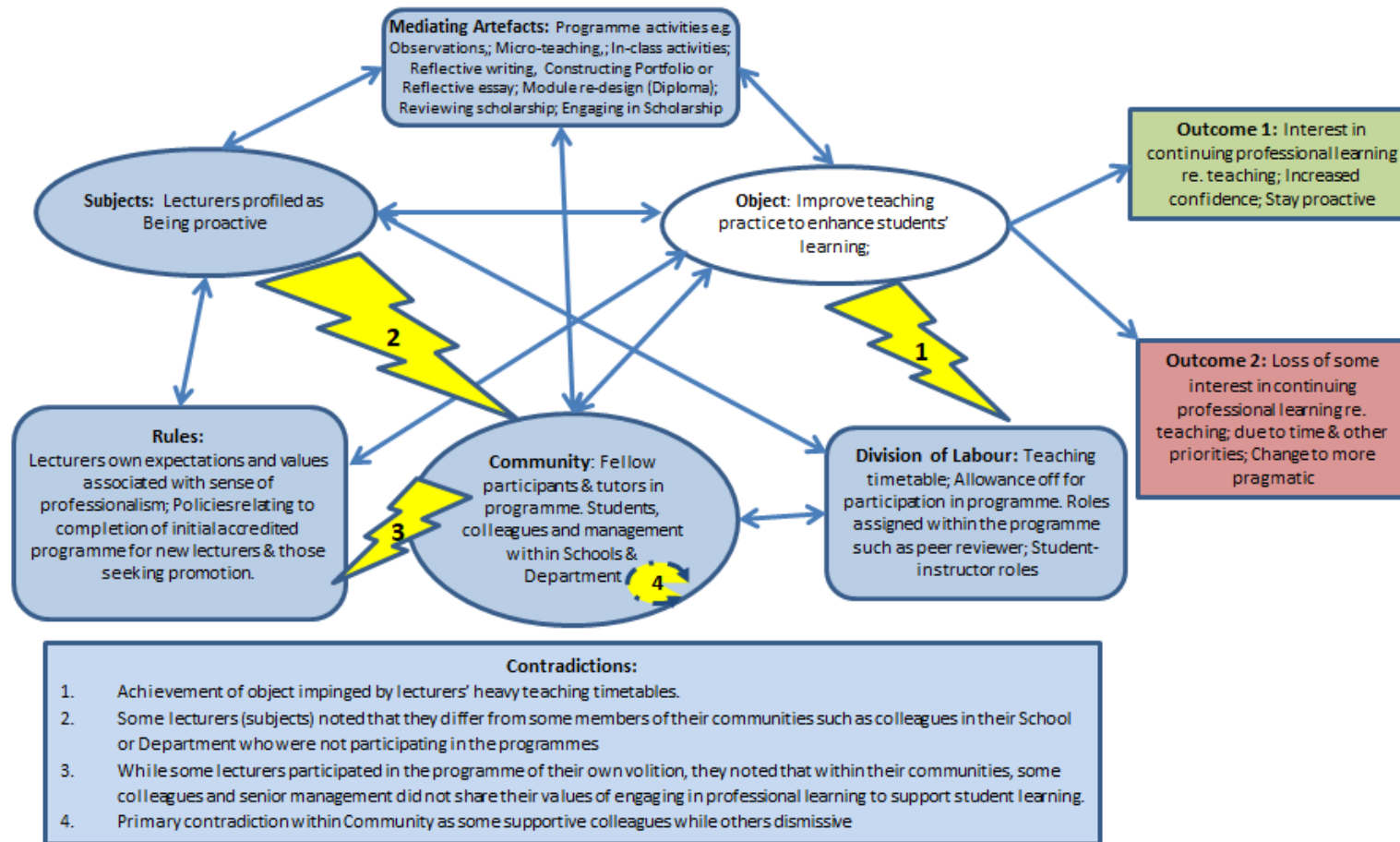


Figure 6:1 Activity System 1 based on Object of improving teaching practice

This activity system (Figure 6.1) comprises of the six components within the activity theory framework (Engeström, 2001) and four contradictions.

Subjects

The Subjects within this activity system are the research participants as lecturers who are graduates of an accredited programme. They indicated that their reasons for participating in the programme in Question 11 (Appendix E) were related to wanting to learn about teaching in order to improve their practice and to enhance student learning. This can be linked with the theme of Orientation to professional learning: *being proactive* as identified from the analysis of the interviews (Section 5.3.2). However, there was a Contradiction (2) evident between Subject and Community. While these Subjects engaged in the accredited programme to improve their teaching, some met resistance from their Community, with some noting that their line managers did not see any value in participating (Section 5.3.5). There was also evidence within the questionnaires that some lecturers participated in the initial programme due to recommendations from other colleagues, so their Community prompted them to engage in professional learning.

Object

This activity system is based on the Subjects' motives or Object as engagement in professional learning to improve teaching activities and generate innovative strategies in classroom based practice and broader curricular activities to enhance their students' learning. This relates directly to one of the key research questions of why lecturers engage in professional learning.

Mediating artefacts

The Mediating Artefacts in this activity system were tools and strategies used by the Subjects to support their learning with the accredited programme. This relates directly to one of the key research question of how lecturers engage in professional learning. The Mediating Artefacts were referred to by the research participants in the questionnaires (Section 4.5) and within the interviews and relate directly to the research question on how lecturers engage in professional learning. Examples provided by participants included micro-teaching, peer and tutor observations, in-class active learning strategies and discussions as well as engaging in scholarship themselves or reviewing others' scholarship. Reflective writing on teaching activities & drafting their Teaching Philosophy statement was noted by some in addition to the completion of assessment tasks such as the Module Re-design and Portfolio within the Diploma and reflective essay in the CPD module.

Rules

The Rules component was complex. Rules encompass documented policies, as well as norms and values which are often more implicit than explicit (Fanghanel, 2004) as discussed in Section 3.3.5. In this Activity System (Figure 6.1), the participants' own sets of values and expectations were more prominent than policies. Some research participants noted that they had completed a programme prior to it being a policy requirement. Two noted that they paid for the programme themselves, as they were part-time and could not avail of the institutional fee-waiver available to full-time lecturers. They identified their own key values or rules, as professional knowledge and confident practice in relation to teaching. Thus, they wanted to engage in professional learning to support these (Section 5.2.2).

However, there were contradictions between participants' own rules (values) and those of their communities (Contradiction 3, Figure 6.1). This contradiction impacted on some participants' attainment of their Object of improving their teaching. For example, one lecturer noted that he would like to continue his practitioner research project which he developed as part of the programme, but he did not have the support from colleagues or management. He described himself as a "mere assistant lecturer" [Dermot] which also indicates that the rule relating to his role title impacts on his sense of agency and control over his own work.

Division of Labour

The Division of Labour is a key component in this research context since heavy teaching schedules and associated timetables are a feature in the IoT sector. Time given to teaching competes with time for research and other activities in this particular institution. While some lecturers were allowed the time off their teaching timetables to participate in the accredited programme, others were not and had to participate in their own time.

Some part-time lecturers participated in the programme in their own personal time. Even if all other components were supportive of the lecturers as Subjects striving to achieve their Object of improving student learning and developing their teaching practice, the constraints of the heavy teaching load greatly impinged on their full participation and commitment to the programme and associated learning activities. A contradiction (1) therefore existed between the division of labour and the object.

Community

The concept of community emerged from both the questionnaire data and the interviews. The key communities were the fellow participants within the programme and the tutor or facilitators. The influence of a range of communities emerged as a strong theme (Section 5.5) but it was difficult to capture the range and influence of the communities.

Students were noted by some participants as being members of the community. This was especially in relation to seeking their feedback during implementation of strategies or while conducting practitioner research projects. Colleagues within the broader scope of the department and school were also included here and ranged from fellow lecturers to senior management. It was within this specific community of colleagues and management that the primary contradiction arose (Contradiction 4, Figure 6.1). Some colleagues and management were supportive of the participation within the programme. However, others and in particular senior management were discouraging and dismissive (Section 5.5.3). This was also presented as a direct Contradiction between the Subject and their Community (2).

Outcomes

There were two outcomes of Activity System 1 (Figure 6.1):

1. Lecturers desired to continue engaging in professional learning in relation to their teaching. This is evidenced by their responses, in both the questionnaires and interviews, to the questions on their engagement in formal and non-formal learning activities they have engaged in since completing the programme.
2. Some lecturers have lost interest in continuing to engage in professional learning. This may have been due to contradictions in areas such as the Communities of their School or Department, the impact of the Rules, or Division of labour.

6.2.2 Activity System 2

As not all research participants had the same rationale for participating in an accredited programme, a second activity system was modelled based on their motives of being pragmatic (Section 5.3.1). These alternative motives determined the Object as complying with institutional policies or Rules and all six components of the system are presented in Figure 6.2. below:

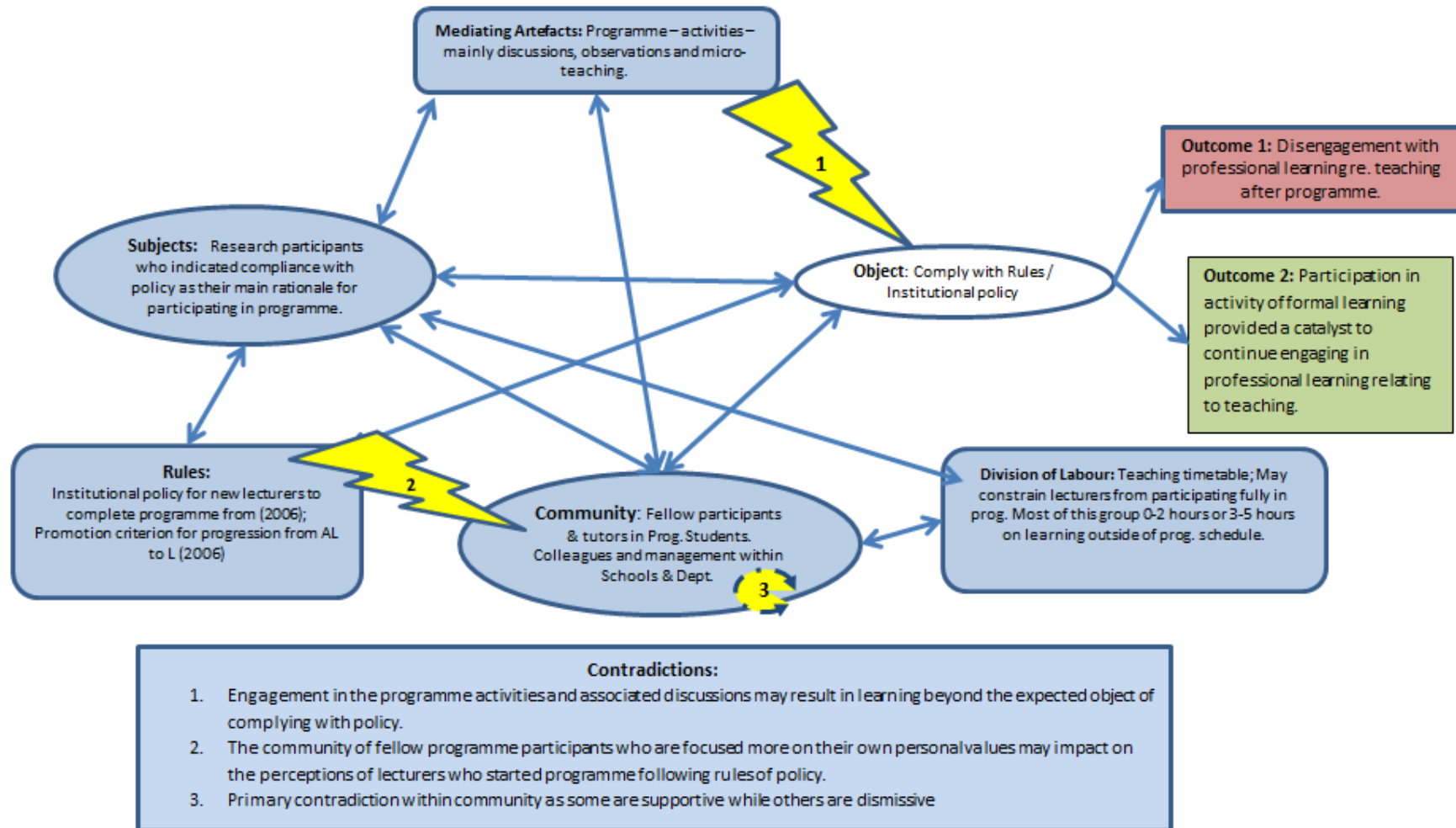


Figure 6:2 Activity System 2 based on Object of Complying with Institutional Rules

I modelled Activity System 2 to represent the Object of complying with institutional policies. Figure 6.2 presents all six components of the system and three contradictions.

Subjects

The subjects in this Activity System 2 (Figure 6.2) are the same as in Activity System 1 (Figure 6.1) above, as all are research participants who are graduates of an accredited programme and engaged in the activity of professional learning in teaching.

Object

Analysis of the questionnaire data showed that 21 participants referred to policy as one their reasons for participating in the programme, with 10 participants stating policy as their only reason (Section 4.2.2.2). These reasons directly address my first research question of why lecturers engage in professional learning.

Mediating Artefacts

The Mediating Artefacts relate directly to my key research question of how lecturers engage in professional learning. There were many of the programme activities noted by this cohort of lecturers which can be deemed as Mediating Artefacts. However, some respondents may not have found them useful. There is a contradiction (1) here in that some subjects may not have engaged with all of the mediating artefacts. The data indicates that these participants may have found pragmatic activities more useful than discussions on theory and reflection (Section 4.2.3).

However, the active strategies and reflective tasks which are central to the programme may have resulted in some participants engaging in the programme more than they expected (Section 4.2.4). As there are many formative tasks and a practitioner research project, it would be difficult for a participant to attend the sessions and complete a portfolio to achieve the assessment criteria without investing in active engagement in the process.

Rules

This cohort of participants clearly indicated that they were complying with institutional rules, such as the 2006 policy relating to the condition of contract for new lecturers to complete the initial programme within their first two years of employment. Another institutional level policy or rule is that the completion of a programme or equivalent is a criterion for progression from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer. Both of these policies were noted by many research participants, for example by 21 in the questionnaire, as noted above.

Division of Labour

The heavy teaching loads were noted within the questionnaires, and discussed extensively within the interviews, as a factor preventing lecturers from engaging in as much professional learning as they would like. The allowance of the time from their teaching timetable to participate in the accredited programme was introduced with the policy in 2006 and easing the burden for the lecturers who participated after this.

Community

The influence of community is strong in this activity system. Some enthusiastic fellow participants have had a positive impact on this cohort of lecturers who initially participated in the programme purely focused on compliance with institutional policies relating to conditions of contract and progression (Section 4.7.1.3: Learning from others). This is evidenced in the questionnaire with 49 responses to the open question on experiences and activities within the programme which participants deemed to support their learning, which prompted them to give examples of activities you found useful for supporting your learning about teaching. While six (12%) respondents noted learning from tutors, 25 (51%) out of 49 respondents referring to learning from peers within the programme. This was reiterated in the interviews with striking examples presented in Section 5.5.1.

The impact of peers within the programme community on the pragmatic participants initially completing the programme based on compliance is depicted in Figure 6.4 as Contradiction 2. This links with the theme of 'Self' and is identified based on the analysis of the interview data with some interviewees identified as being pragmatic (Section 5.3.1) in terms of their participation based on compliance, but this orientation has the potential to change to being proactive and engaging more in professional learning.

There was also an internal Contradiction (3) within the Community. This is similar to the contradiction noted in relation to activity system 1 (Section 6.2.1), in that some participants influenced others in supportive ways as outlined above, while other members of the Community, especially management, were perceived as being dismissive before or after participation in the programme.

Outcomes

There are two main outcomes from the modelling of this activity system (Figure 6.2) for this cohort:

1. There is potentially little or no further engagement in professional learning relating to teaching as 13 (26%) skipped the question on accredited formal learning (Section 4.8);
2. Participation in the initial programme provided a catalyst for further participation in activities which were formal, or for creating their own opportunities for professional learning.

An example of two contrasting profiles of questionnaire respondent may explain two different outcomes based on the same initial object. There are clear indications within the data of linkages across a number of the components which portray consistency with the subject's focus on the object of merely completing the programme to comply with institutional policy. While all of the subjects in this activity system started with the same object of compliance with the policy, the outcome was different for some and led to further engagement in professional learning. For example, two lecturers provided the following responses to this sample of questions which are collated in Table 6.1:

Table 6:1 Contrasting responses to selection of questions (11, 13 – 16, 19)

Question	Respondent 30	Respondent 36
Q11 Briefly outline your reasons for participating in this programme	Under my contract	Requirement of employment
Q13 While participating in the programme, what activities or experiences did you find useful for supporting your learning about teaching?	Other lecturers tips	Reflective practice and development of a community of practice
Q14 Estimate the average time you committed to professional learning and development during the programme (in addition to the scheduled class time)	0-2 hours per week	0-2 hours per week
Q15a Briefly describe the impact of participating in this postgraduate diploma in terms of changes in each of the following associated with your teaching	No real difference	Sparked a desire to develop my knowledge and skills in this area. Lead to further training in the area.
Q15c Briefly describe the impact of participating in this postgraduate diploma in terms of changes in each of the following associated with your teaching Values	-	Changed entirely my outlook on teaching towards a more socially constructed approach.
Q16a-i Indicate the accredited formal learning opportunities and experiences that you have availed of to support your continuing professional learning and development such as: 9 examples of CPDs given to select from	-	MA, MSc, CPD modules on Academic Writing, PBL, Supporting Virtual Communities, Technology Enhanced Teaching, Learning & Assessment
Q19 Briefly describe other professional learning and development opportunities which you consider would support you, which may not currently be available via the Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTC) within DIT:	Speed reading	N/A. DIT LTTC is very well situated to support staff.

6.3 Analysis of Professional Learning beyond the Programme

The analysis of the data relating to professional learning beyond the initial accredited programme resulted in two distinct Objects. In the questionnaire, Question 5a prompted the 50 respondents to indicate their role when beginning the programme. All bar one indicated that they were either an Assistant Lecturer or Lecturer with one noting they were an Assistant Head of School. Within the 16 interviews, there were five participants who were now in management roles. These were four Assistant Heads of School and one Head of School which I deemed as a cohort of role holders. As a group they had a different profile to the other 11 who were Assistant Lecturers or Lecturers. This was due to their reduced teaching loads for example three to eight hours teaching per week, their role in supporting colleagues in relation to professional learning and being involved in timetabling. Their Object would therefore be different from a Lecturer who may be teaching up to 20 hours per week. These two activity systems are presented as Activity System 3 – Lecturers (Figure 6.3) and Activity System 4 – Role Holders (Figure 6.4).

6.3.1 Activity System 3

This activity system is based on the Object of continuing own professional learning and the Subjects are the Lecturers and is illustrated in Figure 6.3 below.

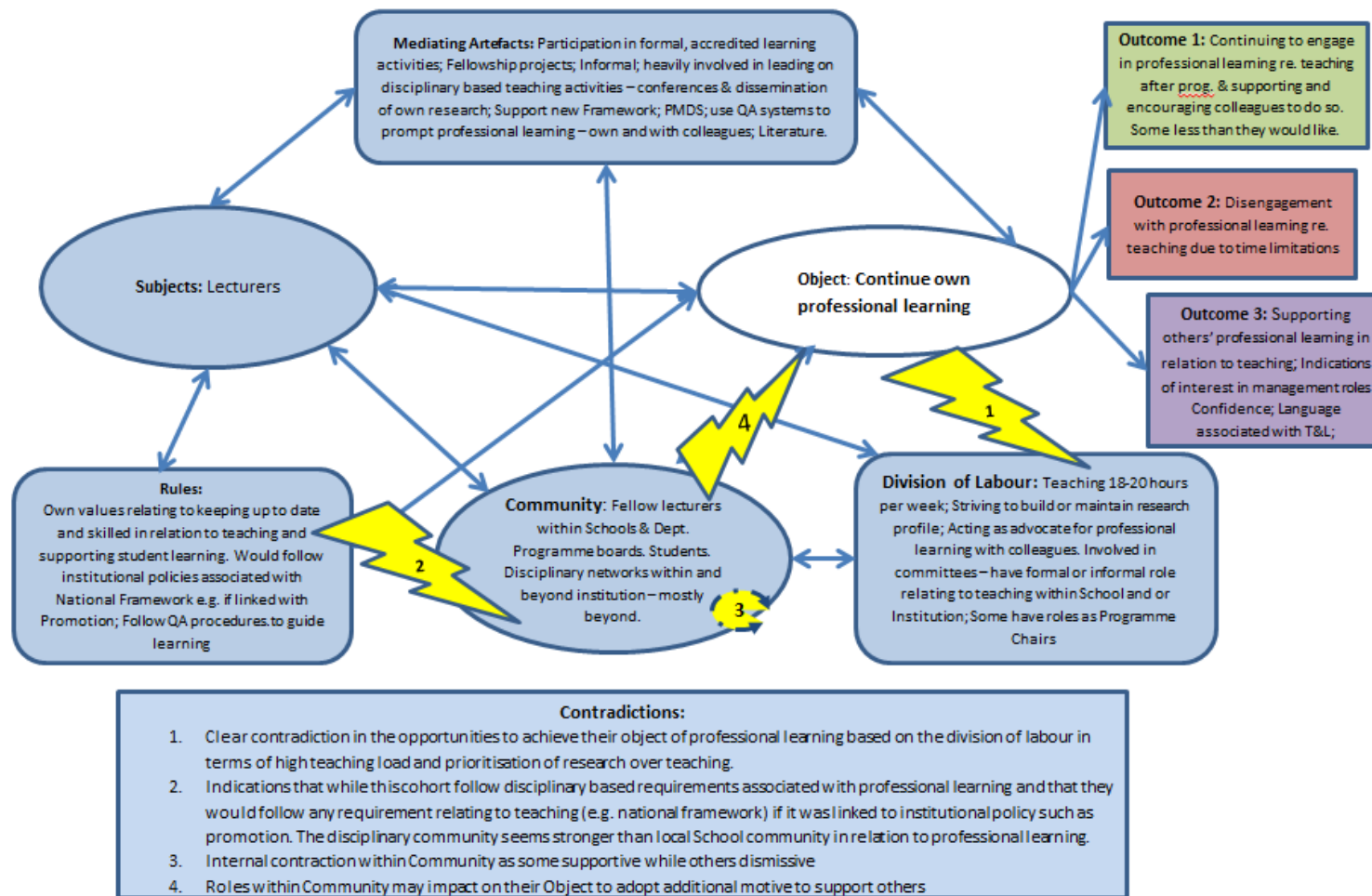


Figure 6:3 Activity System 3 based on Object of continuing own professional learning

Subjects

The subjects in this activity system (Figure 6.3) are the lecturers who graduated from an initial accredited programme in teaching.

Object

As the Object is associated with the Subject's motive, this aligns directly with my research question on why lecturers engage in professional learning. The main object for these lecturers is to continue their professional learning relating to teaching based on the outcomes of Activity Systems 1 and 2.

Mediating Artefacts

There was a diverse range of mediating artefacts noted by questionnaire respondents and interviewees to supporting continuing professional learning. These Mediating Artefacts are directly aligned to my key research question of how lecturers engage in professional learning. These included continuing formal learning opportunities through postgraduate programmes and also postgraduate level CPD modules. Other formal but non-accredited opportunities noted were workshops and projects such as College based Teaching Fellowships and one noted a European funded project. A device, referred to by two interviewees, which could act as a mediating artefact to encourage professional learning, was the curriculum level documentation such as that used in preparation for a new programme or as part of a programmatic review. Feedback from students through institutional and national (ISSE) directed strategies such as module-level feedback may also act as mediating artefacts.

Rules

There are no institutional policies directing continuing engagement in professional learning in relation to teaching after the completion of the initial programme. However, interviewees noted that they agreed with national level policy recommendations for continuing professional development relating to teaching. They also noted that they would follow guidelines in relation to the national professional development framework – especially if it was linked with institutional level policy for promotion. Institutional level requirements regarding QA are adhered to and influence some professional learning for example, insights from student feedback (Q6A forms).

The interviewees revealed that many engaged in continuing professional development and learning in their discipline as they were required to do so as part of being a member of a professional body. They kept up to date with their discipline by engaging in scholarly

reading and this was associated with a professional value. This was indicated by some to also be a professional value in relation to their teaching. They wanted their students to engage in real-world problems or cases and designed their teaching, learning and assessment activities in line with these.

Division of Labour

The Division of Labour is a major determining factor in lecturers' ability to continue engaging in professional learning and is depicted as Contradiction (1) in Figure 4.5. As their time is heavily scheduled in 18 to 20 hours of teaching per week, they do not have a lot of time to devote to other activities. This may constrain lecturers from participating in as much professional learning as they would like. Some lecturers have roles as Programme Chairs and this guides their own or colleagues' professional learning.

Community

Community is a significant component here and was noted by many participants as being beyond the institution and includes their network of disciplinary related colleagues and counterparts in other HEIs. For some lecturers, this network is international. Some disciplines have well-developed networks which organise teaching related events or have a strand within conferences devoted to teaching related themes. There were also contrasting experiences of community relating to senior management within the Schools, as with Activity Systems 1 and 2. This is denoted as a Contradiction (2) as it impacts on Rules and a primary, internal Contradiction (3). For some, there is a contradiction within this component as there is stronger support for professional learning about teaching from their external communities than those in their institution.

However, there were two references to small groups of graduates forming their own communities of practice and disseminating their scholarship on small scale projects with colleague within and beyond the institution. There were also indications in the thematic analysis of the interviews that some graduates of the programmes became informal mentors for colleagues within their School or department. Two interviewees referred to becoming the 'go to' people in their respective departments.

Outcomes

Based on the modelling of this activity system and the contradictions noted, there were three outcomes identified:

1. Continuing - prioritising it and making time for their professional learning in relation to teaching even if not strongly supported by colleagues or Rules (no requirement);
2. Disengagement – as some cannot find the time or are devoting their spare time to research or other activities. They would like to continue professional learning in relation to teaching, but do not feel supported in terms of space or time;
3. Some taking on a leadership role. This may be informally in terms of immediate colleagues by encouraging them to apply for Teaching Fellowships (Claire) and working through an unscheduled programme review to evaluate the impact of a teaching innovation at curriculum level (Stephen). It may be formally through their roles on School or Institutional Committees (Claire) and advocating for greater use of QA documentation to encourage more colleagues to develop their teaching.

6.3.2 Activity System 4

As there were five interview participants who were in management positions, these were deemed as a cohort of Role Holders. Their roles as Head or Assistant Head of School involved leading and supporting others' professional learning in relation to teaching which was perceived as an Object which differed from the lecturers. Their own professional learning was also included as an Object. This activity system is presented in Figure 6.4 below.

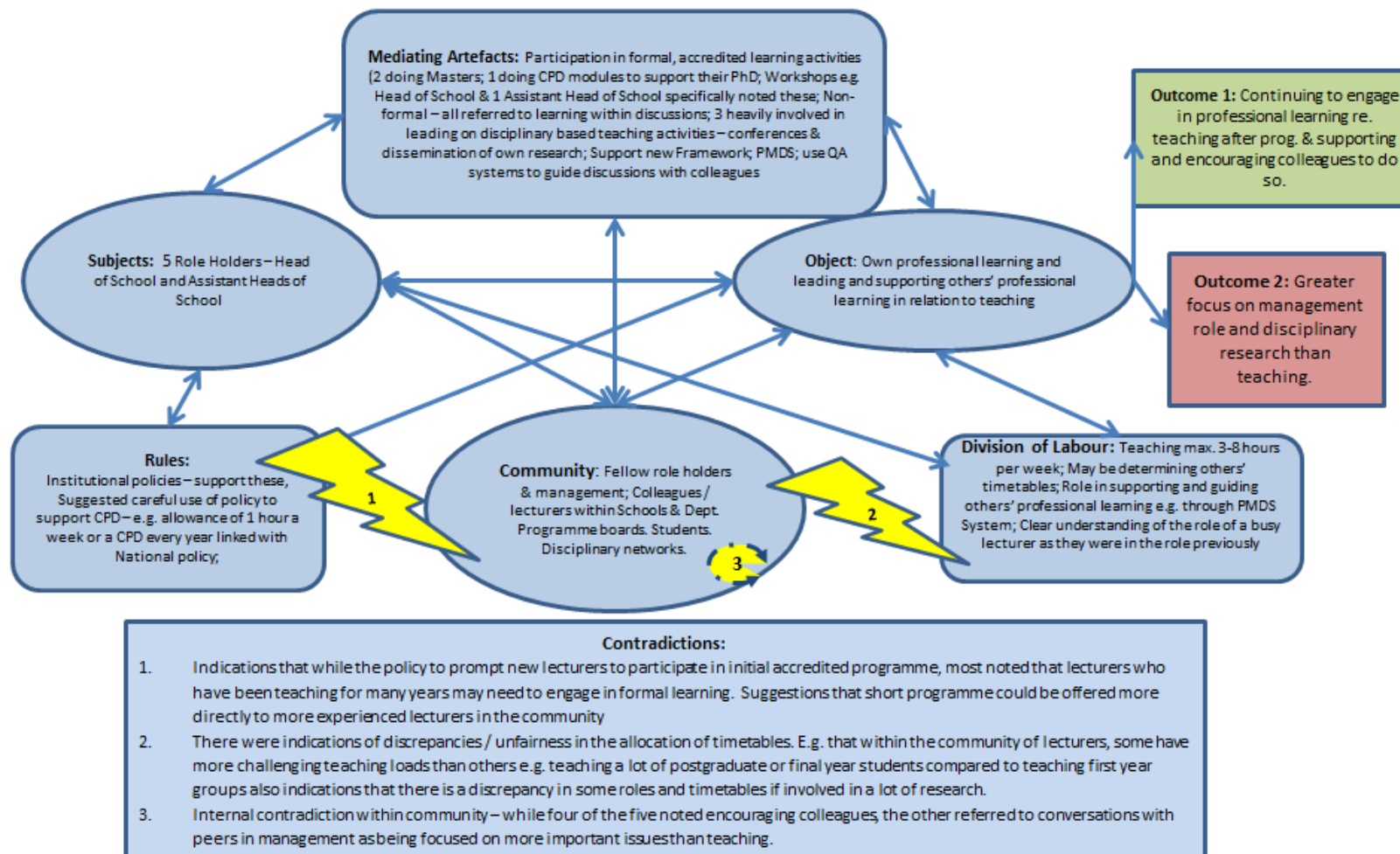


Figure 6:4 Activity System 4 based on Object of own professional learning & supporting others

Subjects

The subjects in this activity system are the Role Holders. These were the five interview participants who were in management roles of Head of School or Assistant Head of School.

Object

The object identified in the analysis of the data associated with the role holders is two pronged. They are striving to continue their own engagement in professional learning relating to teaching, while also supporting colleagues to do so. These motives relate directly to my research question around why lecturers engage in professional learning.

Mediating Artefacts

These interviewees indicated that they were continuing to engage in professional learning. These Mediating Artefacts address one of my key research questions, of how lecturers engage in professional learning. They used a range of mediating artefacts for themselves and used other artefacts to encourage and support their colleagues to engage in professional learning. Two referred to completing a Masters in teaching and learning and another noted that she had completed some of the CPD modules (such as academic writing) to support her initial work in her PhD, while another noted the value she gained from engaging in the Higher Education Policy module to support her application for the role of Assistant Head of School. The Head of School noted that he participated in other formal learning activities which were not accredited such as workshops which he found useful. He also described how he previously, and currently in his role as Head of School, is involved in both formal and non-formal professional learning through discussions with colleagues around teaching innovations. For example, he noted that within School meetings, lecturers are invited to share their experience of using innovative strategies which can then lead to colleagues following up with these colleagues in non-formal conversations outside of the meetings.

Many of these role holders referred to using the Q6a student feedback system to prompt their own or colleagues' professional learning. For example, one Assistant Head of School noted that she can see from student feedback that some colleagues would benefit from engaging in professional learning. Many also mentioned the use of the PMDS system with colleagues to have conversations around development opportunities associated with teaching. All expressed support for the introduction of the national Professional Development Framework. However, three were not aware of it prior to this research which referred to it. However, two emphasised that it would need to be used appropriately and

that they did not want a framework that would involve attendance at so many events or recording of hours to result in a compliance approach to professional learning. This analysis of the data relating to the mediating artefacts indicates that this cohort of role holders use artefacts such as programmes, modules and institutional systems to support and enhance their own and others' professional learning. It may be deduced that because they have completed an initial accredited programme, they are more aware of what is on offer from the LTTC and across the institution than other role holders who have not engaged in these activities or used these artefacts.

Rules

This cohort was acutely aware of the potential of the institutional policies to encourage colleagues to engage in initial professional learning relating to teaching. Three of this cohort indicated that they had participated in the initial accredited programme without being required to do so by the institutional policy. However, they were keen to use the policy to support their colleagues to engage in the programmes and other professional learning. Three referred to colleagues who had been teaching in the institution for many years and who would not be bound by either policy to participate in professional learning. Two suggest that perhaps a policy or non-explicit recommendation could be constructed to prompt greater engagement from this cohort of more experienced lecturers in professional learning in teaching. One suggested using the term 'refresher' [Nuala] and could also be advertised and promoted for those who have completed an accredited programme years previously.

There was also discussion about the potential for a recommendation of completion of one hour of CPD a week or one 5 ECTS module within a year or every two years. This indicates that these role holders are astute in using the leverage potential of policy to encourage colleagues to engage in professional learning. This is represented as a Contradiction (1), as although there is not currently a Rule, they are using influence on their communities. They are judicious in their awareness of 'push' and 'pull' factors and the need to have both to prompt greater engagement from more lecturers other than solely the new lecturers who are bound to participate by the condition of the 2006 Policy on new contracts.

Division of Labour

This cohort has a more limited teaching timetable than their colleagues. The range of teaching hours noted was from three to eight hours, with two noting that they are involved in more teaching and supervision than would be expected in their roles. There were

indications that due to staff shortages, they were 'filling the gaps' [Robert]. There were also clear expressions of understanding the challenges associated with a high teaching load of 18 to 20 hours. Two, in particular, indicated the need to juggle teaching, administration and research. This understanding of their colleagues' workloads may impact on their timetabling role. The Head of School referred to this and how, in the School, they strive to give lecturers the same modules they have taught previously and to provide a balance between teaching first year students and final year or postgraduates students.

There were also indications that they considered professional learning in relation to teaching when discussing performance with their colleagues. However, the Head of School indicated that it was important not to overburden lecturers. In relation to the accredited programme and any subsequent continuing professional learning he would advocate a shorter programme than the Diploma as that might be sufficient to give the lecturers a "flavour...and not overkill" [Robert] in relation to time spent on engagement in an accredited programme. This may link with his approach of allowing time for lecturers to learn about teaching innovations and practices within school meetings and encouraging informal discussions outside of the formal settings.

Research was referred to frequently by this cohort with two in the process of completing their own doctoral studies and others involved in supervision of postgraduates at doctoral level. There were contradictions evident in how research has been prioritised by the institution with reference to a Research Action Plan while there was no equivalent for teaching. The implementation of the research action plan was based around allowing more time for research activities so that some colleagues were given time off their teaching timetables. One Assistant Head of School referred to this focus on research in the context of the institutional move to university status and indicated that she was involved in high level discussions in relation to this. The Contradictions (2) here in terms of a lack of support for teaching were evident, with this Assistant Head of School predicting that the high teaching loads would be unsustainable and that a new model would need to be developed.

Community

A key feature of the analysis of this cohort's community is the diversity and scope of the various communities. Unlike the lecturers, their community consists of fellow role holders and management. The data constructed from the interviews reveals that there are contradictions within this component of the Activity System (3). For example, one Assistant

Head of School clearly states that she does not have conversations with fellow Assistant Heads of School about teaching and that “we have more serious issues...our discussions are very focused on running the school efficiently and well, and we get on with the job” [Nuala]. This corresponds with many of the lecturers’ perceptions of the value attributed to teaching by management. This was noted in Chapter 5; section 5.2 Discourse of professionalism and 4.3.4 Influence of communities within the analysis of the interviews. Management may be perceived as having a different Object to the lecturers, as they teach less. However, it would be ideal if those in management roles who have completed an accredited programme could raise the profile and perceived value of teaching across their Schools and departments. It would be difficult for lecturers themselves to do this and they rely on those in management roles to voice support for teaching and innovations at senior management level. However, none of the role holders I interviewed referred to bringing teaching issues up to more senior management. Their support for colleagues was more informal and on a one-to-one level.

As noted above in relation to strategic use of mediating artefacts, there were references to programme board meetings and learning from external examiners in relation to programmes. This indicates that they view their communities as primarily focused on specific programmes and also acknowledge the valuable perspectives of external examiners and those in professional bodies in terms of informing professional learning relating to curricula.

The analysis of this component of Community also reveals that this cohort have strong influences on their disciplinary networks with four out of the five specifically referring to their leadership in supporting teaching strands within disciplinary network conferences, journals or establishing disciplinary based groups with an associated website. Three referred to publishing and presenting on their scholarship in teaching relating to their discipline, with two specifically commenting on how they encourage colleagues to engage in research and scholarship in relation to their teaching. This high level of engagement in their disciplinary community with a focus on teaching is interesting as they are in positions to support others within and beyond the institutional community.

While this cohort does not have as much contact with students as they have a reduced teaching load, there was a clear sense that all five still engaged with students and valued

the students' feedback and experiences. The valuing of students may be linked to their management positions necessitating an emphasis on retention but may also indicate that they enjoy the teaching role and strive to maintain contact with students. The Head of School referred to introducing himself to all new student groups and meeting with the student representatives as regularly as possible. While discussing formal school meetings, he alluded to being a lecturer during long formal meetings and indicated that his approach to meetings is that they are as short as possible and focused. His accounts and those of other role holders, indicate that they are modelling their approach to management based on their own experiences and that many are aiming to keep communication channels, with both colleagues and students, open and informal.

Outcomes

Based on analysis of this cohort's activity system in relation to professional learning, there are two outcomes.

1. There is clear evidence that most of this cohort achieved the two pronged object of continuing their own professional learning in relation to teaching, as well as supporting others to do so.
2. However, there are indications that at least one role holder is focusing more on their own professional learning in relation to management and disciplinary based research than continuing with teaching related learning and research. While there is evidence that they are supporting colleagues in their professional learning in relation to teaching, the importance of disciplinary based research for promotion has been emphasised. This outcome may be linked directly or indirectly with the contradictions in terms of rules and division of labour which do not favour an emphasis on teaching development when research may be a greater priority for the institution.

6.4 Summary: Key Findings from use of activity theory

The use of the activity theory framework as an analytical tool proved to be valuable. While the findings from the analysis of the data generated by the research participants through the questionnaires and interviews were substantial, the additional use of activity theory allowed me as an educational developer to gain a clearer overview of the wider issues impacting on their experiences of professional learning. As an educational developer, using activity theory prompted me to step back from my usual role focused on individuals within accredited programmes, and provided me with the opportunity to appreciate the broader perspective of the institution at the meso level, but also the macro environments in which

the research participants engage. The use of activity theory helped me to address my third research question: How can educational developers further support lecturers' professional learning?

The key findings derived from this stage of analysis in relation to this research question were:

- Research participants can be presented as having one of two Objects or motives for participating in an initial programme, and based on the elements of the activity systems the outcome may change or remain consistent with the initial motive.
- Community was deemed to be the most influential element within the activity systems with internal Contradictions evidencing the supportive or constraining influence on the Subjects in relation to their Object of professional learning. The Community element encompassed the Community of peers, programme tutors and colleagues and management within their Department. The external subject discipline networks or professional communities were noted as being more significant to some participants' professional learning than their more immediate colleagues within the institution.
- Educational developers may invest time and effort in creating and facilitating learning strategies within programmes as Mediating Artefacts such as micro-teaching and reflective writing and these do impact on the Object. However, for research participants who are participating based on compliance more than through interest, they may not gain as much from these activities as projected.
- Division of Labour was noted as being a strong influencing factor on whether Subjects continued engaging in their professional learning after the initial programme.
- Rules were initially the most obvious and explicit influential factor on why or how participants engaged in an initial programme, as the Rules component captured the institutional policies. However, the more implicit values of the individual participants were also associated with Rules within activity theory and the participants' and colleagues' values and commitments were significant in determining continuing professional learning beyond the initial programme. While this may be presented as the Object, the underpinning drive is emerging from the Rules.

The modelling of the activity systems based on the findings from the questionnaires and interviews provided an opportunity for me to consider some of the many influential structures and spaces within which the research participants work and learn. The identification of the six elements within the activity systems prompted me to carefully consider my interpretation of the previous findings, especially in terms of Rules, Mediating artefacts and Community. The creation of the visual representations highlighted the relational associations and interactions between the various components. The modelling also helped identify and position the components into an interconnecting framework. The holistic lens of systems removes emphasis on solely cognitive aspects of engagement in professional learning and prompts consideration of the sociocultural context and wider environment. The models however were drawn as provisional and not interpreted as set and consistent, but a depiction of the data provided at this time.

The contradictions in particular can lead to Recommendations for educational developers. This process of analysis using activity theory provided me with an insight into the various dynamics within the broader learning environments of the research participants, which I was not fully aware of previously. It also challenged my initial positioning of myself as a mediator in terms of being an educational developer, and prompted me to consider how influential the role of the educational developer is within the context of the research participants' other Communities.

A key emerging finding is that educational developers as individuals and teams must be able to engage with management as learning professionals and researchers. Centres for teaching and learning may be perceived as a support service to implement institutional policy in terms of professional learning. However, educational developers must also see ourselves as influencers and mediators who can confidently inform management on organisational learning realities which can emerge from research using activity theory in the context of case study research. Educational developers can advise management on creating conditions to encourage participation and to prompt and promote further engagement with peers and the wider professional community. A professional learning environment within the institution would facilitate networking and engaging in professional dialogue, scholarship and curriculum developments as a department, rather than solely emphasising individualised professional learning for promotion.

6.5 Conclusion of Findings

The application of the activity theory framework has been illustrated through the modelling of four activity systems within this chapter. The two preceding chapters have presented the findings from the questionnaires and interviews based on iterative and sequential thematic analysis. The combination of these different approaches to data analysis has resulted in a rich and varied collation of findings based on the research questions. These findings are explored further in the next chapter by relating them to literature and determining the extent to which they address the three research questions, and what additional questions they may prompt.

Chapter 7 Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This research set out to explore lecturers' experiences of professional learning in relation to teaching within the context of their roles in an Irish Institute of Technology. The research questions were:

- Why do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How can educational developers further support professional learning?

The findings presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have clearly shown that the analysis of data collected from lecturers have addressed the first two questions. The findings have also provided insights for educational developers working to support lecturers to engage in meaningful professional learning. This chapter provides further exploration and discussion of these findings which are summarised in Figure 7.1 below. I discuss the outcomes of this research from my perspective as an educational developer, lecturer and researcher. The relevance of activity theory as a theoretical framework is discussed to highlight the significance of the lecturers' activities in relation to the research questions. This chapter will focus on how the findings are significant for the field of educational development and lecturer professional learning in relation to teaching in HE. The findings are contextualised with the existing literature. My theorisation adds to the conversation on the issues which have emerged within this research and is framed around discussion points associated with each of the three levels from the macro, meso and micro levels as outlined in Chapter 2 and the Appleby and Pilkington (2014) model has been further adapted in Figure 7.1 based on the findings associated with the three levels:

- **Macro:** Irish Context and Higher Education policy (European, national and institutional)
- **Meso:** Educational Developer and their role within national and institutional contexts
- **Micro:** Lecturers engagement in professional development and learning in relation to teaching.

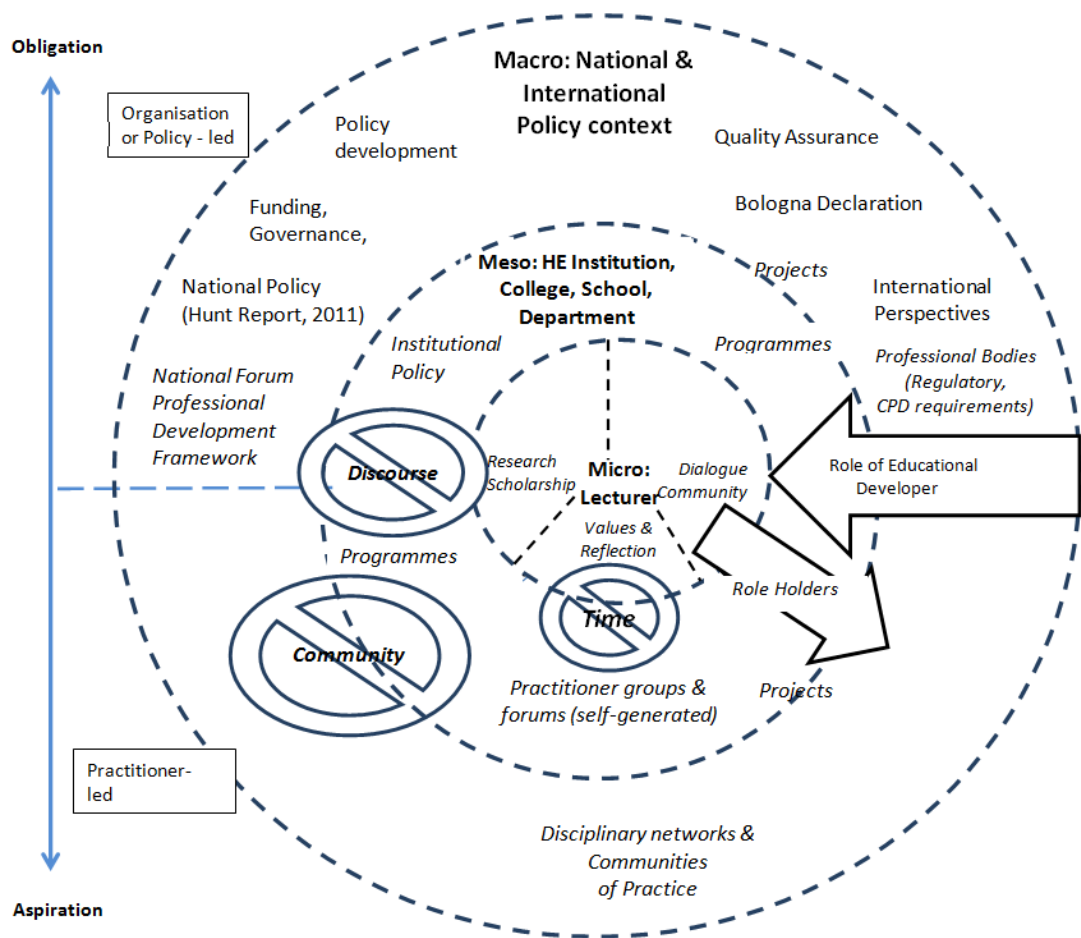


Figure 7.1 Adapted Appleby and Pilkington model (2014) presenting findings

The findings emerging from the previous three chapters are summarised and presented in italics within this adapted model of Appleby and Pilkington (2014). Enablers such as role holders and institutional policy are added to this model based on the analysis of findings. The lack of a shared discourse, time and contradictions within communities were identified as constraints within the analysis. These and the other findings from the previous three chapters are now discussed with specific reference to each of the three research questions.

7.2 Why do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?

The analysis of data in this research shows that lecturers engage in professional learning for a variety of reasons, influenced by:

- (a) Their interpretations of the concepts of professionalism and professional learning,
- (b) Their construction of their own identities,

- (c) Institutional constructs within which they interact and,
- (d) The communities within which they interact.

7.2.1 Interpretations of professionalism and professional learning

The concepts of professionalism and professional learning permeate all of these research findings and discussion. In this section, my focus is on discussing the specific findings revealing ambiguity and complexity associated with the discourse around the terms of professionalism, professional development, and learning. This is presented in Figure 7.1 as a constraint. The complexity of the discourse around professionalism was identified during the analysis of the interview data and this was reaffirmed when analysing these themes using activity theory as a theoretical framework, especially within the Rules and Mediating Artefacts components.

As evidenced in the models associated with the lecturers' activity systems in Chapter 6, there were contradictions in the Objects identified, both within and beyond the initial accredited programme. There were two conflicting Objects or intentions associated with learning within an accredited programme. The first Object was presented in Activity System 1 (Figure 6.1) as 'to improve teaching practice to enhance students' learning'. This contrasts with the Object identified in Activity System 2 (Figure 6.2) as 'to comply with Rules of the institutional policy'. This sense of conflict and unshared objects is continued when the activity systems of lecturers' learning beyond the accredited programme were analysed. In Activity System 3 (Figure 6.3) the Object of the lecturers' engagement with professional learning activities was identified as continuing their professional learning. This resulted in three different Outcomes. As the five role holders were deemed to be a different profile from the Assistant Lecturer or Lecturer, their activity system for professional learning beyond the initial accredited programme was represented in Activity System 4 (Figure 6.4). While they shared the same Object as the Lecturers in terms of continuing their own professional learning, they differed in that their Object also included leading and supporting others' professional learning. However, in both of these models, the Outcomes are influenced by other components of the activity systems such as the Rules, Community and Division of labour.

These contrasting Objects in all four models of the Activity System 1-4 indicate that lecturers have conflicting intentions, perhaps based on differing notions of professionalism and professional learning in relation to their teaching. It may be surmised that for some

lecturers, they are not considering the concept of professionalism while participating in the programmes. It was evident that some role holders were viewing their roles as supporting others in relation to professional learning, as depicted in Figure 7.1 with role holders from the micro level moving into the meso level. However, initially many lecturers strive to do a better job in terms of supporting students' learning but they may not have a clear sense of what a professional lecturer would be. This was articulated by David (5.5.2) who stated that he was seeking a role model or advisor within his department. While a role model may be a member of a Community, the concept of an expert advisor or role model may also act as a Mediating artefact.

It was evident that most lecturers' intentions to engage in professional learning were hindered by time constraints due to the heavy teaching loads associated with the Division of Labour. Other aspects of their activity systems did not support their engagement in professional learning, such as Community. For example, the findings revealed that within some communities such as their departments and schools, lecturers were discouraged from committing time to professional learning in relation to teaching. This was conveyed through implicit, disparaging comments made, and more explicit comments centring on the progression and prestige associated with research activities rather than engagement in professional learning about teaching.

A sense of how to gain professional credibility was indicated within the responses to both the questionnaires and interviews on the national Framework and professional learning in relation to their discipline. Within responses to other questions, there were also clear connotations that teaching as an activity was viewed as neither professional practice nor being valued as a professional activity by management. The associated professional learning with regards to teaching was also referred to as not being acknowledged. This was evidenced in responses which noted time and workload as barriers to engaging in professional learning in relation to teaching. These barriers may be symptoms of the lack of a shared discourse around professionalism and professional learning across the entire context, from the micro level of the individual lecturers to the meso level of their local departments and schools, and broader institutional context to the macro national and international level of policy makers.

As an educational developer, I am aware of the national policy drive to professionalise the practice of lecturers within Irish HE (Hunt Report, 2011) and support continuing professional development (National Forum, 2015; 2016). This is corroborated with policy recommendations and implementation in the UK (Dearing, 1997), the TEF (HEFCE, 2017) and at a European level (HLG, 2013; European Science Foundation, 2012) as discussed in Section 2.2. However, lecturers referred to their personal desire to improve or professionalise their teaching, rather than noting national or institutional policy. When asked directly about national policy, they agreed with the sentiments, with some commenting that the language used was unhelpful. The research therefore highlights the lack of shared discourse around professional learning and teaching in HE. The activity theory analysis showed that there were Contradictions within the Community component and also in the Rules relating to the Object.

Determining the impact of programme participation, especially on student learning, has been highlighted as a challenge by researchers such as Bamber (2008), Bamber and Trowler (2005) and Gibbs and Coffey (2004). The difficulties associated with the change process of practice, especially in relation to teaching, have been noted by Fullan (1993) and Trowler (1998). However, based on a comprehensive survey with lecturers and students in 20 universities, Gibbs and Coffey (2004) concluded that graduate lecturers from accredited programmes were more learner-centred in their approach to teaching, felt more effective and confident, and their students were better engaged in deep approaches to learning. These findings were also indicated by Rodgers, Christie and Wideman (2014). My findings validate these findings as well as highlighting the issue of the lack of support for lecturers' post-completion of the programme. The institutional or meso level context of the Department and School may not be conducive to building on participants' learning, to allow for implementation of key concepts and strategies advocated within programmes. This is similar to findings from Fanghanel, (2004); Knight et al (2006) and Trowler & Cooper (2004).

There were varying and perhaps conflicting reasons for undertaking programmes. Evidence of the lack of a shared discourse of professional learning in HE may explain the tone and almost punitive language of some official discourse around teaching, which could in turn be off-putting to those working in the sector. For example in the HLG report (2013):

The truth about that daily lived reality, however, is an embarrassing disappointment. For research shows that serious commitment to best

practice in the delivery of this core teaching mission is not universal, is sporadic at best and frequently reliant on the enlightened commitment of a few individuals. There are in the sector, both at institutional and governmental level, some outstanding beacons of good practice in their practical support for upskilling teachers, their recognition and rewarding of effective teaching and their support for students to become independent and active partners in the learning process (p.14).

The use of language such as “upskilling” (HLG, 2013, p.14) and “professional teaching training” (HLG, 2013, p.18) are not commonly used terms by educational developers working with lecturers in relation to their teaching. The terms of ‘skills’ and ‘competent’ do not acknowledge the complex nature of the role of the lecturer in encouraging, facilitating and assessing high level learning. This was acknowledged by Light et al., (2009) within their articulation of the skills paradigm of academic development which they associated with the “accumulation and reproduction of performance and communication skills, competencies and tips!” (p.12). The skills and low level tips approach to lecturer development in relation to teaching was also highlighted by some participants. For example, one Assistant Head of School when referring to her experience of learning within the programme conveyed her delight that it was not skills or tips based:

[*Programme*] which went beyond tips for teaching which I have a particular aversion to because teaching is not a tip based thing, it’s much more integrative, and it’s much more interactive ... [Nuala]

Another lecturer also emphasised that while there is merit in individual lecturers improving their teaching practice which may be aligned to the skills based model of professional development, he highlighted that change needs to be at the collective, curriculum level to impact more students and support a better learning environment for all:

In a lot of cases people go about improving their own teaching which is brilliant, but inevitably they are one little bit in what a student sees in four years of ..., it’s really the curriculum that needs to have an overall learning and teaching theme running through it that is student centred. [Stephen]

The lack of a shared discourse means that professional learning about teaching is founded on conflicting rationales amongst the programme participants as lecturers, and between lecturers and policy makers and implementers such as educational developers. It may not be surprising, that teaching in higher education has only recently been explored and researched as a professional activity (Hanbury et al., 2008; Kandlbinder & Peseta, 2009).

Without a shared discourse it is difficult to construct a shared understanding, or direction at any level. This complexity in terms of the layers of discourse is aligned with Roxå and Mårtensson's (2009) use of Goffman's (1966) terms of frontstage as public, backstage as open, honest conversations among the actors, and under the stage for the gossip. The use of this metaphor is indeed accurate, as demonstrated within the layers of discourse described within my findings and displayed within the Contradictions in the Activity Systems. The emergence of these stratified levels of conversation and discourse may be the results of the Institute or a particular School feeling compelled to herald a success story worthy of a place on the front page of the institute's website, or an example of a key performance indicator within an institutional report to the HEA. However, the lack of more public recognition of teaching generally was noted by participants as an indication that teaching activity was not as valued as research.

This positioning of some lecturers as champions or excellent, may discourage others from trying out strategies as they may fear the potential implication for students and themselves if they did not work well. The 'evidence-based' research and practice culture, which focuses on what worked is part of the public discourse needed for positive and public demonstration of success in teaching activities and innovations associated with them, can challenge professional autonomy and may not be applicable to educational research as we may dismiss what did not work and the rich learning experiences associated with this in favour of meeting expectations (Clegg, 2005; Biesta, 2007). Where no alternative public discourse exists in relation to educational research, there may be a curbing of innovation and risk-taking by creative and curious lecturers who would usually be keen to explore and experiment in their disciplinary research. These lecturers may not wish to publicly use a 'trial and error' approach in their teaching and potentially jeopardise their students' learning, and importantly their high-stakes assessments. The potential risk of being misunderstood and exposed as a professional lecturer is not a shared, articulated norm and so, lecturers may rather not take risks with their teaching, preferring to teach as others in the department teach regardless of whether it is innovative or based on didactic, transmission approaches.

These challenges around discourse are central to the findings of this research. Where the discourse is not agreed, there is significant potential for lack of clarity, poor

communication, uncertainty and at best dissatisfaction among lecturers and stakeholders, at worst professional anxiety and informal or formal repercussions.

7.2.2 Their construction of their own identities

The 'professional self' emerged as a central theme from the questionnaires and interviews and became the Subject component in the models of the Activity Systems analysis. Two orientations to professional learning and development were identified from the full dataset, with one being proactive and the other being pragmatic. These two orientations were represented by two different activity systems as the intention or the Object of learning of the Subject was different. The contrasting orientations as described in the analysis of the questionnaires (Section 4.5) and interviews (Section 5.3) were depicted in the Activity System components of the Object and the Rules of Activity System 1 and 2 (Figures 6.1 and 6.2).

Using the terminology associated with activity theory, the Subject or lecturer engaged in the accredited programme either because they wanted to, based on their own rules of personal and professional values, as they felt that they needed to, or for some, it was a condition of contract or criteria for promotion. This links with the lecturer being either proactive or pragmatic in terms of their engagement with accredited programmes and other forms of professional learning within and beyond the programmes. This can be aligned with Barnett's (2007) assertion that lecturers should nurture within their students a will to learn.

While it is clear that the institutional and national level policies are Rules, for some lecturers, their own sets of values guide their individual career plans and choices. These values have been included in the adaption of the Appleby and Pilkington (2014) within the micro segment with Reflection segment in Figure 7.1. The presence of the institutional policies did however, prompt some lecturers to participate in the programme for pragmatic reasons initially, but then continued professional learning based on their commitment and interest. These institutional policies are included in Figure 7.1. While the institutional strategic plans would be deemed as Rules, these do not seem to impact hugely on the lecturers teaching and professional learning, as only one lecturer referred to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy.

In this research, lecturers were found to have a more critical sense of professionalism than policy makers. While policy makers refer to competence and skills, lecturers engage in initial professional learning to develop their practice, but also to reflect and 'be' a better lecturer, as opposed to 'act' which may be affiliated with skills. They are not as focused on skills as policy makers. The research participants seem to have a more 'extended' orientation to professionalism and their practice than the 'restricted' emphasis on skills and competency in the classroom (Hoyle, 1975). They are interested in the curriculum, not just their own skills and practice. They are interested in professionalism 'from within' rather than solely 'from above' (Evetts, 2014). Some lecturers only participated in an accredited programme because of institutional policy, but others were interested in the broader scope of learning within the programme. It was also evident from the Findings that some lecturers moved from an orientation of being pragmatic to being proactive during their participation in the programme and this is illustrated in Activity System 2 (Figure 6.2).

This demonstrates that professionalism is beyond knowledge (knowing) and skills (acting) as it is related to 'being' (Barnett & Coate, 2005). In Barnett and Coate's (2005) engaged curriculum for higher education, they emphasised that the 'being' domain is crucial, as:

without it the others cannot take off. A student cannot be expected to try to get on the inside of the discipline (with the arduousness that entails) and engage in challenging practical tasks unless the student has a firm self (a 'self-confidence') (p.164).

While Barnett and Coate (2005) proposed these three domains of the engaged curriculum for students in HE, it seems appropriate to apply it to lecturers' professional learning. The sense of being, associated with a lecturer incorporates the internal motivation and the sense of commitment to the role. It may be considered around questions, such as what drives scholarship? It is more than just acquiring knowledge, as a lecturer would be part of a community of scholars. In terms of being a professional lecturer, there is a sense of critically engaging, conversing, discussing and debating - to question and be questioned. Professionalism in this context of being a professional cannot be driven 'from above' but 'from within' (Evetts, 2014). Fanghanel (2012) noted that the lecturer's beliefs and values in terms of their role as an educator is a comparatively under-researched area.

It must be acknowledged that activity theory has been critiqued for not profiling the 'self' enough (Edwards, 2007; Wheelahan, 2007). Archer's (2000) work on an individual's agency is depicted as being initiated by their concerns, which then prompts their intentions and eventually leads to their actions or practice. Her work is more focused on the individual (Archer, 2000) than the collective as in Engeström's (1987, 2001, 2007) work with a system approach in activity theory to analysing learning and development within a specific context. While Engeström's (2001) development of activity theory has been of significant value to analyse the data within this research, I agree with Edwards (2007) and Wheelahan (2007) that the individual agency of the lecturer can be subsumed within the Subject component of the activity system as there is not much scope for a deep insight into the motivations and practices of the individual. However, my review of the challenges associated with positioning values within the Activity System as either Rules or Mediating Artefacts in Chapter 3 (section 3.5.5), highlights that others have explored this and the process of this is a beneficial feature of using Activity Systems, in that the researcher has to consider what each component relates to in the entire activity. Within a community of lecturers who are individual, agentic professionals, there may be a need for a more nuanced approach to analysing their learning and practices. Senge (1990) asserted that within a learning organization, practices are informed more by collective thinking and problem-solving than individual efforts. However, this research and the use of activity theory has highlighted that there is currently a lack of coherence within the collective community.

Within the DIT programmes, there is a strong emphasis on developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement which incorporates the lecturer's values underpinning how they approach the role of teaching and supporting learning. It would be ideal if there could be a sharing of these Teaching Philosophy statements at a departmental or school level and linked with disciplines. These could contribute to developing a collective Philosophy Statement or indeed potentially a "signature pedagogy" (Shulman, 2005, p.52) for the programmes across the disciplines or School. This type of exercise may prompt discussions on professionalism of lecturers from within a community of fellow professionals (Parker, Patton & O'Sullivan, 2016). As highlighted earlier, there is currently not much evidence of a shared discourse on what it is to 'be a professional lecturer', and programme or School based activities such as developing a shared Teaching Philosophy Statement to identifying their signature pedagogy may address this. This would therefore act as a Mediating Artefact to support continuing professional learning.

7.2.3 Institutional and National Structural Constructs

Institutional and national constructs were influential in why and how lecturers engaged in professional learning around their teaching. For many, one of two institutional policies was a reason for engaging initially as it was a condition of contract or a criterion for promotion. Another institutional structural construct of their heavy teaching load based on their timetable was the key factor for many not engaging further in professional learning. The activity theory analysis shows these factors: timetables depicted within the Division of Labour and institutional policy a key element within the Rules component. This section provides further elaboration of these institutional factors and also explores the national constructs of policy and the professional development framework.

7.2.3.1 Institutional Structural Constructs as constraints

Time is often cited as the main reason for not availing of professional learning opportunities across many professions (Lueddeke, 2003). Time may be a predictable constraint associated with professional learning but not to the extent of which it confines lecturers within Irish IoTs. The contact teaching hours of 18 to 20 per week is a heavy workload. The standard teaching timetable for an assistant lecturer in the IoT sector is 18 to 20 hours per week and this large number of official contact teaching hours conceals the hours spent in preparation and also post-teaching activities such as reviewing student work and providing feedback on assessments. The insights provided by the IoT lecturers within this case study on their timetables provided a unique opportunity to gain a realistic picture of how their time is apportioned by others and the extent to which they do not have the same autonomy over their time as lecturers in other higher education contexts e.g. Irish universities. The issue of what one teaches also emerged where autonomy over module allocation rests beyond the control of the individual lecturer. This has implications for continuity with regard to teaching, learning and assessment innovation and indeed scholarship into teaching, learning and assessment practice.

Particular aspects of space and time within the working environment of IoT lecturers, including the packed timetable and the issue of shared offices, which emerged in the Findings chapters (4, 5 and 6), are rarely captured in the literature, but they are important considerations in terms of the challenges associated with engaging in professional work and learning. According to Davenport and Prusak (1998, cited in Knight 2002, p.240) one of the indicators of how an organisation values knowledge and professional learning is their

recognition and affordance of “slack time” (p.93) to facilitate employees to think and learn. Knight (2002) reiterated this and stated that “such space is an enabling condition for professional learning” (p.240).

There were clear indications that due to the confinement of office space and lack of “slack time” (Davenport & Prusak, 1998 in Knight, 2002) that many lecturers felt that they did not have the ‘head space’ to reflect, review and renew their students’ learning or indeed their own professional learning. This was highlighted by the lecturer Dermot, quoted within Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews (Section 5.4.1) who described the exhaustion at the end of the academic year and the overall sense of pervasive demoralisation within his School and suggestions of this being more widespread across the institution.

The language used to describe negotiations around the timetable, may also indicate a sense of power bargaining and also the perception of teaching not being as valued as other activities. Examples of this were that lecturers spoke to their line managers being accommodating to recognise what the lecturer brings to committees and they are given allowances off their teaching timetables for other activities. Locke (2014) referred to this point as:

The more teaching in higher education is controlled and constrained and its status undermined, the less attractive it will become as a career for creative, intelligent people, even as part of a broader role, let alone as the sole focus of their professional activity. (Locke, 2014, p.23)

Two interviewees highlighted that the shared office environment is not conducive to engaging in online learning activities such as webinars and other forms of online learning. The disadvantages of sharing an office space with up to 15 other lecturers was also noted by other interviewees, and it could be deduced that this busy environment is not conducive to academic work such as preparing for teaching or assessing students’ submissions. These unique aspects of space and time within the working environment of IoT lecturers is rarely captured in the literature and it is important that it is acknowledged within this research, as it provides an insight into the challenges associated with engaging in professional work and learning.

The timing of development opportunities also emerged in the findings as an enabler or constraint to professional learning, as did the mode of delivery, e.g. face-to-face, online, or blended. When all options are considered and offered there still remain outstanding issues around attendance and suitability of provision not least in terms of learning environment factors for lecturers.

The activity theory analysis revealed the contradiction between Division of Labour and Object for lecturers engaging in programmes to develop their professional learning. This issue of teaching 20 hours per week is almost unique to the IoT sector, therefore it is prominent in the analysis.

7.2.3.2 Institutional Structural Constructs as enablers

In spite of the constraints discussed above, some research participants were utilising the potential of institutional structures to showcase some of the conversations happening informally around professionalism associated with teaching. Participants noted that they use the formal structures to get items relating to teaching on the agenda and into institutional strategies, and to drive professional learning in relation to teaching. This is perhaps akin to a 'Trojan Horse' approach, and it could be argued that it would be better that this discourse around teaching professionalism was more explicit.

The activity theory analysis captured this within the Rules component as it is associated with policies and the impact of this is evidenced in the object of lecturers' participation in the programmes in terms of their intended outcomes. However, the Rules component captures the official Rules of the institution which preceded the national and indeed the European level recommendations while it also contains the individual lecturers' personal rules as values. The Rules component is therefore facilitating the identification of the official documented rules in terms of the policy as well as the lecturers' hidden rules, but expressed in their practices. While it is not currently incorporated into institutional policy, the recently launched national Framework is relevant here as another potential structural construct and is discussed in the next section.

7.2.3.3 National Professional Development Framework

At an institutional and national level, the launch of the National Professional Development Framework may support more conversations around the professional lecturer and professionalism. The Framework was published in August 2016 and piloted in 2017. It consists of five domains, with the first two being:

1. Personal Development: The 'Self' in Teaching and Learning
2. Professional Identity, Values and Development in Teaching and Learning (National Forum, 2016, p.4).

As evidenced in the findings, there was not significant awareness or interest in the Framework among role holders at an initial consultation meeting within the institution in April 2015. This was evidenced within the questionnaire and interviews as the majority of role holders and many lecturers were not aware of it. However, that may now have changed as the final framework has been launched and piloted. If incorporated within institutional level policy, the Framework may become a key strategic driver for professional learning. While it states within the associated documentation within the Framework that it can be used among groups as well as individuals, it may be viewed by lecturers and institutions as a framework for individuals seeking promotion. It would be ideal however to use the framework with groups, such as cohorts of lecturers within programmes, so that there can be open conversations around the domains of the self (personal) professional identity so as groups can discuss and debate the potential attributes, skills and values which could be evidenced for each of the five domains. The underlying values of inclusivity, authenticity, scholarship, learner-centeredness, and collaboration (National Forum, 2016, p.9-10) could also be considered with reference to the lecturers' specific teaching and learning contexts and disciplines.

7.2.4 Community

A key influence on whether or not lecturers participate in professional learning in relation to their teaching is community. This links directly with the Community component of activity theory and Section 5.5 detailing the findings from interviews. Key questions are:

- Who is the Community?
- Are there multiple Communities?
- Is the influence positive or negative?

There is evidence that lecturers are involved in a variety of communities. There are communities associated with disciplinary practice and teaching practice. This research allowed me to gain an insight into the spoken discourse which lecturers are engaged in – with peers, role holders and counterparts in their discipline based networks. The activity theory analysis showed a primary contradiction within this component of Community: there is not a shared discourse within and across the various communities in which lecturers participate.

The most cohesive communities were those involving lecturers in communities which they created themselves based on their disciplinary networks. There were four examples of disciplinary based networks associated with discussing and disseminating scholarship on teaching and learning, from the lecturers' engagement in professional learning activities. One such example was the group which one of the Assistant Heads of School set up with colleagues in her School to engage in teaching and learning projects. This was when she was a lecturer within the School. She noted how some of these projects were initiated based on the introduction of technology supports such as the virtual learning environment. She and colleagues conducted small scale projects and decided to create a group with a website to facilitate engagement with other colleagues and counterparts in other institutions. Their efforts could be defined as a Community of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as they were working towards a shared goal of enhancing student learning with regards their discipline area. While she noted that senior management within the School would showcase their projects, especially to external reviewers and "roll them out" as evidence that "yes, we are engaging in teaching innovation", that there was a parallel derision of their efforts which was described as "teachy learny stuff" [Aileen].

Unfortunately, this example is not isolated and was relayed by other lecturers who became enthusiastic about the potential innovations when they initially engaged in professional learning relation to teaching, especially during participation in an accredited programme and other formal learning opportunities. As this was an informal group, there was no formal leadership who could offer a counter culture. The Findings Chapter 5 (Section 5.2) evidenced this disconnect between the official discourse and almost dismissive undercurrent or coded language of discourse and is captured within the Community and Rules components of the Activity Systems.

The extent of the influence of others is striking in both a negative and positive sense. There was a clear indication that some lecturers experienced a dismissive and discouraging attitude towards professional learning relating to their teaching, from immediate colleagues within their shared offices and also senior colleagues. Analysis of the data evidenced that community matters to participants, and that they identified with more than one community. Two communities can be categorised as their disciplinary community and the institutional community. Participants saw themselves as a community of lecturers or

learners, based on their cohort within the programme. There may be a dual professionalism here (as introduced in Section 2.4.2.2), where participants may be more affiliated to the disciplinary community through networks and professional bodies, (such as accountancy, chemistry, engineering and social care) than their community as lecturers within a School or department. This issue also links with Section 7.2.2, the lecturers' construction of their own identities.

There is a clear need to support these teaching and learning communities to survive and thrive. The communities based within the institution seemed to be quite small, whereas there was greater support from disciplinary networks outside of the institution. For example, two of the discipline based networks had a small amount of funding and one was associated with a UK disciplinary network which had its own conferences on teaching in the discipline. Whereas, the institutional based communities were more unstable, and the one which the Assistant Head of School had set up was still in existence in terms of the group of people, but they had not maintained their website. This evidence is consistent with the literature on informal communities with Knight (2002) claiming that "subject departments are prime sites of non-predictable professional learning" (p.229). However, this strengthens the argument for more support for such communities, as it is within the unpredictability that there is the possibility of the greatest learning. Engeström (2001) frames this type of learning as "expansive" (p.133) which is associated with his more recent work on activity theory.

As noted previously, Knight (2002) highlighted the reliance on pre-determined learning within event-based approaches to continuing professional learning and development is associated with a managerialist agenda and does not acknowledge the learning theories which herald the impact of non-formal and expansive learning, such as in communities of practice. While Knight's (2002) context for his work was secondary schools, his assertions are relevant to the context of higher education and to this particular research, especially his favouring of supporting non-formal learning. "The alternative account of learning gives priority to some departmental practices, such as building a shared pedagogical repertoire" (Knight, 2002, p.240). This was also highlighted by Jenkins (1996) who emphasised the need for educational developers to engage with discipline-based groups and address their concerns. Trowler and Cooper (2004) and Roxå and Mårtensson (2015) have also profiled the significant influence of local departmental communities in higher education. Roxå and

Mårtensson (2015) have described these working and learning groups as “micro-cultures” (p.193).

Lecturers who responded to the questionnaire and participated in the interviews in this research experienced significant support and encouragement from peers and role holders in relation to participating in initial professional learning. This was also evidenced in the activity theory analysis of data relating to professional learning beyond the initial accredited programme and some even stated that they formed their own communities of practice. A valuable point which emerged from the data was that there appeared to be strong communities of practice around disciplinary based teaching initiatives with the strongest examples involving counterparts in other HEIs and even international networks. While this may be based on the fact that a lecturer may be the sole specialist in a particular topic within a department, it may also mean that there is a greater opportunity to engage in discussions with counterparts both formally within conference settings as well as informally through following social media and meetings within networks.

Community is seen as integral to non-formal learning and especially in continuing learning beyond the accredited programme. An interesting and unplanned aspect of this research was the opportunity to interview five role holders – a Head of School and four Assistant Heads of School. I got a clear insight into how they are currently encouraging colleagues’ professional learning, with most facilitating informal learning through individual discussions with colleagues around PMDS which may prompt engagement in formal or informal learning opportunities. These internal conversations conveyed a sense of commitment to their role and especially a commitment to students’ learning more generally within their Schools and across the institution.

7.2.4.1 Scholarship – contribution to and learning from the wider community

Without a specific question on this, four of the five role holders noted that they are engaged in scholarship in teaching and learning. This can be interpreted as contributing to and learning from the wider community. Three research participants referred to writing journal articles on a discipline based topic relating to teaching which they disseminate at conferences and within their own networks. It should be noted that these role holders are generally scheduled to teach three to six hours per week within their roles, however, some noted that they are engaged in more teaching than the norm associated with their role. This may signify their commitment to the teaching aspect of their role, but also one noted that

their School was “short-staffed” [Robert]. It could also be argued that within their roles, they may have more opportunity and drive to be engaged in research and scholarship activities.

Another interesting finding is the mutual dependence of community and discourse. The Community component of the activity system also captures the spoken discourse around professionalism within the national, institutional and local school and departmental context. Within both Activity System 1 and 2, there is a primary level Contradiction within the Community component. At a local departmental level, there was evidence that while some lecturers expressed interest in participating in an accredited programme, prior to the contractual condition, they were discouraged by their School line manager. Another lecturer noted how their immediate peers were dismissive of professional learning in relation to teaching and there were indications that colleagues ‘off loaded’ engagement in teaching and learning innovations and associated professional learning to other colleagues as it was ‘your kind of thing’, as it was almost treated with disdain and scornfully. This lack of value associated with professional learning associated with the teaching role was also evidenced in the insights to conversations among role holders such as one assistant head of school stating that they do not talk about teaching with fellow role holders as they have more important issues to discuss.

If community has emerged as so influential, who could provide support to the various communities? It would be a challenge for an individual educational developer to offer support. It may be ideal if these communities were supported financially by the National Forum and perhaps were viewed as a collective, which could be supported without interfering, as they are existing professional groups with their own autonomy, organisation and priorities. Many of these groups are already cohesive groups who respond to their peers of fellow professional lecturers in their disciplinary area so they view them as experts. There could also be opportunities for support from management and role holders within the institution. However, lessons would need to be learned from the UK’s experience of substantially funding Subject Centre Networks. While there were originally 24 highly developed networks with collaborative projects and discipline specific teaching resources with Canning (2010) referring to the academic co-ordinators as “the invisible developers” (p.461) when the funded ceased, the activities could not be continued to the same level and many waned. As the National Forum involved some professional bodies in

the consultation of the development of the professional development Framework, there is already some contact which could be developed. However, it would be important to seek out the many informal networks and communities of practice, such as Aileen described which was based within her School, as they may need the most initial support.

7.3 How do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?

The analysis of data in this research shows that lecturers engage in professional learning

(a) formally,

(b) informally and

(c) through reflective practice, which may be part of formal or informal learning activities.

7.3.1 Formal learning

My research evidences that lecturers within this institution engage in learning in a variety of formal formats:

- Initial accredited programme
- Continuing to another accredited programme
- Formal scholarship of teaching and learning

DIT has an extensive range of formal learning opportunities for lecturers. These were depicted in activity theory models as Mediating Artefacts. The Findings indicated that lecturers appreciate these opportunities, in terms of what is on offer as well as the financial support. There were two respondents to the questionnaires who had completed two of the Masters programmes – the MA in Higher Education and the MSc in Applied eLearning. Others noted that they had completed the earlier Masters in Third Level Learning and Teaching. Two of the Assistant Heads of School had completed a Masters and another was completing CPD modules which form part of the Masters programmes - Academic Writing and Publishing, and Educational Research Methods.

These formal learning opportunities, in the form of accredited programmes and modules support lecturers' engagement in formal scholarship in teaching and learning. There are research elements within all of the accredited programmes such as the practitioner research project in the PG Diploma and more substantial research projects associated with the Masters level programmes. As there are assessments associated with the formal and accredited programmes and modules, this may prompt more engagement in the formal

sessions and a sense of achievement on successful completion and pride in gaining a formal qualification.

The Findings revealed that participants valued the opportunities to view others' teaching in the short micro-teaching sessions as well as the peer observations. They also had their teaching observed by a tutor. They also valued the opportunity to complete a module re-design (within the Diploma). As noted previously, the influence of colleagues while participating in a programme is substantial. Relationships are built with peers within the longer term programmes and even the five week CPD module, as participants meet regularly and engage in activities in class and out of class which rely on building trust and respect for each other. For example, the micro-teaching and observation exercises may result in some participants being exposed to peers which they are not used to. It may be difficult to achieve this sense of trust with a group of peers in other forms of learning such as informal or non-formal and non-accredited.

7.3.2 Non-formal learning

There were many forms of non-formal learning noted within the Findings. These included:

- Curriculum development
- Networking
- Own reading
- Own collaboration with colleagues.

Curriculum development was noted in the interviews with specific references in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.2.2) as a form of non-formal learning. For example, the format of a programmatic review was instigated by Stephen, who led this initiative within his School. He noted that he was trusted by his Head of School to do this, and linked it with another initiative within the School's programme. Another lecturer (Conor) gave the example of collaborating with colleagues on a series of new modules and how they learnt a lot from the process, about their understandings of relevant content but also gained insights into how colleagues' taught and assessed.

There were many examples of networking with colleagues and counterparts with most of these relating to disciplinary connections outside of the institution. There were some educational strands noted in disciplinary conferences and one lecturer noted his use of

Twitter for networking and following trends in relating to teaching in HE, especially in relation to the use of technology.

Trowler and Knight (2000) claim that most professional learning is “social, provisional, situated, contingent, constructed and cultural in nature” (p.37). Despite this assertion being noted almost 20 years ago, there has been little consideration of how to capitalise on this form of social learning within higher education. Clegg (2003) reiterated this lack of attention attributed to this form of learning noting “the tendency to forget about informal CPD in HE is in part due to reliance on a narrower range of theoretical work than that used in understanding other professions and workplace learning” (p.40).

Workplace learning is a relatively new term and is attributed to authors such as Billett (2006, 2009) and more recently Hart (2017) with her use of the term modern workplace learning. However, Appleby and Pilkington (2014) reference early work by authors such as Boud and Walker (1990) and Boud (1999, 2010) in their claim that “workplace learning is generally acknowledged to be most effective and most relevant to the learning of practitioners, particularly in education” (p.53). However, participants in this research clearly articulated how they feel unable to engage in social or workplace learning with colleagues due to a lack of time and also physical space. The physical configuration of shared offices with 16 lecturers in one space was highlighted. One lecturer compared this new configuration to the previous set up of small offices with two to three lecturers or single occupancy offices, and noted that there were more conversations around teaching in the shared social spaces than in the shared offices. Other participants noted this in terms of not engaging in as much social learning as they would like, with one lamenting the lack of comfortable social spaces.

There were clear indications that lecturers who had an orientation of being proactive in their professional learning were engaged in more non-formal learning, as presented in Section 5.3.2 than those who were being pragmatic. The examples of non-formal learning provided within the questionnaire and interviews corresponded with this, as examples of scholarly reading, supervision, examining and creating their own groups and communities. The realisation that there is learning occurring while engaging in work related tasks such as examining or supervision indicates an understanding that they are engaging in professional learning of their own volition in usual situated work activities, rather than perceiving

learning only occurring in organised and formal settings, which may be more associated with professional development.

7.3.3 Reflective practice

As noted in the Chapter 4 Findings: Questionnaire, section 4.7.1.4, many research participants referred to engaging in reflective practice or noting it as an activity which they found valuable within the programme and beyond. Within the interviews, one lecturer proclaimed “I am a reflective practitioner” (Claire) and she also referred to supporting her students to engage in reflective practice while on work placements. While there were no direct questions on reflective practice, it is perhaps not surprising that research participants would refer to it as a tool (Mediating Artefact) for their own learning or for their students. Reflective practice “is the dominant paradigm” (Fanghanel, 2012, p.36) within accredited programmes for lecturers. It has also been described as the underpinning or “theory of change” (Bamber, 2008, p.112) within a programme. The use of reflective practice is also evidenced in the assessment strategies of many programmes through portfolios and reflective essays, as in the DIT programmes and CPD modules.

According to Cooper (2005) if lecturers are required to participate in a compulsory programme on teaching, they may be incited to challenge and critique the validity of the programme. However, if the focus of the programme is on engaging in reflective practice, lecturers are more likely to consider their own practice and espoused beliefs and practices, than critique what may be presented as standard or expected practices. Kahn et al. (2012) advocate that within programmes predicated on promoting reflective practice, “participants are able to take a more active stance in shaping educational projects to ensure that connections are made with aspects of their practice” (p.865). This correlates with Trautwein, Nückles and Merkt (2015) who stress the need for authenticity of experiences within programmes to inform and support lecturers’ usual practice. This opportunity to engage in a review, reflect and evaluate their practices may be more akin to professional and workplace learning, where professionals are viewed as working on live projects.

As noted in Chapter 2 (section 2.4.3), Appleby and Pilkington (2014) asserted that professionals learn by engaging in their practice with an approach which includes reflection and scholarship. Within this section 2.4.3, two models for professional development were presented based on the work of Kennedy (2005) and Pill (2005). While Kennedy’s (2005)

collation of models did not specifically relate to HE or explicitly note reflective practice, it could be surmised that this practice was incorporated within some of the models such as Action Research and the Transformative models. Reflective Practice has been associated with action research (Hanratty, 2004; McMahon, 1999). Pill's (2005) models of professional development were based on research with new lecturers in HE and she noted reflective practice as a dominant model. Within this categorisation, reflective practice was deemed to a scholarly and critical model in comparison to others based on skills and competencies.

Educational developers would probably position their programmes and the other professional development activities with the transitional or the transformative category (Kennedy, 2005, p.248) and reflective practice (Pill, 2005), as the approaches are open for lecturers to determine their own learning goals. An example of this would be the action research projects within the PGDHE in the Maynooth programme or the Practitioner Research Project in the DIT PG Diploma.

The DIT diploma programme, like many others, supports lecturers becoming and being reflective practitioners, but do they continue to engage in reflection and learning beyond their participation in the programme? My only previous insight of their continuing professional learning is through their engagement in formal learning opportunities which are usually organised by the LTTC.

While reflective practice and engaging in reflective writing emerged strongly from the data provided within the questionnaires and within some interviews, reflective practice did not arise significantly within the analysis using activity theory. While Fanghanel (2004) referred to reflective practice being within Mediating artefacts, in my research there were many other Mediating artefacts referred to in terms of how lecturers engage in professional learning, so it may have been more obscured than the other tools and strategies the research participants mentioned.

It may be the case that unless reflective practice is supported by formal or collaborative non-formal learning, it may not be a strategy that all graduates of a programme would continue to engage in for their professional learning unless they engage in it as part of professional learning for their discipline or professional practice. Many are supporting others so may value it and have developed a habit of engaging it. It is the approach used

within the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland's CPD framework which is an e-portfolio based self-reflective model (PSI, 2017). The national Framework is also based on a "cyclical, reflective process" and involves documenting "evidence-based reflection" (National Forum, 2016, p.8).

7.4 How can educational developers further support lecturers' professional learning?

This is the research question which prompted me to commence this research and this professional doctorate. As an educational developer and programme director, I kept asking myself this question as I would wave off one cohort of graduates from a programme, while welcoming in another cohort. I have been involved in supporting lecturers and graduate teaching assistants in relation to teaching for over 17 years. My role has afforded me opportunities to work with and learn from lecturers from across a diverse range of disciplines in a variety of HEIs, while meeting them within programmes, projects and informal settings. While I was involved in supporting their professional learning in formal programmes and projects, I felt that I did not have an insight into their usual work and learning environment. I suspected that some of the innovative practice and discussions on practice which were evidenced within programmes and projects were not sustainable for some lecturers after completion of these formal activities.

This research afforded me the opportunity to step outside my usual position within a classroom, office or meeting room, to gain a greater insight into the broader institutional context. I would have assumed that as an educational developer I had a mediating role between the micro level of individual lecturers and the meso of the institution. Rowland's (2007) characterisation of educational developers as in a position of either compliance or contestation would have prompted me to consider my role and optimistically align with a critical, contesting and questioning position rather than one of compliance with managements' directives. This more subservient position may be the one lecturers perceive and even to the point of viewing educational developers as 'street level bureaucrats' (Land, 2004).

Barnett (1992) advised that students participating in higher education could engage in troubling activities of "critical dialogue, of self-reflection, of conversations, and of continuing redefinition" (p.16). He asserts that these notions do justice to the idea of higher education. As an educator within higher education, I wanted to use the experience

of this professional doctorate, to engage in critical reflection and immerse myself in reflective activities which I support others to do. I relished the opportunity to engage in authentic reflection as advocated by Barnett (1997) as an opportunity for intellectual space.

Based on my review of the findings from this case study research, I have a more informed and rounded understanding and appreciation of the lecturers' working and learning environments. Educational developers can take a stronger role as advocates for lecturers' continuing professional learning, in their departmental and School environment. This can be aligned with the shift in the educational developer role in Australia, as noted by Debowski (2014) and the transition from educational developers being perceived as a teaching expert and agent for change to more of a partner working with academic leaders to support change.

An early finding for me from the literature review undertaken was the renaming and re-conceptualising of what we usually term as professional development, and to frame this more positively as professional learning. As expressed by McWilliam (2002) and Lebowski (2014), development insinuates a deficit model, whereas learning puts the onus on the participant and implies a more personalised and committed engagement in the process. This use of terminology was profiled in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.3.2).

An overall finding, linked with the recommendations in Chapter 8 (Section 8.5) is the need to recognise and address the constraining factors impinging on lecturers' ability to engage in and continue professional learning. While some of these are structural and beyond the scope of educational developers, the underlying discourse around teaching and professional learning is a key area for educational developers to address. This could be achieved through formal structural constructs of committees as well as through advocacy in an advisory capacity.

It would be important for education developers to look for formal and informal opportunities to engage and dialogue with management with a view to collaborating. Educational developers should position themselves as informed advisors who can build on facilitation skills to collaborate and provide support for groups of lecturers at School and departmental level. This could be through formal curriculum development projects as well

as through support for organic communities of practice. While some examples of this already exist, this research has highlighted the need for those within the meso level of the institution to support the lecturers and assistant heads of school at a micro level.

Further support for the programme teams involved in curriculum development will enhance the impact of professional learning for students. This was advocated by Knight (1998) and Knight and Trowler (2002) and adopts the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) approach to committed and collaborative learning. This also bolsters the enthusiastic lecturers to take an extended orientation to professionalism and professional learning, rather than focus only on their own practice (Hoyle, 1975; Evans, 2007; 2008).

One of the potentially key drivers for practice of educational developers in the near future is the implementation of the National Forum's national professional development Framework. As noted previously, the consultation phase for this commenced at the same time as this research. The findings have recorded the research participants' awareness and understanding of such a framework. The final Framework is currently being piloted but it will undoubtedly become a tool or Mediating Artefact for use by lecturers, but it may be educational developers locally within their institutions promoting and profiling it. Unless it becomes linked with institutional policies or structural constructs, such as PMDS, it may not be adopted by busy lecturers.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how the Findings have addressed the research questions. The outcomes from the analysis of the questionnaires, interviews and the use of activity theory have been discussed and contextualised with insights from the literature. The significance of moving from the micro level of the individual research participants to the meso level of their departmental and institutional contexts as well as the macro national level through the use of activity theory has been instrumental in gaining a broader perspective on the overall context of professional learning. A summary of the findings based on the discussions above are presented in the final adaption of the Appleby and Pilkington (2014) model in Figure 7.2:

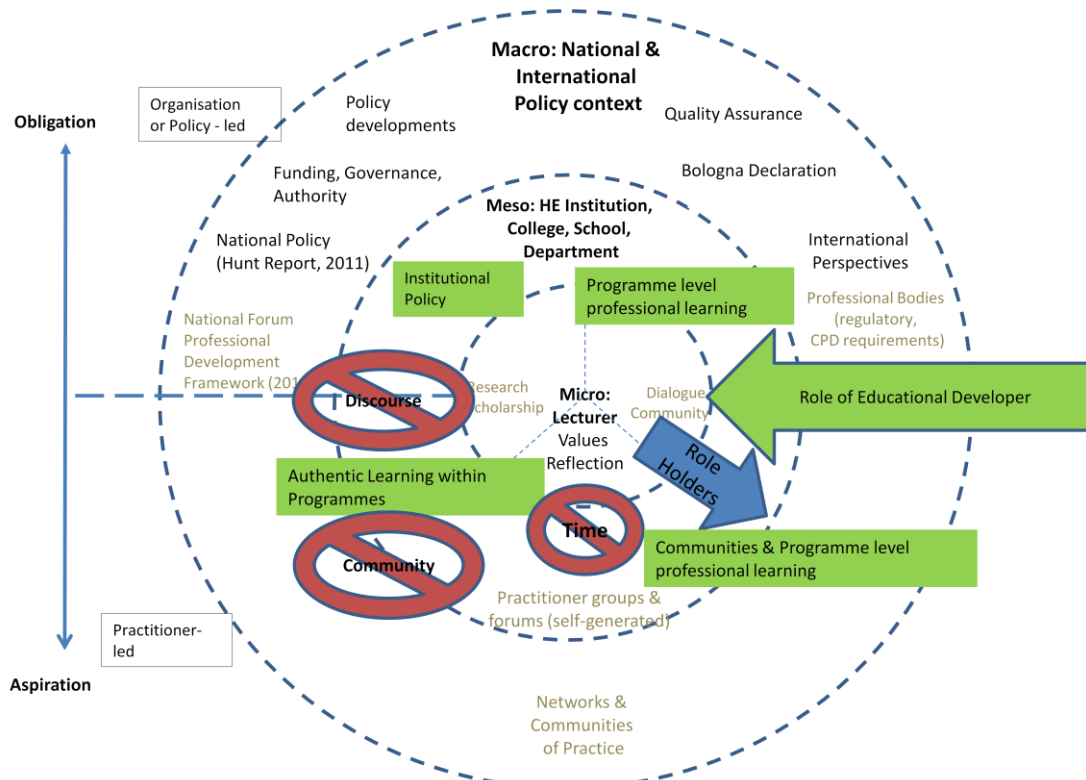


Figure 7:2 Final adaption of the Appleby & Pilkington (2014) model presenting the summary of Findings.

The key points emerging from this chapter are presented in green and shall be explored further in Chapter 8 Conclusions and Recommendations. The implications for the practice of educational developers have been articulated within the recommendations in the final chapter.

Chapter 8 Conclusions and Recommendations

“In dreams begin responsibility” (Yeats, 1914/1956)

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of this research. It provides a summary of the key findings, as well as the strengths and limitations of the research. This is followed by the contributions made by this thesis and clear recommendations for practice and further research.

8.2 Summary of Findings

The research questions identified in Chapter 2 and addressed throughout this thesis were:

- Why do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How do lecturers engage in professional learning in relation to their teaching?
- How can educational developers further support professional learning?

Based on the discussions within Chapter 7 and presented in Figure 7.1 as findings and Figure 7.2 as conclusions, the four key findings shall now be summarised prior to the presentation of associated recommendations for both practice and policy.

8.2.1 Authentic learning within programmes leads to continuing professional learning

The findings from this research clearly indicate that lecturers engage in authentic learning within the initial accredited programmes. Trautwein et al. (2015) highlight that programmes should align with lecturers’ practice. This research has evidenced that the DIT programmes prompt and facilitate practice-based, professional learning. This was evidenced in the examples provided by the research participants and profiled as mediating artefacts within the activity systems. These included teaching observations; curriculum re-design and practitioner research projects.

The dialogue within the facilitated discussions by tutors and informal conversations with peers prompt participants to consider not only their practice but their underlying beliefs and values around teaching and supporting learning. Participants within programmes are introduced to the language and discourse associated with teaching, learning and assessment and scholarship in relation to it. This engagement with the discourse around teaching in higher education supports self-directed and continuing professional development. The initial programme provides a platform or springboard from which to

engage in further professional learning in relation to teaching. It also supports engagement in research and scholarship in areas of interest.

Reflective learning strategies prompted through the writing and assessment activities provide participants with the intellectual space to question their practice and values. While this may not be formally continued by all graduates, the practice within the sessions and curricular drives to include reflective practice for students may reinforce participants' value for this tool which they may engage in, even informally.

The discourse around teaching within the formal and informal settings at a national level through the National Forum Professional Development Framework and among educational developers is raising the issue of professionalism and professional learning. However, this discourse needs to be shared across the institutional communities, especially with management and role holders. This research highlighted the lack of awareness among the role holders interviewed about the launch of the national Framework.

There was a clear sense of excitement and interest conveyed by some participants after their engagement in the programmes. However, for some the lack of collegial support and respect diffused this enthusiasm. It can be difficult for lecturers themselves to generate professionalism from within, without support. The default position may be to be led by professionalism from above. Therefore, it would be important to strive to sustain and augment the levels of enthusiasm around teaching and learning that may emanate from participation in an initial programme. It would be important for Educational Developers to help nurture the energy and sense of commitment that lecturers demonstrate in relation to their professional learning within the programme and support this to flourish.

8.2.2 Institutional policy drives professional learning more than national level structures

A unique feature of this case study research is that there were two institutional policies relating to engagement in professional learning in accredited programmes in place, while associated national level recommendations were being implemented. One institutional policy was a condition of contract for those new to their lecturing role as an Assistant Lecturer. The other policy was a criterion for promotion from the grade of Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer. The existence of these policies prompted many lecturers to participate in an initial programme and many subsequently decided to continue engaging in professional learning relating to teaching.

The DIT policies (2006) were in place and being implemented while national recommendations (Hunt Report, 2011), the National Professional Development Framework (2016) and European guidelines (HLG, 2013) were still being considered. . As noted in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2), there can be a delay in implementing national policy. Institutions need to author their own policies. This seems prudent, as this research evidences that the institutional context in terms of Rules, Community and Division of Labour is important in terms of enabling and constraining professional learning.

Some participants in this research stated that they were motivated to participate in an accredited programme prior to and without the obligation of institutional policy introduced in 2006. Some also noted that as completion of a programme is a criterion for promotion from AL to L, they were keen to participate to develop their careers and progress within the institution.

8.2.3 Educational developers are instrumental in implementing policy and supporting practice

This thesis outlined the emergence of the role of the educational developer in Ireland. The research findings highlighted how instrumental these specialised roles are in designing, developing and facilitating authentic and valued professional learning experiences for the lecturers within this HEI. It is difficult to envisage how the level and scope of lecturers' professional learning could have been achieved without the mediating role of the educational developer in implementing both national and institutional level policy. The insights from role holders within the institution indicate that they have many other priorities, and while supporting their colleagues' professional learning and development are among these, the heavy teaching loads and vast array of programmes, as well as high level institutional developments may often take priority over individual lecturers' learning.

8.2.4 Professional learning and development needs to be focused on communities and programme teams rather than individual lecturers.

A key finding to emerge from this research is that the pervasive and common focus of professional learning and development on individual lecturers may be limiting the scope for enhancing their own and their students' learning. A programme or project level focus is more collegial and reflective of real world team working than an individual level. As noted within the Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews, Section 5.3.2, pockets of good or excellent

teaching practice are inadequate when it comes to providing a consistent high-quality student learning experience across a programme. A collaborative approach is also more enriching scholarly and reflects the collective learning trends which underpin many innovative curriculum and learning strategies for other professionals and students.

8.3 Strengths and limitations of the research

8.3.1 Strengths

Apart from the timeliness of this research at this particular moment in time in Irish higher education, the individual elements convey unique strengths.

8.3.1.1 Literature Review

The thesis has presented a comprehensive literature review which exposed the gap in the literature on lecturer learning relating to work based and informal learning in Ireland within the context of a drive for professionalism in relation to the teaching role. This research filled that gap and informed and validated the research questions and objectives. It has contributed to new literature on areas such as the emergence of the role of the educational developer in Ireland, the paradigms of professionalism and applications within higher education. The account of the historical developments in Irish higher education building from 1922 to the present day has chronicled the social, political and economic influences on higher education and specifically in terms of supporting lecturers' professional learning through commitment of resources to educational development. The extensive exploration of professionalism generally and specifically to teaching in higher education can be offered as a current account of this emerging theme in Irish governance of increased accountability and performativity.

8.3.1.2 Methodology

The research employed a robust design which was implemented in an ethical and responsible manner. The theoretical framework was adopted after critical reflection on my position as a researcher and an extensive review of literature. The use of Engeström's (2001) activity theory enabled an investigation of the complex activities of lecturers as part of a number of systems and members of communities of practice.

The case study design was rigorous and involved the use of two substantial data collection strategies to provide a comprehensive and valid insight into this case with rich data. The inductive data analysis strategy used an iterative process and three stages to ensure that all

data was carefully and reliably analysed. This resulted in significant insights into the experiences of participants.

8.3.2 Limitations

While all efforts were made to address any potential limitations in preparation and during this research and accompanying thesis, there are some limitations which need to be acknowledged. These are presented based on the associated chapters or sections within the thesis.

8.3.2.1 Literature review

The literature review as presented in Chapter 2 is comprehensive as stated above. However, an even more extensive literature was reviewed in preparation for and during this research, and due to word limitations, large sections had to be edited to comply with the word limitations of a professional doctoral thesis. An extensive account of the historical emergence of Irish higher education institutions was conducted as well as in-depth reviews of contemporary Irish and international policy contexts. It is anticipated that these accounts can be published in subsequent formats such as journal article or a chapter in an edited book.

8.3.2.2 Methodology

Most educational research projects are constrained by time and availability of participants, and therefore there are some limitations to the research. A greater number of participants and more variety in terms of involvement of other role holders, such as Heads of Learning Development would have added breadth to the case study. The additional perspectives and the broader scope may however, have proved beyond what was both required and or manageable.

8.3.2.3 Activity Theory

The use of activity theory as a theoretical framework proved to be extremely useful in capturing a holistic view of the lecturers' learning environment, particularly in relation to their meso level context of the department, school and overall institution. However, a limitation with the use of activity theory as a framework is that when determining elements within the models, there is a loss of some emphasis on individuals as they are subsumed into collective Subjects. I tried to offset this by modelling activity systems on different profiles of subjects and associated objects such as lecturers who were deemed to be proactive in contrast to subjects who were more pragmatic. I also differentiated between lecturers and role holders with the use of different activity systems based on contrasting Subject profiles.

As an educational developer, I conducted this research from my perspective in that role. In a broader project, conducted over a longer period of time, other educational developers could have been included. However, a key focus of the research was to give voice to the lecturers, and greater inclusion of other role holders and educational developers' perspectives might have shifted the focus of the research.

8.4 Contributions made by this thesis

This thesis has documented the emergence of the role of the education developer in Ireland within the context of significant changes in education in the 20th and 21st centuries. There are no other similar accounts of published literature, although some unpublished work on educational technologists has addressed similar themes (McNutt, 2010). Dissemination of this research beyond the thesis will be a significant contribution to the literature on educational development in Ireland. Prospective avenues for publication would be the AISHE-J and the recently established journal *Policy Reviews in Higher Education*.

This research provided a unique opportunity to capture lecturers' and role holders' sense of awareness of national level policy, especially in relation to the recommendations of the Hunt Report. It was also timely in the contemporaneous development of the National Professional Development Framework. The implementation of the framework may now be an opportunity to apply my own sense of professional learning.

I have combined activity theory with a thematic approach within my analytical strategy in order to model the activity systems. I have also applied this in the context of an institutional case study focusing on three accredited programmes. This has not previously been attempted. I have outlined a research design that other researchers could apply based on my clear description of the process.

One of the main contributions is the documenting of how lecturers engage in informal professional learning within small groups and disciplinary communities. As an educational developer, I need to be more cognisant of the potential to build disciplinary or theme / project related group works, as opposed to supporting individuals (Jenkins, 1996). This group based approach to engaging and supporting professional learning is more akin to real-world professional learning.

8.5 Recommendations

I have used the heuristic of '2020' to signify the year of 2020 and also in the sense of 2020 vision. If as an educational developer, I could have a clear vision of how I would like to be supporting lecturers' professional learning by the year 2020, I would base this around the following two lenses which are the guiding principles and frame my contributions:

- Practice
- Policy

I am presenting the recommendations for educational developers in the case study institution of DIT and also for the national community of educational developers. I have also identified recommendations for other key stakeholders within the community of higher education such as management and role holders in DIT and other HEIs and policy makers. At the outset, I acknowledge that resources would be required to implement these recommendations.

8.5.1 Recommendations for the practice of Educational Developers in DIT

8.5.1.1 Accredited learning should continue

It is evident from the findings within this research that there is a strong legacy of excellent practice by educational developers within DIT over the past 18 years. A key area of their practice is the development, facilitation and evaluation of a suite of accredited programmes and CPD modules. The first recommendation from this research is that this excellent work should continue. Trautwein et al. (2015) advocated that programmes should be more aligned with the practice of lecturers. However, this does not seem to be an issue for the DIT programmes profiled within this research with graduates acknowledging how the programme activities and assessments encouraged authentic learning in and about practice.

An aspect of the accredited programmes which participants found particularly valuable was the opportunity to engage in observations of teaching by peers and tutors as noted in Chapter 4 Findings: Questionnaire (section 4.7.1.1) and Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews (5.5.1). These were also identified as mediating artefacts within the activity systems 1 and 2 in Chapter 6 Findings: Activity Systems. It is recommended that further opportunities for peer and or tutor observations are facilitated beyond the programmes. It would be ideal if these were peer observations within Schools to support intradisciplinary learning and also across Schools to facilitate interdisciplinary learning. The role of the educational developer would be to support the formative nature of this professional learning opportunity with the

provision of observation templates and or further guidelines on creating and maintaining collegial, formative relationships throughout the process. This would further support lecturers who are engaging in the national Framework as it would provide the opportunity to capture feedback on their teaching practice and become a source of evidence to inform reflection and learning.

During the timeframe of this research, a new CPD module was introduced: Academic Leadership in Learning, Teaching and Assessment. This was designed for Heads of School, Assistant Heads of School and programme co-ordinators and it evidences the ability of the team of educational developers to meet the ongoing needs of the DIT community. This relies on the educational developers being cognisant of the needs of the entire community of lecturers and senior management and supporting them in strategic developments in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. It would be important to research the impact of this new module on the individual participants and review how the module could be further developed and how the participants could be further supported in a collective. Activity theory could be used to conduct this research. It would be ideal to maintain the momentum generated by this new module, and the group could be brought back together online or in person to discuss new developments such as the launch of the national Professional Development Framework.

8.5.1.2 Curriculum development within teams should be nurtured

Since the commencement of this research, the educational developers in DIT have begun working with programme teams within Schools. This, as discussed in 7.3.2 and other research by Benfield (2008), and the model of Course Design Intensives developed by Oxford Brookes University (2017) suggest that the findings from this research are a sound and strategic approach. Working with lecturers from a discipline, or department or school as an entire programme team allows all to collaborate together on new or existing programmes with tailored support from educational developers. It is recommended that this team based approach to curriculum development continues. However, there may need to be more careful communication around the involvement of educational developers, as one research participant who was involved in this school level initiative described the approach as the “fire brigade coming in” (Kenny). This may imply that the School team resented the support from outside their programme team, as they may have perceived the support as a deficient model. Therefore, clear communication on the role of the

educational developers and an acknowledgement of the responsibility for the programmes is with the discipline experts within the school's programme teams would be essential. It would be ideal to evaluate and research this curriculum development approach to educational development work. This would also facilitate some exploration of the roles of programme teams and educational developers within this context.

8.5.1.3 Additional types of non-formal learning should be supported

This research evidences the extent of non-formal and non-accredited professional learning which participants engage in relating to teaching as highlighted by questionnaire respondents in Section 4.9.2 and discussed in Section 7.3.2. While educational developers, like the lecturers are heavily engaged in supporting accredited learning within the accredited programmes, it would be ideal to identify more strategies to support non-formal and non-accredited learning, especially for those who have completed an accredited programme. This could be in the form of advising on action learning and action research which the lecturers could lead and implement themselves, ideally as groups within Schools or based on projects of interest as this would build on existing group activities as discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.2.4 based on findings noted in Chapter 5, Section 5.5 of Findings: Interviews and the Community component of Activity Systems in Chapter 6.

8.5.1.4 Some non-formal learning should be accredited

It is also recommended that a strategy could be developed to recognise and or accredit some of the non-formal or currently non-accredited learning. This may be akin to recognition of prior learning, which some participants referred to in relation to acknowledging retrospectively learning they had engaged in. However, educational developers could support a prospective approach to professional learning in the form of designing an action research project. This may incorporate non-formal learning and support recognition of evidence-based learning. For example, a module could be developed to support this such as a Graduate Attributes Approach to Scholarly Teaching in Action (GASTA). Lecturers could identify graduate attributes of a professional lecturer and gather evidence of their professional learning in relation to new knowledge, skills and values. It could be framed within a 5 ECTS negotiated learning module, with at least one form of evidence as a presentation as part of the annual institutional showcase and or submit scholarship to the institutional or national journal. Such evidence could be enacted to suit the lecturer's needs, perhaps in the form of an eportfolio. Educational developers could

develop the framework to facilitate this, but the lecturer would lead their own learning. It would be ideal to involve a mentorship element from a School or an education developer.

8.5.1.5 Best practice needs to be disseminated more widely through scholarship

Educational developers create and support many forms of dissemination of scholarship and good practice in teaching, learning and assessment. However, there seemed to be a lack of awareness of some of these, with little reference to the online journal Irish Journal of Academic Practice, Teaching Matters blog and newsletter, annual showcase and Teaching Fellowship reports. One Assistant Head of School suggested that there could be an online database of good practice which lecturers could search based on topics or areas of interest. While this is currently possible through the use of the online journal Irish Journal of Academic Practice, which was initiated and developed by educational developers in DIT, this could be promoted more widely and regularly. The DIT library facilitates the dissemination of papers and projects involving DIT lecturers through the online repository Arrow. However, this may also need to be promoted more extensively to lecturers throughout DIT. Educational developers could assist in this by noting new additions in the blog and newsletter Teaching Matters, and by drawing on local projects as well as national, international research and practice in their teaching.

8.5.1.6 Teaching values should be articulated at School and Institutional Levels

This research identified a lack of a shared discourse around professionalism associated with teaching in HE as highlighted in Section 5.2 in Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews. While educational developers in DIT are involved in the institutional Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy committee, there could be more opportunities to support lecturers and management within Schools, Colleges and at Institutional level to discuss and articulate their aspirations for professionalism in teaching in HE. While many lecturers have articulated their teaching values within their Teaching Philosophy Statements as part of the accredited programmes, this is at an individual lecturer level and it would be ideal if communities of lecturers shared their aspirations and intentions around teaching within their discipline or profession. This would encourage intradisciplinary professional learning and may lead to articulation of signature pedagogies within disciplines and Schools. It is also opportune to develop a clear statement of teaching philosophy at School, College and Institutional level as the institution in the advent of institutional status and entity as Ireland's first Technological University. Educational developers could support an explicit documenting of educational values of Technological University lecturers.

8.5.1.7 Activity Theory has potential for further research

Based on the use of activity theory within this research as documented within Chapter 3 and illustrated within the analysis in Chapter 6, it is recommended that a group of educational developers in DIT further explore the activity of professional learning in relation to teaching across the entire institution or within a College. This could involve students and management, with each group contributing to modelling their Activity Systems. The activity systems created within this research could be used as samples to prompt discussion. The data analysis approach could be used as a framework by other researchers. This research could be extended to involve the team of educational developers and apply an extension of Engeström's (2001) work based on the Change Lab approach.

8.5.2 Recommendations for the practice of Educational Developers Nationally

The recommendations for educational developers in DIT are applicable to many educational developers in other Irish HEIs. Indeed, they may also resonate with Heads of Learning Development, Heads of Departments, Deans of Teaching and Learning, and other senior management. As a case study with potential applicability across the sector, particularly with regards the IoT cohort, the recommendations may also be of value and interest to colleagues in the National Forum. Hence, in addition to the institutional level recommendations noted above, there are recommendations for educational developers at a national level.

The launch of the National Professional Development Framework will have implications for all educational developers in Irish HEIs. However, there is currently no legislation regarding its adoption. It may perhaps, be linked with the recommendation from the Hunt Report (2011) that:

All Higher Education Institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support on-going development and improvement of their skills (DES, p.62).

This research has identified implications for the practice of educational developers in terms of supporting lecturers' continuing professional learning and the recognition of professional learning within a framework.

8.5.2.1 Educational Developers need to support the articulation of values, knowledge and skills in Irish HE

The lack of shared discourse around professionalism and teaching identified within Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews and specifically in Section 5.2 and in Chapter 6 Findings: Activity Systems in terms of contradictions within communities could be addressed by educational developers facilitating discussions and through the articulation of professional values, knowledge and skills associated with teaching in Irish HE. The new Framework prompts this through the use of the domains of 'Professional Identity, Values, and Development' and 'The Self' (National Forum, 2016, p.3). It is recommended, based on this research, that educational developers prioritise discussions on these domains as they can underpin and support commitment to professional learning in other domains in areas around skills and knowledge. This can be directly linked to Barnett & Coate's (2005) assertion that 'being' underpins knowing and acting. This could initially be facilitated through EDIN to allow educational developers from across the country to articulate their values and identify how they could support lecturers to document their professional learning and development within the relevant domains of the PDF. Workshops could be organised through the National Forum and supported by AISHE and EDIN.

It would be ideal for educational developers to contribute to the implementation of this PDF with lecturers in their own institutions and also to engage in the PDF for their own professional learning. Based on this research, it is recommended that educational developers engage in conversations on this as a collective community through EDIN.

8.5.2.2 Formal and non-formal learning needs to be promoted further

The significance of supporting continuing professional learning through formal, informal and non-accredited learning opportunities was identified within this research. While it is important that lecturers as individuals and communities lead their own professional learning, educational developers can support their learning by highlighting the range of learning opportunities available. Many of the research participants were not aware of the range of opportunities available or did not recognise their existing learning.

Activity theory could be used as a theoretical framework for a national review of professional learning. The National Forum conducted an initial review of non-accredited learning which they published as a snapshot (December, 2015). It is recommended that a national level research project could be conducted to explore professional learning of

lecturers in various HEI contexts. This could allow for the identification of differences within and across contexts such as universities and IoTs which may relate to structural constructs as highlighted in Section 7.2.3.1 and 7.2.3.2 in Chapter 7 Discussion.

8.5.3 Recommendations for Policy

8.5.3.1 Educational Developers should be more closely involved in policy-making and implementation

This research has demonstrated the significant role that policy has played in prompting and promoting lecturers' engagement in accredited learning, as evidenced in Chapter 4 Findings – Questionnaire, Section 4.5, Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews, Section 5.3.1 and with policy as perceived as a Rule within the analysis of the various activity systems in Chapter 6 Findings: Activity Systems. Educational developers could use this research to acknowledge the extensive and far-reaching professional learning which has taken place based on the existing DIT institutional policies relating to lecturers engagement in professional learning. It is recommended that educational developers are involved in further development of institutional and national policy relating to this (Smith, 2016).

The impact of institutional policy is evidenced in this research, and it is recommended that educational developers embed the national Framework within institutional policy on professional learning. This may be linked with participation in accredited programmes. As DIT is the only institution among Irish HEIs to have a policy on participation in an initial accredited programme, other educational developers could learn from DIT educational developers about initiating and implementing this policy.

In this research, lecturers were found to have a more critical sense of professionalism than policy makers. There could be greater opportunities for discourse around professionalism involving lecturers, policy makers, educational developers and lecturers.

It would be ideal to capture a shared set of values within the institution and this could easily be linked with the advent of Technological University status. It could be facilitated within each DIT College and School, as well as within an institutional set of values. While mission statements exist, it is an opportune time for a greater focus on these at College and School level. These values could then be linked to teaching and learning strategies for programmes. What does it mean to be a university (Barnett, 2011) especially when DIT as

an institution is becoming closer to university status with their application to become Ireland's first Technological University along with partners in two other IoTs.

8.5.3.2 Mentoring schemes should be developed as part of policy implementation

This research highlighted the need to acknowledge the role that some lecturers play in leading and mentoring others in terms of their professional learning, as noted in Chapter 5 Findings: Interviews, Section 5.5.2. While this may be a role for line managers within Schools and Colleges, educational developers could support the establishment of a mentoring scheme. This scheme would need formal acknowledgement from management and time allowances and formal recognition would need to be given to these lecturers for this role. This could link with a criterion in promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer.

8.5.3.3 Senior management need to protect professional learning in institutional policy

It is recommended that there is an allocation of time for professional learning within lecturers' timetables. The issue of time was noted by many respondents to the questionnaire and within interviews and discussed specifically in Section 7.2.3.1. For example, within the heavy teaching loads of IoT lecturers of up to 20 hours teaching per week, one hour could be assigned for professional learning. Some participants in this research stated this as an aspiration and it would be ideal if it was protected for learning relating to teaching of the discipline or specific areas of interest, for example, the use of technology. This could be communicated as time for reflection and 'head space' within a busy timetable.

At a School level, it is recommended that at least one hour per semester is allocated within School meetings to discuss and share practice on teaching and learning. This could take the form of two 30 minute slots, four 15 minute slots or one full hour. It is recommended that this time be scheduled at stages in the academic calendar to allow for optimal learning and engagement for example, at the beginning of the semester and at the end. This would encourage conversations about teaching and learning from within the community of lecturers and management in the form of intradisciplinary professional learning.

It is recommended that lecturers who have demonstrated good practice in teaching are not perceived to be penalised by being given teaching commitments in 'pressure points' such

as large first year classes and final years students. The issue was identified in the research and associated with Division of Labour in the Activity Systems, where some lecturers and role holders expressed dismay at a lack of fairness regarding teaching loads. It is recommended that a working group is established to explore potential solutions to this issue, as currently, lecturers who have invested time and energy into developing their teaching feel they are “put in at the pressure points but there is a lot of people that aren’t doing any of that” (Aileen). It would be valuable to support the committed and innovative lecturers and recognise them as those who lead with vision and values of being professional lecturers as a community. This is captured by Yeats in his poem *Responsibilities* (1914; 1956) with the assertion that within dreams, there must also be responsibilities.

8.5.3.4 Campus development policies need to make space for informal professional learning

In addition to an allocation of time for professional learning, it is recommended that physical space is also prioritised to facilitate this. Research participants commented on how the physical environment of large shared offices mitigated against opportunities to engage in professional learning and this is discussed in Section 7.2.3.1. It is recommended that social and work spaces are identified to facilitate more opportunities for professional learning. When designing campuses for students, there is an emphasis on social learning spaces, and the same sense of learning space should be afforded the lecturers to support their professional learning.

8.5.3.5 Performance management systems need to recognise and reward professional learning relating to teaching

Professional learning should be more positively profiled in constructs such as the Performance Management Development System with line managers and the QA systems. While it was noted in this research that these schemes are used within the DIT in Section 5.4.1.1, there could be greater emphasis on the appraisal of professional learning relating to teaching within this documentation to recognise existing professional learning and support goals in terms of professional learning.

It is also recommended that a criterion is articulated relating to leadership and mentoring in teaching as part of the promotion criteria to progress from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer. As the role of the Assistant Head of School seemed to be a leading role in relation to

supporting professional learning on teaching, it is also recommended that this aspect of the role is highlighted. A requirement for this role could be the completion of the new CPD module in Academic Leadership in Teaching, Learning and Assessment. This is based on comments that senior management did not seem to understand or care about the teaching aspect of the role of the lecturer.

8.6 Future research

This research could be taken forward in a number of potential directions. The original research design could be expanded to include a further series of interviews. Heads of Learning Development and Educational Developers could be interviewed to explore their insights on lecturers' learning within and beyond accredited learning opportunities. It would be interesting to explore whether the current or previous Heads of Learning Development completed an initial programme, and to discover how they view their role to support their College colleagues in engaging in professional learning. It would also be interesting to seek the views and perspectives of the educational developers within the team, as some may have initiated the launch and development of the programmes. As educational developers tend to be the main authors of the teaching and learning literature, the primary focus in this case study was to document the often neglected views of the lecturers, especially the graduates who may now be role holders.

The research design developed for this research could be used by other educational developers and researchers to investigate the learning experiences and similar activity systems within their own institutions. It could also be explored using a different lens. Research could be undertaken into group or team based professional learning in the context of higher education. While there is already a lot of research conducted on the work of educational developers, it tends to be self-reporting and it would be ideal to involve a group of policy-makers, senior-management, educational developers and lecturers in a research project around the implementation of policy. For example, an institutional case study could be conducted on the implementation of the national Professional Development Framework within an institutional case study, with the framework as a Mediating Artefact.

While this research has been conducted over two years, further longitudinal research could be carried out. This research has demonstrated that there is great value in seeking insights from lecturers who participated in an initial accredited programme 14 years on. I sought

insights from all graduates and the range of experiences from across the entire cohort of graduates was extremely beneficial for this research. It provided a breadth which could not have been achieved if I had only sought input from those who graduated recently or from over 10 years ago. While it would be more difficult to achieve, it would be ideal to conduct a longitudinal study on the learning experiences of lecturers to continue to engage in professional learning in relation to teaching beyond an initial accredited programmes. Research such as this could extend the work produced within this research, and further support long-term provision for lecturers. This focus on continuing professional learning of lecturers would be important as it is much neglected. Due to the evolving context of professional learning and the impending implementation of the national Framework, a longitudinal study would be valuable.

This research study is a unique account of an exploration into the learning experiences of a substantial cohort of lecturers from across an institution which has engaged in an accredited programme and those who have continued to engage in some form of professional learning. The relatively large number of respondents to the online questionnaire (n=50) is complemented by in-depth and far-reaching semi-structured interviews with 16 graduates of programmes which includes five role holders. As noted in Chapter 2 and Chapter 7, existing published research which focuses on one cohort and most often early career academics or lecturers. My current research supersedes that limitation and provides a comprehensive insight into the broader and more natural selection of a community of lecturers and management in a HEI, indeed the profession of lecturers.

8.7 Conclusion

The rationale for lecturers to participate in professional learning relating to their teaching was evidenced as being proactive or being pragmatic. Within the context of this institutional case study, the existence of policies prompted some lecturers to engage with professional learning, who may not have otherwise. The effects of this participation were the improvement in teaching practice. However, more tactic effects were evidence such as having the confidence to explore strategies within their teaching. The significant impact of time constraints within heavy teaching loads was clear. The influence of community was also substantial. Their communities can either further motivate them and inspire and

sustain them, or have a negative effect resulting in any initial enthusiasm and commitment being challenged and may ultimately wane.

There are currently many opportunities to continue to participate in formal professional learning through modules and workshops. While some participants did engage in informal and practice based learning, these networks of communities were organic and would need to be supported more to reach their full potential. There was evidence of substantial informal and scholarly professional learning situated in the disciplinary networks.

As an educational developer I am a mediator inspired to take a stronger stance as an advocate and supporter of more informal and organic learning communities. I am also more confident in my own sense of being an educational developer and knowing the potential of the role in terms of mediating between the micro and macro levels at the meso level. I have learned that the individual orientation to professional learning of being proactive or being pragmatic may alter for both lecturers and myself and potentially colleagues as educational developers. A commitment to being publicly proactive can inspire others.

To be or not to be a professional lecturer depends on me and we.

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Appendices

Appendix A: DIT Profile and Programmes

Appendix B: Research Ethics Submission

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

Appendix D: Consent Form

Appendix E: Questionnaire

Appendix F: Final Questionnaire with Responses

Appendix G: Interview schedule

Appendix H: Introduction to Researcher and Research

Appendix I: Text to accompany Transcript for Review by Interviewees

Appendix A: DIT Profile and Programmes

DIT – Profile of Case Study Institution, Programmes and Policies

Profile of Institution:

The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) was established as an autonomous higher education institution on January 1st, 1993, following the enactment of the Dublin Institute of Technology Act (1992). This new institute comprised of the amalgamation of six existing higher technical colleges which had a long history spanning from 1888 under the auspices of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (Duff, Hegarty and Hussey, 2000; Kenny, 2006). Apprenticeships and other strands of vocational education were maintained while other layers of higher education were developed to doctoral level. The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 enabled DIT to award degrees to doctoral level (Kenny, 2006).

The institute is the largest institute of technology in Ireland with over 20,000 registered students and over 2,000 members of staff. It is currently composed of four constituent Colleges: Arts and Tourism, Business, Engineering and the Built Environment, and Sciences and Health. These Colleges are located at various campus locations across the city of Dublin. The staff and students are in the process of re-locating to a single campus on a large site in the north inner city area of Grangegorman. As an institute, it is also in the process of merging with two smaller institutes of technology within the Dublin region with the purpose of a joint bid to become a technological university.

There have been substantial changes to the institute's programmes over its 129 history. Within the current President's welcome on the DIT website, he acknowledges that "colleagues bring creativity, experience, expertise and scholarship, combining the academic excellence of a traditional university with career-focused learning" (DIT, 2016). This emphasis on potential learning experiences related to careers is also captured in the articulation of the approach to teaching and research within DIT's published profile as incorporating opportunities for "practice-based learning, research using real-life issues, internship in the community or industry, volunteerism" (DIT, 2016). These public web-based introductions may be principally designed for prospective students, but they form part of the institute's public profile and could be perceived as applying to all learners including lecturers engaged in DIT's accredited programmes in teaching and learning.

Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTC):

The LTTC is the institute's centrally funded and supported unit for enhancing the learning experiences of students through the provision of opportunities for lecturers and academic leaders to engage in a diverse range of learning activities. These learning activities range from formal accredited postgraduate programmes and modules, to one to one consultations and collaborative whole School initiatives such as programme design intensives. The LTTC is now a team of 10 comprising of five learning development officers and elearning development officers in educational development roles lead by a Head of Learning, Teaching and Technology, Head of eLearning Support and Development and supported by an elearning support officer and programme administrator. The DIT established the Learning and Teaching Centre (LTC) in 1999 and the team of educational developers launched a suite of postgraduate programmes in teaching and learning in 2000 with their first graduates in 2001 and they are the longest running programmes in Ireland.

Programmes:

There were three programmes in the original suite comprising of a Postgraduate Certificate in Third Level Teaching and Learning (PG Cert), a Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching and a Masters in Third Level Learning and Teaching. Some lecturers enrolled in the PG Cert with the intention of completing all three programmes in the suite. The PG Cert and the Diploma were reviewed in 2008 and the Diploma became the initial programme in 2009 and the PG Cert was phased out. However, participants can still receive a PG Cert as an exit award for completing one module of the Diploma. An overview of the current Diploma provides an insight into the typical core components of these programmes:

Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching (60 ECTS)

The Diploma programme is facilitated over one year, part-time with face-to-face sessions taking place in a three hour period in a morning or afternoon. There are usually two intakes in September and January. The two component modules are:

Module 1: Professional Practice in Third Level Learning and Teaching;

Module 2: Curriculum Development and Practitioner Research.

Assessment is based on a reflective portfolio linking directly to each of the two modules. The core theme of reflective practice is embedded within this programme and the short

continuous professional learning (CPD) module: Introduction to Teaching, Learning and Assessment (5 ECTS) referred to within this research as TLA. This programme also includes a micro-teaching task, lesson planning and trialling strategies to engage students in active learning including technologies.

Policies relating to accredited teaching and learning programmes:

In 2006, the institution introduced a policy that it became a condition of contract that all new lecturers had to complete the initial accredited programme in teaching and learning within their first two years of appointment. The initial programme in 2006 was the PG Cert and as noted above since 2008, the Diploma was deemed the initial programme associated with this policy. An additional policy was that the completion of an accredited programme in teaching became a criterion for progression from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer in 2006.

Additional strategies to support engagement in teaching and learning:

Since 2009, the LTC joined colleagues in the Learning Technology Team to form the current Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (L TTC). In addition to offering the Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching as the core programme, they now offer a Masters in Applied eLearning and a Masters in Higher Education, as well as a wide range of CPD modules including some which are fully online and most have blended learning components.

College level Teaching Fellowships have been offered since 2009. These fellowships are awarded to individuals and teams to support work in developing and evaluating specific projects to enhance learning and or curriculum development at a programme, school or College level. Fellowship reports are published online for wide dissemination through the institute. Other seed-funded projects and initiatives are supported at an institutional and inter-institutional level.

Role of Head of Learning Development:

Each College has a Head of Learning Development whose responsibilities include supporting colleagues in academic quality and assurance associated with programmes, chairing college level academic quality enhancement committee and working with the constituent Schools on the development and validation of new programmes. An aspect of the national and institutional quality assurance process which is implemented in the IoT

sector is the use the Q6A form which is a survey of students by lecturers for each module. The Q5 is an annual process of programme monitoring. Both the Q5 and Q6 processes are overseen and supported by the Head of Learning Development within each College.

Appendix B: Research Ethics Submission

DECLARATION OF RESEARCH ETHICS AND/OR ASSESSMENT OF RISK

All research and scholarship proposals, whether funded or not by internal or external funds, must submit a RESEARCH ETHICS/ASSESSMENT OF RISK FORM to the DIT Research Ethics Committee.

This is a self-declaration process. The researcher is asked to formally identify any possible ethical issues or risks that might arise in the course of the work, and to sign the documentation.

Please refer to the Guiding Principles and Procedures indicated on the DIT Research Ethics website prior to completing this form:

- <http://www.dit.ie/DIT/graduate/ethics/index.html>

PLEASE NOTE

- You are requested to attach a copy of your research application to this form.
- The RESEARCH ETHICS /ASSESSMENT OF RISK FORM must be signed by the applicant(s)
- Ethical Approval must be granted prior to start of any research/scholarly activity or prior to funding being released for the project, as appropriate.
- No postgraduate research student will normally be registered until the proposal is cleared by the DIT Research Ethics Committee.

Completed forms should be returned to: Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of Graduate Studies, DIT, 143-149 Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin 6.

Title of the proposed project: Doctorate of Education Research on the professional learning experiences of DIT lecturers during and following completion of the DIT Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching.		
Applicant Details (Use Block Capitals):		
Surname: HANRATTY	Forename: ORLA	Title: Ms.
Present appointment: LEARNING DEVELOPMENT OFFICER		
School/Department/Centre: LEARNING, TEACHING & TECHNOLOGY CENTRE Faculty: DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH, ENTERPRISE & INNOVATION SERVICES Work Tel: 01 402 7872 Fax:		

E-mail: orla.hanratty@dit.ie

Other departments/organisations/individuals involved:

No other department is involved in the research team, but prospective subjects (participants) and respondents will be drawn from across DIT based on being graduates of the DIT LTTC Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching within the past five years.

Source of Funding: While the research project is not specifically funded, as the research is part of a Doctorate in Education (in Maynooth University) partial funding was received for the fees from the DIT Fee Support scheme.

Has the current research project already received approval from another research ethics committee? NO

If so, please enclose relevant information and documentation

Generic Projects:

Researchers may receive approval for a cluster of similar research activity by approval of a *generic protocol* to cover repetitive methodologies or activities. A *generic protocol* should comprise a covering letter setting out the circumstances and rationale for generic approval, outlining the procedures to be followed in all such projects, in addition to completion of the appropriate appendices.

If this project is part of a cluster of research with similar methodology, please tick here and submit a generic protocol to cover all such projects.

Insurance

Normally, DIT insurance covers standard research activity, including fieldtrips. Are you aware of any unusual or exceptional risks or insurance issues to which DIT's insurance company should be alerted? If so, please list the issues: NO; N/A

Please note that no contract should be entered into for clinical/medical (including drug testing) or surgical trials/tests on any human subject until written confirmation has been received from the DIT's insurers that the relevant insurance cover is in place.

Are you or any members of the research team a member of any organisation that provides professional indemnity insurance? NO

Name of the organisation:

Please provide written confirmation of the terms of insurance cover.

Professional Code of Conduct

Please reference, if appropriate, the Code of Ethical Conduct produced by your relevant

professional organization(s), which also informs your research.

Please note that: Where those requirements conflict with DIT requirements, the latter will normally be followed. In all such circumstances, please contact the Office of Research Ethics for clarification.

N/A

All researchers must confirm with the Data Protection Act 1988. Please consult the DIT Data Protection Officer for advice.

IDENTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ISSUES AND/OR RISK

Do any of the following ethical issues or risks apply in your research? If so, tick all box(es) which apply and complete the relevant Appendix, which can be downloaded from <http://www.dit.ie/DIT/graduate/ethics/index.html>

Yes	No	Does your research involve...
✓		Impact on human subject(s) and/or the researcher(s) [Appendix 1]
✓		Consent and advice form given to subjects prior to their participation in the research [Appendix 2]
	✓	Consent form for research involving 'less powerful' subjects or those under 18 years [Appendix 3]
	✓	Conflict of interest [Appendix 4]
	✓	Drugs and Medical Devices [Appendix 5]
	✓	Ionising Radiation [Appendix 6]
	✓	Neonatal Material [Appendix 7]
	✓	Animal Welfare [Appendix 8]
	✓	General Risk Assessment [Appendix 9]
	✓	Hazardous Chemical Risk Assessment [Appendix 10]
	✓	Biological Agents Risk Assessment [Appendix 11]
	✓	Work involving Genetically Modified Organisms Risk Assessment [Appendix 12]

✓ Field Work Risk Assessment [[Appendix 13](#)]

If other risk and/or ethical issues are identified please provide a written submission which outlines the issues and the manner in which they are being addressed.

Please tick the appropriate box below

No, there are no ethical issues and/or risks involved in your research project, **please tick here, and sign the declaration on page 5.**

Yes, there are ethical issues and/or risks involved in your research, **please tick here and complete the appropriate forms identified above.**

In accordance with the Principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and DIT Principles and Procedures, I declare that the information provided in this form is true to the best of my knowledge and judgement.

I will advise the DIT Research Ethics Committee of any adverse or unforeseen circumstances or changes in the research which might concern or affect any ethical issues or risks, including if the project fails to start or is abandoned.

Signature of applicant 1:



Signature of applicant 2: _____

Signature of applicant 3: _____

(An electronic signature is permissible)

Checklist

Please ensure the following, if appropriate, are attached:

Documents to be attached	Tick if attached	Tick if not appropriate
Research Proposal	✓	
Letters (to subjects, parents/guardians, GPs, etc)		✓
Questionnaire(s)	✓	
Advertisement/Poster		✓
Ethical clearance from other ethical research committees		✓

Copy of signed agreement of professional indemnity		✓
Generic Protocol		✓
Other (please specify)		
Impact on Subjects and/or researchers (Appendix 1)	✓	
Consent Form prior to participation (Appendix 2)	✓	
Participant Information Sheet	✓	
Questions for Focus Group / Interview	✓	

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

You are invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out by Orla Hanratty as part of a Doctorate in Education. Orla is a Learning Development Officer with the Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTC) in DIT, but this is a personal research project. Your participation in this research project is voluntary. Even if you agree to participate now, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences.

This research project is designed to explore the experiences of lecturers' professional learning and development in relation to their teaching in higher education. It is an explorative case study focusing on graduates of the DIT LTTC Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching.

If you agree to participate, this will involve the completion of an online questionnaire. There are 22 questions and it should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. If you volunteer to participate further in this research project that would involve attendance at a focus group or semi-structured interview at a DIT venue for approximately one hour. If you are unable to attend in person, a telephone interview may be arranged.

The focus group or interview will be recorded and transcribed, with any reference to your name or other details which may identify you or your students or colleagues, being removed during transcription. Recordings and transcripts will be stored securely and destroyed after the completion of the research project. All participants in focus groups will be reminded that comments made during the session are confidential and should not be repeated elsewhere.

You will not benefit directly from your participation in this research. However, you may find the process of discussing your approaches to professional learning and development of teaching beneficial. It is hoped that findings from this research will be beneficial to the LTTC in terms of supporting the provision of opportunities for professional learning and development in relation to teaching and learning within DIT.

Any information or data which is obtained from you during the process of this research project which can be identified or associated with you will be treated confidentially. This will be done by anonymising the data and any references to your College or School that you might make. The data will be kept securely by the researcher in a location separate to DIT.

Data from this research project will form part of a doctoral thesis and it may also be published publicly in the future. The original recording and all copies will be available only to the researcher.

If you have any questions about this research at any time, you can contact Orla Hanratty by emailing her at orla.hanratty@dit.ie.

Appendix D: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Researcher's Name: ORLA HANRATTY	Title: Ms
Faculty/School/Department: DIT Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTC)	
Title of Study: Doctorate of Education Research on the professional learning experiences of DIT lecturers during and following completion of the DIT Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching	
To be completed by the: Subject	
3.1 Have you been fully informed/read the information sheet about this study? YES/NO	
3.2 Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? YES/NO	
3.3. Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions? YES/NO	
3.4 Have you received enough information about this study and any associated health and safety implications if applicable? YES/NO	
3.5 Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• at any time• without giving a reason for withdrawing• without affecting your future relationship with the Institute YES/NO	
3.6 Do you agree to take part in this study the results of which are likely to be published? YES/NO	
3.7 Have you been informed that this consent form shall be kept in the confidence of the researcher? YES/NO	
Signed _____	Date _____
Name in Block Letters _____	
Signature of Researcher _____	Date _____

Appendix E: Questionnaire

Copy of online questionnaire administered in April 2015

Question no.	Topics / Full exact question <i>as appropriate</i>	Format
Section 1: You and Your Role		
1	Consent	Yes / No
2	Gender	Female / Male
3	DIT College	Drop-down list – 4 Colleges and ‘Other’
4	DIT School / Department	Open text
5	Main subject / discipline	Open text
6	Role when beginning programme	Drop-down list – HPAL, Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, ‘Other – please specify’
7	Years teaching in Higher Education	Drop-down list of 5 options from ‘Less than 2 years’ to ‘16 years or more’.
8	How many years work experience have you in your main discipline?	Drop-down list of 5 options from ‘Less than 2 years’ to ‘16 years or more’.
9	Member of Professional Body / Are you a member of a professional body associated with your discipline?	Yes / No
Section 2: The Programme		
10	When did you complete the Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching?	Drop-down list of years e.g. May 2009, Dec 2009, May 2010, Dec 2010 etc.
11	Briefly outline your reasons for participating in this programme:	Open comment box
Section 3: Aspects of the Programme		
12	<p>Consider what you believed were the important aspects of the programme you completed. Please rate each of the following in terms of how important you perceived them to be in the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Skills - Programme helped you to gain skills and change your teaching b. Development- Programme clarified or changed your focus from what you do in your teaching to your students and their learning c. Reflection – Programme developed you as a reflective practitioner (for example, so as to be able to recognise problems or justify teaching decisions) d. Student Learning – Programme helped you to understand better or improve (your) 	<p>Rating options: Not at all, Somewhat, Neutral, Important, Very important</p>

	<p>students' learning (for example, so your students focus on understanding, rather than reproduction of a subject)</p> <p>e. Conceptions – Programme developed or changed your conceptions of teaching away from teacher-focused towards a more student-focused approach</p>	
Section 4: Your Approach to Professional Learning during the postgraduate diploma programme:		
13	Briefly describe your experience of professional learning and development during the programme e.g. note what activities you found useful for supporting your learning about teaching	Open – comment
14	Estimate the average time you committed to professional learning and development during the programme (in addition to the scheduled class time):	Drop-down list of 4 options from '0-2 hours per week' to 'more than 8 hours per week'
15	Briefly describe the impact of participating in this postgraduate diploma in terms of changes in knowledge, skills and values associated with teaching:	Knowledge Skills Values
Section 5: Your approach to continuing your professional learning and development in relation to teaching:		
16	Indicate the accredited formal learning opportunities and experiences that you have availed of to support your continuing professional learning and development	Drop-down list: MA in Higher Education, MSc in Applied eLearning; 8 Modules as CPD; Other formal learning opportunities such as accredited programmes or modules, or non-accredited workshops (please specify)
17	Indicate the non-accredited informal learning opportunities and experiences that you have been involved in which has supported your continuing professional learning and development	Drop-down list: Curriculum development – self, Curriculum development - Collaborative with colleagues, DIT College Fellowship project, Mobile learning project, Networking with other lecturers (in person or online), Reading of scholarly publications relating to teaching, Scholarly research – self, Scholarly research with colleagues, Other non-accredited informal professional learning, please specify
18	How would you rate the influence of each of the following on your approach to professional learning and development in relation to teaching	Drop-down list: Self - own sense of professionalism, Student learning, Departmental, Other disciplinary, Institutional, Other, please specify
19	Briefly describe other professional learning and development opportunities which you consider would support you, which may not currently be available via	Open comment

	the Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTTC) within DIT	
20*	What do you consider to be the main barriers to your participation in CPD / professional learning?	Open comment
21	Professional Standards Frameworks- Overview of professional frameworks with example of UK's framework. Would you consider such a framework useful to guide your continuing professional learning and development, such as an institutional or national framework outlining suggested knowledge, skills and values associated with competence in teaching in higher education?	Yes / No
	Please support your response	Comment
22	Do you engage in professional learning and development in relation to your discipline?	Yes / No
	If yes, briefly outline how your experience of this impacts on your teaching development:	Comment
23	Would you like to participate in a follow up focus group or interview relating to this research? The focus groups will be College based and held in the main College site.	Yes / No

* The question on barriers was included in the questionnaires sent to the graduates of the Cert and TLA module, but not posed to graduates of the Diploma.

Appendix F: Final Questionnaire with Responses

Question no.	Topics / Full exact question <i>as appropriate</i>	Format	Response Rate
Section 1: You and Your Role			
1	Consent	Yes / No	50
2	Gender	Female / Male	50
3	DIT College	Drop-down list – 4 Colleges and 'Other'	50
4	DIT School / Department	Open text	46
5	Main subject / discipline	Open text	50
6	Role when beginning programme	Drop-down list – HPAL, Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, 'Other – please specify'	50
7	Years teaching in Higher Education	Drop-down list of 5 options from 'Less than 2 years' to '16 years or more'.	50
8	How many years work experience have you in your main discipline?	Drop-down list of 5 options from 'Less than 2 years' to '16 years or more'.	50
9	Member of Professional Body / Are you a member of a professional body associated with your discipline?	Yes / No	50
Section 2: The Programme			
10	When did you complete the Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching?	Drop-down list of years e.g. May 2009, Dec 2009, May 2010, Dec 2010 etc.	43
11	Briefly outline your reasons for participating in this programme:	Open comment box	50
Section 3: Aspects of the Programme			
12	<p>Please think about what you felt were the important aspects of the programme you completed. Please rate each of the following in terms of how important (i.e. how much emphasis was put on each aspect) you perceived them to be in the programme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Skills - Programme helped you to gain skills and change your teaching Development- Programme clarified or changed your focus from what you do in your teaching to your students and their learning Reflection – Programme developed you as a reflective practitioner (for example, so as to be able to recognise problems or justify teaching decisions) Student Learning – Programme helped you to understand better or improve (your) students' learning (for example, so your students focus on understanding, rather than reproduction of a subject) Conceptions – Programme developed or changed your conceptions of teaching away from teacher-focused towards a more student-focused approach 	<p>Rating options: Not at all, Somewhat, Neutral, Important, Very important</p>	50
Section 4: Your Approach to Professional Learning during the postgraduate diploma programme:			
13	Briefly describe your experience of professional learning and development during the programme e.g. note what activities you found	Open – comment	49

	useful for supporting your learning about teaching		
14	Estimate the average time you committed to professional learning and development during the programme (in addition to the scheduled class time):	Drop-down list of 4 options from '0-2 hours per week' to 'more than 8 hours per week'	47
15	Briefly describe the impact of participating in this postgraduate diploma in terms of changes in knowledge, skills and values associated with teaching:	Knowledge Skills Values	48
Section 5: Your approach to continuing your professional learning and development in relation to teaching:			
16	Indicate the accredited formal learning opportunities and experiences that you have availed of to support your continuing professional learning and development	Drop-down list: MA in Higher Education, MSc in Applied eLearning; 8 Modules as CPD; Other formal learning opportunities such as accredited programmes or modules, or non-accredited workshops (please specify)	36
17	Indicate the non-accredited informal learning opportunities and experiences that you have been involved in which has supported your continuing professional learning and development	Drop-down list: Curriculum development – self, Curriculum development - Collaborative with colleagues, DIT College Fellowship project, Mobile learning project, Networking with other lecturers (in person or online), Reading of scholarly publications relating to teaching, Scholarly research – self, Scholarly research with colleagues, Other non-accredited informal professional learning, please specify	46
18	How would you rate the influence of each of the following on your approach to professional learning and development in relation to teaching	Drop-down list: Self - own sense of professionalism, Student learning, Departmental, Other disciplinary, Institutional, Other, please specify	47
19	Briefly describe other professional learning and development opportunities which you consider would support you, which may not currently be available via the Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTC) within DIT	Open comment	28
20*	What do you consider to be the main barriers to your participation in CPD / professional learning?	Open comment	12
21	Professional Standards Frameworks- Overview of professional frameworks with example of UK's framework. Would you consider such a framework useful to guide your continuing professional learning and development, such as an institutional or national framework outlining suggested knowledge, skills and values associated with competence in teaching in higher education?	Yes / No	44
	Please support your response	Comment	32
22	Do you engage in professional learning and development in relation to your discipline?	Yes / No	44
	If yes, briefly outline how your experience of this impacts on your teaching development:	Comment	40
23	Would you like to participate in a follow up focus group or interview relating to this research? The	Yes / No	50

	focus groups will be College based and held in the main College site.		
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* The question on barriers was included in the questionnaires sent to the graduates of the Cert and CPD module, but not posed to graduates of the Diploma.

Note re. exclusion of three questionnaires:

The first five questions related to demographics, role when commencing the programme and associated DIT College. I noted that three respondents stated their main role was not as a lecturer but as a student support role with an interest in teaching. As the research was focusing on participants whose main role is or was as a lecturer, I excluded these three questionnaires from this current research. There were therefore data from 50 usable questionnaires. The subsequent three questions related to participants' profile in terms of experience of teaching, involvement in their discipline and membership of an associated professional body. Data from all these questions was quantitatively collated to provide an overview of respondent profiles. I created a separate worksheet for the collated responses to these questions with the five questions as headings.

Appendix G: Interview schedule

Draft outline of Broad Questions: Interview Phase of Research: May – June 2015

Outline (5-10mins each)

- Professionalism
- Learning within accredited programmes PG Cert / Diploma
- ‘Continuous Professional Learning’ especially within non-accredited and ‘non-formal’ activities
- Professional Frameworks

Introduction and Context (5-10mins)

1. Initial opening questions to identify discipline / subject areas, duration of involvement in teaching within higher education and to determine any initial queries regarding the research and process.

Comment briefly on rationale for this research relating to work and interest in topic – noted on sheet

Professionalism in relation to teaching in HE: (5-10mins)

2. If you think of a professional or a member of a profession (such as your own or others such as Law, Medicine etc), what general attributes and or practices do you think of?
3. If you think of someone who could be recognised as a ‘professional lecturer’, how would you describe them in terms of:
 - Professional knowledge;
 - Professional skills and practices
 - Professional values?

There are currently a range of recommendations both national and international which could be described as relating to ‘professionalising’ teaching in higher education. I have noted one of these recommendations from the recent Irish ‘National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030’ (commonly known as the Hunt Report): If you could review it and I’ll pose some questions on it:

All Higher Education Institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support on-going development and improvement of their skills (DES, 2011, p.62)

4. What is your reaction to this recommendation?
5. Do you currently feel ‘qualified’ and ‘competent’?
6. How do you think the institution can best support ‘on-going development and improvement’ of teaching?

Own Professional Learning - Participation in accredited Teaching and Learning programme in DIT – experiences of ‘professional development / learning’ - if any further comments from questionnaire (5-10mins)

7. What motivated you to participate in the Postgraduate Diploma / Certificate in Third Level Learning and Teaching or Certificate in Learning, Teaching and Assessment?
8. General insight into your experience of learning within the programme – participation in sessions, individual and or group activities / assignments

9. Which activities associated with the programme were valuable e.g. micro-teaching, reflective writing, practitioner research project? If so, why or why not?
10. Did your approach to teaching change during and after completing the programme? If so how (e.g. in terms of knowledge, skills and values, or why not?)
11. Can you provide **examples** of changes e.g. in terms of your students' learning?

Continuing Professional Development / Learning in relation to Teaching – Catalysts and Enablers or Barriers and Limiters (5-10mins)

Show Figure

12. Have you continued to engage in professional development / learning in relation to your teaching? If so, why and how? (For example, reflective practice, reading scholarly literature or engaging in scholarly research?)
13. Describe your experience of learning in any non-accredited formal learning opportunities such as workshops
14. Describe your experience of learning in non-accredited and 'informal'? Do you actively seek out opportunities to engage in professional learning about teaching with colleagues?
15. Could you describe the influence of colleagues on your professional learning?
16. Approximately, how much time do you devote to your own professional learning – e.g. per week, or within the semester?
17. Do you believe that teaching development is adequately supported and prioritised within DIT/ nationally?
18. Do you believe that competence in teaching is adequately acknowledged within DIT/ nationally?
19. Are there other initiatives or opportunities in relation to teaching development which could be supported by the LTTC or within your own College or department?

Professional Learning relating to your Discipline / 'Profession' (5-10mins)

20. Do you engage in professional learning and development in relation to your discipline? If so, how?
21. Are there approaches to professional learning and development in disciplinary contexts which you do / could employ to support your teaching development?
22. Do you see yourself as a 'Professional' in relation to your teaching? How / why not?

Professional Development Framework - National Forum (5-10mins)

23. The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education is currently developing a professional standards framework for teaching in Irish higher education. Are you aware of such a framework in the UK or in other countries and if so, do you believe a framework will support professional learning and development in relation to teaching?
24. Would you like to see recognition of prior professional learning and if so, how?

Aspirational 'Dream' question (1-2mins)

If you could change / create one thing in relation to improving professional learning in relation to teaching, what would it be?

Appendix H: Introduction to Researcher and Research

Introduction to Researcher and Research

My role and interest in the topic of Professional Learning of Lecturers:

Background and experience:

- BEd and MSc in IT and Education;
- Involved in higher education for past 15 years as a lecturer (up to 14 hours a week) and an educational developer in a variety of institutions.

Research relates to my involvement in professional development activities and projects with lecturers such as workshops and accredited programmes (PGCerts, PGDiplomas etc) and now as the CPD co-ordinator as part of my role in DIT's LTTC.

Working title: Being a Professional Lecturer: Framing professional learning within and beyond initial accredited programmes in teaching and learning in an Irish Institute of Technology

Focus is on exploring some opportunities and challenges associated with lecturers engaging in professional learning and how it can be supported by educational developers and recognised at an institutional and national level:

- supporting lecturers to continue their professional learning within their practice e.g. it has been noted that there is a problem embedding learning from programmes into the workplace (Knight, 2006).
- how lecturers learn as professionals within their academic 'workplace' which some may describe as 'informal' learning.
- With the introduction of a professional standards framework and other recommendations being implemented based on national strategy and international reports on quality in higher education, I am interested in how we in the institution can support and acknowledge professional learning of lecturers for e.g. within a framework

Aim of this interview is to get an insight into your authentic experiences of professional learning as a lecturer and any other associated role in DIT.

Outline of Topics:

- Professionalism
- Learning within accredited programmes PG Cert / Diploma
- Learning within non-accredited and 'non-formal' activities
- Professional Frameworks

Timing: approx.10 mins per topic

This interview is being recorded and data will be anonymised.

Please try to avoid noting names of students and or colleagues;

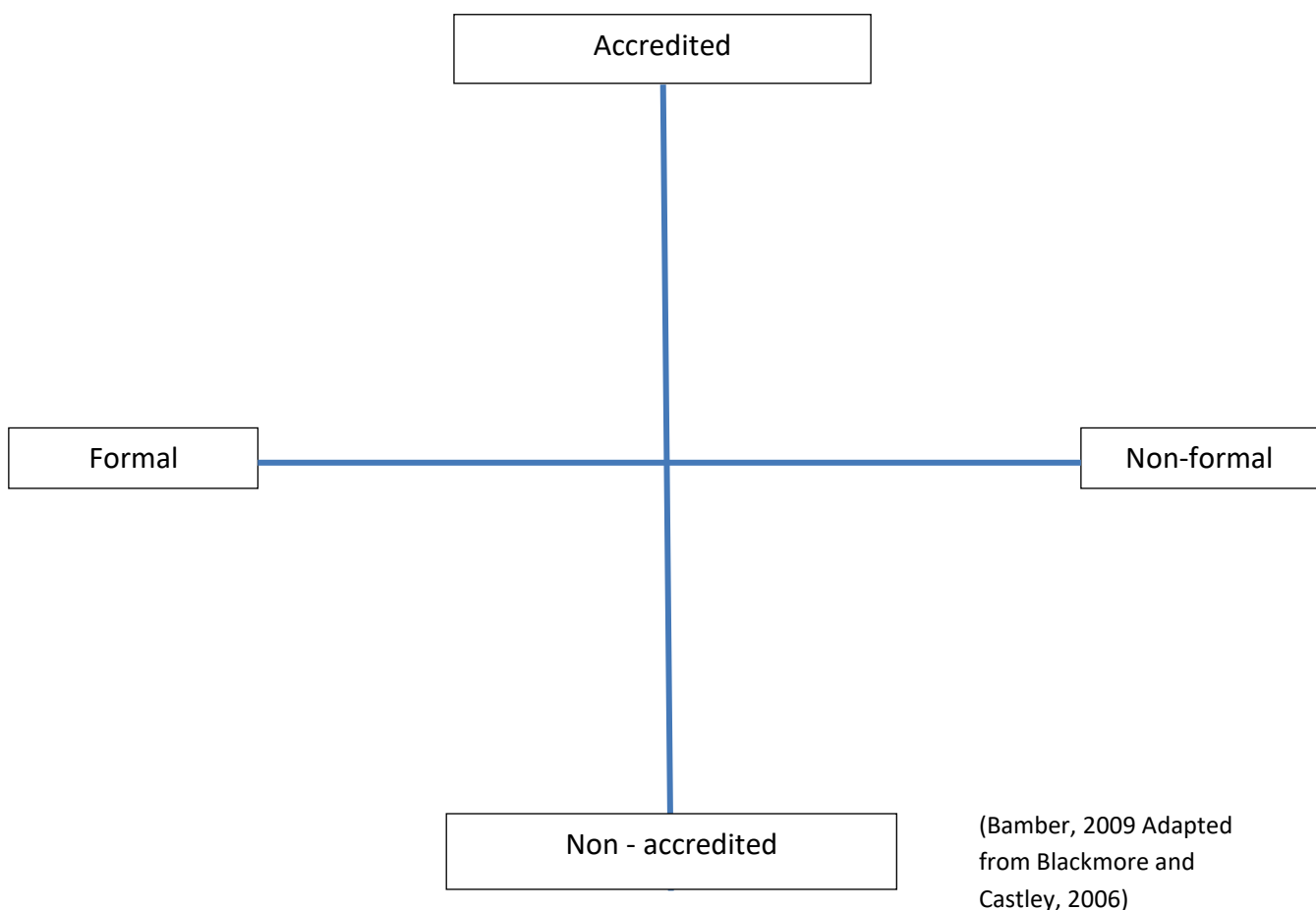
Notes for Questions for Interviewee

Recommendation from the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt Report):

‘All Higher Education Institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support on-going development and improvement of their skills’ (DES, 2011, p.62)

- What is your reaction to this recommendation?
- Do you currently feel ‘qualified’ and ‘competent’?
- How do you think the institution can best support ‘on-going development and improvement’ of teaching?

Figure 1: A broad, flexible framework



Appendix I: Text to accompany Transcript for Review by Interviewees

Dear x,

I hope you had a good summer break.

Thank you again for participating in my research interview. I'm attaching the transcript. I'd really appreciate it if you could review it and let me know any corrections, clarifications or omissions you'd like to make. Similarly, if there are any additional points or reflections which you would like to add, please let me know.

A pseudonym will be assigned to your transcript so that any quotes will be attributed to that pseudonym. Any specific identifiable details of your role, subject, School or College will be removed and replaced by an appropriate noun. Also, I'll replace any other names noted with the word 'name' but if you wish other specific details to be removed, please let me know.

If you could get back to me as soon as possible with any comments or queries, and ideally by Friday, September 4th at the latest, that would be great.

Many thanks and best wishes for the academic year ahead,

Orla

